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The Cochise Quarterly, a journal of history and archaeology of Cochise County and adjacent portions of Hidalgo County, N.M., and Sonora and Chihuahua states in Mexico, contains articles by qualified authors as well as reviews of books on history and archaeology in the area. It is a CCHAS publication. Contributions are welcome. Manuscripts should be submitted to the Editorial Committee, P.O. Box 818, Douglas, AZ 85608-0818.

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# The Cochise Quarterly



Fall, 1995

No. 3

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About the Cover: In June, 1918 the Frank Kirker family of Kansas City, Mo., traveled to Douglas to visit his sister, Mary Gibson. They gathered in the side yard of the Gibson home at 1157 11th St. for this photo. In the back row are, left to right, Robert Leon Gibson, Mary Louella Gibson, Ileta Kirker and Frank Kirker. Their children are, left to right, Charles Kirker Gibson, Mary Ethyl Kirker, Edna Harriet Kirker and William Robert Gibson. (This and all other photos in this issue, unless noted otherwise, are courtesy of Bill Gibson.)

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## A KID IN ARIZONA © By William R. Gibson PREFACE

Volumes have been written about Arizona covering an endless variety of subjects: anthropological, historical, geographical, and most other "ical" subjects one can think of, but this bit of history can only be written by one person.

That one person is the writer, William R. (Bill) Gibson, who at the ripe old age of 80, felt compelled to record what he considers a fascinating life as a kid in Douglas many years ago.

After urging by friends and family who have heard a number of these adventures, the author finally settled down to the arduous task of recording this autobiography and hopes that it will be entertaining and enlightening to the readers.

So this nostalgic story of a little kid born in Douglas in 1913, one year after the state was admitted to the Union, is written. Years have dimmed memory, somewhat affecting the chronological order of the episodes, but otherwise accuracy prevails in recalling the life and times in those early days.

Younger readers should be advised that these adventures took place long before the radio was in extensive use and years before there was such a thing as television. It was a time when we made our own entertainment and used our own ingenuity and resources to fulfill our desires.

### COPPER!

Copper was discovered in the southwest corner of the Territory of Arizona late in the 1800s creating an economic boom of some magnitude and attracting people from all over the country to this new territory seeking fortune and adventure.

Bisbee, located about a mile high up in the Mule Mountains, was the mining center. Every available hand was hired to extract the ore and start the process of getting the final product to market.

The "Electrical Age" requiring copper for power generation, motors, distribution systems, street cars, the electrification of homes and businesses and a host of other things, put an insatiable demand on the mines and smelters producing this metal.

The need for flat land on which to build large smelters to handle the ore became evident since there was no place in Bisbee where such facilities could be accommodated. Through a chain of events, those then in power decided to build two big smelters some 20 miles southeast of Bisbee in the Sulphur Springs Valley and thus the town of Douglas was born. It was named after one of the pioneer mining investors and located right smack on the Mexican border.

The Phelps Dodge Co. built one of the smelters and the Calumet and Arizona Corp. constructed the other. Both of these became big operations employing hundreds of workers. The need for everything: housing, stores, restaurants, hotels, schools, churches, parks, you name it; all were in demand. And thus Douglas became a boom town, and people from all walks of life flocked into the town.

All this activity increased the transportation needs of the community resulting in a railroad hub being established in Douglas. This included not only a round house and maintenance facilities, but an outstanding passenger depot and two large fountains, one on each side of the building, with winding paths



meandering though the beautifully landscaped grounds.

The main building and fountains are still there today. The depot has been restored and is now headquarters for the police department and although the fountains have been out of use for many years, there is evidence that perhaps they too will be put back in operation as a symbol of their glorious past.

Several hotels were constructed to meet the needs of the newcomers and people coming to town as business demanded. The Gadsden Hotel was built and a splendid haven it was. Marble and granite were imported to make a grand lobby with big columns. A spectacular staircase ascended to the mezzanine floor on the landing of which was a huge stained glass window panel. The hotel is now a registered historical landmark.

It is difficult to envision the activity going on in this new settlement. Theaters were built, parks were planned and came into being. A high school, a grammar school and three grade schools were all built within a matter of a few short years.

Streets were paved and even a streetcar line was installed. Its primary purpose was to provide transportation from the city out to the smelters, which were located a few miles west of town. Automobiles were becoming rather common, since Henry Ford was building "Tin Lizzies" which could be bought for a few hundred dollars. With this new freedom in transportation, the streetcars suffered an early demise.

It was this scene that attracted my father, Robert L. Gibson, to this new booming town.

He was a Missourian from Kansas City with a spark of adventure in his soul as well as an idea that there was a lot of money to be made in mining ventures in the area, not only in copper but silver and gold. GOLD! What an enticement!

With this idea in mind, he pulled up stakes in Kansas City in 1900, moved to Bisbee and, with a partner, started a New York Life Insurance Agency which prospered beyond their fondest dreams by selling policies to the transplanted miners and others in Bisbee who felt the need for this security.

#### THE FAMILY

When father left Kansas City it was probably not without some misgivings because he had been courting Mary Louella Kirker, a statuesque beauty who was financially independent. She was a college graduate and a long-time employee of the Park Davis Pharmaceutical Co. holding the position of head stenographer and office manager. Not a mean accomplishment for a woman in those days.

Obviously, my father knew that life for him would be lacking something if he was a solo adventurer in this new land. So he and Louella became engaged and according to the family Bible, "Robert Leon Gibson and Mary Louella Kirker were married in Saint Louis, Missouri, on the twenty-second day of September, nineteen-hundred and four." Married in Saint Louis? How come? They were from Kansas City.

Well, that is another story which has been a little obscure in my memory but enough information has leaked out to shed some light on the spunk and adventure which must have lurked in their souls.

The Saint Louis Exposition was going full-blast in 1904, and it seems there was some kind of a promotional gimmick to award a lot of gifts and some money for couples who would have their wedding ceremony performed at the fair. This offer apparently seemed too good to pass up for a couple getting

ready to venture out to the developing Arizona Territory. So my mother and father went to Saint Louis and were married with all the hoopla and fanfare and gala events of the Saint Louis Exposition. Judy Garland sang about it in "Meet Me in Saint Louie". It must have been a big day for my folks, but my mother always kept this caper under wraps and would only answer questions about the adventure when pressed and then only with the most meager information. It seems that the whole thing was beneath her dignity. My mother was a reserved lady but the enticements of this "fair" thing was too much to refuse. It's interesting to note that my parents were not kids when the wedding took place. They were 34 and 31 years of age at the time.

After the wedding, out they came to Arizona. About this time, my father opened a New York Life Insurance Agency in Douglas. He had an office on the second floor of a building at Ninth and G Avenue. They set up housekeeping in rented quarters which they occupied for a short time while their new home was being built at 1157 11th St.

Business was going great for my father, and he took advantage of this prosperity. He belonged to the Elks Lodge, the Masons and was an active member of the Methodist Church. In rather short order this couple had three boys. Franklin Richard was born on Nov. 30, 1908; Charles Kirker on Sept. 21, 1911 and yours truly, William Robert, was born on Sept. 25, 1913. Richard and I were both born in the family home but for reasons unknown, during the last days of her pregnancy, mother went to Kansas City where Charles was born.



On the porch of 1157 11th St. were Aunt Gertrude holding William, Mary Gibson with Richard and Richard Gibson with Charles.

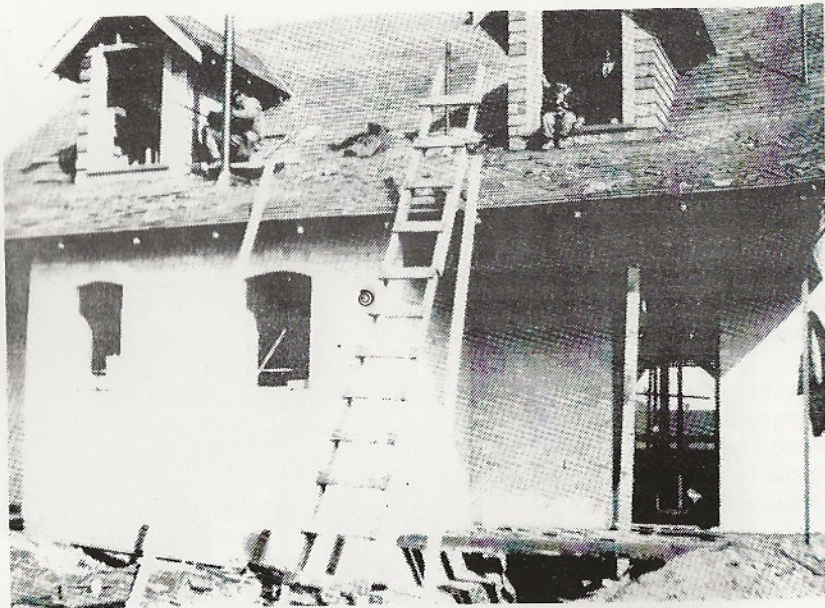


## TRAGEDY STRIKES

It seems that everything was going great for this new family but tragedy struck in January, 1915. There were many childhood diseases which ran rampant in those days and Richard was infected with diphtheria. According to the family Bible, "Franklin Richard Gibson died January 11th at Douglas, Arizona, after an illness of twenty-four hours." He was six years old. This must have been quite a shock to my parents but they were both of sturdy stock and knew that there were two other boys and that life must go on.

It was common practice in those days to have funeral services in the homes of the deceased and so it was in our family. A little casket was placed in our living room in which Richard was laid to rest and friends and neighbors came to our house to pay their respects and express their condolences. I remember these people looking into the casket and, although I was only two years and a few months old, I remember asking my father to lift me up so I could see into the casket, which he did. This traumatic event has been in my memory ever since. Richard was buried in the cemetery in Douglas.

The city fathers had a whole square block set up for churches in Douglas. There was a Baptist, Methodist, Episcopal and Presbyterian church on the four corners. At the time of my brother's death, an addition to the Methodist Church was under construction and members were donating various things to help with the construction. My parents donated a stained glass window to be dedicated in memory of their son Franklin Richard which was made and installed and is still in place today.



This unusual view of a house under construction in early-day Douglas shows the south facade of the Gibson house, 1157 11th St.

## MY BROTHER CHUCK

When you are a little kid and have a brother two years older than you, a relations problem is sometimes created. Such was the case with my brother Chuck and me.

Sometimes we were real buddies like when we were out on the front porch swing watching the rain, or in the summertime lying in the front yard watching billions of stars, or when the kids in the neighborhood got together to play baseball, run sheepy run, kick the can, hide and seek or sit on the curb in the evenings guessing what kind of car would come up the street next (Fords didn't count!).

But at other times, when the action was out of the neighborhood, I was definitely a "tag-along" and left to play with the only other little kid on the block, "Beans" Turvey. Beans lived down the street about three doors. His father not only was the proprietor of a local meat market but also operated a slaughter house out near the smelters. Beans was a year or so younger than I, so when Chuck and his pal C. B. Fleming were out doing their thing, most of the time I was doing things by myself since I felt Beans was a tag-along.

When I was about five or six, Eleventh Street was to be paved and they had gotten to A Avenue and erected a barricade across the street to prevent cars from venturing on to the wet pavement. As kids will do, we were playing on this barricade. I had climbed out to the middle and was on top of the thing when my brother shook the boards so hard I fell off and broke an arm. That's my brother.

When it rains in Douglas, water comes in torrents into town from the east. Engineers designed extra high curbs in the streets to handle the water, some of which entered the A Avenue ditch. (The ditch was long ago covered and paved over.) Because of the high curbs, iron plates were extended from the side walks out into the streets to concrete ramps. The water ran between the curb and the ramp and pedestrians could walk over the rushing water.

One day Chuck was walking over to 10th Street. As he approached the corner, a car came careening around the intersection and Chuck could see he was in peril. He dove under one of these iron overpasses just as the car went up on the curbing. One of his legs was not covered and was hit by the car and the leg fractured near the hip joint. Chuck was on crutches for quite some time but he became proficient in maneuvering with these impediments. He could go like the proverbials with one leg in a cast.

The kids called him "Four Eyes" because he had to wear glasses. He was very nearsighted. With the razzing he took as a result of the crutches and the taunts about "Four Eyes," it is no wonder that he became a pretty good street fighter. He had many encounters because of these jibes. Many a kid rued the day he belittled my brother without a smile.

Harold Warnock was one of the kids that went too far with my brother. His razzing ended in an altercation behind the YMCA. He really got it. He ended up with a broken arm and never called Chuck "Four Eyes" again!

## THE MODEL "T"

Usually my dad bought a new Buick every year. He drove extensively around the area, not only in connection with his insurance business, but also to look into mining investment opportunities. Since this traveling was almost always on dirt roads, the cars took quite a beating making it prudent to trade cars annually.



In 1919 however, instead of getting a Buick, he bought a new Model-T Ford touring car. This was the first car in the family that I remember. It had electric head lights but a coal oil tail light. What Henry Ford was thinking about with this arrangement, I don't know. Making it cheap, I guess. Anyway, on occasion when we would go someplace at night, my dad would let me light the tail light, and I thought that was a big deal at the time.

These Model-Ts, "Tin Lizzies" as they were called, were manufactured with very little basic changes until 1926. This model still required hand cranking to start the engine. Self starters were added later. Besides this inconvenience, learning to operate a rather complicated gear shifting procedure using pedals and the parking brake in certain positions was difficult, so my mother never learned to drive it.

Sunday drives out into the country were almost a ritual. These were fun even though we usually got stuck in loose sand at least once or had a flat tire or both. Once in a while we would get caught in a rain storm and that was a different matter. Side curtains were fetched from under the rear seat cushion and hastily snap-fastened to the doors, top and windshield. This offered reasonable rain protection, but there were two other problems caused by rain which were not so easily solved.

