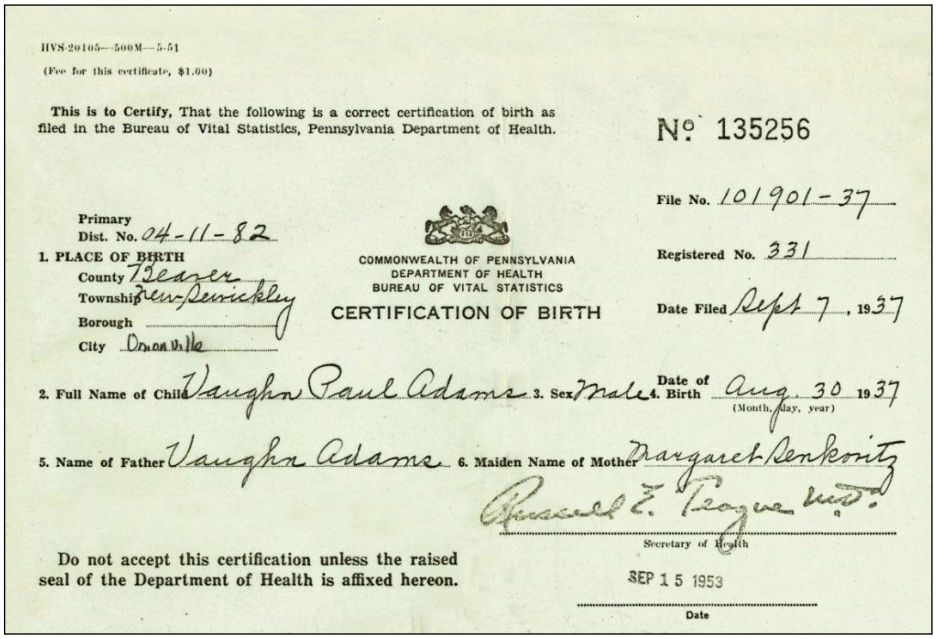
Part 11

Vaughn Paul Adams, Jr., Generation 1

In 1937 the young family of Vaughn P Adams, Sr. moved to Unionville, in the New Brighton area of Beaver County, Pennsylvania, where mineral springs flowed and the countryside nestled many cottages. Vaughn Paul Adams, Jr. was born at home there on 30 August 1937. No one calls a newborn, Vaughn, henceforth, he was promptly called, Sonny. Grammy Sinkovitz stayed with Mom for two weeks. Mom recalled Grammy preparing milk toast for her, which she would or could not eat. My colic screaming was, no doubt, the cause of Mom's indigestion!

Adams residence in Unionville, Pennsylvania in 1937
Photograph taken in 1957



HVS-20105—500M—5-51

(Fee for this certificate, $1.00)

This is to Certify, That the following is a correct certification of birth as filed in the Bureau of Vital Statistics, Pennsylvania Department of Health.

No. 135256

File No. 101901-37

Primary Dist. No. 04-11-82

1. PLACE OF BIRTH
County Beaver
Township New Sewickley
Borough
City Unionville

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS

CERTIFICATION OF BIRTH

Registered No. 331

Date Filed Sept 7, 1937

2. Full Name of Child Vaughn Paul Adams 3. Sex Male 4. Date of Birth Aug. 30 1937 (Month, day, year)

5. Name of Father Vaughn Adams 6. Maiden Name of Mother Margaret Senkovitz

Russell E. Teagarden M.D.
Secretary of Health

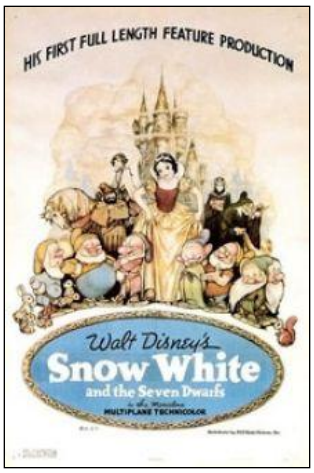
Do not accept this certification unless the raised seal of the Department of Health is affixed hereon.

SEP 15 1953
Date

VPA Birth Certificate

In 1937, the world was a different place. There was no Google yet…or Yahoo.

In 1937, the year of my birth, the top selling movie was Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. People buying the popcorn in the cinema lobby had glazing eyes when looking at the poster.



Remember, that was before there were DVD's. Heck, even before there was VHS. People were indeed watching movies in the cinema, and not downloading them online. Imagine the packed seats, the laughter, the excitement, the novelty and mostly all of that without 3D computer effects.

In the year 1937, the time when you arrived on this planet, books were still popularly read on paper, not on digital devices. Trees were felled to get the word out. The number one US bestseller of the time was Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell. Oh, that's many years ago. Have you read that book? Have you heard of it?

In 1937... Anastasio Somoza García becomes President of Nicaragua. In Moscow, 17 leading Communists go on trial, accused of participating in a plot led by Leon Trotsky to overthrow Joseph Stalin's regime and assassinate its leaders. The Ohio River floods. The first successful flying car, Waldo Waterman's Airmobile, makes its initial flight. The League of Nations Non-Intervention Committee bans foreign nationals from fighting in the Spanish Civil War. The animated short Porky's Duck Hunt, directed by Tex Avery for the Looney Tunes series, featuring the debut of Daffy Duck, is released. The Gestapo arrests priest Martin Niemöller.

That was the world you were born into. Since then, you and others have changed it.

The Nobel Prize for Literature that year went to Roger Martin du Gard. The Nobel Peace prize went to The Viscount Cecil of Chelwood. The Nobel Prize for physics went to Clinton Joseph Davisson and George Paget Thomson from the United States for their experimental discovery of the diffraction of electrons by crystals. The sensation this created was big. But it didn't stop the planets from spinning, on and on, year by year. Years in which you would grow bigger, older, smarter, and, if you were lucky, sometimes wiser. Years in which you also lost some things. Possessions got misplaced. Memories faded. Friends parted ways. The best friends, you tried to hold on. This is what counts in life, isn't it?

The 1930s were indeed a special decade. The Dirty Thirties. There was a Great Depression with traumatic effects worldwide. In Germany, the Nazi's Third Reich rose, ultimately leading to World War II. Intercontinental aviation and radio began. The German airship Hindenburg explodes in the sky above Lakehurst, New Jersey. Gandhi's peaceful resistance movement against the British colonial rule in India gains worldwide attention. Radar is invented, and so is Kodachrome.

Do you remember the movie that was all the rage when you were 15? Monkey Business. Do you still remember the songs playing on the radio when you were 15? Maybe it was Wheel of Fortune by Kay Starr. Were you in love? Who were you in love with, do you remember?

There's a kid outside, shouting, playing. It doesn't care about time. It doesn't know about time. It shouts and it plays and thinks time is forever. You were once that kid.

When you were 9, the movie It's a Wonderful Life was playing.

Progress, year after year. Do you wonder where the world is heading towards? The technology available today would have blown your mind in 1937. Do you know what was invented in the year you were born? The Turboprop Engine. The Jet Engine. The O-ring.

Now it's keys rent in the air in its new place to stand
A gift for the children who play right and left hand
Just a 1937 Pre-war Kimball
Oh, with the grace of that three-quarter grand
Oh, the grace of that three-quarter grand

That's from the song 1937 Pre-War Kimball by Nanci Griffith.

In 1937, a new character entered the world of comic books: Daffy Duck. Bang! Boom! But that's just fiction, right? In the real world, in 1937, Colin Powell was born. And Robert Redford. Jane Fonda, too. And you, of course. Everyone an individual. Everyone special. Everyone taking a different path through life.
It's 2014.

The world is a different place.

What path have you taken?

Ref: Borrowed from the internet, 14 August, 2014… what happened on my birthyear.com

Blatz Beer

Sillito's Meats

Hoover Vacuum Cleaners

See what all you "youngsters" missed? Even though most of these were even before my time, I still remember seeing the Oscar Meyer Weiner mobile and a chicken truck on the streets as a kid.

Cool Old Trucks-Great Marketing. Some of these brands are still around. This was back in the days when advertising was not available on television!

Grammy and Pa Sinkovitz lived within walking distance in a modest, but well manicured home, that had a garage in their basement with their home on a rise above. I would easily visualize their grey, sandy-shingled home in later years when we would visit. Their home was always warm and cozy and Grammy always had wonderfully aromatic food cooking on the stove and pies or strudel baking in her oven. Grammy would place handmade rag throw rugs on her shiny wood floors that I apparently could never walk over without disarranging their otherwise neat, flat placement, thereby sending Grammy into a tizzy. "*Pick up those feet, Sonny*!" she would bellow with her hands powerfully and dominantly resting on her broad hips. I believe I may have listened to her subtle request.

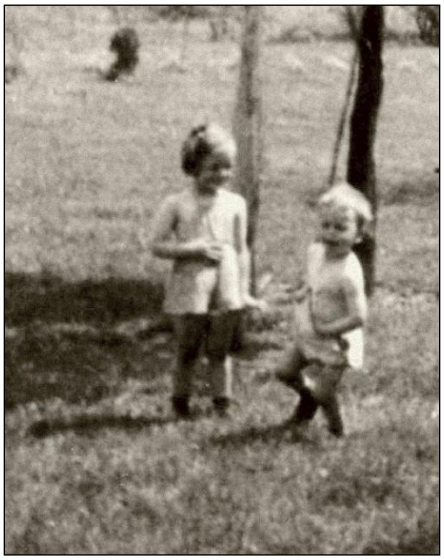
Their "restroom" consisted of a wooden, single seat outhouse some fifty small paces behind their home wherein no one I ever knew "rested", but rather, scrambled from…quickly. Especially at night, when all the creepy, crawling spiders and other ugly, undefined creatures were all on the loose and wanting to climb upon and devour those who were either naively brave or sufficiently distressed... to enter. I would either spend a miserable night or would otherwise wait until morning when the creatures would crawl back into their dark, eerie and webby tunnels they called home and eagerly await again for dusk to loom.

These interesting statistics applied in America during the year of my birth…1937:

- Population: 128,961,000
- 3-Bedroom home: $4,100
- Average Income: $1,893
- Gasoline, 1 gallon: $.20
- Bread, 1 pound: $.09
- Milk, 1 gallon: $.50
- First Class Postage Stamp: $.03
  The Chicago Daily Tribune on 30 August 1937 reported: Hundreds Die as Japs Bomb Chinese Cities
- London Insists Tokio (sic) Punish War Flyers; Break Feared
- President Roosevelt Signs 15 more Bills and Vetoes Two
- Cubs' lead over Giants is cut to one-half game.

Sonny and Dad, 1938
Bridgewater, PA.

Mom would recall that in 1938 in Bridgewater, Beaver County, Pennsylvania, our family of four moved to a second floor apartment in Bridgewater, a place on the Beaver River between Rochester and Beaver, Pennsylvania. The Beaver River fed into the Ohio River. Dad was selling at this time. The Ohio River flooded in a major way and caused the water to rise to their second floor apartment.



Drenched, they quickly moved.

Our family moved to 44 Wilson Avenue in Youngstown, Ohio, a home with large carved stone lions flanking the base of the front porch steps. The lions were large to me then ...but of course, I was small. I visited the home in 1957 and could hardly believe my eyes. The lions had "shrunk" to about twenty inches high! Relativism was at work. This was not the last occasion my relative perspective on life changed over the duration of time and its changing point of view.

