

MY NAME IS REX R. WHITMER

Rex Whitmer



My name is Rex R Whitmer Jr. I was born in St. John's, Arizona to Rex and Claire Whitmer. This will be my memories in so far as I can recall of my father's family. As I write this, I am eighty-six years of age. I believe that my memory is clear as to my association with my father's family.

Grandpa Whitmer was usually cool by today's description. He was levelheaded and usually didn't get too excited about things. He was the buddy to all the grandkids. Always showing us stuff, and lenient. We fished on the lake sometimes. His father had been converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in West Virginia where our Whitmer's had lived since their forefathers had come to America from Switzerland.

My Great-Grandpa Whitmer had joined the Church in West Virginia, where he had suffered quite a bit of persecution. He had planned to go to the Salt Lake City, Utah area, but he received notice while on the train to go instead to what is now Central, Arizona. Grandpa grew up in that area, and when he was of the right age accepted a call to be a missionary. He was sent to what was then the Southern States Mission. He served out his mission and came home.

The story goes that he was called to speak to a congregation in Globe, Arizona, about his mission. Grandma and a girlfriend (probably Josie Merrill) decided that they would go to Globe to hear his report. I don't recall the girlfriend's name but when church was over, my grandmother told her friend that she was going to marry that young man. I don't know

anything about their courting, but they were of different temperaments.

My dad tells of a time when Grandma got mad at Grandpa, and took him and one of his brothers away from the house quite a bit north of it. She took a 22 rifle with her too. She kept saying, "I'm going to shoot you, Dad." After a time, Grandpa came up, and she was threatening to shoot him if he came a step closer. Grandpa just kept smooth talking her, "Now Jennie, let's go home." Eventually she gave him the gun and they went home. I never saw her point a gun at him, or anyone else, but she did lose it once and a while. I'm sure it's not true all the time, but I never saw Grandpa get mad like that. They were both sweethearts as far as I was concerned.

One thing I recall about Grandma, is that I never had a birthday or Christmas that I didn't receive a gift from her. Twelve of her children had children and most weren't small families excepting Aunt Ethel. The gift might just be a pair of socks or some underwear or a handkerchief, but we could all expect to receive a gift of some sort from her!

She loved poetry and kept several scrapbooks full of poems she had liked and pasted to its sheets. She encouraged me to write poems and criticized them, so that my works were real poems. Later I learned to put them to music and made them songs. Grandma was pretty strict with the kids but we had fun around the big fireplace in the living room area. Grandma sat

in the big rocker and used to read a book to us. Grandpa like to take a book to church to read. Grandma was always doing handiwork. She was always the boss, Grandpa wasn't. Once my brother, Lewis and I were fighting and she made me sit on a stool in the kitchen. That's how I learned to spell...flour, sugar, etc.

I remember that my dad got teased at every reunion for burning down the barn. We hunted for pinion nuts. When I chewed the pine gum or sap it was hard but if you chewed on it long enough it got softer. We camped and fished during the summer. Lightening often struck Alpine at 8,000 feet. One time Grandma's best friend's barn caught fire. She was hanging out clothes and fainted.

When the boys were growing up they smoked and some drank. Angus chewed tobacco but gave it all up eventually and went to the temple to be sealed to his family. This was before the Word of Wisdom was more seriously enforced in church.

Grandpa and Grandma retired to the Gila Valley area, a small home in Safford, Arizona. It was a one bedroom, a kitchen with a sort of veranda where she kept her potted plants in the wintertime. There was a single bathroom with a sink, shower, toilet and mirror in it. It had two doors. One into the single bedroom the other into the kitchen. There was a dining room with a very nice piece of furniture where she kept all of her dishes and silverware in it. There was a sort of alcove off of the kitchen with a cot in it. The first year I spent my summer there. That was where I slept. All the rest of the time I slept in small stucco one room building back of their house, where they kept a lot of stuff. I used to read some of the letters she kept stored there, mostly from her children.

