

Notes from Bob Wilson – 2003-2012

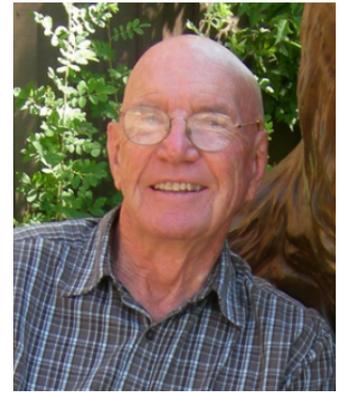
June 28, 2003: This is a test. While I am at it I have some history re: your great grandfather. Delete if you have heard them before. All this "thinking" took place during a very pleasant sail in my little, old man's boat on blue Bear Lake.

1) John Wilson left Finland during the Franco-Prussian war as cabin boy on a "tall ship". 2) The ship sank off the coast of Turkey a Johan was sent ashore in a beaches-bouy to test the gear, being the lightest of the crew.

2) In the off season he worked the "black gang" on a coast-wise lumber ship, which sank off the Northern California coast in winter & was rescued from a life boat 48 hours later. Black Gang definition: In the age of ships powered by burning coal the toughest job was shoveling coal into the "hot box", an almost continuous job at sea. Similar to Western movies where you see the stoker moving coal from the "coal car", followed by the traditional masked bandits holding up the train.

3) A side-wheeler rammed his fishing boat at night at the mouth of the Columbia; his partner was drowned.

End of Test, Utah Bob, better known as Mud Bottom



Robert (Bob) A. Wilson

Jan. 16, 1926 ~ Feb. 21, 2020

June 8, 2004: Thanks for the "look into the past" at Wilson farm. I can remember climbing into loft when barn was almost new. Last visit: summer '64 on trip to Seattle World's Fair. Was barn still there at that time? [Yes.]

Question: House behind '49 white Ford...Howard's? Where did the traffic come from in photo of lovely tulips? I only recall nice quiet road in front of farm. Thanks for the info, and '49 & '50 Fords were same except for trim changes.

I searched for photos of our trip to Seattle in '64, as yet hiding. I had hoped to find a picture of the resident Wilsons with my gang. Would you have been standing there? My two girls were ages 9 & 7. And have remarried since so everything has changed.

June 11, 2004: Have I told you the "Flat tire on Saturday Night" story related to me during that '64 trip from Uncle Fred's surviving wife, Agnes when we stopped in Astoria. It's funny as Aunt Bessie gets even with Uncle Ed, the Saturday night Finnish Hall dancer.

Let's find out if I can get the story straight as told by Agnes. As you mentioned, Uncle Ed enjoyed the Sat. night dances at "the Finnish Hall"...location not known. Bessie would pretend not to notice Ed's departure. On this particular evening, as Ed was turning onto the road from the farm, the Model-T blew a tire. The account continues that Ed jacks up the car and begins the task of switching to the spare. Unfortunately as he is working with an arm in behind the wheel to be removed the car slips off the jack, pinning Uncle Ed without serious injury in such a way that he is stuck. He calls out to Bessie for assistance. She either does not hear his plea or decides not to go to the rescue and as I understand he is trapped there for the evening. How long and by what method he gets out of this situation is not known. But Agnes made it clear that the calls for help went on for a long period. And you are correct, why Aunt Bessie would not go to the dances was another question not answered. Those are the facts, Ma'm, just the facts. Further embellishment is your job.....Honest Injun Bob certified story teller.

June 13, 2004: Agnes placed the tire episode at the farm....model T's were produced from '08 to '27....so dating by car won't wash. You are a better detective, you figure it out.

Amazing how many sail boats are named "Sisu". My cross-country skis are Karhus. I throw that in to further impress you.

Nov. 23, 2005: I finished school in L.A. with a job awaiting at GM in lovely Detroit. That lasted two years and we beat a retreat west. As I read of GM's present woes am pleased to have left early on. Can remember the unions getting all they wanted in wages and retirement. That is all coming home to roost now with billions yearly in payouts.

Nov. 21, 2006: My mother's side, the Waggeners, did leave England for Holland, where the name was modified from Wagner to fit the Dutch language. Their religious bent did not grip me as other members. As Grandfather Eskola (i.e. Wilsonen) said about Prohibition, "My God I'll never make it!"

Dec. 8, 2006: Here's another good Finn name. Sarpola. Alex was a close friend of Fred and Agnes Wilson and I well remember him. He was somehow involved with a fish cannery. What else was there to do the late 1800s Astoria? We received wonderful gifts of smoked and pickled salmon each year. As a kid I usually had a chunk in my pocket, complete with all sorts of weird junk stuck to the fish. At that age, who cared? Goopy string and marbles can taste pretty good.

Dec. 14, 2006: I started college twice. Out of H.S. interrupted by call from USAAF after six weeks. Then again after said USAAF let me go. Both times flunked freshman Subject A exam. Heck, if I can't spell in English, how am I to do anything in Finnish. Besides my greeting came from my trusty English/Finnish dictionary!

Dec. 17, 2006: Advice: Attend church program first. Then have the eggnog. The reverse could embarrass your daughter. Wait! A true Finn can handle anything. I don't "do" outback any longer. But we carried "Peeps", a combination out-going signal and a listening mode to follow signal. And a lightweight, 2-piece shovel, and first aid. And light weight storm sheet. And a compass. And not less than three in the party.

Jan. 8, 2007: Back in the late '50s I handled interiors and graphics for several large grocery chains in So.Cal. At the time had a nice job with a small architectural/exhibit design office, given the title of lead in the design team. Understand that there were two other "teams"; production of documents i.e. working drawings and field construction supervision. We thought we were pretty hot stuff. Today I walk through a remodel of the local market and am amazed at how exciting the design, graphics, layouts and project display are now. Our visit to Japan was an eye opener. Those folks do a wonderful job of marketing. Even small produce stalls take immense care in arrange things in a tasteful way. Oh, and you do not see baseball caps worn backwards or trash anywhere.

Jan. 17, 2007: As my mother said the last night I visited her, "If I do not wake up that's O.K. With Dick (dad) gone I am happy that we had 63 years together". Not bad. They finished with two trips around the world. The

trip by ship let them have a short visit to Finland, where dad used his Finnish on the locals. And their comfortable retirement lasted better than 15 yrs. in a nice retirement center.

“Remember you are dealing with a-not-so-sharp-company-clerk-as-he-was-as-a-corporal-1945. Well, somehow I got this far!”

“You have heard the definition of a sailboat: It is a hole in the water in which one continues to throw money.”

Jan. 22, 2007: At GM we laughed at the statements Marketing made to auto designers put on trunk lids. As you mentioned one of automatic transmission identities, Powergluide, Dynaflo, etc. We wondered when we might get "Ash tray" stuck on. I worked on a 3 million dollar (big bucks in 1953) GM touring PR thing called the "The Parade of Progress" that was based on a traveling circus, stopping in cities all over the eastern US. We did not have to worry about budgets. Not true with smaller companies. GM would hit the major cities to introduce their new cars in the show, "Motor Rama". That meant overtime steady from September to January. That extra money, double-time for weekends, was really needed. Those were days (and nights) I don't want to repeat.

“Once in the army I stuck my head into an empty ammo box, think that would shade me from the Texas sun. All it did was give me a headache! I learned and now retreat to a cozy little sunken room called the Kiva as in Indian meeting room.”

“Our first TV circa '57 was black & white and a cheap model. Seemed that I spent more time replacing tubes than watching the dumb shows.”

April 9, 2007: Did I ever tell you that when I was about 10 years old I can remember climbing into the hay loft of the barn that was such a photo op. Also I really wanted to pet the pigs, but Howard warned me that was not a good idea. What to city kids know? [During visit to Beaverton Farm circa 1960?]....[10 years old would have made the year in first part 1936, barn was built in 1932]

May 31, 2007: Dad had a concrete business right after leaving Cal, and I learned from him. In fact we mixed all the foundation concrete by hand when rebuilding the cabin in the Sierras. Had energy, but little money. Oh, and no electricity, so everything was cut by hand while Mom salvaged the old lumber for forms and actually straightened old nails. I also walk barefoot to school in the snow, uphill both ways.

