

# CHAPTERS

By

Ann Flack Heard

## Foreword

Our family is grateful for the time, effort, and research of the Flack Genealogy given by my beloved brother James Monroe Flack and his wife, Tah.

Following a career of great achievement in the corporate world, he determined to find his roots. Documents and other evidence he kept in a “stack of stuff” called his “Mare’s Nest”.

The search led Jim and Tah to the continent of Europe: principally Norway, England, Scotland, and Russia. Jim departed this world chasing the Celts in Moscow. Tah has carefully preserved letters, documents, and maps which Jim believed established our roots along the Flak River in Norway.

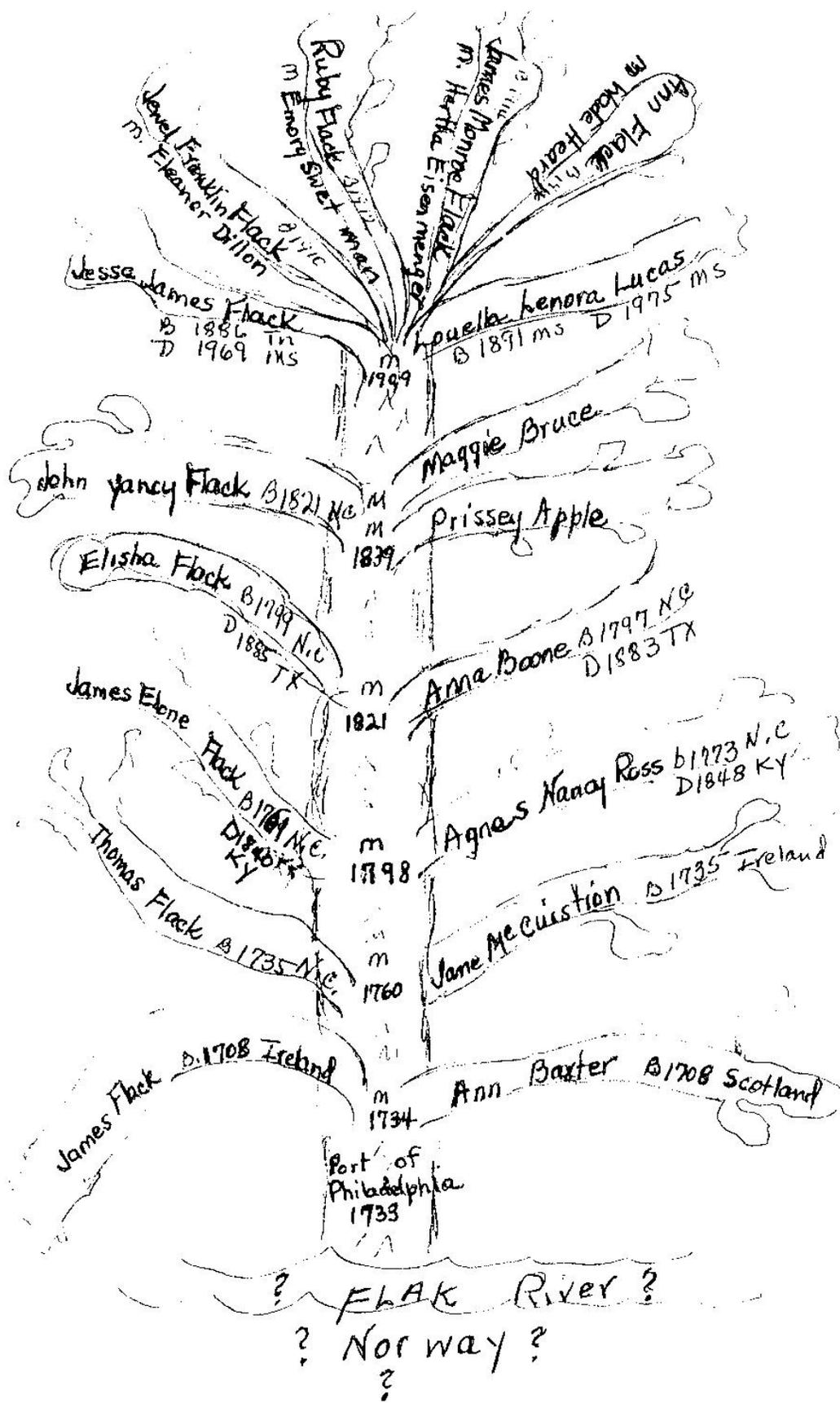
From a book written in 1624, we are reminded that “Jon Tolfsen Flack with three brothers and one sister inherited in FLACK 1½ hud which carried a mortgage of 9 KSK. In 1645 brother Anders sat as landowner. Brother Torgje returned to FLACK in 1657. In 1661, Groundbook stated that the Old FLAK Family has possession of the whole farm. Torgje died in 1665, “etc”. In 1674 King Christian V permitted a bom to be built two miles from the sea on FLAK River and later greeted it to be a useful contribution to Norway.

From 1674 until the recorded birth of James Flack (1708 in Ireland) – immigrated to Port of Philadelphia 1733 – there remains a void.

I have made a written request to: The Genealogical Department of  
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
50 East North Temple  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84150

for help in locating forebears of James Flack, b. 1708 in Ireland – still waiting!

Ann Flack Heard



## Chapter 1

### ***Celtic Heritage by Blood***

“**P**ing...Ping” there she stood, Ruby, ironing Papa’s shirt. Her tears dripped on the hot iron that she had just taken from the hot stove. Only four years younger, I couldn’t understand why she grieved over Grampa’s death.

When Fido died, we celebrated his arrival in Dog Heaven; wouldn’t Grampa receive the same celebration? Besides, we were about to depart for Aunt Janie’s farm where in the “Dog-Trot” house all of us slept on floor pallets upstairs while aunts and uncles slept downstairs, and the hunting dogs slept in the broad, open air hall separating the parlor from the dining room and big bedrooms with the huge fireplace. The kitchen was attached to the dining room by another open-air hallway. That’s where cook sat to churn the clabber into butter and buttermilk, and where the big wash tub sat to be filled with warm bath water!

Out back were the outhouse and one huge barn. Beyond that lay the biggest watermelon patch in the whole wide world – after feasting on melon hearts, the fights among cousins started with melon rinds. Eventually, that watermelon patch turned into acres and acres of oil rigs – much to the dismay of all cousins.

Grampa John Franklin Lucas had raised seven daughters and one son since the death of wife Caroline Lucas at the birth of Louella Lenora. “Nora” is our mother and has the personality of “the baby” of the Lucas Family! In fact, she was only a teenager when she eloped with our father!

Our father, Jesse James (J. J.), became an orphan and a member of his cousin’s family when he was six. As he became aware of his relationship with Cousin J. P. Flack, he made a pact to remain part of the Tennessee farm family and go to school until he was 21 years old – then he was promised a horse, saddle, gun and a bag of money. Pact kept, he headed south along the Mississippi River – totally unaware of the genes which drew him to the pine forests of Mississippi. J. J. had no knowledge of his forebears who lived as a tribe along the FLAK River in Norway; who built the first sawmill on that river, who farmed along that river, who eventually migrated to Ireland; who fathered James Flack born in 1708 in Ireland and married Ann Baxter born in Scotland in 1708. He was

unaware that James and Ann entered the Port of Philadelphia in 1733, met and married in 1734 and began the line of succession for Thomas Flack, James Elone Flack, Elisha Flack, John Yancy Flack, J. J.'s father and the rest of us! Nor did he know that James Elone Flack was a private in the Revolutionary War, was captured by Indians and given over to the British, but managed to escape returning to his company with three Indian scalps! His widow later claimed and received an annual pension of \$56.



Remember that Dog-Trot house that I described? J. J. sought work on that farm, (while the watermelons were still there) and right away fell in love with the beautiful red-headed Louella Lenora Lucas (our mother), who lived with Aunt Janie since our mother became motherless at her birth. J. J. and teenager Nora eloped, and then settled in the pine forests of South Mississippi.

As J. J. ascended the ladder from farmer to Superintendent of the Forest, he and Nora lived in a mill-company house in the forest at the beginning/end of a rail line which gave J. J. transportation via push/cart (hand/cart) into the woods.



That push/cart provided excursions for the growing family into the world of colorful leaves, hickory nut hunts in fall and winter, and to the creek and berry vines and bushes come summer.

Home schooling was conducted by Cousin Hattie for Jewel Franklin, Ruby, James Monroe, infant Ann, and cousin Chester Swor (Hattie's brother who lived with us sometimes). Our extended family included "cook" and "cook's child" who was my best friend and playmate until everyone outgrew home schooling and was chauffeured into town (to Baxterville Public School) in a four door Willis-Knight with running boards and side curtains. Eventually, Papa was transferred to the lumber town of Stephenson, headquarters of the Lumber Company. Mama became postmistress and our family scattered one by one as we matured.

On graduation from high school, Jewel Franklin joined the Navy. Papa was amazed that he was accepted, because he had six toes on his left foot – the result of splitting wood with an ax! Bare footed! Stationed on California's Pacific shore, he met

and married Eleanor Dillon. At the end of World War II, Frank was killed in an air crash in Alaska. Eleanor still resides in California.

Teenager Ruby fell in love with a local grocery man. While still in high school, she married Emory Swetman, continued school and started a family. First born Anelle was adored by all – and spoiled by the constant attention of Uncle James who wheeled her carriage about town. Then there were James Robert, Barbara, and Roderick. Our lives were saddened by the early death of her red-headed, freckled-faced, happy-go-lucky James Robert. Barbara honored my family by spending one year of her high-school days with us when Wade was stationed at Eglin Air Force Base. Our Melinda loved having an older “sister” who had helped her mount her first horse! Roddy had the honor of chaperoning his widowed mother through graduate school at LSU.



James Monroe took all honors in scholarship, sports, and music in high school then capped that off with a total scholarship to Delta State College in Cleveland, MS. (He borrowed \$25.00 from the manager of the Lumber Company to finance his trip from South Mississippi to North Mississippi and for college enrollment. Eventually he repaid the debt with no interest). His achievements at Delta State launched him into further academic avenues. At Yale he met and married Hertha Eisenmenger (Tah). While climbing the corporate ladder, Jim and Tah moved about the world and brought into the world gifted offspring: James Monroe Jr., Karen, Robert, and Suzanne. Karen honored my family by living one year with us in Wiesbaden, Germany, at the time of our son’s birth. She and Melinda were in-house “nannies” to infant Hamp.

I, Ann, as a member of Lynn High School debating team was granted a total scholarship to Moorhead Sunflower Jr. College, then to Peabody Teachers’ College/Vanderbilt, Nashville, TN. A tennis court encounter with Wade Hampton C. Heard on the first day of college life developed into a courtship which later in his senior year interrupted Wade’s enrollment in Pre-Med at Millsaps College in Jackson, MS, when he transferred to Peabody/Vanderbilt and graduation and graduate school. Marriage followed. World War II interrupted Wade’s tenure as Professor of Science at U. of Georgia SW Jr. College, Americus, GA. Ann completed his tenure there. Mary

Melinda Taylor Heard was born in Douglas, GA, Wade's first Air Force assignment.

Hampton Flack Heard was born in Wiesbaden, Germany.

From these roots, other branches and leaves grow.

## ***Relativity***

**T**he four-door Willys Knight with running boards and side curtains was in attendance at all sports events, since our parents Nora and J.J. pushed participation for their four off-spring. In summer, in the absence of “homework,” the family gathered after supper for reading and games – excepting Friday nights when friends came for records on the gramophone and dancing! Fudge was cooked in the kitchen as Mama and Papa retired to their room to read (and listen). Daybreak on Saturday found us gathering with coffee, corn, eggs, bread and bacon and walking sticks – hiking to the creek for a breakfast cook-out (and a roll of the corn husks for “smoking”). In late summer, we met brothers at the cane-grinding where horses, donkeys, or men walked in circles with harnesses on each back as stalks of sugar cane were pushed into the mouth of the grinder which resulted in sweet, sweet juice flowing into huge vats “cooked down” into syrup. Spectators were encouraged to dip cups into the foaming juice to “try it.” The hike on the railroad track returning home was slow and labored; however, by late afternoon, chores completed, with 15 cents in hand, we stormed the movie house – every Saturday night.

Sundays found us in our best dress and in Sunday school where Papa was the superintendent and Mama played the piano. Usually, the preacher came to our house for chicken dinner where breasts were reserved for adults and legs or thighs were child-fare. Leftovers went into the “warmer” for supper or were placed in a basket to be delivered to “The Orphanage” – a home for children – supported by the churches in town. Audrey lived in The Orphanage, played basketball with me and was the link to my moment of glory. In the final minute of a game in which our team trailed by one point, Audrey, a guard, tossed the ball to me (one of two “forwards” in girls’ basketball when there were three sections of the court – neither guards nor centers could shoot the basket – only forwards) and from the farthest corner of the forwards’ court as the final whistle sounded, that ball left my hands and added two points to our team. The tournament was ours! My feet did not touch ground for days; I was so elevated! Audrey won a basketball scholarship and went to college with me.

In that “warmer” above the wooden stove with four eyes, where “leftovers” were stored, a pint jar was kept. The contents were pennies, nickels, dimes and other silver coins. At the successful conclusion of extra chores (weeding the garden, washing windows, running errands, etc.) one might get an award of a coin. A conversation ensued: “Do you really want that gum ball, or would you like to save that penny for college?” Clink, the penny dropped into the jar. As the jar filled, our ambitions grew and except for Frank, who could hardly wait to exit high school and join the U.S. Navy, all of us fulfilled the promise of that jar of coins!

