



Weiss children c. 1910 (Ralph, Carrie, Herb, Clarence, Ed, Walter and Martha)

Dad's Chronicle

This chronicle would never have been recorded if it were not for the fact that Harriet's sister-in-law Sally said, "Walter, will you be our guest speaker for one of my Women's Club meetings?" I asked, "Sally, for Heaven's sake, what would I tank about?" She said, "Well, I think that sometime ago you mentioned all the things you had seen develop in your lifetime and made the remark that you had lived a lifetime spanning a period of greater development and human progress than any lifetime since the beginning of mankind. It would be a very interesting talk." I declined on the grounds that I hadn't prepared anything. It would take quite a bit of time and research to develop the necessary materials to make a 30-minute talk on something of that nature. So, I let it slide for the time. However, the idea was appealing, for I am convinced that the time period during my life has witnessed the greatest change, development and far-reaching, forward-looking steps that have occurred in the history of mankind.

I'd like to put this in the proper perspective. It would be best to go back to my childhood and relate the developments as they occurred; the things I have seen that have had such a profound effect on our civilization.

Therefore, let the record reflect I was born September 30, 1901, in the city of Brooklyn, NY and lived there till I was about 4 or 5 years old. I can recall going to kindergarten in Brooklyn and then from there we moved to northern New Jersey to a rural community called Upper Saddle River. Dad bought a farm there and went into the business of raising chickens. He raised White Wyandottes, which are a good table fowl and also good egg producers.

In addition to that we had orchards--peaches and apples and plums, and of course, the inevitable garden, for N. J. is noted for its gardens.

It is strange how clearly one remembers the events of childhood and yet finds it difficult to recall what happened only yesterday!

Life on the farm when I was growing up was a pleasant one, the golden summers and rugged winters all seem to blend together.

In those early years of my life on the farm in NJ., life was rather simple. We didn't have the niceties and technology that exist today, or later in my youth. For light at the house, we burned kerosene lanterns and lamps. We used wood and coal for heat and to do the cooking. Later I recall Mother had a 3-burner kerosene stove for cooking. That was a great improvement in the ease with which she prepared our meals.

Water was pumped from a drilled well as you needed it. And always among others, our chores were to see that the water buckets were full. Upstairs we had another stove in the central hallway that led off to the 3 bedrooms. It used wood and in the winter time provided the only heat in the upstairs area. I recall how we used to huddle around it in our pajamas and get good and hot before we dove under the covers in our cold bedrooms. Northern New Jersey isn't quite the North Pole, but it can get mighty cold in the winter time.

Summertimes were really the fun times. Our cousins from Staten Island - they were Mother's sister's children - Clarence and the twins Carrie and Martha, used to love to come up to the farm. We certainly had many good times romping around in the field and in the woods. We'd go swimming in a pool in the Saddle River which ran on the boundary of our property. We had several swimming holes we delighted in--two favorites were Dinker's Pond which was upstream a bit, and Belt pool (we called it Belt pool because it was about to our waists at its center).

Just below where we did our swimming was a millpond, Hopper's pond. It was built to provide power for the sawmill. While I was a child that sawmill was still in operation. Mayor Hopper, the owner, used to saw all the logs by waterpower. As a matter of fact there were a number of mills along the Saddle River, providing water power for gristmills, a knitting mill and various others. (Thurston's mill was below the Bierbriers on Saddle River).

I remember having lots of fun catching eels out of some of those millponds. We'd set a trot line across the pond and bait it with a dozen hooks and lines, the main line dropping down into the water. We put big night crawlers on the hooks. In the morning we'd come home with a gunny sack full of eels. Of course, the job of skinning an eel and making it fit for the table isn't very easy, for the proverb "slippery as an eel" is apropos. We also caught trout in the Saddle River. I recall many times as the spring trout season opened up, sportsmen from areas to the south of us, Paterson, Ridgewood and so on, would come up with their fancy rods and high hip waders to catch the trout. In the fall of the year some of the same group of sportsmen would return to do some rabbit hunting, bringing their dogs with them.

Life was not all play on the farm. Most of the chores were done by hand. Machinery on the farm was practically unknown--at least on the smaller farms of the kind we operated. I know as my share many times I had to milk the cow, which was a twice-a-day operation. We had to shell corn and cut wood - a bucksaw on a piece of wood may be good music for the muscles, but it was very tiresome when we had other things in mind.

And then there were the return visits to our cousins on Staten Island. When we first began going there on our visits, they lived in a place called New Dorp, which was about 1 mile from the shore at The Narrows which leads from the NY harbor out to the ocean. We loved to visit them and go down to the beach where we could swim in the surf. That was quite a treat for us, one we thoroughly enjoyed!

It was while we were on one of these visits that I was a spectator to one of the things which transformed our lives. This was the introduction to radio. I'm not talking about a radio where you hear a voice. This was the early phase of wireless communication... there was only one station, KDKA in Pittsburgh, and it sent out its call signals and messages in Morse code. While we learned the call signals, we never did learn too much else. That led to the radio by voice. I recall later in my youth the first time we HEARS radio. I was then selling Model T Fords. The dealer, "Hem" Thurston of the Allendale Equipment Company, put on a show that had 4 or 5 radio sets stationed around the showroom. He invited people in to hear the voices on the radio. This was quite an event and from then on provided us a constant source of entertainment. I recall some shows such as "The Black Crows", Amos and Andy, who entertained millions for years to come. I know Marconi developed the principles of wireless transmission before my time, but the practical use had to wait for a later time. Still later we entered the field of television, first black and white and more recently color.

One of my earliest recollections of the time in Brooklyn provides another picture of life at that time. One evening when I was walking with a baby-sitter, we saw a fire engine go by on the street. We followed it, and saw a wreck on the elevated train. In those days the cars were wood and the fire department had no pump engines, only hand pumps. Horses drew the fire engine, and manpower pumped all of the water through the hoses. I don't recall where the water came from, I suppose Brooklyn had a water system, but I was too young to wonder about things like that.

In the early years on the farm, all our cultivating was done by horsepower. We had one horse, faithful Old Dan, who did all the work of pulling the cultivator through the rows of corn or potatoes or whatever we were growing. He also drew the hay wagon when we were gathering hay, and

we'd pitch it into the wagon and later on up into the hayloft. For a while we did have two horses. But one day while my brother Ralph and I were in the woodshed a tremendous thunderstorm came up. We heard a terrific thunderclap right overhead, but we didn't pay it too much attention though it did startle us. A little later Ralph slipped over to the barn a short ways away and came running back shouting "the Barn's on fire!" We immediately called Dad from the house. The lightning had struck our barn and the new mown hay in the loft was blazing furiously! Dad ran into the stable to bring the horses out, but one was down--he'd been struck and killed by the lightning. Dan we did get out, and when we turned him into the pasture, he grazed calmly away! It was only later when Dad drove him the first time that he noticed Dan no longer responded to voice commands. He would stop when Dad tugged on the reins, but he had lost his hearing as a result of that lightning strike!

The burning of the barn was a tremendous blow to us children. Most of our so-called toys were lost, as they were stored in the woodshed. We had a 3-man flexible flyer which was our pride and joy. We also had a pair of skis and various other pieces of recreational equipment which were all lost. But the grand thing during the course of that fire was that our neighbors from 3/4 of a mile away, seeing the black column of smoke, gathered around to help. It started to rain so heavily that the gutter of the road in front of the barn was full of running water. We organized a bucket brigade to throw water on the roof of the incubator house where Dad hatched the baby chicks. And we were able to save it, even though it was only a few feet from the woodshed and corncrib end of the barn--both of which burned down!

