

ANECDOTES OF MY LIFE

by

Amy D. (Nelson) Thompson

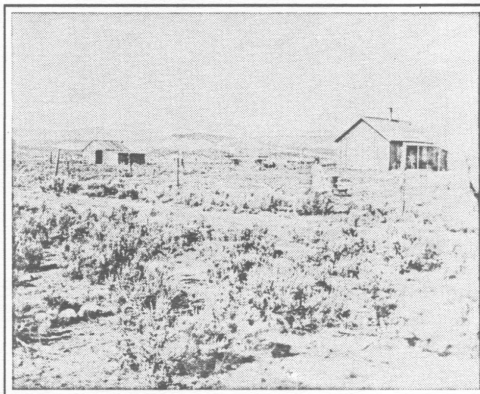


Rewritten from oral tapes recorded
at the home of Dorothy Chadwick
during June 1980.

I was born in the little town of Ouray, Colorado, the daughter of Myra and Malcolm Nelson, who had lived in that town most of the time since their marriage. The first few months after they were married were spent at the Nelson Ranch in Boulder County. This was the place that his father, Johannes Nelson had homesteaded sometime after his arrival in America in 1870. They sold it before returning to Ouray, where my older brother John and I were born. Part of our parents' honeymoon trip had included visiting Elitch's Garden in Denver.

When I was a few months old, our parents decided that they did not want to raise my brother and me in the little mining town, where things were rather rough, so our Father went to Montezuma County, travelling by train, looking for farming land. Finding none there, he went on to La Plata County, and eventually found a piece of mostly unbroken sagebrush land about twelve miles south of Durango. He purchased half of what was originally a 160-acre homestead.

Meantime, the floods of 1911 came, and this made it impossible for him to return by the route he had travelled in going to the southwest. So he returned over Cumbres Pass, and stopped at Howard, Colorado to visit my Aunt Elsie Freeman, according to an entry in her daily notes.



*Nelson home and barn, 1912
Myra Nelson with John and Amy*

By early December the family was packed, and moved back to Durango, and on down to the newly purchased property. There were no buildings on our land, so we spent the winter with a bachelor named Tom McNay in the claim shack that stood on the other part of the original homestead.

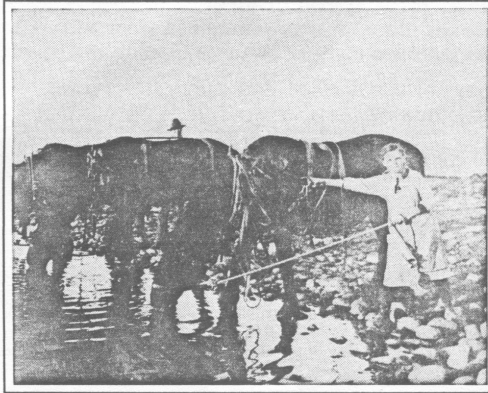
My parents, between them, built a very sturdy two room house, with one clothes closet, and another small room that served as a pantry. This meant that we all slept in one room. My brother and I each slept in homemade beds. Mine was a trundle bed that rolled under his.

Of course, my memories of the very early days are very faint. But, as I remember things, one of the ways that food could be kept cool was that my Father had dug deep down into the ground making a hole that was lined with gunny sacks. When the gunny sacks were wet, it made a very cool place and it was possible to keep eggs, milk and cooked food in there for a few days. Fresh meat was completely unavailable except in the winter time, when it could be hung outside somewhere and kept frozen because there was no way of keeping it otherwise. However, my Father, in early years, built a smokehouse so that when they butchered pigs he was able to smoke the hams, bacons and some of the homemade

sausage. The smoked meat would keep all year. Also, pork roasts could be partially cooked, and then packed in lard. They could be kept for several weeks that way, and only had to be roasted some more for good eating. Everything from the pig was used, even to the tail, which we enjoyed when it was roasted. The meat from the

head was used for headcheese. I also remember when extra eggs laid during the summer were packed into large crocks of "water glass" (sodium silicate) for winter use when the hens were not laying. Of course, there were horses and chickens on the place as early as I can remember.

Dad had a team of mares which he had purchased when they first moved there, and he raised two teams of colts from them. One team was sold after it was broken. The other team he kept, and kept one of the mares. They served as horse power as long as he was able to farm the place, for he



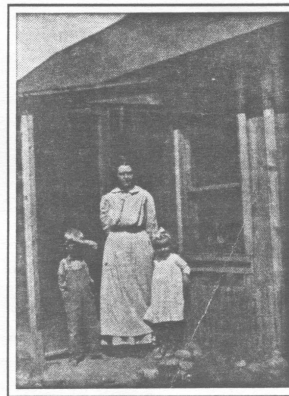
Malcolm and Amy Nelson watering team used for farming and hauling.

never owned a tractor. The only time there was ever any tractor farming done on the place was when he was sick one year and the neighbors came in and did the plowing and planting for him.

Among other things that I remember when I was quite small was that there was a post office across the fields from us, and my Father would walk across there to get the mail. Later it was discontinued, and the mail was delivered about five miles on down the railroad track in the farming community of Elco. Someone would have to ride or walk down the track and would usually bring back the mail for all of the neighbors and it was then distributed among them.

The road ran right past the house and an early picture which I have shows my Mother, my brother and me standing out close to the new house and all around us were weeds and bushes because it was covered with sagebrush. And the road barely shows in the picture because it was not much but a set of tracks.

The first few years all the water for drinking and household use was hauled in barrels about three-fourths of a mile from a spring which ran down the side of a hill. A stock pond was one of the early things that was built and when it was filled, we were able to carry water by the bucketfuls from it for washing. There was a ditch, also, that ran past the



*John, Amy and Myra Nelson
About 1914*

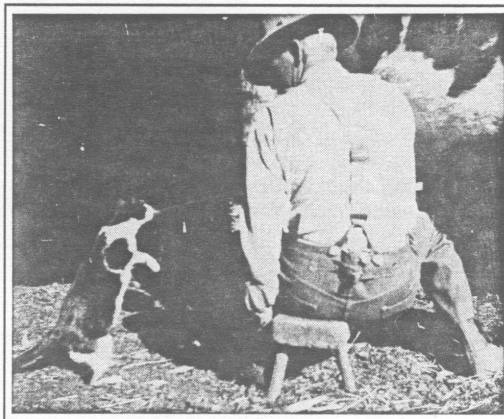
house, and we could dip water from it for use other than drinking. In 1918, with the help of a neighbor, a well was dug which supplied the household water for the remainder of the years we lived there.



Amy and John, 1913

I can remember part of the process of breaking the sagebrush and clearing the land. And the great bonfires as the brush was burned. There were two garden spots right close to the house, and a third one that we called the "far garden" which was a quarter of a mile from the house. It was used mainly for squash and corn while the smaller garden products were planted closer by. An orchard was also set in. One particular thing my Father did in the early years was to plant locust trees along two sides of the house and garden as windbreaks. He planted ash trees in the yard, and also a couple of maple trees. Most of these trees had to be watered by carrying buckets of water to them but the cottonwoods, poplars and chokecherries planted along ditches flourished on their own. One small plot of ground between the house and the road was set aside for flowers and berries and there were cellar shelves filled with the products from them. Coyotes and hawks were predators that preyed on my Mother's poultry. She was a pretty good shot with a rifle. I remember seeing her cripple a coyote an eighth of a mile away with a shot and have also seen her shoot hawks. After the fields were completely cleared of brush this was not so much of a problem.

We did not have our own milk cow until after our sister Ruby was born. I can remember walking to a neighbor's to bring home a bucket of milk in order that she would have fresh milk part of the time. Finally, however, we owned one cow and later two or three cows. Of course, part of our daily job was milking and during the time the cows were kept in summer pasture, we would walk out and drive them into a little pen in the corner of the pasture and do the milking there and then carry the milk to the house.



Malcolm Nelson milking.

I haven't told you about the morning that my sister was born. Of course, we were pretty small yet then. We weren't told much about what was going to happen when a baby was born. But we did know that our Mother was sick one morning and my Father had ridden five miles down the railroad track or had forded the river to

reach a phone across from us. Or had asked a neighbor to do it. And he had gone down to where another neighbor lady lived who would come and help for two weeks. Before the Doctor had arrived from Durango, my brother and I were given a little lunch and sent out to pick wild flowers. We were told not to come back to the house until we were called. When we wandered toward the house we were sent away again. Finally, when we were called in, I can remember each of us being lifted in turn by our Father to peek into a wooden apple box that was sitting up on the little dresser and there was the tiniest, reddest faced baby I can ever remember seeing! In fact, the first one that I can ever remember seeing that was newborn and that was our sister Ruby.

Another bit of excitement on the same day was the fact that the Doctor had had someone drive him down in a car. We very seldom saw a car in those days. And while that car was sitting at our front gate, another car went by. That is the first time I can ever remember seeing two cars on that road in the same day.

My Uncle, Alwyn Eggleston, was caretaker at Electra Lake, which is some 20 to 25 miles north of Durango. Two different summers my Mother, my brother and I went to visit there. I can't remember exactly the details of the trips but one time we went from Durango to Rockwood by train and got off at Rockwood or at the Tacoma Power plant, which uses water from Electra Lake to generate electricity. From there to the Lake was a tram car and we rode across a valley in it. I can remember that it was quite small and there were several people in it. This made it exciting because we could peek over the edge and see how high up we were. We made one trip back to Durango by train and there was a mudslide on the track that delayed us quite awhile. On one of the trips we travelled by car with someone to the lake and also made one trip back by car. This is my first recollection of riding in a car. I must have been three and four years old those summers. On one trip up there my brother caught his first fish. I can remember yet seeing him running down across the dam with the fish trailing along behind him. He was so excited he couldn't even stop to take it off the hook right.

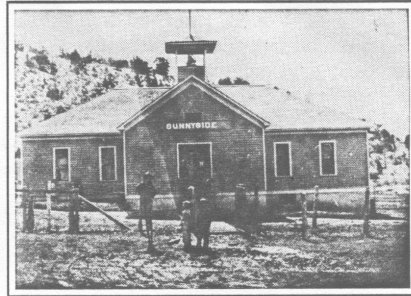
In the early days Durango had a street car—first a horse-drawn car and then, when they built an electric plant it was electrically powered. I can remember riding on it once all the way out to the Fairgrounds and that was a real thrill.

My brother and I started to school together when I was almost seven years old. He had not been very healthy when he was smaller so our Mother had obtained permission to keep him at home and teach him herself for a year. And, as children do, he promptly tried to teach me everything he had learned. Mother decided she should really teach me right along with him so that I would get it straight. And so by the time we started to school the next fall we were put in third grade because we had covered enough material at home that we were up with third grade. We had to do some oral reading before we could keep up in that subject. And so we went all the way through grade and High School together. By the time we finished grade school another room had been added to our building and two years of High School had been added. We were able to complete our Junior year before we had to go to Durango High School to finish.

I can still remember how I felt that first morning when we started off to school. We walked a quarter of a mile straight down the road, and then turned a bend to go a quarter of a mile to the railroad track, and then it was about an eighth of a mile down through the Hollow across the arroyo bridge to where the schoolhouse sat at the foot of the hill. I can remember very plainly the hat my Mother had made for me and just exactly how I felt when we rounded that bend, and started the last lap to school.

School in a small place like that was a lot of fun. There would be anywhere from three to as many as eight people in one grade and there were eight grades. Plus two High School grades by the time I finished there. We would all be out playing games together except for the real little ones who couldn't play baseball and couldn't run as fast as the big kids. We played games like PumPum Pullaway, Steal Sticks, Dare Base, and many other such group games. And, of course, work-up baseball for there were never enough to

have two teams. And we always shot marbles and played Jacks in the spring and the girls were just about as good as the boys. The boys always owned jack knives, and the bigger ones played mumbledypeg. We also had swings, and later on there were big heavy teeter-totters. Many of the kids rode horseback or donkey back to school and there was a barn to tie their horses in.



Sunnyside School

There was no indoor plumbing during the time I went to school there but eventually a spring was piped down the hill, so there was a fountain and running water. Before that water had been carried and poured into a big jug or cooler with one tin cup for everyone to use. We soon learned to make paper cups so we could have our own. There were huge kerosene lamps hanging from the ceiling for light at night. Eventually these were replaced by acetylene lights and a gas plate was put into the basement so that some cooking could be done. Most of us had always carried lunch from home. The buckets were kept out in the hall except when it was cold enough to freeze lunches. Then we were allowed to set them along the front of the room. By the time I was a Sophomore in High School the teacher was cooking a hot dish of some sort for us to have along with our sandwiches. The hot dishes would be beef soup or stew or kraut and wienies. Sometimes parents would send some of the ingredients for the meals.

The second room had been built, with the basement under it, during the summer before I was in eighth grade. And that was when the High School courses were added.

From the time we were in sixth grade all of the rural schools in the county would get together at some school to have reading, spelling and arithmetic matches, outdoor games, and things of that sort. It was always a lot of fun. We usually had a Mayday Festival some place with a Maypole dance. Someone in the community with a car or a truck would take a load of us. Once it was held at the

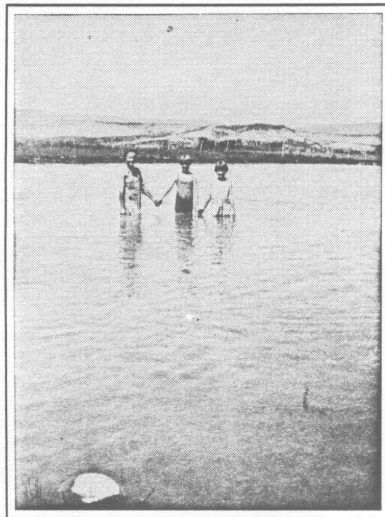
Elco school and some of the people went on the train. My brother and I and a friend walked down the railroad track and back after the contests were over.