Growing up poor? No Way! We enjoyed the same advantages as our neighbors. On Easter Sunday every girl had new patent leather slippers and white socks edged in lace to wear with the organdy dress, which scratched all over. New “lace up to the ankle” tennis shoes appeared at the foot of every child’s bed when school started in September. Tennis racquets were re-strung in springtime. That Willys Knight, filled with athletes, drove to every “away game.” There were enough vegetables in Papa’s garden to feed us *and* cook’s family. Papa and the boys, Frank and Jim, hunted and fished, and once returned home with a twelve foot alligator tied into the bed of the truck – his snout was taped, and then he was tethered to the willow tree in the back garden near the outhouse – until every neighbor had a visit with the demon of the swamp before he was hauled away to his home leaving great memories.

Mama was the village post mistress; Papa was superintendent of the forest for the lumber company. When “cook” was not tending the house and children, we, the non-tended were responsible for whatever needed to be done. Soon after “the bathroom with real plumbing” was added to the millhouse I discovered a hidden talent – “rolling curls.” That became a productive occupation when neighbors dropped by for the use of my new-found skill. Silver quarters earned helped fill the trunk that left for boarding school in my senior year of high school.

Regularly, a negative tick appeared on my report card which overall reported very satisfactory/excellent results. “Talks too much” was my fault line. In boarding school, I was the new student who had no one to talk to early on, so I joined the debate team. I discovered that research, then manner of delivery carried the day; in fact, I rode a full debating scholarship through college and graduate school.

Science Studies was not my favorite category. However, as the female of a lab group made up of Johnny B., Wade C., Bubba D., and me, as usual “she” became the recording secretary for four notebooks. Even though I observed and recorded, I seldom participated in lab experiments. At testing time my recall of entries into those four notebooks served me well as my lab mates struggled with correct answers.

At the conclusion of two magical years of Junior College, presidents of the YMCA and of the YWCA were recruited to attend “Y” Conference at Miami University, Ohio. Wade C. and I met that requirement and boarded the train for Ohio. The conference was “all about nothing,” and when conferees were gathered for lectures touting “we will not serve our country in any war,” Wade and I walked out, packed our bags and boarded the train for home. Our paths did not cross for one year since he entered pre-med school at Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi, and I entered Teachers’ College at Peabody/Vanderbilt, Nashville, Tennessee. However, there was communication designed to keep in touch. Each night at eleven o’clock a certain radio station used a theme song called “Moon River” “...two drifters off to see the world...”



We listened. When I decided to continue my job as assistant librarian throughout the summer quarter, Wade transferred to Peabody/Vanderbilt, was selected as a member of the “Official Quartet” to sing for all official functions, and at graduation the following June was awarded the coveted “Sullivan’s Award” for outstanding student on campus. I was satisfied to serve as “Queen of the May.” By the end of summer quarter, we were three-fourths through graduate school. I had been recruited for a teaching job in Alabama; Wade was recruited for a professorship in Georgia. So at Dr. Metcalf’s suggestion we decided on a garden wedding in his backyard on August 20, 1938. Our “roomies” for the summer served as “bests” (neither family from Mississippi had enough notice to participate except for “Sis,” Wade’s sister). Following the ceremony and reception, we were loaded onto a train headed for Atlanta,

Georgia. We walked to the local hotel, registered as Mr. and Mrs. then spent the evening on “Miss Pitty-Pats Porch” because there was good food and a breeze. Returning to the hotel, we discovered a little breeze on the balcony, so we slept on the floor out there. Next day, we walked to the bus station to catch a ride to Daytona Beach, Florida, where my college roommate and her groom joined us for a week on that famous beach.

Time to report in for our professional lives beginning at Georgia Southwest Junior College of the University of Georgia, Americus, Georgia. Wade’s cousins of the Forte Law Firm had arranged quarters – the upstairs apartment of Mrs. Mashburn’s Home. Parties, as only ladies from Georgia can manage, filled our days and nights. We knew everyone in town before school started; however, Wade was a perfect stranger on campus. On the hour when he reported for assignment, he was mistakenly enrolled as a student!!! Fortunately, our apartment was “walking distance” to campus because we had no car. Eventually, we had saved enough cash to purchase a two-door Ford with summer plans in mind. As soon as the final bell rang for students to return home to summer jobs, we headed north – “out to see the world.” Thirty days would have to do, because as all teachers know, there must be a summer job – ours, as recreational directors at a summer convention in Asheville, North Carolina, started July 4<sup>th</sup>, leaving us thirty-four days to drive the Atlantic seacoast to Newfoundland and return. In 1939, finding lodging meant simply; drive through town, even New York City, pull up to the curb and ask “how much?” Doors and windows remained open to catch the breeze and listen to the conversation next room or to the tickling of the piano keys in the bar. Along the way, if you happened to identify a Georgia tag, everyone yelled and waved, or you stopped for a dip in the “little flume,” shrieked before pulling the bugs out of your skin! Or you assisted in pulling the huge blocks of ice from the lake to be stored in the icehouses of Newfoundland homes.

Amazed at ice-block houses, at the sailing ships and fishing boats, at the huge farms in Pennsylvania and Virginia, by blooming dogwoods and apple orchards, we made our way back to the dormitory for our summer jobs.

Our apartment was located on the first floor; “their” apartment was on the second floor directly above! Schedules allowed us to relax after a hard day’s work, dinner, and then bed. “Their” schedule started as our heads hit the pillow – tuning instruments for the bandstand dance. Dawn found “them” in bed and “us” dragging off for a day of recreation!

## ***Military Life***

**I**n the spring quarter 1942, Wade avoided the draft by enlisting in the Army Air Corps, regretting for the first time having rejected his appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy when he was a high school senior. I remained on campus to continue his job at the college – pregnant and content to be “at home” until he completed

indoctrination into the military. Melinda came to us in Douglas, Georgia, on July 23,



1942. Healthy baby and mother remained in the hospital for ten days! Once home, the housekeeper vacuumed the floor daily, tool in the right hand, infant Melinda over left shoulder. Wade’s tour in Officer’s Candidate School (OCS) carried us to Miami, Florida, where he was honored as top graduate and where Melinda and I had the pleasure of spending lots of time with my brother Jim and his wife Tah. Jim was attending Navy Flight School in Miami. Once Wade had bars, we were stationed in Avon Park, Florida. Sister lawyers moved into the

hotel in town so that Wade’s little family could enjoy their two bedroom villa located on the lake where the flight school was located. The rent was \$40.00 a month. Friday afternoons the dining room table was transformed into the poker club! The game continued until the beer was finished. Wives and children visited and played in the sandbox. When Wade was away for parachute training, he raced Hurricane Gordon from Fort Meyers to Avon Park arriving in time to watch the stucco wall of the dining room wash away in the night! By noon the following day, a new stucco wall was “applied.”

During war time, toys were “not available;” all material was needed for munitions. Papa and Mama arrived in their Chrysler bearing gifts – a hand-made rocking duck and a beautiful rocking horse for Miss Melinda – all made by Grampa Flack. Every child in the circle took turns on those beautiful animals. After her second birthday, Melinda and I (and baby-to-be) made our home with Mama and Papa in Mississippi as Wade departed to the “front line” in Alaska. Still-born baby brother came in the hospital at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi. Our grief was interrupted when it was decided by

Wade that there must be a way for his family to join him in Alaska. Research decided on a route – train to New Orleans; train to Chicago and overnight in the city; train to Seattle; cargo ship to Alaska; train to Anchorage. Simple? Outside Chicago, our train was sidelined in order to allow a troop train to progress. When we finally got underway, the engineer of our train contacted a taxi company in Seattle, hoping that we would connect with the departing ship! We arrived at the docks as the steamer was backing into a turn in the basin. Another steamer would be leaving in ten days! All of Seattle took care of Miss Melinda, especially staff of the hotel where we waited for our ship to come in.

Finally, the day of departure arrived, and it fell our good fortune to discover a mother and child returning to their home in Anchorage. Not only were there salmon fishermen who assisted with life jackets and fire drills, there were military nurses and doctors who helped us cope with seasickness! Icebergs and snowballs proved to be the “toys” for our little girls as we docked to deliver goods to each Inland Passage town.

“Stop! Don’t saw that solid mahogany banister” I called as I discovered my darling’s head on the outside of the stairwell while her body remained behind. My logic dictated that she had climbed through the banisters and had left her head behind. Gently pulling her hips I managed to reconnect her head with her body – much to everyone’s delight. Ice cream was served all around. Her red ears eventually returned to flesh color.

Off the Alaska steamship and onto the railcars which would haul us over the world’s longest trestle inland toward Anchorage. “Not again” I complained, as the train sat still for hours. “Troop train?” I asked. I was invited to hop off the car and survey the problem. In front of the engine stood six huge beasts – munching twigs exposed in the snow. Like us, the beasts were trapped by snow and ice embankments taller than the train alongside the tracks. The assistant engineer used a blow torch to force the moose family up and over the embankments. The train got underway. Eventually, we were in the arms of our soldier in Anchorage, Alaska. Fort Richardson offered us no hospitality, so we registered for the three days allowed in hotel #1, then instantly registered for the ensuing three days in hotel #2. Packing/unpacking was no problem since as true southerners who had never witnessed ice in the air, the Aurora Borealis, frozen feet, etc., we wore the silk scarf over our mouths and all of the clothing that we owned under the parka and mukluks provided by the Army and our new friends.

After a few days getting to know everyone in town, we settled into an alley house, chopped firewood for the iron stove which was fed around the clock, thawed the commode at daybreak before the staff car arrived to haul the man of the house off to Ft. Richardson. After a couple of weeks of sheer survival, we sub rented a house from a family leaving for the “outside” (translation: Stateside). Our next door neighbor was the Pfiel family, immigrants from Germany and Sweden, whose wonderful children taught Miss Melinda to ice skate, toboggan, and ski, and who complained when the weather warmed to 10 degrees below zero! Wade’s first sergeant converted our baby’s shoes into skates and froze a pond of water in our back yard as a convenient rink for improving skating skills. She was awarded a 12” icicle off the roof overhang for each successful circle. Eventually, mother and child were recognized as legal dependants and allowed to occupy quarters at Elmendorf Air Force Base – formerly (yesterday) Ft. Richardson. We lucked into a fourplex with the base provost marshal and his family as our upstairs neighbors which included Julie, a three-year old, like Melinda.

Our adventures intensified. Pounding on the floor above our bed during the night asked, “Do you want to witness an event to remember?” Quickly getting into our arctic clothing, we three exited our quarters, jumped into the Provost’s truck along with his family and sped off to discover a family of bears in the coal bin attached to airmen’s quarters; or onto the lake frozen 4 to 6 feet deep where a hole is sawed for fishing; or come summer wading into the shallow mountain streams to snag salmon, sometimes between our knees! The only drawback to summertime fishing was the hordes of giant mosquitoes.

A promise was made by the departing first sergeant to send to us home-grown Texas Sweets – “world’s finest onion.” The mesh bag did arrive with one onion remaining to reach its destination – having been enjoyed along the way by a few onion lovers!

Fondest memories of military life in Alaska include Sunday mornings when as soon as choir robes were removed, the Chaplain, followed by most members of the choir with families, loaded the Ski Valley truck which waited beside the chapel to haul us up the mountain. Then I remember the fun of attending Wade’s midnight baseball games in June and July – or flying over Mt. McKinley at midnight – or pulling the blinds to close

out the sun at bedtime during 23 hours of daylight in June/July – or keeping lights burning 16 hours daily in December/January – or basking in the beauty of the Aurora Borealis. However, the most astounding revelation to all of us was the resilience of Miss Melinda, our baby girl! While other mothers were returning Stateside to cope with nervous breakdowns due to climate and inactivity, we followed the lead of our three year old who adored the snow, the ice, the wonderment of it all.

Then the war was over! Time to go home and rearrange our lives. Remain military? Return to teaching? Retire to the Heard Plantation of 600 acres in Tennessee as veterinarian? The final option was our choice, so, by inland waterway we stopped in Seattle to purchase a car which allowed Wade to apply for vet school in Washington State. “Sorry, we have a long waiting list.” A statement repeated to him in Oregon, New Mexico, and Alabama; however, in Auburn, Alabama, Wade’s academic record received considerable scrutiny which produced this response: “We have a long waiting list, but if you will sign a contract to become a faculty member on graduation, we will enroll you next semester.” Contract signed, we designed and built a small house on two beautiful acres of pine forest purchased from Miss Annie Heard (a newfound friend located by the name on the mailbox on Moore’s Mill Road) for \$200.00! In August, the head of the vet school, an Army Veteran, read the list of “regular appointees to military duty,” and Wade was called before him to be advised: “Sir, you are making a huge mistake. Accept your appointment and follow that career!” Advice discussed, advice taken. Wade drove his truck to Atlanta and signed up for permanent duty with the Air Force. Subsequently, we reported to Eglin AFB, Florida. Quarters assigned, we set about getting to know our neighbors – some of whom remain our everlasting friends – especially the Joe McGees, the Georges, the Bill Beavenses, and the McDonalds, our neighbors on the Walker Estate.

At the end of Shalimar Drive one entered the compound through a barbed wire fence and gate. The “little house” was for the “ladies,” while the “big house,” with gallery all around, was for the “rum-runners” and the huge barn housed the rum – in days gone by. The long pier and dock adjoined the boat house on Ben’s Lake. Dr. Walker from Alabama felt it his patriotic duty to rent the place to military personnel. So, we bought a couple of beds, table and chairs, a piano and moved right in. Then it rained! Standing at the sink not only involved wet hands, but rain water all over one’s head. A

call to our friend, the base commander, secured a truck for us to move back into quarters for a brief interval while the “big house” got a new roof – and the return of the Heard family. Out in a boat, spotting oyster beds, Wade and Bill Beavens came upon a swimming deer, rescued same by loading it into the boat and placing it into the eight foot fence surrounding the barn. The following day, we discovered a second deer that had successfully jumped the tall fence to join his mate. Florida Wildlife persons arrived to return the beasts to the forest across the bay.