During my first two years of college, I would come up to their house and take care of their lawn or prune their trees. Unfortunately, I didn't get to see them too much after that. Grandpa was sick while I was in the

Air Force, and I took a leave and went down to see him. He needed someone to be with him at night so I spent nights with him while I was on leave. I'm glad I did. I think I spent two weeks short of a day or two with him. I had hitchhiked down, and hitchhiked back to Salt Lake City. The next day after I got there, my Mother called to tell me he had died, and wanted to know if I would be coming back for the funeral. I told her no. I had got to visit with him while he could still be him.

Uncle Don Now my Uncle Don was the only one of my uncles in my father's family whom I didn't know too well. His wife's name was Conda. He had two sons, David Keith (known later in life as Dave) and Nelden and a daughter, Geraldine. They were all older than I was. I really didn't know them all that well. Geraldine was the eldest, Keith and Nelden were in the upper class in our two-roomed school. Someone told me that they had been teasing Uncle Lawrence's dog as being the reason his dog attacked me. They were both quite a bit older than I was. I don't know a whole lot about either of them. I know that Nelden was in the Korean War and had been wounded. Keith became a family counselor, I believe. Uncle Don divorced Aunt Conda after all the kids were gone. She came to Morenci and stayed with us for a while. She apparently got no money off of Uncle Don, so she washed dishes in a local restaurant until she had enough money to go on her own. I don't think we heard anything more about her. I understand that Keith and Alyce had two daughters who were both killed in a car accident coming home late from BYU when they were hit by a truck. Keith wrote quite a bit both in Church Magazines and elsewhere, generally about families. I understand he became a family counselor.

Ralph was next.

Roy, I believe was his third son, Leroy Swapp Whitmer. We were close in age. Uncle Ralph seemed to be quite the industrious person. He sold the place he had purchased soon after my parents left Alpine and purchased a place

in New Mexico. His farm in Alpine was larger than ours by a long ways. Roy and I were in the same grade, and went to first and second grade together. There was also a little girl whose name, I believe, was Sible Tenny. She lived in downtown Alpine. The first time I ever tasted peanut butter was in her house. Her mother offered me a sandwich after I had walked her home, and I've liked ever since. One day Roy and I got into an argument as to whose girlfriend she was. We had a fight about it, and the teacher took a picture of him sitting on me, indicating he won the fight. I continued to walk her home until after Christmas, when my parents left Alpine and went to Phoenix.

One reason my mother had had to stay so long in the hospital when Orson was born, was that there wasn't enough oxygen in the air in Alpine. Also World War II had started that December. Uncle Lawrence had been in training in Panama. He was a member of the National Guard and was shipped from Panama directly to Hawaii, and didn't come home until about six months after war was over.

Uncle Cecil was next.

His house was not too far from Grandpa's. He built it log cabin style. He had also built a house in back of his for his kids. Charles Ray was his eldest and Edna his second, Paul was his third. Charles was very smart, very interested in science. Edna was my dream girl, and Paul was my brother' Lewis's best friend, I liked to go to their house before and after we moved to Morenci. When it was time to order school clothes, they would turn over the three major catalogues to their kids and allow them to choose their clothes for the next school year.

Aunt Stella was quite the diet enthusiast. They never ate white bread, and she was very careful to see that her family and anyone else whom ate with them, were fed with most nutritiously. I liked to watch her eat her breakfast. "Two fresh eggs, broken and swallowed raw, right out of the egg shell!" My brother, Lewis'

had a best friend, the best he ever had, he was Paul, Uncle Cecil and Aunt Stella's son. They were of an age and whenever we went to Alpine, he spent most of his time palling around with Paul. Paul caught a bad case of the flu. He had to go to the hospital in Springerville. Apparently, he was coughing up a lot of mucus. They had put a face shield on him to keep him from choking. He was about twelve at the time. He managed to get the shield off and choked to death on his mucus before they found him! Lewis grieved over him for quite a long time. Charles joined the Service and was sent to Germany. He ca me back and finished school I think and became a science teacher.