BeBe (Sister, Alberta) and Sonny (Vaughn Jr.), Bridgewater, PA

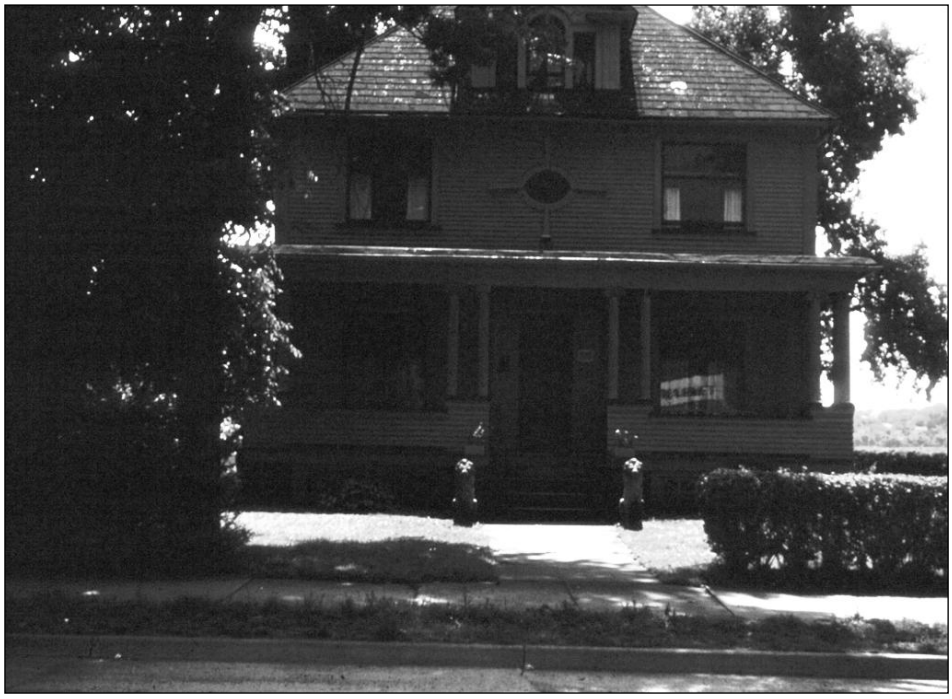
Dad worked for the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad as a brakeman. I would use, with Mom's assistance, Dad's lunchbox to "go to work" and be fascinated by the emergency flares he would bring home and ignite for our delight.

During my early years I constantly looked up to my big sister, BeBe (Alberta). It seemed that I continuously sought Bertie's help and counsel throughout my school years. Bertie was the firstborn, mature for her age, naturally bright, and as I then rationalized, was one year and six months older, but only one year ahead of me in school. I was forever struggling, trying to catch up during the twelve grade schools we both attended because of family moves.

Bertie was a sweet, helpful guiding light that aided me through many of my early academic challenges and trials. Bertie was, and continued to be, my wonderful friend and even greater sister.

The first home our family lived in that I vaguely remember was located on 44 Wilson Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio in 1939.

Our family's next move was a short distance away from Wilson Avenue, also in Youngstown, Ohio. Large intimidating lions flanked the front entrance of our home, and we would spend hours with our neighbor friends playing and sitting on the front steps.



Home on 44 Wilson Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio in 1939.
Note the "huge" lions in front. Photo taken in 1957

Sonny (Vaughn) and BeBe, (Alberta) 1939

Sonny, 3 and BeBe, 4, 1940

During the early 1940s in Youngstown, Ohio, I don't remember friends our age living in our neighborhood, but I recall spending time with my Sister, BeBe, as evidenced in the adjacent photograph taken behind our home with Dad's 1937 Plymouth at the top of our driveway on Wilson Avenue. Mom for some reason seemed to always dress me up in sailor outfits.

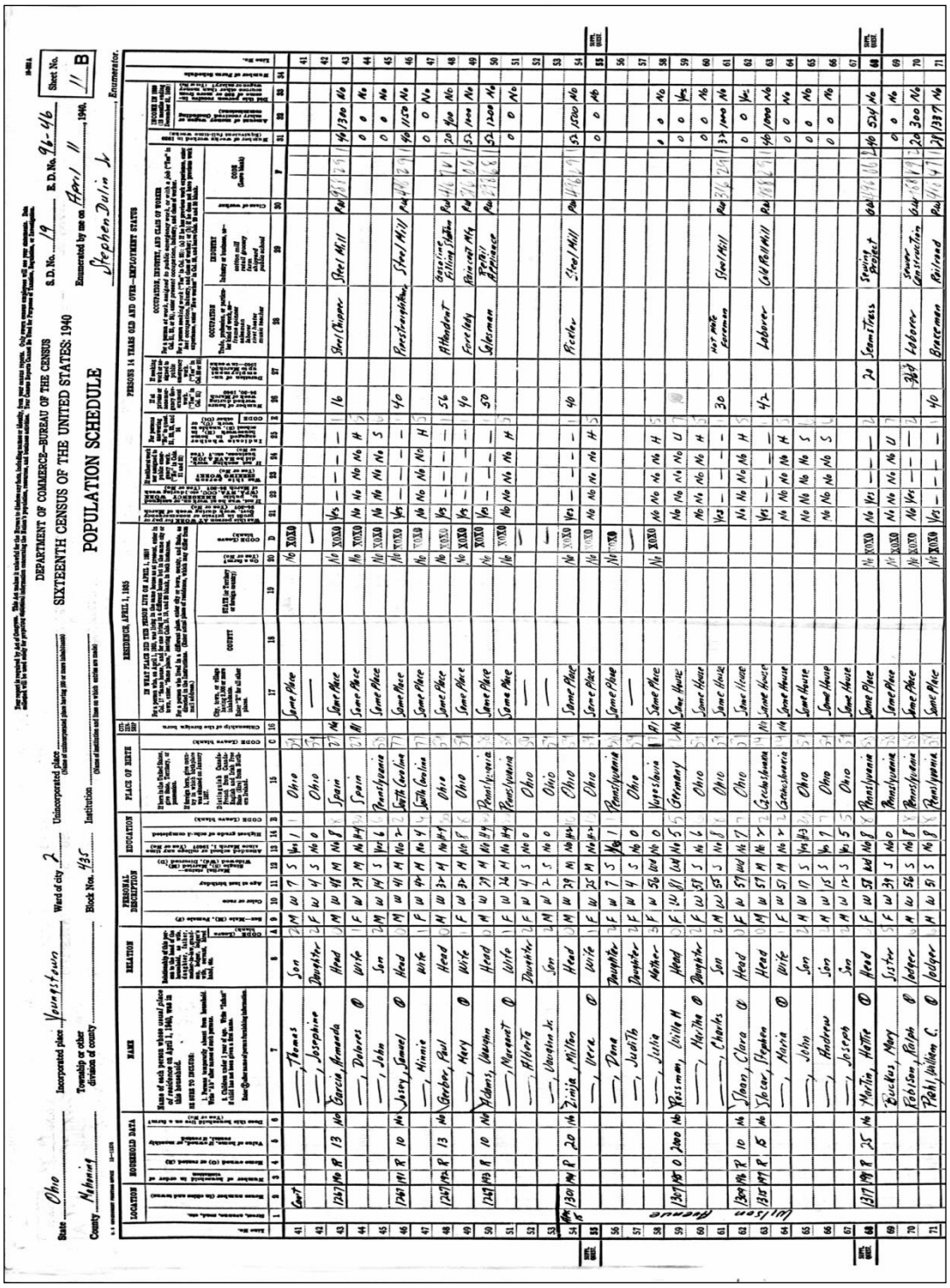
Our car, a 1937 Plymouth Sedan

On December 7th, 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Mom remembered the news vividly and recalled the worry as to where the news would lead.

Vaughn and Connie, 1941

813-Fifth Avenue home, Youngstown, Ohio, 1941, Photograph taken in 1958

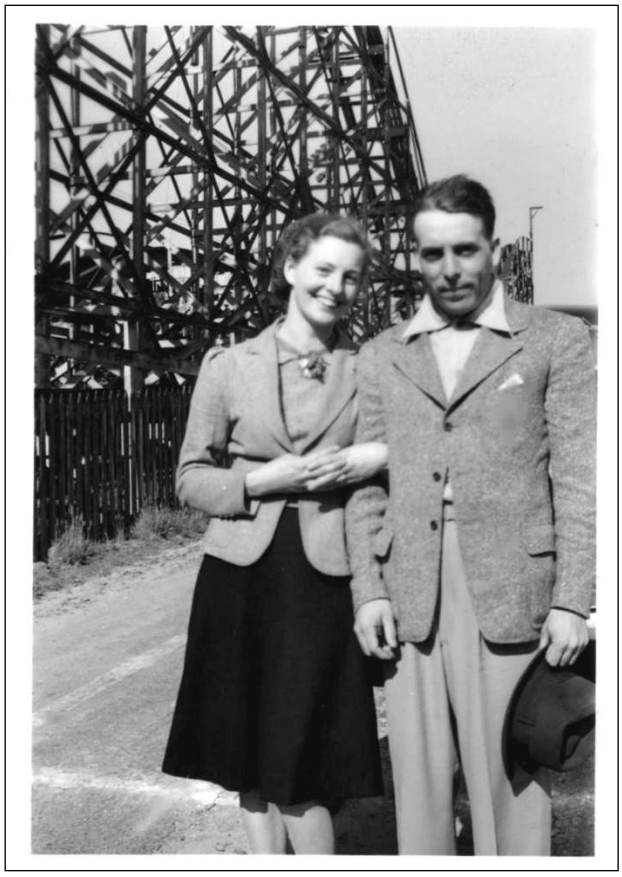
Our family moved from Wilson Avenue to 813 Fifth Avenue, Youngstown, Ohio in 1941. Connie was my first girlfriend!



1940 Federal Census, 193 Wilson Avenue, Youngstown, Mahoning County, Ohio
The Vaughn Adams Family is shown on line 53.

The above record is in slight error given that Alberta and Vaughn, Jr.'s birthplaces are shown to be Ohio rather than Pennsylvania. Dad is shown as a retail appliance salesman… likely selling vacuum cleaners.

Mom and Dad, About 1941



Margaret and Vaughn Sr.
Idora Park, (1899-1984)
Youngstown, Ohio

My brother, Ronald William Adams was born on April 26, 1942. Mom recalled the doctor arriving a little late… after the birthing. Aunt Betty (Romisher), Uncle Bill's wife, was angry and beside herself with the late doctor and apparently let him know rather vocally. The doctor's car tire apparently gave him some problems and did instill in Ron an early lifelong penchant for fixing and reliably maintaining automobiles.

Ronnie, 1943, Youngstown, Ohio

Ronnie is shown above in 1943, nursing his right foot after kicking at a flat tire on Dad's 1937 Chevrolet.

Grandpa Albert Sinkovitz with Vaughn, c. 1940
Pa's home in Monaca, Pennsylvania

The above photograph was added to capture my grandfather in the stature I held him up to be, but seldom personally eye-witnessed. I generally saw Pa in his fishing gear or his foundry work clothes. Here, he must have been dressed up for church, sporting a vest and tie. Pa is remembered fondly as gentle, kind, loving, soft spoken and hard working sportsman.

Sonny and Ron with clothes pin airplanes, 1943

I started first grade in Youngstown, Ohio in September of 1943. The experience was probably traumatic but apparently survivable. I would make airplanes out of wooden clothes pins in the backyard of our home with my little brother, Ronnie. Sister, BeBe, no doubt taught me the art. Photographs are such a powerful visual aid in our ability to enhance long term memory.

Sonny, age 7

Bertie, age 8

Photographs, 1944 – RR-1 Canfield, Ohio

In 1944 our family moved to Canfield, Ohio, where Dad still worked for the B&O Railroad. I can still visualize the small farm house in rural Canfield resting down a long lane with a potato crop farm land surrounding the small home.

Dad worked for the B&O Railroad as a brakeman. Mom indicated later that he disliked his work and developed a drinking habit by stopping at a beer garden after work with his fellow workers for a few "cool ones."

Sonny, Mom, Bertie and Ron, 1944, PA

One late afternoon the family was out working in a potato patch, perhaps digging some 'taters" up for our evening dinner, when I stepped on a rake lying upward on the ground causing the rake handle to pivot upward, striking sister BeBe on the forehead…by accident! The "shot" was perfect. I alone, thought the stunt was funny. Therefore, I alone, received severe swats from Dad's belt for my "funniness."