Frequent trips home to the Mississippi Gulf Coast allowed us to explore different routes across Florida and Alabama. Our favorite way carried us along the coast where the fishing boats brought in shrimp, crabs, and fish. Along the way were many small seafood restaurants for us to visit. On one such trip, our little girl scout urged us to visit “the” horse farm. She convinced us that her scouting badge depended on learning to care for an animal. Now wouldn’t a horse be just the thing to care for since we had a barn and a fenced area? Deal made – horse will be delivered “next Saturday.” “That Saturday” found us waiting for hours for the truck with horse. Eventually, a four-door sedan drove through the gate – horse’s head sticking out the window behind the driver; horse’s tail waving out the window behind the passenger’s seat! Happy girl scout earned badge!

I was recruited to teach in the newly formed elementary school on base. During the decision process, Miss Melinda requested that “her mother” not speak to her should we pass in the hall! No other student had a mother at school! Bargain made and kept.

Among Wade’s many and colorful experiences in the military, one episode won him no medal since he, I, and the General until now were the only ones who were aware of the mission. Called in for briefing, Wade learned that the General’s wife was marooned in St. Louis, and that he, Wade, had been selected to rescue her. He drove the miles, he located the hotel, and he found her crumpled on the floor of her hotel room in a drunken stupor. The floor maid was engaged to “clean her up” and assist in getting her into the underground garage and into the General’s car. The journey back was interrupted for refueling only! This saga concluded a few years later when the General’s body was found on the steps of a church in Louisiana.

Atomic bomb testing was the mission on Eniwetok Island in the Pacific, and Wade was never really convinced that he was proud to recall how his hand set off the

first bomb tested there. Returning home from that mission the airmen stopped over in Honolulu for rest and recreation and to purchase leis of orchids for back-home wives and sweethearts.

Since Eglin AFB is located so near to Mississippi, we established a pattern of spending Christmas Eve with my parents on the Gulf Coast, departing at daybreak on Christmas Day for Itta Bena in the Mississippi Delta where Wade's parents lived, to open gifts and enjoy lots of cousins from Natchez, Jackson, Shreveport, and Monroe. Since Miss Melinda was the only girl child, she was adored by aunts and uncles and teased by cousins. Eventually, girl cousins came along. Four Heard brothers and one sister grew



up in a small cotton plantation community, Itta Bena, (Indian translation: Home in the Woods). Their heritage was royal and rich – reaching back to King Edward of England. The country doctor, Franklin

Coffee Heard, of Tennessee, and his wife Lucy Hunt Taylor, who established and taught in the country school, sent both sons to Soney-Webb prep school before registering them for medical school, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. Joseph Eugene Heard became a very accomplished surgeon in Shreveport, Louisiana, while Edward Taylor Heard became the local pharmacist in Itta Bena, Mississippi. When the aging parents needed care, they lived with Edward Taylor's family in Itta Bena. In addition to many former slaves, they brought down Lucy Hunt's grand piano which was placed in the servant's house behind the Heard House in Itta Bena because Sara Belle Heard, a music teacher and wife of E. T. preferred her own piano in the reception hall (Parlor). Uncle Joseph Eugene, surgeon from Shreveport, on an infrequent visit to see his parents in his older brother's home, took a saw to the rosewood grand piano ("wasting away" in the servant's house) and removed the legs to be used in Shreveport to support a desk being constructed for his office! Memories recalled from early childhood were that grandmother kept a bottle of blackberry wine tucked in the back of the safe in the kitchen

(her secret); however, everyone knew! Grandpa sat snoozing in the reception hall (parlor) usually; however, he managed to trip with his walking cane every child who ran into the house.

The camaraderie enjoyed by the five Heard siblings was irreparably destroyed when the will was read, subsequent to their father's death, making Edward Taylor Jr. the



executor of the estate. The executor decided to keep intact oil leases and all assets and annually distribute the dividends and interest. Agreement was never reached and two brothers never exchanged greetings again. Family reunions continued with one or the other brother never appearing. Cousins, thank God, are corresponding. Taylor's Tabernacle, Tennessee, convenes each summer, as usual, and the third edition of the

Family Chronicles Taylor's Tabernacle is in progress. As I write on my 86<sup>th</sup> birthday, five off-spring of the Itta Bena Heard family have gone to heaven while three widows live with cherished memories.

At Eglin AFB, the "First Guided Missile Group" was formed and scheduled to be based at the Banana River Naval Station in Brevard County, Florida. Six officers with supporting staff were selected to proceed to the area to make ready the change over from Navy to Air Force. The Heard's four-hole Buick convertible loaded with child and cocker spaniel in the back seat, mom, dad, and bird in bird cage in front seat, drove south into a vast area which appeared to be desert wasteland. The drawbridge allowed us to cross the Indian River, the Banana River, then onto A1A, the beach road on the beautiful Atlantic Ocean. Other than the Surf Restaurant and a small grocery store, Cocoa Beach hardly existed. A few miles south of Cocoa Beach, we checked into the Naval Station and were quartered in the Bachelor Officer's Quarters (BOQ). Coast Guard Captain Aslakson introduced shells to Miss Melinda. Until housing could be arranged, she and I collected, collected, and collected shells on that beautiful beach. (Recalling our drive along the Pacific Shore a few years ago, I recalled Melinda's reaction to her legs exposed

for the first time on Carmel Beach. For two years those legs had been encased in arctic gear in Alaska; she refused to expose those “white things” to the warm California sun!)

Eventually, we were housed on Michigan Avenue in Indianalantic along with the Simmonses, the Arnolds, and others. Our very good friends, the Georges, drove over from Winter Park for weekends. Melinda attended Melbourne Elementary School, and again I was recruited to fill a vacancy in the Melbourne High School science department. Eventually, housing became available on base, as the “down-range” program developed from Cape Canaveral. George McNeese headed the highly secretive space program. My very good friend, Myrtle McNeese, often made a telephone call which might be described thusly: “Are you ready to hang out your wash?” (Translation: “ Go outside immediately to see the shot!”). There it lifted like a flaming arrow into the sky – truly exciting!

In order to make the O’Club hospitable, officers were given an option for Wednesday afternoon – remain at your desk or volunteer to clean up the club. Volunteers were in abundance; the O’Club became habitable though hot. We were challenged to provide entertainment for ourselves. Jewelry companies eager to find buyers selected wives as models to strut and display necklaces, rings, bracelets, and such at a big dinner party at the O’Club. Little did I realize that models would be rewarded with some of the goods displayed. I have no recall of my loot. However, the experience served to bolster my ego enough to allow me to accept a modeling opportunity at Coleman’s Department Store in Boston when I was collecting a wardrobe to take to Germany on a future assignment.

General and Mrs. Richardson were gregarious, fun- loving people, so every holiday was celebrated appropriately. Jack DeWitt’s department arranged a “decision” party. What shall we do for the Halloween Dance? Wade and I recalled that a group of cannibals had won the case of beer at Elmendorf AFB. So the “decision” was made weeks in advance, therefore giving us time to scout the state for long johns to be dyed jet black; to roast the turkeys to produce the leg bone for the hair knot; to order grass skirts for each cannibal; to practice covering all exposed skin with black grease; to rehearse grunts and gestures for acts of communication among us and conceal our identity to others; to congregate each Friday night to mix, taste and practice sitting cross-legged around a black boiling laundry cauldron holding the bourbon and water; to decide who

(and how) would set up the properties on site in advance of party time. Unfortunately, no plans were made as follow-up for the condition that resulted from our huge success! First prize was poured into our cauldron, but since no one had recognized us, we were left to ourselves for recovery. Drinking vessels made from coconut shells cut in half were abandoned and scattered about, as each cannibal claimed a spouse and returned to quarters.

Who needs Disney World? Creative and talented people produce entertainment when a void exists. Consider the Christmas Party. Adorable reindeer pulling the sleigh (made at the hobby shop) loaded with “dolls” to be given to good little boys – carefully chosen in advance as recipients. Talent in many forms was displayed by amateurs.

Serving as Officers’ Wives Club president for one year was a pleasant task for me, since the club officer was a young man who with his wife formed a very talented team of musicians and loved to entertain. For me, two accomplishments of that year remain in evidence. Number 1, Red Cross Volunteers were organized; Number 2, Patrick Wives Cook Book was published. I cherish the silver tray engraved: “PAFB Women’s Club” and presented to me as I concluded my term.

Command and Staff School, Montgomery, Alabama demanded Wade’s attendance at the same time I was invited to return to Eglin AFB to complete the year for the departing principal. As Wade left for Alabama, Melinda and I returned to Eglin as guests of Evelyn and Marcia McGee, since Joe McGee was also away on a mission. Evelyn and I marveled that our girls remained well nourished, since they giggled throughout mealtimes!

Soon after returning to PAFB, orders came for Wade to report to Wiesbaden, Germany. He was allowed to carry his cocker spaniel, Flapper, on his flight over, but his family must wait for further orders! Following a farewell visit to family in Mississippi, Melinda and I set out for Boston – our port-of-call in the future. Uncle Jim and Aunt Tah invited us to wait with them in Westford, located west of Boston. Melinda attended Westford Academy with her cousins. Driving from Mississippi to Boston was a challenge. Fortunately for us, traffic was manageable until we were in the tunnel in New York. Mid way through, I pulled over to inquire of the walking patrol, “What is my route to Massachusetts once I am free of the tunnel?” His response, “Wait here until I yell

‘follow that car!’” I did, he did, and we proceeded to follow that car until we crossed the line into Massachusetts. Our time there allowed us to blend with cousins and with early American history. Now that I have read John Adams as written by Mr. McCullough, I cherish the shrines remaining from our earliest days as free citizens.

Shots to update medical records; passports gained; Buick delivered to Port of Boston to be delivered to Wiesbaden; and fond farewells to all our new friends and family; mother and child crossed the Atlantic to join our daddy and our dog at Frankfurt Air Terminal. Our four-door Buick hauled us the few kilometers to our fourth floor apartment on Heinerberg Hill, overlooking the vast commissary and post exchange. Our good friends, the Tiptons, lived near to us and took charge of helping us to “settle in.”

Transferring from Westford Academy to the Military Dependents’ School became a very happy experience for Miss Melinda, since Ann Ulricson lived on the first floor of our apartment building, was a recent transplant, but “knew the ropes.” The Military Dependents’ School was staffed with excellent teachers who followed classic curriculum and discipline. After-school activities included scouting, languages, and clubs. Melinda’s parents provided extra activity by purchasing a beautiful antique grand piano which was delivered to our fourth floor dining room window via pulley and chains from the delivery truck parked below! Weekends were scheduled for piano lessons, ballet class, and horse riding classes.

Wade had arranged for Fraulein Von Lundblatt to come to our quarters for tutoring German. Her students were Dr. and Mrs. Sandy Lazar, neighbors, and the Heards.

Arriving in Germany, after “settling in,” we decided to make use of the 30 day leave accumulated by Wade. As soon as school dismissed for the December holidays, we headed south into the warmer climate of Spain. Enroute we had a brief visit in each ancient village of Germany; used the public sidewalk toilets; stopped in Bern, Switzerland, to visit the Bear’s Pit and the tower clocks, the museum of living clocks, then proceeded to the Matterhorn for an overnight delight.

On the coast of Spain we boarded an overnight vessel to the Island of Majorca. Peasants with farm animals to be marketed on the “Island” bedded down outside our deck windows making sleep impossible. We may have been too excited to sleep on those bunk

beds; however, our hotel accommodations on the Island were quaint and comfortable. Tour taxi was the mode of transportation to visit the beautiful grottos and observe the way of life. Linen and pottery from Majorca grace our home now. We continue to seek Paella as good as on Majorca!

On to Madrid for Christmas – there to be reminded of the “twelve days,” returned to Paris for New Year’s Eve, then home for school days! Wade and I were amazed by all; our pre-teen girl endured politely! School was more fun because of new friends.

Then we discovered that our family was growing! Travel plans in the future must be made with child-care provided. Martha and I had planned to explore Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece. Military husbands were not cleared for such places, so while our girls were busy with school, we selected May as our time of exploration. On a Sunday afternoon farewells were made as we boarded the German Express to Trieste.

Early next morning, we located the big ship with the Red and White crest of the communist party waiting to load guests for the cruise down the Adriatic Sea. Martha and I were not expected passengers, so no stateroom was provided for the two American women who had no travel visas! On deck we were drawn into conversation with Americans who were attending a medical conference in Dubrovnik. The concerned couple offered us their quarters once they were out for breakfast next morning. After brief naps and bathroom luxuries, we expressed our gratitude and joined the travelers who appreciated the beauty of that blue, blue sea.

Split was our first destination. The daughter of our language instructor lived there with other German families and had arranged accommodations for us. We were met with a wheelbarrow pushed by a peasant who loaded our bags and motioned us to follow. We trudged along a dirt road into another dirt road where one old Ford car sat in front of a house, surprise number one. Surprise number two, as we entered that house, we became aware of a bathtub filled with watermelons. Surprise number three, as we inspected our bedroom, we discovered a microphone hidden behind our washstand on which was placed a washbowl and pitcher. Martha and I lifted our bags and retreated to the village where we successfully contacted the daughter of our instructor and sought refuge with her in her primitive environment. Two family members surrendered their beds to us, as they “camped out” near the kitchen which was an outdoor arrangement with open fire!

Early each morning two volunteers hiked to the fish market to buy fish and vegetables for the day's fare. After a couple of days visiting the communists' youth camps, we took the train to Makarska. Leaving our "first class" seats to join the peasants in the "third class" rows, we discovered gracious, hospitable, poor people. Makarska proved to be a town with a hotel. Entering the facility, I used my best German vocabulary to inquire about accommodations. There was no room at the inn. We begged for help and when I produced my passport, the lady behind the desk gasped in perfect English: "Why didn't you speak your native tongue?" We were housed immediately! Makarska was a refined, pleasant village, but wanderlust ruled the day, so after a couple of days, we took the train to Dubrovnik. There was a huge problem with securing accommodations! No visa! No room! Eventually we were granted overnight privilege of Tito's guest quarters in the hotel adjacent to Tito's Villa. Should he need our room, we would be out on the beach!