Aug. 25, 2007: Mom did not, "just you wait until your Father gets home! She was proactive. Whacking me with a wood coat hanger was her weapon of choice. Finally I grew and the coat hanger thing broke and that ended Corporal Punishment for their Adorable and only Child. Heck, my drill instructor was a lot more terrifying, beside having terrible breath when nose-to-nose and yelling with his eyes bugging out. My crime in that event: swinging my arms more than the book six inches during what was loving known as "Close Order Drill".

Oct. 8, 2007: I can recall my visit to your grandfather's "farm" and wanting to pet the sow. Your Dad explained that she did not want anyone fooling with her or her offspring. That was the first time I saw the new barn, about 1936 or so. We had a new Chrysler, yellow with a radio. Of course, at the same time - depression days - Mom had string wrapped around the wringer rollers on the washing machine! Well, cars were important status symbols while a washing machine was hidden in a dark corner. It wasn't until 1948 that she became the proud

owner of an "automatic". We never had the luxury of a clothes dryer, nothing wrong with hanging stuff outside. And I had a small sailboat. Dad popped for \$65 and I was skipper. It was so small that the skipper was all that could get aboard, maybe my Boson Bull Toy, Skeeter. She hated water and swam somewhat like a sinking cottage cheese tub.

Dec. 3, 2007: ...which leads me to tell you a story about Uncle Fred and Dad. During their high school days Fred played in a marching band. Dad was not a musician, period. But the band was to march in a parade in Astoria and several of the members could not show up. My business-like Uncle got Dad and some others to march with the group and pretend to be playing the instruments of the absent members! Nobody was the wiser according to all accounts. The story came from Dad many years ago and I believe I got it correct.

Dec. 7, 2007: When you mention Astoria I am reminded of the great times I had there. How about the day I took my dog for a walk along the railroad tracks that were built out over the water. We had a great time until I realized that a train was coming along at very slow speed! Woweeeee, but Skeeter and I made record time to the first pier where we got off the tracks. Never did tell my Mom about that one! Have wonderful memories of leaving my Uncle Fred's house before dawn to hit the beach at low tide and digging for those huge clams. Then back to town for a change to dry clothes - I managed to always get wet - followed by a big dinner of clams and other good stuff. Aunt Agnes was a great cook and uncle was a first class bar tender. No, I was not served anything stronger than Ovaltine in those far away days.

The Santa suit was made by Jinny years ago and I wear it for Christmas parties. Main problem is how hot it is inside that hat/beard combination. The skis shown are my 35-year old "track" skis from dark and light wood. They generate a lot of comments as the technology has produced much lighter and shorter skis for today's racing. In 1949 my time for second place in a 35K race was 4 hrs.20mins. Today times are less than half of that and "skating" has become the norm. History note: I got a pair of cross country skis in 1948 from Finland for \$14 plus another \$4 for the bindings. My coach had me running on skis that were 7'-6" long. You guessed right, they were hard to turn if I got out of the ruts, rather than just letting the skis follow the trail.

Dec. 11, 2007: I noticed it particularly as a G.I. We could be in the dumbest situation and someone would come out with a funny line to break us up. Bear with me. 50 of us detrained on to a freight platform and "fell in". The corporal in charge of us rather average 18 yr olds put us at "At Ease", meaning we could move one foot at a time and no talking. He would be back as soon as transportation was arranged to the beautiful Pecos U.S. Army Air Force base, where wind blew a tumbleweed eastward in the morning and later the same weed went roaring by tumbling to the west. Snow began to fall. Our overcoats were hidden in our barracks bags only God knows where, and the sun had disappeared and a few weak station lights brightened up the scene. Not a word was uttered and no one moved much. After possibly 45 minutes the corporal returned to find snow on our caps, shoulders, etc. You know, the typical Snowman thing. I still recall his, "Oh my God!" The trucks showed up and we entered the base as a bunch of somewhat soggy guys hoping the mess hall was still open. End of story.

Dec. 15, 2007: In my younger days I varnished a forty five-foot mast. With the boat in the water it was a pleasant motion up there. In dry dock I admit that being sixty plus feet above concrete had its moments. Then I had to go up a mast outside the Golden Gate as the halyard fouled and Bobby was elected to clear the line. That wasn't too challenging, but my new white pants cleaned off all the accumulated surface crud as I came down with legs around the mast. The pants became recycled paint rags. On sailing off shore (Blue Water) I will thrill you with details of losing steerage in big following seas while at the helm of a 54-foot ketch. That can wait until

cocktail hour.

March 27, 2008: Even living in the heart of the great central California valley gave me rare looks at farms. Now I did know my way around Ranches. When the good Japanese Americans were bussed off to "relocation centers", the smart folks asked, "Who will bring in the harvest?" O.K. so in the fall of 1942 high school started at six a.m., we got out at noon and were trucked off to knock walnuts, hustle potatoes, and a variety of other crops. During the summer I got a dollar ten per hour by working the night shift in a falling-down-cannery processing tomatoes and figs. Somehow I always got the jobs involving great amounts of splashing water. Well, it was cooling!

April 18, 2008: My three years in Stockton (before the USAAF) gave me a little of ranching and farming. I have mentioned the high school students joining in the fields for the harvests after the US of A shipped off all our good Japanese American farm owners to "resettlement camps" in Hell's Half Acre". But never got close to anything with four legs.

Oct. 9, 2008: My mother said often during the Depression, "One of these days our ship well come". As a pre-schooler and living in Petaluma, a large river ran a block off the main part of the little (then) town. I could see the river and some docks, but never the ship that was to "come in".

Dec. 21, 2008: I can remember my two winters in Detroit as not being too bad. But we had very little cash other than what the essentials required and the light went on that getting back to the more familiar West would be much nicer.

It is nice to retire to a quiet existence. During my last year in Southern California before coming here for that ski resort design job, I logged about 80,000 miles flying around to show up at meetings as rep for the company. It got so all jet ways looked the same. That was a lousy way to make a living. During that time I had some 57 meals at 35,000 feet up. Well, let me add, that I am more comfortable in the country. Had enough of the "big time" as a "little time" designer. I did make a living and was grateful for some very rewarding projects, the Queen Mary conversion from a floating hotel to an amusement park the most visible job.

March 5, 2009: Did I send you Grandmother Wilsonen's bible, half written in Finnish and half in Swedish? I can remember mailing it, but to whom and when and how is blank. Of course, that is not a source of family information. If I was smart enough to get it off to you it went to the proper desk. If not, then I have to log another blunder in the Great Book of Life.

#1 Dad told me that Grandfather left Finland during the Franco- Prussian war, that Grandfather saw war ships as his vessel passed between Denmark and Sweden. #2 That Dad was G.M.'s youngest child. I remember visiting relatives in Fresno, CA in the late thirties. Grandmother was a widow when she met Grandfather. #3 Dad's brothers were Fred, Bill and Ed, a total of four sons. Also I remember that a sister [Marie] died at a young age by drowning. Here things are very dim.

If these numbers are correct, then Grandmother had seven children. Further I believe Dad was the only one to continue formal education past high school. He had so little money that he joined the R.O.T.C. at Cal, Berkeley. Also his tight financial situation did not cover the books required and used the library as a study hall. Get this,

he and his roommate had a deal with fellows on the floor below and lowered a coffee jug and assorted food containers by line to be heated. Dad pressed his uniform by placing it under his mattress.

Finally when the U.S. entered WWI Pop was stationed at Fort Stevens, having enlisted in the reserves. He qualified for officer training and was sent to Fort Monroe, V.A. Got the terrible flu thing that killed millions world-wide, was given a ticket and \$20.00 to return to Astoria. In Nebraska he was so sick that he left the train and a clerk at a cheap hotel realized Dad's condition and called a doctor. Without that help he may not have survived. It takes a lot to do in a good Finn!

And my research on a conducted trip (I was an independent traveler in earlier years, but signing up with a group tour is more cost effective. Without three Japanese speakers in the group tour to Japan I would still be standing on the subway platform trying to figure out how to get to where I wanted to go.) Back to where I left off. Tours in that area run around the entire Baltic area and with luck, you get two days in Helsinki before rushing off to St. Petersburg and terrible food. Mom and Dad visited Finland as I have probably told you. The locals were impressed by his ability to speak to and understand the locals.