The Limburger cheese event always brings a smile, and has been recalled numerous times during family gatherings when reminiscing about the good ole' times. Grandpa Sinkovitz introduced our family to Limburger cheese. Grandpa would spread this "delicacy" on his Hungarian "Dagwood" sandwiches that he ate after he finished the evening's work around their home. Mom must have carried this tradition into our family's culinary delights.

I recall well helping Dad wax our family car. Ron, about three, couldn't be left out of the fun and began waxing his own sit down pedal car. But Ron used his own wax…a partially empty glass jar of stinky and moldy Limburger cheese he found in the garbage!

The Limburger Cheese incident was rather reinforcing to Ron's later interest in the fine art of automotive paint finishing…or, was it paint removal…I don't seem to remember.

In 1944 the Allied Forces invaded Normandy (D-Day) and Germany surrendered to the Allies. Whether it was the relief of World War ll's ending, the fact that Dad's brother, Bill, had moved to California, the prospect of a new, better and happier life, or Canfield's smell of Limburger cheese… our family decided by popular vote (Father's) to move to Sacramento, California during the summer of 1945. We packed all of our belongings in our Plymouth and made the long drive across US 66 from Canfield, Ohio to… Sacramento!

We would stop at roadside stands and stock up on drinks and fruit, especially dates, to eat along the way. Brother, Ron, to this day will not touch, let alone eat, a date. It's positive proof that he ate the lion's share, and a few too many, of the tasty dates along our trip! We would also stop at night along the way to sleep in the car as best we could. To assist Dad built a wooden box to fit in front of the back seat of the Chevy that housed our belongings and also served as the likes of a bed…a very hard bed! Upon waking up one

early morning we saw a Coyote carcass gazing right in our eyes. Dad had parked along a barbed wire fence that was, upon the morning's light, strung with killed and hung coyotes along the wooden fence post tops as far as the eye could see; apparently done by sheep ranchers to dissuade varmint trespass through their fence line.

Although I can't imagine now how I was allowed to take my gun given the limited space we had in our cramped car, my parents permitted me to shoot my Daisy Red Rider BB gun at stops along the way.

Bertie, Vaughn, Ron, Mom
Sacramento, 1944

My Uncle Bill was selling Borden Dairy products in Sacramento and apparently assisted with Dad working there also; henceforth our move to California. We rented a small store at 516, 20th Street in what is now known as the old, historic part of Sacramento.

In 1945 the U.S. dropped the 1st atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the second bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, and on September 2nd, Japan surrendered.

In Sacramento the name given to the business was ***Adams' Dairy Store*** and it was a store front with an attached two story residence. Our family lived at the first floor level. The Southern Pacific Railroad tracks were located immediately behind our store and house.

I recall throughout my early life the sound of steam train engines that broke the silence of evening quiet time, particularly when I was bedded down. The plaintiff sound was a subtle reminder that there was in place an order of productive activity around me that provided a comfort much like a warm blanket, but to my soul. I sense that same feeling when I hear the sounds of diesel train engines today.

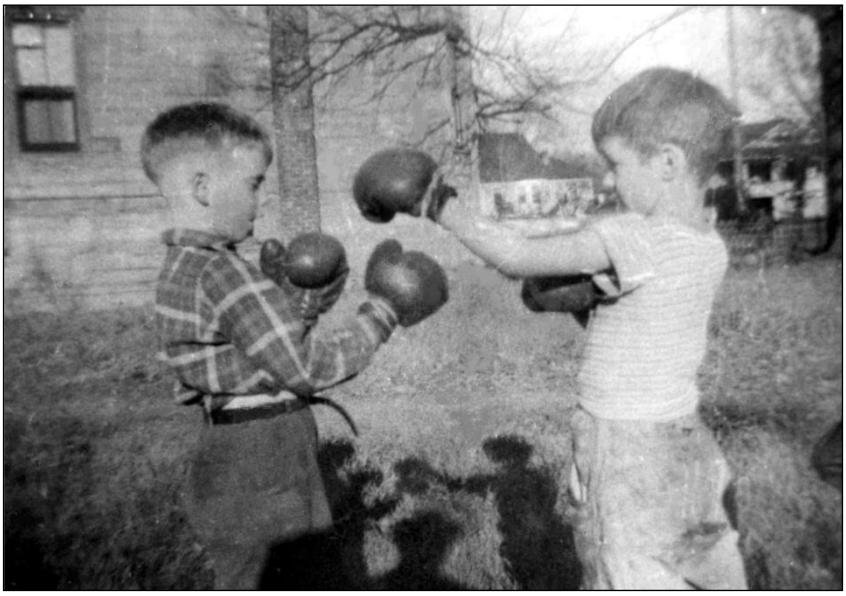
Mom managed the store with Aunt Betty's help while Dad and his brother Bill worked selling Borden's featured dairy products not only through our store but elsewhere in the city of Sacramento. *Fleer's Bubble Gum* was a brand new item our store began to sell; it wasn't a Borden's product but it was a popular item.

Mom and Aunt Betty in front of their store, Sacramento 1945

Dad and Uncle Bill in front of their store, Sacramento 1945

Mom baked cupcakes one morning for our family dinner dessert. School kids that would stop and shop at the store naturally smelled the delicious little frosted cakes and wanted to buy some to eat…now! The Sacramento Public School was nearby and word spread fast. By the end of day the cupcakes were gone and so was our evening dessert. Enterprising Mom, however, launched a new and successful Adams' Dairy Store treat commodity.

I remember well the Broderick's who lived next door across from a vacant lot. I recall boxing with Charles with Dad's provocation. Dad's lifelong love for boxing was, however, never lived vicariously through me. Charles was a year older and stronger than me. I may have put up a good fight…I finished in distant second place!



Vaughn, left, and Charles Broderick, in the lot between Broderick's Home and the Adams Dairy Store, 1946

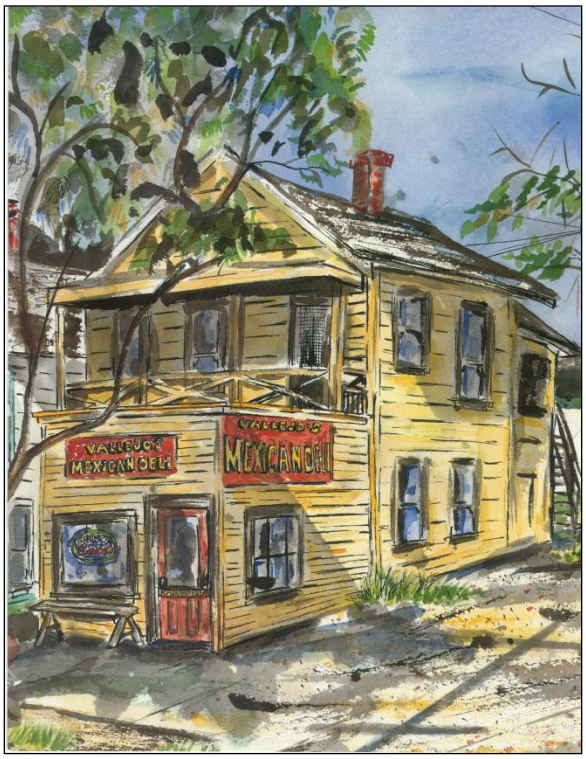
I contracted diphtheria from an epidemic spread through our grade school and was quarantined for what seemed to be an eternity on the top floor of a high rise hospital near our home. Mom and Dad would send a daily bag of mixed fresh fruit up to my quarantined hospital room via an exterior dumbwaiter. I was barely able to see my family waving at me from down at ground level below. The combined smell of apples, oranges, and bananas still to this day, sends my mind reeling back to a seemingly long, frighteningly lonely and isolated time.

Our Uncle Tunney (Eugene Tunney Adams), Dad's step brother, received leave from the Army to attend to his mother, Chloe Mae, who was seriously ill in Monaca, Pennsylvania. His return home routed him through California wherein we were able to visit. Uncle Tunney was impressively attired in full military dress and made quite an impression on me. Uncle Tunney was taught to fight by my father. He of course had to live up to his name, Gene Tunney of boxing fame. And he did! The adjacent medal bears the convincing title.

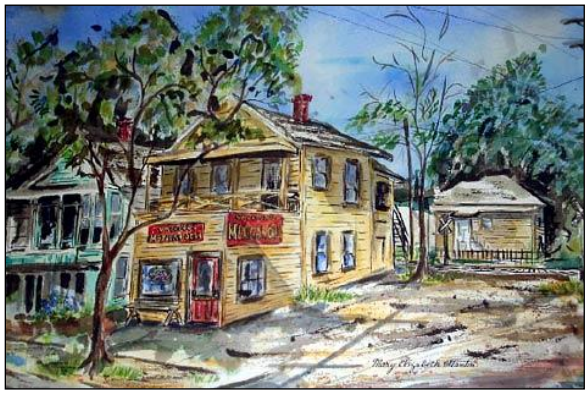
Eugene Adams, Middleweight Champion
Fort McClellan, Alabama, 1945

Chloe Walker Adams died on 24 Mar 1948, in Monaca. Uncle Tunney was close to discharge but had to return to his base to officiate his release order. When he returned to Monaca he married Dorothy Mae Zindren who then became my beloved, Aunt Dot.

While in Sacramento Dad badly cut his head when an axe head flew off its handle while he was chopping down a black widow infested apricot tree in our back yard to the rear of our Adams dairy store. Dad bore the scar on his forehead forever after. Our Adams store likely changed hands many times over the ensuing years. In 1995 I had a forensic engineering case north of Sacramento but found the time to drive over to the old house and store on 20th Street. The structure was exactly as I remembered…a faded yellow, wooden, clap siding frame house still in need of repair. The building housed the *Vallejo's Mexican Deli*, a take-out Mexican food restaurant. I spoke with the owner, Senor Arturo Vallejo, and shared stories about both the similarities and the changes of the neighborhood over the years. In 1996 I returned for trial on the same case and took my wife, Polly, with me to visit the Capital buildings of Sacramento. My trial testimony was completed before noon and my wife and I were both hungry and decided to visit *Vallejo's Mexican Deli* Vis a Vis, the ol' Adams store. The Deli and old house were gone! Only the base foundation remained to bare vague witness to the bygone structure. I asked a neighbor as to what became of the old building and he informed me that the Mexican food restaurant had burned down one night but the owners had established three new locations in the Sacramento area. I selected the one closest to the courthouse and Polly and I drove over there to eat lunch. While standing in line a waitress handed us a menu. Much to my surprise and delight a painting was featured on the cover…the old, first Vallejo's and our 1946 home and store, disguised as a Mexican deli! I again spoke with the owner and he mentioned that the City of Sacramento had commissioned an artist by the name of Mary Jane Stanton to paint many historic sites of the old part of the city and his Deli was included. It was a delightful surprise.



Vallejo's Mexican Deli Menu Cover



Original painting by Mary Jane Stanton

Vallejo's menu cover utilizes the painting of the first Vallejo's and our 1946 home and Dairy Store in Sacramento, California.

I am unsure as to what led to the next move, but the family decided to move back to Pennsylvania. Bertie and I made a covenant with the Broderick's that we would meet again at the same place, in front of the store, when we were **real** old…like, in 1960!

I'm not at all sure why or how we moved to Warrendale, Pennsylvania, in 1947 although the move would likely have been related to Dad's work. Our house was a rented, four room worker's quarters adjacent to the main farmhouse owned by a gentleman farmer and high school science teacher named William O. Grunnagle. He, his wife Edna, and children, Charles "Red" and Claire, constituted the only family within a mile radius, and was located at the end of our lane off Route 76 between Warrendale and Pittsburgh. We would walk the mile long lane daily to catch our bus to Marshall School, where Miss Butler graciously promoted me from fourth to fifth grade. On clear nights we could witness the open-hearth ladle pours of molten steel flare up from Pittsburgh steel's blast furnaces and light up the Eastern night sky with a powerful red glow.