For five days we did not unpack but we walked into the city, surrounded by 8 foot thick walls and donkeys laden with goods led by peasants who survived by the sales of such goods. Then we learned that the Russian Ballet would perform on the hill overlooking the Adriatic at sunset, so we joined the throngs of natives for that spectacular event which made all of the inconveniences forgotten as we prepared to arrange passage on the ship departing next day.

The man with the wheelbarrow waited at the door to haul our two bags to the shore – a couple of miles from our hotel. Martha and I placed on the desk local currency equal to five dollars per day for our room. The desk clerk was astonished that we had no American dollars. In fact, he threatened to call the gendarmes to investigate where we had obtained all those dinars!! We never admitted that we had traded our dollars with the daughter of our language teacher who was attempting to buy her freedom from Yugoslavia. (Later, we wondered if we had been victimized by her). Eventually the clerk threw up his hands in despair and sent us on our way – trudging behind that wheelbarrow to the deck of our ship flying that red and white flag. Our families met the train, eager to hear about our experiences after weeks of no communication.

As soon as the final school bell rang, Melinda and I headed for London. We were met there by the McGee family who escorted us to and through the historical sights of London before heading north to the air base where Joe was assigned. Side trips included

Stratford-on-Avon where the swans swam and into the theater where Shakespeare's "As You Like It" entertained us for three hours. Other than renewing our memories and enjoying our wonderful friends, we collected antique silver from the vaults and more importantly, information was gleaned from some of Evelyn's friends who had experienced wonderful nanny care services from an organization in Holland. That address was filed away for our future needs.

By mid summer my travel plans were stored for future use. Our very good friend, Dr. Scott, had agreed to deliver our new-born come November and a contract had been made for a nanny from Amsterdam. In August my sister-in-law arrived with Melinda's cousin, Karen, who became our house guest for the year. Plans were made for a much anticipated visit to Tivoli Park in Copenhagen, Denmark. Marcia McGee flew in from England and the very next day, Marcia, Melinda, Karen, and I took a train, then a ferry to our destination in Copenhagen. We walked among the streets filled with bikes to locate the best restaurants where fish was fried instead of poached! In Tivoli, as we rested between events, there rode into view a group of bikers – including our friends the Drew family from Massachusetts! Small world! Side trips by ferry took us to Sweden where life appeared to be lived more formally than the care-free Danes. Ancient castles and museums filled the landscape. Home again, we enrolled Karen in the neighborhood German school to fulfill the plans made by her family. Miss Melinda returned to the Air Force Military School for dependents.

On the night of November 10, 1955, signals were sent that our new family member was ready to join the celebration of life. Dr. Scott met us at the hospital and began the process of delivery. After a few hours of travail, the head of the hospital on his midnight round proclaimed that the baby was "Frank Breach" and could not manage a natural process of birth so urgent measures were taken in surgery. The 22" baby boy was rescued by a team of surgeons who stitched up the mother expecting to return her to her room for a rest. Unfortunately, hemorrhage began and re-entry was made to seek the bleeder. Finally, I awakened to discover double-breasted buttons across my belly with lacing crisscrossed from button to button. Ignorance is bliss! Until the urologist from Walter Reed arrived, I and family were unaware of my plight. Further surgery revealed that during the exploration of the hemorrhage my left kidney had been severed from my

bladder which resulted in a free flow of urine into my body requiring a catheter exit my left side which allowed a “catch bag” to accept all secretion from the left kidney.

Eventually, my system recovered enough to allow further surgery which skillfully fashioned a triangular flap from my bladder, stretched and extended enough to attach to the ureter leading to the left kidney, catheter inserted from bladder through new device into my kidney, body rolled face down in convex design to allow healing for 30 days. On that day with a gallery of doctors and family standing by, I was rolled face up, catheter removed and “I Leaked!!!” Catheter replaced, body rolled face down in convex fashion for 30 days longer! Repeat procedure, “I Leaked NOT!!!” Eventually, I was allowed weekends at home to be with my family and our newborn baby boy, Hampton Flack Heard. Nanny Rie kept the family healthy and happy. Flapper, our cocker spaniel loved the baby until he was given crawl space in Flapper’s territory. Growls and threats bought Flapper a ticket to the first sergeant’s home in the country.

Spring break provided an incentive to take a holiday in ski country with the school girls. Wade loaded the car with potential athletes (neighbors and friends) and headed for Bavaria. Ann Ulricson and Cousin Karen were experienced skiers, Melinda was challenged to “keep up” and she did until the final day when a freak accident tossed her about creating a painful sprain to her left knee. She returned home with a bothersome cast and a good story to tell at school. The injury did not interfere with her role as “Queen of the May” as she rode in the convertible which carried her and her court on a celebration ride down Heinerberg Hill as her six month old brother pointed and shouted “Nina” from the fourth floor balcony of our quarters.

“Out to see the world” did not continue in our agenda as a family except for singular excursions attempted as individuals. Wade was encouraged to explore as he could on scheduled military flights to Asia and Africa. I continue to cherish the pearls which he managed to bring from Egypt. An Egyptian agent met the American flights and escorted the “wealthy Americans” to shops on “his list” for treasures. Something went wrong on Wade’s adventure! The entire crew of the aircraft was apprehended and “held” for 24 hours without explanation.

Nanny Rie was scheduled to leave us in November due to a contract with an American family in Paris, so our friends the Tiptons who had assumed command of an air

base in Bavaria, drove me down for a few days of recreation with them. The trip in the VW Bug jarred loose stitches which were not designed for rough riding, so my happy holiday in Bavaria was spent in the hospital being repaired.



Hamp's first birthday was celebrated around a beautiful cake baked by Nanny Rie and enjoyed by friends and neighbors in our building. He wore the darling blue knee-high trousers with suspenders and white shirt sent as a gift from Barbara Ann and Ralph Lee Hicks. The brown knitted monkey presented to him by Rie and the red English soldier from his god-parents remain in his possession today at age 49! A memorable moment of the event was a comment made by our neighbor Dotty Thompson, mother of five year old David who adored Baby Hampton, "Mothers of little boys have interesting experiences. Yesterday, I received a note from David's kindergarten teacher complaining that David chased the girls to get kisses. My written reply thanked her for reassuring us that David chased girls – not boys – for kisses." David grew up to be a successful veterinarian who with a wife shares his profession and runs a clinic in Ashville, NC.

As an occupying force, American wives had few opportunities to mingle with local Germans except through the avenue of trade and domestic help. The Heard's Putzfrau spoke no English, however we communicated well enough with language taught by Fraulein von Lundblatt to engage tailors who came to our quarters for measurements and construction of beautiful materials into clothing tailored to my 100 pound body – which hang in my closet today – outgrown! Following Nanny Rie's departure, Irmgard, daughter of our Putzfrau, came daily to serve as nanny to our son who understood little English but demonstrated knowledge of the German language. Irmgard dressed Hampton in his "Sunday Best" for frequent visits to her home where he played with the local youths (infants) who lived behind concrete fences laced with broken bottle pieces across the tops of all to discourage intruders who ravaged neighbors searching for food and other goods. Shops were stocked with exceptional treasures – china, silver, crystal, etc., to attract the American dollar. Eventually, on an occasional excursion into a local bar,

we sat on long benches around a table with local citizens to drink a ten-cent mug of beer warmed by dunking a heated iron into the brew. If you ordered a hot cup of coffee, the price asked was one dollar, since coffee was an imported item. Bratwurst was a national item available on every corner, since pigs were common to every farmer who held an acre or less of land. We were advised to avoid the vegetable markets since pig manure was the fertilizer of choice in all gardens. With the tender care of Irmgard, our son was out of diapers soon after he learned to sit on the “infant throne,” and the musical accolade from Irmgard was, “Hampton ist su brav!” This specific accomplishment caused his parents extreme stress on the trans-Atlantic flight return to the USA since “Su Brav Hampton” would not sit on the noisy adult throne, nor soil his pants, so he held until we landed in New Jersey! Such a feat should not surprise the family of an infant who on August 20, 1956 was christened, held in the arms of his sister, Nina (who substituted as godmother for Evelyn McGee) and was gently touched by godfather Joe McGee in the Church of St. Augustine of Canterbury Diocese of London, Wiesbaden, Germany, where Wade Heard served as Senior Warden and fired the furnace each Sunday morning – early! The beautiful water color art of the Cathedral hangs on our memory wall today.

Living in Europe concluded when Wade was assigned to the Pentagon as director of the Casualty Branch of the Air Force. As Ann, Melinda, and Hampton renewed our memberships with families in Mississippi and Louisiana, Wade returned to the Washington area to hunt quarters for us. Myrtle McNeese assisted in the search for something convenient to the Pentagon and near to her family in rural Alexandria, VA. On his return south to pick us up, Wade attached a trailer to our beautiful new four-door Mercedes Benz, bought in Wiesbaden for \$4,000, and loaded it with Dr. Franklin Coffee Heard’s walnut desk, his single inherited item from his grandfather’s estate. We drove the Natchez Trace and the Appalachian Trail until the park police turned us about for defiling the scenery with a trailer! On arrival to Wade’s choice of housing in Virginia, my anticipation turned into astonishment: A rural ranch house for a mother with a high school student and a pre-school boy and a new Mercedes Benz! No Thanks!!! The search began for civilization. Fortunately, the broker showed us a vacant rental in Falls Church, VA. In my opinion, the three bedroom, two bath, two fireplace with family room, utility and garage below, and a street full of children was perfectly suited for our

needs. School bus served our high school student who in her own way substituted school activities and the Cotillion group for horseback riding and ballet left behind in Wiesbaden. Kimberly and Stevie became Hamp's mentors instead of Rie and Irmgard. Wade bought an antique ford coupe for transportation to the Pentagon, where he served the needs of all distressed families of the Air Force and delayed his return home at night in order to avoid the crushing 5 PM traffic and to indulge in courses offered by George Washington University especially Russian language. The unwanted house in rural Virginia sold and we could have lived happily ever after in our Falls Church rental had I adjusted better to the role of being wife to the Commander of the Casualty Branch! The underlings must have thought that I filled out their report cards!

During Melinda's senior year at Falls Church High School, Muriel Pfiel, our adorable neighbor in Anchorage, Alaska, who taught our baby girl to love the arctic and who hated to see the temperature warm up to 10 ° below zero, came for a holiday away from the University of Colorado. Her enthusiasm for that college influenced Melinda's choice to attend that school. We were happy to have her on campus with such a dear friend since Wade's new assignment would take us to Hawaii. Military families know that change in location happens frequently, however, our three years in Virginia had been fulfilling. Melinda had many wonderful friends; Hamp had constant playmates; Wade ran the world's greatest "charity" – the casualty branch – and I recuperated through the guidance of Walter Reeds medical community and arranged trips to the zoo, to the Smithsonian, to Pennsylvania's Amish communities, to Niagara Falls, etc., etc., etc. As we celebrated Melinda's graduation and made plans to "ship out" to Hawaii, Wade was contacted by our good friend, Bud Sands who as a brig general was about to return to Patrick Air Force Base as commander and would Wade consider a change in orders to also return to PAFB as his Chief of Staff? YES! Goodbyes were said and promises made to stay in touch. Our good neighbors, Bob and Sarah Waylands gave a good home to Wade's Ford, and we made our way home to PAFB, stopping off in Mississippi to renew family ties.

On base, quarters were provided in new housing called Wherry which was really off base and crowded, so Wade convinced the "Housing Authority" that he needed to be on base to be more effective in his responsibility! Early on, my time was spent in

accumulating a wardrobe for Melinda's departure to U. of Colorado. Neither she nor I was convinced that we had made the correct choices, and she often wrote that "I have nothing to wear." I remained anxious about her appearance, until the year book was distributed. The announcement appeared on Page 23 – "Best dressed girl on campus – Melinda Heard!!!" When she arrived home for the Christmas holidays, the best dressed coed in cowboy hat and blue jeans asked, "How do you tolerate this heat and humidity?" My response, "as soon as you come down the ramp off the plane, we will head for the barbershop. Here you won't need hair touching your belt. Chill out Baby Girl."

Land was needed to extend housing facilities, so the engineers followed examples set by the Navy when deeper water was required for in-coming sea planes. Blow the sand out of the Banana River, which is really an artificial artery separating the Indian Lagoon from the Atlantic shore. So a sandy shore appeared allowing a row of flat-top houses to be built along the Banana River. The Heards were allowed to escape the Wherry Housing "off-base" to occupy a flat-top on the Banana River – not "senior officers' housing – and at your own expense!" Halleluiah! Five year old Ronnie was our next door neighbor who became Hamp's inseparable pal except for school hours. Four year old Hamp attended Royalton Kindergarten, Cocoa Beach, since his birthday fell on 11 November leaving him ineligible for public kindergarten. In September of his 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was carried in staff-car across the two rivers to St. Mark's Episcopal Day School where Jean Dewey was his first grade teacher. When seeking enrollment there, I



volunteered to be called if needed since I held a Florida teaching certificate. Well, I was called – not by the Headmaster who was "let go" – but by the Rector of the parish! I taught the sixth grade for the remainder of the year – allowing the student "next one in line" to spend recess time walking Abigail in the Cocoa City Park next door to the school. Abigail was required to go to school with me, since she needed observation during pregnancy. School assignments for students improved impressively, since everyone wanted to be "next in line" for Abigail care. My temporary status changed to permanent faculty the following year and continued until my retirement as Headmistress eighteen years later.