March 15, 2009: You have been much better than any other source for "How did all of get where we are!" I told you that my one memory of Grandfather Johan is the day we arrived at the Astoria house and I went out to the back yard where Grandfather was cutting fire wool. Not sure that I said anything and I do not remember Grandfather saying much. Probably the usual, "So you are Bobby." At my age then that was a complete conversation.

Here is something to add to your vast amount of historical notations. Many years ago I became a High Bench Roller at Edvi Kauppila's mountain cabin sauna. Maybe you know the ritual, but here it is. One: as the steam increases you keep moving up the benches until you are finally sitting at the highest level. That means plenty of steamy heat. Two: Then, if you are really nuts (and a third generation Finn) you rush outside and roll in the snow. Three: If you are still alive there is a great sensation of feeling clean and relaxed.

Well, Edvi got me through the first two stages and he coaxed me to rush outside and roll over two or three times. Only one problem! The snow was hard and icy which made the rolling part not all that great, but I did it. Have not had another try, one will have to do as Edvi sold the cabin.

One other note. I had a friend, Arno Edvi, who taught skiing and was known as Eddy Arno - made things simpler. Ed was badly injured in an auto accident the week before the 35K Cross Country race along the Donner Pass highway. His father took his son's bib and entered the competition. Now the sad part. Senor suffered a heart attack during the race and died. I was ahead and did not know about the problem until much later.

Now the pleasant part. Arno Edvi, i.e. Eddy Arno, lost an arm due to the accident. Later he formed the organization whose mission was to promote skiing for the handicapped. I have mentioned work with the local group at Park City for twelve years as director of crosscountry skiing plus a couple of summers helping with their swimming program. The local group is internationally known as the National Ability Center and has expanded into a year 'round program centered on a twenty five-acre site just outside of Park City. I retired five years ago as they needed fresh ideas. Working with handicapped people is both rewarding and very challenging.

April 2, 2009: Nan, as you know, is the keeper of all things WILSON. Uncle Fred was a good photographer and the picture of Grandfather is very imposing. I was given a "puukko veitsi" when a dumb little kid. Of course, I managed to lose the nice, red handled knife. So asked Mom & Dad to pick up one for me during their brief visit to Finland. This one has a green handle and is used at my desk to open mail. The decorative sheath is stored in a

nearby drawer. That is hardly appropriate use for such a nice artifact. Maybe you also own one with a horse head finishing off the handle. Every Girl Scout should have one!

Uncle Fred and Aunt Agnes tossed down an "Eye Opener", a pre "Dinner Refresher" and a " Night Cap" which made my mother - a true Victorian, take a deep breath. Mom and Dad did accept a glass of wine with "special dinners". Mother mentioned several times that I should drink less.

April 16, 2009: From all this reading I find that present day Finnish peoples started as Aryan-Indos from northwest present day India and made their way across the Russian steppes, over a bunch of centuries, and turned right into the Land of the Lakes. Others veered left and became the three Baltic states. Now you can sleep better knowing we skipped Africa and picked up \$100 for rounding GO and never landed in JAIL. Some history. That walk of thousands of miles made the tough and independent folks of today. I had the pleasure of working on a project Erero Saarinen, architect, was designing for General Motors (yes, that General Motors). He also is known for the TWA air terminal in New York. No idea what it is called now, since TWA folded. Had lunch with Mr. Saarinen and his staff, being the new-kid-on-the-block I sat at the other end of the table. What you see on TV during the current crisis are glass towers by others. The GM Design Center is now over fifty years old and dated, but exciting in the fifties.

May 20, 2009: On to the history of Dad first, then after marriage and a "try" at some location in Eastern Oregon where Dad started his engineering career, their move to California. Dad had not finished college, returned to Berkeley for two years. Next came a contracting business with a nice fellow Dad met at Cal. By that time they had bought a cottage and I turned up. Dad gave up the contracting to take a better job with what is known as CalTrans - the highway division. From there he studied and continued "going up the ladder" until his being transferred to Stockton. Except for his tour to Europe the last year of WWII as an employee of the War Dept. they stayed in lovely and hot or foggy Mud Ville - yes, where Casey struck out - better identified as Stockton. Dad retired with the title of District Traffic Engineer.

Mom and Dad enjoyed returning to Astoria and Portland to visit their respective families. I thought Astoria was a dream come true. Lot's of great adventures. Mom's dad left Berkeley in the mid-thirties as his second wife had property in Pendleton. Both had lost their spouses and the two lived in the shadow of the Pendleton Round Up grounds well into their nineties. I visited them when I finished Art Center and was headed east.

"My Dad never commented on my decisions and did not push when I started ski racing. If I crashed, his comment was something along the line of, "Well, you finished!""

June 12, 2009: Since our family days at the cabin in the Sierras, trees have been an important part of our lives. Surrounding the cabin are very large cedar, fir, sugar and yellow pines. During WWII a tree standing at the N.W. corner of the old shack was blown down and flattened the house to the west. In the early '60s a five foot diameter pine that stood one lot to the east cut our other neighbor's house into two halves. In that storm another huge tree destroyed the house two lots away. When the winds come up the 200-foot tall trees really swayed a lot. Somehow the little cabin is still being enjoyed by the family I sold to in 1980.

In my past sailing history I have varnished a forty five foot mast and had to "go aloft" on the mast of a forty foot sailboat to free a fouled haulyard - the line that moves the sail up the mast - and we were outside the Golden Gate Bridge! Oh, was hoisted up the varnished mast south of Cabo San Lucas - tip of Baha - to look for wind. We were racing from Newport Beach to Manzanillo, Mexico and were making very little headway. Wind makes the water darker and easy to spot (if there is any wind at all)

Aug. 6, 2009: Stockton located smack dab in the center of California's Central Valley I suffered through summers of 100 plus days. Because of moving all the good Japanese Americans off to concentration camps in the spring of 1942, high school started at 0600 and we were out at noon. That left the hot part of the day to work in the fields making a mess of the various crops. The buck an hour was big money then! Then I put in four years of college there. We less than smart individuals are slow learners. Plus I was stationed at two airfields close to Bakersfield in successive summers. We refueled the planes after training flights were completed at about 1500 hours, meaning we were standing of polished aluminum wings watching the vapors dance about. Everything was blazing hot, even the clipboard where the gallons of fuel were recorded. Somehow I got out of that unpleasant detail by becoming a swimming and water survival instructor. In the army's ever-thoughtful orders, even the financial personnel had to pass a swimming test. My favorite demonstration was jumping off a twelve-foot high tower, then making water wings out of my suntan pants. Don't ask me what happened if you were in the water wearing wool O.D. pants!

As the weather was somewhat like Astoria in makeup. I got to thinking about Grandfather Wilsonen and the hard work it was to fish the mouth of the Columbia River. Dad told me a few stories about what it was like to be out there, particularly in more than a pleasant summer day. Rigging the sail as a tent, using the mast as the ridge pole when caught out at night is less appealing than the boat I had that could sleep four, in a pinch another body, out of the weather and electricity (used carefully as the lights came from a battery and navigational lights had priority. It was a delightful experience and my sailing has included some nasty waves and roaring winds. I hope Grandfather got a glimpse of his dumb grandson bouncy around like a very small cork.

Aug. 10, 2009: Your mentioning Mt. Hood brings back memories of my racing there right after Christmas in 1940. I had never skied the mountain above Timberline Lodge and made a couple of mistakes getting down the mile and a half to the finish. But placing 5th in Boy's Under 16 wasn't too bad for a dumb kid. Never have had a chance to go to that wonderful mountain again. Do have a book of photos taken of popular ski resorts in the West and the series of Mt. Hood are very good. The photographer was from Portland and packed a heavy View Camera all over the mountains, including a lot of climbing where lifts did not exist.

Aug. 31, 2009: ...trade it for a big pan of Lohilaatikko. Might have the wrong word for a dish of fish, potatoes, cheese layers piled up about four times and served piping hot. Two Finnish ladies served that at their home in San Francisco and I remember how good it was. Of course, I really like fish and cheese and potatoes in any form.

