PART I - GROWING UP

Early Days

I was born October 21, 1925, in Tonganoxie, Kansas, a small town about 20 miles west of Kansas City, Missouri. My father, James Rutherford Fair, whom I always called Daddy, ran a small flour mill there called the Fair Mill & Elevator Company. This was the second time he had owned the same flour mill. He went bankrupt during the post-war depression of 1919 and the mill was closed. In 1923 he reopened the mill, but in 1928 he went bankrupt again and we moved from Tonganoxie to his home town, Newberry, South Carolina.

Daddy took a job as a miller's agent, traveling the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. My mother, Georgie Irene Case Fair, who always preferred to be called Mother, sister Mary Nance, brother James Rutherford, Jr.(Jim), and I spent the summer of 1928 in Mountain View, Arkansas, with Mother's parents, while Daddy traveled in his new job. In the late summer of 1928 Mother and we three children moved to Newberry where we lived with my Grandfather, William Young Fair, at College and Chapman Streets. One of the reasons we stayed there was to take care of Grandfather who was 82 years old and a recent widower. Daddy came to visit from time to time, but he mainly spent his time on the road in his sales territory.

In August of 1929 it was decided that the family should be together once again, so we moved to Little Rock, Arkansas. We lived for a month in the Capitol Hill Apartments, and then rented a house at 1524 Schiller Avenue. Two or three years later my parents bought the

house for $5,000. The big white house on the corner of 16th and Schiller was home to me for 43 years. This is where I grew up and where I returned to visit until my parents moved to a retirement home, Presbyterian Village, in 1972.

When I was growing up, the family spent a great deal of time in the house, in the yard, in the vacant lot behind the house, or in the homes and yards of our close neighbors. There was always something going on around the house and, of course, Mother and Daddy were there to patrol us kids. We were encouraged to bring friends home, and we could play anywhere around the house or in the yard. There was very little money for games and toys in those days, but we always had a ball and glove, playing cards, and popular board games like Monopoly. Daddy even put up an "acting bar" between a tree and the side of the house in the hope that Jim and I would use it (to his disappointment, we rarely did).

In the spring, summer, and fall the vacant lot behind our house was a popular place for neighborhood kids to play softball, touch football, and other kinds of games they invented. Since the lot was right there, it was difficult for a game to begin without us knowing about it and joining in. Also, next door the Stantons had a basketball hoop on their garage. Around the corner another friend, John Hal Bennett, had a lighted ping-pong table for us to play on night or day. He later had a high-jumping and pole-vaulting bar and pit. Little Rock High School was a block away and we played on its tennis courts and grounds. We also watched the band and teams practice and generally joined into all sorts of their activities. On the corner of 16th and Park, opposite the vacant lot, there was a small "shopping center" with a

grocery store, a drug store, and a barber shop. We patronized all three, and as kids we hung around them some every day. Mother would send me to the store to buy a loaf of bread (12 cents), bologna (2 slices for a nickel), ham (2 slices for a dime), or a quart of milk (12 cents plus 2 cents deposit on the bottle). The drug store had a pinball machine and a nickelodeon, both of which intrigued me. They also sold ice cream cones or fountain cokes for a nickel, and milk shakes for 15 cents. Mr. Wise, the barber, cut my hair every three weeks. At first I hated going to the barber shop, but later I didn't mind it because every kid had short hair in those days.

There were children for us to play with in practically every house in the neighborhood. Some of the kids were older and friends of Jim or Mary Nance, but they created a lot of activity that I observed even though I wasn't old enough to participate.

My parents and we kids used our front porch a lot in the summer. We would sit out there almost every late afternoon and early evening and visit with the neighbors. During the day we would frequently set up the card table and play games on the porch.

We also played a lot of games in the house. I loved baseball, so we invented several different baseball games. One game was to line the living room rug with books—the Encyclopedia Britannica was ideal—as the outfield fence and set up dominoes at strategic places around the "field". The opponent rolled a marble from behind the center field fence that the "batter" tried to hit with a 12 inch ruler. If the batted ball hit a domino his team received credit for a "hit". If the ball missed all the dominoes the batter was out. The double six was a home

run, the double five was a triple, the double four was a double, and several others were designated as singles. We would keep score and play by the hour.