There came a guy who came through Alpine claiming to be an artist when Edna was about fifteen or sixteen. She ran off with him and they were married. After I was discharged from the Service, I had gotten a job as a carpenter's apprentice and ran into her husband, who was a carpenter. He invited me over for dinner, but I was having trouble with my first wife, and never got around to going.

Uncle Cecil's leg got worse so they moved to Mesa so Aunt Stella could teach school, and Uncle Cecil could see a doctor more. He used to go out and walk quite a ways trying to get it to behave. The doctors t ried several procedures, but he eventually died. I had to go down there while I was married to my first wife, and the place we had made reservations, had rented our room, so I went to Cecil's house to see if they could put us up for the night. They put us in a nice room only it was in the basement. We slept well there but later found out that it was actually their bedroom. They had no cooling, so they had given us their bed in the basement where it was cooler!

Harold is next!

When my father, Rex, Sr., was younger he got a job delivering mail out to farms and ranches who were isolated around Alpine. It was a once or twice a week job,

but later as he got work building roads he gave it to my Uncle Harold. Uncle Harold kept that job for the next fifty years and was finally given recognition for his length of service. He was a big man with all kinds of power in his hands! My brother Lewis and I used to wrestle him when we were in our teens. Once he got his hands on us, we were sunk! We finally devised a method to avoid his hands, and after that he was a little more reluctant to wrestle with us. We loved him and his wife, Aunt Hesse, and spent time with them especially when we were hunting.

Sylvia, his oldest, kind of liked me and I liked Edna, our Uncle Cecil's daughter. Uncle Harold was a good farmer! He worked his place until he died. All three of his kids who were living were girls. He'd had a son, but while he was a toddler, he managed to pick up a kerosene bottle which we all used to keep near our cook stoves to start the wood burning in them. Apparently, the bottle was nearly empty, and he managed to pick it up and drink the kerosene! They did all they could to get the kerosene out of him, then took him to the St. Johns Hospital where my mother was after the birth of my brother, Orson. She says she had a dream and saw a baby being taken by angels. She thought it was my brother, Orson, so she was begging them to take her rather than her son. She claims that the baby spoke to her and told her he wasn't Orson. He was James Harold, her other son. The timing makes it possible, because Uncle Harold and Aunt Hesse's baby finally died about that time!

Uncle Harold's topic of fame is a huge elk he killed one hunting season. He'd seen them coming and climbed into a tree. His license was for a male though and all of the ones in the herd seemed to be females! After they were gone, he was sort of kicking himself, when he heard another one coming. This one had huge antlers, more than six feet from one point to the opposite one! He had driven his Jeep up there, and saw that the elk wasn't going to fit there! He cleaned him out and cut him into three pieces! Luckily there had been a road nearby.

He had the head and horns mounted and kept them in his living room. The antlers were six feet plus between the left and right. Most of that elk, he had ground up. I had the pleasure of eating some of the meat off of him. Even ground up it was tough! Uncle Harold and Aunt Hesse apparently had another son after we quit coming home. When my Aunt Mary's husband, Uncle Alton, died, I went to his funeral. While at the burial I met a young man, late twenties, who identified himself as my Uncle Harold's son. Larry was born years after the other kids. As far as I knew, Uncle Harold's only son had died from drinking Kerosene. Apparently, he'd been born after that.

Larry told me a sad story about how he'd inherited Uncle Harold's farm. He' married a lady who had divorced him, and in the decree she had gotten all of Uncle Harold's farm! He'd moved to Luna, New Mexico and purchased another farm. He'd married again, but got divorced and lost his place to his ex-wife! I didn't see him again. He had married again, this time, an older woman who had an adult daughter. His brother, Arthur, was lauded as being Alaska's best architect!

Rex R Whitmer Sr. is next

Rex was basically the different child. In a family of blonds, he was black haired. He was the shortest one of all the children. He seemed to have the respect always of all the family. If Genevieve or Ethel were too late coming in from a date, he was elected to go find them. The boys all like to wrestle. My dad was pretty good at it. When he was a grown man with grown children he was wrestling men he worked with after work. Because he was shorter he was often challenged. It was a fun thing and apparently no one was ever hurt.