Grunnagle's Farm, Warrendale, Pennsylvania, our abode is shown to the right

I can almost still smell the valley groves of trees with green non-edible bumpy fruit (Bois d'Arcy) we called "Monkey Balls", during morning explorations after a snowfall. The large old house down in the southern vale next to an abandoned slaughter house was an old vacant mansion full of haunted thrills and hours of eerie speculation as to what or who all the bones we found…actually belonged to. I never hiked down to the spooky conclave alone, but always in groups, for reasons we never stated but tacitly understood.

Dad was gone for what seemed to be a very long time with intermittent visits. During the long periods when Dad was gone, I noticed Mom to be lonely for the first time of my

observation. I can still picture Mom ironing, while singing verses of sad and plaintive songs such as "I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen" and other ballads that gave the holdings of her heart away. I can still hear her sing:

"May I sleep in your barn tonight, Mister? It is cold lyin' out on the ground, and the cold north wind it is whistling, and I have no place to lie down." (Red River Valley tune)

I received a Gilbert Chemistry Set for Christmas one year and loved it. I would diligently go through all the experiments that were included with the set…making disappearing ink using chemicals found in neat glass containers. Absent available friends, television or radio, I spent countless hours pretending to be a chemist while listening to records played on our Victor hand crank Victrola.

Dad ultimately returned and the family moved to Illinois. I never learned why. I either do not remember, was not told, or never asked.

One fond memory I recall of Pa and Grammy Sinkovitz, almost as if it was just yesterday, was one of our family's late afternoon movies in Rochester, Pennsylvania, close to where Grammy and Pa lived. *Golden Earnings* was released in 1947 and Pa was interested in seeing the film because of its Hungarian gypsy music and setting. The date was early in winter, chilly, with a light snowfall. We all left the movie and were heading to our car when Grammy slipped and fell on her rear onto the concrete sidewalk right in front of the theater. Now, Grammy was a large and modest woman who always wore a dress, and her concern of her fall was not her "hurt", but her "modesty" in getting up! Pa was laughing so hard at her apparently funny fall… and her obvious concern for her modesty… that a "gentleman" passerby helped her back up to her feet. Grammy was not happy! She had that "look"… her hands on her broad hips and she uttered no words. Her "look" was all that was needed!

Grammy and her "look"

I am sure that afterwards the family stopped at the "Brick House", a local beer garden for refreshments… and a cooling off period.

Ron, Bertie and I would meander around drinking soft drinks, snacking on pickled pig's feet and listening to polka bar juke box music such as… ***She's too fat for me!***

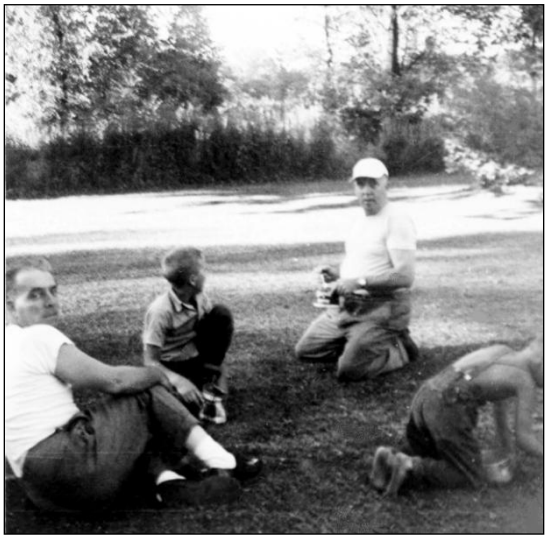
"Oooh, I don't want her, you can have her
She's too fat for me.
She's too fat for me
She's too fat, she's too fat, she's too fat for me!

www.youtube.com/watch?v=XtmuXWCFQzE

…she wasn't fond of having her picture taken, either! But she was indeed a sweetheart!

We moved again in 1948. Our leased summer home was a large waterfront place with a deep backyard facing the Fox River in St. Charles, Illinois. This wide waterway provided a host of exciting adventures, recreation and sport that edified the challenge and curiosity of any 11 year old boy. I was no exception.

Carp and catfish fishing with visiting Grandpa Sinkovitz off the banks of the Fox River was a delight. Pa would use a mixture of dried mustard and water to chase night crawlers from their holes to use as bait. Grammy was a wonderful cook and knew how to "fix" the bottom feeding carp for proper eating.



Fishing for bait worms
Dad, Vaughn, Uncle Bill and Ron
Our backyard, St. Charles, Illinois, 1948

Grandpa, the fisherman, 1948,

Shown in the (above left) photograph is, Dad, (left) me, Uncle Bill and Ronnie all waiting for worm bait to be rooted out of their underground tunnel homes and into our bait pails.

Grandpa Sinkovitz is shown (above right) with his morning's fish catch.

It is fun occasionally to recollect about times gone by and what sticks in our memories, or precisely why we remember them. Events that are remembered generally require a similar situation that spurs us to recall the older event. These events generally require a story to be remembered that will be shared… or at least thought of.

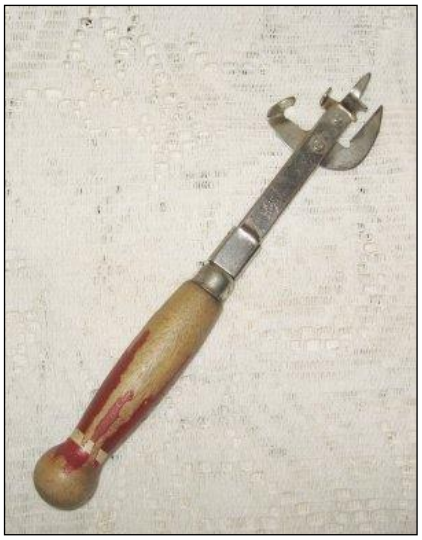
Some recollections can be spurned by an item we recall that can tell much about an earlier memory. Such is the case with old photographs of gone-by relics.

Remember these? … I well understand it is a function of age!

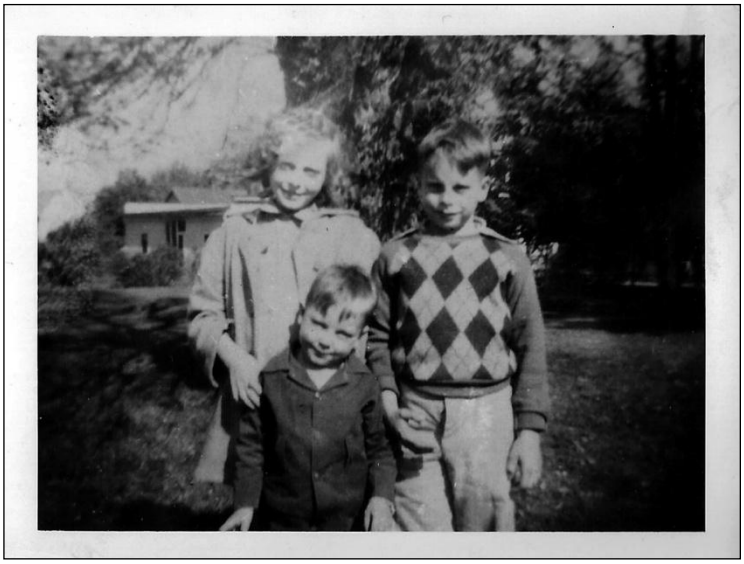
Hand Egg beaters

Skate keys

1.13 ounces of "Fast" cereal



Hand can openers



Alberta, Ronnie, Vaughn, c.1948, St. Charles, Illinois

My buddy, Pete Swanson, and I would canoe three miles south up the Fox River to the bridge and waterfall on Main Street in the city of St. Charles. I bought a large box of Vanilla Wafer cookies at the Riverside Store along the way and ate abundantly too many! We also caught channel catfish so long they would touch head to tail in a large 30 inch washtub (honestly)…and no fingers crossed. Pete's mom with her fine Swedish culinary skills would bake the fish for both our families.

In 1949 our family moved to Jefferson Avenue, Hampshire, Illinois late in the first term of my sixth grade. I do not know how Hampshire was selected as the place we would next call our home. Perhaps Dad had worn out his welcome from selling Kirby vacuum cleaners to the citizens of St. Charles. However, we did not traipse far; Hampshire was only twenty miles northwest from the Fox River home we rented for the summer.

I do not actually remember moving to Hampshire, a small Kane County town off Route 72, northwest of Chicago between Elgin and Rockford. This community of then 750 people consisted largely of German farmers and their families. J. B. Inderrieden Company had a corn and pea canning plant there. My best friend was Marvin Mengeling, whose mom, Adeline, would always offer breakfast to me when I would stop by to pick up Marv for our daily bike ride to school. I probably envied Marv's stable family life with a hard working father who provided comfortably, and whose mom did not work out of the home.

Marvin and I would frequently trek west down the Milwaukee Railroad tracks, now the Soo Line, to swim in Coon Creek. With our BB guns, we would shoot water moccasins that hung from the wooden trestle that spanned the leech laden creek. The Hiawatha passenger streamliner would buzz through Hampshire twice each day, and Hobo camps were found scattered along the tracks for wayward men setting up "home" far away from family.

Hiawatha Streamer #4,
Photographer: Fred C. Stoes

Photo taken from the web site of:
Yesterday Depot
http://www.yesteryeardepot.com/chiest.htm

Marvin was an avid reader with a comic book collection that filled his porch bookshelves as early preparation for a later career as Professor (now, Emeriti) of English at the University of Wisconsin in Oshkosh and published author.

Dad built a garage for our new house. During that time, my brother, Ron, shot upward at a wasp's nest built in the rafters of our garage with his BB gun. When Ron hunkered down to cock his gun for a second bulls-eye shot, the nest fell from the rafter and in through the collar of his shirt. Poor little Ron was stung many times and wished, for sure, that he never had the copper rounds to load that shiny Daisy Red Ryder.

I had the luck of the Irish! I and a girl I did not know (she attended a Catholic school) each won the Borden's Dog Food contest during the 1949 Summer Hampshire Annual Fair. Because I didn't have a dog, I qualified to enter by lassoing a stray Sheppard mutt along the way to the public Hampshire Township Park. I won a new Monarch bicycle that had a new helical coil, spring knee action suspension at the front fork! (See photo on page 277.) Afterwards, I released the stray dog.

However, I committed to memory the consequence of my front tire dropping into a pothole one afternoon while returning from school. The revolutionary knee action suspension linkage drove down into the front wheel spokes, abruptly stopping my front tire and sending me sailing over the handlebars. My chin scar still bears witness to this event and at an early age…and in spite of my fanciful dreams, affirmed that I could not fly.

Brother, Ron with Marv Mengeling, 1949

Borden Dog Food Contest Winners Hampshire, Illinois, 1949

Hampshire was a fine place to have lived as a twelve year old, although I doubt that I appreciated this notion at that time. The town was communal in spirit and seemed tolerant and accepting of all people within its borders. There appeared to be a prevailing, social governance that presided and watched over and cared after its citizens, particularly their children.

Outdoor movies were shown during the summer months on Wednesday evenings from a large screen that would be placed on the corner of Jefferson and State Street to show free movies, generally Westerns, as I recall. Free popcorn always seemed abundantly available.

With 750 residents in all of Hampshire, there were, by my estimate, roughly fifty mothers who lived in town who were appointed by some unknown magistrate to monitor every twelve year old boy's actions. And this "Brigade of Surrogate Mothers" had an unseen, but direct pipeline to one's own mother. If your hands were not clean, your "mother" at the corner grocery store would simply refuse to sell you the donut you wanted. "*G'wan home an' wash your hands, and I'm telling yer Mother.*" Mom would have been so informed before I walked in the front door to wash my hands!

Looking back, Hampshire Elementary School was well staffed with qualified teachers who gave every reason to their students that they cared. I entered Miss Bertha Johnson's sixth grade class when the class was in their second term. Miss Johnson graciously promoted me to Miss Evelyn Baker's seventh grade class.