Our school sat at the foot of a hill that was about three-eighths of a mile long. There was a big bend in the road at the top of the hill, and down along the way several springs. Near the bottom there was another sharp bend and there were two large irrigation ditches that went under the road right there. And another eighth of a mile down the road was the railroad track. We never owned a boughten sled, but had one that Father had made for us. There was no way of guiding it except by dragging our toes which wore out our shoes or by jerking the front end to make it come around where we wanted it to go. Most of the kids at school had sleds that could be guided. One of the favorite pastimes when the snow was just right was to make a train of all the sleds with the biggest one at the front and the smallest at the back. Ours was the next to the smallest, so we were always almost at the tail end of the sleds and it was just like playing crack-the-whip by the time we got to the bottom. Our sled would be whipping back and forth across the road and sometimes it would turn clear over. With all that, there were very seldom any serious coasting accidents. I can remember once when some older people were out coasting by moonlight they ran up on a bank on the way down the hill and one of the girls had a broken nose. Skating was another favorite winter pastime and our Father had been able to buy skates for us. The reservoir, which I have mentioned before, made good skating and he was anxious enough for us to have a good time that very often he would go out and throw water on the ice at night, so that it would freeze a new smooth surface for us. Or he would shovel the snow off the ice and throw water on it. Sometimes a whole group of us would get together at one of the larger reservoirs or even down the railroad track at the sloughs and build a big bonfire and skate by moonlight, roast wienies and marshmallows, and have a lot of fun that way.

In the winter time people often gathered together at somebody's house for a taffy pull or a quilting bee or something of that sort. I was too small to really participate in it but it was fun being there and watching what all went on. Sometimes in winter a big bobsled would be loaded with hay and all of the young people would go for a bobsled ride in the moonlight. Sometimes the farmers put bells on the harness and we could hear them coming from a long ways off.

The neighbors who had range cattle used their bobsleds to haul feed to the cattle in the winter. But my Father had his farm arranged so that the cattle and horses were near the hay stacks in the winter time so he did not have to haul feed. The sled that he had built was just a small one that we called the "punt" and we used it just to go to town or around the neighborhood.

We also went into our pond in the summertime to cool off. I never learned to swim but we had an old "stone boat" which we called our raft. (This was the sled that had been used to haul the barrels of water before we had our well and was also used to haul rocks off the fields in the spring.) I could hold onto it and paddle with my feet and go across the pond that way. We had a pair of kittens that we had raised by hand and they always followed us wherever we went. If we got out into the middle of the pond, they would run up and down the bank and cry and cry. But if we would push the raft up to the bank, they would hop onto it and ride out.



The pond where we played in the summer.

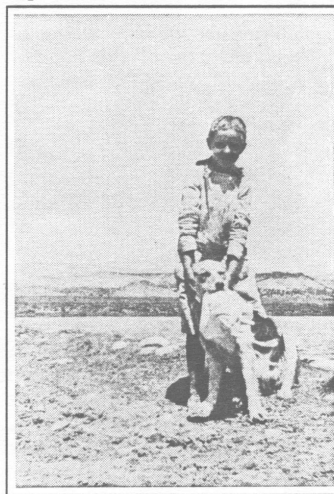
to the middle of the pond and just sit there for a long time. If they got tired of it, they would jump off and swim to shore.

Some of the fun things that stick in my memory were such things as community picnics, where everyone from ten miles or more in each direction came and gathered together for a big picnic. The women brought all kinds of food and there was always homemade ice cream. In those days, of course, there were no refrigerators but some people had ice houses. They would cut big cubes of ice in the winter time from rivers or reservoirs and pack them in sawdust in those ice houses. Those people could use the ice for homemade ice cream or someone would bring a chunk of it in a gunny sack. It would be carefully washed off when they got there and put into the lemonade. It was always a treat watching the women make the lemonade because they used lemons and squeezed them right there and made the lemonade in milk cans. And then there was

all sorts of food and the big kids would play games. On Fourth of July there were lots of firecrackers and noise makers. Most of the people drove their teams or rode horseback. And they just tied their horses to the trees. My Father did not like to do that. But community picnics were about the only time we went anywhere where the horses could not be unhitched and put into a stable.

A trip to town during our childhood was an all day affair and was a major event in our lives. It was made in the spring wagon or in the little homemade sled if there was no heavy load to be transported. Otherwise, the lumber wagon was used and this increased the time it took by at least a half hour or more if the load was heavy or the roads muddy. It was twelve mile trip. Sometimes our Father made the trip once a month.

If he could afford it on a trip to town, he would bring home a little sack of jelly beans, which were always in a very attractive striped bag. These were stashed on the top shelf of the pantry and we were allowed to have one a day. That little sack of jelly beans would cost a nickel or a



Amy

The dog is carrying my sunbonnet.

dime in those days and that was a lot of money to spend on frivolity!

Clothing and shoes were, of course, a very big problem. Many of our clothes were made over for we had relatives who would send big boxes of their cast off clothing and our Mother was very clever at making small garments out of these. As a matter of fact, most of the years I attended the little country school, I had two school dresses at a time and each one was to be worn to school for a week. Needless to say, changing clothes when we got home from school was a *must* in those days and there was never any problem about keeping all our clothes picked up. My brother, sister and parents had no more clothing. But we were happy. This was the life we knew and it didn't matter to us.

As I have mentioned before, shortage of water made laundry a big problem. It all had to be done on the washboard. We didn't have washing machines nor electricity. We used kerosene lamps and lanterns until Coleman lanterns were invented and then we had one or two of them.

Another job that fell to the lot of my brother and me was to herd the pigs out onto the grain fields after the grain had been harvested in the fall and there is nothing more cantankerous than a herd of pigs! If they make up their minds they want to run, there is no way of stopping them—just run along and try to keep up with them until they come to a ditch or something that will slow them down so that the herders can get around them and start them back in the direction they are supposed to be going—toward home. I think we were all very glad when our Father decided that raising pigs was not a very paying proposition and he quit doing this.



Milking time.

Haying and grain harvesting were always big events because it meant outsiders would be helping and the men would be trading work.

At first the hay was pitched onto a stack by hand from a wagon with a hayrack on it. Later, our Father owned a hay derrick. First my brother and then later, I would drive the horse or the team that pulled the load of hay up from the wagon. Swing it around and drop it onto the stack. One or two men would be up there with their pitchforks, spreading it out and building a good loaf-shaped stack. This was so that the water would run off from it and most of the hay would stay green to feed to the stock in the winter.

Grain harvest meant that a neighbor would come with a horse-drawn binder which would cut the grain and tie it into bundles and kick them off onto the



*Ruby, Amy and John
about 1918 or 1919.*

ground. Then someone would have to go along behind, pick the bundles up and make them into shocks once again built to shed as much water as possible. The shocks would stay in the field until the grain was dried sufficiently that it could be threshed. Sometimes it would be hauled and built into beehive shaped stacks placed so that the threshing machine could be pulled in between them. Or sometimes the grain was hauled directly from the field to the threshing machine. The threshing machine consisted of a separator (so called because it separated the grain from the straw and chaff) pulled by a steam engine that then furnished the power for operating the separator by means of a big belt running on pulley wheels. There was also a water wagon for the steam engine required frequent refilling. It was always exciting when the outfit pulled onto the mesa and we knew that there would be large crews of men working from one ranch to another threshing the grain, sacking it and hauling it to the granaries or storage shed. There were always those hungry men to be cooked for and the women traded with one another for the meal preparation, dish washing and so forth.

My Father built a good poultry business in the later years. He built large, roomy hen houses and kept large flocks of laying hens. In the spring he would order day-old chicks that were shipped in by train from Pueblo or Rocky Ford. This meant that they had an all-day trip over the mountains and then they would have to be picked up in town. The brooders and brooderhouses had to be warm and ready for the babies when they arrived. Each one had to be picked up, its bill dipped in warm water until it learned the trick of drinking and given food. From then on it was a constant job raising them to where the pullets could be separated out to be kept for laying hens. The roosters became fryers and often we would haul crates of them to town to the restaurants or meat markets.

Prior to the use of brooders we used to set hens and hatch our own chicks. That process took 21 days and included letting the setting hens out once a day to eat and then making sure that each one got back onto her own nest. This was to ensure that the eggs continued to get the same amount of heat for the incubation period. And then when the baby chicks hatched, they were brought into the house in baskets to be kept warm while the mother hens had a few hours to run and stretch after having been kept cooped up for all that time.

As the days grew shorter in the fall, part of our chores included hanging lanterns in the chicken houses to lengthen the day, both morning and evening. The theory of this was that they would be awake longer, eat more and lay more. This being the main means of income for the ranch, it was important to keep them laying to capacity, especially in the winter when egg supplies in the stores were short.

Other Childhood Memories

We did many things together as a family that remain with me as fond memories. Two or three different times we went camping and that is about the only time we were away overnight. Usually we only went as far as we could get there and back home in the same day.

It was very exciting to go way up to where Vallecito Lake is now and camp and fish there. Fishing was good and everybody had a good time.

We also walked down to the Animas River and fished quite often. It was about a mile down to where we fished and the fish we caught were suckers. They tasted good to us though.

We usually made a trip down to Riverside, N.M. for peaches, pears, grapes and plums in the fall. Our winter apples came from the orchard of a neighbor, Frank Lyman. His place is now a part of the Rainbow Trout Farm where Norm and Anne Putnam and their three children are. Much of the old orchard still stands.

One of the favorite fall activities was going up into the hills west of the Animas River for several loads of wood. The weather was beautiful and we would find pinon nuts and an occasional arrowhead or fragment of pottery. Dad would chop the wood and the rest of us would carry it and load it into the wagon. Upon arriving home it had to be unloaded and piled for winter time chopping or stacked into the wood shed to be kept dry for winter burning.



*John, Myra, Amy and Ruby Nelson
Grandmother Esther Eggleston
About 1921*

Sometimes coal would be hauled by the wagon load from the mine. Or sometimes the men of the mesa would get together and order a traincar load to be put off on a siding, so that each family could haul their winter supply from it.

All of this procuring of fuel was a necessity for all of our cooking and baking and heating was done with wood and coal stoves. It took an expert to be able to get an oven to the proper temperature and keep it there for the proper baking of bread or a cake. You had to know how to operate the stove properly to do this.

Sometimes we would go to a neighbors somewhere to play or other kids would come to play with us. But most of the time we just made our own fun. We had relatives that sent us dolls and toys so that we had quite a bit to play with. And, of course, always some homemade Christmas fun—homemade presents and things of this sort.

In our Father's younger days he had lived in a Swedish settlement where the families got together often for some kind of fun. Dad played the fiddle for dancing and he loved this kind of thing. Mother, on the other hand, had been brought up in very strict religious surroundings and had been taught that dancing was wicked, so she did not participate in it and we children were never allowed to go to public dances. Sometimes Dad would take his fiddle and play for something at the school house. I recall a neighbor woman coming up to my Mother and saying, "Did you know that your husband is *dancing* with so-and-so?" and my Mother calmly replied, "Yes, I know. He is enjoying himself." And thus ended the conversation.

Mother was influential in establishing Sunday School and was usually a teacher or the Superintendent. Occasionally a Preacher would come and hold services.

Mother was in some ways a very lonely woman, for she lived so far from any of her family. She had been brought in a large family of children. Actually, she didn't

particularly like the country at Sunnyside at first but she was completely engrossed in her family life and children taking care of her garden and helping with the farm work.



Early 1920's after addition to the house.

When I was about ten years old, an addition to the 2-room house was built. First there was an excavation for an "inside cellar," as we called it under part of the new addition. The 2-room building was jacked up and a concrete foundation put under it along with the foundation for the new part. The addition would consist of 2 bedrooms and a living room on the first floor with two upstairs rooms for another

bedroom and a storage and play room. This made living much more comfortable and convenient.

Even before the addition was built there had been sent to us a little 4-octave organ that had been my Grandmother Eggleston's and that had been shipped to her soon after she and my Grandfather had come to Colorado to homestead. It had been in my Aunt's home for the last few years. Now my brother and I and probably our sister later took lessons and learned to play on it. Later it was replaced by a standard sized organ and our Father made a chest of drawers of it which now stands in the home of my niece, Martha Hartmann, in Denver.

Dad was handy with tools and had always had a work shop. At first it was just a little lean-to on the end of the little house but later he built a larger, more convenient building. Since he came from a family of carpenters and cabinet makers, he made several pieces of furniture for our house, as well as having done much of the building of the home.

As I have mentioned before, my brother and I finished High School together. He went right on to Colorado University and started taking his course in Electrical Engineering. But I was only 16 when I finished High School and didn't really know what I wanted to do. So I spent the next two years at home, helping with the work on the ranch, entering 4-H work, working occasionally and waiting to decide what to do.

Late in the fall of 1929, Mr. G. F. Snyder, Dean of Ft. Lewis School, came to the house. It had originally been the Fort housing a regiment during the days of



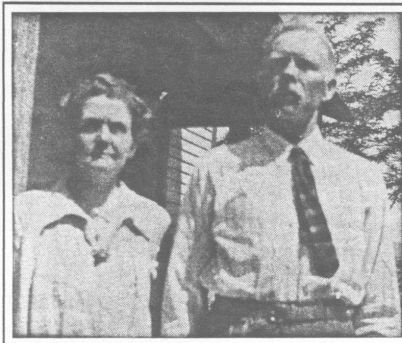
Probably late 1920's



Ruby, John and Amy

a Teaching Certificate. All of my friends found schools that summer but I was still stubborn about it and didn't want to teach.

After another two years of odd jobs, I decided again on the major step and was accepted at what was still the State Agricultural College. I continued in Home Economics and Science finally receiving my degree in January, 1936. With working all the way through it had required the extra semester to finish.



Myra and Malcolm Nelson 1929

Indian unrest. Since 1911, it had been first an Indian School and then a High School with eventual addition of summer Normal Courses for Teachers. In the fall of 1927, the same year we finished High School, two years of College courses had been added under Colorado Agricultural College. That had been our Mother's Alma Mater for her 3 years of college education.

As a result of his call, I went to work in the kitchen for a few weeks. But this experience helped me decide to make the decision to enroll there in the fall. I took Education and Science courses but *NEVER* would I ever consider teaching! At the end of the two years I

took the State Teachers' Exams and passed receiving



Amy, Ruby and John 1929

The Fort Lewis years were wonderful, for the campus was completely isolated and we were in dormitories, without transportation anywhere unless some one came for us or a whole busload of students went to the show in Durango, on a picnic up in the La Platas or hiking. There were skating and skiing in the winter and school parties. Students, faculty and farmhands lived in a closeknit community. Sometimes we had silent shows at school or Assembly programs. There were elementary and high school students bussed in and a number of high school students living along with us in the dormitories. One of the interesting features was that the school had it's own

power plant, which was closed down at 10:00 P.M. so we knew when the lights blinked at 9:45 that we had 15 minutes to get into bed and then the resident teachers enforced "Quiet Hour."

The first year at Colo. A & M I worked in homes, taking care of children, housework, anything that the lady of the house wanted done.