He had a bit of a temper. One time I came home from school and began telling Dad why F. D. Roosevelt wasn't who he thought he was. It was one of the few times he got so mad at me that he could hardly speak!

He could read, but he liked other people to read to him. When I was quite young, I could hear Mother reading Ranch Romance magazine stories to him when they were in bed.

Dad liked to work on cars, but he was never really sure he was doing things right, so he had a couple of his friends whom he thought knew more about fixing cars than he did, and he'd have one of them there in most instances. He was a fanatic about caring for his vehicles. No oil stayed in the engine when the engine had gone ten thousand miles. Spark plugs had to be cleaned at that time as well. Some of our cars didn't have starters on them, or in other cases the battery would be weak and not turn over, so either he or I would get out and put the crank in the engine. We'd give the engine a quick turn, and usually the engine would cough and begin to run. Even cars that had starters in them still had cranks in them at that time, in case the battery went dead.

We didn't have much yard at our house in Morenci. Every year Dad would plant about three tomato vines, and boy! They were pretty and big. Mother would can (bottle) enough for a year for us and we had several neighbors to whom dad gave the rest of them.

My dad, Rex, was quite close with his two brothers, Harold and Cecil. When we'd go up to Alpine we'd spend quite a bit of the time with them while we were there. We'd borrow a one-man plow and work horse from Uncle Harold and plow our place up for whatever we were planting, corn or potatoes. One year Mother had been quite sick and in the Company Hospital in Morenci. Families who worked there got a certain amount of medical care paid for them, but one year Mother spent quite a bit of time in the hospital. Dad had raised potatoes that year so he made a deal with the hospital. We loaded up our three-quarter ton pick-up completely full of potatoes and the hospital took that for what we owed them!

I liked to sell things, and comic books in those days had different advertisers who would send the kids seeds or other things. The kid sold them to people in his or her town, and send back what the company charged him or her for whatever they sold, and then the company would send another gift. One year the company had a glow in the dark pocket watch and I wanted it. They sent it to me. My dad worked shift work, days, swing, and graveyard. He talked me into trading watches with him so he could see what time it was in the dark.

One time when Dad was working on a special job, driving a Cat, the company had bought a lot of underground mines to mine for the copper. Those mines could be as much as a mile or more in length. Besides that, there were turn offs from the main tunnel that they would follow the ore on. There was still a lot of gold, silver and mainly copper still in those mines. The company would buy the mine and then strip the ore body out. There were quite a few old mines in that area on sides of the mountains and so forth. Those miners of that day didn't have cars or trucks so they commuted mainly by foot.

Dad's job was to cut roads out so vehicles could travel on them. He'd cut into the trails making roads large enough for trucks to haul the ore out for refining. On the next level down below where he was working, they had a guy who was filling up the mine shafts with a front end loader. Dad had pushed dirt off the side of the hill, and this guy was grabbing the dirt to fill the mine shaft. Dad backed up in order to get a shaft on his level. They backed up where the other guy was grabbing the dirt to more easily fill the shafts. Dad had backed up, thinking that the dirt he had piled there was stable enough to hold the very large Cat! He was getting ready to push more dirt into the shaft when the back of his Cat began to drop. He didn't have much time, but was able to get his blade up some. The Cat dropped tail end first and flipped over. Dad had

managed to raise the blade up a bit, but the Cat flipped over and Dad was in the cab. He was able to move the blade up while all of this was happening to prevent the cab from crushing him. The Cat was upside down on the side of the hill, his boss and several others who'd seen it all were sure he was dead. Dad had been able to move the blade up enough so that most of the weight of the huge piece of equipment didn't crush him! Most of those who had seen it happen, couldn't believe Dad was alive. It did cause his diaphragm to burst, and he suffered from that until the day he died, but he managed to live quite a few years after the accident. He drew a pension from that time, until the day he died because of the accident!

In Morenci, most everyone worked for the company. There was a movie theater, a bowling alley, a couple of bars, the company grocery store, a hotel, a post office, a newspaper stand that also sold soft drinks and sodas. For a town of our size, we had a really great high school. The grades first through sixth, were older buildings, but were well maintained.

