

Dad's story (Edward Jordan Fritz)

NB EJ was always called 'Dad' by the family – even the grandkids – and Mary Eloise was 'Mom' to everyone, too.

By Norma Fritz Bird

Edward Jordan Fritz was born Aug 9 1892 (see Norma's second comment on this below) in Covington, KY. His father was John Thomas Fritz, born in Portsmouth, Ohio on March 4, 1860. John Thomas served in the army, US Cavalry (1883 to 1885), stationed at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. While stationed there he made a trip to Fr Laramie and to Camp Carlin, near Cheyenne. He was wounded during target practice and given a medical discharge with pension. He returned to Covington, KY where he married Annie Witmore in 1888. They had four children – Jack, Lon, Edward and Will. Annie died in 1896. The children were placed in an orphanage after their father found he was unable to get capable women to care for them while he worked. Thomas Fritz died Dec 27, 1936.

When Edward (Ed or EJ as he was later known) was eight years old, he left the orphanage to live with a woman and her mother, named Webster. He then went by the name of Webster as his name, also. He later moved to Kansas.

This part covers from the time he went to live in Maysville until he and Mom were married November 14, 1917:

Dad was born either Aug 9 or 10 – Grandpa said 10, Dad said 9. When he got the birth certificate later he found it was a year different, too, so he was a year older than he thought he was. Born August 10, 1981. He died January 30, 1958 in Cheyenne. He died 2 days after John Frandsen was born in the same Memorial Hospital – one on one floor and the other on the other. Dad had gotten the Asian flu after 2 years of being in bed and in and out of the hospital after having had a massive stroke and being badly paralyzed. Still he was aware of everything that went on, even if he could not talk. Mom said he willed himself to wait to

know about Judy's baby (John Frandsen). He made it, but only because John came early. We felt sure Dad knew the baby was here though he was in a near coma at the time.

It is a miracle he lived to be 66 ½ , after all the 'lives' he nearly lost. He said he was taken by a teacher – Webster. We never heard her first named and we don't know what Dad called her. I feel sure she thought she had legally adopted him but he could not be as he had a living relative. Grandpa said he never signed papers for any of the boys to be adopted. He always just said they were taken out of the orphanage. Somehow he lost track of Dad, either early or when he went to Kansas at 14. This is all hazy to both of them now.

Dad said he was a skinny tall kid who never outgrew it. He was hardly the type anyone would have taken to be a work horse, but he said she needed someone to chop the wood and bring in the coal. Marge said it was also to be there with her aging parents. Dad did speak of them and some of the names he talked about may have been those two. Marge wrote this to me in a letter: 'Dad helped cook at the fireplace. She must have had a big building because she ran the Post Office, a hotel and had a milliner's shop (a hat maker). They rented rooms for 25cents a night and space for wagons during camp meetings. When she had no work for him, she would rent him out to farmers and he would go riding with 'ladies'. He would ride behind one of them and hold the horses and wait for them to come. He always had some aristocratic ideas which probably helped make him more unhappy. I don't think the woman (Mrs Webster) was mean to him – just practical, I suppose.' He learned a lot from her and from living there. She was a great reader and taught him to like reading, too. He knew poetry as well as Mom and I don't believe it was all from the school system. He went to a country school and I cannot be sure any more if she was the teacher. He learned the Bible, classics, literature, mythology and history. If all this was at school, it was a good school. I believe he was encouraged or maybe forced to learn at home.

I know he knew the Bible better than anyone I ever met. He said he had to learn a different verse every day for years. His favorite was the shortest: 'Jesus wept.' He never forgot a lot of this learning. He disliked her religion. Hellfire and brimstone, he called it. He had a fear of all this from early childhood, probably from inside the orphanage as well. He would not let us be baptized as he hated the whole idea. He must have been dunked as a child, the way he talked about it. He said he watched kids in the creek and thought it a terrible thing to do to a child in the name of religion. His church going and education ended at 14. But he never had reason to feel bad about his education. Mom said he had not had much math, but a practical experience in practical building and weights and measures. He had little practical money sense but I doubt he ever saw much of it until he was on his own at 14 and then not much for many years after that. Not that many people of that generation did. If they had a horse and a saddle and a change of clothes they felt they were rich and I am sure he had all these most of those later years.

I believe he had a small town country life at that time. He loved the area. He knew much about what grew and always could recognize a tree that he had not seen for years when he came to California, so much of what he knew stayed with him. He learned farming and about horses. He knew about gardening and orchards and how to preserve food in a cellar they dug in the ground – for storage. I tell of this again in my own story. He knew about cooking as Marge said he learned to cook on the fireplace and later as a cook on the chuck wagons.

More than anything else he learned to work and did more if it than most men in their lives. I grew up learning alongside him and I can say we all worked hard on the farm and later after we moved to town. His learning to work seems to have been something at least 2 of his brothers never took to very much - if what little we know about them is true.

He complained about living there but most kids do that about their early life. I think she was good for him and no doubt good to him. She

fed him and he grew up healthy to be able to go on and do the things he did later on. She gave him a home, friends, a place to live and learn, clothes and a religious training, even if he didn't want it, and a good education. We owe her our thanks for all this as many kids in orphanages at that time did not do so well.