Vaughn, Mengeling's front walk, 1950 **Vaughn, front of the Adams' house, 1949**

Both of the above pictures were received from Marvin Mengeling in February of 2004. Marvin wrote that he found the pictures while rummaging through old photos at his Mother's home in Hampshire.

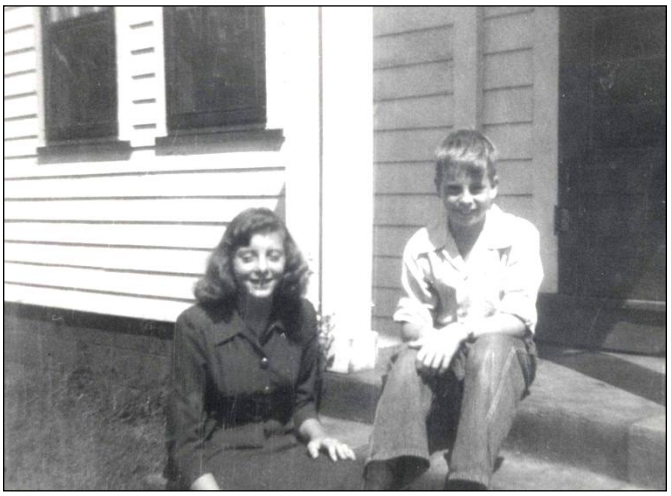
My memory still holds the anthology of classical music we studied in Miss Evelyn Baker's seventh grade class, and her style of testing students during Music Appreciation. She would place the stylus of her phonograph down on her 78 pressed Bakelite record for no more than three seconds of time to allow her class to recite the composer, music and proper movement of a classical Schubert or Chopin during test time. Miss Baker also gave the class an assignment of ruler measuring the complete perimeter of our monumental red brick Hampshire Elementary School, with its numerous windows, offsets, and other architectural features. This was a monumental task!

Miss Esther "Sammy" Samuelson taught eighth grade and always maintained the persona of an upright and disciplined teacher. Sammy would posture her vertebral carriage accordingly. I know I would have learned much from Sammy's teachings, but our family left Hampshire prior to my taking her 8th grade "finishing" class.

Our neighbors to the west were the Umholtz's. Charlie was likely my age, and lived with his father and grandfather. I never saw a mother (woman) at their home. Charlie was twelve… going on thirty-something. Charlie's learned behavior tendencies were perhaps acquired from living and working so closely with his older male farming relatives. Charlie was gentle, soft spoken and seemed to comprehend all things mechanical in

nature, but never seemed to either have the available time or inclination to do such things as snow sledding or playing basketball with the rest of the guys, like Marv or Boyd Reid.

Both times and terminology evolved over the ensuing years. Marv and I got "high" by climbing the local water cooling plant baffle tower. We could see the flat corn fields for miles from the top. We found empty plants and mills along the railroad tracks in town where we discovered basement grade level windows through which we would squeeze through and explore the depths of what seemed to be an earlier age gone by. We could have called this going "underground". We were more lucky than street-smart and never seemed to get caught during these escapades. We may also have been seen and were just ignored.



Bertie and Vaughn, on our front porch on Jefferson Street in Hampshire, Illinois

Brother, Ronnie is shown crossing State Street in Hampshire. Ray Maynard's Farm Implement Store is shown in the background, 1949

Marv and I built a plywood floor wrestling ring… of sorts, in our back yard upon which we would mimic all the mighty blows and takedowns of the "professional" wrestlers we watched on my Aunt Mil's early eight inch, black and white Philco television. The lack of a firm foundation under the plywood floor added acoustic amplitude to the falls while also attenuating most of our fall energy.

Our capers to escape small town, pre-teenage summer boredom were typical young male shenanigans that challenged the longing to test limits of our skills and our parents' wits and patience; all part of the traditional male ascension from adolescence to puberty.

I still hold fond memories of the short time our family lived in Hampshire. Its small town flavor would not, thereafter, be savored. Marvin's mom, Adeline, played a wonderful and nurturing role in my adolescent development for which I have felt much gratitude.

Marv's dad, Edwin, likewise exhibited to me a wholesome paternal role model in contrast to my own experience, which I learned to appreciate more so later in my adult life.

Hampshire and its folks created a short but unforgettable chapter in my life's experiences.

Childhood buddies, Marvin Mengeling and Boyd Reid
2005 Class Reunion at Hampshire High School
Received from Marvin in 2005

The Forties were gone and the decade brought about incredible changes in growth, maturity, new experiences and changes in lifestyles.

I often seemingly grumble in my writing about our routine moves around the country stemming from Dad's high pressure door to door selling. While I believe these moves did play some hardship on my ability to integrate into schoolwork, there were decided benefits in having the exposure of new geography, people, cultures and experiences. I believe this now. I do not believe I ever considered the notion while I was travelling through this time/space continuum. Life's experiences just observed to "happen" and I just "happened" to be connected to them in some unexplained fashion. Furthermore, I am not unique…I'm certain we all have had similar life's experiences.

Viewing retrospectively, I'm enriched that each of my life's experiences did occur and that while I had no control over them, I was clearly an integral part of their effect.

The fabulous fifties were approaching with new and exciting adventures on their way!

Hampshire High School Freshman Year, 1952

Top row: L to R: Bonnie Tatge, Carol Scheiser, Donna Deihs, John Duchaj, Boyd Reid, Jim Pfaffinger, Joyce Bauman, Carol Carlson.

Next row down: Karen Holze, Janice Holze, Irene Reiser, Edgar "Skip" Kruse, Shirley Peterson, Orrell Ruth, Leona Beart, Ruth Ann Bahr.

Next row down: Maxine Baker, Eddie Hennig, Elaine Conro, Bettina Ball, Jim Getzelman, Charlie Umholtz, Marvin Mengeling, Ron Leighty, Shelby Allen.

Bottom row: Lou Ann Gray, Joan Sunderlage, Lorraine Krecker, the Home Economics teacher/class advisor, Marcella Groebner, Marvin Engel, Jim Fillmore.

Ref: Photograph and name listing Courtesy of Marvin Mengeling, 2005 and used at Hampshire High School's 50th year Class Reunion.

Mom
The photo was taken at front of our home on Jefferson Street in Hampshire.

Mom was always soft spoken, happy and beautiful… in spite of her tough situation. She was determined to make things work for our family's togetherness and welfare. I never heard her complain or grieve… if she did; it was never demonstrated to her children or evident in her daily course of life. Ron, Bertie and I cherished our loving Mom.

In Hampshire we had a garden behind our home with all kinds of vegetables, including potatoes and green snap beans. Mom would preserve a meal that included those potatoes, bacon and green beans, with a roux of browned bacon grease and flour. We would seemingly devour this Mason jar sealed dinner all winter long. This meal with buttered bread was to become our comfort food. I still occasionally yearn for its nostalgic taste.

A fond memory includes YMCA swimming classes in Elgin with thick *Dairy Queen* milk shakes afterwards to languish during our drive back home to Hampshire. Other well remembered friends included Boyd Reid, Jim Getzelman, and Janice and Karen Holtz, cousins who were also my secret loves. There was also Jim "Fats" Pfeffinger, Maxine Baker, who was Marvin's sweetie, Ron Leighty and Skip Kruse among others.

Skip's father was a strict Lutheran minister and from his garden the "Midnight Raiders" would, after dark, creep low and with one eye trained on the parsonage, "help" themselves to fresh watermelon, corn, potatoes, and other edible booty. Reverend Kruse would stoically, but accurately, claim, "Steals." The Midnight Raiders would then find a remote hideaway site to roast and devour the stolen feast ala "Robin Hood" that likely ameliorated our malnourished stomachs and guilty consciences.

Reverend Guy Twyman, our Methodist Church Minister, assisted Mom in staying in touch with Dad who was absent on some unknown work related activity. Pastor Twyman also arranged for a 1950 summer "scholarship" to enable me to attend summer Bible school camp in Green Bay, Wisconsin, if I memorized the 23rd Psalm. Scholarships provided a benevolent means of sending to camp those who otherwise could not afford the expense. I met a girlfriend, Gail, at camp who gave me my first kiss and later wrote me love letters using green ink, apparently so I wouldn't forget where the kiss of the Green Bay lass came from.

Dad showed up during the early fall of 1950 and we moved to Hammond, Indiana. We stayed at the Indi-Illi Hotel in downtown Hammond temporarily, and then found a house to rent across the State line in Calumet City, Illinois. Bertie stayed with her friend, Joanie Holtz and her family, in Hampshire, to finish out the rest of her 8th grade school year.

I would begin a new and adventuresome saga in the Calumet Region, or as one from "da region" would say, "*I lived in da Cal Region…Ya know… on da Sout side… on Pulaski Ave… cross da street from da Catlick Church."* I never learned the ideology, or the science of causes or origins, for the gross deterioration of one's grammar and proper speech elocution on Chicago's south side; the verbal blight may well have resulted from

drinking the water from the Calumet River. It seemed that every friend I knew always contracted the disease.

Our newly acquired residential community of Calumet City, Illinois, demonstrated the general indifference of their town folks to what I later presumed to be all newcomers. Unlike friendly, small-town Hampshire, passersby's would not return a "Hi" on the sidewalks nor would they allow their eyes to make contact with yours. Curious gazes would peer from the pulled curtains of the windows of the longstanding resident Polish family neighbors. We were "Scotch-Irish", as Dad would say, and I felt a little bit out of place in this predominately Polish neighborhood. I presume we seemed just as strange to them and different in our ways as they were to us. We were also new and unfamiliar to the customs of the "Region". I brushed over my fears, as most kids will, and quickly many of my best friends were "Polacks".

My Polish friend, John Dudynski, exuberantly told me of his family's official name change… to Dudy! How great it was for him not to be embarrassed when asked to publically spell their name all the time. Shortly thereafter, they were even more irked to be asked to respond to… "Howdy… Dudy!" when the *Howdy Doody* craze flooded the media! It is unfortunate to know of families who had anglicized their wonderful and proud ethnic names, believing they had provided themselves and children a favor…when it really was not!

Howdy Doody

Grandpa Albert Sinkovitz died 25 February 1951. We were still living in Calumet City, Illinois. Our family drove back to Unionville, Pennsylvania to bid our loving farewells. Sadness encompassed a cold, gray, slow moving winteriness to the trip, services and internment, most of which I did not seem to appreciate or understand. I would miss my Pa greatly.

Pa was a hard working and soft-spoken man with an engaging smile and a funny, devilish Hungarian humor. He smoked a pipe that was well seasoned from sweet smelling *Prince Albert* tobacco that he bought in large, circular, red tin cans. One afternoon he took me by one hand and with the other he carried an empty tobacco can that was filled with supplies. Pa punched a hole in the bottom center of the can with a nail and sprinkled in a few crystals of calcium carbide to which he added a small amount of water. Pa then pressed the friction lid down tightly with his foot then toppled the can over on its side with his foot. Out from the small nail hole flowed a white smoke stream of what I later learned was acetylene gas. Pa lit one of his wood pipe matches, and, keeping his foot firmly on the side of the can, reached down and placed the business end of the match to the small plume of escaping white explosive gas. I was convinced the detonation was heard throughout Beaver County. The lid that I had trained my eyes upon exploded from the can and instantly sailed completely out of sight. Pa would smile and chortle during the entire process knowing that I had never before witnessed such an amazing spectacle.

One treat we kids would always look forward to when visiting Grammy and Pa was the disbursement of collected coins from a chain-hanging hollowed out log stub in Grammy's Unionville kitchen. Our sister, BeBe, older and wiser in such fiscal matters, would naturally assume leadership in our pecuniary disbursements and we would look to her to commence the process. I tried in vain to carefully audit our sister-leader. Ron was always maneuvered to sit between Bertie and me, and never caught the coin values or the double counts on the ends. Ron just smiled and was tickled to be part of the otherwise undemocratic "coin disbursement" procedure.