We played a number of card games such as Solitaire, Old Maid, and Go Fish. A favorite game to play with my brother Jim was card baseball. We would make up teams and play by dealing the cards and scoring what was written on them. We marked the cards with all sorts of plays: strike out, base on balls, ground out third to first, single, double, and so forth. In my imagination I invented the Western League with teams in Topeka, Wichita, Omaha, Council Bluffs, Lincoln, and St. Joseph. None of these cities had minor league baseball teams at that time. I had complete rosters and would calculate batting averages and pitching statistics. I was able to while away countless hours playing card baseball when I was about eleven to thirteen years old. It gave me a lot of practice in the use of numbers, including calculating percentages and averages.

Growing up we were forever making up games to play. We let our imagination run wild as we played cops and robbers or cowboys and Indians with rubber guns, or baseball by throwing a tennis ball against the front steps and fielding it in the street. We fantasized being big league baseball players or varsity track men as we played ball or ran races down Schiller Street. Another pastime was fashioning a bat out of a board and hitting rocks as far as we could in the vacant lot. About the only thing we didn't do were things that cost money. We just didn't have any.

School Days

I began in the first grade of Centennial School in September, 1931. I still remember Mother taking me to the cafeteria for enrollment and orientation. Miss Fausett was my teacher, and art, penmanship, and music were my favorite subjects. Miss Autry was my second grade teacher, and I thought she was wonderful.

Our family was very musical. Mother encouraged my singing and would accompany me on the piano. Some of the songs I sang over the next few years were "Lazy Bones," "Wagon Wheels," and "Up a Lazy River." I wanted to be like the movie star Dick Powell who had lived across the street. Before he went to Hollywood he would come to our house and sing. My attempts to emulate him faded as I was never comfortable singing in public such as in school assemblies.

The Stantons lived next door. Jimmy was by far my best friend and playmate. He was a year older, bigger and better than I was in most things, and I was always trying hard to be like him. There were four Stanton children and there was always a lot going on at their house. In fact, we almost tore the place up at times and Mr. and Mrs. Stanton didn't seem to mind.

One day when I was about five years old and playing in the Stantons' back yard their house caught on fire. Mr. Stanton was burning a Christmas tree in the fireplace and somehow it started a fire on the roof. We didn't know this until a number of high school students came running across the vacant lot to tell us the house was burning. They had seen it from their classroom.

There was great excitement with fire engines arriving, furniture being carried out into the street, and firefighters swarming all over the place.

In May, 1933, I skipped half a grade, so in September I was in the second half of third grade instead of the first half. In September, 1934, two important things happened: the family spent a week at the Chicago World's Fair and, at school, I started lessons on the clarinet. In Chicago a family friend, William Garlington, rented a furnished apartment for us. We went to the Fair every day except for the one day Daddy took Jim and me to see the New York Yankees play the Chicago White Sox. We got there early enough to watch the teams take batting practice. Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig were playing for the Yankees and we really wanted to see as much of them as possible. The Yankees won the game and Gehrig doubled twice to left field. I don't remember what Ruth or anyone else did.

During the fall the city's elementary school music instructor came to Centennial to talk to the third and fourth graders about taking music lessons. Somehow I decided to try the clarinet so the folks rented one for me. From then on, practicing and playing the clarinet took a lot of my time and attention but I liked it. It also gave me a chance to be a member of the junior high and high school bands.

On Christmas Day, 1934, Santa Claus brought me a bicycle that I rode everywhere. My classmate, Otis Cathy, also got a bicycle. We rode our bikes to Centennial, around the neighborhood, and before long, we rode downtown every Saturday to see a movie at the Roxy theater on Main Street. In those days some theaters,

like the Roxy, showed a cowboy movie, a serial, and a cartoon on the weekends. The serial would last for about ten or more weeks and we always wanted to come back to see what happened to the hero.

I always liked riding a bicycle. It gave me such freedom! I even rode one when I went to college and in those days, that was unique.

My first time away from the family occurred in June of 1935 when I went to a one-week camp in southwest Arkansas. The camp was sponsored by Miss Renfro and Mrs. Romine, two sixth grade teachers. At the camp at Caddo Gap we hiked, swam and played all kinds of games. I had a lot of fun for a while but was a little homesick and ready to go back home at the end of the week.

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades students were appointed monitors. The monitors were assigned places in the halls and at the doors to move student traffic along. In the fifth and sixth grade they were also assigned to direct traffic on the streets around the school. I had served as a traffic monitor at the corner of 16th and Battery Streets when I was in the fifth grade. Since Battery served as a US highway it still surprises me that ten and eleven year olds would be asked to stop traffic while children crossed the streets.