He talked about a family of Readers who lived close to them and all the scrapes he and this family of boys got into along the creeks and in the hills there. It was a kind of Tom Sawyer type of life for a bunch of boys. When Dad was 14, the woman married a man named Gardner. At the marriage she wrote a 'provision', or something that lead Dad and all of them I think to believe that it was a legal will and that she was leaving everything to Dad. At Gardner's insistence they moved to Kansas where he told Dad that he knew Dad was not legally adopted and ran him off. This is mixed up, as I don't know if she had already died when he left and Dad left or if, as it sounded to me, he was run off at 124 when they got to Kansas. That was the first he knew² that he was not adopted and that his name was not Webster. He did not know about his family or how to get in touch at that young age. He never talked much about what he did at first but we know he went on cattle drives into Nebraska, Wyoming and Colorado. He said that he was the cook's helper as the smallest youngest on a crew always got that job. He was called 'Cooky' naturally and hated that. He told one story of being in Nebraska on the Blue River when they were driving cattle back and forth from the Sand Hills of the western part to eastern Kansas. They were caught in a bad storm. And I have been in Nebraska where Chet's family lived and they are terrible storms in the summer time. They needed shelter. A church was the only building in sight. One of the men said if he ever went inside a church the roof would cave in on him. They went in there and the lightning did strike the church and the roof did come down on them.

This is where Dale's story fits in (it's on pages 3-6).

When he was sixteen years old he was involved in a gun fight over water rights while working for a rancher. A homesteader was getting water from the rancher's well and the rancher was taking the windmill down to keep the homesteader from using it. A fight ensued between the two factions and Ed was shot early in the fight and was placed in a wagon as they thought he was dead. When the fight ended it was discovered he was still alive, so he was taken to a doctor and then to a hospital in St Joseph, MO. He developed pneumonia and other complications which required surgery. It was found the bullet had lodged in the fleshy part of his heart. It was left in place, as they considered it too dangerous to remove it. He had many complications and spent eight months in the hospital. On the doctor's advice that he move to a drier climate, he came to Cheyenne in 1910, where he worked on several ranches in the area, including the Bell Ranch, east of Cheyenne. Later he worked for the 'Leader', early Cheyenne newspaper as a pressman. He worked as a conductor on the street cars which ran close to the house that the family lived in at the time which was at 27th and Snyder Ave.

At this time, he decided to try to locate his family and wrote to the orphanage which gave him information that enabled him to find his father and his brother Jack, but found nothing about his other two brothers. At this time, on his father's advice he changed his name back to Fritz. Both his father and his brother, Jack, visited him through the years.

From the tape that Dale made on his version of the story:

In 1908 Dad was working on a ranch in Kansas. He was about 16 or 17. There were still some range wars going on between ranches and squatters. There was a ranch with a man, his wife and 2 grown sons. They had a well next to their place. Someone checked and found the well was not actually on the land of the farmer. Dad was working for his board by doing chores around the place on the ranch of the man

who looked up the records. The man who bought the land with the windmill on it only had to take down the well and that would drive the farmers off their land, as they would be without water.

So one day new owner sent 2 wagons with 4 horse teams and 6 of his cowhands from the ranch to take down the windmill. As they were leaving they asked Dad if he wanted to go along. Being a 165 hears old kid, he was ready to do anything that sounded exciting. He jumped on one of the wagons and went along with them. Of course, the farmer and 2 sons were not about to let them take the windmill without a fight and a fight there was. Dad said he did not remember the fight so he was hit by one for the first bullets fired.

The bullet went through the fleshy part of the tip of the heart and he was then of course, unconscious. He did not know what went on after that. There was a gun battle in which the farmer and one of his sons, as well as 2 of the cowhands from the ranch were killed. After the battle was over they took the 5 of them and laid them out in an old school house on the ranch. They assumed Dad was dead when they saw the blood on his shirt in the area of the heart. Fortunately for Dad, but not so for the other man at the ranch there, later that night there was a fight at the ranch and one of the fellows who didn't like all that was going on wanted to leave. In the course of the argument he was killed and when they took him up to the school house to lay him out with the rest they found Dad was still alive.

They took him to a doctor and in a relatively short time he was perfectly well. They did not operate to remove the bullet; in fact no operation of any kind was performed at that time. Some time later he caught pneumonia and that was when he became very sick; in fact, he was so sick he was about to die. He was taken to a hospital in St Joseph, Missouri.

It was there the operation was performed. I have no idea who the 2 doctors were who took care of him but when they examined him they saw he was close to death. They decided, between them, that there was an operation they could try to save his life. Tat the time it was

entirely experimental. One of the reasons they could do it was that there was nobody around they had to ask to get permission to operate. They did operate. They cut away the rib section and opened up the chest cavity. They found the membrane sac around the heart was full of pus. In the course of the operation, one of the doctors put his hand in under the heart while he cleaned out the pus. This is why they say Dad was the first man that ever had his heart held in the hand and lived. This seemed to be true and it was put in the papers and Mom remembered reading the story when she lived in Texas. So you see their lives crossed a long time before they met.

At the end of the operation the doctors installed a rubber tube from the membrane sac around the heart to the outside of the chest. This was to allow the sac to drain and this was something they expected to go on a long time because they made a harness-like arrangement which had a gauze pad to absorb the drainage.

Since he had no place to go, the doctors sort of adopted hi and took care of him. In fact, they talked of sending him to medical school. In any case, he recovered quite well but in the humid air of St Joseph he kept getting touches of pneumonia. So finally, the 2 doctors decided he would never make it unless he got to a high dry climate.

