

PART THREE

TOWN

The Little House on Smallwood Lane

Many mornings I remember going down the little dirt road to the house on Smallwood Lane where my husband's grandmother lived. Eunice Smallwood Phipps was one of those who came to Fair Oaks quietly, and quietly lived out her eighty six years.

Born in Texas, she and her husband, W.C. Smallwood worked the crops from Oklahoma to Texas and finally left the dust bowl and came to California in about 1922. They worked their way up the valley harvesting fruit and finally settled in Fair Oaks in 1926.

Many of their relatives had come to the Fair Oaks town much earlier. Uncle Lum Smallwood arrived in Fair Oaks in 1904 and owned part of the land on Olive Street where the Fair Oaks cemetery is now located. Lum lost his life helping to clean up in San Francisco after the earthquake in 1906. In 1913, his nephew, Jim Smallwood came to Fair Oaks and became constable. The next year his two sisters, Mrs. Nora Ward and Mrs. Nannie Steen arrived in Fair Oaks. So it would seem Fair Oaks was a likely place to settle with family already here.

When they arrived in Fair Oaks, Eunice worked in the fruit packing sheds in Orangevale and the olive processing plant in Fair Oaks. Many of those ladies who worked in those plants took their children along with them to work and the children played around the buildings all day while the women worked.

Within about six years of the time they arrived in Fair Oaks, W.C. Smallwood became ill while working on the gold dredge and died almost immediately. Some years later Eunice married Mr. Joe Phipps.

I remember most of my visits to her home. The first was when I was just a child I walked over there with my friend, Mary Ann from the Grammar School during our lunch hour. Mary Ann's grandmother was expecting us and had a table set with everything you could think of to eat. I still remember the cherry pie and it has been nearly fifty years!

The days I treasure her friendship most were the difficult days after the loss of my husband, her grandson in a plane crash. I had a friend where I could go on a morning with a heart almost breaking. A friend who understood.

I would make my way down the narrow dirt road to her house and stop my car under the tree by her little white picket fence. After struggling with the hook on the gate, you made your way down a short walk, stepped over the dog and around the Christmas cactus. Before you could duck your head under the dripping porch roof, Grandmother would be standing there in the doorway calling your name.

As I stepped into the door of her little home I felt the welcoming strength and loving heart of a little old lady who had lost her husband, her son, her grandson and since then her great-grandson to sudden and unexpected accidental death.

There was just room for her at the end of the couch and for me in a chair by the kitchen. The other chair by the little stove was kept for Carl Johnson, her granddaughter's husband who would often drop in just to read the paper, set a spell, or to inquire how she was. The rest of the room was piled with quilt scraps. She made quilts for all of her family. I still have a Star of Texas quilt she made for us for a wedding gift. The furniture was topped with framed pictures of her family. And, the kitchen table was always setting with an assortment of things to eat.

In the window hung the flag with a gold star in honor of her son who died in W.W.II. That flag hung there as long as I can remember.

We wonder why some suffer so much loss. I shall never be able to understand her loss, nor how hard she had to work all of her life. Many a neighbor, friend, family members, myself included have seen and hold precious the memory of what a loving, understanding, beautiful, ambitious and generous lady it made of her. It was wonderful just to drop by and sit with her in her cozy little house.

There was *Gold* in Fair Oaks. It was in the golden heart of a little old Grandmother, Eunice Smallwood Phipps.



THE NEW DOG

When my dad was just a young teenager, the family got a new dog. They had tied him up a ways from the house in under a tractor.

All night long the dog whined and barked. My Uncle John thought it was because the dog was new and frightened. My dad kept coming out and saying cuss words to the dog thinking that would calm him down.

Finally, my uncle heard my dad come out with the shotgun and thought that the dog was a goner. Sure enough, KER-BHAM. There was total silence the rest of the night. John was heart sick. When morning came the little dog woke up and started barking again to come to the house.

My dad had shot a skunk that had been tormenting the dog!

"The Passing of the Backhouse"

James Whitcomb Riley went on to say, "When memory keeps me company and moves to smiles or tears, a weather beaten object looms through the mist of years." This verse from the "Passing of the Back house", brings back the memory of many a story telling session that went astray. Our family loved to tell stories and often they were embellished with the telling and the struggle to out do each other. Usually ending in gales of laughter and tears.

In early days only the finest of homes had indoor plumbing. Most likely this is the reason so many folks had some amusing story to tell. Ours usually starting with the time my sister Laura disappeared, not to be found anywhere. Fearing some wild beast had eaten her or something equally fearsome, the whole community was enlisted to help find her. The search went on for hours. Finally, some person breaking ranks for the call of nature opened the door to the privy and there sat Laura sound asleep.

Then my mother liked to tell of the time when it used to rain in Fair Oaks. On one such day the rain came down in torrents and the little flock of spring ducks found it was wonderful fun to run from the top of the hill and slip down the little rivulets that I pedaled my rusty little car over. Soon the rivulets turned to torrents and down the hill they went and you guessed it. . . . in under and down in to the outhouse. My mother kindly rescued them and put them safely back into their pen.

My Uncle John has told me this story so many times. His mother died when he was born, leaving his distraught father with four young sons to raise. The father continued to talk to his wife just as if she were still with him. Often standing in the persimmon orchard, he would shake his fist and yell at her tucked safely up in God's Heaven. When the boys got older he had to talk with her where they would not overhear. John said if he wanted to know how he stood with his father all he had to do was go out and sit behind the outhouse and listen while the old man gave the daily report on the boys to Elizabeth.

The backhouse was indeed a fearsome thing. Somewhere there in the darkness crept the boggy man, yahoodi and the biggest bear. Often on Halloween night they were found up on top of houses or barns. Sometimes, luckily, if they were not gone completely, they were only moved back a couple of feet catching the sleepy stumbler unawares.

"Behind the house and barn it stood, a half mile or more, and hurrying feet a path had made, straight to its swinging door."