Oct. 26, 2009: Briefly I was putting a sailboat on display in New York for the January show. After the union crew of seven, yes, union rules had me pay for seven, I finished accessorizing the interior and wanted to vacuum the carpet. The tool crib guy informed me that there was a four-hour minimum. The carpet yardage was very small and I needed the vacuum for ten minutes. I noted that the guy left the crib leaving the door ajar. Bob, the burglar, picked up the vacuum, did the boat quickly, returned the vacuum to the crib and was feeling great that Morgan Yachts of St. Pete did not have to pay a dime for the cleaning job. Crime pays if you can get away with it. My criminal record includes a similar gig to the NY Boat Show, when I snitched a dolly to move a refrigerator. The shop owner wouldn't rent it and the refrigerator could not spend the night on the sidewalk. So what's a thief to do? And my apartment was only four blocks away and he went to dinner. I had it back before his soup course was finished.

Nov. 9, 2009: I am reading "I Heard an Owl Call My Name", an emotion-draining story of a young priest going deep into the Indian culture of the Northwest. His experience with the natives is both challenging and rewarding. The cedar board houses remind me of the shack Mon and Dad bought in the mid Sierras. Outhouse, the shower drained through holes in the wood floor, Mom cooked on wood stove - in the living room when too cold to use the kitchen, etc. I loved it. Only a block from a small lake where I had a leaky rowboat and we three started skiing there at Christmas in 1935. Dad's homemade Root Beer froze on the dining table once! My memories of the cabin with the sign hanging at the street side is above the actual condition of the shack. Name: "La Boheme". Below the title: "All who enter here depart in peace and plenty."

When the one storm each summer arrived we always had friends that were in the campgrounds ran over to stay dry. In the winter the snow load would deflect the front door and once opened it was tough to close. Did I tell you there was no standard framing? The 10" wide boards held up the weight. When we tore down the shack when starting the rebuilding, we found the floor supports about four feet on-center and the granite hunks used as supports were smashed to small bits.

Will send a copy of photo of cabin Dad and friends built on Young's Bay. Might find picture of Mom in a canoe.

Dec. 10, 2009: Building the cabin in Pinecrest located just off the Sonora Pass highway was truly a great experience. The Wilsons worked their yin-yangs off to replace a falling down shack with a comfortable mountain retreat. And done with limited funds, but a lot of Sisu. From the shack M & D bought to the more real "La Boheme" it served as the center of the family and friends for forty years. I sort'a miss it, but now struggle to keep Jinny's lakeside property in working order.

I missed including the two cats in yesterday's Tall Tales. First an all-white long-hair Sonja joined us by coming to the front door one night. Only her blue eyes and black nose stood out from a mass of whipped cream. Later a Galico with long fangs and a wonderful coat was found in a small box. Peggy and Sonja slept with Charley Brown, the half-breed hound. Here's the funny part. When Charley and I took our late evening walk the two cats came along. With Charley Brown on his lead the cats were free to sneak off the sidewalk, usually preferring the bushes. If we passed other walkers the question was, "Are two cats following you and your dog?" We four had a great time. End of story and time to kill the eggs,

Dec. 12, 2009: My goodness, you lived in Whittier during the sixties. When we returned from exile in lovely Detroit, I qualified for a no-down G.I. loan and bought a neat house in Whittier Downs. Near the freeway that was built after we threw our junk on a rental trailer and moved to Costa Mesa. The railway was four blocks southwest. Another friend lived in the same tract and we car-pooled the 22 miles along the Santa Ana and Hollywood Freeways. Ugh, of course that was in with the heavy traffic and reverse course heading back to West Whittier. That area changed quickly and not for the better. I had to get to clients in the mid-west, N.Y., North Carolina, Denver, and the south. A big job had me in Chicago every other week and that really became a drag. The opportunity to come here for the destination ski resort was a relief. Met Jinny and stayed. Good move! Some good stuff by the Historical Society - remember walking along the RR tracks on piles with the water below, the brief shot of the WWI soldier which I hope still stands in the small island in the street next to the Wilson house in Uniontown. Never heard of the split between the Finns over the Russian revolution -

Dec. 26, 2009: Got a note from my former business partner who will be visiting Finland later this year. Mike and I met at the Big Time architectural firm I worked for after escaping from GM and Detroit. We were both

hired about a month apart with the understanding that each would be "the assistant director" of the interior design department. Seeing the writing on the wall and ran out the door and coned a former instructor to hire me. He did and the next five years were great as I learned enough to go off on my own. That has always been questionable as our bank account was just above the survival level. Live and learn. I will close with my guiding thought: You can't steal second while standing on first!

The description of heavy snow in Finland freezing the gates got my attention. We have not had deep snow build ups here for the past five winters. When snow depth gets to three feet or more I have to take some weight off the garage and house roofs. As a skinny kid, Dad would have me do snow removal from the roof of the original cabin. Sierra snow has much more weight than the light stuff that we usually get as the storms are affected by passing over the Great Basin west of here.

Jan. 14, 2010: The history about Tin Cans has to do with the Japanese three pronged naval forces that hoped to raise hell with the beachhead during the Allied landing. The 3rd Fleet under Halsey was lured north to take on a Japanese carrier fleet leaving only three small "escort carriers" and destroyers to face two battleships with 15- and 18-inch guns. Not a good situation as the destroyers had three 5-inch guns and those shells usually bounced off big ships armor. But true to American guts they held off the Japanese, losing three destroyers and one escort carrier but did enough damage that the Japanese decided to retreat. The survivors from the sunken ships spent three days in the water. Some 300 were rescued, about a similar number were lost to injury, sharks and loss of strength.

Unless I fell off the turnip truck and further damaged my brain, your Dad is sporting the helmet used by the Brits in both wars. In WWI the U.S. issued the same design. The spiked helmet is a real collector's item from WWI used by the "Huns" for dress only. The "pot" issued shortly after the start of WWII was a great design of three parts. First was a wool cap that was used in cold weather, then a plastic "helmet liner" covered by the third part of tough steel. The liner worked well and I remember we had a forced march of twenty miles in a heavy rain. The liner worked, but my raincoat leaked like cheesecloth except for the pockets that filled with water! Under the coat was a bulky gas mask, pack containing one half of a two-man tent and blanket, my carbine and other assorted junk. We looked like moving tents. The guys that elected to hop on a truck in the convoy were cut from going further in the flight training program. It was a good prep for my later cross country skiing races. Was the smartest kid in the outfit, but had endurance to spare. Oh, and stamped inside the raincoat was. "M-1 Coat / Rain 1918".

Forgot that Fleming, not your Dad, was in the Pacific. I might have actually met Fleming eye to eye once. Did hear his name often, but when my parents jumped to California our contact with the rest of the family was reduced to trips to Oregon. I do remember our visiting Dad's step relatives in Fresno in the mid-thirties. If correct those were from my Grandmother's daughter born in Finland. Then came Grandfather Eskola, fresh off the boat. He was in Coos Bay first (good guess) then Astoria. My father was the last of Grandmother's seven children. Dad did mention a sister - not sure if that was the first or second "batch", who died in a swimming accident at a young age, Name unknown to me [Marie]. All the above is fuzzy. Nothing written, all oral history. And we both know just how reliable that might be. [Marie drowned in a berry bog in 1892.]

Living in Berkeley, Stockton and Southern Cal shakes are ever present. I told you some time back that Dad sold over a hundred papers when San Francisco started falling down, making 1 cent per paper or over a total treasure of a buck or so. Not bad for a young kid.

April 18, 2010: That is an interesting event of gathering stories of Grandmothers. I can remember visiting Grandmother Wilson and unfortunately the only recall is seeing her at the hospital during her final year or so.

Do remember being at her funeral, but that is dim and out of focus - my pre-school days.

The only memory of Grandfather is watching him chopping wood in the back yard of the family home. Gardens in those days would not be featured in Sunset! More bare ground than any lush growth.

Forward one generation. Dad told me about sliding on the icy street on a sled he built and having to watch out for the streetcar. Not my idea of going downhill in winter. The sled was tied onto our 1928 car and brought to California. We would tie it against a fir tree near our mountain shack for use in hauling supplies a few blocks from where the car had to park as the road those days was not plowed. I miss the simplicity of those days before all the gadgets we now have.

I lost a photo of workmen building Uncle Fred's home on the main street running parallel to the river, but up probably six blocks or so. I think that street (name deleted from my memory bank) was the same as the street on which my Dad's home was - Is. Could it be Union Street as a wild guess? [Bond Street.]