One of the important parts of early life on the farm concerned the storage of our foodstuffs. We produced most of the produce we used throughout the year. So, it was essential to have a special place where these foods could be maintained to preserve their quality. There was a cellar which had been excavated under the house so that all parts of it were below ground level. It held an even temperature summer and winter. On one side, by the entrance to the outside, was a long bench where my dad packed the eggs after they had been cleaned and candled to make sure they weren't fertile. He crated them in cases of 6 or 8 dozen and delivered many of them to customers in New York City who pooled together to buy them by the case

and be assured of fresh eggs. In this way Dad was able to obtain the top price for his eggs.

Along the walls were shelves which Mother kept loaded with her canned goods. She put up as much of the produce when it was in season as possible. On descending the stairs to the cellar from the main floor, you would see jars of green beans, beets, wax beans, peaches, pears, plums, apple butter, and many more. There was also a large sandbox where we stored turnips, beets, cabbages, and such. The sand kept them marvelously fresh throughout the winter season. We always had barrels of apples, potatoes, pears, and a 10-gallon crock or two of sauerkraut curing. Today we take fresh foods for granted and are able to store most anything in electric refrigerators and freezers, but in those days one had to save things by whatever means were at hand.

Later Dad added a coal bin to store the coal which a truck delivered and dumped into the cellar through a chute.

Dad also made pressed cider from our fresh apples. He made several wines of which elderberry was my favorite; it was rich and heavy, but quite tasty. He made a drier wine from wild cherry--it was quite bitter, but in small doses - quite tasty.

But with all that we put up, our foodstuffs didn't always meet our needs. I remember once after a long stretch of snow we needed some flour. There were no snowplows then to clear the roads. Horses had to pull sleighs to break open the tracks in the deeper snows, and we were often marooned. On this occasion, we'd been isolated long enough to use up one of the main staples of our diet, flour. I was sent to walk to the nearest store which was about one mile away on the New York state line. It was a small store, but it carried many of the staples for the countryside. I recall plowing through the snow that was, in places, almost waist deep. It took a lot of struggling for me to reach the store and I was quite tired when I arrived there; but I had to turn around and return with my arms full of flour across that deep snow!

Another product of our farm came from our Jersey cow who gave a milk that was high in butterfat. The only way to store her milk was in the cellar

where it was a constant cool temperature. We had long shelves hanging from the ceiling by wires to keep the mice and rats out of the milk. The pans were large and shallow so that the cream could rise to the top and solidify, after which we skimmed it off to make a churn full of butter. We'd then separate the thickened sour milk and put it in a cheesecloth bag outside where it could drain and make cottage cheese. That was a staple of ours and is still one of my favorites, especially, mixed with chopped onions or chives and salt and pepper. It's not only good for you, but excellent in sandwiches.

I have already said that we grew peaches, apples, pears and plums in our orchard. Though my mother preserved and stored many of these in our cellar, the major portion we sold. We took it by wagon to the Paterson Farmer's Market which was about 13 miles away. We'd load all of the produce on the wagon, cover it with canvas, and hook Dan up to the traces. Late in the afternoon we'd leave for the market. We usually got there after Dark. We would then pull in to the "Island Market", a small island in the Passaic River. We would back the wagon into one of the divided stalls which were under a large shed. Dad would free Dan and give him some feed. Then we'd wait for the market to open. The buyers usually began their rounds about 2AM. We had to have everything arranged in the stall so that they could inspect it and determine if they wanted anything. We had some excellent Burbank plums, and I recall that these always went quickly. Usually, we were able to sell most of our crops, as we used the less desirable for ourselves, and took the prettiest to market. This was an important money crop for the small farmers, and the trip to market was an important part of our lives. The excitement of going to market was something I always loved, but the trip itself was very tiring. We'd not get home until the middle of the next day, and there was never time to sleep before the buyers arrived!

Later we acquired a Model T Ford. Dad built a truck body for the back after removing the "turtle back" and he put racks along the sides and in the box body. It was much quicker and easier for us then, as we could load the produce at night and get it to the market in plenty of time to set it up. Afterwards we could get home early enough to rest a little before returning to farm work.

Concerning education in those years, we attended a one room school in Upper Saddle River, about 1 to 1 1/2 miles from our home. We had to walk to school every day for the full 8 years of grade school. One teacher conducted all 8 classes. Obviously, we had our favorite teachers. I remember one in particular, Annette Van Riper, the daughter of one of the farm families in that area. She was a favorite because she could bat a baseball as good or better than any of us, for which we admired her greatly!

In the school the front row was always occupied by the class which was being heard at that time. The rest of the students sat in the rows toward the back and did their studies. It may sound very boring today, but it was very orderly. The teachers seemed to have more authority to maintain order and quiet in the classroom so that the class being heard would not be disturbed by others. We learned the alphabet using phonics--certainly we understood the pronunciation of words better than students do who use the sight method.

Education wasn't just going to school. We also did a lot of reading. My Uncle Ed, Mother's brother, worked in NYC and had access to the publishing houses. He used to bring home volumes of books such as the works of Alexander Dumas, James Fennimore Cooper, the Dickens series, Marie Corelli, and others. I particularly enjoyed the Three Musketeers series, and also the Leather Stocking series. I recall in particular reading the works of Jules Verne; 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea, in which the fabled submarine of Captain Nemo so accurately portrayed things which have since come to pass, and From the Earth to the Moon, which was another fantasy, that, in my life has become reality. Whoever would have thought back in those days of watching men walking on the moon.

Back when Uncle Ed was bringing books home, we got a victrola. The mechanism which operated both the recording and playing parts of the machine was a spring which was wound up fairly tight. As long as the springs were well wound, you could hear whatever was recorded. The Wizard of Menlo Park, Thomas A. Edison, invented the phonograph, and after that we had a ready source of entertainment. I particularly remember

hearing the magnificent voice of Enrico Caruso pouring forth from that machine! Uncle Ed also brought home records of the opera. We were exposed to music and entertainment which was popular at that time. It provided color to our lives.

The grade school had about 30 desks for the students, and these were usually full. The desks were arranged in rows. On the front of each desk was a slot to keep pencils and pens from rolling off. In the center at the top was an inkwell. You dipped your pen in the ink and wrote with it; when it ran out, you dipped it again. The fountain pen certainly changed all of that! It was developed during those years and the names of Waterman and Sheaffer & Parker became synonymous with fine pens.

Heat was provided in the winter months by a wood stove. This was kept up by the students, we would add wood as it was needed to keep the temperature warm enough. We had no plumbing in those days. There were two outhouses, one off to the rear of the school for boys, and on the other side, one for girls. Occasionally some of the boys would mischievously try to upset the girl's outhouse while they were in there. It always produced a lot of shrieking, but no lasting harm was ever done.

One incident I particularly remember, which took place before the fire destroyed our Flexible Flyer. I was rather young, probably about 8. We had gone to school that morning towing our Flexible Flyer, which was the most popular of sleds. When we approached the school we had to climb a fairly steep hill. The snow had been rained on and frozen into a hard glaze. The crust on the snow was as hard as ice on a pond.

I sat down on the sled at the top of the hill and was watching the action elsewhere when one of the boys, who is unnamed and forgotten, pushed me off. I went sliding down that hill and at the bottom went right into a barbed wire fence. I cut my lower eye lid. It must have bled profusely! The kids rushed me to the school. The teacher had just driven up in a sleigh, driven by someone from where she was staying. She immediately had the driver take me back home. After I got home, Dad hooked up his sleigh and took me to the doctor in Spring Valley which was about 5 miles away. A Doctor Finch examined the eye and performed a little operation for which

he used chloroform--the anesthetic of the time. He took 6 stitches in the lower eyelid. I remember it only vaguely, but I do remember getting back home. Mother had baked some sweet rolls which I really liked. As I wanted one so badly, she gave it to me. But the chloroform had very undesirable side effects and I became violently ill! This incident illustrates the problems we had whenever there was a medical emergency.