In a heavy rainstorm the driver's visibility was greatly impaired making accurate steering almost impossible since windshield wipers were yet to be invented. Thus, at times progress was halted until the rain abated.

Sometimes during a rain storm certain parts of the ignition system would get wet causing a short in the wiring and stopping the engine. When this happened, there was nothing to do but to sit and wait until the rain stopped, and then Dad would get out, get a dry rag, wipe off the wiring, spark plugs and other vital parts, crank it up and hope it would start. All this time Chuck and I would be fidgeting in the back seat impatiently waiting to get going.

Then, of course, there was the problem of getting stuck in the mud which was not unusual. When this happened, Mother, Chuck and I would get out and push, and this worked most of the time.

Fortunately, rain was not a common occurrence in our county. When it did happen, it was usually of short duration. Since most of the time we had fair weather, we always looked forward to these Sunday drives.

### THE CANDY STORE

It was Christmas time in 1919 and the nation was in the grip of an influenza epidemic. People were dying from the disease in great numbers all across the country and various precautionary measures were being taken in an attempt to stem its proliferation.

Gauze masks, which covered one's mouth and nose and were secured with strings tied around the neck, were required to be worn when entering any store or public building because of the epidemic.

Patterson's Candy Store, located on 10th Street between F and G avenues, was doing a brisk business supplying the needs for sweets and treats for the season. One evening my dad decided to go to Patterson's for some goodies, and I went along with him. The store was busy with shoppers and the shelves as well as the windows were full of all kinds of candy including oodles of candy canes.

When we got there, I found to my dismay that I could not go in the store because I had no gauze mask. My dad whipped one out of his pocket and went

in to make the purchases alone while I waited outside drooling over the luscious stuff on display. Talk about frustration! Here I am, a six-year-old kid who can't even get into the candy store.

Little did I realize at the time that this would be the last Christmas I would ever have with my father.

### TRAGEDY NUMBER TWO

I guess my father was never in really good health. I know he had diabetes. He was rather rotund and apparently his circulatory system was not the greatest, resulting in a weakened heart condition. These complications led to an illness shortly after Christmas, and I remember sitting on the front steps when an ambulance came and a couple of attendants put him on a stretcher and took him to a hospital where he passed away after unsuccessful surgery on Feb. 9, 1920. He had been ill only 11 days and was only 49 years old.

Even though my father had been in the insurance business, he carried no policy on himself. His tenuous physical condition probably made him ineligible. Also, his mining investments never paid a dime in interest and eventually all these stocks were worthless.

By this time, Mother had been in Arizona 16 years. She had lost her eldest son at the age of six and now her husband was gone, leaving her with a mortgage on the house, no income, very little cash and two boys to raise.

After a brief stint in a doctor's clinic where she was placed to recover from a "nervous breakdown," Mother faced the grim reality that she would have to assume the role of the head of the household and somehow make a living for the three of us.

Two assets were immediately available. There were two bedrooms upstairs in the house which could be rented, and she had always been fond of cooking. There was a possibility that she could start up a boarding house. She could make a living and still be at home to care for her two children, and so such a plan of action was taken.

### THE BOARDING HOUSE

Douglas was in need of teachers in the school system. Often they were recruited from mid-western and eastern states. Obviously living quarters were in demand for these imported people, and so Mrs. Gibson had no trouble renting the rooms and contracting for boarders.

There were numerous boarding houses in the town. Thus there was some rivalry among the operators which only resulted in better "vittles" for the customers. This situation didn't faze my mother because she not only enjoyed the company, but she liked the culinary aspects of the business, and her boarders were glad to sit at her table.

To make things even more satisfactory, on a number of occasions she would fry up a whole bunch of chicken, make a big batch of potato salad, get a lot of corn on the cob and all the boarders would get together in their cars and go up to Berner's Resort in the Huachuca Mountains for a day. Sometimes the group would stay overnight in the cabins on a weekend.

Obviously this activity could not be kept under wraps, and the Gibson boarding house became the envy of all the other people in that business. Mother had a waiting list of potential customers. If my memory serves me correctly, she had 22 diners all sitting around the big table for evening meals in the dining room. Some of the customers came for breakfast and some for lunch but the evening meals were the big event.





**Trips to Box Canyon in the Huachuca Mountains were a welcome diversion for the Gibson family, their friends and boarders and family pet, Jack.**

Mother always had a Mexican maid to help with the meal preparation, general cleaning and other household chores, but my brother and I were also delegated to assist in setting the table, wash dishes, run errands, feed the chickens and clean out the chicken coop. Boy, how we hated that job!

In one corner of our fairly large back yard, there was a chicken pen with a wooden structure for about 30 chickens to roost, lay eggs and hatch them when the time was proper. Obviously this was a great source of food for the boarding house operation. Mother had all the equipment needed to utilize this "chicken thing" to its maximum; feeders, brooder facilities, fake eggs to fool the chickens in starting the reproduction cycle, the whole bit. Even two kids to do all the chores and clean up the place. This was "Chicken Every Sunday" of the first order.

### THE MAXWELL

When Father passed away the Model-T Ford touring car was put in storage in a garage down on F Avenue, not being of use to anybody. Mother needed a car and the frustration of mastering the complicated maneuvers required to operate a pesky Model-T were too much to take on at the time, especially since hand cranking was necessary to start the motor. So she traded the Ford in on a used 1918 Maxwell touring car with a self starter and a conventional gear shifting system, and thus a series of adventures for the family was launched. It was in this car that the trips to Berner's Resort with the boarders were taken as well as many other trips into the mountains to Rhyolite Park, Cave Creek and Ramsey Canyon, as well as the almost ritualistic Sunday drives around Cochise County.

As was the normal curiosity of little boys, I was intensely interested in the operation of this vehicle and would watch Mother as she turned on the ignition,

punched the starter button on the floor, pressed in the clutch, released the brake, shifted into low, pushed the gas pedal, let out the clutch and started into motion. Then came the repetition of the clutching and shifting through second into high, and shortly all four cylinders were propelling this marvelous machine along at a glorious clip even as fast as 45 miles an hour. I had been watching this procedure so intensely and so many times, that I knew I could make the thing go all by myself. I waited for the day when I could climb into the driver's seat and feel all the exhilaration of driving up 11th Street!

One day the opportunity to execute this fantasy actually came. This day, Mother had driven to a Ladies Aid meeting and when she came home, she left the car out in front of the house with the ignition key in it! Chance of all chances! I got in the driver's seat and executed all the well-rehearsed motions and what do you know, the Maxwell started up 11th Street with this eight-year old kid at the wheel!

In those days one could drive up the street crosswise and not hit anything there being so little traffic. But someone saw this car with the little kid at the wheel and the word spread through the neighborhood pretty fast. I drove up the street a couple of blocks and decided that it was time to go back. So I executed a perfect turn-around in the middle of the block and started back down 11th Street, shifting through all the gears and having a great time. That is when I noticed several of the mothers in the neighborhood out in their yards wringing their hands and screaming.

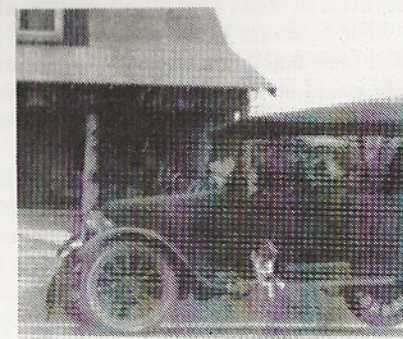
But I drove on in utter disdain and continued down the street a couple of blocks, and again executed a perfect jack-knife turn around in the middle of the block and started back home. By this time there was quite a gathering of people out in their yards watching what they were sure was going to be an ultimate disaster. My solo stint being accomplished I pulled up in front of the house next to the curbing, put on the parking brake, turned off the ignition and got out of the car.

I couldn't see why this was such a big deal, but all the women came up all talking at once with chatter somewhere between relief and amazement, and there was Mother with a look I had never seen before — pride for having such an accomplished kid and astonishment.

Do you know I never got a spanking for that episode? But there must have been some words about never thinking about doing such a thing again. However, I knew deep inside that my driving days were not over.

My brother Chuck was beside himself because he was two years older than I and he had never had that experience. I don't think he ever did get this thing out of his mind.

On several occasions, sometime later when Mother would walk down to the church for a Ladies Aid meeting, Chuck and I would sneak out to the garage,



**The Gibsons' 1918 Maxwell touring car with family dog, Jack, adorning the running board was parked in front of 1157 11th St.**



fire up the old Maxwell and go for a spin in the country. We'd go to the Sunshine Grocery Store and buy a gallon of gas and put it in the car so Mother would not be suspicious of anything. We learned about driving at a very early age, and also about covering our tracks.

### PANCHO VILLA

Agua Prieta, Mexico, was only separated from Douglas by a ditch and a barbed wire fence. In my boyhood days, it was the focus of much activity during the Mexican Revolution.

On one occasion, Agua Prieta was attacked by Pancho Villa and his army. This skirmish as well as a venture into New Mexico were of such magnitude that U.S. Army troops were deployed. U.S. troops even ventured into Mexico on Villa's trail but this is not an historical account of Pancho Villa. My only interest is to relate how his adventures affected my family and our community.

Our home on 11th Street was only 11 blocks from Old Mexico. So when these raids occurred, sounds from machine guns, rifles and other small arms not only could be heard but were cause for some concern to Douglas residents. Usually it was nighttime when these marauders struck and awakening to the sound of gun fire was quite startling.

One morning after a revolutionary attack on Agua Prieta, our Mexican maid went out on the back porch to get a broom or a mop for her cleaning chores and shortly came back into the house screaming carramba! and other excited words to indicate something was amiss out on the porch. My dad went to investigate and found the cause for her alarm. A machine gun bullet had come through the screen and impaled the broom and mop together, and she could not get them apart.

On another occasion, Pancho's raiders were shooting up Agua Prieta and the fusillade became so intense and prolonged that a caravan of automobiles was hastily assembled to take the women and children out of town to a safe haven in Bisbee. I remember the trip but the place of lodging escapes me.

Another time, after a rather short encounter and somehow an all clear signal was given, Mother wanted to go across the border to get some fresh vegetables in the shops on the main street in Agua Prieta. Chuck and I went with her. To our dismay, a dead body was lying right in the middle of the street. Why it was still there we never knew. Maybe the authorities hadn't gotten around to it yet. Mother went into the shops, got her produce and returned home, just like nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

Rain in southern Arizona is not an everyday occurrence by any means, but one day after a rain storm, Mr. Gmahling, a neighbor across the street, noticed some leaks in his roof and called a roofing company to look into the matter. On investigation, it was discovered the roof had been riddled with bullets which caused the leakage necessitating complete replacement of roofing material.

### CAMP HARRY J. JONES

Camp Harry J. Jones was a cavalry unit camp located just east of town, and being a cavalry unit, many horses were involved with its function.

There was little or no security around the place, and the neighbor kids could go out there and walk around as they pleased as long as they behaved themselves.

It was fun to go there and watch the soldiers at target practice. The

Springfield rifle was the standard weapon of that time and we would watch as many rounds were fired at the targets. We were not allowed to get too close while they were firing but we could see the action.

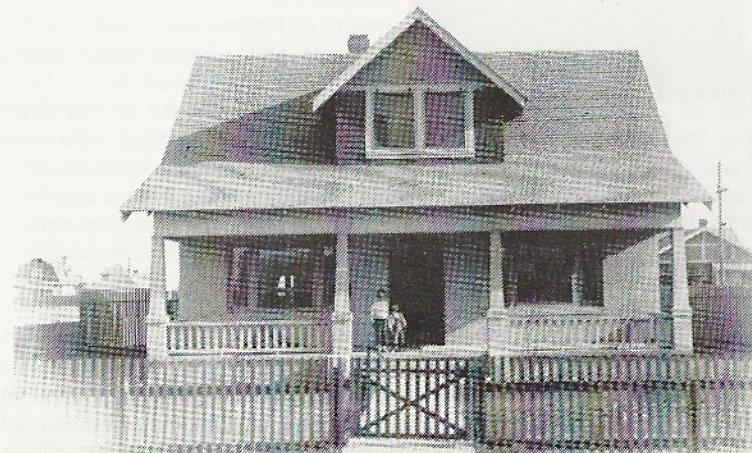
Cleanliness was one of the requirements of the soldiers, not only with their equipment and barracks, but clothing as well. While out at the camp one day, I watched one soldier do his laundry. He was outside his tent with a bucket of soapy water and a scrub brush energetically scrubbing away at his heavy woolen shirt. It seemed to me that the cleaning process was much more damaging to the shirt than any action he might do while wearing it.

One evening shortly after sundown, we were sitting in the living room and all of a sudden we heard a loud rumbling noise. We jumped up and went out on the front porch to find that a whole parade of military equipment going right up our street.

There were tanks, caissons loaded with equipment, mounted cannons and other military equipment and many horses in the procession. Apparently a train load of equipment had just been unloaded and was on the way out to the camp. It was an exciting thing to see all that military equipment going right up our own street.

Since this was a cavalry camp with many horses involved, it seemed natural to have a polo ground. On days when the game was going on, we would go out and watch the play. I really never understood the finer parts of the game very well. All I knew was that the riders raced the horses back and forth at break neck speed flailing long handled mallets at a little white ball and trying to get it through a goal at one or the other end of the field.

My compassion was for the horses who withstood the trauma of having the guys swinging those weapons around their legs while running all out.



In 1915 the house at 1157 11th St. had a spiffy new fence and there was no house on the southwest corner of Bonita Avenue and 11th Street.