So they decided to send him to Wyoming. They bought him a train ticket to Wyoming and sent him off. They told him if he ever got pneumonia to come back to them at the hospital in St Joseph.

I never quite figured out why he ended up in Sunrise at the end of that train ride. It just doesn't make sense because all the trains that go into Sunrise are on a small spur track off the main Union Pacific. If he was coming from Kansas area, I can't understand how he ended up in Sunrise. That is where he went and that is where he stayed. Sunrise is a little town off of Torrington where there is iron mining and that little spur line is still operation.

He had to have a job, so looked around for work. The job he found was shoveling coal from a coal car into the tender on a train that fed the engine. Now this was on the spur line off the UP that ran to Wheatland. It was called the Turkey Trail. It was not a big line. It didn't go anywhere but Wheatland and then came back. It was not the engineer's choice of a place to work for the railroad. In fact, they used it as a place to sort of discipline engineers who gave them trouble. If they did something wrong or something they didn't like, then they would put them on the Turkey Trail.

At the time Dad arrived there was a fellow called Casey Jones. Anyone on the railroad named Jones was called that. This guy seemed to be an ornery old cuss and deserved to be on the Turkey Trail. Dad had nothing to do with the train. He worked at night filling the tender. I don't know how long he had this job, but after a while the fireman resigned from his position and Casey turned to Dad and said, 'you'll have to come with me on the engine and be the fireman.' Dad said he could not shovel coal day and night. But Casey said not to worry about that; he would shovel the coal. All Dad had to do was be there as he had to have a fireman.

So this is what happened. Dad went along on the engine. Casey, even though he was the engineer, shoveled the coal into the firebox. Dad just rode along with him. I guess a lot of this was boring trips but on the occasion when they had a lot of stuff to haul, they split the load and made two trains following one another. Once in a while, this old codger would jump off the train when they were going up a grade and when it was at a slow speed, he would oil the tracks with a long handled, long snouted can. He would keep this in the caboose and then run up and get back in the engine. Then the second section would have trouble getting up the hill. The wheels would just spin and not get anywhere. They would have to stop and put sand on it to get rid of the oil. That was really the kind of guy he was. So he deserved what he got on the Turkey Trail.

But on one occasion, when they were coming back from the Wheatland area, they had to go through a canyon. I guess this canyon was pretty steep. The railroad bed was really just built on a shelf that had been carved out of the side of the canyon. It was a pretty dangerous place and the speed limit was 20mph. On this one time when they were coming back they saw a boulder had fallen and was lying right in the middle of the track. They stopped, got out to take a look at it to see what they could do about it. Casey said he thought he could knock the thing off so they got back on the train and backed the train up and went going about 30mph. They hit the boulder and they did knock it off but in the process they knocked off the cowcatcher. The cowcatcher is that thing on the old steam engines that was to scoop off the animals or anything that got in the way. It was made of wood – and it was demolished. When they got in the yard and the report got around that there was no cowcatcher on their engine anymore, Casey was called into the office in Cheyenne to explain what happened.

Since he had to go he said to Dad, ‘why don’t you go along and take the physical exam and become a full time fireman?’ They did go into Cheyenne and the people in the office knew he was an ornery old cuss. They knew that if you didn’t want to know anything you just didn’t ask him. But there was somebody from the head office in Omaha there and he said he’d handle this.

Dad went in with Casey and they said they wanted an explanation of how that engine got damaged. The records show here that you were coming back up the canyon and saw this boulder in the road. How far were you from the boulder? Casey said, about 200 yards. The guy said how fast were you going?. Casey said 20mph. That’s the speed limit in that canyon. And the guy said how fast were you going when you hit that boulder? Casey said 30 mph. The guy said, ‘you mean to tell me that in 200 yards you were able to go from 20 mph to 30mph?’ Casey said, ‘I backed up, you damn fool.’ That was the kind of answers you got from Casey. I don’t know what happened in the rest of it, but Casey

was back on the Turkey Trail. This kind of trick didn't get him back on the mainline.

Dad went in to take the physical to be a fireman and the minute he took off his shirt the Doctor said, 'what's that?' when he saw the harness. Dad told him what it was. The Doctor said, 'Put your shirt back on. You'll never be a fireman.' That was the end of Dad's career on the UP railroad. Dad stayed in Cheyenne. He then got a job for the Bell Ranch, as a cowboy.

The Bell ranch was spread out all over east of Cheyenne. The part of it that we know is to the northeast of the Hudson farm. He stayed a cowboy for a time until someone saw him with his shirt off and then he had to explain it and after that they wouldn't let him ride anymore.

That is when he became the regular chuck wagon cook. Whenever we had fish Dad cooked it. That doesn't make much sense as I am sure on a chuck wagon in Wyoming they didn't have much fish. If they did, it came out of a can. I can't be sure how long his cowboy life lasted. He used to go to Cheyenne for the big city night life.

At one time he did get pneumonia; he went to a doctor in Cheyenne who diagnosed it as pneumonia. Dad had enough money that he got a ticket on the train and went to St Joseph's to see the doctors there. By the time he got there he was about well but he went to see them anyway. They were quite amazed to see him and to know that he was still alive. They checked him over. It just happened that there was a medical convention in the city so they told Dad they would give him \$10 if he would come up to the convention that night. So he did and they took his shirt off, pushed back the dishes on the table, laid him up there and told the whole story of the operation which they had done. After that he went back to work on the Bell Ranch. Then one night he was in a hotel in Cheyenne. He heard somebody scream and the next thing he knew he had the whole harness, tube and all, in his hand and he was sitting up in bed. Immediately people started banging on the door and he figured out that he was the one doing the screaming. Eventually he let the people in and they called the doctor.