Pa would make toy wind-up tractors for me, using Grammy's wooden thread spools, rubber bands, Popsicle sticks and wax. Pa would vee-notch both rims of the spools with his knife (that he always carried) to provide traction to the drive spools. The rubber band was threaded through the holes of the spools, and the wax provided manageable frictional release between the stick and spool. Pa introduced me early in my life to not only the basic elements of chemistry and physics, but also a lot of creative, low cost fun. After Pa passed on Grammy sought after a job. She had never worked outside her home. She did, however, find that her services were warmly received at the Beaver Valley Country Club where she served as their pastry chef for many ensuing years.

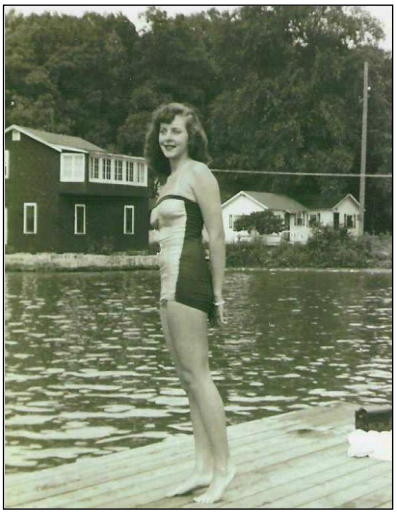
I was graduated from Lincoln School in Calumet City, Illinois, and reluctantly agreed to sing "O Danny Boy" at eighth grade graduation with three other mates who desperately needed a foursome to try to make their harmony work. I was also a Boy Scout for the year, which I totally enjoyed.

The Polish and Italian influence of my friends also motivated an interest in wanting to learn to play the accordion. Dad, Mom and I drove up to State Street in Chicago to buy a new 120 base accordion. I took lessons from a classical old German teacher from Chicago's south side. He would harmonize my lessons using his first and only love…his violin. He made my boring exercises sound almost bearable to me and undoubtedly expended the effort to mask the noise that I was generating and safeguard his own sanity. I don't believe he liked accordions or their music. He was a violinist making ends meet.

I'm not sure whether my teacher's tolerance gave out or the drive to South Chicago became too hectic, but I was next hooked up with the Monarch Conservatory of Music in Hammond, Indiana. I did not last very long there and ended up occasionally practicing on my own.

I later grew to truly appreciate the varied ethnicity of "da region" of the south side of Chicago: its people, foods, customs and particularly their weddings. We self appointed "Cool Cats" would crash these weddings on weekends, learn their folk dances, and enjoy the company of the attractive dancing girls with strange ethnic costumes that accompanied them.

In the early summer of 1952 our Adams family moved again, this time to Cedar Lake, Indiana about thirty miles East of Hammond. More fishing, night crawler rousting, and watching my sister, Alberta, look more like a movie star each and every day.



Bertie, Cedar Lake, Indiana, 1952

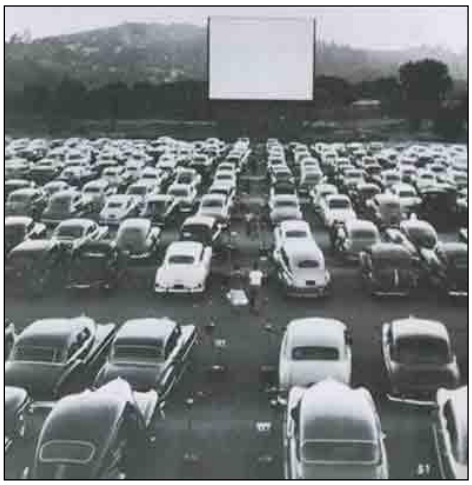
Our family moved to 250 Fernwood, Hammond, Indiana located in the Calumet region late in the summer of 1952 where I took a part time job (at Mom's encouragement) at McKeon's Hardware Store which was located around the corner of Fernwood and Hohman Avenue.

I started my freshman year at Hammond High School that fall. Dad opened a vacuum cleaner sales office on State Street in downtown Hammond. Bertie enrolled at Thornton Fractional High School as a sophomore and Ron was in fifth grade at Kenwood School further North on Hohman Avenue.

Mom was still busy working at Cousins Jewelry Store in downtown Hammond. When times were rough, Mom would never show her discouragement or complaining. She was always positive in her outlook, no matter how difficult times were.

250 Fernwood, Hammond, Indiana, Photo taken in 2002

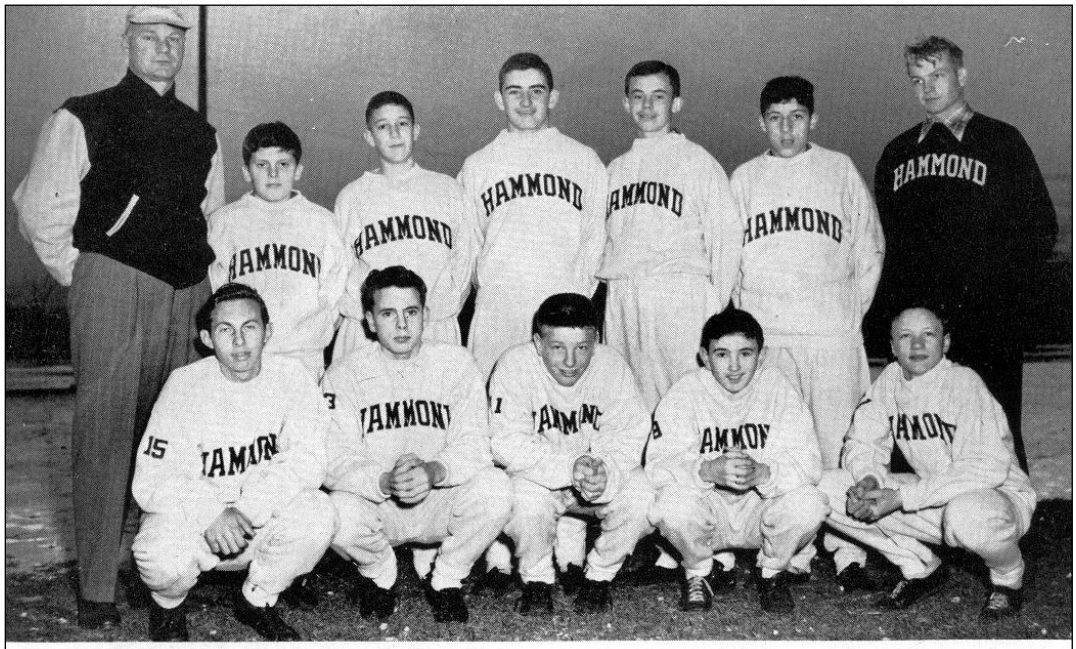
I would either ride my bike or walk to school at Hammond High. Our established family setting was conducive to better school study habits and I spent much time on the dining room table completing my homework. Cross country and spring track kept me after school, and with limited time available, I learned accordingly to better schedule my time.



While money was tight, the cost of outdoor movies was the often family night out recreation… now for the most part, long gone.

Outdoor movies of the '50's

School was finally catching my interest and I was challenged, more so in retrospect, by both Hammond High's excellent teachers and college bound curriculum.



FRESHMAN CROSS COUNTRY
First Row: Novakowski, Adams, Bauer, Dabney, Dean.
Second Row: Coach Wonsowitz, Cherchinsky, Murphy, Bement, Kussmaul, Fechalos, Emerson.

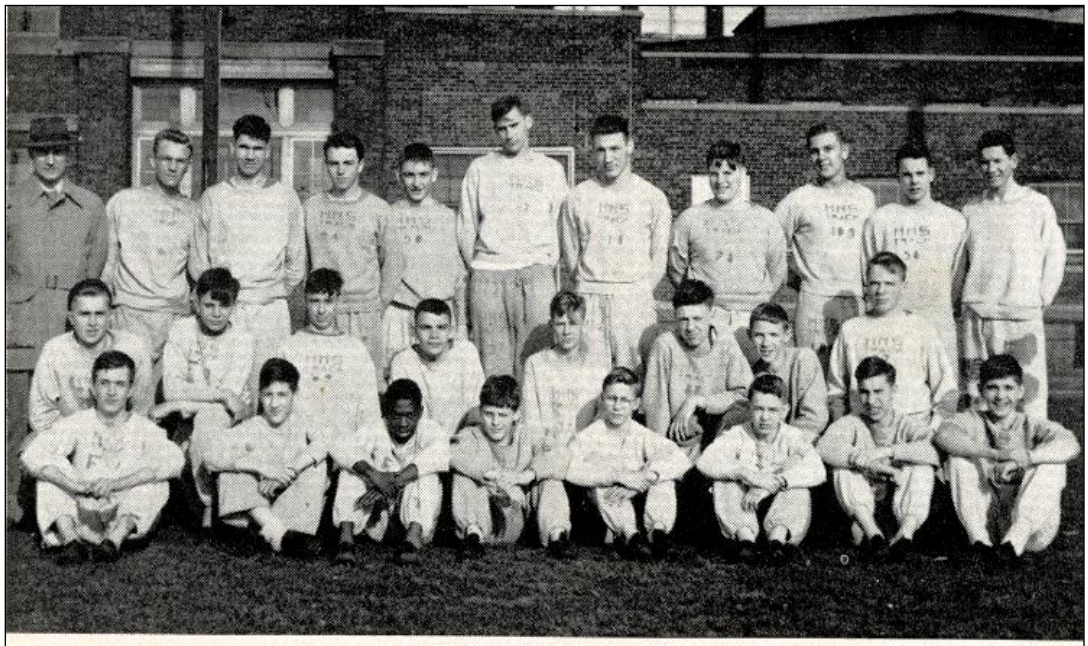
Hammond High School Freshman Cross Country, 1952

I enjoyed my first year of high school; particularly algebra and Latin. My PE teacher, John, "Whitey", Wonsowitz, called "Coach", encouraged me to try out for the track team for which he was the head coach. Looking back, Whitey was the personification of the gentle strength of the dedicated ethnic male teacher in the south Chicago area. He was

strong, honest, strict, conservative, hard working and generous coach, particularly with his time.

I started on the freshman cross-country team, but wasn't overly thrilled with competitive long distance running. I found out later that Coach wanted me to build up my legs for spring track. I loved the sprints and did rather well in the 100, 220 yard dashes and the 880 relays.

Later, I would run long distances for simply the pleasure of running. I can clearly envision the times of internal personal frustration, driving out in my Ford roadster to Lake Michigan's lake front in Whiting, and running for hours at night to just feel the later identified endorphin rush. I did not understand the biomedical effect then but I felt lifted up, relieved and in great spirits whenever I ran the distance along the beach.



FRESHMAN-SOPHOMORE TEAM

First Row: Carpenter, Murphy, Blackmon, Cherchinsky, Forsberg, Rigg, Diehl, Gasparovic.
Second Row: Laposa, Langendorff, McIlroy, Voris, Stempowski, Carroll, Eggers, Rhind.
Third Row: Mr. Papais, Gehrke, Hausenfleck, Deen, Bement, Radavich, Tall, Hildebrandt. Adams, Gross.

Hammond High School Freshman-Sophomore Track Team

I never recalled being encouraged as much as I was by Coach, and his inspiration was uplifting. Latina Prima was required and I liked the new language that, apart from our small class, no one I knew ever uttered.

We had a traditional sort of white, male-dominant fraternal fellowship called "Outside Clubs", and I was invited to join the initiation rites to "Freon". Hammond High had probably eight such clubs, and other neighboring schools had their comparable male social fraternal clubs as well. We stuck together, stood up for one another and fought for

each other in all matters of "honor" including our club status, principles and of course, our girlfriends. We kept chains in the trunks of our cars to display or enforce our Freon creed and beliefs. I've often sensed that the fathers of the incumbent leaders were really the ones who kept this ritualistic, social fraternity ongoing.

Our family was secure and intact. Dad was successful in his sales work and worked hard. Dad's persona and charisma made him an instant friend of everyone… everywhere. Dad's "good times" however, appeared to often interfere with his success; or, perhaps it was the other way around. Dad had a good, rather vagabond and wanderlust heart, but was always sincere; right or wrong. It was not for me to judge; I had never traipsed in his footsteps.