MISCHIEF

When Grandfather got old he would sit in his big red leather chair and muse. Sometimes you would look over at him and he would be smiling. He would puff on his old corn cob pipe and blow smoke in wafts that encircled the old red chair. If you could get him to tell it, there would be a fine story. One of his favorites was about the school bus.

In the early days of Fair Oaks every child over six years old walked to school. My dad had to walk a little over two miles each way. The roads in his time were not yet paved. In the winter they were churning with mud as huge wagons full of oranges came from every direction to the packing houses which were downtown. In the summer this same mud turned to a grade of dust as fine as face powder. He walked to school until his second year of high school at San Juan when the District purchased a bus.

It was this school bus that so often made him smile over the long years. A man named Bill Spangle drove the bus and picked up students all over Fair Oaks. Very often the bus would get mired down in the mud and all the big boys would have to get out and push it. They would gather all around the bus and pose with hard worked muscles. When the driver would get ready and yell for them to push they would all dig in their heels and pull backwards making it almost impossible for the bus to go forward. Sometimes they didn't get to school until noon!

Remembering, he would laugh until the tears came. Laughing he would press the brown button that opened the flaps on his old standing flush ashtray and pound his pipe. Tucking the pipe into the pocket of his worn bib "overhauls" he would drift off to sleep with the sweet memories of a by gone day.



Gun Cleaning Techniques

My Grandfather Vincent had a favorite old shotgun which was one of the few treasures he brought with him from Kansas. One day he decided that his sons were not taking good enough care of it so he got it out of the closet and was going to clean it. He had not expected that the gun was loaded and the first thing that happened was that he blew a hole in the kitchen table.

When the boys got home they found their father in a state of pale blueness and thought he had a heart attack. It was only the gun.

School Days



'Reeding, riting, rithmetic,' must have been taught there at the old Fair Oaks Grammar School on the corner of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Winding Way. But, I remember most the friends I had there and all the wonderful years of learning to play together, of citizenship, sportsmanship and community spirit.

The old brick school survived all of the earthquakes, but apparently did not survive the earthquake laws. It was an incredible work of architecture. As I think of it now, how efficient it was, built of brick with windows on an inside courtyard along the morning side. The floors were made of solid oak that was kept waxed and clean. The main entrance was facing Fair Oaks Boulevard had grand wide steps bordered with well trimmed shrubs. We always posed on these steps for class pictures. There was a lawn out front that was mowed by hand and had a thatch at least four inches deep of the richest green grass. The first grade was in a separate little building and grades two through eight went down a long hall in order. There was a wonderful old auditorium with a stage and a balcony that was also used as a hot lunch room.

Fair Oaks in the early days consisted mostly of elderly retired people so it might have been a mile or more between where there were houses where children lived who could play together in the farming areas. I think it was because of this that I looked forward to school and my friends so much. Some of the friends I made there as a child are still my lifetime friends and some of us grew up and got married to each other. Mary Ann McKenny was my best friend all of my school days, we are now aunts to each other's children. We share letters about our grandchildren.

Our times on the playground are so vivid. Every morning we played work ups out on the baseball diamond. My bus got there last and after all of the walking children had arrived. I don't think in all eight years I ever got past being the extra person out in right field that chased the balls. It didn't seem to matter, we were all playing the game whether we were the one who hit the ball or the one who just came to chase it.

We were fanatic about marbles in the spring. We played some sort of game that was laid out with holes like a golf range. My sister remembers when they were allowed to bring their roller skates to school and skate over acres of flat paved and hard rolled dirt school yard. In the winter we would run and slide on the ice. One day I ran and fell on my back and knocked the wind out of me. I still remember my friends staring at me and the indecision on their faces as the bell rang. They all ran off and left me laying there unable to breathe or speak or get up. I laid there until I could feel my clothes freezing to the ground.

I think the most fun thing was not "legal". When we did not get caught we would sneak out of the unfenced school yard in to the surrounding orchards and have grass fights. You could pull tall succulent grass up out of the near virgin soil and with it a nice clod of wet dirt around the roots. This made a missile about two feet long that you could wind up a few times and let go at the other kids. Just as soon as the teachers got done in the teacher's room they would catch us and we would be in trouble.

I am not going to dwell much on the teachers we had. They were all very dedicated well educated beautiful people. But as I look at this with my childhood eyes, I thought of them as bossy, critical, pushy, demanding and always telling on me and getting me in trouble with my mom. She then would drive down to Mr. Alread's house with me and tell him to give me a spanking. I sat pretty subdued in the back seat of the old cow milking car one night as they discussed my giggling in school. Mr. Alread's daughter, Barbara came out to the car and whispered, "You don't have to be afraid of my dad." So teachers mostly interfered with my happy social life.

School did seem more like family than school. My sister recalls on hot days the teacher would let the children take their shoes off and she would run a water hose on the floor. I recall Mrs. Shanz made us a huge sandbox and taught us to play some funny little musical instruments. Mrs. Shanz taught us art and architectural drawing in the first and second grades. I attribute my ability to use my artistic talent to her basic fundamentals.

Sometime in the 1940's a family named Whelan moved to Fair Oaks from back East. They built a movie theater on the north side of the park. One year at Christmas they invited the whole school to come and see Dicken's "A Christmas Carol". Most of us had only been in a theater once, if ever, and thought a Christmas Carol was a song. We were marched ramrod straight, single file downtown from the school to the theater. They also had some sort of treat for us which during war time was quite a wonderful surprise.

I think the hot lunches cooked by Mrs. Mayfield and Mrs. Schroeder were too memorable not to be included in this story. Every morning they came and cooked a meal for perhaps a hundred kids for which we paid 25c. These meals were such things as fresh roasted turkey, peeled, boiled and mashed potatoes, peas, carrots and a slice of cranberry jelly. For desert they often had real cherry pie. Real pie in those days came from a bakery.