Aunt Geneva was next in line, her actual name was Genevieve.

I think most of us called her Geneva. She and her sister, Aunt Ethel, were very close. Both were very beautiful young ladies! I was never certain which one was dominant of the pair. In their teens, both were quite popular with the local boys. They had set times to be home by, and when they overstayed that time, it was my dad who was delegated to go find them and bring them home. It was always hard for me as a boy to differentiate between the two of them.

Aunt Geneva married Uncle Reeves Edwin Fitzhugh. I don't believe that Aunt Ethel ever actually married. I seem to remember a Pringle who was with her for about ten years. I do recall that he had an airplane they flew around in. She may have married another man towards the end of her life. Aunt Ethel apparently was

quite well off. When Aunt Ethel realized that death was eminent, she approached my mother about handling her money for her when she died. My mother refused telling her to find a member of the family for that job. I believe she finally got my Aunt Mary to take care of it.

My Aunt Geneva had one son, and both Mother & Aunt Geneva seemed to be his mother at times. The son died quite young I believe. I did at one time have contact with his wife, but I personally was moving and lost contact with her.

When I was about nine, I went to Silver City, New Mexico and spent the summer with her. Grandmother Whitmer was also there. It was during World War II and I was given a job of using a dust mop with magnets in it to sweep out her beauty shop most evenings. The mop picked up bobby pins and other metal things that had fallen to the floor. There were two theaters in Silver City at that time. They changed movies about three times a week. I'd go to a matinee altering between the two every day except Sunday.

When I was a senior in high school and planning to go to college, Aunt Ethel invited me to come to Silver City and attend their local college there. My parents and I went over to check things out there. Her house was very, very ritzy! Uncle Bill had a hardware store and managed a bus depot, and she had several beauty shops. They would find work for me. I turned it down, not because of the work, but because the house was too ritzy and they both drank and smoked-I would really have liked to stay because Uncle Bill had his own plane. As an Air Scout, I had taken some lessons, but not enough air time to qualify for a license.

Afton Verle Whitmer is next.

I likely know him best of all because he worked for Phelps Dodge in the same town as my dad. I often baby sat with his children when he and Aunt Lenora would be going somewhere. My mother began working again after her last child had died, and I being

the oldest in my family was entrusted with caring for my younger brothers and sister. It seemed I couldn't have friends over to the house, while my siblings could and did! I often begged my mother to quit working and stay home with us kids, but she always thought we needed the extra money.

We only had four kids while Uncle Afton had five or six, and they were just as well off as we were! In fact my Aunt Lenora belonged to a couple of civic groups. Both Dad and Uncle Afton had some animals that they kept in the area designated by the company. My dad usually had a couple of horses and some rabbits and sometimes chickens and pigs he kept there as well as a calf which we raised for beef. Uncle Afton generally just had a few chickens.

My dad always had at least one horse, so our outgo was larger than Afton's. I don't know how it was established, but Uncle Afton always took Lewis, my younger brother, with him when he was doing jobs so they could watch us, and Uncle Lawrence took me. Personality wise, they were both equal. They would let us hold the reins when we were hauling things or plowing or leveling the ground! Mother would usually have a treat for all of us when we got back to the house. Lewis was two years younger than me, so Uncle Afton couldn't take him as often as Uncle Lawrence took me. Uncle Afton went with Uncle Don in 1940 when he went back up to Washington to visit his wife's family. While there, he met my Aunt Lenora and asked her to marry him. At that age she was quite cute, but later she became a bit heavy, but she was always fun to be around! I moved back to Morenci after I remarried. They had a square dance club there that we joined. It seemed like that Uncle Afton would always grab my wife, Catherine, for a partner, and I had my Aunt Lenora. I was always amazed at how light she was on her feet!

They raised a fine family. Their youngest son joined the army with several friends, and was sent to Viet Nam. There were nine boys in that group, and every

one of them was killed within a few weeks after arriving there! I had been Scoutmaster over a group of scouts in our church group. He was a very fine and intelligent boy! Eighteen was a very young age to die! Uncle Afton had retired from the mine by that time, and when they received the government money they used it to purchase a house in Safford. They're both dead now, but their kids are mostly still there.