Mom, however was always there as a warm and steady anchor for us.

In 1953 we moved again to 427 Lewis Street in Hammond. We had rented the Fernwood home for only for a year while our lessor, Dr. Kuhn and family, were on leave from the Kuhn Clinic in downtown Hammond. The home and south Hammond neighborhood were especially fine and unlike that to which we were generally accustomed to enjoy.

Dad "took in" a 1932 Model A Ford, complete with rumble seats and red spoke rims, as a partial down payment for a compact vacuum cleaner sale. The coupe was black and had a spark advance lever around the horn bezel. More importantly was the fact that Dad gave this prize to me! The "down payment" amounted to about $50.00 of trade value, but Dad only paid $25.00 for his "units". While I might later question the ethics of such deals, my delight was undaunted at the prospect of having my own car. It mattered little that I had no license and at 15, was underage. Such attention to "trivialities" never seemed to bother Dad, and I was obviously indifferent to any problems or consequences that might result.

1932 Model A Ford

The above photograph (borrowed from the internet) is a good match for my car with the sole exception that mine had red spokes and rims and the fact that my rumble seat door was generally always open and full of those who could not fit in the front seat.

There was that memorable time that Bertie, whose name evolved from BeBe after I could manage the oral diction, borrowed my sporty Ford. Bertie and her girlfriend, Marjean, drove to the favorite summer beach getaway, Miller Beach. This sandy beach along Lake Michigan near Gary was part of the Indiana Dunes State Park, and east of Hammond some thirty miles. Bertie apparently ran out of both gas and money. They were rescued,

however, by a gallant group of "cute" guys who pushed them (which meant my roadster) back to Hammond with their car! Thank you Ford for your rear leaf spring bumpers.

I worked at Jim Bainbridge's City Service station on Hohman Avenue in Hammond pumping gas and servicing automobiles during the summer and on weekends and nights during my sophomore year at Hammond High.

I'm not sure exactly what reason provoked the next move to Oliver Street, Whiting, Illinois, but I'm sure there must have been a good one. Most families had spring cleaning…ours had summer moving. Our family moved again during that summer.

I spent one semester at Whiting High School where I met Joyce McCauley who was a year ahead of me. We met through note exchanges during study hall. We dated and "went steady". Joyce would always cheer me on at my track meets where I ran and set a school record for the 220-yard dash. There is not much I recollect academically about the school.

Dad bought a brand new 1953 Desoto that he apparently could ill afford and finally lost, but he felt it was worth the cost he outlaid just to sport the car around if only for a little while. Mom would never understand the logic and apparently, neither did the bank.

Mom, experiencing financial difficulties not of her own choice, was repaying a loan provided by her employer, Cousins Jewelry Store. The loan was taken out and given to Dad for reasons he never shared. Dad had another mysterious calling and left. We moved closer to Mom's work as she and had no car and did not drive. I continued to work at Jim's City Service, still pumping gas and servicing cars. The 52 Ann Street apartment in Hammond, Indiana was adjacent to the heart of the downtown Hammond business district.

Bertie had met and dated Arris (short for Aristotle) Kontos, a stylish guy of Greek background who was an avid Chicago Cubs sports fan. He was a "cool" dresser, and drove a maroon Plymouth convertible which, on occasion, would let me borrow. While I may have been protectively suspicious of Arris' intentions with my sister, I kind of liked the guy. Arris won out. Bertie and Arris were married that fall and celebrated a typical, wonderful, "big, fat" Orthodox Greek wedding. I grew to love both Arris and his wry, irascible manner and witty, dry and occasionally repulsive sense of humor.

Mom, Ron and I then moved to a smaller apartment off Conkey Street on Monroe Street in Hammond located on the second floor accessed by a long inclined wood staircase. Ron was a sixth grader at Kenmore School and walked to school. Times were tough financially. I quit high school at the beginning of the second semester break of my junior year to help Mom out. I sold my original, pristine Ford for $100 to a guy who chopped, channeled and destroyed "my" car by converting the pristine original beauty into an ugly "street rod."

I was still "seeing" Joyce McCauley but the distance between Hammond and Whiting

was about fifteen miles and I was without "wheels". I took a bus to see her one afternoon and stayed until after dark. By that time the busses had stopped running. I ran home that evening and when I arrived at Ann Street...my legs failed to stop. I had to wind down slowly and over-ran our front porch by a half a block before I could stop running! I loved to run long distances and would always receive an uplifting euphoric feeling that lifted up my spirits and made me feel whole and good.

Now car-less, I rode a city bus to my summer full time job at Cappy's Shell Station in Indiana Harbor, centered in the very heart of the Calumet Industrial Revolution. The Indiana Harbor and Ship Canal is an artificial waterway on the southwest shore of Lake Michigan, in East Chicago, Indiana which connects the Grand Calumet River to Lake Michigan. Hyman Kaplan owned the service station and "invited" Shell Oil Company to graciously distribute their products through his station. Hymie was kind to me and I learned much about the fine art of petroleum product conservation to maximize one's profits.

Hymie lived in Chicago and wanted to "fix me up" with one of his daughters. I liked, respected, and learned much from Hymie, but never did date his north side Chicago, cute Jewish daughter.

Looking back at these days, I was in unrealized and unappreciated young rebellion, and had not the foggiest clue as to why. I was obviously neither pleased nor happy with where I was or where I was heading down life's highway.

Gene (Eugenio) Cittadino, or, "Dino", the Italian watchmaker at Cousins Jewelry Store in downtown Hammond where Mom also worked, helped me over some troubled waters. Gene had long man-to-man talks with me that decidedly changed the errant direction I was heading. I committed myself to working off my debt to Gene by helping him revarnish his French doors and dig a basement for his Italian wine cellar. I also helped him make his annual two oak barrels of red Italian wine.

Gene and I would drive to Chicago's famous outside produce market in the late fall, meet up with his dad and brothers, including Amadeus, and go through the process of selecting the "best" grapes by what I might now call the "Delphi" method of group consensus decision making. We would all pick a cluster of different grape varietals in each hand and squeeze the juice out onto our hands. When the juice would begin to dry, the sugar content would be comparatively measured by how sticky one hand was compared to the other. Not very scientific, but it apparently worked! The selected grapes were loaded, hauled by truck and driven home. Gene and I would press the clusters; watch over the fermentation and oak barrel the good Italian "Dego" red wine. It was never bottled but taken out by the pitcher from the lower bung spigot tap. Gene and I would play pool and drink the homemade wine. I think of Gene often and fondly as I make my wines today.

Gene also believed every young man needed a "trade" to fall back on and I agreed to have him master me in a watch-making apprenticeship at his home two nights a week. Two nights a week I would also savor the delights of Gene's lovely wife, Ann's

extraordinary Italian cuisine that she would start early every single morning to prepare.

My memories today of the Chicago and Calumet region reflect a lonely period of time with little money and much hardship on the streets and roads we used as arterials to carry us from pillar to post with little perceived hope and certainly no great expectations.

Robert Brasher, one of the guys that Heskett, Bob Carr and I hung out with during this period, was unique in that he was a professing Christian, nice guy, handsome and had a shy but easy manner of also attracting good looking girls. Bob did not drink and would volunteer to be our designated driver. He had a dark blue 1952 Ford that was rear end lowered, with dual exhausts and rumble pack mufflers that subtly and aptly beckoned friendly and attractive females.

Bob later married one of these attractive girls named Fran and had a son named Robert Brasher, Jr. I had lost track of Bob and his family until decades later when he passed away in the late 1990's. Robert, Jr. became a successful Chicago painter of the streets of the windy city and painted the "Chicago Art Institute" shown below. A copy of this painting was given to sister, Bertie, for her 70th birthday.

Robert's art is very moving to me personally and reflects broadly on much of how I deeply recapture the Chicago of my youth. I wrote Robert of my appreciation for his insightful art:

"Afternoon at the Art Institute"

"*... You might appreciate how much I empathize with your work. I grew up viewing Chicago as the large and crowded; rainy and windy city... rather unfriendly to me as a young, economically starved and unrefined lost soul who found little comfort within the wet, cold and indifference from the city streets of Chicago. Living for five decades in the warm, dry, sunny, happy and receptively open Phoenix valley strikes a marked contrast to my early Chicago memories, and draws an even more startling recollection of lost and lonely times not washed away by the rain on Chicago's dark and rainy streets. Your reflection of Chicago streets vividly captures this contrast for me.*"

Our family recovered from much of our plight by the end of summer…and moved to 6220 Monroe Street, a nicer apartment in Hammond. I didn't feel comfortable restarting high school again at Hammond High. My earlier friends there were now a semester ahead of me so I elected to enroll at the Hammond Technical Vocational High School. The

name had a certain non-collegiate, industrial ring attached to it. The new direction provided, in retrospect, exactly the challenge I needed.

The summer of 1953 was one of upward transition for me and positive changes were beginning to take hold in my life. Gene's influence had taken hold and I saw new horizons ahead. For my birthday, Mom gave me a renovated Lord Elgin watch, perhaps as an encouragement to maintain my interest in watch making. While I cherished the watch, my interest in watch making began to wane. I have kept the watch as one fond memento of my Mother's enduring love.

My long kept and remembered gift from Mom, a Lord Elgin Watch

The second semester of my junior year was one of many positive changes that would occur. Hammond Tech was a challenge. I had a drafting/design class all afternoon for the entire year. I worked hard for Mr. Albert Schell, a mechanical engineer who "retired" to teaching. His class "jobs" were selected from local industry, progressive in scope, and one could advance as quickly and as far as you were motivated and challenged. I was highly motivated and challenged.

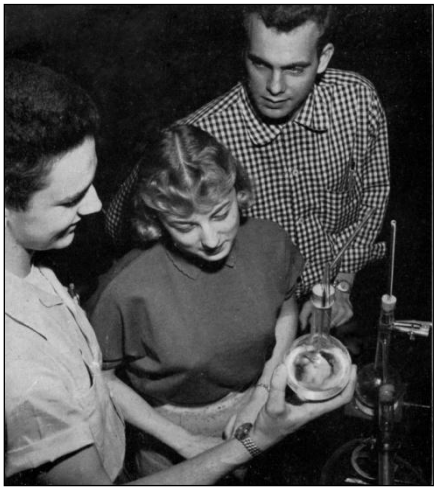
During the latter part of 1954 we moved again to 33 Elizabeth Street in Hammond. The Cittadino's lived on the south side at the west end of the street near State Line Avenue. This allowed my pay back duties and watch making apprenticeship easier to manage. With two nights a week studying watch making at the Dino residence I began to appreciate the proper role of a hard working and dedicated father figure, one that I had not had with my own father. Gene would relax at home. After my "tutorial session" was over, I would stay for dinner. Afterwards, Gene would occasionally entertain us with his guitar. I was impressed with his love of "Malaguena", flamenco style, and he played it masterfully as well. Gene would also let me borrow his 1953 Buick Riviera for special dates wherein I would bring it back early Sunday morning, washed and cleaned for Sunday Mass. Gene provided a strong and caring counsel that I much needed at that time of my life. I am convinced God placed him in my life to redirect my teenage rebellion toward good and wholesome values that I may have then failed to consistently implement, but since have never forgotten.

Gene and Ann Cittadino

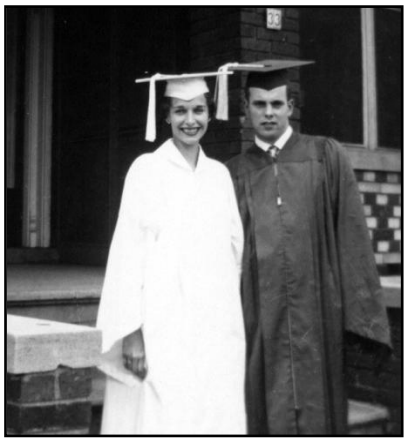
Gene was "a man for all seasons". I would watch Gene play pool in the basement of Hammond's Indi-Illi Hotel where he would play pool with other businessmen during lunch break at Cousins Jewelry Store. Dressed up in a suit, his wool topcoat and wide brimmed felt fedora, all masking his small frame and serious expression, disguised his otherwise friendly nature, welcoming dark eyes and easy Italian grin… especially when he donned work clothes and had a shovel in his hands. I'll not forget my friend and mentor, Dino.