After having lunch with your extended family in Beaverton we visited Aunt Agnes in Astoria. Then crossed on the "new" bridge [Astoria-Megler Bridge] as we continued on to the Seattle World's Fair [1962]. I clearly remember Dad stopping by at the drug store where I worked in Stockton as a dumb high school kid to tell me Uncle Fred had died [1943]. That was fall of 1943. Visiting Fred and Agnes was fun and we got to go clamming at Seaside.

Whether Dad went to the funeral or not is hazy. If he did it would have been by train as gas rationing had starting by the summer of '42. A silly bit of recall: No skiing in '43, so I decided to try for the high school swim team as something to do. I made the team and was the slowest member having been converted from "crawl" to "butterfly" breast stroke as #2 in the slowest event. It is amazing that I did not drown somewhere at about the 75th yard mark. My block "S" sported a star as the good swimmers won the championship. I had enlisted in the air force while still in high school. Waiting to be called up I entered the local junior college and found myself again on the swimming team. Thank goodness I was inducted two days before a meet with Cal where I was supposed to swim the 400-yard free style event. I had never swam more than the 200!

The pictures of the plowing and the rather elegant simple design of the barn are really good. I can remember going to a highway construction site in Dad's State of Cal, Division of Highways car on a Saturday. The shoulders of the road were being graded by a blade pulled by a pair of mules. That was near Petaluma and me in my pre-school days. Things have changed.

“I named my last sailboat Bear Lake Monster and had a noticed stuck to the boom reading, "If you don't believe in the monster, get off the boat!" Only my granddaughters jumped overboard.”

May 31, 2010: I was never one to weep over the "Departed", rather enjoy remembering those who have gone and what they meant to my life experience. That includes my bulldog, Skeeter. She was a toy member of the bulldog world and wet weighed about less than a sack of pears. A friend of my parents gave her to me about the time I entered the first grade. Skeeter actually slept with me, went everywhere I went. Being so small she could just keep her head above water when trying to swim. A nice buddy and went off the Dog Heaven when I was in high school.

We lost our peach tree to old age and the pears are small so I shake the tree and let the deer have them. I have given up shocking the remaining pear tree. It produces nicely and each fall I trim the new growth back to

restrict the size. A lot of cutting, but the tree seems to respond and looks Japanese like. Now those folks know how to garden. We have a collection of books on Japanese gardens, architecture and art. I appreciate their simple design solutions. With a billion folks on a bunch of small islands, they have to conserve space.

The best designer in my L.A. class was Japanese-American - he was responsible for the IBM Ball typewriter. I was one of two round eyes at his wedding. Unfortunately, Shimmy drank too much and is no longer with us.

June 4, 2010: There is a lot to remember! Early on I spotted the first model Corvette produced in 1953. I was at a GM plant and getting information for an exhibit I was designing with the silly title of "A Car Is Born". In a wide hallway a gang was laying up the fiberglass for a Corvette body. Yep, by hand! Production was three bodies per day. Later Matched Molds speeded up output. Fiberglass for boats, dune buggies, etc. is a very messy job. Around boat production most of the nasty work was done by Mexicans and when the Feds showed up at the factory the Mexicans went over the back fence and out of sight. Later your video displayed a '57 Chevy with the goofy machine gun-like decorations sticking out of the hood. GM loved that stuff and they were the largest corporation going. We dumb designers were called to the product show room to watch a movie of GM's latest - a jet looking car with an actual aircraft tail - then the pilot got in, the canopy lowered into place, the wheel chocks were pulled clear (a job I did well as an Aviation Student waiting to become an Aviation Cadet) and the camera zeroed in on the huge exhaust pipe. The car-jet flashed down the runway, but, of course, never left the ground.

July 12, 2010: Mom rarely let me go to the Saturday afternoon kids movie. Heck the 10 cents could buy a loaf of bread. We started skiing in 1935, Dad driving a 1928 sedan. Then we moved up to '36 model, with radio and no heater. In those days we left Berkeley before dawn, wearing our ski clothes and boots. Returned home either the same evening or if we did a "overnight" at the old cabin we were still wearing what we departed in. Except for five layers in an attempt to survive the night in the Pinecrest barn. Maybe winters were not as cold then. Sort of a reverse climate change. Thanks for the memories. Oh, I bought our first B & W cheap TV in 1956. Remember taking the burned out tubes to the local market for an exchange? The other newspaper sales that did not have a route, went from camp to camp trying to sell the Modesto Bee, taking the standard 2-cent commission. Per summer I might have net 10 bucks.

August 3, 2010: During the few summers I worked in the fields and canneries around Stockton I got about 10% of your smarts as to growing yummys in the back yard. Most of the high school days were picking cherries, peaches, thinning walnuts. None of which I was very good at doing. At 50 cents a bucket of cherries - with the stems in place - my day on a ladder in the tall trees produced an average of 3 bucks for the day. Shorter trees were easier, but I did not grow rich. By working night shift at the cannery my hourly take was a wild \$1.10 per hour. The extra 10 cents was for night shift, which I liked as it was much cooler - if canneries are ever cool.

I would guess not many things were grown when you lived in the L.A. Area. I did have an orange tree in one yard, but the tree was no longer producing fruit. In Costa Mesa, in clay gunk, I grew corn with fair results. I well remember the big, green worms that arrived with the plants. Wow, they were ugly! The design profession attracted me as a way to make a living. Being more fitted into the mountains and that sort of life of teaching skiing, starving, and doing odd jobs in the "off season". Something turned on the switch. As I neared a BA realized I did not know much. The hard-nose trade school in L.A. saved me. I never reached riches, but always made time for family and doing stuff with the girls. Looking back, that was -is- very rewarding.

Only one item for which I do not agree - cars of the late fifties into the mid-sixties were not so hot. The VP at GM in charge of Styling said, "My job is make GM cars longer and lower!" Now there is wisdom at its very

best. As soon as I left GM for the west coast I bought a nifty black VW with red interior and wide white walls. That goofy beetle was a kick. I loved it.

August 19, 2010: All the other stuff that the younger set seems to have time and interest in is off my chart. Once I left the pressure cooker of design and deadlines I revert back to my love for the earlier days when Mom and Dad somehow became owners of the little cabin - no electricity, meaning shower & hot water was produced by the cones and firewood I was responsible to hunt out of the forest. I was lucky to have a dozen summers there with my leaky boat (s).

Sept. 24, 2010: Short story: Pacific University and San Jose were enemies at best. During their game in 1948 Pacific had a little All-American quarterback who went on to the Redskins. The quarterback faked a hand-off, and unloaded a forty-yard completed pass for a touchdown. But the line judge saw what he thought was the halfback go down and blew his whistle. Meanwhile the ball was flying through the air. The play was called back and Pacific lost. As I was the worst student body president in Pacific history, I charged out onto the field at the end of the game to protest. A nice picture of me facing the errant referee appeared in the next issue of the student paper. Possibly the best and only thing I did right during my year in office!

October 4, 2010: As a kid living within walking distance of U of Cal Berkeley Dad and I enjoyed the whole menu of sports. Do remember sitting in the end zone - grammar school Crossing Guards got in for twenty five cents - and groaning through a whole game with Oregon State which ending with Cal winning 3 - 0. As bad as soccer! Hershey candy bar wrappers included a postage stamp and after the game we would wander around the bleachers looking for wrappers that might contain a true collector's treasure. If I found any stamp it was usually one of little value. When I mention, "within walking distance", read about three miles or so. That was nothing as Berkeley Hi was the same distance. I spent only one semester there before Dad was transferred to Stockton and high school was a mere mile along tree-shaded streets.

I spent a lot of time in cross-country races battling the Norwegian exchange students who were on the Cal and UCLA squads. Twice in the championships I was second. You guessed correctly, just seconds behind the Norge guys. Nordic jumping and downhill events are no longer staged as both were decided to be too dangerous. With an ex-paratrooper and two Finns from Wooster, MA, Pacific did well in jumping. Even the half Finn, Slow-me, had a chance. Just closed my eyes, headed down the in-run and hoped that I would not die. Even placed fifth once out of about forty jumpers.