The lunch was served in the auditorium which had a nice stage with a real draw curtain and lights. At the back was a balcony. The auditorium was used for lunch, for PTA meetings, graduation, maybe a special program or a movie on a rainy day. The eighth grade girls helped to serve the lunch and clean up. They got their lunch free for the week they helped.

The memory that comes back to my amusement is the Christmas play. We had practiced for months. On the night of the play we were all dressed in

our costumes and waiting our turn to go down the hall from the third grade room to the stage door, up the little steps and through the dressing room onto the stage. In order for everyone in the school to be in the play, everyone had some little line to say and we all came in at different times. My line was, "Hark, who goes there?" My only line. No one has ever said where were you or why did you not come in on cue. Somehow we all got to kissing each other in cloak closet and I missed my part. I suppose quite a few of us did. Those first tender kisses of childhood innocence will be remembered forever.

I think we had teachers who were very well suited to leading and teaching children. I recall after the war the Arase's came back from detention camp where the American-Japanese had been sent during the war. Mrs. Brown, our fifth grade teacher explained what the camp was and briefly why. She then explained that the war was over and that Kaname` was one of us and that we would call him by the new American name she had made up for him, Kay. And that was that.

Some of my best friends were the janitors, At first there was a wiry little man, Mr. Corbett who kept the school in a marvelous way. But, he did not care much for us children. I suppose we walked mud on his waxed oak floors. Later came Jack Dave and Mr. Schroeder. We all loved these two men dearly. They also drove the school bus. We would ride along, talk and laugh with them. I remained friends with George Schroeder all his life.

A school story would not be complete without telling about the ink wells. We had wooden desks that all bolted together in a row. The front of one desk was the back of the desk in front of it. So then we were in real close contact with each other. Vernon Whitney could not resist putting the end of my sister, Wanda's long auburn braided hair in his ink well and closing the lid. One day she had about enough and she grabbed her ink well and threw it at him. It sailed across the room showering everyone with ink and went through the window. The principal made them each pay for half the cost of replacing the window.

In conclusion to this story about school days I would like to pay tribute to my friend, Janie Graham. Janie was one of my best friends. Most of the years in school she sat just in front of me. When I dream my dreams of childhood, I see Janie sitting in the desk in front of me. Janie had thick woolly light brown Scottish hair. In the morning her mother wet it and braided it tightly getting every wisp of hair in the tight braid. As the day went on and I looked up toward the teacher I was fascinated as the little tendrils fought and twisted their way out of the braids and made an aura of ringlets all over her head.

Janie left us early. When I wake, with my minds eye, I can see her with that hair turned loose to the wind, running through flowery meadows with the angels.



Rolled Ginger Cookies

The kind of cookie that keep soft and great for the lunch box

- 1 1/4 cups of shortening
- 1/3 cup of Brown Sugar
- 1 1/2 cup of Molasses
- 1 Egg
- 2 teaspoons of Ginger
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of Cinnamon
- 1 1/2 teaspoons of Allspice
- 5 cups of flour
- 1/2 teaspoon of Salt
- 1/2 cup of boiling water
- 4 teaspoons of Baking Soda

Cream shortening and brown sugar together. Add molasses and egg and beat well. Sift spices and 2 cups of flour together and mix into creamed mixture. Add the boiling water. Add another cup of flour and let stand one half hour in a cool place. Now sift the remaining cups of flour three times with the baking soda and salt. This is important, as this recipe calls for more than the average amount of baking soda. Add to the mixture and put in refrigerator one hour or more. Part of the dough maybe kept in the refrigerator overnight if you do not wish to bake all the cookies at one time. Roll out a small portion of dough at a time to about half-inch thickness, using as little flour as possible. These cookies should not be rolled thin, as are gingersnaps.

Bake on greased cookie sheets in moderate oven, 350° F. Be careful not to burn. Cookies containing molasses bear watching. Frost, while warm, with confectioners' sugar icing. When frosting sets, store cookies in heavy crock. They keep softer in this type of container. This makes four dozen cookies.

-circa 1940

A Trip Downtown

Some of my most interesting memories of my childhood during the 1940's were of trips to downtown Fair Oaks.

Most often it would be my dad, who off on some errand would pick me up and set me up on the seat beside him in his big truck. We would be out the drive and down Sunset Avenue. By the time he was through shifting gears we were going up the hill on the two lane road lined with olive trees to Fair Oaks Boulevard. We would turn at the corner of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Sunset where Lee Smith had such a beautiful piece of property planted with every kind of scrub or tree known in California. The family had a small florist business out of their home. They were also known world wide for their exotic bird farm.

There wasn't much but open fields between Sunset Avenue and the Fair Oaks Grammar School as we followed Fair Oaks Boulevard to town. Blanchard's had a small fruit stand about half way along and then by the school was the Lawson's. Faith Lawson had a beauty parlor upstairs and her husband ran a dynamite business out of the cellar. A business that could have curled half of the hair in Fair Oaks according to a fellow who bought the old house. Down on the next corner was the May's grocery and gas station. When Mr. May died the whole elementary school had the day off in his memory.

Just around the corner and half way up the hill by the Thursday Club lived the school principal, Mr. Alread. Oh my, if I was with my mother she would often wheel in there in our old Ford car and tell him to give me a terrible spanking for giggling with Billy Hinsey and Jimmy Meed. Once you were past there the town was made up of lovely big homes all so trim and neat down to the next curve where the Rice's had their grocery and gas station. What fun it was to go in and look at the bread all in rows and the bakery goods. I still marvel at the chocolate cupcakes, two in a pack with a squiggle of white icing on top.



There were many things about Fair Oaks that were pretty scary to a little child. I was a sickly child and my dad carried me in his arms most everywhere we went. On one particular day we went the Diamond Match Company which was in the building where Racy's is now, next to the old Fair Oaks Water Company. We went to the lumber yard and the prize fighter, Max Baer was there. He, seeing the darling little child, came right at me eye level. I had never seen such a big man in all my life and I started up a squalling that was not too soon calmed.