Gene's 1953 Buick Rivera

In 1955 during my senior year I had a similar Inspiration in chemistry. Our instructor was a Chemical Engineer on borrowed leave from The Standard Oil Company in nearby Whiting, Indiana. Mr. William Parsons mandated that all his students enter in the State Science Fair. My chemistry partner was, much to my chagrin… a girl! Her name was Lucy Falusi, which I understood to hear..."Lucy, the Floozy." Lucy was popular, energetic, Student Body President, and in every organization imaginable. Lucy and I elected to synthesize Thiokol A Type rubber for our entry in the Indiana State Science Fair, a project encouraged by Mr. Parsons. With help from my buddy, Lowell (Mac) McCarter, then a Chemical Engineering student at Purdue, Lucy and I won a First Place in the Indiana Regional State Science Fair.



Bill Lanz, Lucy Falusi, Vaughn Adams



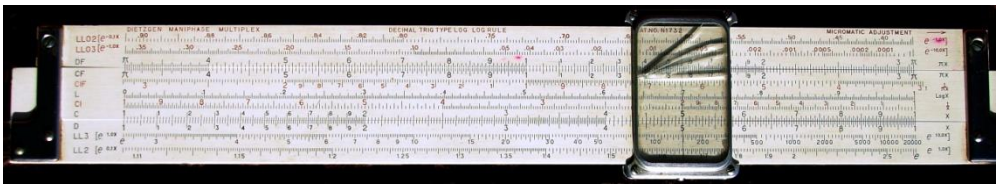
I performed well in Mr. Schell's class and in school generally, taking an overload to make up credits lost the year earlier. I was still a ½ credit shy of graduation requirements that May, and I finished over the summer.

I dated Sharon Duykers during the summer of 1955. She was a sweet friend, attractive and intelligent. Sharon later taught English at North Phoenix High School.

I started dating my high school Chemistry partner, Lucy Elizabeth Falusi.

Sharon Duykers and Vaughn, 1955

I had saved enough money (about $20) to buy a new suit for graduation at Joe Hirsch Men's store in downtown Hammond. Enroute, I stopped at the Northern Indiana Stationary Company on Hohman Avenue and ended up foregoing the suit for a fancy slide rule…a *Dietzen Maniphase Multiplex Deci- Trig type, Log Log Slide Rule* that was the top of the line for calculators. I used the slide rule througout my college years while working full time at Edward Valves, and Hutton and Hutton Architects and Engineers before moving to Arizona.



My Dietzen Slide Rule, 2014

The slide rule finally gave way to the Monroe rotary calculators in the late 1950's, the 4 function calculator in the late 1960's, and finally to the multi function Texas Instrument whizzes in the 1970's.

One thing is for sure…I doubt I would still have the blue surge suit I was looking for over the last sixty years!

Remember back when…

You got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped, without asking, all for free, every time? And you didn't pay for air? And, you got trading stamps to boot?

And with all our progress, don't you just wish, just once, you could slip back in time and savor the slower pace, and share it with the children of day.

The front porch swing

And our summers were filled with bike rides, Hula Hoops…visits to the pool, and eating Kool-Aid powder with sugar.

They were indeed…good ‘ol days…!

Mom with Darla Siget in front of our apartment
33 Elizabeth St, Hammond, Indiana, July, 1955

Darla is the daughter of Dorothy and Joe Siget, Dad's step sister and her husband.

Our attitudes, beliefs and lives have indeed changed over these ensuing years…

Belief then… *Have you seen the new cars coming out next year? It won't be long before $2,000.00 will only buy a used one.*

1957 Bel- Air
Two Door Hard top

Belief then… *If they raise the minimum wage to $1.00, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store.*

Belief then… *It's too bad things are so tough nowadays. I see where a few married women have to work to make ends meet.*

Those were the days, my friend...

Belief then… *The fast food restaurants are convenient for a quick meal, but I seriously doubt they will ever catch on.*

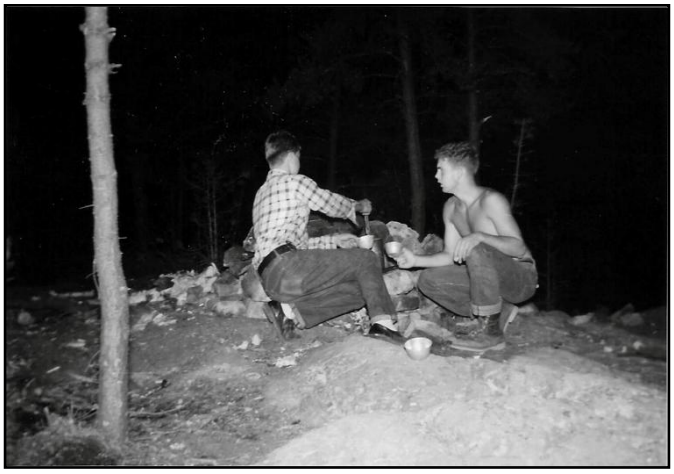
Enough of that... time clearly proved our beliefs were largely incorrect...!

In July 1956 my high school friend, Bob Carr, my brother Ron (age 10) and I decided to take a trip to Canada. Bob drove us in his turquoise Pontiac hard top to Ely, Minnesota, located on the Canadian border, where we were outfitted by the Quetico Park, Canada, *Canoe Country Outfitters.* This was a three-week boundary waters canoe trip in the wilderness of Canada. We had a most memorable trip with unique experiences quite uncommon for street-smart South Chicago city guys.

Our first evening, after canoeing and portaging north the entire day, took us to a small island where we set up camp. Mosquitoes seemingly came from nowhere and viciously attacked us. We each dove into our pup tents, still not fully up, poured repellant on our rattled skin and finished setting up our tents from inside. We had not taken note that we were on a broadleaf tree island terrain where mosquitoes flourish by laying their eggs in the dew collected in the curled tree leaves.

After that experience, we only camped on pine tree grounds and never again had the problem. We lived and learned a lot over the ensuing weeks. Ron was both a good scout and sport. Looking back in time I regret not being a more compassionate brother; I believed earlier that a brother five years my junior was only a pesky gnat to be avoided. We have made up for those years since then, and I have had a close, great friend as a brother ever since.

Bob (stern), Vaughn (bow), Canada

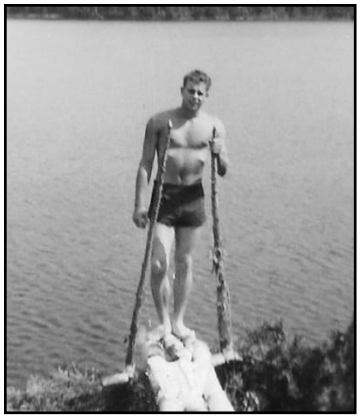


Bob, left, ladling hot, brandied coffee

In the photo above, Bob and I were out fairly far in the canoe when Ron had just finished mess duty and walked over to the lake bank. We both watched Ron throw a large boulder down from the bank into the water. We both saw the water splash upward and fall back into the lake. We afterward heard the sound of the rock initially splashing the water's surface. Bob and I pondered the physics a bit and queried that we could determine how many feet from shore we were from the seconds of elapsed time from when we first saw the splash to when we heard the splash (knowing that sea level sound travelled at 1128 feet/sec at 68 degrees F). Sooo…, I cupped my hands over my mouth and slowly yelled to Ron, "Ron…, throw…another… rock… in… the… water"…!

Puzzled, and no doubt questioning that he was the butt of yet another joke, responded with, ”why…?” Neither of us could shout sufficiently loud to explain the “why”…and we ultimately gave up the notion…it wasn’t worth the yelling effort! We have chuckled about this rock issue many times over the years and thought it was worth memorializing here!

Brother, Ron, took all the photos with his camera and I sorrowfully regret I never thought to take a shot of him!



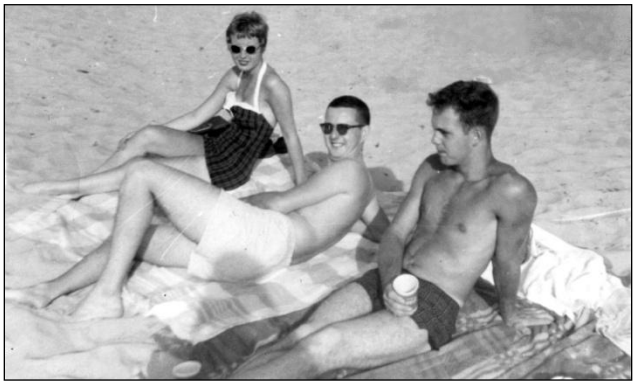
Our handmade diving board

Our wilderness water mode of travel

Our kitchen table (Bob on left)

Bob, Ron and I travelled many miles upward into Canada, portaging, canoeing, breaking for camp, eating, sleeping and on we went, learning much along the way. It was a most memorable experience.

Back in the city, on any free day when the first rays of sun would try to break through the high ceiling clouds of the south Chicago region, we thought of Miller Beach! It was there we could forget the reality of Hammond, Gary, and East Chicago and alternatively escape to the warm sands of Miller Beach! We would swim, sun bathe, chat and enjoy the scenery of Lake Michigan in front of us and sand in all other directions.



Peggy Falusi, Lowell (Mac) McCarter, and Vaughn
Miller Beach, Indiana, summer, 1955
My date, Lucy Falusi, took the photograph

Coach Whitey Wonsowitz would bus our track team to Miller Beach to help build our leg muscles up by running miles in the loose rolling sand.

Mr. Albert Schell, my high school drafting/design teacher, was able to secure me a job interview at The Edward Valve Company, a Division of Rockwell Manufacturing Company located in nearby East Chicago, Indiana. Mr. Schell had been an engineer at Rockwell prior to his "retiring" to teach. Rockwell designed and manufactured large scale valves for the steam powered generating stations, nuclear submarines, and the gas and oil industries.

I was hired as a draftsman, detailing valves that I was familiar with from Schell's earlier class. I felt I was in seventh-heaven and had my "own" office in an engineering department of some 100 engineers and designers. My salary was a whopping $30.00 per week!

I was given amazing opportunities at Edward Valves. When a valve failure occurred at the Babcock and Wilcox Power Plant in Chicago, I was asked by a project engineer to assist him in the site visit. We gathered the valve fragments and sketched the installation layout. We returned and I assisted in piecing together the fragments onto a casting mold insert for the same valve so as to better analyze the nature of the valve fracturing. This analysis resulted in the modification of the casting to eliminate the stress risers by increasing the wall thickness.

This analysis later aided me greatly in my forensic engineering practice with BTI, Inc. I was convinced then that I would make engineering my career and profession.

In 1956 I started evening classes at Purdue University at their Calumet Campus in Hammond while still working at Edward Valves full time. I also attended Calumet Technical College studying structural steel detailing for which I received a Certificate. The instructor was Ed Gracie, an engineer I met from Rockwell. Ed was able to arrange a job interview with Roberts Engineering, a structural engineering firm in Hammond, Indiana.

This work eventually led to an interview with Hutton and Hutton, Architects and Engineers for an engineering design job with considerable increase in pay… probably to two dollars an hour! I enjoyed the work and thought I might better enjoy the study of Architectural Engineering. I enjoyed the sketches of William Hutton, Sr. who would ask me to draft final working drawings. He would tell me to "Beef up those lines, Vaughn", which was his prompt to more strongly delineate my object lines.

Concluding Statement

At this time Part 11 completes the published Adams Family History, and as a result of personal privacy concerns, Chapter Seven is only a partial representation of my writings which omits my adult years, marriages, and children. The remaining family history writings are contained in my Personal Chronicles and may be published at a later date.