## ***Two Drifters Settle Down***

**W**ith a gift of Indian Head stock from my brother Jim, our investment ego expanded and led us to purchase 300 feet of Banana River frontage pumped in by Gus Edwards, a local developer. We designed a house which placed our college student on the northern end of the house, parents and boy child on the opposite direction – using one half of the site for home and the remainder for landscaping a Japanese garden, building a dock and providing a playground for Hampton, Nelson, Skipper, Mike, and others. Don Ezelle, a decorator from Melbourne, furnished our home placing a beautiful fountain in the lanai separating two huge tropical bamboo chairs which he drove to Miami to fetch. Three beautiful ceramic lanterns designed and fashioned at the Merritt Island Pottery Place were hung from the elevated ceiling of the living room. Other unique features were sunken tile tubs inside sliding glass doors and opposite wall-hung toilets – the first installed in the county! As I write, a local developer has successfully gained license to build a mansion on the lower, narrow footage – eliminating Japanese Garden and playground – and connecting to “our house!”

So why did we rid ourselves of that wonderful place? After a 22 year career in the Air Force, Wade was assigned to the Air Force Inspector General’s Staff which required us to live on base at Andrews AFB, Virginia. His responsibility would carry him to every Air Force Base on the planet – big promotion – seldom at home with family. Our girl child had tired of Colorado, wanted to continue as secretary (summer job) with Boeing at Cape Canaveral. Honoring this expressed wish, Wade contacted “someone” who could gain admission for Melinda to Kathryn Gibbs Executive Secretarial School in Boston. “If you want to be a secretary, you will be well qualified,” he said. The year spent in Boston was the era of “the Boston Strangler!” Finally, certificate in hand, she graduated, then announced that she no longer wished to be a secretary! So, the wheels were greased to enroll her as a junior in Florida State University where her wonderful friend, Judy Knauf, was a student. Gaining a BA degree there, with teaching certificate in hand, she announced that she preferred to become a secretary with Boeing in Seattle,

where Dr. Knauf, former medical doctor to the Astronaut Corp, resided with Judy and family. As she prepared to move to Seattle, she climbed to the distinguished position of “first female in Boeing’s history to be transferred by the Company, all expenses paid.” She became the administrative assistant to the Director of Flight Test and the Boeing test pilots and her responsibilities included everything from scheduling flight crews, writing press releases, traveling to foreign embassies located in the United States, arranging for crew visas, to managing a crew that provided administrative services to the entire Flight Test community.

Now with Melinda in a successful career, Hampton attending St. Mark’s Day School and Dixie Camp for Boys in the Georgia mountains in summers and with a beloved horse stabled on Pluckybaum Road, West Cocoa, where he rode and cared for



Peanuts after school hours until dark – every school day – and for special events on the weekend, Wade is in a dither regarding new assignment and promotion in the Air Force. Decisions, decisions! In August of 1964, Wade retired, crewed with our neighbor, Luc Martin, on a sail marathon from Jacksonville to the Keys for a week, and then began a career with RCA in the same building where he retired two

weeks earlier. Since we had eliminated the three year change of address or continent habit, the desire to become farmers overwhelmed our common sense, so we sold our 21 West Point Drive home, as Hampton and I took off for the World’s Fair in Montreal, Canada.

On arrival, we rode the underground train to a suburb where Jenny’s tour person had arranged rooms. After five minutes of inspection, I determined that we would not unpack in such a remote place, announced our decision to the desk person, returned to the center of the city, entered the best hotel in town and had a chat with the desk person who advised us to leave our bags with him, follow his directions to the fair grounds, and with

any luck at all, when we returned he expected that we would be accommodated – and we were – for a wonderful week of luxury, good food, and exceptional hospitality. Another week was spent with my beloved brother, Jim, in New York City. Having become proficient in underground tunneling, we made our way from the airport to Central Park and to 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue where Jim greeted us. The weekend saw Hamp and his uncle playing Frisbee in Central Park, exploring the shops around the corner, and declaring the streets safe for shopping or jogging as he did each weekday to his office downtown. Our visit concluded with an urgent call from Father Williams of St. Mark’s Church advising me that the School’s Headmaster was transferred and the Church Vestry hoped that I would replace him as Headmistress. I was delighted to accept the honor.

While we were on our holiday, Wade had moved his family into an apartment in Twin Towers, Cocoa Beach, and our great neighbors, the Tabelings, had relocated also. Weekends were divided between mastering that huge surfboard in the Atlantic and trimming trees, weeding, or picking avocados on our recently purchased 18 acres of grove on South Merritt Island – our future home site. The process of working with realtors to buy “The Farm” fascinated Wade, so the decision was made that he would switch from management to salesman should we ever decide to sell some of the 1600± feet of waterfront on the two rivers. The final footage to sell was our wildlife refuge “Walden Pond,” 6-½ acres on the Banana River which served as nesting for Ospreys and other tropical fowl, black panthers, and raccoons. Each year Form Seven Students from St. Mark’s Day School with teachers used “Walden Pond” as a survival area overnight.

During the two years required to design and build our New Orleans-style house on the Indian River, the Tabeling sisters who kept horses at Winnie Brown’s Stable on North Merritt Island chaperoned and chauffeured Hampton to and from his Peanuts at the same stable after school hours at Roosevelt Jr. High School. Out of school summer days found Hamp and his good buddy, Skipper Baker, in Melinda’s care in Seattle, where great friendships were formed with her young neighbors. After her marriage to a young Boeing engineer, Jerry, Hamp and Skipper became regular members of their summer household, and enjoyed many flights in Jerry’s airplane to interesting holiday places in the state of Washington. On one occasion, the two young adventurers were allowed a trip

south into Mexico in Melinda's VW Bug – unchaperoned! Today, such an excursion would be ill advised.

On our 30<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary, Wade and I moved into our dream home at “The Farm.” Evelyn McGee had made a special dinner for us, so we celebrated in a big



way; however, the late evening was spent attempting to reach my parents who had sought refuge in their church from one of our worst hurricanes to ever hit the Gulf Coast. My brother, Jim, chartered a plane out of New York the following day to search and rescue our

parents who had safely returned home before his arrival.

As we unpacked our household belongings which had been held in storage for two years, I realized that a few items were missing: two very handsome peacock chairs; one fountain with lass pouring water from a Grecian urn; Grandfather's beaded walnut frame and beveled mirror; three hand-made lanterns with chairs from the Merritt Island Pottery, and etc., etc. Checking against the list of inventoried items, which I had never checked before, I found them unlisted! All remained at 21 West Point Drive, and the new owner turned a deaf ear to my pleading. So, my friend, Don Ezelle placed all of the old furniture now covered in leather downstairs in the children's quarters and installed new items upstairs for grownups.

Transferring from Cocoa Beach Jr. High to De Laura Jr. High in Satellite Beach, Hampton collected new friends. The Houha girls who lived north of us gave him a lift if he missed the bus; the Satcher boys rode the bus; John Paul Wallace played his guitar with Hamp at grove-burn parties; and Rob Bashore was the other gladiator on Gravely Tractor who smashed citrus fruit all over my eastern verandah as he missed aim at his adversary, Hampton. Skipper spent most weekends “downstairs” unless the Georges were over for sailing. Country life offered a wonderful quality of life, except for Tippy, who lost his eyesight and was lonely, since everyone left “The Farm” early each school day and returned home quite late, usually. Hamp was a champion cross country runner,

and a member of the band playing the Oboe (after school activities). Now that Peanuts had become a member of the household of his 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, Hamp returned home late and hungry. His ride dropped him off roadside, and as he trudged through the grove, he often climbed a citrus tree and “scarfed down” a few fruits.

With senior year of high school approaching, our family decided on a rendezvous with Miss Melinda in the Teton National Park. Our plans included maps of all states with campsites identified and marked. Sleeping bags, cooking gear, and groceries were packed in the Chevy Station Wagon. Tippy boarded out. Hamp and Skipper in the back seat, Dad, maps, and I spread across front seat. First night spent with family in Mississippi. On the road again to Monroe, LA. Second night spent with Wade’s oldest brother. Third night in Texas – temperature in high 90’s, hotel cool and comfortable. Oklahoma too hot – nice hotel. Rushing toward our rendezvous with Melinda, on a long deserted desert highway, we were halted by a patrolman who greeted us with, “Howdy, nice to see you. Where are you going in such a hurry?” Not waiting for a response, he slapped a traffic ticket through the window, waved to the boys, departed to chase yet another tourist. Eventually, we were in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and with determination found the campsite located on Snake River. After depositing a \$5 bill in the welcome box, we chose a fire-place on the edge of the river, opposite a bluff, located across the rapids, where mountain goats were gathering, obviously, to observe us! No other humans were in sight. As Wade and I unpacked the gear, Hamp and Skipper explored. Suddenly, the air was filled with laughter and cheers as two objects were sighted bouncing over and through the rapids of Snake River – our boys! Anxiety overwhelmed us, until we watched them catch a huge rock and move onto the bank in the curve of the river!

Everyone enjoyed canned stew for dinner after which we explored the area to locate the beasts of the forest – elk were timid and beautiful, mountain goats were not. Returning to our campsite, we discovered that the adorable beavers had left their holes and raided our boxes of food. Summer nights are brief in the northern states, so breakfast came early, and a trip to town was needed to replenish our food supply. Enroute, we noted a mailbox labeled Taylor, so we stopped by and discovered that our roots were similar and hospitality included an invitation to leave the boys for horseback riding as we proceeded on our shopping tour to town. My concern about their lack of familiarity with

the mountain country was countered, “the horses know their way home.” On the upper shelf of Hamp’s closet, deer antlers rest – collected on the Taylor Ranch in Wyoming.

At the scheduled time, we drove to the Jackson Hole airport to collect Jerry, Helen, his mother, and Melinda. After securing Jerry’s airplane, we drove to the Teton Mountain Resort Hotel, enjoying the incredible views of the mountains along the way and comparing the range with Yellowstone National Park, which we had visited a few days earlier. The reunion allowed us to know and love Helen, and to put a final blessing on the reunion of Melinda and the boys – who as high school seniors now had to “grow up!”

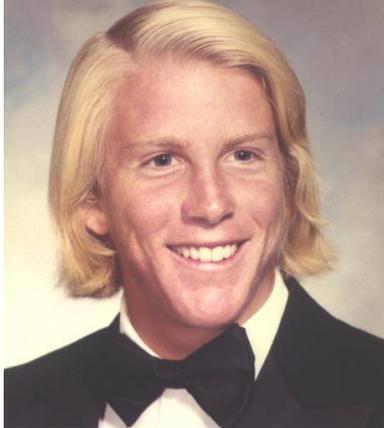
Our return to Florida was interrupted by a stop over at the Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, Colorado, where we met and observed the cadet who trained the eagle mascot. The industry of the campus was noticeable; however, neither of our “seniors” expressed a desire to become a member of that society – they were eager to return to their jobs as life guards on the beach. And we did, after a brief stopover in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, with our good friends the George McNeeses. Skipper secured an “A” grade on his bottles of soil collected from each state visited, and Hamp earnestly pursued his application to attend the U.S. Air Force Academy – Wade’s idea, not Hamp’s.

At St. Mark’s Episcopal Day School, my French teacher arranged exchange student plans with friends and families in her hometown of Toulouse. Travel arrangements were made for a dozen of her students, ages five through 12, placed in my care for 30 days. One day following Hamp’s graduation ceremony from Satellite High School, I with my French teacher and a dozen students departed Orlando Airport for Toulouse, France, via New York and Paris. The bright red jackets worn over white shirts and blue shorts and the perky red bowties worn by the well mannered students gained for us soft-glove treatment in every situation. Michelle Roberts with the two youngest students were housed with Michelle’s mother who lived in Toulouse; the remaining were housed in families with students of same ages and grades. School continues year round in France, so the Americans attended school for 15 days in Toulouse. Daily, I visited in the classrooms assessing procedures that might be used in St. Mark’s School. Excursions were planned by host parents for weekends. Motoring on a party boat through the

country on a narrow canal was a huge treat for one trip. Driving south through Lourdes then on to Spain for shopping was very popular. Farewells were made as we departed by train for a final week in Paris. Museums and cathedrals were explored; McDonald's was located, and throughout the week, only one 12 year old girl became separated and lost in the streets of Paris. Fortunately, Helen spoke the language and entered a café where the hostess called our hotel as we counted heads and panicked when we came up short one child! The reunion was beautiful.

Returning home, we were met by jubilant parents when each was rewarded with hugs and loaves of real French bread. No bad news was reported, since each student received A+ on his conduct and gleefully reported that exchange students would be coming our way. Evelyn came to the Heards for a year of school in America, and returned to us on her honeymoon, and again on her 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We continue to correspond, and Wade and I had a wonderful ski holiday in the Alps with Evelyn and Robert and family a few years ago.

Something was missing from our home when I returned from France. “The



downstairs” was deathly quiet. Hampton had shipped out for the Air Force Academy. Following a very successful graduation party on the pier, chaperoned by Wade and Roy Tabeling, Hamp packed his bag and flew the coop – a confirmed cadet in the Air Force – the youngest cadet ever to enter those rigid halls. His long blond hair had been shorn, and survival programs had been successfully achieved. Thoughtfully, Wade had

arranged for us to have a holiday with the Koethes in Seattle before I had time to grieve over an empty nest! We arrived in Seattle in time for the 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic around the pool with their friends. Each weekend found us at P.J.’s place for a barbeque and boating, and an earnest search began for acreage to accommodate retirement years for the Koethes and the Heards. Eventually, a contract was drawn for the purchase of a 42 acre property located east of Seattle near an un-incorporated village called Fall City. Located on the Snoqualmie River, west of the Cascade Mountain range, the farmhouse restoration began instantly, since the Koethes expected to relocate there as soon as their home

located on Lake Washington was sold. Everyone pulled on the gloves and did what needed to be done on the almost century-old abode with original oak and heart of pine



flooring; hand-blown window glass; nesting birds in the chandelier; mice in the cellar; owls in the silo; etc. The milk barn was preserved, however, but the old barn which had served as

an artists' attraction had to be eliminated before it victimized a curiosity seeker. Ponds were dug near the forest area and the running stream and when the Koethes knew exactly where they would construct their future home, the property was divided 50/50; making neighbors of the two families. Eventually, on the advice of our tax lawyer, a quit-claim was made to identify the property in my name, and place our Florida property in Wade's name – later to be parceled out to each child to avoid oppressive estate taxes – a procedure to be advised to all asset owners.