In the sixth grade there was an election for head monitor. This was the most prestigious job a student could have. It was like being student body president. Jack Gilkerson and I were asked to run for the position of head monitor. Jack won the election much to my disappointment. About a month or two later Jack did

something that led to his removal as head monitor. This necessitated another election. I ran against Billy Toler and was elected. My disappointment turned to unabashed joy and I felt like I had really accomplished something.

That year I had to start wearing glasses. This hurt me quite a bit because very few people wore glasses in those days, and I thought glasses would diminish my status as a regular fellow. Under all circumstances I did not want to be regarded as a "sissy" and glasses suggested to me, at least, that I was something less than "manly". I was sure that they would limit my ability to be an athlete, a baseball or basketball player, and that was one of my top priorities at the time.

I was promoted to the seventh grade at West Side Junior High School in January 1937. My parents gave me a new shiny metal clarinet, and I played three years in the West Side band. I was selected for the Varsity Band made up of students from all three junior highs in Little Rock. I thought it was quite an honor. I played in it all three years—the last year as second clarinetist. Calvin Holt from West Side was first, and there was no doubt that he was the better player. Calvin and I became the best of friends through high school and for many years beyond.

I made the Honor Roll all six semesters at West Side, and I was especially proud to wear a badge on my sweater indicating that accomplishment. Also, I was sports editor of the monthly newspaper in the ninth grade, and I played on the basketball team in the eighth grade. Unfortunately, I wasn't tall enough or good enough to play in the ninth grade, but I did well in

intramurals. This was partially due to playing basketball in the Stantons' back yard just about every day after school. I have loved basketball ever since.

Shortly after I became 12 years old in October 1937 I joined the Boy Scouts, Troop 24, at Asbury Methodist Church where Mr. Bowen was the Scoutmaster. My brother Jim had preceded me as a Scout and had attained the rank of Eagle. This was a big incentive to me because I always wanted to do everything that Jim did.

Every summer for the next three years I spent two weeks at Camp Quapaw on the Saline River, between Benton and Hot Springs. I completed the requirements for First Class Scout in 1938, and two years later I earned the merit badges needed to become an Eagle Scout. I was awarded the badge in 1940 and was tapped for the Order of the Arrow at Camp Quapaw that summer. I returned to Quapaw for two weeks in the summer of 1941 as a counselor. My years as a Scout turned out to be invaluable in helping prepare me for the challenges that arose shortly thereafter.

I was promoted to Little Rock High School in January, 1940. Calvin Holt and I were immediately selected to play in the high school's national championship band. The director, L. Bruce Jones, insisted that all clarinetists have wooden instruments, so Mother and Daddy dug deeply into the family treasury and bought a Selmer clarinet for me at the unheard of price of $200. Supposedly, it was one of the last instruments made in France before the war, and I treasured it. Calvin and I played second clarinet, third and fourth chairs. Our band went to Shreveport,

Louisiana, that April for the regional band contest and easily won it. Mr. Jones had a terrific organization and was quite a musician himself, as well as a disciplinarian. It was on one of the days in Shreveport that we heard that Winston Churchill had just been elected prime minister of Great Britain. I was almost fifteen years old, and little by little our country's drift toward war in Europe began to arouse my interest.

My First Business Experience

For eight weeks in the fall of 1939 I had an *Arkansas Democrat* afternoon paper route. It was in a marginal neighborhood where about half of the subscribers were poor blacks who found it very difficult to pay regularly. I soon found it impossible to make any money so, reluctantly, I resigned.

Early in the summer of 1940, however, at the urging of my friend Bill Eberts from West Side, I started delivering the morning paper, the *Arkansas Gazette*. My first route was around my home. Each week I delivered over 200 papers for which I paid 15 cents per paper each week and collected 20 cents. Almost everyone paid so I made about $10 a week. I dragged myself out of bed at 4 o'clock in the morning and finished my deliveries around 5:30. Then I flopped back into bed and got up for school around half past seven. I wasn't enthusiastic about the job but I liked making a little money for the first time.