One of the products of the winter months was the ice pond from which ice was harvested. In those days, artificial refrigeration didn't exist. Curtin's Pond which was midway between our home and school was built just to provide ice in the summer, though it was also a swimming hole in the Warmer months. It was quite a sight watching the men harvest the ice. They first cut a hole in the ice, and then used big saws to cut long cakes which would often be about 2 feet thick. The ice was harvested several times each winter. There were ice houses on some of the larger lakes. These were commercial storage buildings. Each layer of ice was covered by a layer of sawdust. This insulation enabled the ice to hold and often there was still ice available in the ice houses when the next winter's harvest was ready. Conley's pond above us was also used to harvest ice.

It was during my early youth that artificial refrigeration was born. I believe an Englishman, Lord Kelvin, discovered the principle. But I was in my teens before we had our own unit. It was one of the old General Electric models, a "Monitor" top with a circular mechanism on top of the machine. It stood out on our porch for years. We didn't move it into the kitchen until several refrigerators later. Before the refrigerator, we kept the cubes of ice in a big cold chest which was really just an insulated box. The big cake of ice was put in the top of the chest, and the cool air filtered down through the box keeping things cool. An ice man called regularly at our place in the country, delivering the ice in 25, 50 or 100 pound pieces from a horse drawn wagon, depending on the capacity of the storage one had.

There were other weekly supply wagons besides the summer ice man. We had a bakery wagon which called at the house regularly, and a butcher who came through at least twice a week. He delivered the meats of our choice, but on Fridays, as a general rule, a man came by with fresh fish. These items were always carried in a well-iced truck, which was really a horse-

drawn wagon. We usually made a weekly trip into town for regular shopping. That was how we came by some of the niceties in the country!

Speaking of transportation, after grade school, we had to go to Ramsey to high school, a town about 4 miles away. Our transportation in those days was a wagon drawn by a team of horses. All of us would climb in and head for the high school. In the winter a sleigh took the place of the wagon. Usually the wagon was a farm wagon with a top rigged on it so that in the rain or snow we had some protection. Since we had no public transportation to get to school, we had a hard time if we wanted to stay for extracurricular activities. I enjoyed playing basketball. I'd never known about basketball until I attended the high school. But if I stayed after school to participate, I had to walk the 4 miles back home, since the wagon only ran at the one time.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the development of the automobile, as I experienced it. My Dad's brother Uncle Fred Weiss lived right across the street from us in the summertime. His business was in New York, and he commuted back and forth each day. Upper Saddle River and Saddle River at that time, as today, were part of the bedroom communities for New York. People had homes out in the country, but went into New York on commuter trains every day. There was a lot of rivalry between the businessmen as they raced each other's horse and buggy, horse and wagon or horse and surrey, as the case may have been. At the station, they turned their horses over to the livery stable where they were cared for until the evening trains brought everyone back again. My Uncle Fred bought a car--one of the first cars I had ever seen--a Reo (for Robert E. Olds, known for the Oldsmobile). The Reo was built like a horse drawn buggy. It had a dashboard and a seat above. You started the engine by standing down alongside the car and reaching in to pull out a crank. The engine cranked from the side of the car. It had one cylinder and was steered by a tiller, not a steering wheel. The brakes were a particularly crude arrangement. My Uncle Fred decided he could beat all of the horses in the countryside to the station! Generally speaking, the races were nip and tuck. If the horses were in good shape and Uncle Fred didn't get a good running start on the Allendale Hill, the horses would win. But if he could get up enough speed,

he could pull in at the station first. That was my first experience with an automobile.

Later on the people who ran a silk mill up at Monsey, which was north of us about 4 miles, got a car; a Crane-Simplex. It was a big "powerful" car with something like 10 horsepower. Whenever the car came up the Saddle River Valley, everyone could hear it coming for miles--those big cylinders produced loud explosions! We would run to the top of the hill to watch it go by! This was the real beginning of the automobile industry. These were the first cars. One by one our neighbors got cars, and then Ford introduced the Model T, the "car for the multitudes." I recall driving a horse and wagon into Spring Valley where there was a Ford dealer and looking at all the cars he had parked there. Those cars sold for \$365, delivered. That was a lot of money even then, and those were crude cars. This must have been about 1908.

Automobile usage was very limited then. My future wife's father, Mr. Bierbrier, had a touring car of some kind (an Overlands?) and we all went for a ride in that car up to Greenwood Lake on a camping trip. We were let off and pitched our tents. After our vacation was over in about two weeks, he came back to pick us up. Somewhere going downhill on one of those mountain roads, which were all dirt then, he lost control. The rear end skidded and the first thing we knew we had plunked into the ditch and rolled up onto the opposite bank. That finished the maneuverability of that car! We had to get word down to Allendale for Hen Thurston to come up and tow us in--which he did, but it was well after dark before we got back to Saddle River.

Talking about the Model T ford reminds me that that particular car which came out in 1908 was continued until 1927! True, there were modification and improvements made, we could call it modernization! But during those years over 21 million models of that car were sold! They were supplanted by the Model A in 1928.

I remember also riding on the trolley cars when we went to Staten Island to see the family. The trolley was horse drawn but rode on a track. The trolley was the early "public transport" in New York and on Staten Island. Of

course the advent of electricity changed that. But out on the farms we were still using kerosene for lamps, lanterns and stoves. It was many years later when electricity made it out there.

I know Alexander Graham Bell invented the phone prior to my time, but it was during the early teens of this century when the first telephones came out to the farm. Each of these developments which so dramatically changed the meter of our lives and contributed so much to our progress followed something of the same pattern. Their beginning was very modest. Many different makes of cars were available in the early days, but most of them never got any publicity and didn't make it. But once the industry began mass producing, and everyone could afford to have one, then the manner in which we had done things changed dramatically. Because of mass production, industries became mechanized, and the habits of our lives were changed with it. Steel mills grew tremendously, and giant companies like Ford, General Motors and later Chrysler Corporation provided jobs and lifestyles which removed many from the farm.

Along about 1912-13 I spent a summer at West Haven on Long Island Sound. The place I stayed was the Colonial Inn. A school friend of mine, Perce Saunders, had worked there the year before and told me how nice it was. I decided to join him and work up there for the summer. We had a lot of fun doing things in our spare time. We borrowed the owner's rowboat and went out fishing or fished off the jetty. Occasionally we'd catch fish that we could bring home and prepare to eat. It was during this summer that we heard the rumblings of war in Europe. I recall a French Major who was staying at the Inn for about a month. He was a representative of the French government. I don't recall the capacity, but he cut quite a dashing figure in his officer's uniform. I particularly remember that the women were most impressed by this person.

It was about this same time that aviation came into practical being. The great air war of WWI was the early history of aviation. Had I been old enough, I think I would have been delighted to enlist in the air force. It was during this time when we were actively participating in WWI that I joined the Staten Island Ship Building Company. I moved in with my relatives there and worked during 1917-18 in the yards. The company was building a series of mine sweepers for the Navy. These were nothing more

than huge oceangoing tugs capable of pulling behind them tremendous lengths of steel cables which were supposed to sweep the mines out of the waters. It was a very interesting experience.