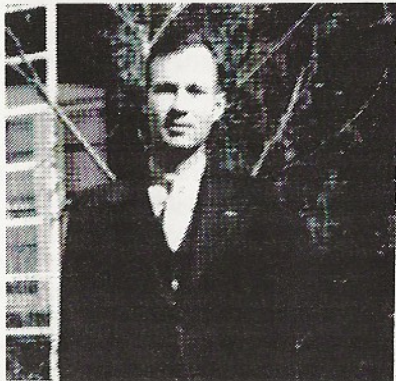


## BILL HAMMILL

Across the street and down a few doors was where Bill Hammill lived. He was such an influence on not only me but the other kids in the neighborhood that this account could not possibly be written without a significant portion devoted to him and the escapades which resulted because of his influence.

Bill was a few years older than the rest of the kids on the block, but he enjoyed the company of this younger bunch because infantile paralysis contracted in his very early days left him with a definite restriction in the use of his legs, preventing him from running and playing with kids of his own age. Lucky for us, he became the leader and mentor for our gang, and especially for me and my brother, since we had no father to guide us and to participate in our activity.

Bill's father was one of the early settlers in the territory and the founder and owner of the Douglas Drug Store on the southeast corner of 10th Street and G Avenue. Mr. Hammill passed away soon after the store was established, and Bill's mother, Maude, took over management of the store. This was quite a prosperous business and kept Mrs. Hammill busy, and provided a comfortable living for the family.



Bill Hammill

Across the middle of Hammill's back yard was a fence with some plants and vines growing on or near it. Behind this fence was an area known as "Bill's back yard." This area was enclosed by their garage on one side and a fence on the other three sides. This was a veritable "our gang" compound where there were no restrictions on what went on as long as no laws were broken.

## THE SEARCHLIGHT

Bill got the idea that a searchlight would be a fine thing to have. So with the help of the gang, he built a tower in the back yard which looked like an oil derrick and soared about 16 or 20 feet up in the air. On top was mounted an automobile headlight on a swivel and tilt arrangement. At night a beam could be squirted all around the neighborhood to the utter dismay of the citizens nearby.

The platform on top for the operator would accommodate two kids. When my turn came to try to find something interesting to look at, all the effort was futile. It was fun to shine the light all over the place though.

This joy was not shared by the neighbors, because the next day Mrs.



Members of "our gang" were, left to right, Bill Hammill and his sister Marion and their dog, C. B. Fleming and Bill and Charles Gibson with their dog, Jack.

Hammill was flooded with irate calls about what fool thing was that kid of hers going to think up next. Albeit to say that the searchlight had about the shortest life of anything you can imagine, and after those telephone calls, its demise was quick and complete.

## THE CITY

One of the most ambitious undertakings was "The City," and this venture spanned a couple of years. The idea was that every kid on the block would build a model house to be no more than 12 inches high or thereabout, with windows you could see through. These were to be built during the winter so that in the spring we could all take them over to Bill's back yard and array them in streets to look something like city blocks.

While we were all busy with the construction projects, Bill took Lionel train engines apart and made bodies to fit on them which looked like streetcars. He made two or three of these using tin from five gallon oil cans.

When spring came, we all pitched in and put the city together. We put in wiring to all the houses so they could be illuminated at night. We had streetcar tracks laid out in the streets, street lights made and installed, and our city of two parallel blocks, was ready to go.

Boy, were we excited about this project! Couldn't wait to flip the switch and watch the whole place light up with the street cars going and everything!

These projects required a certain amount of resourcefulness and ingenuity, like procuring the light bulbs, for instance. Where were we going to get all the little lights for the street lights and to light up the houses?

Since Bill had transformers to supply the proper voltage to run the streetcars, it was only fitting that we should have a six-volt supply for the lighting system. Where would we get a sufficient number of such light bulbs? From automobiles! Most cars had six-volt systems at that time.



In those days all the cars had a glass lens in each headlight behind which was the light bulb. Tail lights also were so constructed, only the bulbs were smaller. Dash lights were the same size as the tail lights and usually were mounted on the dash board with a little cup-like hood slipped over the fixture with a slot which directed the light on the instruments.

Most of the driving was done on gravel and dirt roads so it was not unusual for stones thrown up by cars ahead to break these headlight lenses. Presto, light bulb source! Bill told us that we only had to go around to where cars were parked, look for ones with broken lenses, grab hold of the bulb and "push-in-turn-to-the-left-and-pull-out" and there was your light bulb.

So the campaign started. My brother Chuck and I along with C. B. Fleming, another kid in the gang, started looking for headlights and we found oodles of them. When band concerts were performed at the 10th Street Park, the pickings were particularly easy. Cars were parked all around the whole block and under the cover of darkness we plied our mischievous thievery. Dodge cars had a 12-volt system with larger light bulbs which were particularly attractive and, although we couldn't use them in our city, we swiped them anyway.

When the end of summer came around and it was time to break up the city, we had a lot of light bulbs left over for use the next year. Chuck and I got the brilliant idea of putting them in coffee cans and burying them in our back yard for safe keeping, and this we did. Everything was going along just fine until next spring when Mother decided to start a garden in the back yard and in preparing the soil, she unearthed the coffee cans full of light bulbs.

One evening at the propitious moment when Chuck and I were home, she produced the cans and posed the question, "What are these things?"

Sort of in chorus, "Light bulbs."

"What kind of light bulbs?"

"Well, they are automobile lights."

"Where did you get them?" she retorted.

We could see that it was futile to try to come in first in this contest, so we confessed to the whole thing. The conversation concluded with, "Well, you must put them all back!"

Of course this remedial plan was never accomplished, but that was the end of the light bulb episode, and things were a little touchy around home for a few days.

### DRUG STORE MONEY

A city cannot survive without enterprise and enterprise cannot function without an exchange medium, so a way to solve these problems was devised.

All the kids involved with "The City" were supposed to establish a "business." We had a lumber yard, an auto repair shop, C. B. called his "The Basada Sand Works." I forget what else, but we had fun setting up these establishments.

Down at Douglas Drug, the soda fountain, cosmetic counter, gift department and all the other sections had a device made of cast iron about a foot square which contained tickets of different colors on which were printed numbers representing coin denominations. I don't remember exactly how this system worked, but I think when a customer made a purchase, the clerk tore off part of the ticket or tickets representing the amount of the purchase, gave them to the customer who took them to a cashier with money and paid the amount

required. The cashier stamped the tickets "paid." The customer then went back to the clerk with the stamped tickets and picked up the goods. (This seems like a cumbersome system to me but it kept the clerks from stealing and produced a lot of tickets.)

When the larger part of the ticket was torn off, a small stub was left in the device. At the end of the day, proper accounting of the sales could be made by matching the large tickets with the smaller stubs and the cashier's money.

These used tickets and stubs became our medium of exchange. The big tickets were dollars and the stubs were cents and, believe me, we had thousands of dollars worth of them to transact our business in "The City."

### PULLMOBILES AND THE BIG RACE

A pullmobile is a little replica of a racing car with wheels mounted on axles which were attached to a suitable board with a body made of tin. Old spark plugs or something similar were placed under the hood for added weight. A string was attached to the front end. Presto! A pullmobile.

We all made these things. Regulations limited the size to about 10 inches long and the axles no wider than four. A great deal of ingenuity went in to these creations as we tried to make them look like the cars driven by Barney Oldfield, Ralph DePalma and other famous racers of the day. We ran up and down the sidewalks pulling the cars to see who could cover a prescribed distance in the fastest time without overturning or running off the walk.

Since we had all this money in "The City" and not much to spend it on, Bill got the brilliant idea that we should have a race and bet money on the outcome. Eight kids were entered. Just for the record and if my memory serves correctly the contestants were: my brother Chuck, C. B. Fleming, Bob Posten, Jim Wimberly, Clinton Carey, Ed Fish, John Slaughter and me.

We each drew a number to determine the racing order. The course started at Hammill's front steps, went out to the sidewalk, down to A Avenue, back up to Bonita with another U turn and back to the starting point. Bill was the bookie who handled all the bets which ended up totaling all the money in "The City." I was the littlest kid in the race, but I was fortunate enough to draw number eight.

So the race started! Number one turned over on the first turn and was disqualified. Number two went off the sidewalk. Each kid was trying to go as fast as possible and in their exuberance each one met a similar fate. Then came my turn. All the competition had been eliminated, so I just walked around the course pulling my racer nice and steady. No overturning, staying on the walk all the way to the finish line and all the money. There was about a peck bag full of it!

The glory of victory however sweet was short lived. Since no one else had any money and even though many fabulous offers were made to get some of my winnings, the spirit of trade quickly faded and energies were directed to something else.

Because of this race, eight has always been my lucky number.

### BULL DOG

Kids in grades one through five in our end of town either went to Clawson or A Avenue School. One was on one side of town and one on the other. Eleventh Street was the dividing line. We lived on 11th Street, and it was my lot to start out at Clawson.



I don't remember a whole lot about Clawson except that one day there was to be a full eclipse of the sun and all the kids were urged to get a piece of window glass and smoke it up with a candle flame so the eclipse could be seen without damage to the eyes. We did it and it worked. The whole place blacked out in the middle of the day, just like stories of the "magic" perpetrated in the olden days.

When I was in the fifth grade, the enrollment at Clawson was greater than at A Avenue and an appeal was made to some of the fifth graders to volunteer to transfer to the other school. The buildings for these schools were exactly alike and since I lived on the dividing street, I volunteered to transfer.

Since the winters in southern Arizona are mild, drinking fountains are placed out on the school grounds. At these schools they were like raised troughs with a horizontal pipe with suitable emitters which ran continuously, creating some standing water in the trough.

On my first day at A Avenue when the kids were on the playground, I noticed they had little water pistols with bulbs about the size of an eye dropper which they filled at the drinking fountains and squirted each other. Big fun! These water pistols were given with the purchase of a package of some kind of chewing gum at the Sunshine Grocery nearby.

One of the bigger kids had attached a much larger atomizer bulb to his gun and was having a big time squirting the little kids much to their discomfort and his delight. I had never seen this bully before, but I couldn't condone his action. I asked him why he was picking on the little kids, and one word led to another with the, "What are you going to do about it?" resulting in an appointment to meet on the playground after school to settle the matter.

At the appointed time the fight started. Of course the word had spread that there was to be an altercation after school and a goodly crowd had gathered. Heck, I didn't know any of these kids and my adversary had quite a rooting section.

This was not my first combat and I thought I was "pretty handy with my dukes," so I was rather surprised to find I had a formidable adversary. The exchange of blows went on for some time with some knock downs by each combatant with no evidence of superiority by either one. After a little bruising and blood letting by both fighters, the bout ended in a draw with exhaustion prevailing.

The next day at school I noticed the kids calling my opponent "Bull Dog." On inquiry I learned that he had the reputation of being the toughest kid in school and I took him on, on my very first day! I'll tell you this. Nobody challenged Bill Gibson at A Avenue school after that, and the little kids no longer were pestered by the bully with the big squirter.

When I came home after the fight, my clothes were a mess and I wasn't in any better shape. Of course I had to confront my mother who was visibly upset at the sight of this disheveled kid, but when she heard my side of the story, I think she was proud of her little Sir Galahad.

#### THE SLIDE

We made a cave in Bill's back yard by digging a big trench, covering all of it with boards and dirt except for a small part at one end. Three or four kids could get in it at a time. Candles were used for illumination. It was cool and adventurous down in there, but it was fun for only a short time.

We also made pits into which hot rocks were placed. Whole potatoes wrapped in tin foil were put on the rocks and covered with dirt and cooked just barely long enough to be considered edible. We thought this was fun a couple of times, but nothing we did was as satisfactory as Bill's slide.

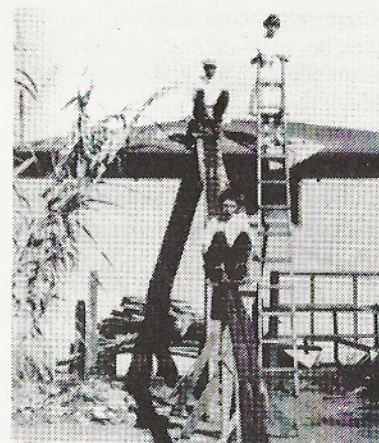
Bill had quite a pile of lumber left over from the infamous search light venture which presented somewhat of a construction challenge. The problem of using this lumber was solved when he got the brilliant idea of building a slide from the top of their garage across the back yard.

Now this slide was to be an engineering feat since the kids using it were to be on "cars" which would allow a much greater speed than the conventional playground variety. So construction began.

All the kids in the gang were assigned the task of scrounging up more boards and laths for the slide bed. The bed or track for the slide was made from

a number of lengths of 1 X 8 boards onto which were nailed laths, two thick, double track spaced just slightly wider than the lath width apart. All the boards were connected and propped up on a rather rickety trestle arrangement. The last few feet were less steeply inclined to slow the cars at the end of the run.

The cars were made from sturdy packing crate sides and ends varying in size, but big enough so a kid could sit on one with his feet propped against one end. Fastened on either end of the bottom of the car were two eight-inch lengths of broom handle wrapped with tin from tin cans. Each length was perpendicular to the direction of movement. In the center of these "sliders," a lath the length of the car was attached. This runner fit between the tracks on the slide bed.



**Bill Hammill's inventiveness and the scrounging ability of "our gang" created this unique slide in the Hammill back yard in October, 1921.**





With proper balance, a kid could hold onto the car and slide down the length of the track, providing it was slick enough. Liberally applied axle grease, easily obtained in those days, assured that adequate lubrication was obtained.

The results of this endeavor were satisfactory beyond our expectations. The cars zipped down the track rapidly. Nobody ever fell off and we enjoyed many hours of pleasure, not only in the building of the contraption, but in the thrill of the slide.

After a few weeks of use, Bill decided that the track should be longer, so he devised a switch which was installed about ground level just in front of the slow-up incline and extended the track several feet to the back of the yard.