Lawrence F. Whitmer was next.

He was MY Uncle. In my ages from five to seven, I went everywhere I could with him. When we were threshing grain, we hauled the grain in a huge wagon that had a seat quite high above the floor of the wagon. The grain was bundled after it was cut, and when the threshers came around we'd go out into the fields and pick up the shucked grain. The threshers would cut up the wheat or grain and send it down where someone was sacking and tying the sacks. The straw was blown out to a huge pile of the actual grain stems, maybe ten to fifteen feet high. The sacked grain would go into the barn to feed the cattle and horses who stayed in during the winter time. The straw pile would have a fence built around it, and the cattle that had been out on the range would eat it off the pile. The fence would be moved in as the pile grew smaller. A tarp would be sometimes thrown over the huge pile if it looked like it might rain or snow. In the summertime when we could get away with it, we'd build little caves in the side of it. The horses and cows both lived off of it in the wintertime, but only the horses in the summer.

The cattle were out on range! I remember one time that Uncle Lawrence had had a date with a girl who didn't live in Alpine. He said he'd gone over to Snowflake to go to a dance with her. I had no idea where the town was with such a funny name. I asked him if she was pretty and he said that all the girls in Snowflake were pretty! One time when we were taking the reins off of one of the work horses, I went to pick up a strap that had fallen beneath the horse. Nobody told me to do it,

I was just trying to be helpful. The horse didn't like me there so he kicked me in the head. I was knocked out good! Uncle Lawrence picked me up and took me to our house about a mile away and told my mother what had happened. About that time I was coming around. You'd have thought I had died from it the way Mother carried on, she wasn't mad at Uncle Lawrence though. She was mad at me for going under that horse when I'd been taught not to get too close to a horse's feet!

Uncle Lawrence was a member of the National Guard and his unit had been sent to Panama for training. I didn't know it at that time, but Uncle Lawrence had been shipped from Panama to Hawaii after the Japs had bombed Pearl Harbour! We never saw him again until quite a while after the war was over. We did write lots of letters and got some pictures back when he could make them. He was sergeant when he was sent over, and eventually made a lieutenant by the time it was over. He was sent to Japan after it was over, but because he was an officer, it was quite a while before they shipped him home!

He and my Aunt Evelyn were married a few months after he returned home. One other thing about him. He would not go to a movie depicting a war battle. When it occurred, he would get up and walk out. Movies couldn't begin to show the horror of battle! He stayed with us for a while. Dad had been having bonds taken out of his checks after the war started. He took those bonds and split them up between Lawrence and Von. Though both of them refused them at first, eventually they took them.

Later in life after He and Evelyn were married, He moved around a bit. Mother would find articles about him or his family, and by this time I was a grown man, actually stationed in Salt Lake City. She'd get the paper and it would mention he lived in Washington county, Utah. I looked in all kinds of maps attempting to find where that was. Years later after he had died, I found out that it was actually part of St. George, Utah. I had traveled through there quite a few times on my way to Salt Lake City! Our letters sent to him while he was in the service were subject to "Victory

Mail". They censored every letter and then took a picture of it and made it smaller by shrinking the picture. Mail was examined both ways so that a soldier wouldn't accidentally reveal his location.

Vaughn B Whitmer also known as Von, his preferred name.

By the way these middle initials mean nothing! My grandparents thought it was dignified to have a middle initial for the males. Vaughn was the youngest son in the family so he was a bit spoiled. Not that he had any more bad faults than any of his brothers and sisters. He was nine years older than I was. I can't say a lot about him as he wasn't much older than I was. I have virtually no memories of him at all while we lived in Alpine. He apparently was a bit wild but I don't know that for certain.