However, when I went back for the second year, I was able to get a NYA job and was placed in the office of the State Economist. Under this plan we worked a required number of hours. We could sign for either a \$10.00 or a \$15.00 a month job (I don't remember the pay scale). We were encouraged to take the lesser hours if we could get by on this. My roommate for the next year and a half, a Swedish girl from Strasburg, Colo. and I found a \$12.00 a month room with kitchen privileges and accepted the \$10.00 a month jobs. This gave us \$8.00 a month for food and fun.

I continued to work on campus for a few weeks after graduating. Then a lady who was setting up a study for the Bureau of Home Economics to learn how people were spending their purchasing money during the Depression which was now upon us, interviewed me and I was chosen for an Assistant Supervisor on the Western Slope study that would cover Garfield, Eagle and Rio Blanco Counties. The list to be filled by the field agents, all of whom were from the Relief rolls, was very detailed even down to how much was spent for toilet paper. That was Item 5-25 so for years we used that number when we wanted to refer to it. It was during the time I was working on this project that I first met Harold Thompson, who was later to become my husband. He was also working on the project.

After we had completed the survey of our counties, I was transferred to the Eastern offices. First, there was a week of Orientation at the Bureau of Home Economics offices in Washington D.C. I travelled alone by train and had many new experiences and "eye openers." I walked alone some in the Capitol and passed many well-known landmarks. I saw one of the unexpected February snowstorms that defied streetcars to make their uphill run. And the Secretary to Congressman Lawrence Lewis picked me up a couple of times for a tour of the streets where the Foreign Embassies are and a trip to the Library of Congress.

Next was several weeks in Baltimore where the tabulation process was to begin. Several of us found rooms in one of the Brownstone Houses in an old residential area. It was a three-story rooming house with a dining room in the basement staffed by a fabulously talented negro cook. The evening meal was about our only contact with the rest of the occupants but they were quite a varied and interesting group. We sometimes walked the several blocks to work and those morning we went by the fish markets. What sights and smells for an inlander! Near our offices was the space occupied by the Government employees who were just setting up Social Security. And in February when for the first time I paid Income Tax, I left work a little early, walked a couple of blocks to the Internal Revenue Office and paid my tax over the counter!

When that phase of tabulation was complete, I was sent on to Philadelphia for the next phase. This gave me a chance to roam about the downtown part of that city and see many historic sights. Also, Helen and Lawrence Dunaway were living

in Ardmore, a suburb of Philadelphia. Helen met me downtown once and they had me at their home for an evening.

John and Estelle were at Camp Dix, where he was Superintendent of a CCC camp. This was just across the river from Philadelphia so I had several pleasant weekends with them. We visited Atlantic City and the boardwalk, canoed on the still, winding streams in New Jersey and visited Lakehurst Airport where the dirigibles that plied between Europe and America landed. On the day we were there the sister ship of the Von Hindenburg was tethered there. By pushing on the giant rope that held her in place we could rock her. The next week the fiery end of the Von Hindenburg occurred there. For Easter we went to New York City going through the newly completed Holland



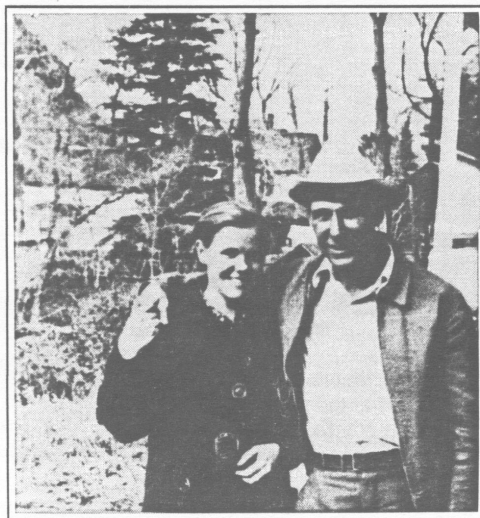
*Aunt Estelle in the N.J. woods
1937*

Tunnel. We attended a beautiful Easter service in one of the Cathedrals then attended the performance of the Rockettes in the Music Hall. During the time we spent there we also joined the Easter strollers along 5th Avenue and had our picture taken by one of the street corner photographers.



*Easter outfit on
Fifth Avenue*

Eventually I returned home to Colorado for a few days and then went on to California. There we were married.



Harold C. and Amy (Nelson) Thompson

Daddy went on working for Douglas Aircraft for a time. However, he was always very restless. It seemed as though after he had worked in one place for a time, he simply couldn't stand it any more. So after a few months we bought an old 1927 Chevy for \$40.00 and headed for Colorado. At that time the roads across the desert were not paved and one could judge the traffic by the puffs of dust along in the distance indicating the passage of cars. Signs along the road advised, "Carry Your Own Water.", "Last Chance for Gas. No Water." So it was a long, hot dusty journey. When we reached peach country, Daddy found work in the orchards both in the Grand Junction area and at Paonia.



Harold C. Thompson

or so that we did this, three cars came along. The third one stopped and was able to siphon some gas for us. As we went on up the steep and winding, dusty road, we came to a side road and turned off onto it. Finding a level place, we stopped and rolled our blankets out on the ground and were soon asleep. Imagine our surprise the next morning to find ourselves in a cemetery!

During the early part of peach harvest that year, Daddy's hands became infected from the peach fuzz. So we loaded all of our belongings into the Model B Ford that we were now driving. With Doris and Jack perched on the load on the back we took off for California. We just barely got there and moved into an apartment when the car broke down for good. Daddy was able to go back to work at Douglas Aircraft.

That time we stayed in California until after Sandy was born. By this time World War II was in progress. It was a tense time along the Coast because there was fear that the Japanese would attack. In fact, they did two or three times with submarines and one-man submarines. And finally one night there were enemy aircraft over Los Angeles and our own anti-aircraft guns were firing away at the planes that had appeared in the air. It was quite a scary night. Most of the men of

A job at Ridgway and Ouray with a telephone company crew tided us over for awhile and Daddy picked up odd jobs. Part of the time we lived high up on the side of Mt. Abrams in an old mining boarding house and did some assessment work on claims belonging to Elmer Eggleston.

My Father had cancer surgery that eventually led to his death and we spent the winter that Margaret was born with my Mother at Sunnyside. Also Doris and Jack were with us and attended the Sunnyside School where I had had my education.

The next June we again moved up onto the Mountain walking now on the crust of snow on top of several feet of winter pack. All of this was fine and fun until the crust started to soften and I would suddenly find myself hip deep in snow as I hung diapers on the line run between two trees. That summer we had another of our laughable experiences. We were on our way up the old Monarch Pass road late one evening when we ran out of gas. We turned around and backed up the hill as long as there was gas enough in the tank to run down to the motor in that fashion. Then we started flagging cars. In the hour



Harold, Amy & Margaret, 1939

the family and of our neighborhood worked night shifts in the defense plants. Of course, those of us who were waiting at home were afraid that the aircraft plants would be bombed. Traffic lights were not being used and cars were forbidden to use headlights when driving at night and windows were blackened wherever lights had to be used inside after dark. When the Air Raid signals blew all traffic was

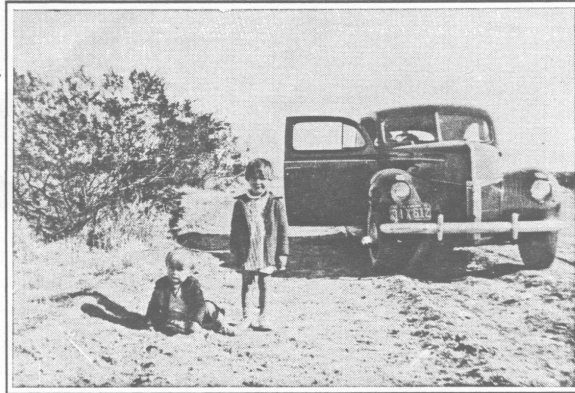
supposed to stop and not move again until the "All Clear" sounded. At dawn I was aware of a great roar outside and I went out the front door to see what was going on. The boulevard that ran down past the end of the block where we lived was just simply jam packed with cars. There were civilians out directing traffic. It became evident that as soon as it became daylight all of the people who had sat in their cars since about 1:30 A.M. on, waiting for the "All Clear" signal, had started to move toward their destinations just as soon as it got light enough to see although they were not supposed to move until they heard the signal.

I really do not know much about Daddy's parents and their background. I don't know how long the Thompsons had lived in Toledo. His Mother's people, the Schupps, were of German descent but I don't know how long before their people had come to America. Daddy seems to have been allowed to run pretty freely and do things with his playmates—things like climbing up the spar of a big sailing boat and diving off. Toledo was evidently rather "small town" at the time he was growing up there. His Mother told of him getting up early in the morning and fixing his own breakfast, then feeding the neighborhood dogs and cats that would come around for something to eat. By the time he was fourteen he was getting very restless at home and very anxious to join the Army. He tried joining the Canadian



*Grandpa & Grandma
Thompson
Margaret & Sandy*

Army as well as the U.S. Army but on account of his age he was not able to make a go of it. Finally, however, he did get away from home and falsify his age and get into the United States Army probably when he was sixteen but I am not positive about his age. I don't know where he took his training. He never talked about that but he did talk about his days with the Army when they were down on the Texas-Mexico border when Pancho Villa and his army were raiding across the border into the United States and General Pershing and his Army were down there. They were trying to prevent the raiding and to drive Pancho Villa and his raiders farther back into Mexico. Daddy seems to have rather



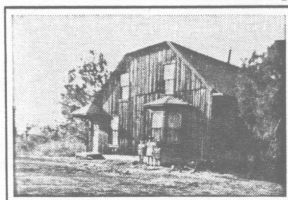
Sandy and Margaret in California, 1942

hero-worshipped Pancho Villa, in spite of the fact they were fighting against him. He told many tales of things that happened when he was in Mexico but you realize that this happened when he was quite young and he may have blown some of the events up in his memory.

In 1918 World War I was gaining impetus. It had already been going on for some time in Europe and now the United States became involved as an ally to France and England in fighting against the Germans. Since General Pershing already had an organized army, he was ordered overseas first. The troops that went with him, including Daddy, was known as the First Division or the Rainbow Division. After they reached Europe, it became necessary to fill out insurance papers and Daddy forgot what date and age he had given when he enlisted so the Army soon caught up with the fact that he was not old enough to be over there. However, since he was already in the Army and trained, his Father wrote giving permission for him to remain there. So he was in Europe for the whole of the American involvement and remained with the Army of Occupation. This was the troops that remained to prevent any further acts of aggression on the part of Germany and to help them get themselves reorganized and able to fend for themselves again.

Daddy was in all of the major battles of the war and was an Aide to the General. He was also in the Medical Division and travelled with the ambulance picking up casualties. Many of his memories were of happenings then.

War then consisted of each of the armies digging long trenches to protect themselves from the enemy's fire and the space between the two lines was known as "No Man's Land." There were also barbed wire entanglements between the two lines of trenches which helped to prevent surprise attacks. The trenches were



The Jones house, 1947

vermin infested so that the soldiers were bothered with "cooties" or body lice. I remember Daddy telling about sitting up on the edge of the trench one day picking cooties off, when all at once a shell whistled overhead and he had to dive back into the trench. During the Army of Occupation the troops were often quartered in German homes and he made some close friends with some of them.

When we were living in the Jones house at Falga, Daddy received a letter from a German woman. She had been a girl at the time of the war and now lived where there had been a Post Office during the war. She had found, among things in the house, the Toledo address of Daddy's parents and so had addressed a letter to him at that address. It was forwarded to us. She was asking for shoes for her family and items like soap and toilet articles. Germany was undergoing a depression. However, we were busy keeping our own family in shoes and clothing so we did not respond.

Daddy's military decorations include a Star for Mexican Service and a bar and star for each of the major battles of World War I—Montdidier, Noyon, Aisne-Marne, St. Mihiel, Meuse-Argonne and Defensive Sector. He was home and out of the Army by the time he reached enlistment age!

In later years during Daddy's illness and since then I have learned that Parkinson's Disease had showed up among many people who went through the Flu

epidemic of 1918-1919. It was believed by some doctors that the high fever of the flu may have caused the brain damage that resulted in the Parkinson's. By this time he was too far gone for me to ascertain whether or not he had had the flu in Europe but I believe he did have.

Some other things you may remember about Daddy. He had a little toe that stuck up and he said that he had had a box of ammunition dropped on his foot when he was in Germany and it had broken that toe. Another accident that he had had was a severely broken arm suffered when he fell out of a tree when he was a boy. At that time doctors screwed a silver plate onto the bone to hold it in place. Army and VA doctors told him at later times that he should have the plate removed but he never consented. So for the first few years after the Parkinson's disease became bothersome, he laid it to the plate in his arm but still refused to have anything done about it and he had no help for the Parkinson's Disease for the first few years.

He also had been gassed in the war when he gave his gas mask to an officer during a battle and as a result received some gas himself. It caused TB and pleurisy but these symptoms disappeared as he got older. However, at one time when we were living in Dolores he had had one of his trips to the VA hospital for a checkup. Soon afterward the County Nurse came to the house saying she had had a report of a case of TB in our home. She had been sent to investigate and to see whether the children were being properly protected. When she learned that the case was arrested, she did not trouble us again.

Now to return to the years of World War II. I mentioned earlier the fear of attack along the West Coast. There were many Japanese residents in California but in the heat of danger of attack, all of them were summarily rounded up and sent to internment camps in inland states—Arizona, Colorado, etc. There was no time to be wasted in trying to determine where their loyalties lay. This caused extreme criticism in later years. It was a feeling of relief to know that they were in a situation where they would not be a danger.

With the escalating need for aircraft, Douglas Aircraft decided to build more plants inland, where they would be safe from attack. One plant was to be built in Chicago and two others in Oklahoma. Daddy decided that Chicago was the place he would like to go and, so he was put on the staff to design his own department to be built in Chicago. And for many weeks we worked on plans for that. He would bring his work home and I would check on them and point out places where he might have made a mistake or where he might be able to make some changes.

Finally came the time for us to be all packed up and cross the country to Chicago. I was pregnant and Margaret and Sandy were little tykes. We drove during Thanksgiving week and had our first experience in several years with icy roads. When we arrived in Chicago, we lived in a hotel until we could find a house to move into and were eventually settled there. Dorothy was born in May, 1943.