The time for a test run was at hand and Chuck volunteered to be the venturer. The switch was set to divert the car and down the slide he went. The car turned, but Chuck didn't. He scooted off the car and right up the slow-up incline leaving two greasy tracks on his overalls. Mother was a little upset about this, since there were no washing machines in those days and everything was washed by hand on the old scrubbing boards. That was the end of the switch. Another good idea down the drain.

### THE GADSDEN HOTEL

The boarding house operation was going along well for Mother but she was always searching for a more profitable and less physically demanding occupation. So when an opening for Douglas Postmaster came about, Mother applied. She completed all the governmental forms and was interviewed but, although her expectations were high, she was not selected for the position. This was a great disappointment to her, but in those days there were practically no women in such responsible positions.

There may have been other opportunities about which I have no recollection, but one possibility did occur soon after the post office episode. She took advantage of this latest offer which brought the boarding house venture to an end.

In 1924 the Gadsden Hotel management was looking for someone to operate the hotel dining room on a concession basis. Somehow Mother became involved in the negotiations. Not wanting to take over this operation alone, she approached a friend, Mrs. Dowell, and together they assumed full responsibility of the dining room.

The dining room was a good sized operation. There was a head chef, pastry chef, salad chef as well as other kitchen underlings, and of course the waitresses, all of which required a bit of management expertise.

Prohibition was in force at the time, much to Mother's disappointment. Although there were many traveling salesmen and other business people as guests at the hotel, the temptation to go a few blocks across the border to Agua Prieta for a little libation before and with dinner was too great to resist. This resulted in the loss of considerable dinner business at the hotel, as well as income for the two partners.

As is the case in many such ventures, the dining room operation never produced the income that had been envisioned by Mother and Mrs. Dowell.

Of course Chuck and I became involved in the Gadsden Hotel, if only to the extent of having some of our meals there, and also as observers of the culinary activity in the kitchen and dining room.



This circa 1920 photo was taken facing south on G Avenue. The three large buildings on the right are the Gadsden Hotel, Phelps Dodge Mercantile and First National Bank. The two-story Brophy Building is on the left.

Since we both had after school and weekend jobs as well as summer time occupations, we didn't spend as much time fooling around the hotel as we might have done under other circumstances. We did get to know most of the bell hops, room clerks, elevator operators and other hotel staff and they all knew that our mother was responsible for the dining room operation.

### THE LAUNDRY TRUCK

In the Gadsden Hotel, there was a hand-propelled freight elevator used to raise freight, furniture and bulky things to the upper floors. Since the dining room was on the mezzanine floor, all the supplies for that operation were carried up on this elevator.

The elevator was a manually operated device requiring a great deal of effort by the operator. There was a rectangular opening on one side of the elevator through which the operator would grasp a large rope and, by pulling it either up or down, the elevator would go SLOWLY in the required direction.

The large rope was connected to a flywheel at the top of the elevator shaft. With the continuous tugging on the rope the flywheel would turn and, through a series of gears connected to a drum on which the lifting cable was attached, movement was achieved. A laborious task!

One day the laundry man came to deliver clean linens and was in the process of hoisting the load up on the freight elevator. The laundry truck was parked in the alley behind the hotel. It was a Ford Model-T truck with an enclosed bed and would be considered a "pick-up" these days.

Chuck got the brilliant idea that since the laundry man was going to be gone so long delivering the linens, there would be a fine opportunity to drive the



truck around the block. So, we put the plan into action. Chuck thought he knew all there was to know about operating a Model-T and that this caper could be pulled off without a hitch. At that time I was 11 and Chuck was 13 years old.

Problem number 1: The vehicle had to be started by cranking.

Problem number 2: In those days there was no foot throttle for controlling the speed of these Fords. It was done by a lever on one side of the steering column which was moved up or down as the situation demanded. Also, there was no automatic spark advance. This was controlled by a similar lever on the opposite side of the steering column. The faster the motor turned over, the more the spark was advanced. With a little practice a skilled operator would adjust the spark advance for optimum performance.

Problem number 3: When cranking one of these pesky Fords, if the spark was not retarded, the spark plugs would fire before the pistons passed TDC (top dead center), sharply forcing the crank back in the opposite direction. Kicking, they called it. When this kicking occurred, the crank was forced into reverse rotation with such velocity that it would hit the cranker on the back of the arm resulting in a broken arm. Hundreds of guys met with this disaster.

Problem number 4: There was no automatic choke in those days. The Fords had a stiff wire extending out in front of the radiator with a loop formed on the end. The cranker would guess how cold the engine was and pull the choke wire out as far as he thought would be proper for the operation and start to crank, all the while assuming the gas throttle was advanced the proper amount and that the spark was retarded.

Obviously Chuck was to be the driver and I was designated as the crankee. So he slid into the driver's seat and dumb things of all dumb things, he pulled both the gas and spark levers to advance as far as they would go. Fortunately, he did see that the gears were in neutral.

At the command to start cranking, I pulled the choke wire out a little and gave the crank a lusty yank and what happened? You guessed it. It kicked. The crank flew backwards, hit my arm with such force that both bones were broken and after the initial shock abated, my arm between the elbow and wrist looked like a "V."

Needless to say, that was the end of the laundry truck episode. My brother said, "Don't tell Mother!" But just as I crossed G Avenue and was beside Ferguson's Drug Store, Mother approached from the opposite direction on her way to the hotel. Heeding my brother's admonition, I held my fractured arm behind my back. But with evident ashen face and excruciating pain, I was confronted with the usual, "William, what is the matter with you?"

Full confession time. Before the whole story was related, however, Mother opened the rear door to the drug store and escorted me inside. We were no strangers to Mr. Ferguson. Chuck was working there as the delivery boy and general roust-a-bout, although not on duty at the time. Mr. Ferguson came to the back of the store to investigate the commotion and quickly analyzed the situation. He called a doctor who arrived in a matter of minutes, set the arm and applied the proper splint.

Rarely is a fatherless lad grateful that he has only one parent, but I am sure that both Chuck and I had such feelings on that day. I don't remember what punishment we received for this caper, but if our Dad had been around, I am sure my memory would be more acute.

## FERGUSON'S DRUG STORE

It was the summer of 1924. Chuck was working evenings and Saturdays at Ferguson's Drug Store as delivery boy, general "gofor" and soda squirt when necessary. His salary was \$2.50 a week.

An opportunity for him to go to the YMCA summer camp in the mountains came along, so he asked Mr. Ferguson for a week off and said that his brother Bill could fill in while he was gone. Mr. Ferguson replied that Bill was too young and besides his arm was in a sling as a result of the laundry truck incident. Chuck countered by reminding him that my cast was about to come off, that I was riding my bicycle all over town, that I was big for 11 years and that it would only be for one week. Mr. Ferguson relented and one Monday at 6 p.m., I showed up for work.

The job description, if such a thing existed in those days, would show that I was to make deliveries as required from six to nine o'clock in the evenings and do whatever was necessary to help Mr. Ferguson make ice cream on Saturdays. He had all the equipment needed for this operation in the back of the store. I was also to fill the dispenser jars with syrup and toppings at the soda fountain and to clean up the place as needed. I couldn't see that this was such a big challenge and feathered into the job with enthusiasm.

When the camp week was over and Chuck returned to the drug store to resume his work, Mr. Ferguson told him that his little brother was doing such a good job that his services were no longer needed. What a blow! How would you feel if you were advised that your little brother was doing a better job than you did even with one arm in a cast?

Most of my predecessors on the job must have helped themselves to the bounty of the soda fountain. Mr. Ferguson probably figured that this was to be expected and considered it part of their pay. I felt that this was stealing and, on occasion when I did make myself a malt, soda or a sundae, I made an entry in a book with the charge to be deducted from my pay.

This must have been something unusual to "Fergie" (as we called him, but never within ear shot) because after I had been on the payroll for a month or so, he called me into his office one evening he said, "William, I am going to raise your pay to \$3.50 a week on two conditions. I want you to quit reading the magazines in the sales rack and stop spinning around on the soda fountain stools!" These were two hard things to give up, but a dollar a week raise? Fast decision!

## PROSPERITY

Douglas had many people who were newcomers to the area and missed the newspapers from larger towns. Every day a bus would come from El Paso with newspapers from that city. They were dropped off at a smoke shop and newsstand right across the street from Ferguson's Drug Store. I learned that kids could buy these papers for three cents and sell them for five cents and thus I started in the newspaper business.

Since I had all this money from my salary at the drug store, I would invest three dollars for 100 papers and walk up and down G Avenue yelling, "El Paso Herald!" and in a very short time they were all gone and I had \$5! Two bucks clear profit! The papers came in around four o'clock, so I had plenty of time to do this business after school and before reporting to the drug store. Six days a week, two bucks a day, 12 bucks a week!



On Sunday morning, a bus came from Los Angeles with papers. I would buy 100 of them and go up and down 10th, 11th and 12th Streets yelling, "Los Angeles Examiner!" I had to use my wagon for this because it was a much bigger paper with funnies, rotogravure and all that. In a little while they were all gone. Five bucks clear profit!

Let's see now: \$3.50 from the drug store, \$12 from the El Paso Heralds and \$5 selling Los Angeles Examiners. That is \$20.50 a week! Not bad for a 12-year-old kid in 1926.

It wasn't long before more kids found out about the profit available in this newspaper game, so competition became rather fierce at the smoke shop to see who would get the 500 or so papers to peddle.

One afternoon a new kid was trying to beat me out of my papers. A heated argument ensued with much name calling resulting in a fist fight to settle the matter. This was great sport for the men in the smoke shop and passers by who urged the fighters on, much to their delight.

I was handling things quite well when a friend of my adversary joined the fray and turned the tide of battle to the foe. It just so happened that my brother came around the corner on his bicycle at this time. He quickly sized up the situation, took off his glasses and came to my aid. Short fight. We overcame the opposition in short order, much to the dismay of the onlookers who were enjoying the battle. I never had any trouble getting my papers after that.

Every week I would buy my mother some kind of a gift and put some of the money into the family till. Sometimes it would be a pen and pencil set, or a box of candy, a box of handkerchiefs or something I thought she needed or would enjoy and I started a savings account.

Chuck was working for the Douglas Dairy at that time, getting up in the early morning hours to deliver milk. With his income combined with mine, we opened a charge account at the Sunshine Grocery on A Avenue right across the street from the grammar school. We were the envy of all the kids in the neighborhood. We could go in the store and select some candy bars, cookies or whatever, say charge it and walk out of the store. Big shot spenders!

### THE PURE FOOD BAKERY

The Pure Food Bakery was at 1116 G Ave. They had two or three delivery trucks painted in their colors and on the top of each was sign stating, "Bread is Your Best Food — Eat More of It."

Full glass windows faced G Avenue through which passersby could see retail counters displaying all the goodies the bakers concocted. This was quite an enticing sight, resulting in a very successful business.

Loaves of bread were slipped into paper sacks upon purchase at the retail counters or when delivered to other purveyors. One day the bakery obtained a wrapping machine which enclosed the loaves in waxed paper and sealed the ends by passing the loaves past hot plates which melted the wax and bonded the folds.

The bakery management made a wise decision to place this new contraption just inside the front windows so passersby could watch this mechanical marvel perform. Everything mechanical was fascinating to me and I thought this bread wrapping machine, next to automobiles, was just about the most intriguing thing around.

Nearly everybody in Douglas heard about this marvelous new machine and,

at some time or other in the first few weeks of its operation, they came down to the bakery to see the action. There were times when the curious were in such numbers that one could hardly find a place to stand and watch. Such were the times before radio or television, when things were simple and new fangled gadgets attracted much attention.

My obvious fascination with the bread wrapper was noticed by the shop owners because I was down there every day watching it go through its intricate maneuvers. Since I showed so much interest in the bakery, they offered me a job running errands and helping the bakers for an hour or so after school. This was heaven of the first order.

In the back of the bakery were the ovens in which the bread was baked. There were two chambers, each of which was about eight feet square and about 20 inches high completely lined with fire bricks. An opening into each chamber about 12 inches high and 20 inches wide was fitted with a swinging door through which pans of dough on long paddle-like boards were placed for baking.

To ready the ovens for baking, large gas flame throwers were placed in the openings, fired up and directed into the interior. The torches continued in operation until the bricks lining the ovens were hot enough to bake the bread with retained heat.

The bakers mixed the dough in a large trough. When it had risen sufficiently, it was punched down and prepared for a second rising. Measured amounts were placed in pans and set aside to rise again. At the proper time, the pans were put on the long paddles and placed in the hot oven.

As I remember, 200 or so loaves were baked at a time. When they were removed from the ovens the whole bakery and the north end of G Avenue was permeated with the aroma of fresh baked bread. What a delightful smell!

I was intrigued with all the devices they had for cutting the dough into the proper sized wads for making cloverleaf and Parker House rolls, cakes, pies, cinnamon rolls and all the other good stuff. Management soon decided that my fascination was much greater than either my desire or ability to perform the assigned tasks, so after only about three weeks on the payroll, I was fired.

Oh well, such is life. I was only 11 years old and I knew that many other opportunities would come along. Today, such activity would be called child labor and would not be condoned, but I learned something about the bakery business which otherwise would not have become part of my storehouse of knowledge.

### THE YMCA

There were only two swimming pools in the whole town. One was the big American Legion pool out toward the smelters, and the other was in the YMCA.

For kids in southern Arizona, a swimming pool is an attraction beyond measure resulting in a very active youth program at the "Y." At that time there were no females in any of the programs. The YMCA was strictly a male-only operation and in this bastion of masculinity all the swimming was done sans suits.

Many kids were members starting at age nine or 10 as juniors and progressing through intermediate to seniors when they became 15 or 16. At the earliest opportunity, I became a member so I could join in on the fun with the



other kids even though swimming was not one of my accomplishments at the time.