In 1918 there was a false armistice rumored. Everyone thought the war was over. We had a tremendous parade in NYC. I recall that the fleet of buses which carried us to the shipyard each day and took us back at night brought us across on the ferry, and we paraded up 5th Avenue. It was pandemonium! The tremendous excitement that prevailed at that time! We learned later that the Armistice hadn't yet been signed, so only a short time later there was a repeat of that parade. It was a very stirring time as we witnessed the end of "The Great War"!

It was while I was working at the ship building company and living with my cousins that I decided to learn to play a musical instrument. One evening after work I took the trolley car and got off at St. George. I took the ferry boat to the Battery in NY., then walked up to the Bowery in downtown NYC. I'd heard that there were a lot of music and pawn shops in that area. I looked around and eventually saw a Mandolin in one of the pawn shops which I was able to get for the grand sum of \$4.00. After I'd tried to play it for a little while, I began lessons with a Senior Esposito who taught mandolin. What he could do to that instrument one would think impossible! I enjoyed the experience studying with him and practiced quite a bit. Later I was able to form a little band with my cousin Clarence on the violin and the twins on the piano. We hit a lot of discordant notes, but it provided us with hours of fun!

Incidentally the ferry ride between Staten Island and the Battery is magnificent. You are looking at the harbor and all of its traffic in that great city. You can also see the city skyline as you head toward it. It is a magnificent sight. There too, stands the Statue of Liberty and that ferry ride provides the same view of the American scene as first seen by the thousands of immigrants who have been welcomed to our shores. Back on the farm I decided I needed to get a summer job. That meant I had to go into New York City. Uncle Ed told me where there was a street which had lots of employment agencies that had signs in their windows for jobs and what they paid. One day, I caught the Erie Railroad to NY., crossed the

Hudson on the ferry, and took a streetcar to that street. As I walked around I read the ads. One in particular appealed to me. A summer resort on Blue Point, Long Island, wanted an assistant pastry chef. I had helped my mother making apple and peach cakes, and things of that sort. I fancied myself an experience cook! So I applied for and got the job. I must have been 11 or 12 years old. I had to get first to New York, then through it on the Long Island Railroad to South Bay and then Blue Point. The pastry chef was a real Prussian type--everything had to be exactly so! And I had never had any real training in cooking. But what he needed was a helper, and mostly I did the dirty work. So I was able to bull my way through.

Each afternoon we had a couple of hours between lunch and dinner, and I could go to the waterfront. There was a large pier which jutted out into the bay. On my first venture, I put on my bathing suit and ran out onto the pier. I jumped right on in and pains shot right up both legs! I had landed heavily on my feet and cut both of them to ribbons. Blue Point is still famous for its oysters, but of course I didn't know any better. That is certainly the hard way to learn!

Another day I rented a rowboat. I fancied myself an expert oarsman. So I set out into the Great South Bay, and began rowing right along. I was making good headway until the water became pretty choppy. I skipped the top of a wave with one oar, "caught a crab" as the saying goes. I fell back into my seat and lost the oar. It fell overboard, but I wasn't daunted. I jumped in and swam after it. When I got a good grip on it, I turned around to head to the boat--only the boat was rapidly drifting away from me as a stiff breeze pushed it out from shore! I knew I couldn't catch the boat and the oar was too heavy to drag with me. I was a very long way from shore, but the only way back was to swim. SO I dropped the oar and began to head in. It seemed forever and I kept wondering if I would ever be able to make it. There came a time when I was too tired to go any farther, and I didn't feel like I was any closer than when I started. But I had the inspiration to tread water for a little while and rest up. As I right myself to look around, my feet hit bottom! I could have walked the whole way in, the Bay is that shallow!

On another occasion I picked a bunch of cherries from the trees there. My boss was delighted and decided to make some pies for the guests. I then had the tedious job of pitting enough cherries for the hotel's guests. You can imagine how many cherries that was! But the chef showed me how to rig up a hairpin on a stick, the ends of the hairpin project downward and are tied on so that the loop is left at the end. This is inserted into the top of a cherry where it wraps around the pit. With a twist and a pull, the pit comes out. It works well, but I am sure some of the guests cursed the baker for letting them break their teeth on the pits I missed!

It was while I was working here that I got word my school friends back in Upper Saddle River were going on a camping trip to Greenwood Lake. Nothing would do but that I join them! So I went to the pastry chef and asked him to let me quit work. He told me that I couldn't quit unless I was willing to lose my pay. I certainly did want my money, but I also wanted to spend some time at my favorite camping spot! So I told him that I would make him fire me, that I wouldn't work! And eventually this is what happened. I got my release and my money. I headed back home and got there in time to join the gang at Greenwood Lake.

Greenwood Lake is about nine miles long, and about midway up the lake on the west shore was an old blast furnace. It is reputed to have been one of those that forged the chains used to stretch across the Hudson River and prevent the British navy from sailing up it further, which prevented them from navigating up to Albany. The chain must have been tremendously heavy to have stretched all the way across the river!

Upper Saddle River is only a stone's throw from the New York State line. Just a few miles north of that, above Monsey and Suffern, are the Ramapo Mountains. They are very pretty, though the highest, Mt. Torn isn't much over 1800-2,000 feet. But during the American Revolution a settlement developed in those mountains which was called the "Jackson Whites." It was comprised of deserters from the Hessian army, some renegade Indians and some Blacks. They lived together and inbred tremendously over the years after the Revolution. Later some teachers were sent up to that area to try to help them. The teachers reported back about the results from the

many years of inbreeding. It was an interesting sidelight on the aftermath of the Revolutionary war!

Incidentally, the Ramapo Mountains abound in lakes. There were also iron mines in the area. It was one of these mines that supplied the furnace at Greenwood Lake.

In the western part of New Jersey are lead and zinc mines. But most of the area around northern New Jersey is agricultural land. Even in the pockets between the mountains, swamps were drained, and the rich soils used for farming.

After the War terminated and my job at the Staten Island Ship Building Company was over, I went back to NJ and entered into the business of selling Model T Fords for a dealer in Allendale. This was a venture that was frowned upon, as it was viewed as having an unlikely future! Selling cars appealed to me and I felt sure I could sell even though a very astute man had told me I was no salesman! Selling in those days was entirely different from today. In the first place you were selling to people who had never operated a car before. So part of your chore was to teach them how to run the automobile. This provided me with many difficult and sometimes amusing situations. People were not accustomed to machinery of any kind, and they were venturing into a new world when they bought a car. I had to answer many questions and make many assurances before anyone was ready to begin to drive.

The early Model T had none of the mechanisms which we are accustomed to in our autos today. For instance, in order to light the road at night, kerosene lamps or the brighter carbide lamps were hung on the front of the car. At dusk the driver would pull over, get out and light the lamps with a match. The lights were very ineffective. Fortunately speeds were then considerably slower than now! With progress came electric headlights, and batteries which powered other accessories. The later Model Ts were modified to modernize them.

One of the amusing incidents from my early sales deals with a Mr. Millsap who lived just up the road from us on an adjoining farm. He had had very

little education, but as a thrifty farmer he was able to purchase a Ford car. I tried to teach him how to drive it. When someone has never operated any machinery other than horse drawn hay rigs or mowing machines, it is particularly frustrating trying to drive.

I recall one day after a lengthy driving session, we were seated on the running board talking. The tank which held the fuel for the carbide light was on the running board beside us. It had on it a pressure gauge which indicated how much gas remained in the tank. These were relatively small tanks, but the gauge read 50 pounds pressure. After studying it for a short while, Mr. Millsap said, "Well, Walter, you know I just can't believe that that little thing weighs 50 pounds!" I had quite a job explaining to him the difference in 50 pounds and 50 pounds pressure. Everything about machinery was so foreign to people then!