During Hamp's eventful years at the Academy, we visited on Parent's Weekends and entertained Hamp and his roommates as they came home for leave. A favorite quotation heard around our house was "Matt and me" – a reference to his roomie. On Christmas holidays, the Koethes flew into Colorado Springs to collect their brother and fly him home for a holiday and reunion with old friends. Recently, in 2003, I read again the letters saved from their first years away from home – starting with Camp Dixie, followed by communication from college. In the bedside table drawers on the left are Nina's letters; the bedside table on the right holds letters from Hamp. In spite of the three year change of address or continent for us as a military family, which forces change of friends, life styles, climates, activities, etc., adjusting to life away from family was not easy for us!

Fortunately, I was challenged by my responsibilities at St. Mark's Day School, and Wade was on call 24/7 in real estate, however, our beloved off-spring each coped with new and strangely different situations as freshmen in colleges where EVERYTHING was different. Nina interrupted her tenure at U. of Colorado after two

years, took one year at Katherine Gibbs School, Boston, Massachusetts, then two years at Florida State University, where she graduated in 1965. Hamp thought a lot about fleeing to Canada as life at the Air Force Academy became inhumane – especially in the “Survival Experiences” conducted by former POW’s from the Vietnam War days. To his credit, he survived the mistreatment (which is no longer imposed on first year cadets, since girls are now enrolled in the Academy) and graduated into flight training to become a fighter pilot in the USAF.

Christmas holidays were celebrated at home on Merritt Island. The Koethes planned their trip to fit the Academy schedule which allowed them to fly their small plane into Colorado Springs to pick up Hamp for a ride home. On one occasion, they flew low down the Indian River and into PAFB restricted airspace to announce to Wade that they had arrived. Unfortunately, the Air Force also received the notice and proceeded to escort our children to a landing on Merritt Island. Wade quickly contacted the base commander with proper credentials for everyone!

What is a more fulfilling experience than graduation? Melinda’s graduation from FSU was celebrated by a trip including friend Judy and guitars to Moody Hollow for a weekend with our good friends Bubba and Jane Hill and family. Academy graduation with its usual “pomp and ceremony” was concluded as Hamp packed his beloved 260Z, aka “the green machine,” a graduation present allowed on campus at the successful conclusion of first semester senior year, and departed for flight training at Vance AFB in Oklahoma. We joined the Koethes in their flying machine to Seattle where we unwound from the excitement of watching Wade pin gold bars on Hamp’s shoulders.

Achievement attended our lives regularly as Melinda climbed the corporate ladder with Boeing and as Hamp graduated from flight school. Not only did Wade have the thrill of pinning on Hamp’s bars, but also, he was honored to pin the wings on the chest of his fighter pilot. However, greater than the bars, wings, etc., were the friends picked up along the way. As Hamp trained and finally took that first solo flight, his friend J.P. Wallace, neighbor on Merritt Island, was there to witness his success. On Hamp’s wedding day, J.P. was witness to that success as Hamp and Virginia Young walked down the aisle in Alexandria, Louisiana. The wedding entourage included Carolyn Aderhold,

five year old daughter of Virginia, and other members of the Young family. In attendance were two of Hamp's uncles with wives and former classmates from the Academy. The bride and groom sailed on a cruise in the Bahamas on a vessel where Skip Baker and his future wife were entertainers.



Air Force transfers kept Hamp on the move from one continent to the other for twenty years. When he experienced a stressed spinal correction, Wade and I flew to Spain to house-sit Carolyn and the puppy while Virginia held Hamp's hand in a hospital in Germany and got to know Peggy Tabeling who was a staff person at Ramstein Air Force Base. In the early summer of 1990, Hamp and his flight squadron accepted the invitation of King Hussein of Jordan to participate in war games with the Jordanian

Air Force. The flight departed South Carolina and landed at Torrejón Air Force Base in Spain to overnight for fun and food at favorite places before touching down in Jordan. A few months later, the Heard family reunion in Fall City, Washington, was interrupted as Hamp was ordered back to his base in South Carolina. Shortly thereafter he took his squadron on a record breaking mission to the Middle East - destination not revealed to family. The F-16 fighter pilots flew for 18 hours, nonstop. Refueled midair six times. Had one plane turn back to Greenland due to loss of pressure and another went "pago" most of the way, but survived the flight. The group landed in the desert, exhausted, bleeding, but happy to be alive! "Desert Shield" described their mission as tents were raised and many others joined in the attack on Iraq. Would this engagement cancel Hamp's scheduled "remote for one year assignment" to South Korea? NO! Following a brief return to family, Hamp left the states for his mission to secure South Korea. Eventually, Virginia was allowed a 30-day visit to that area.

At the conclusion of 20 years of life as a fighter pilot, Hamp retired to become a pilot with Delta Airlines. He requested and received assignment to Orlando as his "hub." He and Virginia are busily remodeling a house on the Banana River, Thousand Islands community on Sloop Drive in Cocoa Beach. Carolyn and Stephen Szabo have graduated

from Auburn University and are employed as civil engineer and school teacher in Brevard County and live nearby.

Wade and I had dreamed of spending summer days in our farm house in Fall City, Washington, when he retired. I retired from the Headmistress chair at St. Marks Episcopal Day School in the summer of 1979. Wade remained active at Trafford Realty Company until he was in his mid seventies! We celebrated our 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary in Fall City with family and friends – dining at Snoqualmie Lodge in a private dining room overlooking Snoqualmie Falls. The occasion was a celebration of life and a realization of dark days ahead, because our beloved Wade had been diagnosed as suffering from early signs of Alzheimer’s disease, and we accepted this information with determination to cope with lifestyle changes. Support from our children, friends and neighbors made it possible to keep Wade at home. Eventually however, my physical condition made it necessary to transfer him to assisted living facilities at Autumn House located across the river. His favorite caregiver was Aldie, a tall, lovable, strong lady from Jamaica who in Wade’s mind was “Mary Julia” or “Aunt Ida,” two women who served as nannies to the Heard’s five children as they grew up in Itta Bena, Mississippi. Eventually, following a survival episode in Holmes Regional Hospital, Wade was transferred to Indian River Center, a nursing home where he was visited daily by his loving family until he went to heaven on January 30, 2000, following his 84<sup>th</sup> birthday on January 4. His ashes were deposited in the Garth at St. David’s Episcopal Church. To offer final farewell to Wade were these old friends: Nita and Walter George, Joe Jr. and Judy McGee, (Joe Sr. and Evelyn had gone to heaven), Jane and Ben Hill, the Warners, Dot Mathews, Skip Baker and family, Annette and Othelia Bailey, Al Trafford, Don and Lauret Bryan, Ken and Kitty Wallace, Beryl Bashore, Joann and Frank Godwin, Bob and Joann Houha, Bob and Joan Wallace, Bob and Sarah Wayland, - all friends from the 1940’s and through the year 2000! Hampton read this resume of “Y.A.M.:

### **Y.A.M.**

On January 1916, Y.A.M. came to earth in Itta Bena, Mississippi, as Wade Hampton Coleman Heard, the fourth son of Edward Taylor and Sarah Belle Heard.



As a toddler, he was called: “Happy Hampy” by his mother, “Gutzon Borglum” by his father, and “You Ain’t Much” or Y.A.M. by his three older brothers. The younger sister never called him, nor them, anything. She was the “Queen of the Litter.”

Growing up he gratefully accepted “hand me downs” until finally came a great surprise – to be fitted in his first own suit at high school graduation. Along with that came appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy, which he turned down to be with his favorite brother, Joe, at Sunflower Jr.

College in the Mississippi Delta. While there, he was voted “Mr. Sunflower Jr. College” by his peers and played tennis with a girl named Ann Flack.

Upon graduation from Peabody College at Vanderbilt, he was awarded the Sullivan’s Award for outstanding graduate and took Ann for his wife.

His tenure as professor at University of Georgia Jr. College in Americus was concluded when he joined the Army Air Corps. He was honored as “Outstanding Graduate” at Officers’ Candidate School and became the proud father of Mary Melinda Taylor Heard.

Early military tours included Elmendorf Field, Alaska, and Eniwetok Atoll in the Pacific where his finger pulled the switch to test the first atomic bomb tested there. He was also assigned to Eglin Air Force Base, Avon Park Air Force Station, Patrick Air Force Base, and Wiesbaden Air Base, Germany, where his son, Hampton Flack Heard was born.

After that he went to the Pentagon as Chief of Air Force Casualty Branch and then he returned to Patrick Air Force Base and retired as Chief of Staff to General Harry J. Sands.

Along the way “You Ain’t Much” nurtured his offspring, collected master’s degrees in mathematics and the Russian language; pioneered the Air Force assuming Patrick Air Force Base from the Navy; worked with RCA; pioneered the maturation of St. David’s from its earliest days at Ramon’s Restaurant; and enjoyed 20 plus years with Al Trafford Real Estate firm.

He was a devoted husband for 62 ½ years.

So, God, please try to find a chore in heaven for this humble angel, “You Ain’t Much.” AMEN.

P.S., And, God, he loved all of your creations and he forgives you for placing those “D... B...s” (peacocks) on our farm. Amen, Amen, Amen.

Wade’s legacy is that of a caring human being. His friends were legion; his enemies were few to none! He camouflaged his disappointments or frustration with cheerfulness, and he remained totally unaware of his genius, always humble and undemanding. Many honors attended him – at which he marveled: “I don’t deserve this!” His devotion to his family was genuine and magnanimous – we cherish his memory as we “carry on.”



## ***Growing Up Memories***

**O**ne thing is absolute! Sarah Bernhardt did not experience the same attitude indoctrination as I! When the family dog knocked me down the stairs, I was consoled with my very own can of tomato soup – “Not to worry! You are okay.” My very first stage debut was cancelled by red spots all over my body at age six. “Not to worry! You are okay.” Singing in the college Girls’ Quartet, I was advised to “mouth the words” in the event of memory loss. “Not to worry! You look great! If your clarinet ‘squeals,’ no one will know it is you – unless you look distressed – we need you! Carry on!” Entertainment was needed for the farewell luncheon honoring Miss Georgia, the General’s wife. Four of us volunteered to sing an improvisation of “The Tennessee Waltz.” Pre-luncheon rehearsal and a cup of punch to relax the quartet were enjoyed as each “angel” was decked out with angel wings and a halo. At recital time on stage, Elayne proceeded to adjust Ann’s halo; Ann responded by adjusting Elayne’s wings; Kaye confronted both angels with a big push; Kathleen burst into gales of laughter – as did Mrs. Richardson and the entire audience. “Not to worry! You were wonderful! Comedy is better than music!”

Reassurance begets confidence – or disguises catastrophe! Do we really learn from our mistakes? Consider this event: In graduate school, credits were available in a course labeled “Recreation.” In our final summer quarter, Wade and I signed up for this credit. Activity planned was “frogging.” Students rode the bus to a weekend resort where at first dark we distributed bodies 3 each into flat boats on a pond. We were instructed to quietly sneak up on the croaking sound, blind the bull frog by holding the flashlight near his eyes, reach behind his ears for the snatch, then deposit the



critter into the “croacker-sack.” Proceed to fill the sack. Six boats with 18 snatchers collected six dozen bull frogs – toted the produce to the kitchen where each sack was hoisted onto butcher block tables for further procedure. As “butchers” searched for tools used in amputation, the victims escaped the bags, scattered all about the floor creating hysteria among “snatchers” convulsed with laughter as they flung themselves over the escaping frogs.



Once out of the nest, I returned home for Christmas holidays only. Assistant Professor became my title following my freshman year, so I assisted a lot thereafter. Other titles included “Miss S.J.C.,” President of YWCA, Secretary of “The Lee Society,” and “Queen of the May.” Debating, basketball, track, and tennis kept me on the run during two years at Sunflower Jr. College. Six weeks of YW/YMCA summer camp in Asheville, NC, was a learning experience in getting to know students and professors from universities throughout the continent – and an experience in bed-making, serving cafeteria style and dish-washing! Then there was the weekend trek to the top of Mt. Mitchell where sleet and snow welcomed us, but did not deter us from enjoying the view, a steak dinner around the camp fire, and a night’s rest in our sleeping bags.

Dr. Weatherford arranged to educate us in society’s needs through lectures given by some of our country’s best minds. Entering teacher’s college at Peabody/Vanderbilt proved to be less traumatic following the broadening experiences at Ashville – and following in the footsteps of my siblings who were students at L.S.U., Yale, or Harvard.

Enrollment at Peabody/Vanderbilt challenged me greatly. Tuition was granted. I worked in the library as an assistant; meals were exchanged if I served in the cafeteria line; money from home was banked, and when Wade enrolled for the summer quarter and subsequent year, he was earning extra dollars by singing for official occasions – thus our assets grew for future plans. As assistant house mother in my dormitory, in addition to “sneaking in after hours” reports, I counted the laundry and issued it as it returned. My roomie, Eleanor Cowart and I were serenaded every night, as Wade vocalized in the rose

garden three stories below our window. Even now in our late 80's Eleanor and I correspond.

Nashville, Tennessee, in winter months “froze over” enough to allow us to try our new found skills of ice skating on Lake Centennial. We were limited in maneuvers, but we were better ice skaters than rabbit hunters with bow and arrow! However, there was carry-over value from the bow and arrow efforts, since as counselors in summer jobs at Camp Dixie, Georgia, we learned to select the wood and carve the bow, string it and shoot the arrow into the target – sometimes hitting the bull’s eye! One of those hand-carved bows hangs in my garage today. Incidentally, it was with bow and arrow that we snagged salmon in Alaska.