Six months later I was asked to give up half my route and merge the rest with the route next to it. This gave me 300 papers to deliver and increased both the

work and my income by 50 per cent. I hired classmate David Garrett to throw half the papers for $2.00 a week. Six months later I took over another route with 400 papers and I had this route for a year. I paid 13 cents a week for a paper and collected 20 cents. This was a potential income of $30 a week, a good income for those days. Bobby Bogguss was now my helper. Collecting from my customers tied up my Saturday mornings and Monday and Tuesday nights. Surprisingly, I eventually got used to getting up early as there was something special about having the responsibility and making a good income. What I didn't like, however, was calling on non-subscribers and trying to talk them into taking the paper. We had to do this solicitation on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, and I found it difficult ringing doorbells.

One night after a meeting of all the carriers, Ralph Bradbury, the manager, asked me to stay. He let me know in no uncertain terms that my solicitation performance was poor, as was my "attitude" about soliciting, and he wound up his dressing down by firing me and demanding my route book. I was mortified. I left the station and went around the corner to a drug store to kill some time. After a few minutes I went back to Ralph and begged him to take me back. After extracting all sorts of promises to improve my performance, he handed back my route book. I just could not go home and tell Mother and Daddy that I had been fired. It made a lasting impression on me to always do my best, and it ended up impressing Ralph so much that later he complimented me in front of the other carriers.

In the late spring of 1942 Ralph Bradbury joined the U.S. Army Air Corp. We had a going-away party at

Millwood Park for him and his new wife. Less than a year later Ralph was killed in a plane crash. This was the first person I had been close to who gave his life during World War II. I was stunned.

Basic Building Blocks—Family, Religion, Sports, and Music

Both Mother and Daddy came from big families that stayed close throughout their lives. Daddy's family had lived in Newberry, South Carolina, since the 1770s and Grandfather, William Young Fair, was born there in 1846. My Grandmother, Mary Williams Nance Fair, died when Daddy was only three years old. They had eight children but only Daddy, two brothers, and a sister (Uncles Rob and Will and Aunt Nance) lived to maturity. Over the years my aunt and uncles spent a lot of time in Little Rock or we went to see them wherever they lived. There was always talk around the house about the family history, the good old days in Newberry, and everyone's current situation. Aunt Nance acted as the catalyst in these activities.

Mother had nine brothers and sisters. Her mother, Angie White Case, (Granny to the grandchildren) and her father, Richard Case (Grandpa) had a big house in Mountain View where their children and the grandchildren gathered from time to time, especially in the summer. During the 1930s four of my uncles and aunts and their families lived in Mountain View, so there were always a lot of relatives around when we visited. When we were there for two or three weeks other members of the family would visit and add to the fun. Mother and I really enjoyed these visits, while Daddy usually stayed in Little Rock or had to travel.

Mountain View was a small town of 500 people. It is the county seat of Stone County. In the 1930s it had no paved streets and no city water, electricity or other amenities. The Cases were relatively well off. They had installed their own pump and watering system and a gasoline generator for electricity. There were two indoor bathrooms, a telephone (with a hand crank to call the operator), a piano and other musical instruments, a storm cellar, and big wrap-around front porch where the family would adjourn for after dinner conversation. The big house and the yard provided we children an almost infinite number of places to play.

Grandpa ran the town's general store, post office, Ford dealership, and various other things. He owned real estate, including two of the houses my uncles lived in and another house across the street. Granny took in boarders and eventually ran the Case Hotel. In fact, that was how Mother and Daddy met back in 1912. Daddy was traveling in north Arkansas and stayed several nights with the Cases. At that time Mother was a 20-year-old school teacher in the Mountain View schools. She also helped serve the guests during dinner.

Four years later Mother and Aunt Nettie (Janet) boarded a train en route to Little Rock. They just happened to sit in the same coach where Daddy was seated, traveling from Kansas City to Little Rock. Even though four years had elapsed, he recognized Mother and struck up a conversation. He took Mother and Aunt Nettie to dinner at Newport, where they had to change trains from the Missouri Pacific train to Memphis to the one to Little Rock. By the time they got to Little Rock Daddy was determined to stay in touch. During the next

year he wrote often and came to Mountain View to visit. He proposed less than a year later, and both Mother and Daddy later admitted that they hardly knew each other. They were married in October of 1917. Uncle Will was the best man, and he often kidded Daddy that he had kissed the bride before Daddy.

Over the years it was obvious to me that family was very important to the Fairs and the Cases. Like all families they had their squabbles, but there always was a lot of love and affection for each other. There was very little said about it, but it was there in abundance.