By summer of 1944 Daddy had again reached the limit of his endurance in a confining job and so we loaded up the car and headed back for Colorado. This time we started to buy a small place in the Animas Valley and he had a job with a motor supply place in Durango. By New Year's time he was ready to go back to Douglas Aircraft again. So he went back alone, started work and found a place to

live. We had sold the car that summer so were travelling by train. Meantime, the well had caved in on the place where we had been living and the three children had the chicken pox. So there was nothing I could do but move in with the Zinks until Daddy could send for me. Finally, by the time the children were able to travel, Daddy had sent money for our tickets and we started out. The first lap was over Wolf Creek Pass by bus and then train the rest of the way. It was a long 48 hour trip and we were tired when we reached there. We settled into life in Chicago again and this time stayed until July. Then it was back to Colorado by train.

This time Daddy went to work for the Colorado Power Company and stayed with them until his health failed in 1948. That was when I started teaching.

Meantime, however, the twins were born in 1946. We were living out in the Falfa area southeast of Durango. Margaret by now was in fifth grade, having attended Central School in Durango, a semester in Chicago and Central again before we moved to where she and Sandy too by now, attended Cottonwood School.



*John Z., Dorothy, Grandma Nelson, Ida Estelle, Anne, Margaret, Martha, John N., Harold Sandy, Nelson, Shirley, Ruby, Amy, Charlotte
1948 at the "Jones place"*

My first teaching job was in Bayfield. It was a long trip back and forth with roads being the way they were at that time. The road that led out to the highway from our area was just a dirt road at the time and got very muddy in the spring.

At one time, after coming back to Colorado, we had had an old Plymouth sedan. It finally wore out soon after the twins were born. So we sold it and bought a little white Model A Ford and drove it for several years after that. It was quite a sight to see seven of us packed into it—the three older children in little truck back and the twins and parents inside.

The next year I signed up in the Ignacio District and was assigned to the Allison School, which meant a 52 mile round trip each day. The roads were a cloud of deep dust and on chilly morning a dense cloud of fog hung in every hollow. One drove into this with a flip-flop of the heart, knowing that it would be impossible to see an oncoming car. There was also the nagging knowledge that when a storm came, the adobe road would be impossibly slick or gummy. The little Ford I could jack up and put on chains. But sometimes I drove an old Hudson sedan that we had bought during the summer and I knew there was no way that I could handle it or put on chains.

I had been assigned to the 4th, 5th and 6th grade room at Allison and arrived to find that there were practically no books to teach from. I borrowed from the County Superintendent of Schools to solve that problem.

We kept trying to find a place closer to school to move to but as the weeks passed, had not been successful. Meantime, my husband had learned that New Mexico was paying much better than my munificent salary of \$143.00 per month. I had written and learned of a Home Economics position in a little town in that State but had made no decision.

On a Friday night we were required to stop in Ignacio for a Teachers' Meeting and by the time I started on home the much dreaded event, a sharp shower had occurred. In the bottom of the first dip my wheels began to spin and the car to edge toward the side of the road. To compound the situation, a big truck was jack-knifed at the top of the rise ahead of me. As I stood wondering what to do now, a farmer came down bringing his milk cows home. When he had them in the home field he came back to offer assistance. Being used to the road, he drove me up the slope and from there on the road was all right.

That event made up my mind and I immediately wrote to set up an interview with the New Mexico Superintendent. And on the next Saturday morning we were loaded early and off for Penasco.

At this point, I will again back track to cover some other events.

On July 25th, a very sudden and drastic change came into our lives.

I was a College Graduate, with a degree in Home Ec., with science as a Minor. However, I had been married for thirteen years and had no thought of working outside of the home. We had five children, aged ten, eight, five and the twins not quite two. Daddy had worked for Douglas Aircraft in Santa Monica, Calif. and in Chicago during the war years. However, his heart was in Colorado and we returned to the Durango area in 1945.

He had worked ever since that time for Colorado Power Co. But had changed a year earlier from being an Operator of the Power Plant to reading meters. Increasing weakness in his right hand bothered him and on the above date he came home with the announcement that he had quit his job.

An assessment of my education, job experience and the local job situation in the post war years led me to put in my application in the Bayfield School District.

I was hired! There followed three agonizing weeks, during which time I thought of facing classes of High School students with increasing dread, for it was to be my first experience in the classroom.

Also there had to be plans made survival of the with me gone five days of the week. It soon turned out that little five year of Dorothy was an able help to her Father in care of the twins, making beds, sweeping and with cooking but they were long lonely days for the four of them. We were living in an old frame house on the Florida Mesa, a half mile off the main road and then it was two miles out to the highway. There was a good well on the place (the house we had lived in previously



had had no water) but no electricity or telephone. All of the roads were dirt, not even gravelled. Our only means of transportation was the little white Ford that I described previously and school was fifteen miles away.

It was decided that the two school-aged children would accompany me, as we expected to move closer to my job. As it turned out, we did not move but I learned of a teacher who drove daily from Durango and who would pick us up at Elmore's Store.

On some days that two and a half miles was an obstacle in itself. A heavy snow storm started on New Year's Eve and by Monday morning the temperature had dropped to 12 below zero and the first half mile of road was impassable. So for two days I walked to the highway. By Wednesday the temperature had gone down to 25 below and Daddy would not allow me to go. When I reached school on Thursday and explained my absence to the Superintendent, he suggested that I call the newly elected County Commissioner and tell him about my position. When I got home that day, the road was plowed clear into our yard and was kept open the rest of the winter. However, when the snow melted, we were again faced with nearly knee deep adobe mud and had to walk again. One evening as we trudged along a car stopped and the driver called out, "Lady, we wouldn't want you to think that we are fresh but we have noticed you and the children walking several times as we go to and from work and we would like to offer you a ride." Needless to say it was accepted with gratitude and they always stopped for us when we had to walk after that.

It was a year of new experiences and new friends for all of us. And it gave me the experience and confidence I needed for a career of teaching and seeing my children grow into self-reliant people.

After my first year of teaching was completed, we waited for awhile to see if Daddy would be able to go back to work. We did a lot of camping and fishing that summer, besides raising a large garden and field corn. We also had a nice flock of poultry. Since we had no "horse power," Daddy attached a cultivator to the back of the Model A and I would drive slowly up and down the rows of corn while he guided the cultivator. This was also the summer we purchased the old Hudson sedan so we were now a "two-car" family.



Daddy in the cornfield with the Model A at the "Jones place".

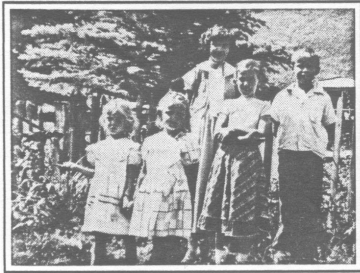
Penasco

I've already written of the circumstances that led to our decision to move from Falga and my job at Allison.

On that Saturday morning everyone was loaded and we made an early start for my appointment with the Superintendent in Penasco. Our route took us to Pagosa Springs and then over the beautiful winding road to Chromo and on to where we topped out as we approached Chama, New Mexico. Once again through picturesque and beautiful country and we arrived at the twin towns of Tierra Amarilla and Park View—beautiful old Spanish settlements predating Durango by

many years. The "old road" led past a lovely little Catholic shrine on the hillside. As we went on through Cebolla, Abiqui and other little settlements, the adobe house were brilliant with long strings of chili peppers hung to dry in the fall sunshine intermingled with the crimson of woodbine leaves and the yellow of the cottonwoods.

When we reached the San Juan Pueblo the road leads through it and we turned back up along the Rio Grande River. This took us through the bottom fruit country of Velarde and we were hailed by children with fruits and vegetables, particularly plums, for sale.



*Charlotte, Shirley, Margaret,
Dorothy and Sandy*

This was the well-known Dixon Hill road and eventually we came down through a long valley with foothills on either side. There were many little farms out here with their accompanying adobe buildings and off to one side the San Lorenzo or Picuris Pueblo.

Now we came into our destination, the little town of Penasco. The road went right up the middle of town, which consisted of several bars, a couple of garages, two or three general stores, a filling station or two, a lovely old adobe church, a Forest Service complex, a theater and the school buildings, along with many homes and smaller buildings sprawled along the road and the lower valley which was lush and beautiful.

The Superintendent, Mr. Alfredo Romero was soon located and before we left I had signed a contract for the remainder of the year. The pay was much better and he already had a house of a comfortable size and a compatible amount of rent located for us only about a mile from school.

Now I was faced with the unhappy task of informing the Ignacio Superintendent of my imminent resignation. He seemed philosophical about it (maybe even a little relieved) as I was not the only teacher who had had to be replaced during that first month. I have already written of the shortage of teaching supplies in the school, plus the very low salaries.

At any rate, early the next Saturday morning we had our Falfa landlord's truck loaded with our belongings and set out with our two vehicles, also well loaded. One of our belongings, which now had to accompany us, was the large black dog left to us by my step-daughter when she returned to California by bus and could not take him. He took up quite a bit of room when he travelled with us!

By Monday morning we were settled and ready to go off to meet new people. It was the first year of Public School for many small communities. The State Education Department had ruled that they would no longer help finance Parochial Schools following the famous Dixon Case. So I went into a situation with many new facets.

Perhaps the most abrupt and apparent change was that now we were a minority family!—The only completely Anglo family in the entire school system!

Penasco and the surrounding communities that came into the school were pretty largely settled by descendants of the Spanish settlers who had come through Mexico. Of course, they had intermarried with other inhabitants of the area and there were also very definite characteristics of the Basques in some of them, as evidenced by gray or blue eyes, reddish hair and lighter skin. Prior to World War II it had been a fairly isolated area. The men, many of them, had worked away from home in other states as sheepherders. In the post-war era into which we came there were families who had gone to the West Coast to work in the shipyards and Defense plants, as well as those who had served in the Armed Forces and then come home again. And with the advent of cars, the residents travelled farther and knew more about the world.

The Forest Service employed a number of Anglos—in fact, the Ranger when we were there was Chester Shields from Durango. And part of the unmarried teachers had come from Michigan, the headquarters of the order of Nuns who were in Penasco. Also, there were two Arab men, cousins, who owned and operated rival stores. The rivalry was so great, in fact, as to extend to the use of firearms or axes to keep each from encroaching on the property or holdings of the other.

So we, to a certain extent, were faced with an initiation of fire. It was especially so for Sandy, then a fourth grader. The boys tried in various ways to intimidate him and wanted to teach him their vocabulary of pet words and phrases. When he lived through that, he was taken on many delightful excursions, learning to catch fish with his hands, exploring the hills and playing their games. The two school age girls found friends of their own ages. The twins, who were now three, could speak no Spanish and their playmates could speak no English but it didn't take long for them to be playing together as well as though they could communicate. By the time we left there all of the children spoke with a sing-song Spanish inflection.

As for me, I found my Home Ec Department to be a one-room adobe building with a wood stove in it. But I also had a large study hall in the main building—about 40 students. They were well established for this was the beginning of the second month of school. The teacher who had had it until then was familiar with all of the students and being Spanish himself, would call roll with no problem. He did not even give me a list of names so each morning for the first week I would send around a sheet of paper for each student to sign. Then I would attempt to call roll from it. The kids were good natured but amused at my pronunciation. One name, spelled Moises Arguello, always brought forth gales of laughter and I was never able to connect a face with the name. On Friday one of the girls came up to me and said, "Mrs. Thompson, there isn't any one by that name. We just put it there to see what you would do!" I guess I passed the test for that was the end of that sort of thing.

However, I never ceased to cringe at one of the regulations and had some trouble with it. According to State Department regulations, there would be no money appropriated for any school that permitted Spanish to be spoken on the school grounds. It was the duty of teachers to keep a list of the offenders and turn them in. Sometimes the boys would take advantage of me by refusing to give their names. The Principal thought that perhaps he should punish the boys but I assured him that I did not feel it necessary. Perhaps I would have been tempted to do the same thing under similar circumstances.

Anyone who has dealt with a wood stove can appreciate the problems I had in trying to keep an even heat for several class periods of baking cupcakes or cakes. I think perhaps the Nun who had been my predecessor had done the mixing and baking herself, instead of teaching the girls to do it, for one of them told me once, "When Sister would be baking cupcakes for something and we wanted them to eat, we would come in here and dance and try to make them fall so we could have them."

When I would drive the Model A to school, I would find the larger boys pushing it around the school yard, laughing and calling it "La Cucharacha," "The Cockroach!"

One morning, as some of us started to walk up the road to school, we came upon an Indian lying by the side of the road. I could see marks in the sand where he had clawed with his hands but I could detect no signs of life. I sent the children on and returned to the house to tell Daddy. Our nearest neighbor was a Peace Officer so Daddy called him while I went on to school. The Indian was dead and Daddy was sworn in on the impromptu Coroner's Jury. The whole proceedings was carried on in Spanish but someone translated for him and the verdict was "death from alcoholism." Later stories told us that he had spent the previous day around town, trading his coat for liquor. It was illegal to sell liquor to Indians. He had been seen as late as 5:00 A.M. on the day of his death by men driving to their job so must have died just a short time before I found him.

With the coming of winter there was snow and cold but we did not suffer any particular hardship from it. It did not stay on the ground long in the Valley. However, one Saturday Daddy decided that he wanted to drive the 25 miles over the hills to Taos. The battery in the Model A was dead and the brakes were poor. For some reason the Hudson would not start that morning but the battery in it was good. So he set the Hudson battery into the back of the Model A and ran wires

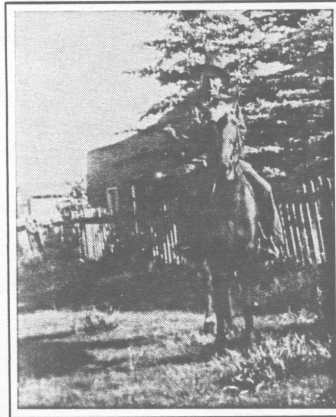


Model A, Hudson sedan, Daddy, Grandma and Grandpa Thompson, Penasco, 1949

connecting it into the electrical system and away we gaily went, taking the twins with us. The road led over small hills and then over what was known locally as U.S. Hill. We topped a rise and as we started down, he threw it into high gear and then saw that the grade was too steep without brakes. So he shifted back into second gear. The car spun around on the icy road and then rolled over the edge. The twins and I went out through the canvas top but Daddy was wedged behind the steering wheel and rode to the bottom where the car stopped against a tree. He climbed out, unhurt but completely disoriented, since he didn't realize that he was now facing back toward home. We made our way back up to the road uninjured except for a cut on my chin and a new boot cut to ribbons in the broken windshield! I also had a badly swollen hand and some rib soreness. Eventually someone came along in a car and took us on to Taos where I had some stitches in my chin.

The worst loss though was our beloved little Cucharacha. The motor went to the garage owner who towed it back home, the battery back into the Hudson and the chassis was made into a trailer.