## Chapter 6

**August 20, 1938**

**T**he dormitory is quietly sleeping as I fold my possessions and place them into the single piece of luggage which will move me to my new life as bride of Wade C. Heard. Dr. and Mrs. Metcalf had invited a few friends to our “Garden Wedding” in their back yard. Would there be enough room to stuff my wedding suit into that bag; was the question. Not a problem, just go for breakfast and meet your ride at 9 o’clock for a farewell ride from the summer quarter of graduate school at Peabody/Vanderbilt.

The morning was bright and warm; the ceremony was brief and the reception was lovely. As I changed from wedding suit (dress with cape) to traveling attire, Wade



assisted in the clean-up of the garden. Within the hour we were hauled to the railroad station, loaded onto the train which would carry us to Atlanta for the night – our dinner was served on “Miss Pitty-Pat’s Porch” where we rocked and talked until dark when we strolled to our hotel and slept on the floor of the balcony where a breeze stirred. Next morning we walked to the bus station and caught a ride to Daytona Beach where my college roommate and her groom met us for a week of frolic on that beautiful beach before we caught a bus to Americus, Georgia, where Wade had a teaching contract in the Science Department and his cousin Irene Battle Forte had arranged for us an apartment with the Widow Washburn. In the week before school started, we were wined and dined with the friends of the Fortes of the Forte Law Firm.

Out of Wade’s meager salary, we managed to save enough cash to purchase a used Ford coupe which carried us along the Atlantic sea coast to Nova Scotia and back to our summer jobs in Georgia.

## **Critters**

**S**he was in a big hurry – up the “root tree” she climbed never glancing about, as the wind whipped the fronds all about her body. Since there was daylight galore, I immediately planned to call the Animal Rescue Department to report a rabid raccoon in my yard. Before I could research the telephone number, I observed the creature descending the tree, head first, carrying in her jaws a squirming body about the size of a mouse. Carefully she made her journey of about 15 feet to another tree carrying her baby up that towering trunk to safe haven away from the blowing wind. As I stared and waited, she descended the safe-haven palm tree, ascended the “root-tree” a second time, shortly descending with the second bundle of joy! The event repeated until five bodies had been transferred from original nest to safe-haven. No rabid raccoon could achieve such maneuvers so efficiently. Terry, my neighbor, set the trap. When she emerges for nourishment in the trap, her family will be carried across the Indian River to join the colony of previously trapped relatives who play in the public park! Thereby the avocado crop will be saved until the next family emerges. Lucky us, that mother continues her daytime sleep in the “root tree.”

I was aroused sometime after midnight by conversation coming from T.V., I thought. “Wade, Wade, wake up – we left the T.V. on.” He headed down the stairs then announced that T.V. is silent; however, “I believe we are being serenaded by a crowd in the pool.” Outside lights snapped on revealed on the south deck of the pool, a gathering of beasts that yelled and screamed at something trapped underneath the pool blanket. Once the underwater pool light was turned on, we saw another beast trapped under the blanket and struggling to reach shore. As we watched in amazement, trapped critter gained a foothold on the steps and crawled free; the leader of the clan threw a claw against the victim which sent it flying into the jungle where the rabbit warren was maintained. Until this day, we are debating whether the slap was an act of compassion for the water-logged beast or punishment?!? The incident has not been repeated; however, these raccoons and their descendents continue to fertilize the southwest corner of that pool, which we refer to as “Animals’ Town Hall.” Since that corner of the deck

appears to be safe harbor for frequent conversations between rabbits and ground thrushes, and a dead branch overhang from a huge sea grape tree offers safe haven for osprey who fish from then dine on the catch on that limb hovering above the same corner. Friendly king snakes clean up the debris in that jungle atmosphere.

### **Abigail**

On-base living with three small, sociable children and one pregnant Bassett Hound became a tremendous frustration for Col. and Mrs. Maloney who desired to follow the rules of containment in a structured military community, but, in time, lost control of the situation, and sought the help of a friend – Wade C. Heard, who with his family lived “off base” in a Banana River-front home on West Point Drive – across the canal from Dick and Dotty Mitchell. “Abie” was adopted by the Heard’s and, eventually, delivered seven adorable floppy eared beauties – all of whom were eagerly adopted by friends, except for the runt of the litter who appeared last and least with a white tip on his tail. He became known as “Tippy” or Richard P. Tipton to honor our good friend Col. Richard P. Tipton. Eventually, Abigail decided that our friends across the canal had better snacks than the Heard’s offered, so she abandoned us! Tippy remained our true and loyal body guard until that day when he was needed in dog heaven

### **Queenie**

Was a huge Shepard dog of unknown lineage who could not tolerate the weather offered by Col. Walter George’s assignment in Maine, so she became our house guest until her family came south. Wherry housing was being developed in “sand-spur land.” Daily, Queenie trekked off into sand-spur beds to take care of nature. Daily Ann Heard rescued Queenie by hauling her across the desert to safe haven. Shortly, we managed a move to the flat-top housing (not for senior officers!) on base where Queenie wallowed in fresh sand blown in from the river. One warm summer day, Queenie hallowed out a burrow against the house beneath the kitchen window for a summer nap. Twelve hours later we found her in the same location – sleeping? Everyone in the neighborhood came to witness, touch, and agree that she had departed this world. The rescue team was summoned with stretcher in tow to remove the body. As “the body” was gently lifted,

Queenie bounced to earth – yawning – then trotted off to lap water from her bowl!  
Eventually, the George family returned to Florida and claimed Queenie.

## **Ospreys**

In the heat of the summer, it was our habit to swim at sunset a couple of hours after dinner. Raucous noises drifted over our heads and claimed our attention. A formation of Roseate Spoonbills flying south across our grove was being challenged by a trio of Osprey who claimed our sky as their territory since generation after generation of offspring had been hatched in Dr. Bashore's attic next door. The leader of the spoonbills kept circling the triangle shaped cadre until all had successfully reached the emptiness of space south of our sky. With the development of cruise ship harbors at Cape Canaveral, spoonbills are seldom seen in our skies. With the savage freeze of 1989, in addition to losing the Australian Pines which held the blown-in sand around "Walden Pond" on the Banana River, we also lost fifty or so nests housing a variety of tropical birds. Most ospreys relocated in tall Norfolk Pines, which had been planted on the Indian River, and in the Bashore attic. They recognize and tolerate two-legged animals known as the Heards and the Bashores and if necessary will sit in the oak tree with peacocks while eating the fish trapped in their claws. Nor are they too bashful to steal a catch from the claws of a heron or a seagull.

## **Peacocks**

We watched this gorgeous peacock in full feather hobble down the trail toward our home. He appeared to have one handicapped leg – he limped. As if he had found a safe haven, he snoozed on the lowest branch of the huge oak tree just off the patio – his tail touched the ground in the rabbit warren. He was there overnight and by daybreak, we declared him a member of our family and named him Henry to honor the memory of B'dear's fish who when called, jumped above the water level in the lake located outside Gainesville. After a day enjoying our hospitality and dog food, Henry called up in his raucous manner a pair of young friends, an albino female and a young male peacock who were designated as Lady Diana and Andrew. Lady Di became anti-social as other green neck females came on the domestic scene; she migrated to the southern end of Merritt

Island as dozens of her species took up residence on our farm. As I write, Andrew senior is relegated to the grove, disallowed access to the vicinity of our house by his sons,



grandsons, and great, great grandsons. When I am out and about, I carry a bag of cat food in my pocket just in case I run into Andrew, who occasionally at sun-up will sneak up the front steps for a greeting and a handout. It is doubtful that he can display his voluminous tail for the ladies this nesting season. Eventually, as Henry did, he will “just walk away” into the darkness to a peacock throne.

Recently, a distraught neighbor called the animal control department to request a “hunter” to rid her small yard of several “peacock poopers.” I reminded her that she was voting for insects in her garden over beautiful birds that ate the pests. She called off the hunter to my applause.

When there are many eggs in one nest, mother peafowl is challenged to endure the 28 days required to hatch chicks. The nest of ten eggs was faithfully covered until eight chicks were peeping and crawling about. Finally mother abandoned two eggs in order to scratch about for insects to teach and feed the chirping infants. As Wade lifted the two remaining eggs, one egg chirped demanding an exit. With ice pick carefully applied, a soft ball of feathers emerged into his hands. A basket was cushioned, bird seed offered, water made available to make the orphan comfortable. Next morning, the decision was made to locate “mother” and reunite the family. “Babe” was placed under mother’s nose, mother whacked “Babe” across the back of its head, at which time the infant yelped and reached for an insect. The observing humans realized that the slap was necessary to break the membrane across the baby’s snout and helped us to understand why that bird had not eaten the bird seed provided by us – the foster parents. As we departed the scene, we discovered the abandoned one following directly behind Wade’s sneakers. This conduct was countered by replacing the infant at its mother’s feet which produced a dramatic scene, as Babe rolled over on its back, feet extended upwards playing dead! Once Wade’s sneakers came alongside the “body,” Babe snapped to and

happily crawled over Wade's feet. If he brushed the pool, Babe assisted; as he walked 500' to the mailbox roadside, she trotted along beside the sneakers. Eventually, Wade made a baby pen to contain the infant who had imprinted with his shoes. Eventually, Babe became an independent pea hen, much to Wade's liking.

In spite of the wishing and urging of the viewers, Orlando Magic team was tossing their 3 to 1 lead out the window. Andrew and three hens with noses pressed against the glass doors watched the debacle with me, unaware that darkness had happened as we sat glued on the game. Panic set in as the peacocks realized that they could not see the oak tree which gave them safe harbor at the end of the day. I pondered the situation, deciding not to repeat the error of letting them overnight in the garage. After consideration, I decided to turn off T.V. and put the house in total darkness. From the upstairs glass doors, I leaned out with Wade's big "weapon" flashlight and flashed the light on the oak tree. Immediately, the four peacocks flew into its branches, one by one, ladies first!

## **Cat**

"Do you see what I see?" I asked as we drove toward the garage. There sat the dearest "hand-sized" calico cat that one would ever see. She has wandered from "her" home; we must return "her" to "her" family. ("Her" must be female – "he" could not be that pretty!). No one – north nor south – had ever seen that cat, so we encased "her" in neighbor Number three's mailbox, knowing that she had cats. Soon she would return home, gather the mail – and her cat. Satisfied with our deduction, we strolled home – there sat "cat" at our garage door! We fed her milk and cheerios. Early the next day, we planned to take her to the vet. She was nowhere about; she must have returned to her home overnight.

A few hours later, a pitiful cry was heard. We searched about the farm to locate the cry – "there! Look up!" At the top of the tallest palm tree sat cat. Obviously, she had sought refuge overnight in that tree! Wade fetched the tallest ladder to make the rescue. Once her feet touched ground, she raced for safety under the thickest hedge. A call to the vet to change the appointment, we announced that we would arrive "if" we could recover and hold the intended patient. She advised that we toss a pillowcase over the victim – encase it – tie it – she will not suffocate – bring her. Arriving with pillowcase wiggling,

vet releases cat and starts paperwork – “Her name?” “Cat!” Surely we can do better than “Cat.” Katarina Heard? So she was named.

July 2002 - Trip to vet to diagnose “leaking cat.” “Your friend and companion is seriously dehydrated” announced the doctor. “She has taken no nourishment this week,” I announced. So tests were made, sent to Holmes Lab; results called following A.M.: “Your cat is seriously ill – unless she goes on dialysis treatment her life span is brief – even then she won’t endure for very long.” My response, “she must not suffer.” Plans were made to return to his hospital for the following day for the final procedure. Nina volunteered to fly in from Seattle to hold my hand; Hamp volunteered to cut short his flight schedule; my friend Joe McGee, Jr. arrived early to transport our darling cat on the final leg of her earthly journey. She lies “at rest” in the croton bed; a stone covers her grave.

I miss her 4am announcement: “I’ve gotta go!” Off the foot of my bed she jumps on the run for the front door. At daybreak, I ring the bell to call her inside before the peacocks leave the roof to threaten her. She nibbles at her food until I head for the rocking chair with my cup of coffee. Stretched out under the chair, she dares me to rock on her tail. There she sleeps until Annette starts the vacuum cleaner – then she seeks safety under a bed – upstairs or downstairs until the threat is silenced.

Listening to National News after dinner, I can expect a love-in with Cat! I have determined that the attraction is not my lap nor my neck but the two wedding rings on a gold chain around my neck. She remains in my lap until I turn T.V. to Chris Matthews, at which time she jumps to the floor, runs under a chair and tries to cover her ears – a habit learned, no doubt, from Wade!



At 5pm, Cat waits at the door leading to the Western veranda; there as others sip tonics, she indulges in droppings of peanuts, cheese and crackers, or popcorn – her favorite “treats.”

Strolling the 500+ feet to the mailbox will be a lonely trek without

her. There and back, she played hide and seek with peacocks, before she raced me into the house.

I miss you, Cat, thanks for enriching my life – especially since January 30, 2000.

## ***Friends and Neighbors***

**M**y life has been greatly enriched by special people beginning with my preschool playmate who daily came with her mother who cleaned and cooked for our family. She and I built play houses in the sand; shared cookies and milk with our dolls; and made our farewells following dinner, which was served at noon to all farming families. As she and her mother departed with “left-overs” to be shared with her family at home I was put down for a nap. This relationship endured from 1917 to 1922 at which time home schooling found me at the dining room table with my sister and two brothers each day of the week.

### **Edna and Audrey**

As my siblings matured, socialization was limited to country life so Papa determined that sports should become part of our education. We moved into the mill town of Crosby, MS, to attend the public school while Papa commuted to the forest.