A big thing in my young life was the Second Presbyterian Church. Mother was very active in the church and Daddy was an Elder and Clerk of the Session for years. Going to Sunday School and Church was a given on Sunday. For seven years I received awards for attending Sunday School every Sunday during the year. Mother was also given perfect attendance awards, so we supported each other. If we were out of town we had to find a Sunday School to attend. During trips the rest of the family usually waited in the car or walked around a strange town waiting for us.

I enjoyed my contemporaries at Second Church. Many of us, like John Larson and Cowle Hamilton, went all the way through Sunday School together. Others, like Marion Boggs, joined as they moved into town. These and others were bright and engaging persons who had a real influence on me. We associated with each other in young people's meetings and socially as well. John, Cowle, and Marion were very smart and were interested in many things that I had not yet been introduced to, such as chess, theater, tennis, golf, and a number of

intellectual topics that I had never known about, much less discussed.

Another important thing to me while I was growing up was sports. I remember so well being taken to a Little Rock Travelers baseball game at the opening of the new Travelers Field in 1931. Daddy and Jim went to baseball games all the time and I wanted to tag along. By the time I was 8 years old I joined the "Knothole Gang" at the Boys Club. For 25 cents I received a membership card that allowed me to go to most games and sit with the other members in a special section of the bleachers. At 12 years of age I had to start paying 25 cents to get into the games. By my last two years in high school I followed Jim as an usher in the box seats which allowed me to go to all games and have a good seat—I received no pay but saw lots of baseball.

I played all sports on the vacant lot behind our house or on the Stantons' backyard basketball court. I loved big league baseball and followed the Detroit Tigers religiously. Jim liked the New York Yankees, so of course I had to pick another team.

In the spring of 1941 the high school band went to Jackson, Mississippi, for the annual band contest. We won that one easily. Calvin and I were now playing first and second chair solo clarinet. My first cousin, Amalie Fair Robinson, and her husband came to hear us in Jackson.

War Enters My Life

I shall never forget Sunday afternoon, December 7, 1941. I had gone to the movies, and at around five

o'clock a yellow message ran across the screen. The Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor! I went to the young people's meeting at six o'clock and there was a message for me to report to the *Gazette* station immediately to sell "Extras". The papers sold like hot cakes.

The next day there was a special high school assembly. A radio wired to the public address system was in the center of the big stage. We listened very closely to President Roosevelt deliver his declaration of war message to Congress. There was much buzzing around school that day, and I began to wonder how the war would affect me.

In early 1940 the country debated a bill to draft men into the armed services. After it passed, I spent a Saturday morning at the elementary school where Mary Nance taught as she and the other teachers registered all the men in her school district for the draft. It was interesting watching men from all walks of life come through the door not knowing exactly what the future held for them.

The army reactivated Camp Robinson on the North Little Rock city limits in about 1940. National Guard units occupied it first and then it became an infantry division training site. This brought about 30,000 soldiers to the Little Rock area and changed the town. Soldiers were everywhere, especially on weekends. Their presence not only caused crowding in theaters and restaurants, but created an air of excitement throughout the city. Because I was only 15 I was not especially concerned about going into the army but in early 1942, when the draft age was lowered from 21 to 18, I became much more concerned.

I was on course to graduate at mid-term in January 1943, and even had the opportunity to skip the last half-year and go on to college. I decided to postpone graduation until May 1943 in order to take over first chair, solo clarinet, in the band and to play second clarinet in the Arkansas Symphony. It also allowed me to take a year of physics, a third year of Latin, and advanced math. In addition, I had been selected to be a student manager of the school's varsity athletic teams, which was a big deal. Finally, I was only 16 and a half in May, 1942 and I thought I was too young to go off to college.

Alaska—A New Adventure

In the late winter—January or February—Daddy read in the evening paper that the U.S. Public Roads Administration had positions in Alaska for under-engineering aides. He encouraged me to go the federal building and apply, which I did. Within a couple of weeks I got a phone call saying that I had not been selected. That was OK with me as I still had a few more months before graduation.