The water company next door was the neatest little place with a business manager Sim Green and the district water supervisor, Eric Fulton. When they

wanted to work on the pipes they blew a whistle and everyone in the community could hear it and save some water in the tubs and buckets until the repair was done. The same whistle was blown for noon, for a fire, for an air raid and for water shut off. There was a code that the adults never bothered to explain to me so I always felt the worst was about to happen every time I heard the whistle blow.

On down from there at the triangle corner of Fair Oaks Boulevard and Winding Way, where the huge oak grew was the old hotel where Great-grandfather, Doctor William Nellis Kennedy held his office hours. In that fearsome building was housed Doctor Norton Archer, the dentist, and the medical doctor Saverien and the wonderful Doctor Earl Blunden.

Just across the street was the dear little shoeman from Switzerland, Dan Brehm, with his shivery little hairless dogs. Dan was always old. One wondered what love he may have left behind to come so far to a strange land. I often bring a rose to his grave and remember the little Swiss gardener who gave so much beauty to Fair Oaks.

Right next to the shoe shop was the ice machine. Often we would stop and get ice for the old ice box in the cellar. In the summer, a big chunk to chop and make ice cream with the ripe fruit and sweet thick cream we always had in such abundance. Who would think an ice machine could be so interesting. I got to see inside once. It was really fascinating with the huge blocks all lined up to slide out the canvas door that opened when you put in your quarter.

There was a little alley there that went up to some houses and beside it was the saloon. I was always rushed past there and seem to remember only an open door to a dark cavernous building where hushed tones and clinking noises still intrigue me. The next little store was a very fine ladies dress shop called, Vera's. Everyone loved Vera Christenson. She added a lot of style and quality to our life which before had come mostly from catalog goods. In that area was the Broadly Market with its brown plank floors and barrels of goods for sale. Also, along there was Raymond's Insurance Company.

Near Raymond's was a barber shop. Fair Oaks had three barber shops, one on the south side of the park and another down by the old bridge. They still look the same and perhaps still have the same barbers!

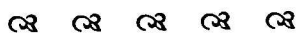
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The dry goods stores were most interesting. The first store I remember was Conkey's on the corner. Mr. Conkey had a very large nose. I was not tall enough to see over the counter so I stood there looking in to the side of a wooden counter. I used to ponder if his nose had something to do with his name. The next owners of that store were the Fergusons. Mrs. Ferguson was a sweet, kind, heavy set woman who always smelled of good cooking. One day I

realized as I looked right into the middle of Mrs. Furguson's ample body I had grown tall enough to see over the top of the counter.

On the morning side of the park by the eucalyptus trees was the Justice Court of Judge Narramore. Law and Order in Fair Oaks in my childhood consisted more of mercy than it did of requite. I recall a day when I had gone down to the doctor with my mom and she had been told I had some new malady and we were on our way back around to go home. When we got to the corner by Rice's she was doing a slow roll through the stop sign with not a car in sight in any direction when she spotted the cop behind a bush. She braked hard, but it was too late. The big heavy car slipped past the line and he came out after her. George Stinson, the singing cop. He may have been an opera singer in his other life. None the less, as a cop he was pretty awesome and my mother was so shook up she told him the whole story of the doctor visit. They had a nice visit since they had known each other for many years. George made out the ticket as they talked and made it out in her maiden name of Kennedy. She didn't notice so when she went in to pay her fine, Judge Narramore said, "Wanda, have you had your name changed?" Unaware of the wrong name on the ticket, she said, "No, of course not." He said, "Well, this ticket is not written out to you then." And with that he dismissed the case.

On the south end across the park were several interesting businesses through the years. On the corner was the drugstore with a long green soda fountain counter. Doctor Archer the dentist always rewarded you with an order for an ice cream cone after you had your dental work done. Next door was a barber, and then perhaps a post office.



I cannot mention the post office without recalling the Fair Oaks mailman, Horace Massey. Mr. Massey had an English car which he drove down the road sitting in the right hand side. Often he would come by with a huge English sheep dog sitting in the drivers seat. My mother nearly fell off her milking stool the time he came past the draw where she was milking the cow with his dog in the drivers seat.

Horace Massey like to smoke and chew tobacco at the same time. He would smoke his cigar from one end while he chewed up from the other end and would greet you at the mailbox with the tattered leaves of tobacco unwinding from his mouth. I always loved this story until my Uncle John told me the rest of it. My Grandfather Vincent was a very righteous man and would never think of lighting up a smoke, but he loved the smell of a good cigar. He would carry an expensive cigar around in his pocket and sniff at it until it had lost its aroma. Then he would give it to the mailman!

The next store over was a small dry goods store that was owned by the Kellams. Later this store was moved around the corner and up the street and was owned by the Callahans. There on that block going up out of town was the

Hinsey's Red and White Market. It would seem that there were too many grocery stores for one small town that does not even have one downtown today. It could have been that they were not all there at the same time.

In the forties there was the Wood's Car Dealer. My dad ordered a new car before the war and did not get it until 1949. Somewhere along the years a hardware store was started across the street but its fame comes more from the years of the Nardenellis and the Hills. Their history rises from the sages who congregate there in the mornings.

Down the hill from the little town was the lovely old Federated Church built of beautiful wood. I am told that they could not settle on one or the other denomination, Presbyterian or Methodist, so they had one kind of preacher one year and the other kind the next.

Fair Oaks continued on from there west on Fair Oaks Boulevard to Carmichael and southeast down to the bridge and across the river. Tucked there on an oak shaded hill was the old Catholic Church. I don't know any of the church history, but I do have many stories, dear to the heart, of the little priest who lived there and made himself available to the community to come to dinner or to visit.