One day, a woman came hitchhiking into Alpine demanding to know where the Whitmer Ranch was. She claimed that she had married him in Silver City, New Mexico! I believe that he was about eighteen years-old at the time. He had gone to Silver City and gotten himself drunk. I guess he got to bragging about owning the biggest ranch in Alpine, Arizona. She'd got him a bit drunker and had taken him to a Justice of Peace and had him marry her. They sent the lady on her way, I don't know how, but she went to a law firm there in Silver City and made a complaint. Vaughn was about eighteen at this time. It was causing quite a bit of problems. Grandpa apparently hired a private detective to check out the woman. In the mean time the lady whom claimed he had married her was killed in a car accident! Vaughn went and enlisted in the Army, and after basic training they sent him to electronics school where they made a telegrapher out of him.

While he was in training he met a young lady about his age named Zelda Hale, and married her. She had come from Arkansas and her family sort of lived like what we see in the hills of Arkansas. When his training was up, he shipped out to India. In the mean time Zelda found herself pregnant, so she wrote Grandpa and Grandma for some

help. He had already signed his pay over to his parents, and she had no way of supporting herself. Grandma went to where she was living and attempted to take the baby away from her. She didn't succeed. Zelda found a job waiting in a bar and an apartment that was above the bar, and she lived there until he came home.

When the baby was born, she was sort of out of her head and said that someone had sent her a present for the baby from a department store who's name began with an "H" & "B" so that's what she named him, HB. Vaughn's job in the Army was to handle the telegraph in a plane that was flying the "Burma Hump". The planes were carrying equipment and supplies to the Chinese army who had been attacked by the Japanese. If a Japanese plane attacked them, they were supposed to open the cargo door and shoot at them with a machine gun. It never happened but a lot of men died in the process. Just before the end of the war though a Japanese plane strafed the field, and he was shot in the groin!

When he came home he and Aunt Zelda took up where they left off. She didn't have money so she took care of herself. She could do anything. She would study it out and do it. If she didn't know how to make a shirt, she'd just figure it out. She smoked and drank. She never joined the church. They adopted two more children. After a while Vaughn decided he wanted to come and work where Dad and Uncle Afton were, so Dad talked to his boss and they hired him. Unfortunately, he had become an alcoholic and couldn't get to work when he was supposed to and he was fired about a year and a half from when he started. He went back to Indiana and got his job back in the meat plant.

One day when I was helping Grandma and Grandpa, he came visiting. Grandpa loved watching the news, but it was in the days of black and white television, and he couldn't see too well, so Uncle Vaughn went and bought him a huge TV, and then gave him four hundred dollars besides!

After Grandpa died, Von called Grandma and asked her if he could come help her. She told him no, she had me and my sister there to help. He came anyway, and called my mother from Wilcox saying he'd taken the bus from Indianapolis, come pick him up. My mother came to me and asked me to tell him she didn't want him to come, that he had his own family to care for. He'd been a drinker and held up a bottle of Dr. Pepper, and said, "This is all I drink now!" It hurt, but I told him that I was here now and she could take care of herself. I turned and left him, and he went back to Indianapolis. His wife, Zelda, is one of the sweetest women I know.

I remember Uncle Melvin and Aunt Fern. Uncle Melvin was in a fire in the war and had to have his hand attached (instead of a skin graft) to his stomach. Wonderful thing. Missing his fourth finger.

Fern lived in a duplex with them in Morenci. She was a pretty good aunt most of the time. She had several rings I thought were diamonds. She had a chest of drawers and was sorting things while Lewis and I were in the room. She was showing how pretty they were. After she left we grabbed one of the rings and took it to a jewelry store in Morenci and tried to sell it to the owner. No deal, so we took it back home. Lewis was supposed to put it in the jewelry box. That night Aunt Fern was baby sitting us. When Lewis took off his pants to take a bath, the ring came falling out of his pants. Lucky for us.

Aunt Fern was pretty cute and outward whereas Faye was timid. Fern would always tell you what she thought, no matter what. When Aunt Faye was going to marry Raymond, they went to tell Grandpa and Grandma. Grandma got so mad, chewed her out and told her to leave. She was only sixteen. They went to Phoenix and got married. She gave up the beauty college she was attending. No doubt a big regret for Aunt Faye later.