Evidently what had happened in those 3 years the rubber tube that was in his chest wore down to a point and when he turned over in bed, it slipped under the breast bone which is a tender spot – and the pain was severe. He had grabbed the whole thing in his sleep and pulled it out.

The doctor came and looked at him and Dad explained it to him. He said that they either had to put the tube back or heal the hole. The hole was about the size of my little finger in the surface of his chest into the heart. They decided to try to heal it and they did. They had to cauterize it twice. As kids when we would see Dad with his shirt off, that section of the chest was a mass of scars and the biggest and deepest was where the tube was taken out. It left quite a hole in the chest even after all that time.

We used to ask Mom and she would say she didn't know. We asked Dad and he would say he got shot. He didn't even tell Mom about this until later after he had his serious heart attack in Dec 1941.

The doctors expected him to live only 3 years 16 to 19. They must have been surprised to see him again and to know he was a cowboy and that he had shoveled coal. I don't know much about his careers. He couldn't get in WWI. Too tall and underweight, he said. The second time he went for a physical he ate all the bananas he could hold so he could try to make the weight but he didn't make it.

He worked on the newspaper as a pressman. He lost several of the ends of his fingers – the tips only had scars on them. They would grab the flesh up and sew them back on. That was too much for him, being inside and the fumes of the melting lead of the print were not good for him.

And one more story: He and his friend Red Sandburg, who he worked with, were amateur photographers. Cameras and photos in papers were new. If they took a photo they used in the paper, they were paid a little extra for it. One time when airplanes were experimenting with night landing they went out to make a picture of the landing. They worked it out so that Dad would take one picture just as the plane

touched down and Red was further down, where he would take another one as it was taxiing along. The plan worked out fine. Dad took the first as it touched down and Red took the second just as it turned over. There was an irrigation ditch across the field that no one had done anything about. It hit that and went over on its nose. The picture showed it standing straight up on its nose. The paper used it and they did get something for it, as amateur photographers. I can remember his bellows type Kodak with a little door that opened so you could write on the film, which would then be printed on the picture. We don't have that camera now; it was around for years. Hope it is still somewhere.

This is the end of Dale's tape.

More by Norma Bird

I heard Dad tell the story but it is a little different from what Dale heard. One little thing: Dad said one of the ranch hands wanted his harp (harmonica or Jew's harp) and went into the bunk house and found him. When I was small I pictured the harp as a big instrument so was surprised when Dad meant a harmonica. Dad was always stooped. He could stand straight but when relaxed, he bent over. He had shallow lungs. He said he spent 8 months in the hospital on pillows under his head to raise him so he could breathe. He told of drinking water and putting ice in it when they came to take his temperature to break the monotony of lying there so long. It must have been a hard way for an active teenager to exist.

He also had smothering spells all his life that he thought had a lot to do with the injury. It was so scary to hear him struggling for breath and Mom was so scared so often. Now the doctors would call it sleep apnea and maybe do something for it.

I think Dad worked first on the Swan ranch up by Iron Mountain. We went there just one time later to see what it was like and it was a desolate place to be – between Wheatland and Laramie. One time

when I was older we went to watch a Frontier Parade and the Queen riding in the parade came over to Dad and said to us that our Dad had taught her to ride a horse when she was our age. She was the Nimmo girl. He liked this family better than most.

He was there during the Tom Horn affair and his version certainly was not like the one we see in shows. He did not have a good opinion of the authorities in town; even though he was a cow man, he thought they were in the wrong.

He did not like it when they changed the name of the fort from Fort Russell (for the Union Pacific engineer that surveyed the town of Cheyenne). Fort Warren was named for the cattle ranger Warren who was a senator and whose daughter married Pershing.

Dad worked around on different ranches before he went to work for the Bell ranch which was the place he stayed the longest. He said he came to Cheyenne by 1909. He would have been there by the time he was 18 ... so had spent about 3 years in Kansas getting over the shooting.

When I was in Cheyenne in 1986 Don and Edna took me out to see the Bell Ranch to the east of the Hudson farm where some of you have been. Dad always liked that area and when they built that new cemetery he said that was where he wanted to be. As usual Mom would have preferred to be in town as she did not have the love for that windy spot out there that Dad did.

I told Don the story of the Marple baby and he said he did not know Dad was mixed up in that, too. I am going to put this down just as I wrote it in 1981 before I heard everyone's version:

One time when I was 5 or 6 we were living at the Rice place and we went to a social function. Maybe a wedding reception or something that got everyone together from that area. I remember Mom and Mrs Marple, who was older than Mom, were sitting on the porch and I was listening to them talk. She told us that Dad saved her life. She was due to have a baby and had planned to go into town 7 miles away (Cheyenne) in time for the baby to be born there close to the doctor.

But it started to come during a blizzard and Dad and another cowboy were also caught between ranches and had to stay there with them. The men of the family were caught away from home and she was alone with 2 strangers. The other one stayed with her and Dad took 2 horses and rode to get the doctor in town. There were no phones, few roads and few ranch houses, at that time. Very few fence lines, too. He doesn't know how he found Cheyenne but then they knew he was the only one who could get the doctor back to the right ranch house, so he had to go back by horseback. The tracks he had left were erased and they had to find the way again. The doctor saved both the mother and baby, but they all had to stay a while because it was such a bad storm. Dad knew all the ranchers for miles around and knew the men and families but in a blizzard everything can be lost.