While I was selling the Model T, Ford Motor Company introduced the Fordson Tractor, which was the first small farm tractor. It was designed to make the load of the small farmer much lighter and I was immediately attracted to its possibilities. Nothing would do but that I had to have one of those together with a plow and harrow. The area around my home was largely small garden patches of only an acre or two. This wasn't enough ground to justify people buying their own tractors. So I conceived the idea of purchasing all the equipment and doing custom work for them. With it I would make enough money to pay for the tractor. Dad endorsed a note for me at the bank and I borrowed enough to buy my first tractor, plow and harrow. I set about working for the farms in that area. I soon found I had to have a truck to carry the equipment back and forth. But there was enough demand for my work that I could pay off my debt and even make some extra money. I also continued to sell Model T's and Fordson tractors. My expertise with the tractor actually made me a better salesman, for I could demonstrate the versatility and usefulness of the equipment. The Ford dealer had to cover three different towns, Ramsey, Suffern and Allendale. I became the tractor representative for all three places and sold farm equipment for them. Most of my custom work was mainly done in the spring. Eventually this led to my going directly with the Ford Motor Company. I had made the acquaintance of Joe Lewis, the factory representative, who lived in Saddle River. He knew of my skill using the

Fordson, so he introduced me to the district manager in New York City and set up an appointment for me. I went into the interview with the manager, a Mr. Easlinger who had about 150 dealers under him in the area around NY, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and northern NJ, with another 5 counties in Pennsylvania. I was interviewed by him and five assistants. After a short while, he told me, "Mr. Weiss, I don't think you are a salesman!" That floored me! I was very confident that I had a niche in that company somewhere. So I told him, "You don't need a salesman. You need people who can go out and show others what can be done with these tractors, how to use them." I must have impressed him, because I was hired to call on the dealers throughout the area as a factory representative. This was in 1923, while the Model T was the car of the masses; and it led to many enjoyable years with the Ford Motor Company! It also constituted a major part in my education in the automotive industry!

H. Ford was an innovator and established the first minimum wage among major manufactures (\$6 per day) and the first 5-day work week. His philosophy was that the people who built the cars could afford to buy them and have time to use them. The mass production of machinery begun by Ford Motor Company first made this possible.

It seemed impossible to produce a million cars in one year. But Ford made it happen. There was one time when the Ford Motor Company had borrowed huge sums of money to finance the plants and develop the enterprise that became the manufacturing firm we know today. This money was borrowed from the money market sources, primarily the Wall Street Capitalists who were dominant at that time. This money came due at one crucial point when it seemed impossible to meet the huge indebtedness. Many felt that Henry Ford was going to lose the company. In an ingenious move, he sent orders out to all his plants to produce every single auto that they could build using the materials on hand and ship them out the dealers. They did. Every scrap of material that could be fabricated into an automobile was utilized and the cars were sent by sight draft, bill of lading attached (COD). This raised enough money to pay off the debts and kept Henry Ford's control of the company intact.

It was about this time that I became acquainted with some of the men who worked with Henry Ford during the formative years. They told me some of the history of how the moving assembly line developed. It is this manufacturing method that was unique to Ford and has since become the common method for mass production today.

It seems a group of men who were all assembling the same standard part at a work bench standing side by side, possibly 6 or 8 of them making something like a generator, decided that if they changed their method so that each one did only a certain party of the assembly instead of using all of the different screws, nuts and bolts, that they could move the piece on to the next man and make the piece much more efficiently. This is really what a moving assembly line is and thus the modern method of production was born. Each man did only one part of the assembly then it was moved on to the next man who added still more to it, then the next until the unit they were working on was complete.

It was quite interesting to meet with the people who were instrumental in developing the new automotive industry. Keep in mind that the Model T Ford was the moving force in the development of the highway systems we take for granted today. It was responsible for the tremendous advances in our developing industrial might. It certainly played a major part in making us the premiere manufacturing country in the world. In those years, these men were sharing the details of history as it was unfolding.

On one occasion I had the privilege of meeting Henry Ford on a rare visit which he made to the Ford Building on 54th Street and Broadway. I met Edsel Ford also, and was very impressed with his personality. He seemed a very gentle person, more the artistic type. Edsel was the one responsible for the acquisition of the Lincoln Motor Company.

Henry Leland, who designed the Lincoln was also the original designer of the Cadillac. There was a saying in those days that "Henry Leland built the Lincoln to contain all those things that the Cadi-lacked." This play on words provides some insight into the development of these two companies. When Henry Leland built the Lincoln he claimed he was building the finest car in the world. In many eyes, he achieved that goal. When the automotive

industry was still in the formative years, the Lincoln Motor Company met with hard times. Edsel Ford pushed for the purchase of the company. His purpose was to insure the continued development of the finest cars. About the same time, the Ford Motor Company acquired the Johansen Gauge Company, which manufactured precision gauges which measured to the millionth of an inch. They were a marvel in that day. And their precision was an important part in the development of the kind of automatic go and no-go gauges which were needed to ensure quality in mass production. Any company which was trying to turn out a million 4-cylinder cars in one year had to produce 4 million pistons which could fit so perfectly into the cylinder walls to get exact clearances. The introduction of the precision gauges was critical to the control of quality, and this is often overlooked in looking back at the history of mass production.

It was about this time that Henry Ford became interested in the newest form of transportation--aviation. In pursuing this new interest, he employed William B. Stout, who had designed a number of all metal aircraft. Most of the craft built then were of tubular steel and covered with fabric. Many of the early airmail planes and private planes were completely fabric covered. Thus William B. Stout was one of the earliest to design all metal planes. He was the designer for the famous Ford Trimotor. I recall the first one I saw was brought to New York City disassembled and was reassembled on the floor of the showroom of the Ford Building. It created quite a stir, for it was a monstrous plane for that time. Today it seems quite cumbersome for an aircraft. But it had some marvelous flight characteristics and was a very dependable machine. I recall two advertisements which were circulated with it were: "view ahead" and "look to the skies".

It was the foundation of today's airline industry. I believe several of those 1920's Ford Trimotors are still flying, one somewhere in Michigan and several others in South America.

It was about this time that _____ (Publisher) put up a prize of \$25,000 to the first man who could fly an aircraft from the US to Europe. I recall going out to Roosevelt Field on Long Island from which most of the attempts were made. There were planes lined up there of almost every

possible design. I remember one in particular, "The Old Glory"--a large single engine craft which probably had the most powerful engine built yet. It was one of the planes which after take-off was never heard from again. Of course there were many attempts, but it wasn't until Lindberg and his Ryan-built mono plane "The Spirit of St. Louis" that the feat was accomplished. The history of that feat is well documented and makes fascinating reading. But it was also very exciting to go see the planes which were being used to make the flight. I remember a French attempt which failed to get off the ground, the plane burst into flames and the pilots perished!

It was these early days of aviation history which cause me to marvel again at the foresight of the author Jules Verne. In his story "Around the World in Eighty Days", the central character Phineas Fog makes the trip on a bet with some of his companions. The story was a fable at the time it was written, though the means were probably available. But today we look to the skies and beyond our vision are manmade heavenly bodies hurtling around the earth in less than 80 minutes! They go considerably more miles on one revolution than Jules Verne's characters did when they circumnavigated the circumference of the earth. But just think of all that has been accomplished since then to make such feats possible!

For instance, the story of rocketry started in Germany during the bombing of London with the launching of the V2 rockets during the Second World War. This led later to the development of the manned space program and all the manmade satellites some of which are still exploring outer space and sending back messages to earth. We are still witnessing how marvelous is our age!