Edna and I spent Saturdays on the tennis courts, concluding the day with a trip to the store for a 5 cent fountain Coca Cola. Audrey and I played basketball on the outdoor court week days. The three of us attended Sunflower Jr. College, Moorhead, MS, where we continued to play tennis and basketball, track, and volley ball. On the first day at that school, on the tennis court, I met my future husband. Edna and Audrey did not continue college life, so our paths seldom crossed after my father retired and relocated on the Gulf Coast where fishing was better.

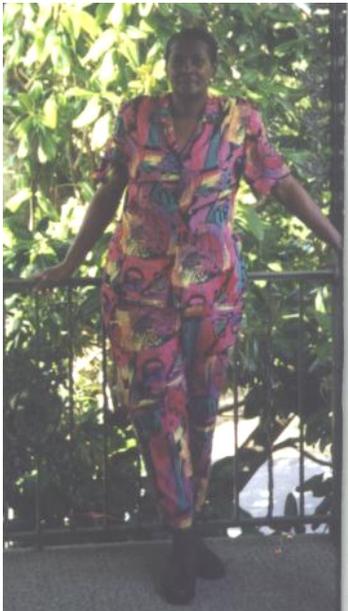
### **Eleanor Cowart Young**

As strangers on campus, two aspiring teachers became roomies at George Peabody College for Teachers, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN. Eleanor came from a wonderful family in Lakeland, FL, and upon graduation taught for one day in a rural school in south Florida. Shortly thereafter she married her childhood sweetheart and the

couple joined Wade and me on our honeymoon week in Daytona, FL. Our friendship continues as she writes or calls from her nursing home in Georgia.

## **Annette**

Our extended family includes Annette who as a teenager in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade helped with domestic duties when I became a professional teacher at St. Marks School. She is the daughter of Luther and Othelia Bailey, who are great parents and friends of ours and



offered hospitality to our basset hound, Tippy, if we had plans to be away for a few days. When Annette decided to go to Atlanta to college, I and my neighbor Mrs. Robinson packed a foot locker for the “freshman,” however, when the Rev. Luther Bailey suffered a heart attack and went to heaven, Annette unpacked and registered at Brevard Community College in Cocoa, FL, where she later sought night-time employment and continued her education as she continued to give domestic help to me – and still does!

The sheets were removed from the dryer, folded and made ready to be stored in the linen closet. As I pushed back the sliding door, I came face to face with a long, squirming snake! Fortunately, it was more surprised than I and made a hasty retreat to the corner of the shelf. Annette called from the kitchen, “If he ran away, he is more frightened than we are. Poisonous snakes don’t retreat!” Neither she nor I had the courage to confront nor capture the intruder, so I ran next door to seek help from the friendly neighbor who located the reptile, declared him to be a harmless “tree snake,” picked him up and happily carried him into the grove! That closet is brightly lighted now and the hole which allowed the enemy to invade has the door-bell alarm carefully replaced therein! Also, the hole in the overhang which had been pecked out has been sealed. The woodpeckers, hopefully, will nest in a tree!

## **B'Dear**

If your child is attending St. Mark's Episcopal Day School, you attend Patron's Meetings, as I did early in Hamp's first year. It was my good fortune to sit alongside a great-grandmother whose granddaughter taught music in that school and also she had four great grandchildren in attendance. In fact, Marie Holderman was a great inspiration for the establishment of the day school in the Episcopal Parish in Cocoa, and she owned and published "The Cocoa Tribune," the highly acclaimed newspaper. In time, I learned that she had become the arm of hospitality for the navel base and subsequently, the air base at Patrick AFB. She loved the military! Recently, she had mourned the death of her only child, mother of Jane Laird Hill and Leason Brodt. As fate would have it, I reminded her of Mary Jane, her beloved daughter, so we became very good friends and after I came on faculty at St. Mark's (Wade was now retired military and his real estate office was in Trafford's Cocoa office), Hamp and I were frequently invited to take dinner with B'Dear in Cocoa. Our lives entwined for football trips to Gainesville, to Moody Hollow for summer holidays and winter snows! Eventually, we purchased a piece of the mountain alongside the Hill's with plans to build a summer cottage. The cottage plans are stored away, the property is now in Hamp's possession, and after Uncle Bubba Hill went to heaven, Jane sold their property to a friend leaving Moody Hollow a favorite memory. When Leason became ill with the dreadful Alzheimer's disease, at the request of her twins and other family members, the court appointed me as her guardian. With the help of her husband Perry Huie, I found the unique refuge for her care. "We Care" became Leason's home, and weekly I carried her daughters or her friends to visit and to assess the care given to her. Eventually, the disease destroyed her and we are left with fond memories of a happy, lovable Leason. Recently, I attended a baby shower for Leason's niece, my God-child, Ashley Pierce, Jane Laird's grandchild. B'Dear's grandchildren and great-great grandchildren always called us "Aunt Ann" and Uncle Lade." For more than 40 years, Jane Laird has taught music in St. Mark's Episcopal Day School. She still does, after school hours.

## ***Children of Our Friends***

**E**arly in 1942, Wade enlisted in the Army Air Corps, leaving me to continue his contract at Georgia Southwestern Jr. College as he began his duty in Douglas, GA. In June of that year, I joined him there for the birth of Mary Melinda who came to us on July 23, 1942. Our time there was interrupted in order for our soldier to attend Officer's Candidate School (OCS) in Miami Beach, FL, where he graduated with top honors. Fortunately, my brother Jim was attending Naval Flight Training in Miami at this time so we spent a lot of quality time with him and his wife, Tah and their neighbors and friends – all great admirers of infant Melinda. Our pilgrimage continued to Avon Park flight school where Wade became an instructor, briefly, before receiving orders to Ft. Richardson, Alaska, by way of parachute school in Ft. Meyers, FL. Melinda and I tagged along until the flight departed for Alaska, at which time she and I moved about with relatives in Itta Bena, MS, with granddaddy Heard; with Aunt Ruby and cousins in Louisiana; finally, with Mama and Papa in Mississippi where our expected son was “stillborn.” Shortly thereafter, Melinda and I made a very long journey to Alaska where we became neighbors with the remarkable Pfiel family in Anchorage, since we had no dependants' privileges “on base.” Caroline and Muriel Pfiel spent after school hours introducing our three year old Miss Melinda to the joys of living in the snow and ice since they were avid skiers, snow-boarders, and ice skaters. Once her lace-up shoes were converted into ice-skates, and the ice rink had been developed in our back yard, she spent most afternoons with her friends on her rink or on a sled gliding down a steep hill nearby. As a college freshman, she joined Muriel at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Muriel's brother Robert served out his obligation with the military on completion of graduation at West Point Military Academy then founded Alaska Airlines in Anchorage, Alaska. Muriel formed and ran a tourist agency to accommodate Alaska Airlines in particular. Her marriage to the son of a local doctor produced a beautiful baby boy. As the marriage disintegrated, divorce followed creating a fierce battle for custody of the son. When Muriel turned the key to drive home from her office her car exploded. When

the grandparents arrived to gather the child from his nursery school, they were told that his father had fetched the son earlier that day. Eventually, the father and son were located in Hawaii. Brother Robert endeavored to bring the case to justice and in the process met his demise! The remaining family experienced great distress and grief as did their friends.

On base housing at Eglin AFB, we were neighbors with Joe and Evelyn McGee and their young daughter, Marcia. Joe and Wade carpooled to their desks and both families formed enduring, life-long friendships. On retirement the McGee family joined us in Brevard County where our sons, Joe Jr. and Hampton attended Satellite High School and continue their friendship in the same county today. Marcia and Melinda continue their friendship – long distance from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Joe Jr., who before he became supervisor of landscaping for Cocoa Beach, used to manicure our farm every Saturday, while his wife, Judy, with sons Mitchell and Christian still take care of and enjoy our pool. We regard them as an extension of our family.

Children of Nita and Walter George grew up with our children since the girls, Nancy and Jan were Melinda's age. John and Clifford were in Hamp's category. Trips to the Keys for lobster season were interrupted when everyone wandered off to different colleges. Our last visit with Nita and Walter was at Wade's Memorial Service in February 2000.

## ***Excursions***

**S**ince officers were frequently assigned tasks “down range,” the curiosity of wives grew until a plan was organized which allowed some friends to take a trip. We spent most weekends and some after school hours at the “Tradewinds Hotel” in West Melbourne. Dilapidation of the building wasn’t a deterrent, since bathroom and the bar were operable, and the pool was the place of activity for children and parents. LaVerne Warner, Dot Mathews, my two neighbors, Margaret Hemans and Lucille George, and I determined that we needed a break from family – Nassau called. On arrival, we were met with a tray of refreshments and taxied to our hotel. Our large corner rooms were on the second floor with French windows leading to balconies which allowed us to view the patio below where Blind Blake and his band played that enchanting Calypso music. Shortly, we joined in the merriment on that patio. The following day started with breakfast and an introduction to a chaperone! Our decision was to negotiate for his services that evening as we joined in the festivities at night clubs. That young man from Sweden spoke our language and danced like the professional that he was. Our three day holiday extended to five days when a hurricane moved over the island, requiring a delay in our departure. Attendance at court where the judges wore those white wigs and more shopping in the many shops and basket marts kept us busy. Flying back to Ft. Lauderdale, we claimed our automobile and headed up state after visiting for a few hours with the Gibbs.

Margaret Hemans and I spent hours on the tennis courts. This passionate pursuit of that sport carried us into the state doubles tournament for women. We were declared the champions, but, unfortunately, the engraved trophies were not delivered to us before we “shipped out” to new assignments with the Air Force.

Tennis did not interfere with Monday morning endeavors. As our school children boarded the school bus, keys turned in our vehicles to carry us to the bridge table. LaVerne Warner, Kay Bradford, Elayne Simmons and I dealt those cards until it was time for that school bus to return our young ones home.

In order to shop in Orlando, one traveled 520 to Cocoa, drove US1 north to Titusville, then 50 to Orlando – an all day trip – including shopping, sight-seeing on two lane roads, and lots of visiting – especially Xmas, Florida.

Another popular excursion was crossing Mather’s Bridge to Merritt Island where Bemis Gordon grew acres of exotic tropical plants – including pineapples. Few homes existed there, but the unpaved dirt road exposed great views of both the Indian River and the Banana River. Evelyn Stuart was the Grand Dame of the Island – living in a beautiful Spanish Villa and sharing her hospitality graciously with those who interested her – especially if one came from Mississippi. The environment attracted retiring military. Admirals Riefkohl, Teddar, Wallace among others took advantage of the available acreage and settled down to become farmers, growing coconuts, avocados, mangoes, citrus, and peacocks! Lobster, shrimp, crabs, and fish added to the bounty, and for recreation, in addition to fighting hordes of mosquitoes, there was fishing, sailing, skiing and hunting – since the rivers turned into havens for ducks, geese, and other exotic birds, including Roseate Spoonbills, eagles, ospreys, Sandhill cranes, manatees, dolphins, alligators, and such. Black panthers crawled about the trees while rabbits lined the road each morning, and raccoons as large as small horses and opossums climbed into trees for daytime sleep. Small birds from cold climates flew down for the winter, or monarch butterflies passed through on their way farther south. I would be remiss to neglect to talk about coral snakes and moccasin or rattler snakes which thrived in the tropical climate.

But the most incredible fixture on the Island was on the drawing board for the northern end of the Island – the Space Center.

Does it come as any surprise that Disney followed? Or that my address is: The Farm, 8595 South Tropical Trail, Merritt Island, Florida!

## **September**

The decision made by my parents to abandon “home schooling”, move into town in order to expose my two brothers to competitive sports and other challenges was a

decision which benefited me immensely. I discovered September! School began the day after “Labor Day”, and as I skipped and ran the long distance from my house to my school, I decided that the sky was unusually blue and beautiful, so I composed little tunes as I raced along, friendless but hoping to find good companionship as school progressed – and I did. Edna lived “up the hill” beyond my house, so our paths crossed on the second day; thereafter, we skipped along together until I grew up and went off to boarding school. As a student, teacher, head mistress, and mother of students, I have continued to appreciate September.

As a very senior citizen in my 87<sup>th</sup> September, I have developed a significant attitude towards the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the year. September 2004 will be recorded on history books as the worst year of hurricanes for Florida – four catastrophic storms in 30 days. “Safe havens” for me began on Thursday when my good friends the Warners escorted me and food from the fridge to Dot Mathews’ home across the river. We were ordered evacuated by 2 p.m. The storm struck at midnight on Saturday. After a week of playing cards and dining on gourmet food, we were allowed to return to the Island and the Beach. We thanked Dot and her cat Bandit for providing “safe haven” and took refuge at the Warner’s home. The Island was inaccessible. Trees covered the road and no one had power! My “safe haven” continued with the Warners. After a comfortable time with the Warners, I was delivered to Cocoa Beach to accept another “safe haven” with Hamp and Virginia until another hurricane demanded that we evacuate by 2 p.m. Our “safe haven” was across the river with Caroline and Stephen – my step-grands. Eventually we returned to Hamp and Virginia’s home on Cocoa Beach since Ivan the hurricane had blown a 200 year old oak tree across my driveway on the Island – and I still had no power! Eventually power was restored to my home allowing me to sleep in my own bed following a month of evacuation in the homes of my friends and family.

Consequences of this spectacular September are fewer trees for the remaining few peacocks! My home survived with little damage – Hallelujah!!!! And with a cell phone, who needs a home phone anyway?? Eventually Bell South repaired the cable. In Florida the dearest comment ever spoken “*The Power is on*”! Charlie, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne – good bye!



“What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lives within us”.

Henry David Thoreau

Mother, I have loved every minute of helping you put this book together. Your years have been full of achievements, pride, fun, and love. Thank you for sharing these incredible memories with me.

Your daughter,

Melinda