One time he told me the name of all the ranchers and their brands. I think this was probably the most settled part of his young life while he was working on those places. Maybe that was why when he started farming he enjoyed living on the Rice place. When I was 5 and living there a man named Campbell had a farm a mile or less from our farm. It is still there on the I80 which used to be the Lincoln highway and later US30. Anyway this farmer cut out of wood a big camel that he put on his hill so that could be seen from the road. I also remember getting stuck in the mud on that road when it was a dirt road and Dad swearing about it. Mom told him not to swear in front of the children and he handed her the shovel to dig us out. They did not speak for the rest of the way home after he got over being mad and dug up the road himself to get us out. It was no wonder that Mom did not have good memories of that place as I told about in Grandpa's story.

I don't know what he did all that time between 1909 and 1917 when they married but I know he was the street car conductor when he and Mom met in 1917. He was lucky in this time to have had 'Old Doc Johnston' to be there for him. He was the one they called that night in the Oceanic hotel when he woke up screaming. That hotel was the famous one in Cheyenne. It and the Cheyenne Social Club were the

main centers of activity downtown. As usual all towns tear down their fine old buildings in the name of progress.

Back to the doctor. He saw Dad through the flu epidemic, a near case of diphtheria, cut off finger tips and at least 2 of us new babies, who were born at home, of course. I found out later that he had an original painting by Charles Russell. He was given the painting in exchange for a doctor bill. At the time, I was living in Cheyenne and going to art club there; they said it had never been reproduced as most have been.

Dad was going to the same Methodist church on 19th and Central (I believe) that Mom and Jesse were going to. I never heard of Ed ever going in a church and the church that Jim and Mattie went to after they came was one of those Holy Rollers that Mattie liked and Jim did not.

This is out of place but has to do with the injury story:

Dad was in Pine Bluffs and Mom was in Laramie where she had a kind of a boarding house for Dale and another student or two during the school year of 1941 and 1942. I will tell more of this later in the story of Pine Bluffs. This is when Mom started doing work on this story I am writing. Dad had a heart attack on, I believe, the 19th of December. Mom and Dale and Marge were all in Laramie so Leland Lewis son of Dad's best friend Otto Lewis and Dr Morris brought Dad to my house in Cheyenne. Dr Morris said to get him into a hospital there if I could but the only doctor I could get said it would not make any difference as he was not going to live so he would not put him into the hospital. This is in the days before Medicare.

Mom, Dale and Marge came right down and we somehow had a Christmas and got through the week. I remember Chet and I going out to buy a chicken among other foods to fix a New Year's dinner the next day. It was 32 below zero on the thermometer at the bank in Cheyenne.

Dad had made it so Mom decided to take him to Laramie where maybe we could get him to a doctor there. Since it is 8000 feet elevation over Sherman Hill they went by way of Fort Collins and up that draw that is

not so high. Chet was taking a college course in Leadership and welding at the college and Dale was back in college and Marge in the 10th grade, I believe. He survived that trip, too. (I was in our house in Cheyenne with a 2 year old Judy, a 5 year old Connie and just pregnant with Linda) Chet stayed up there, too, during the week. To explain all this: the war was unofficially on. Hitler had moved into the Balkans in Sept 1939. Japan hit Pearl Harbor three weeks before Dad's heart attack. Everyone wanted to do something. Dad had gone out and picked up bones that were lying loose in the hills for so long some might have been buffalo or long horned cattle from the Texas cattle drives. He got the bones as the war effort needed lime or whatever from the bones to use to make munitions. They offered to pay a bit for each pound anyone would gather up. Dad got enough to buy the turkey for our big Christmas dinner we were all to have at my house - probably a couple dollars. He was batching alone. Our neighbor called the doctor after Dad managed to call or get to her to tell her he was sick. Mom said he may have overdone it out trying to get the bones on a cold day. Edna and Don were already in Richmond CA and working in the ship yard. They were begging for welders and each state college was doing all they could to train workers. (Also people saved grease.) I had gone up too to be there when Dad went to the doctor. We found one that said to take him to the old Iverson hospital in Laramie and he would look at him through a fluoroscope and see what he thought. A fluoroscope is a machine that shows the bones and foreign objects in the body and blood clots. Now we have CT scans that record what they see instead of just looking. Dad was standing behind the machine and Mom and the doctor were at the end where they could see. I was not. It showed up the bullet on a screen. When Mom saw the bullet she gasped and doctor said, 'what is that?' and Mom said something to hush him so that Dad did not hear it. She told the doctor about it being the bullet and the doctor said Dad was not going to make it anyway but not to tell him about the bullet as it might scare him. He had been carrying the bullet for 30 years of so.

When he asked the doctors in St Joseph about getting it out they told him that had not but let him think it had gone into the stomach and out the bowels and Dad never knew any different as none of us ever told him either, at Mom's request.

The doctors in that hospital said there was no hope for Dad and they would not put him in the hospital either. They did not clutter up hospitals with dying patients then. Dad surprised everyone but us and made it. Later after Dale quit college at the spring term and Chet had finished his 6 week course. They took Dad back to Pine Bluffs where he recovered completely enough to drive to California in July with Marge's help on the driving. Chet and Dale went in April. The girls and I went by train in June and Dad and Mom a short time afterward. We had sold our house in Cheyenne and I had moved back down with Dad and Mom and Marge for those few months.