During the end of WWII, jet planes were introduced. Today jets are the most common of sights in our skies and at our airports. Their swift travel is often at speeds in excess of the speed of sound. The Concorde flies between the US and Europe in remarkably short time, something like 4 hours. The field of communications has also developed from the wireless with its series of dots and dashes to today's broad range of satellite equipment, and all in such a relatively short span of time! We still have no idea where we

are going...to what lengths we can achieve, or to what distances we can reach!

Speaking of the advances in space technology reminds me of an incident in 1910, when I was still a boy. The famous Haley's Comet could be seen from our farm in Upper Saddle River, NJ. I still remember the excitement and awe as I pondered that sight! I remember learning all I could about what comets were and where they came from. I guess the return of Haley's Comet in April of 1986 will inspire similar feeling and interests in the youth of this time! I wish I could see it again! (He didn't make it, but would have been disappointed in its brightness).

I worked for the Ford Motor Company for quite a few years, but I left them for a short while to go into business with Stan Oberrender who was the Ford dealer in Hazelton, PA. He had been able to buy the dealership from George Markel whose family was associated with the anthracite coal industry. I had recently married and Harriet and I moved up there for a little over a year. It was while I was there that I met Lloyd Yost--one of the early pilots who had trained in military aviation back in the time of Lindberg. Lloyd had several aircraft: one was a Fairchild with hinged wings which could be stored in a garage, quite an innovation at that time! It also had a cabin for 4 people, which was one of the first cabin planes available.

Anyway Lloyd had his own field--there was scarcely a level place anywhere on it, but planes flew out of almost anything then. He taught aviation, and it was under his guidance that my own interest in aviation was born. I took lessons and learned how to fly. I soloed in the Pennsylvania mountains, and had done several cross-country flights when it was time to take my flight exam. The flight examiner was unable to make it to the test day, and it was winter before he could come again. So I didn't get my license then but my love for flying continued to grow throughout the years. The position at Hazelton was temporary because of several problems. The switch from the Model T to the Model A took Ford over 6 months just to alter the production process. There were innumerable delays and trying to get cars to meet the demands was impossible. I had driven the first Model A demonstrator to Hazelton when I first went there. But just about the time that Ford had gotten the production level up to begin making long

promised deliveries, the steel mines went on strike! I decided that dealing with one industry was enough. Having to depend on both the automotive industry and the mining industry was too much of a risk. So I left and returned to New York where I went to work for a Mr. Eber Sherman who had formed a partnership. The Sherman-Sheppard Co., to distribute Ford Tractors in South America. He had a distributorship for various agricultural implements and wanted me to work for him on the Ford tractor division. I stayed there for a year or two. But shortly after I joined them the Ford Motor Co. decided to stop manufacturing the Fordson tractors in the US, and ship their factory to Ireland. Their production was resumed over there with a slightly improved tractor which had a high-tension ignition system, among other things. The Sherman-Sheppard Co. had the distributorship for New York State, northern NJ, much of New England, and northern Pennsylvania. I traveled extensively through the area promoting their new improved tractors. I really enjoyed this time of my life, and feel it was very informative.

However, I felt the future of the tractor being made in Ireland showed less than the best promise, so when the opportunity offered, I went back to Ford Motor Co. in the Lincoln division. I traveled for them for a number of years.

One of the interesting things about working with the Lincoln division was the people I met over the years. I remember on one occasion I was at one of the automobile shows, I believe it was being held at the Waldorf. The Lincoln exhibit had a chassis cut away so that parts of the engine, transmission, drive shaft, and rear axle displaying the finest custom-built sections by Judkins, Willowby, Dietrich and Waterhouse, to name some of the builders - to show the superior quality of the product. One evening I was standing there in the evening attire, which was required then, all dressed up in a dinner jacket in the Hotel's salon, with the world's finest car, when a gentleman came up to me and started a conversation. He thought I might like to know why he had decided to buy a Lincoln. I told him, "Yes Sir, I would like to hear it." He said, "I manufacture steel and am very proud of the quality of my product. I submitted a sample of our steel to the Lincoln Motor Company in an attempt to get some of their business. They sent back to me my sample and a report which said they could not

accept my materials because they did not come up to their standards! You can imagine my surprise! I decided anyone who set standards that were higher than those of the steel we made must produce a VERY FINE CAR, and that I wanted to have one!"

It was about this time that I went back to the Ford division. The company had instituted a new operating section called Sales Training Department. Ford had never been among the leaders in salesmanship, they had depended on the name of Ford to carry their product. It did for many years! But as times changed, it seemed wise to improve salesmanship in the dealerships. To my surprise and consternation, I was picked to head the sales training department of the New York Ford Division. This meant going back with Ford from Lincoln, which I did for about 2 years. It was an interesting time because I had to meet the people who were developing the sales training materials at the headquarters in the Detroit plant. Then my job was to meet with the salesmen and dealers to teach them the techniques for selling their products. The travel along with my experiences working with people were very educational and enjoyable. Later I had the opportunity to switch back with Lincoln and travel for them through the area encompassed by the New York branch which took in all of northern Pennsylvania, Northern New Jersey, New York up to Schenectady, Connecticut and parts of Massachusetts. I also did the sales training of the representatives who attended the New York World's Fair in 1939, including the lecturers at the Ford exhibit. This gave me an opportunity to see the Fair in depth.

It was while I was with the Lincoln Division then when Zephyr was introduced as a completely modern car. It was built on the unit principle of construction. The body and frame were a single unit.

The Mercury was introduced as a division of Lincoln Motor Co. to provide Lincoln dealers with a lower priced automobile which could compete with the medium-priced cars.

I headed up the Lincoln-Mercury sales division at the Green Island Branch, a small plant on the Hudson River across from Troy, NY, which manufactured

springs, radiators and other parts. This was also the sales distribution center.

It was while I was at Hazleton that Lindberg was on tour around the US after his Atlantic flight. He and his sponsor were flying to New York City when the weather closed in and they were forced to land at the sod field in Hazleton. He stayed at the Hazleton Hotel. It was a momentous occasion for the community to have such an illustrious visitor! The Mayor greeted him at the hotel. We all went over to see him arrive, and he seemed more embarrassed than pleased to be met with such a ceremony. I am sure by this time he was quite saturated with the public's adulation!

One of the most momentous experiences I have ever had is one I feel sure I share with pilots the world over--my first solo flight. I especially remember the tremendous thrill I felt when the Plane lifted off the ground and I knew that I was completely in control of that plane--it was my sole responsibility to get it safely back on the ground!

While I was in Pennsylvania, another incident happened; a cross-country flying contest--a transcontinental race for 11 sizes, shapes and types of planes. It was a handicap affair, and the first scheduled stop was at Middletown, Pa. So, Lloyd proposed that I schedule my first cross country flight for that objective.

From the Middletown airport I could watch all the contestants come in, touch down and return airborne to the race. Lloyd was flying his Fairchild which carried four passengers. His mechanic, Bachman, was taking the plane I normally flew with two more passengers. So that left me with the odd plane in the hanger, a Waco 10. Lloyd warned me there was a little problem with it. The plane only seemed to go all right if you had partial choke on; but he still hadn't determined the real problem. I was so eager to go that I welcomed the opportunity to fly with my own handicap! So, I took off as the third plane in the line, right behind the mechanic. I had to follow him as I didn't know my way to Middletown. But I quickly learned that in order to keep my engine running smoothly, I had to remain at full throttle. Bachman was flying at cruising speed, which was much slower than my plane. If I tried to slow down a little bit, my engine would begin to sputter!