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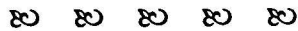
Across the bridge was a lot of activity. There were still gold dredges howling with glee as they gobbled up grape vineyards. There was the rock crusher that crunched away at the huge river rock as the modern days came. My dad often went down to the railroad station to pick up some sort of freight. Sometimes it was huge boxes of crisp cuttings for chrysanthemums that we grew acres of every year.

One day the train had been sitting there for some time and had perhaps cooled down, I am still not too sure, but some of the men decided to set me up on the thing. I think that occasion was the origin of the word NO!

One of my most favorite friends when I was a child was Jack Dave. Jack had a job with the railroad and sometimes when times were slow he would take a nap under a cool box car. Occasionally he would wake up and hit it with a hammer. The men, wise to his scheme would call out, "Almost got it fixed?" Jack would get a grip on his hammer and give it another whack and yell back, "Almost."

On along the Citrus Road was the county dump. There was an old man there, unshaven, with sores and only one leg. I think his name may have been Pegleg. I remember my dad always called him "Old Pegleg", but maybe not to his face. We carried all our garbage down there that was not burned or buried and sometimes we paid him and sometimes he paid us. I never could figure that out. He lived in an old shack made of people's castaways. I think he died

in a fire that consumed his shack. It was said the he had tens of thousands of dollars stashed away in there. It is easy to say those things when it all burned up. Poor Old Pegleg, I don't think anyone knew where he came from, but he is another that lives in the warmth of my childhood memories.



There were a couple of other places in Fair Oaks where we did business. Down Smallwood Lane was an auto mechanic named Jack Hanes. Anything we could not fix ourselves was taken down to him. He had a dog that was hooked on to a roller on a clothesline so they he could run about half a block. Woe be to any burglar who thought he could evade that animal.

There were many fruit, nut and olive processing plants in the area. Most of our crops were sold by trucking to The Farmer's Free Market in Sacramento. Often we would take a truck load of olives down to the olive plants, but I usually was left in the truck bundled up against the winter's cold. In the summer we could ride along to the almond huller and sometimes got out while the big dusty bags of fuzzy, sneezy almonds were unloaded.

The old Fair Oaks Cemetery was probably not a real lucrative business, but visited real often on a trip out. Those of my family who were early settlers bought whole blocks of graves where generations could be buried together. On Decoration Day we would all go down with buckets of little bouquets of mixed spring flowers and sometimes there would be a little program there in a bandstand with lots of flags on the graves of the war heroes.



The Fire Department was in several locations through the years. The Fire Department was a volunteer department. I remember Adolph Heim and my own Uncle, John Vincent. When the whistle blew volunteers rang up the operator and she would tell them where the fire was. Everyone who was able rushed to the fire. I don't think their truck carried much water because often those who came to help grabbed every hose in the yard. Farmers would come with their pipe wagons loaded and hook together pipe marked with different colors. When the fire was out each would gather his own color pipe and take it back home.

The most interesting fires were often on the bluffs which would burn for days. Those fires were fought with wet burlap bags (gunny sacks). The women would help by bringing wet bags and food. When the Doctor Buffum house caught fire the ones who came to fight the fire pulled a large couch into the yard and threw the dishes out onto it. The firefighters did more damage than the fire.

I remember the Kroeger fire. I was just a small child, but everyone ran to help. Someone handed me a full length soft wonderful fur coat and told me to

go put it somewhere. As I was running down the drive through the trees with this glorious thing, I realized how valuable it might be and that it could be stolen so I must hide it. I remember going in to a chicken house and hiding it down between two bales of hay.

The airport was not in downtown which was in the old days how most people planned things. Our Fair Oaks Airport was built out on what was known as the Bald Spot. My Uncle Glen, who was a doctor here in Fair Oaks for many years and the well known Doctor Earl Blunden had fine airplanes out there. I remember them trying to set me in my Uncles red bi-plane that didn't seem to have any top on it and they heard that NO again!

Many businesses were operated out of the home as a supplement to the farm income or simply because the business did not require a storefront. There were the fruit processing sheds, Fowler's Almond Huller, the Broadleys did plumbing, Strackens delivered gas and oil, Red Wasgatt was the electrician, Mr. Kanoff was the PG&E man for this area. Many farmers supplemented their income by tractoring or horse plowing other farmers lands.

As I drive downtown now along the same road I see the same old places; we just change the faces from time to time.



My dad, Walter Vincent built one of the first crystal radios in Fair Oaks. It is remembered as one of the loudest!

When Lindberg made his Trans-Atlantic flight my father put his radio in the upstairs window of his father's house. Nearly 200 Fair Oaks residents gathered to sit on the lawn and listen to the account of the flight as it was broadcast.

Trick or Treat

Halloween remembered in Fair Oaks over a 50 year period.

Ghostly little goblins going down a long dark lane to the old Dickson Ranch. Every tick of a grasshopper making giddy feelings in their tummies. If they could survive the terror of the lane, there was a lovely lady who opened the door to a real mansion. The lady invited the children in to a banquet table set with every possible good thing that anyone could have dreamed of to eat.

This was Halloween in Fair Oaks in the early days. So many of us remember running in the cool damp darkness of the autumn night and surrounding homes with huge jack-o-lanterns cut in to big smiling faces and smelling of hot wax and burning pumpkin.

The old Kroeger house was one of our favorites. we would sneak in through the orchard and surround the house with lit jack-o-lanterns and then hide in the bushes and yell, "Trick or treat"! Mr. and Mrs. Kroeger would come out with their son, Henry and stand on the porch. They would act really surprised with all the commotion. Pretending, as if one of our tricks would be just too much, they invited us in for homemade cake donuts displayed like clouds in their little coats of powdered sugar. The house was always warm and safe from the terror of coming up through the dirt and clods of the orchard. The huge kitchen always smelled of cinnamon and hot bubbling lard. The Kroeger donuts were Halloween fare on Chicago Avenue for three generations.