How he survived having a sale and getting rid of everything and renting the house in Pine Bluffs and all the things they needed to do I will never know - and neither did Dad or Mom or Marge, back in school in Pine Bluffs. It was a trying time for all. One time when Dad was at his lowest the mother cat was on his bed which had been moved from the bedroom to the dining room to keep him warmer. The cat had kittens right there by his feet and he would not let Mom put her in a box. He got interested in this bunch of kittens playing all over his knew and Mom said it was the turning point as he had something to do besides worry. With it being war time and being cold and sick and his family scattered, it was enough to make anyone worry.

Back to the point of all this. When he got home from the hospital examination he was sitting in a chair by the heater in that downstairs apartment they were living in in Laramie. He told the story of the shot – the only time he ever told it. He never said why he would not talk about it before. He seemed to know that we wanted to know and he told it just as if it had happened to someone else. Mom told me that we must write it down as it was an historic event and that she had read about it when she lived in Texas. Some of this not going to the hospital

was not as much the doctor's idea maybe as it was Dad's dislike of them, as he had seen more than his share already and he certainly did again the last two years of his life. There was a blood clot in the side of the brain that the doctor warned Mom and me that could rupture at any time and cause him to have a stroke. He thought it was from the old injury and had been there for years but if it were to break loose it would be dangerous. It did, about 25 years later. This was just one of the many things that happened to him. The next worse was being pulled off a truck when his glove caught on a motor they were unloading at the dump and he fell face down on the motor. It hurt his face badly and broke out several teeth. He had also had a heart attack in 1934 when Dale and I were 12 and 16. We finished the potato crop and made it somehow through the middle of Wyoming's worst years of depression and drought.

During Dad's last illness, Mom again had to explain to more doctors all about those scars and the bullet that showed up in X-rays. They also said Dad should not be told about the bullet. They were very interested in the story, too.

Dale said Dad had cut off finger tips while working as a pressman on the newspaper. Later he cut off a finger with an electric saw. That was put back on, too, but was crooked. (Karen – this might be Dale's story as he had the same thing.) He had the 1918 flu, a disease thought to be diphtheria; was put in the pest house outside town as he was in quarantine. That was bad on me as a child as every time I got sick I thought they would take me to the pest house which had a bad reputation and I feared it more than anything in my childhood. I suppose every town had them. I don't know what they do with contagious diseases now but when Melinda was in Letterman Army hospital for radium treatments they kept her on the floor with the AIDS patients. They said she was a threat to them more than they were to her. They told us and her to stay on our side of the hall to keep it from hurting them, which was not what we expected. Her illness was not

contagious but us just being there was a threat to people with AIDS they said. Somehow he survived it all and lived to be 66.

Dad was going to the Methodist Church young people's Sunday school class where Mom was the teacher. They talked about both of them being from KY and from that they began to go together in the same group of young people. Mom said they all went to Pine Bluffs to the county fair as the Carlson and Olson girls had relatives there. They went to a dance and by the time they got home they had decided they liked each other. A few months later they were married in the parsonage of the Methodist Church.

He married Mary Eloise Burnett on November 14, 1917 at the Methodist Church in Cheyenne. Eloise was born in Hawesville, KY on December 20, 1888, moving with her family to Seymour, TX when she was six years old. She attended the University of Texas in Austin and taught school several years before joining her brothers, Ed and Jess Burnett, here in Cheyenne in 1916. They had four children, of which three were born in Cheyenne. Norma Ann (Bird) was born Aug 16, 1918 at 2409 Pioneer Ave. Edna Frances (Hudson) was born Sept 5, 1920 while they were living at 18th and Pebrican Ave in a house that for many years was the Pillar of Fire church until it was demolished to make room for the present Family Practice Center. Dale was born Feb 23, 1922 while they were living at 821 W 27th St. The house is still being occupied and looks a lot as it did then. In 1924 they moved to a farm seven miles south of Pine Bluffs where Marjorie Ruth was born May 7, 1925. Norma and Edna, being of school age, attended a little country school the first year with Pearl Sisson as the teacher. She boarded with the Fritz family. There were eight children in the school in seven different grades from the surrounding farms. The next year the school was consolidated with the Pine Bluffs School and the children had measles, chicken pox and whooping cough one after the other. Crops were good those years with good weather conditions. Ed bought a Dodge touring car but did not keep it long as it had cloth side curtains

and was too cold to ride in during the winter. He next bought a 1927 Chevrolet sedan, later trading it for a truck. After living there three years they moved into Pine bluffs where Ed was engaged in trucking and irrigated farming. In the trucking business he hauled livestock to the Denver stockyards in the fall brought back fruit, melons and vegetables to sell to the grocery stores. He also hauled coal from the Hanna mines, lumber and slate from the Fox Park area and gravel for highway construction. In the summer of 1930 he worked in Yellowstone Park with a road building crew. In the early thirties they brought land near town and he went into irrigated farming, raising potatoes and sugar beets.

In 1942 they joined their children in Richmond, Calif, where all were working in the Kaiser Shipyards, building Liberty ships for the war effort. Ed worked as a tool dispatcher. After ten years in California, they returned to Cheyenne, making their home at 2204 E 12th St. In 1956 Ed had a stroke and after a lingering illness died Jan 31, 1958. Eloise lived to the age of 81 and passed away Oct 30, 1970.