Nov. 15, 2010: Forgot to mention that I forwarded your piece on GM's big bore engines in a collection of outer space designs. Two cars were hitting showrooms while I was in Detroit - the first edition of the Corvette line and the '55 Chevy followed by the '57 Chevy. Friends from Art Center had a hand in the '55 & '57 Chevy designs. In fact my dear parents bought the '57 four-door sporting two machine-gun looking decorations atop the hood. That car, in the favorite color scheme, required a wait of a month or so after the order was placed it was so popular. Followed later by the '59 model with, what automotive nuts called, the melted fins. Then came the absurd really big wing-things for the '60 year. The wrap around windshield popped up somewhere in the late fifties. My Ford of that era was a tank and drove like one. Well, my VW did not have enough room for my two daughters - a good excuse to buy into Detroit's "Latest". Getting in and out was a challenge by the space left from the wrap around. European designs got to the goofy windshield craze just as Detroit was moving on to the windshields of today. GM was all about "Styling", not sensible cars. I blush when my resume included General

Motors Styling Division experience. I did do some work on where and what the radio antennae of the future might be. Thank goodness most of my assignments were for exhibits, displays and architectural interiors - stuff I could apply to the western market. Was offered a job with Toyota's advanced styling studio located in Newport Beach for auto interiors, but with the divorce really wanted to get out of southern California. Lucky me, as the ski resort came along and I threw a few possessions in the Volvo and headed east in 1978 dragging a U-Haul trailer.

Nov. 20, 2010: Above I mentioned valley "Tully" fogs. I can remember driving back to school after a weekend of racing at Badger Pass in Yosemite. For some 25 miles the highway dips down a few feet into the fog then up again to where we could see. Sort of similar to sailing in big waves as on the top you can see how you are doing in the fleet, then down to the bottom of the next wave. Hoping when you come up there is no other boat sharing the same crest. Tully fogs usually are above the ground ten to fifteen feet. I remember a football game where a punt disappeared into the fog. A defensive back has no idea where the ball is until it hits the grass. Does add a lot of excitement to the game. During retirement days Mom and Dad would drive the 8 hours from Orange Co. to the cabin in the mid-Sierras a day or so before Thanksgiving. Then after work I would repeat their drive, arriving at the cabin after midnight. It was great fun for Nan & Abby - they got to sleep in the back seat. We had three days, some skiing if the snow arrived early, then back the eight hours to Newport Beach. You guessed it, back to work Monday morning. How we did those crazy things is a dim memory. One of life's pleasures is taking a nap whenever the idea comes along. [I have also seen it written, Tule fog.]

Dec. 7, 2010: If I am correct the two trees and the adventure to get the trees, on skis, is the Finnish family. I remember the photos of the farm and the young boy in a one-horse open sleigh. I all sounds very traditional. On this very day - December 7th, 1941 - Dad and I were out in the woods ten miles further east than where the cabin was located, looking for a tree. In those days the Forest Service would issue a permit to cut a tree, with certain rules. As there was very little snow at the cabin, we drove to higher elevation which allowed Dad to find the tree, while I messed around on my skis. As we were tying the selected tree to the ski rack on our 1936 Chrysler, a large flat-bed truck went by with a fake French army tank on the trailer. We realized the truck was from a Hollywood film company and the snow had shut down further filming of the movie, "For Whom The Bells Toll". For political reasons the film (anti Franco, Spain) was not released until early 1944. Since much of the mountain shots for the movie were areas that we knew well, I got to see the movie just before going into the army. Have watched the movie several times since and it held up pretty well with Gary Cooper. Our village, Pinecrest, was headquarters for the movie crews and some of the "extras" were friends. I worked at the little post office, so only got to watch one day of filming. During the 1930s two other movies were made nearby and mom drove us to the locations. Thirty miles down the mountain is a narrow gage railroad used in a lot of western movies. You know the situation where hundreds of Indians attack the train and the good guys shoot 'em off their fast moving horses. Ride 'em, cowboy! Tender Foot Bob - I don't do well around horses, they know I am a city kid.

Dec. 21, 2010: With all of my uncles gone and little connections with my age group, you are the one remaining on my list of correspondents. My favorite cousins living in Portland have passed and my cousin Jane died just after WWII. Jane lived with us for a short time when I was in grammar school. She, and her mother Myra, had rather difficult lives and both died in the thirties. The depression was difficult for many, and I was fortunate to have my father employed. My favorite story: We were eating dinner and Mom was telling Dad that the living room drapes needed replacing. Dad's reply was simple: "Hazel we have never missed a meal." The Basics we had, anything above that was "want" not "need."

The family barn new in 1932 was an exciting adventure probably within a year of the barn being finished. If I am correct with help I got to the upper level as a 1st or 2nd grader. Your work to keep me updated on your family is appreciated. The summer my family came by and had lunch at the family farm in Beaverton was part of our tour of Oregon. We visited with my cousins "Bud and Sis" – Lawrence, Jr. and Madelaine - in Portland, then to Seaside to say hello to Uncle Lawrence and Aunt Emma before stopping at Uncle Fred's to see his widow, Agnes. Then on to the Seattle World's Fair [1962]. By that time Mom's father and second wife were no longer living.

Jan. 3, 2011: With Dad's days at Cal Berkeley and we living just four miles from the Cal campus, Stanford was black listed. Mom would have a party after the Big Game, with enough people to fill the living and dining rooms. That was a treat when I got invited to the Cal-Stanford game in Palo Alto. Somehow I made it there and back without getting lost. That was a streetcar - ferry - train ride to Palo Alto then reverse the sequence including a taxi from train to ferry on return. Being a dumb kid I probably did not tip the taxi driver.

Feb.3, 2011: During a trip to Astoria in the 1930's Dad tied his homemade sled onto the spare tire and brought it to Berkeley. I remember a trip to the highway east of Sonora (Gold Rush country) and my first in snow. The conditions were warm and the snow would not support the runners of the sled. But I was hooked on winter activities. Later, after Dad bought the original crude cabin at Pinecrest, he tied the sled to the trunk of a huge evergreen. Unfortunately, the sled was stolen and never seen again. In those days we transported food and other items a block or so from a parking area as the road to the cabin was not plowed and the sled was used. I remember the wonderful sled was painted green and had a yellow swastika - an Indian symbol, going the opposite direction as the infamous Nazi graphic.

College meets are the next level, but since I got involved Nordic Jumping (30 meter hills, which made a 100' jump standard) and Downhill, because of the danger of possible serious injury, have been dropped. "Ya, know, Pilgrim, thas ain't makin' tough folks no mor, like tha use'ta" (My best John Wayne imitation) State or local championships are the third level and finishing with the really experienced competitors at the Olympics and World Cups. Pro meets might have disappeared. Oh, add Masters for racers over 35 - both men and women. Your cousin, plain Bob Wilson, got within 3 points of making the "A" classification at the state level. Going on after getting a BA to the school in L.A. brought my "not so illustrious career" to an end. Dad was my on-going support. I once finished a downhill race with a bloody lip after crashing along the way, covered with snow as evidence of the fall. Dad looked at me and said, "Not bad, you finished ahead of Warren Miller." (world famous for his very well-produced movies on both skiing and sailing)

March 9, 2011: Aren't we happy to be out of Los Angeles? I worked in west L.A. for six years, plus the two and half years getting my design degree. That was exciting, but was glad to have the "Sisu" to move to Orange County and start my consultant practice. One reason for leaving the L.A. job that had a good future was getting the girls into better schools.

Way back in college days UCLA and Cal Berkeley plus some other schools had Norge exchange students. We enjoyed getting to know them. They were fun and good skiers. Several of that bunch had served in the resistance against the Nazis. All spoke English well enough and their phrases of English to fit some expressions were delightful.

Living in Berkeley was complete with probably at least a half dozen shakes. About the third grade we went to school half day, while the brick parapets were removed following a big one that hit the Los Angeles area. Our glass room was the main hall and we all had to buy a bag to carry books as we took a lot of work home. I

thought my black satchel with fake leather straps was COOL. Then on to school in L.A. and I was living at the school - an old wood frame two story building - when I was shaken out my bed in the middle of the night. Remember heading for the nearest stairway and bumping from one wall to the opposite wall over a "rolling" floor. That one was followed by after- shocks for three or four days. Maybe you were living there when a big quake centered on north east of the basin and knocked down parts of the freeway over passes, damaged a VA hospital. I thought, "that is not so bad" thinking I was ground zero - driving to the Queen Mary in Long Beach the radio gave me the nasty details.