After Kroegers we would all run to Mrs. Wasgatt's. I was very little and often my feet only hit the ground about every fourth step as an older sister or cousin ran with my hand held tightly in hers. So I don't exactly remember, but I think Grace and Red Wasgatt always had chocolate pie for us. The filling was thick and chewy. I still make her recipe from time to time.

Then we ran down the hill from Chicago Avenue along Sunset Avenue to Uncle Frank and Aunt Julia Forrest. As we came up the driveway to the back porch we could see Frank Forrest, a giant of a man over six feet tall and weighing over 200 pounds, with hands like huge baseball mitts, and a heart equal to his size. Frank was a cowboy from Colorado. He came to Fair Oaks to marry his childhood sweetheart, Julia. Too old to have a child of their own, they became mom and dad to the children on Sunset Avenue for over a half century. As we ran past the big picture window where our friend sat in his big brown leather chair, Julia swung open the screen door, we all crowded in to her little mint green kitchen where she had big ginger cookies cooling on the marble counter.

Our family tradition at the Walter Vincent ranch was to save all of the tree prunings from all year and pile them in a clearing in the orchard. On

Halloween night we loaded the big flat pipe wagon with the children and all the makings for a hot dog roast. Grama started the tractor up and pulled it out to the orchard. Just as it got dark we would light the huge pile of dry brush and it would go up like the Fourth of July. When the coals were down we cooked our hot dogs and marshmallows on fresh cut green willow sticks that smelled good enough to eat also. The children of the neighborhood, seeing the huge fire, would creep down the long lane to see what was going on. Blinded by the firelight, they did not notice the brother-in-laws, nephews, and uncles all hiding in the twisted old almond trees until they were deep into the blackness before the fire. Then the mean guys would all start making their various interpretations of ghostly noises and it was wonderful! After the terrible scare they all ran to the clearing where Wanda Vincent had the biggest jar of candy you ever saw. I always loved that jar. It had a narrow top and if a youngster got a little too greedy and got a big handful they couldn't get their hand out of the jar.

Some of the adults of the town got a little carried away. My great-grandfather had his doctor's office in the old hotel there on the corner in town. Old Doc Kennedy had a feud going with the town Real Estate Broker, William Anwyl Jones. One night Jones thought it would be fun to get several men to put the Doc's black horse buggy up on top of the hotel. Doc Kennedy did him one better by buying everyone a tank of gas who would dump a truck load of garbage on Jone's lawn.

Halloween used to be a night for everyone in Fair Oaks. The men would save their used oil in big drums for the whole year and then on Halloween they would dump it on the hill that went down from town. The hill being much steeper in those days provided quite a bit of excitement downtown. I'm sure some of our great ancestors just thought of an errand that would take them that way so that they could slide down the hill in their cars and a good time was had by all.



GRACE WASGATT'S CHOCOLATE PIE

"After Kroeger's we would all run to Mrs. Wasgatt's. I was very little and often my feet only hit the ground about every fourth step as an older sister or cousin ran with my hand held tightly in theirs. Grace and Red Wasgatt usually had chocolate pie for us. The filling was thick and chewy." -from Trick or Treat.

1 cup of sugar

4 tablespoons of flour

4 egg yolks

1 square cooking chocolate

1 cup sweet milk

Cook this mixture in top of a double boiler until thick. Put into a baked pie crust. Top with meringue and brown in oven. Good with just a puff of whipped cream.



Red and Grace Wasgatt lived in the house on the south west corner of Sunset and Chicago Avenue. Red Wasgatt was the Fair Oaks Electrician.

A Country Doctor

Glen Marion Kennedy lived in Fair Oaks from 1923 until his death in 1961. He died at the United States Naval Hospital in San Bruno.

Doctor Glen Kennedy, my Great Uncle was one of Fair Oaks early town doctors. Glen was a graduate of the medical school at Georgetown University, Washington DC. in 1917. In the summer of 1918 he sailed aboard the USS Chicago as the chief medical officer with a fleet that was sent to South America. On that ill fated cruise he contracted tuberculosis and was sent back to Fair Oaks to live with his parents Dr. and Mrs. William Nellis Kennedy in 1923.

Glen was well provided for by the Navy and did not have to be a doctor for a living. So Glen was a kinder, gentler doctor because he only doctored when he wanted to and then was most often paid with a chicken, or some home canned fruit or garden produce. A real old time country doctor. Julia Forrest was the only available person for home care and often she and Glen would go in to a home to care for a sick family and stay several days. Julia told me that many times they cleaned a house, did the wash, bathed the children, fed the livestock, cooked endless kettles of Glen's famous vitamin rich broth, as well as looking after the ill person.

Glen always had the money for a luxury car, an airplane, and a good sized boat on the Delta. I loved his car, a big sedan with velvet seats and a lining of wool felt. I can remember riding in the back seat of that car and putting my little hand up inside the plush lined strap that hung down to hold on to when you went around a curve and how warm and safe I felt. Behind the drivers seat was a silk rope that stretched across to hold several wool lap robes.

It was on a dark night in September 1927 that he skimmed up Sunset Avenue in his long green sedan on his way to a house call and noticed the lights on in my grandparents home. He noted the time and drove by every hour or so. Finally he wheeled into the driveway and up to the house and went in. There he found my mother in bed with her parents. She was in labor with her first child and had come across the street from where she lived with her husband and his family and got into bed with her parents. Glen came in and said, "Well now, Wanda it is time we had better have a look at you."

I owe my very life to my Uncle. When I was about three years old I lay in the old county hospital in a darkened room in a white iron crib very critically ill with complications from measles. The thing I remember most about that time was seeing my uncle's sweet kind face and his snow white head of curly hair show up at the small window in the door that let the only light into the room. After all else had failed Glen suggested that my parents allow him to send for an experimental drug being used by the military. That drug, Sulfa, came slowly by train many anxious days from Chicago to Sacramento and my life was saved.