All the family was in Cheyenne in the spring of 1918. Mom had come in the late summer of 1916 expecting to be a substitute teacher and later to teach full time, when she found they did not honor her teacher's degree. Instead she went to a business school there in Cheyenne and got a job in the office of Dr Quayle, the head of the agriculture experiment farms including Archer where Dale was later the superintendent.

While she liked the job in the capitol building she never really liked secretarial work. She thought typing and filing tedious. She always resented that she couldn't use the knowledge which she had spent years getting the hard way. She had taught in the winters and gone to college in the summers for 7 years. Years later during WW2 she was surprised to find she could type and file well enough that she held a job for the Southern Pacific railroad at the Richmond Depot (CA), where they were shipping loads of war material in both directions. She was

there when we had an earthquake that she said nearly shook the second floor of that building off the foundations. Her typewrite nearly rolled into her lap. She always said later that once we learned something we would never forget it and one never knew when it would come in handy.

When she came to Cheyenne she, Ed and Jesse moved into an apartment made into the old Vendome. It was a miniature of a famous building in France. A fine old house. It was later moved to 26th street out near Randall, close to the Greek Church. The surprising thing is that when Chet and I and 4 month old Connie first moved to Cheyenne we lived in an apartment in the same building in its new location. It was moved from across from the Methodist Church on 19th to downtown to make room, I believe, for the Frontier Hotel.

When Dad and Mom married, Jesse and Ed moved to the rooms in the Opera House Block. Mom and Dad stayed in the Vendome until I was on the way. In the spring of 1918 they moved to the little house on B Street, out close to the gates of the Fort and Pioneer Park. That is where I was born. Jesse told about Dad and Mom bringing Ruth back with them and then all Jim's family being there a week or so and all of us having to move. Neither Dad nor Mom expressed any love for the place the one time they found it so I could see where I was born.

They then moved to the house on 18th street which in time became the Pillar of Fire church and later still, the location of the medical center. This is across from Ed's house; they were living there when they all had the flue as they had to move as soon as I was born. The flu epidemic started soon after I was born and was at its worst by Thanksgiving. I don't know where Jim and Mattie lived, but I believe on East 17th. Not too far from Dad and Mom during the flu epidemic. Jim and Mattie got into the red brick house on the corner of 16th and Warren in spring 1919. I liked this place with lawn and lilacs and a wrought iron fence across two sides. It was a big square building with sleeping rooms upstairs, a large kitchen and a big dining room. It had a bathroom with the water in a tank above our heads and it always had a singing noise to

it. One time I stayed there I could not sleep because of all the noises. Unlike being in quiet Pine Bluffs – I was about 10 at the time. This was the first place I saw glass glasses. We used ceramic cups and our baby tin cups to drink from. I remember them putting newspaper under our plates to keep the tablecloth clean. I asked Mom one time if I had to eat the mashed potatoes as we had them at home. I was amazed later to see people who could afford to eat something else eat beans and potatoes!

Mattie was an excellent cook and was well known. Her place was up the street from the famous Plains hotel where Ed was a barber most of his life. It was also a block from the train depot which I am glad to learn they have made into an historical landmark, so it will be saved. She had the draw of all those people to feed but her regular boarders usually filled the tables. The girls did the serving and went to school. Jim was a carpenter but did a lot of work there, too. It was a busy place and seemed like a whole new world to me when we went there. John was born into all this and was raised by everyone as part of the job. He broke his leg at 9 or 10 and could not get to school easily so came down to live with us for a few months. He knew little about dull family life as he had never known it. He and Carl were too far apart to be much company but liked each other. Carl looked after him more than the others and I am sure always felt responsible for him, being the only two boys in that mass of women around the place. Mattie's 2 sisters were also there some.

Mom had joined the Methodist church as soon as she came to town. She always said to go to church the best place to meet people and find out what a new town is like. Jesse was already going there 'when he felt the need', he later told me. He did try to go at Easter and Christmas just because he thought he should. Ed was never known to go to church. Dad had gone there with someone he knew.

Mom was soon the teacher of the young adults' class of the Sunday School and Dad was in her class. This was in the summer of 1917 when

Dad was still known as Webster. Mom was working at the capitol and Dad was a street car conductor.

They began talking about both of them being from KY originally. In the class were girls she knew who worked at the Capitol and Carlson and Olson cousins from Pine Bluffs and Albin. They, like most Swedish families of the time, sent their girls to the towns to do housework and send home their payt. These girls were Mom and Dad's friends all the time they lived in Pine Bluffs.

For a long time, until the 4H took over the fairs, it was held in Pine Bluffs. In Sept 1917 Mom and Dad went with a group from the Sunday school class to stay with the other girls' relatives in Pine Bluffs while they all went to the fair. By the time they go home Dad and Mom were going steady.

They were married 6 weeks later in the parsonage of the Methodist Church. (I put in the marriage announcement even if it is so dim it can hardly be read.)

Mom and Dad continued to belong to the church after they moved to the farm, but I doubt they went often from there. Later, when they moved back, Mom rejoined the church and maybe Dad did too. Nearly all the services of the family were conducted by the Methodist church, including Chet's.

When we were living in Cheyenne, I was teaching the kindergarten class in the Sunday School there, and taking several of the little children with me. At Mom's request I was baptized along with Marty and John. We were never baptized as Dad and Mom could not agree. Dad said a child should wait and make up their own mind. And Mom said it wouldn't hurt children to belong to something of a religious nature. Anyway, I finally was.