I graduated from Little Rock High School on May 14, 1943. I had two full tuition scholarships, one to the University of Arkansas via competitive examination ($100), and a band scholarship to Louisiana State University ($200). I assumed I would go to one of these colleges until I got drafted. I had also taken the A-12, V-12 exam for army and navy college programs. I had crossed off V-12 as I assumed I couldn't qualify for the navy because of my poor eyesight. In mid-May I was notified that I had passed the A-12 exam and should

enlist in the U.S. Army Reserves if I wanted to take advantage of the program. This I did. Almost immediately thereafter, in late May, I was called at home by the local head of the U.S. Public Roads Administration to ask if I wanted to go to Alaska two days later. After I told my folks about the opportunity Daddy said "go"; Mother was not enthusiastic. I called the man back and told him I would go. Then I had to get ready to leave in less than 48 hours.

My first problem was to obtain a copy of my birth certificate. Daddy called Topeka, Kansas, and they promised to get a copy in the mail that afternoon. I had to have a complete physical examination, and Mother arranged for me to take it the next day. There were other frantic last minute arrangements to be made, but somehow they got done. Two days later I met seven others at the Union Station for the trip to the Public Roads headquarters at Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, Canada.

We left Little Rock on the four o'clock Missouri Pacific train to St. Louis. We went by Pullman in a car that was switched in St. Louis to a Chicago train. We arrived in Chicago early in the morning the next day. None of the other 17-year-olds had ever been there before (I had attended the Chicago World's Fair in 1934, not that I remembered much about it) so we spent the two hours walking around the downtown area and getting some breakfast. Around nine o'clock we boarded the *Hiawatha*, the Milwaukee Road's streamliner, for Minneapolis. This was an exciting ride. We then went to St.Paul where we took a sleeper on the Great Northern for Winnipeg. We were awakened in the middle of the night to clear customs.

In Winnipeg we transferred to the Canadian National for the 24-hour ride to Edmonton, Alberta. The trip from Little Rock to Edmonton took three nights and parts of four days, but we were traveling first class and were quite excited about the whole thing.

In Edmonton we reported to the Public Roads office and went to their barracks on the outskirts of town where we were assigned beds, had breakfast, and took a shower. The barracks was on a trolley line so we could move about the city easily. We were told that we would be there for a couple of days so we fooled around the city, sightseeing, going to the movies, and meeting some of the people. Three or four of the more enterprising members of the group found a church and attended a young people's meeting that Sunday evening. They met some girls and ran around with them the next two days. I was envious but probably wouldn't have had the nerve to join the group.

Two days later we boarded the Canadian National again, this time chair car, for the next part of the trip. We went to Jasper National Park where we transferred to a train headed for Prince Rupert, British Columbia. We actually got off the train at the last stop before Prince Rupert and went to a small U.S. Army base where we spent two nights and a day. My first taste of life at an army base didn't seem too bad. There were movies, a Post Exchange, and very little to do.

After two days we were trucked to a pier in Prince Rupert where we boarded a ship for Skagway, Alaska. The small steamer went up the inland waterway, stopping at Juneau and one or two other places. I got

seasick after supper, so I thought it was a tough trip. We arrived in Skagway around nine o'clock the next morning and walked a couple of miles, with suitcases, to the heart of town. Again we had an hour or two to look around.

At high noon we boarded the White Pass and Yukon narrow gage train for Whitehorse. We were warned to buy box lunches because there were only two passenger cars and no diner. The train itself had about a dozen freight cars and three locomotives, two in front and one in the rear. This was necessary in order to get us from sea level to the top of White Pass. I have never experienced a more scary and uncomfortable ride. The narrow cars only had built-in wooden seats and the train crept along, even after it had gone through the White Pass. The train stopped once so we could get out and stretch our legs. It took us eleven hours to go 110 miles. We got to Whitehorse and the Public Roads barracks around midnight, completely worn out.

We were only around a few days before it was decided that there were no under-engineering aides jobs for us. We were assigned to the kitchen as waiters and kitchen help. I waited tables for a day or two and was then assigned to the kitchen as a dish washer. I was very embarrassed about this and did not tell the folks until much later. After a week or so our pots and pans washer/garbage man left, and I volunteered for that job. That's what I did the rest of my stay in Whitehorse. I wanted that terrible job because a panel truck came with it. I used the truck to carry as many as four 40-gallon cans of garbage to the dump every day. The rest of the time the truck was mine to use. Since we had several hours of free time in the mornings, the afternoons, and at night, I could drive around the area at my leisure.

Obviously, I was very popular with the rest of the crew, and we went everywhere.

I played on the Public Roads softball team. We had games two or three times a week after supper. Since it stayed light almost all the time, we could play as late as 10 or 10:30 pm with no trouble.