Penasco had never had a gym but we had a basketball team. It was quite an adventure to stand out in deep snow and watch our team play on a dirt court that had been shovelled off. The visiting team looked pretty cold in their basketball trunks, too. Our boys played in their jeans.



Barney Abeyta on his horse

We were gradually accepted by the older people and Daddy was able to pass the time with some of the men. The women were also beginning to come with questions about canning and use of electrical equipment for the little town had only had electricity for a year and half when we went there. One lady had a new electric sewing machine but couldn't figure out how to make it run. So she and her husband came to see if I would look at it. They had not discovered the knee lever that folds up into the cabinet of some machines! Some of the men came by often to see if we needed "Llena por la 'stufa'"—wood for the stove.

Children there go out on Christmas Eve trick or treating. But on New Year's Eve I was totally unprepared for a group of men who came to the door carolling at a late hour. I hastily passed out handfulls of candy and nuts and it was not until much later that we learned that the custom for them was to go carolling for *wine*! In later years they came specifically to include Daddy but that first year I doubt if they knew that we were the occupants of the house. It belonged to the owner of a liquor store and he lived there until that year.

As the year drew to a close Daddy could not face the thought of another year there. So we packed again, loading the trailer to capacity and started out for

California with the five children and the afore mentioned dog in the car. The next morning as we were preparing to load in again the dog looked at the car, then walked around the trailer looking at it. He made a mighty leap and scramble and settled himself comfortably on the top of the trailer load and there he rode the rest of the way to California which, once again, was our destination.

Housing for a family of our size was a problem. We lived first in an apartment house but then found a tiny house of our own. And jobs were even harder to find.

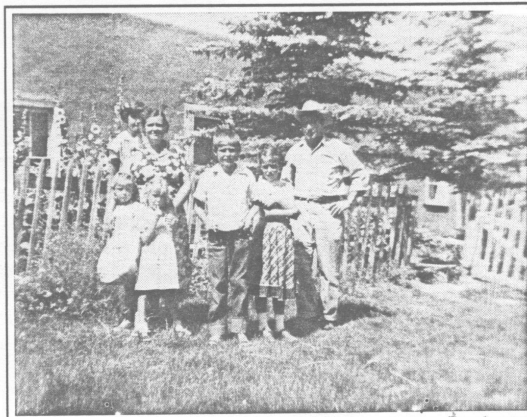
Eventually, however, I landed a job on an evening shift as a telephone saleslady. When I arrived at the address, I found myself in a room equipped with about 25 telephones and was given a book filled with coupons that promised discounts and premiums for the services offered by different businesses along with some pages from a telephone directory. Our job was to call these people and attempt to convince them of the great amounts of money they would save by investing in one of the books. I worked hard at it and managed to convince some "suckers." Within two weeks I arrived at work one night to find the telephones all gone but at least my pay check was waiting for me. The Better Business Bureau had shut the operation down.

There were many job opportunities being listed but nobody was interested in a middle-aged woman with a family of children whom they imagined would be constantly ill and demanding a Mother's care.

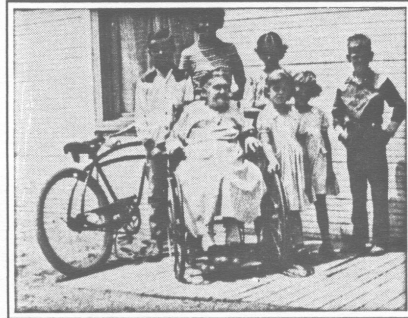
Finally, we moved again to Riverside, California just about the time that Burpees Seed Company was ready to mail out their fall seed catalogues. Again I was hired and this time it was a room full of typewriters and the job required 1000 envelopes a day by the end of the first week. And I had scarcely touched a typewriter for 15 years! To top everything off the first file drawer they gave me was names of the Japanese who had been sent to the Internment Camp in Arizona during World War II. What a hassle to renew my typing skills on! But I reached the required number by the third day!

After two weeks of this, I received a letter from my former Superintendent at Penasco saying that they had not been able to replace me on the Faculty and offering me the job again if I would come back! So—it was pack again and retrace our route.

We arrived back at Penasco to find that the new buildings were not yet completed and classes were being held in a variety of places. Dorothy's class was in a home with a little corner fireplace as the only source of heat. Sandy was in a building that had housed



Long house in Penasco



Grandma Nelson with Sandy, Margaret, Dorothy, Shirley, Charlotte and Nelson Zink, Island Cove, 1954

some kind of offices. Margaret and I had a drive of several miles over the hills to Vadito which had more classroom space. She was in a regular classroom but I was put into a half-basement room where the only furniture was a bench so long that it had to be placed cornerwise in the room. This was seating for my classes and I had a chair. The heat was furnished by a small cookstove that had a cleanout cover missing from it and therefore, never did draw nor heat properly. When we came back after Christmas vacation, during which time there had been no heat, the dirt floors and walls were so cold that my feet were frostbitten from having to spend my entire days down there.

During the break between semesters we were able to move into our new quarters but wouldn't you know it! Before my return all of the teachers had toured the new building and picked out their classrooms and no one had thought of me! This problem was solved by the Superintendent occupying what was to have been his Secretary's office and I was put in his 10 × 20 foot office. Down the center of the room were two long, 3' wide tables from the old department. By the time we got in chairs, a refrigerator, one sewing machine, and finally, much later, an apartment sized stove and a class of 18 boys, there was scarcely room to move, much less sew or cook. Water was brought in from the janitor's closet in the hall for dishwashing. But we managed. By the next year I had a regular sized classroom with two stoves and more sewing machines.

One event took place before the arrival of the stove that deserves recounting. A dedication ceremony of the new school with the Governor as a guest was a *must*. And who was going to prepare the dinner? You guessed it! Fortunately, I had one student, the wife of an elementary teacher, who could be depended on to help me. Between us we baked the ham, sweet potatoes and apple pies at home. The vegetables were to be heated on hot plates in various classrooms but *nobody* knew anything about the electrical system and we kept blowing out fuses or switches by connecting too many appliances. Finally, with the help of carefully trained students for tablesetting and waiting tables, we pulled it off!



John, Ruby, Amy, Shirley and Charlotte Peñasco, Martinez house, 1952-53

We spent the next summer back in Colorado. When we returned to Penasco in the fall, we moved into what we call the "long house." It consisted of three, two-room apartments in a line and eventually we had the whole house to ourselves. The oldest part of it had been built when there was still danger of Indian raids and the walls were about three feet thick.

That summer we stayed in Penasco and raised a garden and chickens.

We have many fond memories of special Fiesta events, wedding, receptions, the elderly man who often stopped by to bring pinon nuts for the children and allow them to ride his horse, picnics, meals in the homes of friends, the summer Darrell spent with us and many other special things.

It was with real sadness that we decided after the fourth year to bid "Adios," and come back home to Colorado.



Margaret on Barney Abeyta's horse

Various Teaching Experiences

My first year of teaching at Bayfield was just sheer drudgery. My teaching assignment consisted of 8th Grade and 9th Grade Science, Physics, Geometry and one Home Ec class. We did not have a Home Ec room but did have a stove of our own and a corner in the school cafeteria. Since it was my



first year of teaching, I really had to study everything in advance and learn methods of presentation.

I soon learned that the longer I stayed up at night to try to study the longer everyone else stayed up. So, it became early to bed for all. Then I would crawl out any time from 4:30 A.M. on to pump up the Coleman lantern and get at it. If I needed to press anything, it was also necessary to pump up the Coleman iron.

Classes were small but the kids were typical of all kids and quick to take advantage of me. But we also had some very successful times. I have recently talked with two of my students from that year and they seemed to have some pretty good memories of me.

When we returned to Colorado after leaving Penasco, I found work at Penney's. It was during this time that the four younger children ran out into the yard after lunch at Island Cove and the lightning bolt almost struck them. I was back to work before I got the shakes!

One day a man came to the door and introduced himself as the Superintendent of Ignacio Schools. He had been unable to find a Home Ec teacher but had been told about me. I soon signed the contract for the \$32.00 per week that I was being paid did not go very far for our family.

I do not look back upon that year of one of my best but we all lived through it and made some fast friends. The strong feeling among the different nationalities that made up the school were a detraction. Since I was not a Vocationally qualified Home Ec teacher, I knew that I would not be rehired. So I had sent letters of application to several of the area schools. I was told that I could remain in the Ignacio system but in some other capacity if I wished to stay.

I received offers of interviews from both Dove Creek and Dolores High Schools. One look at Dove Creek was enough to convince all of us that Dolores would be our choice. The 22 years spent in that system were very rewarding to all of us.

All of my children have their own memories of those years so I shall not go into detail.

I was eighth grade sponsor my first year there and that meant that I was responsible for a float for the Homecoming Parade. And I remember that I finally



had to leave the classroom and go down to Kinkades to get a car to be decorated. When I came back there was a rough and tumble fight going on in the classroom floor!

I was Pep Club Sponsor many of my years there and that was a gruelling job! I also sponsored a very active FHA Chapter and was often sponsor of some class. Also, I was Advisor two different years for the publication of the Yearbook.

Sometimes I was the only woman teacher in the High School building. It was very noticeable to me what a difference there was in the language and rowdy behavior of the students when they were mostly under men teachers who didn't seem to notice the niceties of behavior that I demanded.

The first High School graduate, of course, was Margaret and it was a great day in our lives. She had always been rather shy and withdrawn which made it hard for her to make friends. She attended Fort Lewis College. This was the first year for it on the new campus in Durango and it still only offered two years of college work. Sandy was next to receive his diploma in 1958. He was a strong leader in High School and implemented several new ideas during his years. He immediately went on to Colorado University. Dorothy also was very involved in High School activities and Rainbow. She was always a quiet and contented child as she grew up, prone to do things alone and do them in a very sweet and satisfying way. She was a candidate for a Gates scholarship and flew to Denver for an interview. She attended CSU at Ft. Collins.



Dolores



Amy and Harold Thompson

After the birth of Shirley and Charlotte all three of the older children took great pride in them and took a great deal of care of them. As they grew up, it turned out that Shirley was more outgoing and enjoyed doing things with other people, while Charlotte was more inclined to have just one close friend. However, she did as well in school. Both were in Band which gave them opportunities to go on trips and participate in many fun things. Both eventually attended CSU and Shirley also attended Ft. Lewis.

Memories

Our children were born hither, thither and yon as we moved about from job to job and location to location. However, there are some strong memories connected with each of the arrivals.

We were living with Grandma Nelson at Sunnyside when the time approached for the arrival of our first child. It was about 11:00 P.M. when we decided it was time to start for Mercy Hospital in Durango. We were travelling in Grandma's Dodge pickup, a usually reliable vehicle, except for one little fault. Every so often the vacuum cup in the fuel system would drain out and there was nothing for it but to sit and wait about 20 minutes for it to refill.

That night we had just crossed the railroad track near the KIUP radio station when it happened. We took advantage of the time to choose a middle name, Gene, for the baby.

Margaret arrived in good shape about 2:00 A.M.

We were living up one of the canyons outside of Santa Monica, Calif. when Sandy was born. This time we had found a Doctor living out that way who was willing to come to our home to deliver the baby. Daddy had gone to work as usual but Mother was there and 14 year-old Doris was living with us. She was sent to a nearby phone to summon the Doctor and the nurse who was to help. By the time Daddy arrived home from work he had a son to welcome him. To celebrate he went out the next day and bought a new car.



*Sandy, Margaret & Dorothy with "Fritz"
Burnham house at Falfa, 1946*

Two years later we had made our move to Chicago. All of the younger doctors were in the service and the older men were busy with their practice, so I had eventually been referred to a woman doctor, who practiced at Womens and Childrens hospital in a nearby suburb. It was a cloudy, drizzly day when we made the trip to the hospital. Before evening Dorothy had been added to our family.

After the war we were back in La Plata County, Colorado again. Daddy was working for Western Colorado Power Company. In midsummer we had had to vacate the house where we were living in the Animas Valley and had found a house near Falfa (the one I have mentioned before that had no water). Doug Bryce was working the same shift with Daddy so they rode together. His wife and I also travelled together on our trips to town to visit our Doctors, as we were both expecting our babies, although not at the same time.

When I called a neighbor at 10:30 the night of October 4th to take me to town while her husband stayed with the older children, I had no idea that I would find Doug's wife at the hospital ahead of me. Her baby arrived about 10:30 the next night and mine put in their appearances at 11:25 and 11:30 P.M.

When a nurse had the time, she called the Power Plant and asked for Mr Bryce to tell him he had a baby daughter. She then asked for Mr. Thompson and informed him that he had twin daughters! The two new fathers just about closed down the Power Plant after that bit of news! The hospital allowed them to come in to see us after they had finished their shift at midnight.

The house where we were living at Falfa had a nearby irrigation ditch where I could dip water for laundry but household water had to be hauled from town and we sent most of the laundry to the COD laundry in town. All of this was manageable in the summer and fall but when the ditch froze, I was reduced to chopping ice to melt on the stove for diaper washing.

To add to the general discomfort, the owners of the place notified us late in December that they wanted to move into the house themselves. So the search began again for a place to live. Finally an old frame house that stood back in the trees from what is now Highway 172 but was then just a dirt road was found. At least there was a good well but neither electricity or telephone. It showed signs of having been a beautiful house with ornate trimming and a bay window but had been vacant for a long while. The big ditch that carries water to the Pastorius Reservoir ran close to the house and in years gone by there had been a water powered flour mill there. Nothing remained now but the concrete foundation.

It had been a long open fall and we made the move during Daddy's "long break" at the Power Plant between shifts. But when he went back to work a foot and a half of snow had fallen and before he had gone very far toward the gate in the little Model A Ford, he plowed into a drift and lost a chain. I had to go out and hold a lantern while he found the chain and put it back on and went on to work. Then I made a trip into the basement through the outside entrance and fed the furnace before going back to bed. It wasn't long before Daddy cut a trapdoor and built a ladder so we could tend the furnace from inside.

Within a day or so when the house began to warm up we started hearing noises in the basement. Finally we discovered a pair of porcupines up on top of the dirt wall right under the floor. The dirt walls had been boarded up leaving a ledge where the spiny animals had hibernated. Daddy shot them with the 22 rifle as we did not relish the idea of having them there for the rest of the winter. That night after he went to work I heard noises again. When I went down to investigate, I found that the shots had not killed them. So I had to take the gun down and finish the job.

There was quite a bit of dead wood around and we bought coal for the furnace and cook stove. Once, though, we ran out of coal. After Daddy had left for work (on day shift this time) I took the saw and went out and cut down a pinón tree and cut it into lengths for the furnace. The coal truck came that day, thank goodness!