Dad got a penny per paper announcing the San Francisco quake and resulting fire. $100 \times 1 = \$1.00$. Big money then!

Mom and Dad were married on December 26 and having just being discharged and having little money, he wore his army uniform. Mom was in a long wedding dress.

A thought struck home in that it has over a half century since I left school in L.A. It is good I quit the design world as the alumni magazine I still receive centers on "the latest" and I have no idea what I am reading and looking at. As an eager student we had a favorite battle cry of, " Look out for onrushing youth!" As the photos and text revealed, those Youths are now sitting on the porch (are porches still around?) at an AARP center.

Nan is collecting old books and earlier she became the owner of, "How Peter Rabbit Went To Sea". I was awarded the book for perfect attendance in First Grade at Thousand Oaks Grammar School. Am sending her " Hinkly Pinky" and favorite of my young days, "My Life Story", by P. Uppy which is about a dog. The front cover has a sitting puppy taking most of the space. What I thought was amazing is the dog's head is a separate over-layer and the head can be moved upward to give the illusion of the puppy looking up at the sky, ceiling or perhaps dinner being offered by the owner. "Hinkly Pinkly" was full of very simple rhymes for an early reader. Jack and Jill sort of things, which I mastered by the time I finished high school. A few of the rhymes scared me and I would quickly turn the page.

I am guessing that Dad started school at Cal later than 1911 - maybe 1914 or 1915 as he was called to active duty about 1917. When he returned later to finish at Cal he had only two years to go. He did not get a degree and started a contracting partnership about 1920. As a kid he showed me sidewalks his small company built in Berkeley with the usual "branding" of Wilson & -oops forgot the name of his partner. They remained friends and while I was stationed near their home in Bakersfield I was invited to dinner and an overnight in a bed much more comfortable than the GI cot.

March 27, 2011: You are looking at Corporal Richard A. Wilson, platter for a very large coastal gun defending the mouth of the Columbia. Note the two stripes on each arm. And, of course, the second photo includes my mother. They are standing in front of a small cabin that Dad and several friends built near Young's Bay - That may be more of a guess than pure fact. I have several similar pictures. Ownership of the land was never made clear and it may be that out in the woods no one cared. I am hazy as to the identification of the National Guard organization, other than he did mention "Company Astoria." As platter his job was to figure just where on a circular RR track the 6" (that is big) cannon was to be sighted. Limited firing was at towed targets, not ships of the German Navy. I do remember visiting those massive concrete formations, long after the guns were removed. Just north of the Golden Gate Bridge we have stopped at abandoned gun emplacements that were quickly built after Pearl Harbor. Again the guns have been removed and only the "gun pits" remain. The human race is very slow in recognizing that shooting at one another is dumb. As a fresh recruit each week we went to the post theater to watch a series of movies to get us into an appropriate mood, called "Why We Fight" - golly they made John Wayne look like a Boy Scout. I worried about two things from movies about combat: Having to take off gloves at 40,000 feet where hands froze and gas attacks if you were lucky enough to get back on the ground.

Dad was transferred back to the office in S.F. about 1930 and I remember living in my grandparents small, two-bedroom house. Grandmother (Winnie) died during that time, but I know nothing more about her funeral. I do remember going with my Mom later to her gravesite with flowers. We moved from grandfather's house in Albany to the Alameda Street, Berkeley house by 1932 and I started school. My last visit with Mom's Dad and my step-grandmother took place during the three weeks I had between the school in L.A. and heading back to Detroit to work at my first "real" job as an entry level designer at GM. That is a separate boring story coming six years after my "less than heroic days" serving in the air force. Finally, I had a regular salary, some 360 bucks per month - take home.

April 27, 2011: You have the correct history on Dad's return from Europe. Let's start at the beginning. Having reached Officer Candidate School in Virginia in early 1918, that horrific world-wide fly epidemic caught Sgt. Wilson. What did the Army do? To get rid of him they gave him a RR ticket back to Astoria. He was lucky to have survived! Now we move to WWII. He tried to get back into the military in 1942-3 with the idea his engineering skills might be needed. I packed a toothbrush and went off to induction center April 1944, with the hopes of qualifying for air crew training. I made it as far as becoming a Air Student mid-1944 and Dad was still with CalTrans. My program was cut as some 70,000 dumb kids were ready for the next step, which came to a halt by August - Student Wilson was soon driving Crash Trucks. In lovely Pecos, Texas. Out of the blue came a furlough to see Dad off for Europe. I had no idea he had been accepted by the Army as a civilian engineer, given the simulated rank of Lt. Colonel that allowed civilians to be housed and fed with officers. He flew to DC, reported to the Pentagon, then flew to France as the Allies were moving eastward. His work centered on the huge transportation requirements for several million folks to be supplied and transported. When the Germans surrender Dad had moved on to Aachen. With the assignment completed a group of civilians were sent back to the U.S. and Dad elected to go by ship. Reported to the Pentagon, was discharged and got back to California by train. Mom and I met him in San Francisco, as I had been discharged and was working a military hospital waiting for the spring semester to start at Pacific. The experience in Europe led to another assignment when he retired to again work for the same U.S. construction company and he spent a year in Indonesia putting their highway system back in order after the Japanese occupation. The war had destroyed much of the roads, airports, etc. Mom flew to Hong Kong after his year was up. From there they came back to the states by a westward trip, getting to visit India, the mid-east, and some of Europe. One stop was Switzerland, where Dad and Mom visited with a Swiss fellow Dad had met during his days in France. End of story. Hope I didn't bore you, Bob

May 10, 2011: When clients would say, "Let's not worry about cost!" That may have been standard at GM, but in the real world I learned to be careful and tried to establish a budget and stay with it. Good example: I was recommended to do the office for the unit director at Ford's west coast Space center. Forgot the name, but Mr. Big was from Greece and wanted to impress. So, OK, I put together a suite, complete with private shower, lots of expensive materials. Mr. Big loved it. The architects loved it. When the Ford visited the installation they DID NOT LIKE IT, or the cost. Mr. Big was fired within a week. Mies van der Rohe said, "Less is more." He was an architect that ruled during the sixties - seventies. I liked his work and now am terrified by what is being constructed around us - Mac Mansions is the trade word for houses of 5,000 square feet for starters.

June 20, 2011: One of my last design projects was upgrading the post-partum floor in a local hospital. The room was complete with wallpaper, TB built into a cabinet with closing doors, storage space below, several appropriate framed prints, carpeted floors, soft lighting - the whole nine yards. And turnaround time was one day, possibly two. Sort of a factory production line. In the food service business it is known as "turning the table" unless the customer (s) are spending big on after dinner drinks. Only recently have fast food operations added amenities. Forty some years ago when I had the Carl's Jr. account interiors were something you could use

a fire hose on the clean up. Well, OK, not quite, but carpet was a no-no.

July 14, 2011: Dad was fortunate to have worked for what is now known as CalTrans at first a superintendent of highway construction - at pre-school age he took me out to a job site on a Saturday morning and I can remember a grader being pulled by a team of mules or horses. No big tractor! By studying Dad continued to take exams for working up the ladder, topping out as District Traffic Engineer and being transferred to Stockton when I was starting high school. Your dad's college during those days was a real accomplishment, given the country's condition. Dad left Astoria to go to Cal, Berkeley. Had to study at the library as he had no money for books, joined the ROTC and pressed his uniform by placing it under his mattress. Again, a lucky event as he became a sergeant with the Oregon National Guard and when they were called up to the U.S. Army he was sent to officer training corps (OTC) and was almost finished when WWI came to an end.

Again, back to the 30's and Mom driving the ten miles to Oakland's Farmers Market - a huge warehoused type building which featured independent stalls - all offering a special item. No shopping carts, so I was the designated caddy. The bags of food were placed on the back seat filling the entire width. My careful shopper mother would let me know that all that came to ten dollars. This was the crummy part of the city and long lines of men would be lined up for a free meal. Men would knock on our back door and ask for a "hand out" which was always given. I do not recall ever seeing women lined up for a meal, maybe they were helped in another way.

... I decided to work in the city "8 to 5". That provided a pay check, but also lots of overtime and travel. Just the reason I accepted the job of joining the team that was building a destination resort near Provo. My overtime during my five years with the largest Industrial Design firm on the West Coast showed of lots of fifty- and sixty-hour weeks. Oh, did I tire of the many meals in the air traveling to Chicago, New York, Denver, and other charming places.