He saved my sister's life also. As a nine month old child she got into my grandfather's heart medicine and swallowed most of what was in the bottle. Glen was called immediately, but by the time he drove the mile up Sunset Avenue from Pennsylvania Avenue she was unconscious. Glen had been taught a technique by which sudden acute pain would release adrenaline and not cause any permanent damage. With one quick twist the pain startled the unconscious child so that her little eyes just popped open. Adults that still like to tell the story say they then took turns making her walk. They walked her for two days until the medication dissipated.

My very favorite story was told to me by an old man a few years ago. Floyd Brown's son Larry and his cousin were rocking back and forth on an old wooden trailer. As the boys tipped it back and forth faster and faster Larry lost his balance and fell into the wooden rail, driving in an inch long splinter of wood right next to his eye. They grabbed him up and drove from Orangevale to the Kennedy home in Fair Oaks. It didn't really require much to get the splinter out and put on some medication and a small bandage. Then Glen said, "Now, I am going to give you something to tell your friends about." He then proceeded to wrap Larry's head in yards and yards of gauze until it looked like a huge turban.

This is the Glen Marion Kennedy I like to remember. A simple man possessing a gift of healing, not so much from his education, of wealth, of social status, or the availability of modern facilities, but a bedside manner full of love, caring, kindness, and humor. The old country doctor who would drive to the house, care for the ill person and then sit down for a nice visit with the rest of the family. It was a common thing for Glen to take the family dog on his lap and with the skilled hands of a surgeon give the animal a check up and pick off every flea all the while talking to him in baby dog talk. The family pets always loved him because along with the big leather doctor bag came a fine suit pocket filled with dog biscuits.

Glen Marion Kennedy, Medical Doctor, 1888-1961.

UNCLE GLEN'S APPLE PUDDING

Uncle Glen was the son of Doctor William Nellis Kennedy. He retired to Fair Oaks in 1923. He practiced medicine in downtown Fair Oaks and from his home. He was a physician and surgeon, a graduate of Georgetown University, Washington DC. He became disabled while serving in the US. Navy as a ship's doctor. He was a funny kind man. He had nine wives. His greatest contribution to Fair Oaks was his willingness to care for poor families in their homes. Often he stayed for days and cared for them and their farms. Most often accepting no pay since he had a handsome military retirement.

4 cups of flour
2 cups of milk
2 cups chopped apples
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons shortening
3 teaspoons baking powder

Sift the flour several times before measuring. Then sift several times after adding the baking powder and salt. Rub the shortening into the flour, gradually add milk and mix to a stiff dough. Roll out onto a flour board to less than one half inch thick. Spread with the chopped apples. Roll up like a jelly roll. Cut into 1 1/2 inch slices.

Place in rows in a large deep baking dish. Pour over the following sauce:

1/2 cup butter
2 cups of sugar
6 cups of water which has been boiled together for five minutes. Pour over pudding. Bake 350° for 1 1/2 hours. Basting occasionally. Season with nutmeg and cinnamon.

It is a heavenly desert with vanilla ice cream on it.



Stephanie

Sometimes in life people pass our way and we never know who they are or where they came from. We never know if they had children or a family somewhere in the past. They pass by and perhaps only leave one or two indelible memories to haunt us when we think of them. One such person in Fair Oaks history was Stephanie.

She was something of a mystery. No one even knows what her last name was. She was one of my Uncle Glen's nine wives. When he tired of her, he left her in a little house on the side of the hill across the draw from our house. I still remember the house with a screened in porch that extended in our direction out over the cool willows that grew in the creek.

My sisters remember visiting in Stephanie's house when they were very young. She would recline on a velvet chaise wearing layers and layers of bright patterned silk robes, her bony body was weighted down with cheap gaudy jewelry. A craggy old thing, she clutched a long ebony cigarette holder in her claw of a hand, puffing on a tiny brown cigarette.

My mother was a newlywed and just 18 years old the day Stephanie came to her door. She heard a knock on the door of the little one room house where she lived with my dad. Stephanie must have been in dire need to have made her way from the chaise across the draw to my mother's door to ask for a cigarette. My mom was not at all familiar with the ways of the world, let alone being knowledgeable about tobacco. Well, my mother did not have any cigarettes, but she did have some of my dad's Granger Pipe Tobacco in a big can up in the food cupboard. My mother thought it would not be too hard to make some cigarettes. She got the can of pipe tobacco out and went out to the privy and got the roll of paper. She made Stephanie several good sized cigarettes. (Just a little bigger than a cigar!) The old woman took just one puff on one those stogies. She choked and coughed. The tears ran down her face. She said she guessed it would be best if she went home. She put the cigarette out. My mother asked if they were all right? Stephanie went home directly, but not without taking her homemade cigarettes with her!

No one remembers what happened to Stephanie. I sometimes drive up the hill on Sunset Avenue and see the little niche in the road where her driveway was. It is now nearly hidden by brush and scrub trees, wild berries searching for water taking over the olive trees are all that is left to remind some of us of Stephanie.





Walter at UC Berkley



Wanda in her Senior Ball dress

Walter and Wanda during the courting years.