Daddy had great difficulty in sleeping day times when he was on night shift. I used to say that I could keep the chickens and dog away from the house and the

children quiet but when the woodpeckers came and started hammering away on the gable of the house there was nothing I could do about it! And it would invariably waken him from the soundest sleep.

When warm weather arrived, we discovered that we had other equally undesirable tenants. The stone chimney was built on the outside of the house and in the space between it and the wall a great colony of bats slept through the day and came swarming out at night. Occasionally one would get into the house and frighten the children. I disproved the belief that it is impossible to hit a bat with anything for I knocked one or two down with a broom.

More Random Memories

The first year I attended CSU I could not go home for Christmas. But I arranged to spend a few days in Boulder with my Mother's cousin, Ina Weston and her husband, Everett. There were a large number of various Eggleston relatives living there so I had an enjoyable time. One girl, a little younger than I, came in one evening and was excitedly dancing around singing "Red Sails in the Sunset," while waiting to be picked up by a group who were going carolling.

Many years later, at Dolores, a co-teacher wrote a series of articles about the teachers, introducing them in this way to the community. A new teacher in the system, who had at some times seemed very familiar to me, was described as having come from Boulder. My mind went back to that evening and I searched out various pictures of my Mother's Boulder relatives. There she was! —Besse Myers with her brother Bill. Also a picture of her Mother and three Aunts, all of whom were my Mother's cousins. And so we established a relationship with Besse Ripley!

Another event that had happened but about which I had completely forgotten, although some of the children remembered it, occurred in our early years in Dolores. A social worker had come to the door to say that she had been contacted about a teacher in Dolores who had an invalid husband and a family of several children. She had come to see if we needed help from Social Services. I firmly informed her that several of my children had jobs and with my salary we could make it without help!

This again was Besse Ripley. When she submitted my nomination for Colorado Mother, she related this event in her letter of recommendation. I was chosen as a Finalist so Aunt Ruby, Shirley, Charlotte, Joe and Shane drove with me to Denver to attend the luncheon. Martha joined us there. I was chosen as one of the Merit Mothers. You can imagine how I felt when Besse's letter was read!

As retirement approached, I had to make up my mind what I wanted to do. At first, I just could not imagine life without a job. I considered the idea of applying for teaching in Foreign lands but couldn't really generate much enthusiasm from either myself or the nearby children. Finally, one day, I knew what I wanted to do! Move back to Durango and get at knitting, quilting and such things! When Sandy learned of my decision and knew that I would want a place to live, he immediately thought of a friend of his who was building a new apartment and would soon be

moving out of the one he and his wife occupied. This proved to be the place that appealed to me. But it was to be several months before I would be able to occupy it.

I purchased two Trailway Bus passes each good for a 30 day trip anywhere. The first one was used to go East. That trip took 72 hours and I was weary when I arrived but Dorothy met me in Boston and it didn't take me long to recuperate when she got me home and among my grandchildren. They were living then in the old mill town of Manchester, New Hampshire. This being only a short time out of Boston, we had some delightful trips into the City. Then I went on to Cape Cod and spent a few days with Uncle John and Aunt Estelle.

By the time I arrived home we were able to finish moving me into the apartment and I got things arranged.

Then I took the bus again, heading for California, in February. The Middle West had just been hit by severe winter conditions and the buses were jam packed with people from there taking advantage of winter bus rates and heading for warmer country.

I reached California safely and was met by my cousins, Orville and Alma Freeman and Edith and Russell Gerber. After a few delightful days with the the Freemans, they took me on to Helen and Lawrence Dunaways in Laguna Beach. A couple of days later Jack and Darlene picked me up there and took me to their home in Redlands. The next day about noon Darlene and I left the house to drive to visit some of the Thompson relatives. This is when I crashed and burned, slipping off a small step in the sidewalk and ending up in the hospital with a badly fractured leg. This resulted in five and a half weeks in the hospital in a cast and in traction, which made me practically helpless but I had excellent care and made many good friends. People who didn't know me but heard about me dropped in often to see me. Even one little girl from Durango who was visiting her grandmother and whose parents I knew came in.

Stephen and Kathryn Eggleston, whom I had planned to visit, came to see me and so did Aunt Anne. And some of Uncle Vernon's children also came in.

At last, the day of release came and I went home to Jack and Darlene's for the night. They took me to the plane where I had to be carried on as I was too weak to sit down or stand up alone.

Sandy met me at the La Plata Airport and took me to their home where I spent three weeks with them having to help me up and down, in and out of bed and with my exercises. I gained strength enough to where I was able to go to my apartment in three weeks but they and Aunt Ruby came in daily to help with the things I couldn't do and to walk with me. Margaret also came and spent a few days. Charlotte and Joe with the boys and Shirley also came.

As soon as I was able, I started going back to the Senior Citizen Center and eventually was able to start bowling with them again.

Meantime, I was finding many of my old friends and joining a Sunday School class, the Garden Club with Aunt Ruby, the Historical Society, AARP and the Retired Teachers.

Aunt Ruby and I had a couple of delightful trips together. One was in 1969, when we travelled to Iowa by train and attended a Mosher reunion. There were lots of Moshers and we spent several days among them. We then went on to Ann Arbor, Mich. and visited our cousin Esther Rainville, stopped in Toledo to visit Daddy's relatives and then out into Pennsylvania to visit cousin Anna Kerstetter. The final lap of our journey took us into Boston, where Uncle John met us. We spent time at their Boston Townhouse and then on to their retirement home on Cape Cod. We flew back to Denver where we were met by Dorothy and Dale. We visited with them and Martha and attended Midsummer Services at the little stone church of Ryssby. The other trip was to Europe in 1978 and from it I include the following:

Travel Anecdotes

Learning to ride the Tube or Underground in London and the British Railway provided many laughs for my sister and me. In either case you had to know where you were going, where you were going to get off, whether you were changing trains, which side of the track you had to be on and from which direction the train would be coming. There were maps and timetables on the walls or on large bill boards but sometimes a bit of information didn't soak in properly.

For instance, the time we got off the train in Glasgow, Scotland to change for Chester. We didn't know that the train we needed left from another station several blocks away. So we wasted quite a bit of time looking for a schedule. We made a mad dash watching all the time for signs that would point the way. Finally we lost sight of them. Suddenly I saw one halfway down the block on the other side of a street full of traffic. But the cars were temporarily stopped and we dashed through between bumpers and panted into the station just in time.

Another day we rode out to the end of Wales and had just time to catch the next train back with a 20 minute wait for it. A couple was also sitting there waiting for a train in another direction and we fell into conversation with them. He had been born in Eastern Colorado and she had a nephew who taught music in Durango—none other than Dennis Evans. This was the last day of our railway pass and we had to make it back to London. Somehow on our next change we were more breathless than ever when we got onto the train and just practically collapsed into our seats, giggling all the while. The ladies facing us leaned over to look at our luggage tags and saw that we were Americans so they laughed with us. Then they started asking us what else we were going to do. When we replied that we had two more days before leaving for home and planned to visit Lakenheath Air Force Base and Stonehenge on those days, they gasped and said, "Why you can't do all *that* in two days!" However, each was only two hours out of London so we purchased "there and back" tickets each day following our plans.

One day, while sightseeing, we discovered that we could check our luggage at the railroad station and take a side trip, come back and pick it up and be on to our planned destination the same day. It took coins for the locker and this necessitated showing a Rail Pass so as to go through the gate to get change. We had no more than locked the locker when we realized that we had left something that we would

need in our luggage. And then, of course, we needed change again to lock the locker. This necessitated another trip into the depot. When we explained to the agent what had happened, he said, "That was silly, wasn't it!"

A Trip to Town

We children seldom had a chance to go to Durango during the school year, as our Father did not like to make the trip on Saturday.

So, on a summer morning we would be up bright and early hurrying to get the milking done and the cows turned out to pasture, the pigs fed and watered, the chickens fed and then our own breakfasts and our clothes changed.

The horses were hitched to the spring wagon the last thing and then we would all climb in, Mama, Papa and Ruby in the seat and brother John and me on a bench in the back. There was always hay for the horses' noon feed and sometimes a crate of young chickens in the back (or some cases of eggs).

The road led the half mile along our farm and little farther on. After crossing a lateral ditch our road took across the sagebrush and through some springs until we reached the hill that led down to the bridge across the Animas River. In those days the road was rocky and often rutted from storm run off and steep enough that the brake had to be used to keep the wagon from running up against the horses.

Once we were past the Weaselskin homes the horses would trot steadily whenever the road was level enough. The wheels would run quietly and most of the sound was the clapping hooves and the ever present squeaking of harness. Now our Father would relax and sing some of his favorite songs in his clear tenor voice. That was one of the best parts of the trip.

It was exciting to drive through the dump out south of town often in bloom with beeweed and yellow daisies. Over on the rim of the river were the remains of the first smelter that had been there and had burned.

When we arrived at Graden's store the eggs and sometimes the chickens were unloaded there. Then the wagon was taken to the yard of the livery stable where the horses were watered, stabled and fed.

Now we would return to Main Street do our shopping at such stores as The Golden Rule, Burnside-Wayt, Jackson Hardware, often to the First National Bank and end up with the greater part of our needs being filled Graden's for it was a full department store then.

Sometimes we would have brought lunch from home or sometimes we would get something from the bakery and some slices of bologna, cut fresh from the large link of it that hung from a hook in the meat market. And oftentimes Ben Heidt would look up at the bunch of bananas hanging near the center of the store. If there were several that ran the danger of becoming overripe before they sold, he would pull the sharp knife out of the banana stalk and cut some of the fruit to add to our lunch. We would sit on a truck out in the feed department and eat our lunch.

Each section of the store had its own smells and the linger in my mind yet. And then there was the elevator! What a thrill to enter it, have the door pulled shut and then the rope pulled to start the cage on its way up to the second floor where drygoods and millinery were sold.

Hats were a must in those days and since the trip took almost two hours each way, we could have been severely sunburned without them. Mother also always wore a veil for the trip, partly to keep her hat and hair in place and partly as a sun and dust shield. Also parasols were often a part of our equipment for it might be sunny all the way or it might rain!

I remember once when my Mother had a dental appointment that had to be kept as she was being plagued with a tooth ache. There had been a lot of rain and when we reached the arroyo bridge by the Weaselskin place it had been washed out. This left no alternative but to turn back and go up the hill past the Sunnyside School House and to town over the mesa. The bridge over the Trumbull Canyon arroyo was also gone but it was possible to drive down and across the stream. Another time a cloudburst had occurred up in Ridges Basin. When we reached Basin Creek the raging water was up to the bridge. Papa got out and inspected the situation. Then he returned to the driver's seat, told us all to hang on tight, whipped up the horses and we dashed safely across the bridge. It was a very unusual thing for him to do more than lightly touch one of his horses with the whip!

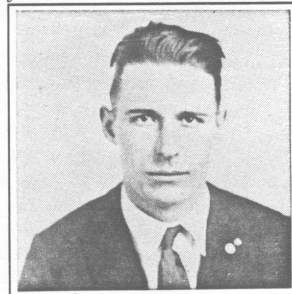
One other memory of a dental appointment for Mother was after Ruby was born. The dentist was Dr. Burns upstairs in the Century Building. My brother and I were assigned to take care of Ruby out in the hall—a long, barren looking place with doors to offices along each side. The lighting was single light bulbs at intervals. When the baby began to cry and couldn't be soothed, we also began to cry. Very soon some stern men emerged from one of the doors and told us in no uncertain tones to be quiet! Soon Mother was out and we were able to leave. In recent months I had occasion to go to an office along the same hall and it looked just about like it did then! I had the same depressed feeling!

Random Memories of Early Years of Harold and Amy Thompson

Between the fall of 1937 and the fall of 1939 Daddy and I led a rather nomadic live but some of our experiences were more outstanding than others.

We arrived back from California in time for him to participate in the fruit harvest at Palisade and Paonia. Then we worked our way down the Western Slope looking for employment.

Watching the miners come down off the mountain at Telluride in their hipboots, slickers and hard hats dampened his enthusiasm for mining. But as we returned through Ridgeway, we learned that a telephone construction crew was hiring. Daddy was employed and by the end of the week we had found a



Harold Thompson

place to live—an old boxcar made over into living quarters. The old Majestic Range took up most of the entire space across one side of the kitchen. In the bedroom was a roll-away bed that had a habit of trying to fold up in the night!

When the work was completed there the crew was moved to Ouray and this time we found a virtually unfurnished house of 12 rooms! The outstanding feature of it was that the kitchen range and the bathtub had been painted with aluminum paint which had scorched and burned off from the range. But the *bathtub* was pristine in its silvery beauty. We soon found that every time we took a bath some of the paint peeled off. This, along with the general condition of the house, gave us a clue to the general habits of our predecessors!

A relative of mine, Elmer Eggleston, was a prospector and had several claims on which assessment work had to be done each year. This appealed to Daddy and we often hiked up the streams and over mountain trails looking for the proverbial pay dirt. The next summer we returned to the little mountain town and took up residence in an old mine boarding house high up above the Million Dollar Highway where a trail wound up a mountainside. The cousin had a claim "over the hill" and Daddy was to do the assessment work on it.

These old mine buildings were constructed largely of corrugated tin sheets and were quite rude containing mostly just rude wooden furniture and bunks. The outhouse, as was often the case in the mountains, was merely built out over a stream rather than being set over a pit. The picture of Daddy was taken by a romantic Easterner, Aunt Estelle's sister, Ruth, who had made the climb up the mountain. This is the picture of him with a gun, bearded and standing in front of the building.

It was back to the fruit harvest that fall and then to spend the winter with my Mother, who was widowed. Our oldest daughter, Margaret, was born that winter.

I've related elsewhere the story of going back up to the boarding house while the snow was still deep.

By the way, did you ever try boiling potatoes or green beans near timberline? They never get soft!

One of the winters that we spent at Ouray, Daddy helped pack supplies by mule team up to the Camp Bird Mine. The trail led over the top of the famous Waterhole Slide which had run earlier. When the snow began to soften so that the mules would fall though, a crew was assembled to open the road. This meant hand shovelling until they reached the part of the slide that was too deep for this. Then they would dig a tunnel though the slide, hauling the snow away in trucks. One of the hazards of this kind of work was the huge icicles that would form on the cliffs above and then come plunging down on the workers. This was solved by someone going out in the morning with a high powered rifle and shooting the icicles down. Daddy, along with others of the crew, eventually went snow blind and had to quit the job.