We played a lot of cards and penny-ante poker. We would watch the bosses play no-limit poker in the rear of the laundry room and were properly impressed with their winnings and losses.

We were paid $250 a month plus all living expenses. I had taken $100 with me and had some left over by the time I got to Whitehorse. About the time that ran out I was reimbursed a $100 for out-of-pocket travel expenses. That was a lot more than I needed so I sent home my first two or three semi-monthly checks.

Some of us were always roaming around town in our time off. There were only two or three stores of any consequence. It was a very small frontier town, and we got to know several of the townspeople. One of the people we got to know best ran one of the general stores. I ordered several Glenn Miller records from him and bought the only pair of Levis I've ever owned. One Sunday he invited several of us out to his "summer cottage" on a lake about five miles from town. He encouraged us to go swimming—he had several suits available—and some of us did. Without a doubt that was the coldest water I've ever gone into—and right back out of!

When we first got to Whitehorse an army corporal came around trying to sell us a record player and records. He was leaving and offered to "give all of it away" for $40. I bought it and played it quite a bit. It was also borrowed by those who were arranging parties and dances in our rec hall.

Once while I was there I came down with a bad cold and was sent to the little infirmary the army had at their base. (I picked up their garbage every morning.) I was only there two days but I learned to play cribbage from one of the other patients.

Mother wrote often and sent me clippings from the newspaper. Even though she sent them air mail it still took a week or more for the mail to arrive. On August 16th I received a letter from her with orders enclosed to report to Louisiana State University (LSU) on August 18th for the beginning of the A-12 or Army Specialized Training Reserve Program (ASTRP). One of the advantages of going to Alaska was that I was draft exempt, and I had understood that it applied even though I had enlisted in the reserves earlier. So I could stay or go. Even the orders stated that I didn't have to report but would be subject to the draft or call when I reached 18. This created a problem for me. Should I stay or go?

After dinner that night I got an appointment with a Major at the army base to talk about it. He was no help. The next morning I decided to go to the head of the U.S. Public Roads, the man responsible for building the Alaskan Highway. I had never seen him, but since he was the most important VIP around I thought I should talk to him about it. I had a tough time getting an appointment, but finally on August 18 I got to see him in his huge

office. After showing him my orders and talking to him for a few minutes he recommended strongly that I take advantage of the free education. When I agreed with him he offered to get a seat for me on the evening plane from Whitehorse to Edmonton. Since it was four or five o'clock already, I thought he meant in the next two or three days. But he meant that night, and the plane left at seven o'clock. Thinking I had a day or two I went back to the kitchen to work. Shortly, I was notified that I was to be at the airport within an hour and a half.

My problem of getting ready to go, to say goodbye, to pack, sell my record player, get some money, etc. was almost too much to solve in an hour and a half but somehow it worked out. I only had $10 so I sold the record player to one of the group for the $40 I had paid for it, and then I borrowed $40 from another one of the guys. I packed what I could in the one suitcase I had and asked that the rest be packed and sent to me. Then I got a ride to the airport, asked those with me to say goodbye to all the other people I had known, and got on an Army Air Force C-47 for my first-ever airplane ride. The plane was very uncomfortable: metal bucket seats, very little insulation, cold, and bumpy. Although I got sick again, I managed to hold it until we got to Edmonton four hours later. When we got to Edmonton at 1:00 am—their time—I got a ride to the Public Roads barracks where we had stayed two months earlier and found an empty bed. Because there was no one to ask when I checked in I was a bit worried that I shouldn't be there or was in someone else's bed. As it turned out there was no problem with my staying there.

The next day I went to the airport to try to get a ride back to the States. I had been told in Whitehorse

that Ellis Fagan from Little Rock was an Air Force Major stationed at Edmonton and he might help me. The name was very familiar because he had been our district's state representative. Amazingly I found the Major just as he was about to leave for somewhere in Canada. He stopped at the transportation desk to ask that I be considered for any available space on planes bound for the States, so I waited around all day. Unfortunately I didn't get a ride. I went back to the barracks to eat and sleep that night before going back out to the airport the next day. Again, no luck. That evening I spent almost all my money on a ticket to Little Rock and boarded the nine o'clock Canadian National train to Winnipeg. I was retracing my trip north but in a chair car instead of a Pullman.