The pool was indoors, in use all year round, and measured about 30 feet by 50 feet. It was three feet deep at the shallow end and eight feet at the deep end. There was a low diving board and a six-foot high diving tower at the deep end.

Saturday mornings the pool was alive with boys having all the fun usually associated with such a facility. Some had learned to swim and dive and were showing off their new-found skills. Some of the younger ones, me included, were floundering around the shallow end having yet to swim the whole length of the pool. We were somewhat terrified at the thought of going into water so deep the bottom could not be touched.

After a few Saturdays in the shallow end, Chuck and some of the other kids felt that I was ready for the big attempt to swim the full length of the pool, and I was urged to give it a go. Mustering all my courage and with a rooting section along the side of the pool, I took off from the shallow end and with grim determination splashed my way clear to the other end. Victory!

I had just climbed out of the water when I was grabbed by several of the older boys, hauled up to the top of the diving tower and four of these kids, each with a hand or a foot, swung me back and forth a couple of times and flung me into the pool. Eight feet of water! Sputtering to the surface, I made it to the edge of the pool and climbed out to the resounding cheers of the other kids. That was my initiation.



**The Douglas Y.M.C.A. building on Railroad Avenue. (CCHAS photo)**

With new-found confidence, I became a veritable fish. Stroke improvement came next and with coaching from instructor Gates Foss, I became a super swimmer and diver.

The "Y" conducted swimming meets on frequent occasions with the main events being contests to determine the fastest swimmer to complete from one to several lengths of the pool. These contests were in the junior, intermediate and senior groups. It wasn't long until I was by far the speediest kid in the junior class, so there was nothing to do but to pit me against the intermediates. Duck soup! I consistently beat all the Intermediates.

Obviously, this speed demon was then pitted against the seniors. Horror of

horrors, none of these older guys could complete the laps as fast as this now 12-year-old kid. Usually my closest rival would request a re-match, claiming that he didn't get a good start or some such thing, but to no avail. I was the undisputed fastest Australian crawl sprint swimmer in the whole YMCA and loved it. Every chance I got, I would find my way to the "Y" pool.

It was a house rule that no one could swim alone. There had to be a least two people in the pool at any time. Many times an adult member, usually a railroader, wanted to take a swim in the afternoon but was not allowed because he was alone. I would hang around the "Y," playing pool (pocket billiards, that is), waiting for one of these men to show up. When one did, I would immediately offer my services because this was the only way a kid could get to swim in the afternoon when it was reserved for adults only.

The "Y" had a gymnasium and other facilities including billiard tables where I learned the elements of the game, but I was so enthralled with the swimming pool, I remember little about the gym.

In the summer time, usually starting as soon as school was out, the big American Legion pool west of town was open and all the kids, as well as the adults, went out there to swim. Since this was a heterosexual operation, swimming suits were required but what a popular place it was! It was an easy bicycle ride out to the pool. So whenever we had time and the money for admission, we would take advantage of the opportunity to go swimming.

This pool was big, and when I say big, I really mean big. It was several times larger than the "Y" pool. There were two adjacent pools side by side, with a fence through the middle separating the shallow side from the deeper side.

As I remember, it not only had two diving boards mounted at the deck level, but a diving tower with what would now be called three meter and five meter boards; but we said they were 10 and 16 feet. It was scary getting up on the 16-foot board and diving into the pool but it was fun at the same time.

This was before law suits and suit-happy lawyers, when people took some responsibility for their own actions and had a lot of fun taking a little risk. I doubt that there is a public pool in the whole United States today where people can have fun daring to dive off a 16-foot board.

### **THE "Y" CAMPS**

Even today, going to a summer camp is probably the highlight of any kid's summer. It was no different back in the 20s, especially if the camp was located in Pinery Canyon in the Chiricahua Mountains.

Every summer the "Y" would schedule several week-long camp sessions with about 25 going to each outing. No permanent facilities were on the camp site. Meals were prepared using pots suspended over open fires. This was not "haute cuisine" but for kids who tramped around the woods all day long there were no complaints about the grub.

This was the immediate post World War I era and the kids all had army canteens and field mess kits consisting of a combination frying pan and eating plate which folded up enclosing a knife, fork and spoon, all of which could be easily attached your belt to take on hikes.

The leaders had a large tent which served as their headquarters and the kids erected pup tents, one for each two campers. These pup tents were arranged in appropriate configuration and rocks were collected and placed in rows to



designate paths from the tent entrances and along the tent row to the camp fire location, the leader's tent, the latrine and the evening bonfire area.

Every night after the evening meal and the mess clean up, we all gathered around a bonfire and related events of the day, sang camp songs, told ghost stories and listened to noises from the woods which sometimes scared the bejabbers out of us.

One night we thought we heard a mountain lion in the woods, and the next day a forest ranger visited the camp and reported that a cougar was in the area. So the leaders formed a posse to try to find the beast and properly dispense with the problem. So we started the hunt. As you can imagine, 20 or so kids all hiking along a mountain trail made so much noise no self-respecting mountain lion would be found any place near all that racket. Our hunting expedition was futile but it kept us occupied for a good part of the day.

The "Y" started a program modeled after the Boy scouts called the "Pioneers." A Pioneer Handbook was published, which was very similar to the Boy Scout Handbook with all the information about surviving in the wild, first aid, knot tying and so forth. Campers were instructed in these outdoor activities following the material in the handbooks. Not only was this good training for the kids, it gave them something constructive to do which made the time slip by quite rapidly.

Achievement in acquiring these skills, as well as neatness of tent maintenance and other things the leaders felt worthy, were rewarded by some kind of medallion. In addition, neckerchiefs were issued denoting the level of achievement of campers. These were called "rags." There were Blue Ragers who were the beginning achievers, Red Ragers who were the intermediates and the Green Ragers who were the elite cadre in the camp.

Obviously this system created a great deal of competition among the campers to master the skills outlined in the handbook as well as to inspire each individual to keep his quarters neat and clean and to follow the rules of proper deportment. This system made the summer camp especially rewarding, not only from a fun experience in the mountains, but for learning useful skills as well.

I went to three of these summer camps and will never forget the experiences. The YMCA was a very significant element in my boyhood days.

### JOHN PHILIP SOUSA

John Philip Sousa, the "March King" who wrote "Stars and Stripes Forever" and many other marching songs, was probably the most well-known musician of the day. His band was famous the world over and he gave concerts throughout the land and in many foreign countries.

It was 1926, I believe, when Sousa's Band came to Douglas. This event was well publicized and people came from Bisbee, Tombstone, Willcox, Fort Huachuca, Benson and even as far away as Tucson for the parade and concert in the 10th Street Park.

G Avenue was lined with several thousand people. When the band marched down the street playing its stirring music, every heart was filled with patriotism and everyone was glad they came to Douglas that day. This was truly a big event for a little town in southern Arizona.

I was working at Ferguson's Drug Store at 11th and G diagonally across the street from the Gadsden Hotel where Mr. Sousa and his entourage were staying overnight. It was a Saturday morning and I was on duty, running errands, going

to the Douglas Dairy for cream and doing other flunky chores.

Jim Sweeney, the regular soda squirt, was on duty but he had to leave the store for a few minutes. I was filling in for him at the soda fountain when, what do you know, Mr. John Philips Sousa came through the door and sat down on one of the soda fountain stools. I approached and asked him what he would like to have and he ordered a cherry phosphate. Confident as an experienced soda jerk, I mixed up the concoction and served it to him. He seemed to enjoy the drink, paid the nickel charge and left the place.

That is one of my claims to fame. I made a cherry phosphate for John Philip Sousa!

### BURROS

Burro, donkey, jackass, jenny, whatever you call them, they are the same animals which roamed all over Cochise County in those days. They belonged to nobody and were either half wild or half tame most of the time.

One Christmas day, when I was about eight years old, a jenny with her little colt came walking up 11th Street. Chuck and I thought it would be a good idea to entice them around to our side yard and feed them some shoots from our bamboo patch. With a little urging, we got the mother around there, but the little one was not so easily coaxed. Chuck suggested that I get a stick and whack it on the rump and maybe that would encourage it to join its mother. (Chuck was real good at getting me to do all the dirty work.)

I got the stick, proceeded with the operation and with the first whack that little beast bounced its hind end in the air and let loose a lightning fast kick which caught me squarely on the nose and sent me somersaulting backwards with blood squirting all over the place. Needless to say, this led to some howling which brought Mother out into the yard to assess the situation and give some first aid treatment.

Lesson: Never stand behind a burro with any thought of mayhem. To this day, I still bear a scar as evidence of the failure to heed this warning.

Even with this rather violent start, we, particularly Chuck, could see the possibilities of having our own herd of donkeys at our beck and call to ride around at will. We made a small pen in one corner of the back yard and went out into the desert searching for donkeys. Within a few days we had three of them corralled. We soon learned that with proper urging, not always by the same method, we could get these recalcitrant beasts to respond to our goading.

Donkeys are not ridden like horses. One sits directly over the haunches of these animals with the rider's legs extending parallel with the donkey's rear legs. This is a natural seating arrangement and can be somewhat comfortable providing that the rider is not too large or the donkey too small. We are talking bare back here. I never saw a saddle on a burro.

When we decided the time was right for a ride, this was the usual procedure. Chuck and his buddy, C. B. Fleming, would each get on a donkey, and Beans Turvey, my designated companion, and I would both get on the third burro. We would go out the back gate into the alley and start out toward the east end of town, hoping to be successful in actually breaking out into the desert. We only had to go past Bonita, Carmelita, Dolores, Estrella and Florida avenues and we were out in the country. (That's B. C. D. E. F. Got it?)

People put their garbage cans out in the alley. In many cases the lids had disappeared causing an enticing aroma to emit into the atmosphere which the donkeys couldn't resist. Obviously this impeded our progress almost to no



progress at all. The only remedy was for one of the riders to go ahead and turn all the garbage cans upside down and thus eliminate the temptation to stop and forage. This procedure worked quite well and most of the time we were able to have a rather satisfactory ride.

It came to pass, however, that the residents became somewhat disturbed to find out that on frequent occasions their garbage cans were overturned causing some grief. And somehow or other it was discovered that the Gibson kids were the culprits. Mother was the recipient of a number of complaints about the garbage can situation, and needless to say, we had to take the herd out to the desert and turn them loose. So much for the burros.

### THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

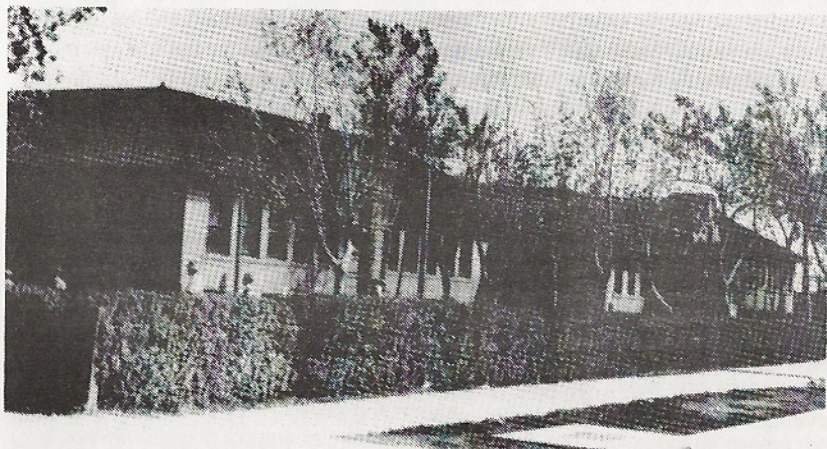
After kids completed grades one through five in the elementary schools, they went to the grammar school for grades six, seven and eight. This was a fun school in those days because it operated on what was known as the "Platoon System."

Each teacher had a particular subject which was taught in a particular room. At the end of each period the whole class marched in single file to the next room on the schedule assigned to the class. This broke up the monotony of staying in the same room all the time and for the first time the students had a different teacher for each subject. The school rooms were arranged around a large landscaped patio which was a pretty place to pass when going from room to room.

In September of 1923, I entered Douglas Grammar School for a very interesting period of my life.

During the second semester in the sixth grade I was caught up in a chicken pox epidemic of some small magnitude. Some one from City Hall who had to do with things like that, came out to the house and nailed a quarantine sign on the door and we were isolated from society for the duration.

There must have been a thousand pox sores on my body, every one of which had to be treated with some kind of salve several times a day. Also Mother had to apply some kind of oatmeal or other paste mixture every day



Douglas Grammar School, 12th Street and A Avenue. (CCHAS photo)

which only added to my misery. Suffice it to say, this infirmity caused me to miss so much school that I flunked the second semester of the sixth grade.

When school started in September of 1924, I was placed with a group of kids who were mid-year students. Instead of being in 7A where we should have been, we were back in 6B.

We had an arithmetic teacher named Effie Baughman. Now Effie was a little banty hen type, always bustling around fussing about things, and as a result, the kids were not always the most attentive to their studies. When Effie was upset because one of the students was inattentive, whispering or whatever, she immediately descended on the culprit, made him extend his hands on the desk, palms up and whacked him across the palms with a ruler.

This punishment was quite effective as far as deportment control was concerned, but it sure didn't enhance the learning process or endear the teacher to the students. Even though all other teachers graded the students according to their accomplishments, Effie gave a failing grade to every kid in the class causing quite a problem for the administrators.

Since the school had a large number of pupils in each grade, they were placed in groups according to their abilities. The brightest kids were in 6A-1, the secondary achievers were in 6A-2, the lesser inspired in 6A-3 and 6A-4 was reserved for the ones who were not really with it.

After my chicken pox episode, I was put back in the sixth grade and my class was designated as 6B-4. Not the most accomplished group by any means.