Dale and Muriel also belong to this church and are members of that Sunday School class. Before they came here this summer (1989) they had been to Dale's 50th class reunion and when they left they were going to attend the reunion of that same Sunday School class that Mom once taught and where Dad and Mom met.

Dad and Mom started out on their honeymoon soon after they were married on Nov 14th 1917. They planned to visit Jim's family in Amarillo and to go on to Seymour to get the Bible and papers Mom had left there. When they got to Seymour they found out the papers and Bible had been lost in a fire (that's what they told Mom but she never believed it). It was one of the regrets of her life that she had lost the family history. They left on Dad's 4-cycle motorcycle Dale said was an Indian brand. It had a side car which I cannot see my mother riding in. According to Jesse it broke down in Trinidad and they sold it and bought train tickets to finish their trip. I bet Mom was glad but wonder if she said so.

Jesse tells about Jim's family there. Mom and Dad brought Ruth back with them; she was 5 - and 5 year olds are treasures.

Dad worked on the street car until after the war ended. He had coins that returning soldiers put in the fare box. He was supposed to keep them from putting them in and had to pay when they did. He brought them home. I particularly like the ones from France; they have a square hole in the middle. I hope I still have some of these.

Dad was out of a job as the returning soldiers got their old jobs back. With the end of a war, the world goes into a period of stagnation. Also with the returning soldiers in the summer and fall of 1918 the influenza epidemic traveled around the world. The worst in history. The black plague and other diseases had been bad but not across the whole world as the 1918 flu was. Dad was among the first to get the flue – probably from the returning men he met on the streetcar. He was taken to the hospital and Mom and I joined him soon afterwards. Later they had to close the hospital and the pest house as they had more patients than they could handle. Mom said that both Jesse and Ed went to their jobs one morning and by night were down with it. Mattie was one of the few that did not have it bad and never quit taking care of everyone else. She nursed Jesse and Ed, Mom and me and her own family and probably cooked and cared for the neighbors

too. Mom said she would forever be grateful to Mattie as without her help Mom and I could not have come home from the hospital.

We were all three in the hospital Armistice Day Nov 11, 1918. I was three months old. Dad was so sick he did not know the war had ended. Mom was well enough to know that all the celebrations was going on in the park in front of the Capitol, which at the time I was small was a solid 4 block square of park without those huge government buildings in it.

Dad was in the hospital 3 weeks. They told Mom there was no hope for him. He said he remembered little of the time he was there. Mom was also told I was not going to make it. The nurses put me in a basket under Mom's bed and told me not to try to feed me as it was useless. She got up and got me and put me in bed with her and I survived to everyone's surprise. Mom could take me home if she had help and Mattie was there for her.

Ever afterward we would meet people who had lost a family member to the flu. As so often in the case of flu, it hits young people and children.

There is an odd coincidence: I was in the hospital in Albany, CA next to Berkeley on VJ Day, the day the war ended in World War 2, August 15, 1945. I had appendicitis and a ruptured ovary. I needed penicillin which was new and used only for war wounds. Since the war was ending they sent Chet to Treasure Island to buy \$50 worth from the Navy there. It took time to get the infection down before they could operate. It also took a call to Washington DC to get permission for me to have the penicillin. It worked. When I came out from the operation I told the doctors that I had dreamed the war had ended. They told me they had let Chet tell me just before I went under that it was over. The doctors said I was in the safest place that day and night as no place could go as wild as the Bay area, even then.

Dad had worked at some time for the C&S or Burlington railroad. He was on the extra crew that worked when needed. One time there was a wreck and he brought home bananas. He said nothing smells as bad

as rotting bananas. While working on this job he became friends with the Burns family. Tom had a farm next to the Rice place where he and his boys stayed in the summer when he was off work. They had a house very close to us on 27th Street. I can't remember her name but she and Mom were also very good friends. I used to know the names of their 12 children. She stayed in town. It was easier to make it on the farm under those conditions than for us with one man, no extra job, 3 tiny children and no experience. I don't think it was all his fault we became farmers, but I am quite sure that he and their friend across the street helped influence Dad that farming was the way to go.

Jesse had helped Dad get a job on the old Leader paper where Jesse worked so long before it became the Tribune and later also put out the Eagle, all in the same office. Dad also had his good friend Red Sandburg who he worked with there. In each case, their wives and children were our friends, too. The Sandburgs came to see Dad and Mom during the war when our family lived in Richmond. Red lived in Oregon by then. Dad could not take the pressman job. The fumes and the metals and inks in the air were not good for him. He had a case they thought was diphtheria and put him in the pest house. After a length of time they decided he was going to live and was not contagious and that it wasn't diphtheria, after all. Later a Cheyenne doctor told me I had diphtheria and he called Ed to have Cleo come to get Connie and Judy as Chet was out of town. He said I could not go to the hospital as I was contagious. Chet came home from working out of town and took me to Pine Bluffs to our old doctor Morris and he said it was my usual sore throat which I recovered from in time. I don't know yet what they expected me to do - alone there and no care.

Dad could not go back to the paper and was advised to work outside as he was sick so often, for he had such weak breathing apparatus, they said. The farm was the answer.

We had a great life in Cheyenne. That was a great house and neighborhood and I have fond memories. Then we moved to the farm and problems began. Not that I did not like it, but all kinds of things

went wrong and we moved to Pine Bluffs in 1925 where Marge was born.