I rode all night and arrived in Winnipeg the next afternoon around five o'clock. Then it was on to Minneapolis on the Great Northern. I arrived there early in the morning and, after washing in the men's room of a large hotel, ate a little breakfast. I then went to the nearest Western Union office. Since I was down to my last couple of dollars I wired Daddy collect to send me a five-dollar money order and to tell him I was on my way home. My train didn't leave until late afternoon so I had time to wait for the money order but with very little money to spend. My solution was to ride the streetcars to the end of the line and back. Around noon, while I was riding through St. Paul, we passed a theater advertising a movie and a stage show featuring Ozzie Nelson and his orchestra. His vocalist was Harriet Hilliard. So I went to the theater. It didn't cost very much and it killed three hours very nicely. Then back on the streetcar to Minneapolis and Western Union. Sure enough, I had a money order waiting for me and it was for $10!

I rode a very crowded Rock Island Rocket to St. Louis that night. I had to stand for about one-half the trip. We arrived on time and I caught the morning train to Little Rock. When it arrived Mother and Daddy were at the station to meet me. It was good to get home, even though I was only staying for one day before going on to LSU.

Combining College with the Army

It was now late August 1943 and I was over a week late reporting to the ASTRP unit at LSU. So I had to keep going. I left Little Rock the next evening on the Missouri Pacific for one more overnight ride in a crowded chair car. I arrived in Baton Rouge the next morning and went by cab directly to the campus. I was told that the ASTRP office was upstairs in the student union building. When I got upstairs and told a woman behind a counter who I was and that I was reporting for the program she immediately sent for an army corporal who came charging out of his office. In no uncertain terms he asked where I had been and that I was eight days late and so forth. As soon as I could get a word in edge-wise I told him that I had received my orders late and that I had come all the way from the Yukon as fast as I could. This made a tremendous impression on him and from then on he knew exactly who I was.

The corporal took me over to Pentagon Barracks dormitory for my room assignment. I was to share a room with a civilian sophomore and an ASTRP participant, Bob Masters from Eagle Pass, Texas. Bob became a good friend and we served all the way through the army together.

After giving me my room assignment the corporal walked me over to the classroom building where the 60 or so students were going through a series of refresher, non-credit courses prior to the beginning of the fall semester. He also assigned me to John Langley, one of the ASTRP designated squad leaders. John was extremely capable and later served with the 100th Division where he received a battlefield commission. John, and several others from Texas, had gone to high schools where they had ROTC units, and he was already trained in army routine to some extent.

We were only at school for another two weeks when we were allowed to go home for a few days before the beginning of the school year. During the two weeks we went to classes, did close order drill, and played sports. I went sightseeing on the weekends.

We started the fall semester in early September. We had a very heavy workload as we were scheduled to complete the engineering degree in about two plus years. All of this was exciting, but to me I was just as excited about going to college and all that it represented. I was rushed by the fraternities and pledged Sigma Chi. It was unusual for the army students to pledge fraternities but three of us, Bob Shults, A.T. Brillhart and I, did so—all Sigma Chi. I really enjoyed the fraternity and the activities. It introduced me to many things, not the least of which was shrimp. They were served at a pledge party. I had no idea what they were but they tasted good! It was also football season and I attended every game. LSU had a good team with Steve Van Buren, a future All-Pro, at fullback. He was big: a senior when most teams were made up of freshmen, and he was a terrific runner.

I went away on several weekends. Frank Aldrich, a friend from North Little Rock who roomed next door, was as enthusiastic about seeing the area as I was, so we hitchhiked to New Orleans on one weekend and to Biloxi, Mississippi, on another. We rode the Kansas City Southern train, the Southern Belle, to Shreveport on a third. I didn't work hard at all and didn't do spectacularly. We knew all along that as soon as we were 18 we would be sent to ASTP Basic Training for 13 weeks and so it was hard to concentrate on school work.

In December, shortly before we were to leave LSU for basic training, the Sigma Chi chapter offered to move their initiation up from the beginning of the next semester to the week following exams. This would delay my going home and would shorten the time between going home and army induction on December 18th. It would also cost $40. I didn't want to spend the money and was reluctant to ask Daddy for it. Later Mother and Daddy pointed out that I should have seized the opportunity. Also, I had plenty of money in my Peoples Savings & Loan account, something over $1,500 (earning four per cent interest), but I was as reluctant to spend my money then as I am now.

100th Infantry Division in France and Germany