So when Effie flunked the whole class, the next semester the school administrators deemed it necessary to have a 6B-FIVE! It was the first time in the school history that any class was worse than a 4, and I was in it!

In my opinion, they should have fired Effie. Any teacher so dumb that she could not even have one pupil make a passing grade should not be on the payroll.

The shock of being placed in such a demeaning class was not only felt by me but by my mother as well. As you can imagine, this resulted in a concerted effort to make me become more of a scholastic achiever. Apparently my efforts, along with my mother's urging, paid off because I completed the grammar school curriculum in a reasonable manner, although I was a year behind most of the other kids my age.

### MR. GMAHLING'S PIERCE ARROW

Mr. Gmahling lived at 1126 11th Street, right next door to the Hammills. His business had something to do with the mining industry and required him to make frequent trips into Mexico and remote Arizona towns where mines were located. Because of the traveling requirements, he needed a rugged and dependable automobile. He fulfilled this need with a seven passenger Pierce Arrow touring car.

These Pierce Arrows were BIG cars. Almost all the cars in those days were "touring" cars which meant that they were not sedans. The top could be folded down for a completely open passenger compartment. A roadster was the same kind of a thing but with only one seat and two doors. When it rained, the top was put up and side curtains were placed on vertical rods which slid into holes in the doors and the curtains were snapped together for a somewhat satisfactory protection from the storm. The side curtains had transparent isinglass sections in each curtain for visibility.



One of the features of the Pierce Arrows which gave them a distinctly different look was that the head lights were mounted on the front fenders. People who traveled into the boonies in those days would usually carry extra gasoline, water and even motor oil in cans mounted on the fenders. Since the tires were not nearly as reliable as those of today, it was not unusual for a motorist to carry at least one and as many as four spares mounted on the back of the car. Since Mr. Gmahling was one of these travelers, not only did he carry a number of extra tires, he replaced them frequently to assure maximum reliability.

Bill Hammill could see a use for these discarded tires, so he prevailed upon Mr. Gmahling to give them to him. These tires were big enough for a kid to double himself up in the wheel opening, grasp the bead with his fingers, jam his feet against the bead and be secure enough to be rolled down the street with another kid rolling the tire much like rolling a hoop. With six or eight of these tires, it was quite a sight to see that many kids being rolled down the street all at once. We spent many delightful hours taking turns as riders or rollers in Mr. Gmahling's old tires. Big fun, little cost!

### **PUSHMOBILES AND OTHER WHEELS**

Kids have always had a fascination for vehicles, and so it was back in my childhood days. We had coaster wagons, tricycles and even Irish Mails, which were three wheeled contraptions with one large wheel in front much like a tricycle but with a steering and handlebar arrangement like a scooter. A spring supported platform was connected by a crankshaft to a rear axle solidly attached to the rear wheels and the rider, by bouncing up and down, could propel the vehicle at a very rapid speed. Even though much enjoyment was derived from these manufactured products, there was always a desire to create contraptions of our own invention and thus our home made vehicles were devised.

A pushmobile is any kind of a car on which a rider can sit and steer, either by foot or steering wheel on a shaft with a rope arrangement connected to a pivoted front axle. Sometimes these were fashioned to resemble racing cars or sometimes just a platform with a back rest which was steered with the feet. Our town was perfectly flat with no hills to coast down, so these cars were pushed with a broom handle by another kid. Thus, pushmobiles.

When a cart was made with just a flat board, a fixed rear axle and wheel assembly with a pivoted front wheel arrangement, it was called a "bellybuster." These were propelled with the driver flat on the board with hands on the front steering member with one foot extending out the side driving the contraption much like a scooter.

My uncle Frank and aunt Ileta were visiting from Kansas City one time and I was showing off on my belly buster only to fall off with disastrous results. On going around the corner of Bonita Avenue turning onto 11th Street on the sidewalk, I miscalculated the turn, fell off the cart and hit my front teeth on the edge of the walk breaking off the center corners of both teeth. What a mess. I lived with this affliction for years with somewhat satisfactory dental repairs, but not really correcting the problem until 1974. Moral of the story: Don't show off!

The problem was wheels. We scrounged around and salvaged wheels from discarded baby buggies, tricycles, coaster wagons or anything else we could find. Usually these wheels were found in pairs. Rarely did we find any kind of

vehicle with four wheels intact. So our pushmobiles rarely had all four wheels that matched, but we made the best of what was available.

Eleventh Street was paved with concrete. It was rather new and suitable for roller skating, pushmobiles and all other kinds of youthful activity. Since there was very little automobile traffic, it was our playground. Because of this lack of heavy vehicular traffic, we had all kinds of races. We raced with pushmobiles. We raced with kids in automobile tires. We raced with scooters and roller skates which brings up another subject.

All the kids had roller skates. The predominant brand was Union Hardware. There were no composition roller skate wheels in those days. The wheels were made of heavy sheet metal suitably shaped, pressed together and fitted with ball bearings. Skating on the concrete sidewalks and streets was abrading to the wheels and they wore out in time. The hardware store stocked wheels and other parts to maintain the skates, so the only real problem was getting the money for the replacements.

These skates were adjustable in length and had ankle straps on the back and clamps on the front which were adjusted with a skate key and clamped securely onto regular leather shoe soles. Of course the vibration generated from the skating action loosened the clamps. Regularly one of the skates would come off causing the skater to go flying head over heels resulting in skinned knees, elbows and other body parts, not to mention the damage to the clothing. But that was all part of the sport.

Not content just to enjoy regular roller skates as they were intended to be used, we fashioned scooters using the skates for additional pleasure. These were made by taking the skates apart and nailing the front section on one end of a three-foot long 2 X 4 and the back section on the other end. A wooden orange crate was then nailed on the front end of the board and across the orange crate a smaller slat was attached to serve as the handle bar.

So it was with our wheeled contraptions, some manufactured, some the product of our own invention, but all enjoyed to the fullest.

### **BICYCLES**

When he was about nine years old, Chuck started pestering Mother about getting a bicycle. Our parents had bought a small Yale bicycle for our older brother, Richard, which was almost new when he passed away. After his death, Dad stashed the bike under the house in a crawl space next to the excavated basement portion of the house. Neither Chuck nor I knew it was there. Mother never mentioned the bike but because of Chuck's incessant pressure, one day she told us about the bicycle and Chuck crawled under the house and retrieved it.

Wow! An almost brand new bike!

We were immediately confronted with two problems. One, this was a small model with wheels about 16 inches in diameter and obviously not really big enough for Chuck, but maybe okay for me. Secondly, the tires were flat and had deteriorated beyond use during the five years of storage. We discovered the local bicycle shops had no replacement tires of the required size and showed no interest in trying to find a supplier who could accommodate a request.

Obviously we had to make this thing operable, so we tried riding it on the bare rims only to discover that it was unstable on turns since the wheels skidded out from under the bike. Next we cut lengths of garden hose to fit,



filled them with sand and wired them onto the wheels. This was totally makeshift and totally unsatisfactory, but we did ride the thing as well as we could. But in no way could we keep up with the other kids with their full sized two wheelers.

Mother was aware of our plight and our frustration trying to cope with this thing, so she made a decision to do something about it even if it meant a family financial hardship.

It was near Christmas time. We had gotten a tree and all the decorations, purchased presents and all the other usual things, and went to bed Christmas Eve anxiously waiting for the morning to come. Bounding out of bed at the crack of dawn on Christmas Day, we rushed into the living room to see what presents were under the tree. Lo and behold, next to the tree was a brand new bright and shining full sized bicycle! What joy! I don't remember what other presents were there. All I remember is that we got dressed as fast as possible and took the bike outside for a trial run.

As usual, with great benefit a problem is created and ours became apparent immediately. By this time I was big enough for a bike of my own, so how in the world can two kids share one bicycle? We tried to make this sharing thing work, but it never was really satisfactory.

After a few weeks of wrangling over whose turn it was to ride, it became evident that somehow we were going to have to get another bike. Fortunately fate intervened on our behalf. Somehow we learned that somebody had a bicycle for sale. It needed a little fixing up, but it was in pretty good shape and the price was only \$5. Mother scraped around and got the money together and the purchase was completed.

Now the Gibson kids each had his own set of wheels. You know who got the \$5 bike, of course. It was William, the little one.

We rode our bikes all over the place. Because of this constant usage, the need for repair was ever present. However, the means to meet this situation was at hand.

In our town, nearly everybody had a Montgomery Ward catalog which was used extensively to order every conceivable thing from the big mail order house in Kansas City. There was a section in the book, depicting the Montgomery Ward Hawthorne DeLuxe bicycles and all the parts needed to keep them in repair. They had tires, pedals, forks, chains, bearings, sprockets, spokes, wheels and every other thing. This became our source for parts needed to keep our bikes in repair and we made frequent purchases from the book. Since we didn't have the money to have our bikes repaired in the local shops, we became adept at the maintenance of our vehicles.

In a very short time, Chuck and I began collecting old discarded bikes and salvaging parts. Along with new parts available from Montgomery Ward, we produced renovated bicycles and sold one every once in a while. Word of our expertise spread throughout town, and other kids brought their bikes to us for repair, for which we charged a fee. After a couple of years at this trade, Mr. Elvey, owner of one of the local bicycle stores, came to Mother and complained that her kids were damaging his business and operating without a license, and that we should cease and desist with the threat of legal action.

That did it. We quit doing work for other people and confined our energies to our own needs. Besides, Chuck had become a half owner in a one lung motorcycle and was losing interest in pedaling.

## AUTOMOBILES AND RACE CARS

Automobiles have always fascinated to males of all ages and in the early days of their development, the attraction was even greater. Reliable models had been on the market for only a few years and every technical advancement was greeted with a great deal of interest and much discussion about its merit.

As an example, when four wheel brakes were introduced, there were those who predicted only doom for this arrangement. They said that if the brakes were applied when turning a corner, the car would flip over resulting in dire consequences. When hydraulic brakes were introduced, doomsayers were positive that no method could be devised to contain the fluid resulting in no brakes at all with obvious disastrous results.

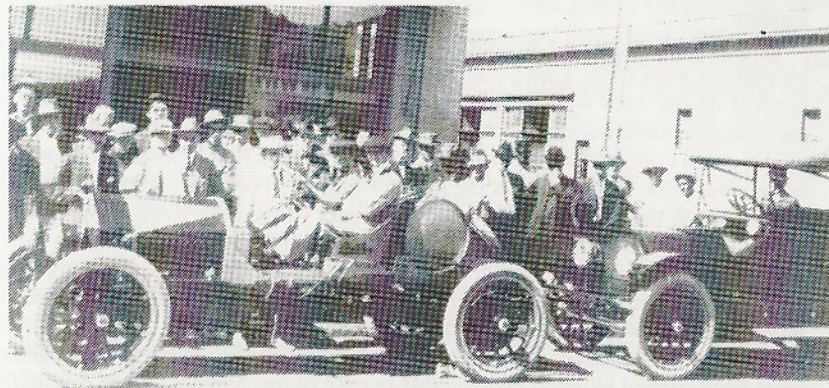
Compared to models of today the old cars, regardless of advancements and reliability, were simple mechanisms that commanded unbelievable interest. New models were shrouded with mystery before introduction. Dealers would cover the show room windows several days before the unveiling and sneak the new cars on the floor, ostensibly shielding them from public view until the advertised new model date.

No one was more fascinated with automobiles than yours truly.

There were dealers in town for virtually every make of car on the market, all vying for sales from eager customers. I would visit all the dealers, read the literature about the cars and sometimes sit in the driver's seat and imagine what it would be like to actually drive one of them. I was just nuts about cars and especially the mechanics of operation.

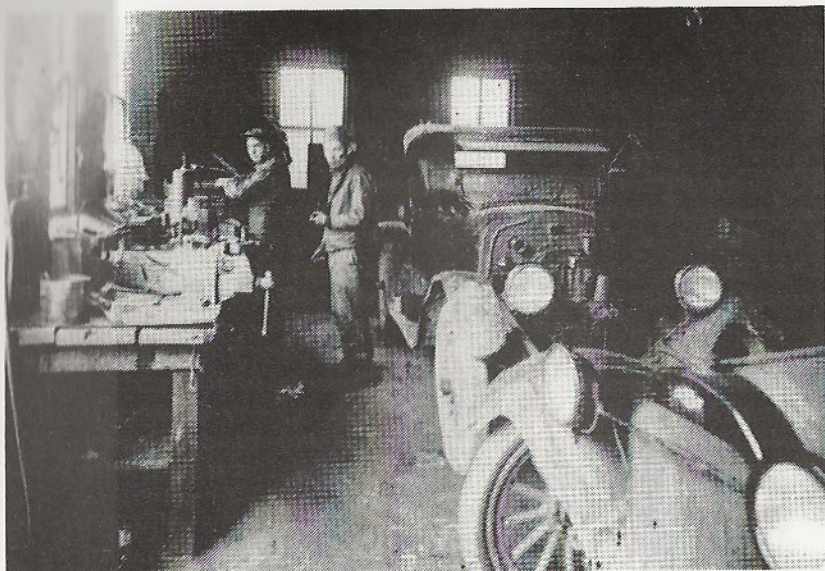
With all this interest in autos and the debates about the merits of the different makes, it seemed the only way to settle disputes was to have races and let the results provide the answers. A one mile oval race track was constructed out by the fair grounds and auto races were conducted on every conceivable occasion.

Most cities across the country had race tracks attracting large crowds to this new sport. In the wintertime the race tracks in the northern states were not in operation, resulting in many drivers bringing their cars to Douglas to compete during the winter months. These race cars were stripped down versions of



A Cadillac race car on its way to Phoenix attracted a crowd in Douglas. (CCHAS photo)





**Bert Gibbs, left, and an assistant worked on Chevrolet coupes in his garage. (CCHAS photo)**

regular passenger models, fitted with racing bodies and perhaps a few other modifications the owners felt might enhance the speed.