Daddy at Sunnyside, Winter of 1938

Memories of Important Events.

Recollections of World War One

Of course, you realize that I was only seven years old when things really began to happen. After America entered the war, a draft was established and all the young men from 21 up in age were required to register. Soon quite a number from La Plata County received their draft notices or enlisted. And then there was to be a trainload of them leaving from Durango. A large crowd gathered at the depot to see them off. I remember distinctly that it was a rainy, drizzly day and we had the 12-mile drive to town in the spring wagon. There were some of our neighbors among the enlistees and that made it especially close to us. Eventually one of our neighbors received a bad ankle wound. A bone was taken from his wrist and grafted into the ankle and he was sent home.

As the war dragged on, the draft age was raised higher and higher, until it finally reached 42. Our Father was 43 and we knew that if the war continued much longer the draft age would be raised again to include him and we would probably be left alone on the farm—Mother and the three of us children. Fortunately, however, the war did end and the men of that age did not have to go.

After Germany surrendered, the date for the signing of the Armistice was set for Nov. 11, 1918. However, due to the type of communication in those days, the actual news of the signing did not reach us for about a week. First the news was sent across the Atlantic by underwater cable. From New York it would be telegraphed all over the country. Durango had only a weekly newspaper at the time so perhaps the news was not published immediately. And the paper would not be mailed out of us until the following day. This was before radio and we did not have a telephone yet.

Other things that stand out in my memory were the gathering of women to knit mittens, mufflers and socks to be sent to the men overseas. It was during this time that I learned a little about casting on stitches and doing plain knitting. However, I did not pursue the art and soon forgot all I knew about it.

There were Liberty bonds sold during the War. I remember my Mother telling about it later. They purchased one but when the man came around the second time, there was just no cash available to buy another one. The man called her a "slacker" and that really hurt.

Another memory was of how the farmers would haul their grain to the Graden mill in the fall and many of them would lay in their year's supply of flour and sugar at that time. But then came the order that no one could hoard their supplies of these commodities. So the farmers dutifully hauled their supplies of flour and sugar to the nearby railroad sidings to be picked up by the train and taken back to wherever it would be redistributed. The train did not stop to pick it up and there came a rainstorm that spoiled the flour and sugar. That hurt, too.

Other Recollections of World War II

We were living in Venice, California in 1941 where Daddy was employed at Douglas Aircraft Company.

On the afternoon of December 6th, we had driven up the coast to a clean, sandy beach where we would camp and fish. The next morning we were up and preparing breakfast. We noticed that we had company that morning—a lone Japanese man who was fishing a short distance from us. This was not unusual for there were many Japanese truck farmers, gardeners and business people in the area.

Daddy turned on the battery powered radio that we had taken with us and we heard with shock the news of Pearl Harbor! We later realized, as we packed for a hurried return home, that the Japanese man had departed before we did.

Now the West Coast began to prepare hastily for emergency measures. Windows were to be covered at night so light would not indicate to marauding sea or air enemies the size of the city. Fire sirens were to be used as warning in case of attack. Neighborhood wardens were chosen and trained for emergency. Traffic signals were turned off and orders were issued that in case of enemy attack or danger of one all cars were to immediately stop, turn off their lights and remain this way until the "All Clear" signal sounded. Factories, ship yards, parking lots, large buildings were all camouflaged so as to be less visible from the air. We became accustomed to seeing anti-aircraft emplacements and soldiers everywhere, sentinels marching their beats up and down the beach and then, suddenly, the rounding up and moving inland to internment camps the entire Japanese population. I've written elsewhere of the night the enemy aircraft were over the city.

Memories of January 20, 1981

From the time the Iranian militants seized the American Embassy in November, 1979, my thoughts have been almost daily with the hostages there and their families here. I dreaded every newscast for fear there would be news of mass executions of them.

There were five young Iranian women on the bus tour I had been on in 1978 and I found them to be vivacious and charming. This was just as Ayatollah Khomeini was driving his assault through Iran and promising that when he took power he would impose strict rule bolstered by threats of cutting off the hands of all who opposed his restrictions including the return of wearing veils by women. I could sense that the actions of the young people could become very erratic as they either supported or opposed him.

On the last mornings before the announced release of the hostages, I awakened early and turned my radio to the seven o'clock newscast instead of waiting until my usual time of eight o'clock.

By Tuesday morning I was much more interested in news of the negotiations than I was in the Presidential exhibitionism. I had seen Presidential parades down

Pennsylvania Avenue as well as the funeral procession of slain President John Kennedy. I had listened to Presidential Oaths of Office or read them many times.

Tuesday being my day to meet my friends at the bowling alley, I followed this procedure as usual. The TV set was on and every so often the bowlers would leave their game to see what was going on. But disturbances like this distract me and hamper my game so I did not go over. By noon at the Center, word was out that the negotiations had been successful and the hostages would soon be on their way to freedom.

Since my Tuesday afternoons are spent in the Gift Shop at the Center, it was not until I was home that I was able to sit down and truly savor the delight of seeing our citizens coming off the plane in Germany and being identified as they appeared. And along with it were the pictures directly from the homes of the families. I stayed up until 11:00 P.M., away past my usual bedtime, just glorying in all of it. It will stand out along with the memories of Armistice signings.

A Later Addition

My two grandchildren, ages 10 and nearly 12, were allowed to skip school on the day of the ticker-tape parade in New York City, in order to go to it. They accompanied their father to the office that morning and when it was over, went home alone on the ferry boat and then the bus that runs near their home.

They reported the crowd to be so thick that when they burrowed their way through it toward the front, it was dark as night. Ticker tape is not used much any more so there were all sorts of paper floating down from the windows—computer cards, other sorts of cards and toilet paper. The wind was so strong that it carried much of it up to festoon the towers and tall buildings while underfoot, it was like walking in snow.

The Summer of 1968

By now Margaret, Sandy and Dorothy were married and in homes of their own, the twins were still with me but both working and Daddy was well established in the VA hospital in Grand Junction.

In May, just before school was out, I took delivery on a new car—the first since 1940.

I had also been notified that I was the recipient of a National Science Foundation Grant for an eight-week course in Physics at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology at Rapid City.



*Doris, Margaret, Daddy, Jack, Sandy
Charlotte, Shirley, and Dorothy*

By the second week of June we were all loaded and away on whatever adventures came our way. Two of my daughters' schoolmates had arranged their working schedules so they could accompany us. The car was loaded to the brim



Back row:

*Sandy holding Geoffrey,
Charlotte, Dale, Jan,
Tom, Tommy*

Front row:

*Shirley, Amy, Dorothy
holding Amy, Margaret,
Dona Jo, Darlene, Jack,
Don*

with
sleeping
bags,
suitcases,
my bedding
for a
dormitory
room and
last but not
least, four
carefully
placed straw
cowboy hats
in the rear
window for
the four
girls were
dedicated
rodeo fans.

We stopped en route to visit Dorothy and her family and Sandy and his family and then were on our way.

As we drove up through Wyoming a carload of young men, also wearing cowboy hats, kept passing us, dropping back and then passing again. Finally they pulled over to the side of the road and indicated that they wanted our car to stop. The ensuing conversation revealed that they were on their way to a High School rodeo in Nebraska. A look at the map showed me that we could go that way without seriously interrupting our schedule. So we spent a couple of hours at the rodeo and then went on.

As soon as we got into South Dakota we really began to get the Tourist Fever. We visited caves, stopped at tourist attractions and had the thrill of seeing our first herd of buffalo. The excited and fun-loving girls jumped out of the car and laid their ears to the ground to try to hear the thunder of hooves. At one stop a bearded old prospector with his burro enticed tourists to stop and have a picture taken with him. My passengers *insisted so* somewhere I have a picture of myself snuggled in his encircling arm. The final stop of interest was at Mount Rushmore with the carved faces of four of the Nations's Presidents. It is indeed an awesome sight.

After leaving me at my destination, the girls went on following everywhere the trails that led to rodeos. They zigzagged back and forth over State lines, rolled their sleeping bags out wherever, became acquainted with nationally known rodeo cowboys and finally arrived back home, safe and weary, just in time for the 5000 mile checkup on the car.

Meantime, I settled into the routine of dormitory life and being alone for the first time in over thirty years.

Our group proved to be a congenial bunch and classes interesting. I had already taught from the text for two years so found that I did not have to study too hard but was learning new techniques in presenting material and doing experiments.

All of the single "girls" were housed on one floor of what had been designed as a men's dorm. To our amusement the urinal was now the receptacle for a large bouquet of artificial flowers.

Soon five of us unattached females started doing things together on weekends. There was a large, unmarried young woman from Montana, loaded with money and the owner of a Cadillac; a young negro girl from a rough school in California; a petite nun who had adopted the modern habit; a middle-aged woman who had taught in the service men's schools in Europe and was rather hardbitten and cynical and me! We roamed the hills on narrow winding roads, up and down and through beautiful country. We visited the bleak Badlands National Monument. We visited the cemetery where Wild Bill Hickock and Calamity Jane are buried and traipsed single file through the saloon that he had owned to go through the Opium Dens beneath it. Imagine, if you can, what a sight we were. Is it any wonder that the heads of the men sitting along the bar turned to gape at us? And everywhere we went were the inevitable Tourist attractions and shops to wander through.

The final big event of the summer was a trip along with another nun in a Gray Lines bus to see the Passion Play at Spearfish. It is held in an outdoor amphitheater with seating on the hillside above. Everything was very authentically done—the camels, the Roman soldiers on horseback, doves and chickens, slaves cleaning the streets, the final trip toward the crucifixion site almost out of sight on a hillside and finally the stone rolled back from the open tomb with light shining out. The viewer is held spellbound, watching and remembering the Biblical stories.

What memories linger in my mind!

Activities Lately

Since retirement my time has been occupied by many different activities.

Since I had known many people here for many years, it was not hard to revive old friendships and to make new ones.

My first involvements were with Sunday School and Church, 55-plus activities, retired School employees and AARP. Also an invitation from Aunt Ruby to join the Animas Valley Garden Club even though my gardening activities are entirely confined to house plants.



Soon Sandy urged me to join the Historical society which at that time was meeting in the Library next door to my apartment. They were in the process of acquiring an old three-story sandstone schoolhouse that was gradually being vacated by the School District. Even before we owned it, renovation was under way and we were finally able to purchase it. From that I became involved in teaching in the "Turn-of-the-Century" classroom wearing old fashioned clothes and teaching the history of the area and old fashioned games and spelling bees.

I also became involved for a year and a half in doing simple Home Ec projects with a class of slightly handicapped children. Just recently I spent a half day in a Fourth Grade room as part of American Education Week.

An effort was under way to get a historic designation for Durango's downtown business district. When the effort was finally organized, I was invited to help. That took a good many months of walking the area, numbering and describing the buildings and doing the necessary Court House research. And I have done some research on other buildings as the need arose including the Old Power plant and the history of electricity in Durango.

1980-1981 was designated as Durango's Centennial Year with Sandy as Centennial Chairman. He with his committees lined up a fabulous series of events to take place between Sept., 1980, which was the 100th year after the driving of the first survey stake for Durango and Sept., 1981 commemorating the arrival of the first train. Former President Gerald Ford and his wife, Ambassador and Mrs. Firestone and Louis L'Amour were the honored guests and I had the pleasure of seeing both the Museum and the Downtown Historic District dedicated that day.

I also designed a Centennial quilted hanging for the Museum commemorating the industries and events that led to the success of Durango. Many women embroidered blocks or helped quilt it.

Another one of my very time-consuming projects of retirement years has been the completion and compiling of the Eggleston and Nelson family histories for the Colorado Families; A Territorial Heritage. And I have also written a story of the Nelsons at Sunnyside for the next volume of the San Juan Pioneers D.A.R. book.

These are only a few of the many things that keep me busy and young at heart these days.

Modes of Travel

Train travel was quite a novelty in our younger lives. However, when I was a Senior in High School I stayed in Durango and would ride home on the Farmington train on Saturdays. Then on Sunday I would walk the mile up to the Highway and catch the Cannonball Bus back to town. It was merely a large passenger car. My first year at Ft. Lewis I was chosen as one of the delegates to take my 4-H exhibit to the State Fair and our group went by train over Cumbres Pass. Then after I started college at Ft. Collins that was the mode of transportation most of the time.

While Daddy and I lived Ouray we decided to go to Durango on the Rio Grande Southern track down through Telluride, Rico and Dolores. The first part of the trip was made on the "Galloping Goose." It consisted of an old car body with the road wheels replaced by flanged wheels to run on the rails. It had a baggage compartment on the back of it and the original side curtains to keep out the cold.

It was one of the roughest rides I have ever taken. The short wheel base caused it to bounce every time the wheels passed over a joint in the rails. And when we plowed through snow drifts, the snow blew in on us. But we were always glad we had had the experience. At Dolores we changed to a regulation train. Little did I dream that night that Dolores would later become our home!

The Experiences of a Land Lubber Deep Sea Fishing.

I had spent a month in New Hampshire with daughter, Dorothy and her family. The occasion had been the arrival of little Abigail, who was welcomed by five older brothers and sisters. This needless to say, had kept us pretty well close at home but Dale had plans for an outing before I left.

The plan was to take me on a charter fishing boat for a day of deep sea fishing. I viewed the idea with some misgiving. What if I should become sea sick? I had never done this before.

When the momentous day arrived, Dale and I were up for an early breakfast for we had an hour's drive to the coast. I was fitted out with sweaters and jacket for warmth and we took sandwiches with us. When we arrived at the dock we learned that the boat that he had reservations on was out for an overnight trip. So we would have to wait for an hour for another one.

It was drizzly, the rain becoming heavy enough at times that everyone would crowd into a small recreation room on the dock. Once when we came back out a school of fish was feeding just a short distance out in the water. Dale immediately baited up his pole and soon hauled in a very ugly looking fish weighing between two and three pounds. He said it was not edible but would make good bait and I visualized him cutting off chunks for us to bait our hooks with.

Finally the small boat put off from the fishing boat and came into the dock to ferry us out.

Eventually every one was on board and we were soon under way. It was not long before we were out of the harbor and we began to leave the shoreline behind us. But we proceeded for over two hours before the boat anchored and tackle boxes began to appear. During the trip out we had sat in the cabin and watched the activity around us. One group of four men, it turned out, fished together often and had their regular jokes. At first, when we watched them and listened, we thought they were a queer bunch. To my relief, there were a few other women on board. In fact, one of them was a regular and she pulled in more fish than any one else on our side of the boat.