The only alternative I could think of was to stay at full throttle and climb in order to kill speed. By the time we reached Middletown I was at least 5,000 feet above him! I had to circle and circle in order to lose all that altitude. The field seemed huge by Hazleton standards, there was a large circle in the middle of the field. I didn't know what it meant--if I was to land there, avoid it or what? So I selected a small corner of the field which was adequate to land the plane I was in, and proudly set it down. I taxied over to the parking area. Lloyd was standing by the parking ramp doubled over in laughter! When I pulled up, he pointed to the back of the plane. I cut the engine and looked back to find I had accumulated what amounted to a bale of hay on the back skid. It appears I had raked up the hay field and was delivering it to the barn!

This story provides some insight into early aviation. At this time, most airplanes used for instruction purposes had a tail skid on the back sectional in a perfect landing--called a three-point touch down--the skid and wheels and hit the ground simultaneously. The tail skid was the only brake on the aircraft. Its drag eventually slowed the plane to a stop. Imagine depending on that to stop the planes of today.

A favorite story of mine is about the aircraft and pilots who provided the country's first airmail service. The mail routes crossed the continent, but there were no guidance systems other than the maps which the pilots carried with them. At night they were guided by a series of lights which were equally spaced and within sight of one another. How those pilots accomplished all they did considering the conditions and aircraft they had is a real tribute to them.

The area around Hazleton, Wilkes-Barre and Scranton is the mountainous anthracite coal area of Pennsylvania, and it became known as the graveyard of the early airmail pilots who had to fly the route between Cleveland and New York, more planes were lost in that area than in any other route of the service.

Hazleton is the highest city in the state, at an altitude of some 2,000 feet above sea level. The valley where the airfield was located must have been about 1,000 feet lower. But the countryside was quite varied and made for

interesting flying. The coal mining area covered a wide area of eastern PA. The veins of anthracite underlay much of the land from Carbondale to Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. I recall that in the Carbondale area there was a mine which had had a vein of coal burning for over twenty years then, and all efforts to extinguish it had failed. For all I know, it is burning still! The people were also quite interesting. We got acquainted with a number of the coal baron families. I mentioned our acquiring the Ford dealership from the Markle family, who held controlling interest in the business. They were well-known and quite wealthy. Stan Oberrander was a good friend and college mate of George Markle, and together they got into some interesting situations. I recall once when they got Lloyd to fly them into New York City where they literally took over a night club for 3 days and nights enjoying the band, drinks and fellowship.

I also met Calvin Pardee, from another of the coal baron families. Cal was a fancier of fast automobiles and drove a foreign touring car--the Dusenbergs. He also took up flying with Lloyd Yost. They had a standing bet as to which could climb Cunningham Mountain first--his car or Lloyd's Fairchild. Lloyd finally demonstrated the superior speed of his airplane. Calvin subsequently bought a Waco airplane from Lloyd which had a Warner radial engine. But he never would solo it! He accumulated over 50 hours flying time, but never flew by himself! He was also an avid skier and spent much time at Lake Placid.

Harriet and I stayed at the Bachman house which provided us with some really sumptuous meals. The Bachman family spread a wonderful board three times every day!

Speaking of wonderful boards, the Pennsylvania Dutch [Deutsch] area to the east of Hazleton provided me with many delightful experiences. In addition to the marvelous food, I met some other memorable experience. I remember once having to call on the Ford dealer at Kunkletown, which is in the heart of the farming area. Mr. Gower, the dealer, was selling quite a few tractors. I was interested in learning exactly how many tractors he had delivered because his records didn't agree with ours. However, when I checked it out by thoroughly reviewing his cigar boxes of records (he had no formal bookkeeping system), I determined that we owed him several

thousand dollars in bonuses, which he had earned but never claimed! I had to stay overnight at the local hotel while working on the bookkeeping, and that was run by the Ford dealer. He also operated the lumber mill, and he had a cider press which was turning out some delicious fresh cider while I was there. At dinner than night I was in for a real treat! -- 3 or 4 different meats, vegetable galore, jellies, breads, honey and pies of all kinds. It truly was what is sometimes called a "groaning board"!

The Vermont and Berkshire County, Mass areas are beautiful in the summer. But they can become terrible in the winter. I recall on one trip to Watertown, NY which is up on the Watertown Plateau, I left Utica for Gouverneur about 1pm on a beautiful sunny day. Before I ever reached Gouverneur, it was a raging blizzard. The temperature kept dropping and road conditions were so bad that we could only crawl along. I was burning up my gas trying to keep the engine on to keep the heater going. A tractor-trailer rig had blocked the road, and it was past midnight when I finally got to Watertown. I was sitting on an empty tank! When I got up next morning, the temperature was 32 degrees below zero! But a gorgeous clear day. The next time I had to go to Watertown, I traveled by train! I saw huge mounds of snow which had drifted over the cars abandoned along the highway which parallels the railroad track! I remember once seeing the linemen working to repair the electric wires by standing on top of a snow drift! It's unbelievable how much snow can pile up in a short time! The attractive home we were renting in Nyskyuna, as I said before, had been built on speculation, and we were its first residents. Shortly after the cold weather arrived, Harriet and I had another couple over to play bridge. It was bitter cold outside, so I lighted a fire for the first time, and kept it well stocked to keep the heat coming out. Harriet remarked after several hours that I needed to get some more wood to replenish it. So, I started down the cellar steps when I looked up and saw that the floor rafters were burning! Flames were running all along them. I called my guest down to help me and we hooked up the garden hose and started to spray the ceiling of the cellar, which of course supported the floor overhead. We got it extinguished about the time the fire department arrived. But they checked around and said, "We'll have to break through the wall because there is a terrific amount of heat behind it right here. It may burst into flames again." What a chore that turned out to be! But what they learned was that in

cutting corners, the builder had used ordinary brick around the fireplace instead of the fire brick that is required. Of course there was enough heat transmitted through the ordinary brick to cause the wood to begin burning! We remained nervous all that night and for some time after for fear a fire might break out again. And the mess that the firemen made when they pulled all that plaster off the wall! I don't know how we survived that night but I feel sure no one was able to sleep!

In the days before we were married, Harriet worked for an accounting firm in downtown New York, and she occasionally did some stenographic work for the adjoining office which was a ship broker. He told her he could give her a free trip to Jamaica, if she would like to take some friends on one of his banana boats. The cost would be for food, plus purchases she might want to make in the islands. The boats plied the ocean lanes from the city along the coast to Jamaica and back, about five days each way with an extra day spent in Jamaica loading up the cargo. Harriet invited me along with two of her girlfriends, Pearl Dimmick and Gladys Conklin. I arranged my scheduled vacation for June 1926. It was our first ocean voyage, one we were really anticipating enjoying. Harriet and I took seats up on the prow where we could enjoy the beautiful day and the spectacular views. I recall enjoying the trip through the Narrows to Sandy Hook. But shortly after the pilot boat pulled alongside to pick up our harbor pilot, we entered the open ocean and started to hit the ocean swells. The motion soon turned her a green color, and she developed a case of seasickness which lasted the entire five days on the boat! There was little she could enjoy about that trip! During the trip we saw a school of whales probably somewhere off the coast of the Carolinas. They looked monstrous from the boat! One of them appeared half as long as the boat itself!!