A "Mile a Minute" was not only a common phrase in those days, but a goal to reach and maintain for an extended period of time. That doesn't seem like a lot of speed today, but it was awe-inspiring then.

After school I would ride my bike down to the dealer's service department where these vehicles were being readied for a race and watch the mechanics work on them. Not only did I learn a lot about the cars but the use of tools and equipment required to make the repairs as well. Of course, this led to following the drivers to the race track for trial runs and all the excitement with that activity.

Much excitement was generated on race days. Usually 10 to 15 cars would be entered with races going for up to 50 laps. Even with that short distance, several of the cars would fail to make it to the finish line, succumbing to mechanical problems or, much to the delight of the crowd, a crack up.

Of much concern to drivers of the rare super cars like Duesenbergs and an occasional Pope Hartford, was the number of times Fords would be the winner. Even though the Fords were basically Model "Ts," they were usually fitted with Frontenac heads for higher compression and greater speed. They were also underslung to lower their center of gravity. With the agility resulting from their smaller size and lighter weight, the drivers were able to out-manuever the larger cars and win many of the races.

All cars had seats for the driver and a mechanic who sat by his side. Some tools were carried along to be available in case of mechanical failure during the race.

I became a rather familiar figure with the racers and mechanics. One day a driver, who was going to take his racer out on the Bisbee highway for a trial

run, asked me if I would like to go along. Boy, what a question! I got into the mechanic's seat and away we went.

We had been on the highway for only a short distance when he said, "Let's open her up and see what she will do." Pretty soon, with the engine roaring and our hair flying, we got up to nearly 70 miles an hour. What a thrill! That was fast for those days and I will never forget the experience.

### **HOT TAMALES**

Down by the railroad tracks at H Avenue and 11th Street was a small hotel operated by Mister Williams. He was one of the few black people in town and his hotel catered to other blacks who were transients or workers in the smelters or on the railroad. He was a jovial man who played an important part in our lives because he made the very best hot tamales in the whole world. And we always called him "Mister Williams."

Meals were prepared in a small kitchen in his hotel for his guests, so he had the facilities for making tamales. His tamales were big and fat with lots of tasty meat inside the corn meal mixture and all wrapped inside corn husks. Yummy!

These tamales were stacked on end in two large five-gallon lard cans, layer on layer until the cans were full. I guess they were partially cooked at that time, but the cans were then placed on a big cooking stove and simmered over low heat until ready to serve. The delicious odor of tamales permeated that end of town.

When the tamales were ready, he placed the cans in a coaster wagon, wrapped burlap around the cans to keep them hot, and started up and down the street calling out "hot tamales" to a receptive clientele of eager eaters. This was always early in the evening when people were most likely to be at home.

When the kids in the neighborhood heard Mister Williams coming, there was a mad dash into the house with a fervent plea for a nickel and just as mad a dash out to the street to make the purchase after which we sat on the curb devouring the things and savoring every bite.

The reason I know so much about the tamale making process is because I delivered prescriptions to Mister Williams and he let me watch him make them. None of the other kids ever got into Mister Williams' kitchen.

### **CONTRABAND**

International Avenue in Douglas was really First Street. On the south edge of the street was a ditch and a barbed wire fence and then Agua Prieta, Mexico.

Traffic between the two towns was rather brisk with Mexicans crossing the border to work as laborers and many women were hired for domestic help. They purchased goods from local stores. Americans went across the border because prohibition was in effect at the time and liquor was readily available in Mexico. Although it was against the law to bring booze across the border, there is no doubt that traffic in the stuff flourished to some extent.

There were many shops in Agua Prieta selling goods attractive to Americans and produce markets with all kinds of fresh vegetables and fruit grown in Mexico. There were also carne shops (meat markets) with fresh and not so fresh meat. These shops sold very little to Americans because the unsanitary conditions and method of slaughter made the meat unsavory to them.

Many of the produce shops were owned by Chinese people who perhaps were from families of workers imported to work building the railroads. These shops attracted many housewives from Douglas who found the food to be fresh



with good variety and attractively priced. We made many trips across the border with Mother to purchase produce for the boarding house.

Sugar cane could be purchased in most of the produce markets. Whole stalks were usually piled in a corner of the shop and could be bought for a nickel or dime a stalk. For reasons unknown to me, transporting sugar cane across the border was illegal but all the kids loved to chew on the cane.

Since sugar cane as well as liquor and other things were not allowed into the country, customs agents would inspect all the goods in cars returning to the U.S. to enforce the regulations. If the customs agents discovered any of the forbidden goods, not only would it be confiscated, but other drastic action would probably be taken.

Since our desire to have some of the forbidden sugar cane was greater than the threat of apprehension, we would buy a stalk or two, cut it in foot long sections, wrap it in newspaper and stash it under the rear seat cushion of the Maxwell, and sneak across the border with the contraband.

The stuff was consumed by cutting off the outer fibers of the stalk and chewing the inner core. Sweet and delicious. So we would sit out on the curbing chewing away and getting twice the enjoyment, for it was "forbidden fruit." The customs agents probably knew that a few stalks were passing through for kids to enjoy, but it certainly was not upsetting the sugar industry, so no big deal. Of course we didn't know that. We were sure we were pulling a fast one on Uncle Sam.

### THE ICE CREAM TRUCK

McWhorter's Ice Cream Co. made and distributed almost all the ice cream in Douglas. Their delivery truck was an open bed Model-T Ford. These trucks were very light weight with a high center of gravity making them subject to instability on fast turns and a possibility of tipping over.

One day their delivery man drove this truck north on A Avenue and turned east on 11th Street on the way to the army camp to deliver three five-gallon cans of ice cream. On making the turn onto 11th Street, the truck tipped over spilling the load of ice cream all over the intersection.

The galvanized round five-gallon cans of ice cream were placed inside a large wooden tub with cracked ice tamped around the can with rock salt generously sprinkled throughout the crushed ice. The ice covered the top of the lidded can over which several layers of burlap were draped and tied around the outside of the tub with suitable cord.

When the truck tipped over, these three tubs disgorged the cans and ice. The lids flew off and the cans of ice cream rolled across the street. Quite a mess. By a stroke of good fortune, I happened to be near the corner when this unexpected bounty befell.

With great haste, I ran home near the other end of the block, grabbed a large sauce pan and big spoon and dashed back to the scene of the disaster (or good fortune depending on the individual involved). I scooped a goodly quantity of the delicacy into my pan and sat on the curb to enjoy the bounty.

I wasn't the only kid on the block with this ingenious idea. I just had a little farther to go to get the equipment! But I was one of the first guys on the scene.

Of course, the main cause of concern of the crowd which gathered was not the mess of spilled ice cream but the condition of the driver and vehicle. Fortunately, the driver suffered more humiliation than physical harm and after the truck was put back on its wheels, no great damage was detected. All this

action was observed as we kids calmly sat on the curbing enjoying the largess proffered by the McWhorter Ice Cream Co. and a careless driver.

### AIMEE SEMPLE MCPHERSON

Aimee Semple McPherson was a famous evangelist who founded the Four Square Gospel Church in California. She had thousands of followers and her appearances attracted capacity crowds everywhere she went. In the summer of 1926, she disappeared leaving not a clue as to her whereabouts. Newspapers across the country were constantly printing articles about this mysterious disappearance with speculation as to her whereabouts with rumors of kidnapping or other foul play. This media hype went on for a number of weeks fanning the flames of interest across the land.

One day she emerged from the desert of Mexico like a specter passing through Agua Prieta and across the border into Douglas. All hell broke loose!

Reporters from the Douglas Daily Dispatch were on the wires reporting this appearance to newspaper services from border to border and coast to coast. Soon reporters from all over the country were flocking into town to get the story on her disappearance and all the mystery associated with her absence.

She stated that during the nights in the desert in Mexico she could see periodically a glow in the night sky (which was caused by the dumping of slag from the smelter furnaces), so she "followed the gleam" and thus arrived on foot but oddly in dust free shoes.

The Western Union office in town was swamped with messages going and coming from cities all over the country. Chuck, besides his job at the dairy, was also a Western Union messenger delivering messages by bicycle to reporters holed up in hotels or at the newspaper. He also made deliveries to the Calumet Hospital where the evangelist was recuperating from her ordeal. There were other messenger boys all of whom were busy around the clock keeping up with the flow of information.

The town buzzed with excitement over all this national attention and many businesses flourished with the added income from all the out of town reporters and others connected to the event. The Chamber of Commerce concocted all kinds of promotional stuff using the phrase, "Where She Walked!" which was put up all over town. Orange stickers with the slogan were attached to letters and the activity was really something.

As far as I know, no reasonable explanation of the disappearance was ever forthcoming and many people thought the whole episode was a promotional gimmick to inspire interest in her church. After a few weeks it all died down. Aimee Semple McPherson went back to California, and the town settled back to normal.

Personally, I recall no involvement in this episode except that I was there when probably the most exciting thing that ever happened in Douglas was going on.

### THE METHODIST CHURCH

The Methodist Church was only five blocks down the street from our house making it a convenient place not only for worship but a social center as well. Mother insisted on regular attendance, so Chuck and I attended Sunday School and the regular service every Sunday. Not only that, but in the summer time we went to daily Vacation Bible School at the Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church, a block up the street.

A "live wire" group was organized for kids our age which included





**Grace Methodist Church, 11th Street and D Avenue. (CCHAS photo)**

recreational and craft activity. I remember various games we played in the church yard and even making radios by wrapping copper wire around oatmeal cartons and a crystal with a "cat whisker" and a set of earphones. Some of the kids had success with this venture but the results of my efforts were not as good and I lost interest in the radio stuff.

Mother was interested in the "Ladies Aid" and spent some time with this group. They had teas, made quilts, had bake sales and things of that nature to raise money for the needy. Church dinners were scheduled rather frequently and in the summer ice cream socials were held in the church yard. We attended all these things.

Mother had a rich contralto voice. Sometimes if Sunday School dismissal was a little delayed, kids would get to the regular church service late and would have to find a seat other than with their parents. On these occasions, it was easy for us to know where mother was sitting because her resonant voice rang out above all the others making her location known.

One such Sunday the family was separated and I was sitting alone in the congregation. We had learned most all the standard hymns which we sang along with the congregation and some of the church ritual was tolerable for a kid but the sermons usually left us cold and our minds would wander. We would get restless and wonder when the service would ever end. Such a situation existed on this particular Sunday. I was bored, restless and hoping for something of interest to occur.

The preacher, Rev. Wilbur Fisk, had just finished his sermon and as usual at this point in the service was asking all those who wanted to dedicate their lives to the Lord to come forward and be baptized. Of course, he had already conducted pre-baptismal preparations with the two or three anticipated candidates, but I didn't know this. So when they rose from their seats and

started toward the altar, I figured, "What the heck, I've been coming to this church as long as I can remember and have never been baptized, and now is as good a time as any," so I got up and joined them.

The look on Rev. Fisk's face was one of surprise and I suppose my mother was about to have a fit, but the ritual was carried out without a hitch. I was duly sprinkled and baptized forthwith.

I think I was 10 years old at the time, but from then on I felt a lot better about doing all the stuff at the church.

### **PASTIMES**

Winter sports were never heard of in southern Arizona. Once in a while snow would fall, but rarely more than enough to cover the ground. Even then it would be melted in a short time. With this situation prevailing, sleds were of no use. Same thing with ice skates.

The mild weather was conducive to almost year round outdoor play, challenging our ingenuity in creating recreational activity. We were rather successful in this pursuit and filled our spare time with many activities.

**KITES:** March was the month for kites. Usually winds were stronger this time of the year and kids would start making kites to take advantage of this weather condition.

There were no kits for easy kite assembly. Our kites were made from scratch. Ribs were made from bamboo or other suitable sticks. Tissue paper covered the ribs and the string strung around the ends of the ribs. Paste made with flour and water was used to fasten the paper to the frame. If the kite needed a tail, cloth rags were torn into strips and tied together until the proper length was achieved. Test flights were made to determine the proper tail length.

Kites were made in various shapes and sizes but usually in two dimensions. However, box kites were popular. These consisted of a box shaped frame, four sided and about three times as high as the width. Wide paper bands were attached around both ends of the contraption, a bridle string was attached top and bottom on one side to which the flying string was attached and it would be ready to go.

At school there was always a "Kite Day" and prizes were awarded for the largest, the smallest, the most ornate, the most unusual and for flying the highest and the farthest and so forth. Excitement was rampant on "Kite Day" when the rewards for all the ingenious designs and labor were given. Even the kids who didn't win a prize had a great time anyway. We spent a lot of time making and flying kites.

**MARBLES:** It was easy to find a suitable place to play marbles. Any flat place where the dirt was smooth would do. We played "fish" and "circle."

In fish, a stick was used to mark a fish shaped design in the dirt, usually about two feet long. In the middle of this figure, each player would place one or more marbles depending on the number of players. At some distance away, a straight line was drawn to which players would lag their shooting marble. The one closest to the line would shoot first and then in successive order each would shoot from a predetermined spot toward the fish. The idea was to attempt to knock one of the marbles out of the fish, and if successful, keep shooting until he missed. Then the other players would continue in turn until all the marbles were shot out of the fish. Marbles shot out of the fish became the property of the shooter.

"Circle" was basically the same game except a circle about four feet in



diameter was drawn and all the shots were made from a spot on the perimeter of the shooter's choice.

Various kinds of marbles were used in the games. "Doughbabes" were made of clay and coated with a glaze which looked like the coating on a pretzel. They were cheap and rarely used because of their low value and lack of spherical precision. "Glassies" were the standard. They were just like marbles of today, made of glass with swirling colors. "Aggies" were really made of agate. They were expensive and of greatest value. Why they must have cost 10 or 15 cents each! These were used as shooters or "taws" as we called them and never used as target marbles. "Steelies" were marble sized ball bearings used as taws. Because of their weight, they were a little hard to shoot but were devastating when shot into a cluster of target marbles.