I was a little taken back by having about a three foot spot along the rail for my assigned spot but as fishing started I began to see why this was enough room. Dale said, "Here, I'll start you with this. It might attract a big one!" He attached the fish he had caught earlier to my hook and instructed me, "Just drop it over the side straight down but keep your thumb on the line as it comes off the reel or you will have a backlash and get tangled." Later experience proved him right. Right now, though, the fish was carrying my line straight down until suddenly the line slacked, indicating that my line had reached bottom. The procedure now was to reel in a few feet and then let the line drop again. After a few minutes of no action

I was instructed to bring my line up. The inert fish was still there so down it went again another time or two. By then Dale had decided that it was no use so he removed it from my hook, tossed it overboard and rebaited my hook from the bait bucket. The pole was a short stubby one with no bend to it. The sinker weighed two or three pounds and the line was heavy nylon. It was quite a chore to reel it in and usually by the time some one reeled in the lines had drifted in the current so anywhere from three to five lines might come up in a grand tangle and maybe there would be a fish on one of the hooks. Needless to say, I was a bit surprised to learn that the bottom was 200 feet down there! No wonder it was a chore to reel a line in!

Landing a fish was another new experience to me. When the pull on the line indicated a fish, one would reel in as fast as possible, keeping the line taut and trying to keep the fish from tangling in other lines. As the fish became visible the call would go out, "Gaff here!" and one of the crewmen would come running with the gaff to lift the fish in. Dale and I each caught two nice ones and my third one got away.

When the fishing day was over and the boat headed toward home, the men took turns working on the shelves at the back of the boat, cleaning their fish and tossing the cleanings out over the rail. The boat was followed by a huge flock of gulls that fought for the food sometimes catching it in midair and sometimes riding the waves watching for bits.

The day goes down in my memory to be another never-to-be forgotten adventure.

Ancestral Records of our Family

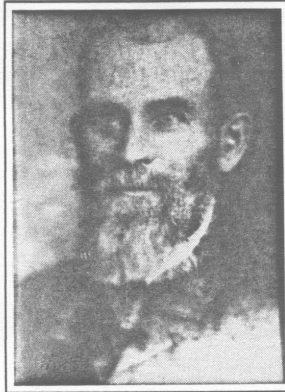
Thus far in my writing I have dealt only with the families after they moved to Colorado around 1860 to the present.

We know little of the Nelson family, our Swedish ancestors prior to their move to America. My great-great grandfather had a flour mill in Sweden. His name was still on the foundation when Helen Dunaway found it.

The Eggleston family has been traced back to Bigot (Begat, Bogot or Begant being possible spellings of the name) who lived from 1590 to 1674. He came to America in 1630 evidently as a bond servant. He was freed in 1631. His descendants who form our family line are Benjamin, Bigot, Darius and then my great grandfather, Elisha Eggleston, who came to Colorado in 1860.



Wedding Picture of Malcolm and Myra Nelson, parents of Amy



*Wellington K. Eggleston
Father of Myra Nelson*

Elisha's second wife, Rachel Kinne, descended as follows: Sir Thomas Keney of Lynn, England prior to 1556; John Keney; Henry Keney, who immigrated as a paid passenger on the ship "Elizabeth and Ann" and settled in Salem Village, now Danvers, Mass. in 1635; Thomas, who spelled the name Kinnie; Deacon Thomas Kinney, Moses Kinny, Cyrus Kinney, Zachariah Kinne and finally Rachel, who married Elisha Eggleston.



*Esther Eggleston
Mother of Myra Nelson*

My grandfather Wellington Eggleston married first Ann Davis of Iowa and we know nothing of her family. The only person remaining in that line is Anna Kerstetter. After Ann's death grandfather married another Iowa girl, our grandmother Esther Mosher.

Through Grandmother Mosher we can trace back to the Mayflower as follows: Francis Cooke and Richard Warren came over on the Mayflower and both signed the Mayflower Pact. Cooke's son John married Sarah Warren, daughter of Richard. Their daughter Mary Cooke married Philip Taber and their daughter Esther married Thomas Brownell. Thomas Brownell II married Hannah Potter and their daughter, Hannah, married Obadiah Mosher. The Mosher name carried on down two more generations to the marriage of Esther to Wellington Eggleston.

It is also of interest to us that Winston Churchill, Douglas MacArthur and Franklin Delano Roosevelt also all trace back to John Cooke and Sarah Warren. I have seen the genealogical chart in the Denver Public Library.



*Stephen and Ruth Mosher
Parents of Esther Eggleston*

Richard Warren goes back 19 generations to King Henry I of France (1008-1060) and Francis Cooke back 15 generations to King David I of Scotland (1084-1153).

The direct line of Mosher descent can also be traced back eight generations of Mosher's beginning with Hugh Mosier who lived 1600-1694.

The Moving Mountain

For many years the Carbon Junction Coal Mine was tunneled back into Carbon Mountain south of town. The coal had a high sulfur content and caused a great deal of soot in stovepipes and chimneys. But it was easily accessible for hauling by the wagonload and was a little cheaper than some of the better coal that was sometimes hauled down the Farmington Railroad track and shunted onto a siding for the farmers to haul their winter supplies of fuel.

Eventually, however, the mine became unproductive and was closed. Later, during prohibition days, the tunnel reportedly housed another thriving business—a still. After that it became just another place to be remembered from the past.

One morning, however, rattling and banging noises were heard out south of Durango and soon came reports that Carbon Mountain was becoming active. Stones and boulders were cascading down the steep north face of it and up in the gully above the old mine a section of earth had broken loose and was sliding downward taking underbrush and small trees with it.

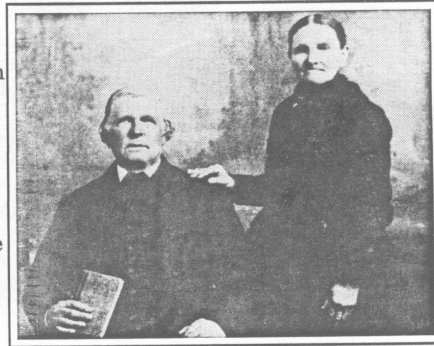
Some reported seeing what seemed to be puffs of smoke emitting from it. Others suggested that the river might be dammed! That Durango might be flooded! That the little railroad—Durango's lifeline to the outside world which wound its way along the base of the hill on the other side of the river might be blocked.

Finally activity stopped as suddenly as it had started but the curious continued to wander and explore.

By the time my Mother, sister and I decided to visit the site late in the summer there was a well-beaten trail winding up the ridge above the slide. There wasn't much to be seen except the raw earth that had been exposed. But it contained several layers of different colored soil and rocks making an interesting display. Down near the bottom an enterprising young man had set up a booth where he was selling little vials containing pulverized rock and soil from the different colors arranged attractively in layers.

The view of the valley was beautiful from up there with the river appearing as a silver ribbon far below, the trees along it, the background of the Blue Cliffs (as they were called then) and the patchwork of green fields, sagebrush and pinón and juniper.

Oh—later when I questioned a geologist about it he said, "Oh, it was just a cave in of a fault below the earth's surface."



*Nels and Maria Johnson
Grandparents of Malcolm Nelson*

Holiday Reminiscences

In order to spend a short time with my daughter, Dorothy, Dale and their six children in Ft. Collins, I was up early on a Monday morning. Fortified by a slice to toast, coffee and juice, I was ready when my son came for me at 6:00 A.M.

There was a large crowd boarding the bus and we were informed that it was too late to check baggage and besides, I would not have time to claim it and catch my next bus out of Denver. So—up it went onto the rack and I settled to snooze a bit more.

During a quick stop at South Fork we had coffee and an *immense* warm cinnamon roll. Then were on our way again.

At Monte Vista an elderly man sank into the seat beside me and I listened politely to the usual story of how and when his wife died, his four bedroom home and place that he had to keep up and where he was going, quite excitedly, for Thanksgiving. We knew places and people and history of various places through the San Luis Valley but finally he ran down and I returned to my book.

At Salida the bus emptied rapidly but I could find no enthusiasm for the mad dash down the alley and to a crowded, unappetizing restaurant a block away where the last bus load of people would just be finishing and leaving the Cafe. So I waited and the found a dispensing machine inside where I found a granola bar to munch on.

Things were pretty quiet through South Park but as we began the winding trip through the canyons approaching Denver, my companion became alert and excited. He leaned out into the aisle to peer ahead and exclaim about the changes in the road. I saw him leaving the depot with a tall man after we arrived so I knew he and his son had found one another.

As I was attempting to free my luggage I heard, "Here, let me get it for you. Is this yours too? Go ahead, I'll carry it our for you." And a tall young man with only a back pack smiled down at me.

Now I had time to hunt food. It was a self-service deli where one served one's self, paid at the exit turnstile and then stood at the counter to eat while keeping an eye on luggage.

Dorothy and Dale were waiting for me at the end of the 70-mile trip and we were soon walking into a living room teeming with 15 small people ranging from 16 months to about that many years, three more young couples, Dale's mother, the man she was to marry and his son.

Now came the excitement of being greeted by my own six grandchildren whom I had not seen for 16 months. Some seemed quite familiar but the middle two little girls had changed so much that I couldn't be sure. In the excitement I planted a kiss on a little blonde head only to hear my daughter's amused voice, "Oh! That one isn't ours." I never did completely identify the four youngest of their cousins.

Next a turn around the room to greet all of the elders. Most of them I had seen recently enough to know but the tall dark six-foot brother of Dale's had been only about 12 and having a water gun fight on the stairs the last time I remembered him, and his wife and son I had never seen before.

The rest of my time there was a flurry of food being prepared, eaten, dishes washed, each family involved in their own affairs. But along with it a few short hours with only Dorothy, Dale and their children along with good visits with the others.

On Wednesday morning it was up early again and off the to the bus with a slice of toast and a cup of milk to fortify me.

There was supposed to be only a five-minute gap between my buses so I hurried into the depot to find myself at the end of a line that stretched clear across the waiting room. It began inching forward and eventually I got out the door. Luggage was being checked outside so I was relieved of having to lug it.

By the time we were starting down the road every seat was filled and we were already almost an hour late. We picked up five more passengers as we went along who had to sit on the stairs or on their luggage and the driver kept assuring them that a second bus would be added. However, this did not occur until we reached Pueblo.

Now I had a new seatmate—a college freshman whose home was in Iowa but he was going to school in Missouri. He was carrying a large square box and a briefcase. After a glance at the rack, he set the box on the floor and folded his long legs uncomfortably on top of it. He was neat and clean cut, self assured and the same time boyishly excited and eager. He had defied tradition and was on his way to Pagosa Springs to visit a girl friend instead of going home. He had started out from Missouri in a carload of boys with someone to meet him at La Junta and take him the rest of the way. But a car had broken down so he had had to take the bus. It was his first experience at bus riding and he was excited about that, too. Every so often he would open his brief case and examine the contents. Once he got out a map to see where he had come from and where he was going. Finally, he pulled an envelope out and asked me if I would mind mailing it for him. He said, selfconsciously, "I can't very well mail it where I am going." I didn't embarrass him by looking at it but just slipped it into my purse. When I looked later it was, as I had suspected, addressed to another girl in Iowa!

The bus became more crowded when the second bus had to turn back and then as passengers reached their destinations, I had a seat alone again.

As we approached Durango, I stood up to struggle into my coat. A hand from behind straightened it and lifted the sleeve for me and I thought, "In some ways it's fun to be a little old lady travelling alone with so many friendly people."

My son was waiting when the bus pulled in almost exactly 66 hours after I had started out.

End of a Fishing Trip

One day in the summer of 1942 we had driven to the home of a friend who lived near the beach and had spent the day. Late in the afternoon we were headed home along Venice Boulevard.

The streetcar tracks ran down the middle of the Boulevard and there was two-way traffic on both sides of it. We were travelling next to the tracks but would make a left turn away from them in a short distance.

As we approached the intersection the light turned red so we were stopped. I noticed a double header street car coming swaying along the track and approaching the intersection from the side opposite us. The setting sun was reflected in the windows of the cars. Traffic was crossing the track on the green light when suddenly we realized to our horror that the street car was not slowing down but approaching the intersection at full speed!

It plowed into the middle of an army truck. The front streetcar derailed and turned sideways and the whole mess tore down a big power pole and the signal post and then into us pushing us sideways. The gas tank on the army truck ruptured throwing flaming gasoline onto our car.

My husband jumped out of the car, pulled me across the seat and out and we grabbed the two children who had been thrown into the bottom of the car and ran behind a large sign.

Almost immediately Harold ran back out to where other men were already trying to rescue people. He climbed up onto the hood of the car and pulled the truck driver out through the window. Then several men literally carried our car away and the task of removing the rest of the soldiers was completed. Meantime people were also being helped from the streetcar.

Suddenly I realized that Jack, my stepson, would be getting home for supper. I took the hands of the children and picked my way across the street with coils of live wires spitting and sparking around us to a phone booth. I dialed the number where he worked and got an answer but couldn't make myself heard. Finally it dawned on me that I was trying to use a pay phone and didn't have any money to put into it. So, back to the car I went and rummaged in the glove compartment to find a dime. With that I was able to make myself heard.

Now someone said we should go to the nearby clinic and be checked. Someone took us and I was told to undress the children. There they sat for an interminable time, blue and shivering. There were no apparent injuries so I was allowed to dress them. By that time our next door neighbor appeared and took us home where Harold was waiting. He had carefully rescued his reel from the trunk of the car and then walked home not knowing where we were then had talked to the neighbor who apparently had an idea where we might be.

Harold had seared his hands and face while helping with the rescue. I had a bruise clear down my right side where the car door had caved in on me and my left

shoe was torn nearly off my foot and the entire left side of my blouse was ripped in the same way. Within a few days the children both developed ear infections. The doctor at the clinic examined them and decided that Margaret's had to be lanced. So he laid her down on the table and poured hydrogen peroxide into her ear and before the noise of the bubbling had ceased he did the operation with no sort of anesthetic! No wonder she was a nervous child for many years.

Then to top it all off she developed impetigo where the tips of her hair dragged the drainage pus across her face. That necessitated a trip to the barber for a hair cut. With all she had been through she fought and screamed when he tried to cut her hair. Suddenly he ran his clippers right up the back of her head. And then had to cut the rest short enough to match that! What a sad little girl she was for awhile.

One of the soldiers died from his injuries which resulted in a trial for the streetcar motorman and we had to appear as witnesses. The final verdict was that there was mechanical failure in the brush that should have changed the light that he was approaching to red so he was acquitted.