I found the trip very enjoyable. We entered Port Antonio in Jamaica one morning and went ashore, where we rented a car and driver to take us to Kingston. He took us along the coastal area, which was most impressive with its palm trees and banana plantations and imposing views of the sea. We spent the night at the Myrtle Bank Hotel in Kingston. It was a beautiful old hotel which I understand has been rebuilt twice since then. The next day we headed back to the ship by the mountain route, crossing Castleton Gardens, which are some beautiful tropical gardens there. We took this trip

in 1926, during Prohibition, and Jamaica, being part of the British Empire, had plenty of liquor. So, we proceeded to stock up. I remember buying a case of White Horse Scotch, some rye whiskies, bourbon, rum and other liqueurs. A case of Scotch was just \$18, or \$1.50 a bottle. So, we took it all aboard the boat where a member of the crew assured us he could smuggle it into the states with the ship's laundry. We planned to meet the laundry truck somewhere away from the boat slip, but when we managed to meet the truck on the other side of the Brooklyn bridge, we got a little better than half of what we'd bought. The rest disappeared en route from the ship; payment, I guess, for the service we had received!

It was that same year, when Harriet and I agreed to get married. But she wanted me to ask her Dad for his permission. I recall the evening very well! Her Dad was reading in the living room, and I used my best manners to ask him if he had any objections to my marrying his daughter. He asked me a few questions, though he knew me very well as we'd been going together for some time. He said he had no objections, but where did we plan to live? I told him that for a short time, we'd like to live there with him. We would look for a place of our own, and then move out. It was on this basis that he agreed. So, we planned to have a New Year's Eve party and invite our friends. We would be married at midnight! We wanted the wedding to be a surprise! And, it did work out that way. However, we had invited our Staten Island relatives, and it was such a stormy night--snowing and sleeting that they were unable to [get] there until about 12:30. So we delayed the ceremony. We had a little orchestra playing for the dancing, and they had been prompted to play the wedding march. Also the husband of one of Harriet's friends was a minister and we had asked him to perform the ceremony. Since he was also a close friend of the people at the party, no one suspected anything out of the ordinary. We held the ceremony closer to 1am, and everyone was aghast when Harriet started down the stairs to the wedding march! Harriet's brother, Lenord, was my best man, and we waited together at the bottom of the stairs. When everyone finally realized what we were doing, the surprise was complete! We had reservations at the Hotel Alexander Hamilton in Patterson, NJ, for our first night, but the dancing and snowing went on for a long time and we were late in getting away.

Sometime after the wedding, Harriet and I rented a one-bedroom apartment in a new building in Brooklyn near Prospect Park. Some summer neighbors of ours had an apartment in the building and had recommended it to us as new and attractive. We lived there about one year while I commuted back and forth by subway to the Ford office on 45th and Broadway. It was a fun time for us! Harriet continued to work for the accounting firm and also kept in touch with the man who had provided us with the Jamaica trip.

The next year we moved to another apartment in Hackensack, NJ. We were there only a short time as Harriet's dad had died of cancer and her mother was at home. Lenord and his wife Sally lived in Montvale and we moved to Allendale and rented a house there, putting us back home in the area where we had grown up.

Harriet's mother died of a heart attack only about 6 months later. The Bierbrier property was divided into three tracts, Lenord and Sally took the house and adjoining lands; Bud, the younger brother, took the barn and central piece; and Harriet and I got the four acres which contained the apple orchard. We decided to build our own home there later on. But it took quite a while because we had to do so much to get ready for it. We were fortunate in having a good friend, George Debaun of W. Saddle River Road & Stone Church Road, who was both an architect and builder. He knew about a pre-revolutionary war Dutch colonial home which had just been demolished to make way for a subdivision. The red sandstone blocks of which it had been built were all hand hewn. We contracted to get all these blocks as well as the oak timbers. We had a lot of fun planning and building it! The design was a colonial two story with dormer window and a covered front porch with flagstone. It was built on a steep embankment and the driveway ran along one side to the back where the garage was in the basement. We also had a small bathroom and a nice game room with a fireplace down there. The floors were all beautiful, pegged wood. This was the first and only house we ever built and we were very proud of it. We were able to live there about 5 years, during which Sandra was born. But when I was promoted to manager of the Sales Division in Troy, NY we leased our home and moved to the area near Schenectady. We were very reluctant to rent the house, and we were furious and saddened when the

renters nailed their Christmas tree to the pegged floor, along with other destructive acts.

When Ward was born in Hackensack, NJ, Harriet had to stay down there with Sandra and try to do something with our place there. After that she brought the children up to a very nice brand new house we had located in a little place near Schenectady, NY, called Nyskyuna. The house had been built on speculation, and it seemed an ideal situation for us as it wasn't too far from the Green Island Ford plant, where I had to go daily. We really did enjoy that area. I loved traveling around the Adirondack mountains of NY state, especially in the summer when they are green and beautiful. But the winters are something else! -- Fighting ice, snow and slush; and catching colds, hail and sleet--I soon had my fill! I do remember enjoying one winter experience. It was when I was calling on a dealer at Lake Placid. The Lincoln salesman for the Gladd Brothers had been a member of the US Winter Olympic Bobsled team at Mt. H in 1931. He made arrangements for me to make the bobsled run! I was rather reluctant to go, but he assured me it was "perfectly safe" and that I would really enjoy it. So I made the run with three professionals, and it was a marvelous experience! However, I would gladly have gotten off after that first few seconds. The track appears to drop straight down for hundreds of feet and you gain tremendous speed before starting into those terrifying turns. I rode in the 2nd or 3rd position behind the steersman and in front of the brakeman. I knew we would fly off when we entered that first turn, and it still amazes me how the sled banked into that curve and we stuck to the sled like glue.

Schenectady was in the regular snowbelt of upper New York state. My job at the Green Island Branch had me traveling through the cold upcountry of the Adirondacks. I recall enormous snows in the Cherry Valley area and up on the Watertown Plateau. I got fed up with the frightening weather. Surely somewhere there was a better life than we had there. So, I decided to look elsewhere. Also, I realized that if I was to progress with the company, I would have to expect transfers from place to place, and that didn't hold much pleasure for me. So, I contacted my counterpart in Jacksonville, Florida, and learned from him what Ford dealerships might be available in Florida. He told me of several, one in Live Oak, another in Melbourne, and one in Homestead. I had never heard of the latter and wondered where the

heck it was located. But when I learned it was only 25 miles south of Miami--SOUTH of Miami sounded as warm as one could find on the mainland! -- I decided to go check it out. I talked to my general manager about buying my own dealership. I told him I wasn't able to do my job very well because I had other things on my mind and I wanted permission to take my vacation then and go on down to decide on the Ford dealership, or else come on back to my work there. He agreed. So I went down to stay with my brother Herb in Coconut Grove. I drove down to Homestead and met the dealer, a Donald Niece. I told him I had heard his place was for sale and that the dealership could be bought. He said, "Yes, it can be." I said, "Well, you are talking to a prospective buyer." So we chatted some more and I finally made him a deal. I then returned to Coconut Grove and contacted an attorney my brother knew to have the papers drawn up. After everything was concluded, I returned to Troy, NY, and told the general manager that I would henceforth be a Ford dealer in the sunny south!

When I was buying the dealership, one of the stipulations I had insisted on was that I control the sales of the Ford-Ferguson tractor. It was newly built using the patent of Harry Ferguson, who invented the unit system of implements as well as the hydraulic system to control them. This system is so practical that most all farm tractors use it to this day, and it is also widely used in the heavy equipment industry. Anyway, as Homestead was a winter agricultural community, and war was a distinct possibility, I wanted to be sure I could survive if the cars and trucks were cut off. Surely the company would continue to build tractors in order to provide the foodstuffs necessary! As it turned out, I was correct. Only six months and two days after I became the Ford dealer in Homestead, the Japanese bombed Pearl harbor and we entered the war. But the foresight I had displayed carried us through. I could get sufficient quantities of tractors!