I was a pretty good shot resulting in a cache of a hundred or so glassies as trophies of my expertise.

**TOPS:** I never see kids playing with tops anymore nor do I see any kind of top in any of the stores, but we spent many hours applying our skills with these things. I can't believe anyone would not know about tops. This is written to enlighten the uninformed.

A top is shaped somewhat like a pear only coming to a point on the small end into which is inserted a steel point. A groove is cut around the large end around which a string is wound, and the winding is continued around and around the top. The end of the string is formed into a loop which is placed over the middle finger. The wound top is then placed in the hand and adroitly thrown toward the ground unwinding the string causing the top to spin. Interesting maneuvers can be developed making spinning more intricate and challenging.

The game of tops is played by one spinner having his top spinning on the ground while the opponent tries to toss his top in such a way as to collide with the first top interrupting its spin but continuing to spin itself. Several variations of this basic play can be conjured. The kids usually had several tops of various sizes and design and spent many hours enjoying the sport.

**MUMBLETY PEG:** This game must be played on grass which we found either in our front yards or over in the 10th Street Park. It is a game played by no more than three players who take turns flipping a jack knife with the point resting on various body parts such as forehead, nose, shoulder, elbow, etc. into the ground. The first player to complete all the maneuvers in succession without missing is declared the winner. The loser is required to pull an embedded peg out of the ground with his teeth. Hence the name, mumblety peg.

**SLINGSHOTS:** This device consists of two varieties both of which we made and became quite adept at using. One variety is made by either cutting a suitable fork out of a tree branch or sawing a "Y" shaped fixture out of a piece of wood. A leather piece of the proper size to partially encase a small stone is then connected to the fixture with rubber straps about eight or 10 inches long to the two top ends of the "Y." We cut these rubber straps from discarded auto tire inner tubes.

A stone is placed in the leather and the operator holds the stone between the thumb and index finger of one hand while the other hand holds the "Y." The sling is pulled back and then released sending the stone flying toward the target.

The other variety is the kind David used to slay Goliath. These consist of a similar piece of leather connected by cords of suitable length one of which has a loop slipped over a finger of the throwing hand with the other held between the thumb and index finger. The device is spun around and around and when the desired speed is attained the end held between the fingers is released at the proper instant and the stone is propelled at great speed toward the target.

With practice, one can become quite accurate with these things. We practiced shooting at cans, bottles or whatever. Both of these devices are lethal and caution must be taken in their use. Fortunately, no one was ever hurt while we were playing with them.

This was a time when kids made their own entertainment, and these are examples of some of the things we did. In my opinion, the ingenuity required in making things and applying their use not only resulted in hours of pleasure but was good training in developing self reliance as well as mechanical aptitude and other positive traits.

### THE APARTMENT

Mother must have been getting frustrated with the operation of the dining room in the Gadsden Hotel. The demands on her time were great and the profit was less than she expected. Since she was going home for short periods between the breakfast, lunch and dinner sessions, she decided to rent our home and move into an apartment at 1118 E Ave. to be closer to the hotel. It was late in 1925 when we made this move.

I was working at Ferguson's Drugstore evenings and Saturdays and also peddling papers. Chuck was getting up early in the mornings to deliver milk for the Douglas Dairy. So life went along as usual except that we were living at a different place only two blocks from the Gadsden Hotel. The rent from the house was a little greater than the rent for the apartment, so from an economic standpoint we were somewhat better off.

By this time, the Methodist Church had changed ministers and Rev. Marvel was the new man whose family occupied the parsonage next door to the church. The Marvels had four children: Ted, Victor, Helen and Ruth. The boys were somewhat older than Chuck and I, but the girls were closer in age albeit a year or so older.

Mother struck up a mutual fondness with Mrs. Marvel and they became close friends. We then lived only a half block from the parsonage and every once in a while, Chuck and I would take the girls for a ride on our bicycles.

This episode is mentioned only because of a strange series of events which ensued. We left Arizona a short time later and so did the Marvels. He was sent to a town in Kansas, then became ill and passed away. Mrs. Marvel and the girls then moved to Winfield, Kan. In the meantime, we moved to Kansas City.

Several years later when Chuck and I were in our late teens, we visited the Marvels. Chuck and Helen and Ruth and I spent some time together strolling around the area in the evenings while Mother and Mrs. Marvel were doing their visiting.

Although we were there only a couple of days, something must have started between Chuck and Helen. After an extended courtship mostly by mail and telephone, they became engaged and married in 1937. This was 12 years after our bicycle rides when we were kids.



The bicycles were not built for two, so that just goes to show that when the love-bug strikes, the type of equipment matters little.

### OFF TO KANSAS CITY

In correspondence with my uncle Frank, who was with the board of education in Kansas City, Mo., Mother mentioned her frustration with the Gadsden Hotel thing and expressed her hope that some day she could return to her hometown and find some way to make a living.

It so happened that in Kansas City three large new high schools were being constructed, all of which would have full cafeteria facilities to feed several thousand students. My uncle asked Mother if she would be interested in coming to Kansas City to assume the position of manager of one of these cafeterias.

The superintendent of schools in Kansas City happened to be an old friend of the family who had known my uncle and my mother for a long time. Since Mother had the experience of operating the Gadsden Hotel dining room for a couple of years and was on the inside track with the superintendent, she was offered the job.

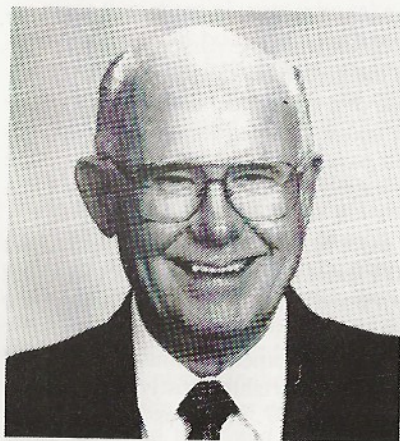
Thus a new venture started. It was in August, 1926 when all the household goods were sold and preparations made for the move. Mother made arrangements for the renters to assume ownership of the house on some kind of an extended payment plan.

Chuck quit his job at the dairy. I told Mr. Ferguson that I was going to Kansas City and would have to quit my job at his drug store where I had been working for two years.

I had \$14 in a savings account in a new bank which had started up in town. I decided to leave the money on deposit and let the interest accrue, which turned out to be a dumb decision because the bank went belly-up during the Depression.

And so the big departure. We boarded a train to Kansas City and left Douglas. To me it was not with misgivings but with a feeling of a new adventure to begin in a large city about which Mother had talked and which we had visited on several occasions.

But that is another story.



**About the author:** Bill Gibson first carved out a career with TWA and later worked for General Electric. He and his wife, Joanne, retired to the Tucson area where he is active in Kiwanis.

## Letters

### Dear Editor:

What a tremendous research accomplishment Cindy Hayostek achieved for the article on my brother Edward's service story (Summer, 1995).

The article was so well written. The way she wove the material I sent with the background of my father and his interest in aviation, bringing American Airlines through Douglas, tied the Huxtable heritage to Douglas and one of its pioneers.

Thank you for the extra copies. I have sent one to our Canadian relatives and the other to R.L. Scott Armitage, who lives in Sierra Vista. R.L. grew up in Douglas and has a wealth of memories on early days in Douglas. She is approaching 90 years of age. R.L. will send her copy to my sister, Mary Russell, whose daughter is interested in our family genealogy.

I also enjoyed the story on Ashley Packard, whom I knew.

Again, I commend you for the article. It was so well done. Thank you for telling the story of Edward J. Huxtable Jr. and his heroic role in the service of his country.

— **Martha Huxtable Vickers**  
Sun City Center, Fla.

### Dear Editor:

"Japan Surrenders: Ed Huxtable of Douglas" is a marvelous tribute to this great naval officer and ace pilot. I was saddened by his untimely demise and think of him often. I only wish he was here to read the article.

Ed was one of my best friends and the two of us enjoyed many hunting, fishing and camping trips together. I fondly remember his delightful mother and his two pretty sisters, Martha and Mary Russell, who were such

well-mannered young ladies.

I graduated from Douglas High School a year earlier than Ed and was also interested in the U.S. Naval Academy. Lewis Douglas, who then was a U.S. Congressman from Arizona and a resident of Douglas, offered me an appointment to Annapolis.

There were stiff requirements prior to taking the entrance examination. The sticker was high school courses in ancient history, solid geometry and trigonometry. None of these courses was offered by Douglas High School.

One way to meet these requirements was to attend a prep school at Annapolis, which was operated by Annapolis retired officers who taught such courses and in turn gave the applicant a comprehensive review of all his high school subjects pertinent to passing the entrance examination.

The Great Depression was not yet over and my father had been retired from Phelps Dodge on a meager pension, so was financially unable to send me to the private prep school. I therefore gave up the idea of going to Annapolis.

A year later, Ed received an appointment from Mr. Douglas to the Academy and was faced with the same problems as I had. Mr. Huxtable paid Ed's tuition to this private school aforementioned, which assured he would meet the high school requirements and in turn pass the entrance examination.

I might add I knew Ashley Packard, who was younger than I. My sister often spoke of him.

I read of the proposal to increase the annual dues to \$20. It seems to me the fair way would have been to put the proposal to the vote of the membership. It is my opinion you will lose members with this increase in dues.

— **C.B. Fleming**  
Mesa



**Dear Editor:**

What a pleasant surprise to receive the summer issue of *The Cochise Quarterly*. I was delighted that you remembered our lunch together and kept my card, enabling you to send me the interesting magazine.

The subject material is of real interest to me as a history buff and as a flyer. I can well appreciate the time spent in research of this material and then presenting it in a way that makes the stories come alive.

Since our Elderhostel stay in Douglas, I have found an opportunity to play a part in the commemoration of the end of World War II. You may know that the man who owns the Gadsden Hotel flies forest fire slurry bombers during the summer. He flies a PV-2 Harpoon, a WW II Navy bomber converted to carry fire-fighting liquid. There are only a few of these old planes left in flying condition.

Five years ago, a military heritage foundation from Indianapolis bought one of these old planes that had been used as a bug sprayer since WW II and has been converting it back to the way it was used by the Navy. It is now restored and one of only two in the country flying in the original military configuration. I have been asked to check out in it and will be flying it in the Chicago, New York City and Washington, D.C. celebrations of VJ Day.

Another item of historical interest is that my good friend, with whom I rode in the back seat on his 75th anniversary flight, is still flying on his 77th anniversary. He was a fighter pilot in World War I and has been flying longer than anyone else in history. He will be 97 in November. Clarence Cornish still attends all of the meetings of our Quiet Birdman flying club and drives himself and his wife on long vacation trips.

We had a such a wonderful, scenic and culturally stimulating visit to your city and county that we would love to come back.

— James Graham  
Brownsburg, Ind.

## Reviews

By Cindy Hayostek

**Copper Crucible: How the Arizona Miners' Strike of 1983 Recast Labor Management Relations in America by Jonathan D. Rosenblum; Cornell University Press, 512 E. State St., Ithaca, NY 14850; 257 pages, notes and index, \$38 hardback, \$16.95 softcover.**

A dozen years ago, a strike by union workers against Phelps Dodge Corp. racked several Arizona towns. Effects of that strike are still discernable, to varying degrees, in Clifton, Morenci, Ajo, Douglas and Bisbee. Rosenblum asserts the strike also changed labor management relations in the United States.

That a strike in some small Arizona copper-mining towns had such a wide-ranging effect is a big statement. But journalist and lawyer Rosenblum presents a strong case that that's exactly what happened.

He begins by outlining the history of labor relations between unions and Arizona copper companies. This includes the "Wobblies," how unions came to be used as a tool to fight discrimination and the perfection of pattern bargaining.

In 1983, Phelps Dodge refused to conform to the pattern. PD cited low copper prices, company losses and a weak national economy as reasons for not signing a new labor contract. The cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) became the sticking point and a strike began at midnight June 30.

In August, already high tensions

rose further when PD announced it would begin hiring permanent replacement workers. The strikers forced a shutdown of the Morenci plant and this led to activation of the National Guard and increased violence.

Rosenblum makes it clear he feels PD was out to break the unions. Union leaders challenged PD's accounting and contended PD was bargaining in bad faith. When the National Labor Relations Board said it could find no evidence of this, the union cause was dead.

Although there was much more maneuvering, eventually the union was decertified. Rosenblum says this result "is emblematic of the decline of two vital achievements of the American labor movement: solidarity and the right to strike."

Rosenblum interviewed PD executives, union leaders and others involved with the strike. His sketches of these people are succinct and telling. He covers many viewpoints but obviously sympathizes with the rank-and-file. The price they paid, Rosenblum notes, was often wrenching.

The title of this book of recent history is particularly apt. One definition of crucible is a severe trial. The 1983 strike was certainly that to everyone concerned.

**Cochise: Chiricahua Apache Chief by Edwin R. Sweeney; University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Ave., Norman, OK 73019; 512 pages, photographs, maps, bibliography, index; \$16.95 paperback.**

First published in 1991, this award-winning biography of the Apache leader for whom this county and thus this publication are named has been issued in paperback.

Although the volume is Sweeney's first book, it received favorable

reviews, with good reason. Sweeney spent more than 10 years in wide-ranging research on his subject and the result is a richly detailed biography.

Despite its meticulousness, Sweeney's writing seldom bogs down. This is due in part to the inherent drama of the story. Persecution, treachery and ruthlessness all figure predominately in the life and times of Cochise.

For those who didn't buy a hardback volume, this is the perfect chance to grab a copy of what is the definitive biography of a courageous and well-known man.