August 13, 2011 - I can remember those days when I was dumb enough to go on my own, starting a consultant biz in a second floor 10' x 15' office in the former cannery section of Newport Beach. Lots of long hours and little income. With the girl's mom teaching we managed to eat for the first year. After that slow beginning things developed as I had enough clients and work to expand 100% by having my art school roomy leave Detroit. Eleven years later I had seven on the payroll, some good projects, but a different partner that had a drinking problem. Closed the office and went back on salary with a large design firm. More on that sometime in the future.

Oct. 3, 2011 - I was reminded of Knott's Berry Farm. Yippees! Have forgotten which city they were located - anyway I was a house guest in Balboa about the summer of 1948 or 49 and was introduced to a Ma and Pa place, the original Berry Farm, for a great chicken dinner finished off with a berry pie. That's all I recall, but before Disneyland got underway the modest Berry Farm grew and grew. When there were real orange trees and lots of open land in Orange County I recall visiting relatives that had a ranch that produced oranges. When I lived in Costa Mesa/Newport Beach I realized the ranch was located about where the Santa Ana Freeway zoomed by the Crystal Palace church. Some changes are not for the best, but we cannot stand in the way of "progress." Should have mentioned that visiting the ranch came in my pre-school days. Small world: the "distant" cousin that lived on the ranch was a member of the same frat I joined when going to Pacific. He was older and had finished college before I showed up.

You know more about football than I do and that comes from the 1941 waterboy for the Stockton Hi Tarzan football team, Being the new kid on the block, my season watching from the sidelines was a great way to meet the locals. Our cabin did put me in touch with three kids that also had cabins at Pinecrest. When I was interviewed for my hopes of getting into flight training at age 17, one of the questions from a board of officers was, "How many games did your team win this past season?" That was easy, "All of them, Sir!" Smart Finn, me.

Nov. 14, 2011: Dad was the Cal man, although he never got a degree with school divided by WWI, then marrying Mom and working in Eastern Oregon for awhile, before returning to Cal. In those days a degree was not as important as present and he advanced by home study for his civil service exams. We followed Cal sports of football, basketball, rugby, and track events. I do not remember ever going to a baseball game. When I got old enough to walk to the stadium on game day, Dad would meet me at the gate as he worked half day Saturdays and could get to Berkeley by streetcar to the ferry, ferry across to Oakland and the Big Red cars within a short walk to the game. We sat on the east side in the sun. Those were great days for both of us and the three-mile walk home was easy.

I have a soft spot for USC. Most of the architects I worked with and my dentist and attorney were grads. Then I was hired to do the interiors for the athletic department headquarters building. That was a very interesting assignment - lots of trophies!

Jan. 3, 2012: The design school I attended on Third near La Brea moved to the northeast of the Rose Bowl in the seventies. TV views just missed the campus, but I got split second shot of the approximate location. The school is expanding, have a "South" campus in Pasadena proper and will add to the original building. Part of my scholarship included cleaning studios after classes ended at 4 pm, which often meant my working as fast as possible to finish my assigned four large rooms. At about 6 pm some two or three evenings a week a car load of we poor, starving art students drove to various locations to take inventory of ladies ready to wear. That gig paid five bucks no matter how long the work required. I actually was one of two students that had a hole in the wall room and lived in the building. As there were always students working all night to meet a deadline, the two of us were responsible to see that the building was not burned down. The entry doors were never locked. By now that old pre-WWII building has probably fallen down.

A family note: Mom came to only one jumping meet and shut her eyes when my name was announced. Shucks, and I stood up for all three of my jumps! I always appreciated my Dad's comments when I finished a race with snow all over, knowing I had taken a spill with, "Well you finished!" (I fell a lot during wild downhill races).

The Berkeley house had a great view of the Golden Gate. We could see the progress of construction as the device that wove the huge cables went back and forth. On that subject, in the late thirties Mom and I took a ship up the coast to the Columbia, then past Astoria, ending in Portland. It was a memorial event for a kid that always loved being on the water. (Now my yellow kayak does the job).

Feb. 7, 2012: I remember the Wilson house on Bond Street. If correct the white house on the left in the photo was removed by the time I visited there and only a vacant lot with lots of weeds existed. Can remember clearly setting of firecrackers laid along the top of the stone wall at the sidewalk.

That branch of the famous Wilson clan enjoyed drinks - as in Eye Openers, Pick Me Ups, After Dinner Follow Ups and Chasers finished off with Shut Eyes. Mom was a one-drink lady. Compared to today, and during the tight budgets of the Depression, little wine was served at our home. Dad often was sent a "present" at

Christmas. It came in a wonderful red box. Not sure it was legal as at that time Dad was in charge of permits for over size construction equipment to travel state highways and receiving "Gifts" from contractors might have been questioned by the Powers That Be.

Another bit of Astoria trivia: Alex Sarpola, another Finn of course, was manager of a cannery and at Christmas he sent a package of smoked and pickled fish. I loved the smoked salmon - you can imagine what a piece looked like after being in the pocket of my jeans for several days. I was not smart enough to wrap the piece snatched from the kitchen.

Have you seen the photo of Fred's house under construction with the workers wearing hats and ties? A derby was included. Rather different than today. I worked on a huge building constructed on the Southern California facility for the Seventh Day church. I always appreciated a sign stating: "Workers will be fully clothed, no profanity, no radios". Rather simple and to the point of getting the job done. Boom boxes can make conversations impossible.

Feb. 9, 2012: While I did work on tearing down the original shack in Pinecrest, California which was replaced bit by bit, room by room during a span of 1947 - 1960. Cash was limited as was time during the rebuilding. Dad, Mom and I worked on the project every day we had away from Dad's office and/or my going to college. Mom was in charge of salvaging anything that could be reused. Stacking old lumber to be used for concrete forms, plumbing parts and bath and kitchen room sinks! I was designated Chief of Wrecking and Dad - without any drawings, directed where and how all this was to be done. We would pick up lumber, sacks of concrete, hardware and nails in Sonora, some thirty miles from the property and lug stuff in and on the car roof.

The name Pyykölä had disappeared from my mental database. The medal John Wilson received for his brave work on the rescue tug, "Tatoosh", was given to the Clatsop Co. Historical Society museum in Astoria on Dad's last visit there. When reading of those hard-working people of yesteryear, I realize how easy my present conditions are. I did work like a gopher at school in L.A., but after that I spent most of my working days at a drawing table in a nice, comfortable office. When I was at construction sites, after giving details about how something was to be built, I got back in an air-conditioned car and headed back to the office. Not really smart, but smart enough to know a good thing when it was offered. Cap'n Bob's tall tales about how he flashed through the slalom gates, ran like crazy from point A to point B on funny, skinny skis or pretending he knew what he was doing going off the only scaffold jump in California.

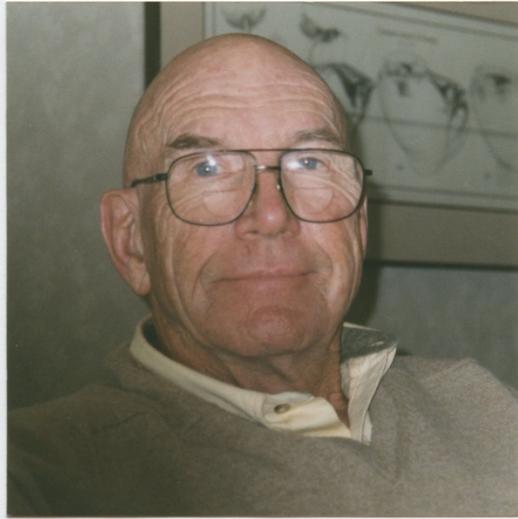
*[My notes interjected are in brackets.]

Bob Wilson, Salt Lake City, Utah
Son of Richard A. Wilson; grandson of John & Johanna Wilson



Bob Wilson and one of three birdhouses entered in a recent contest at a wildlife center. Bob received an "Honorable Mention" for this entry called, "For The Birds".

This birdhouse, branch and all, is now residing at Judy Wilson's home in Beaverton, Oregon.



Bob writes,
"Being child-again-like, I build stuff. In this case the three models were built during long winter nights; the wagon was rebuilt from something found in a neighbor's trash container."