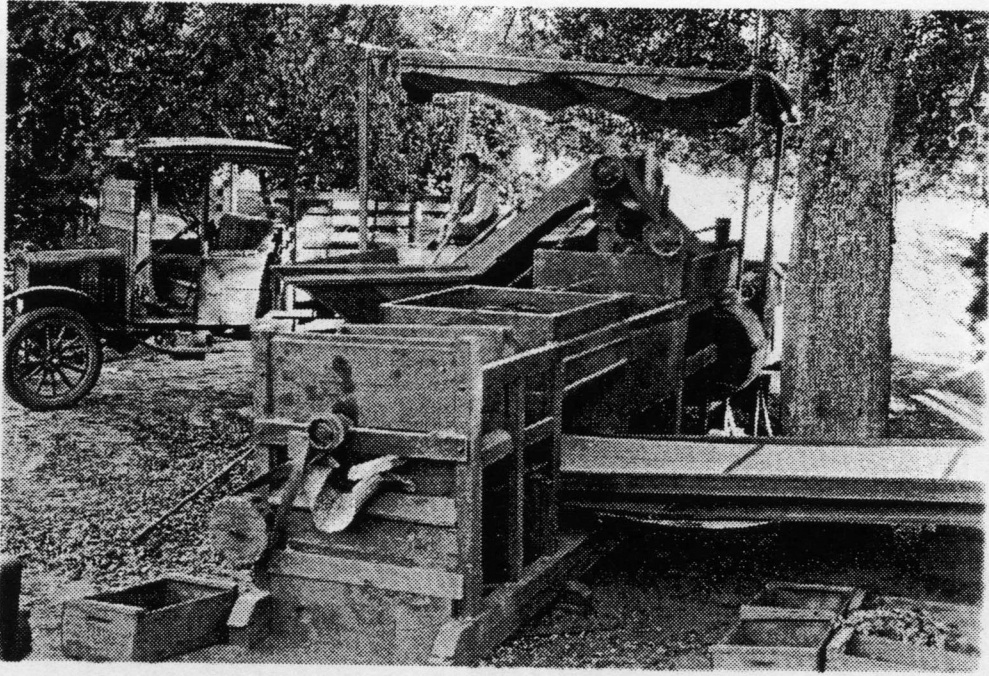
My parents, Walter Horace Vincent and Charlotte Wanda Kennedy after their wedding, July 17, 1927. A honeymoon trip to Faith, Hope and Charity Valley.



Walter and Wanda Vincent wearing homemade heavy woolen swimming suits. The American River near Salmon Falls, 1927.



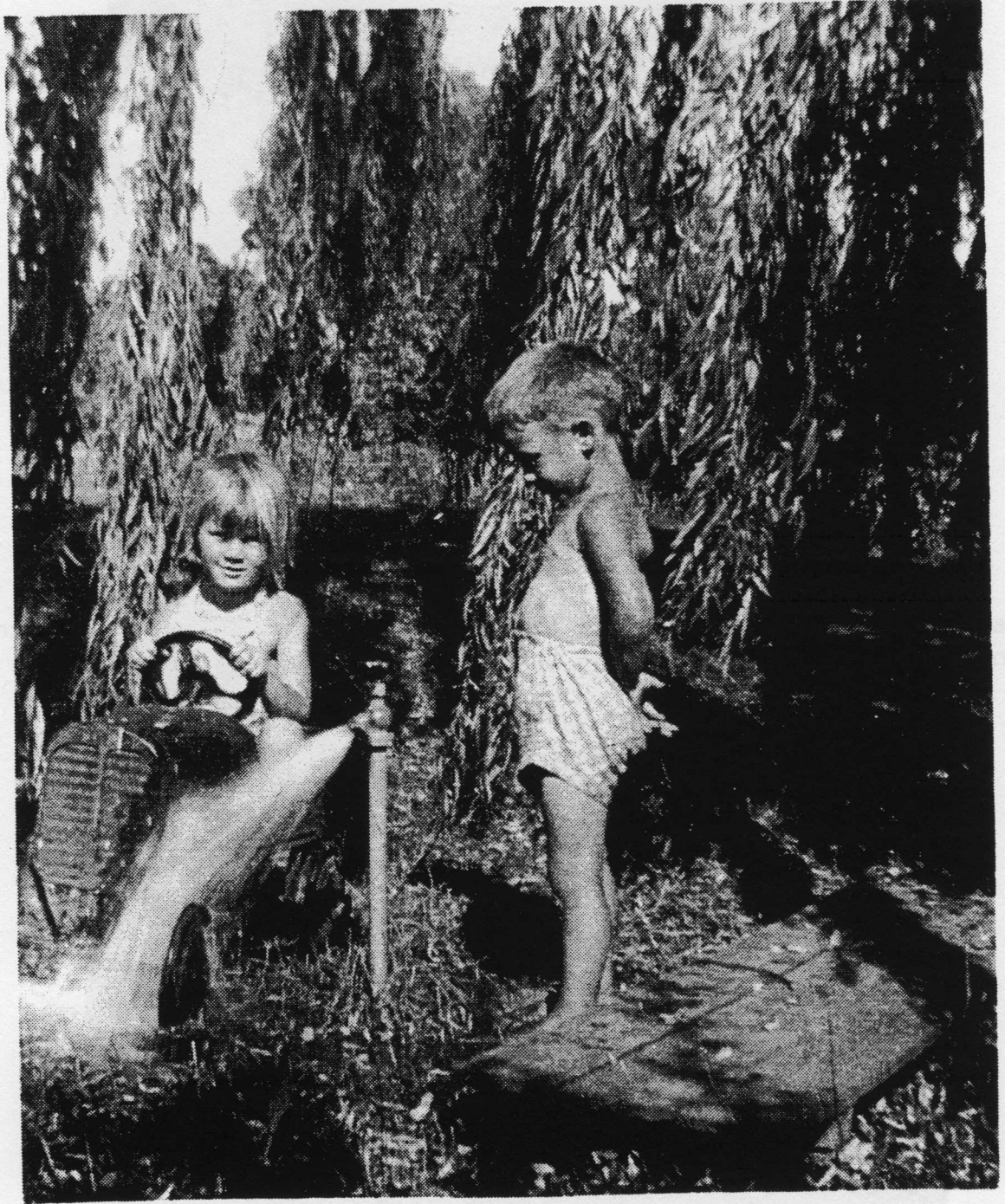
Walter Vincent on his tractor about 1924.



This is one of the first almond hullers in Fair Oaks about 1924. John Vincent is seen in the background.



Sorting almonds on the Vincent Ranch. Left to right Frank Vincent, Julia Schraft, John Vincent, Rebecca Kennedy and Whitney Kennedy.



Summertime

Sarah-Ann in her car with cousin Tommy under the willow tree on Sunset Avenue.