

Things I Remember Growing Up

By Jerald Willingham

My father was Fred Willingham, and my mother was Edith Hatcher Willingham. I was born March 25, 1933 at Andover, VA, Wise County. I was the 4th of six children. Harold was the oldest, born in 1923, then Edward, Shirley, and two younger, Elva and Bobbie, four boys and two girls.

My dad worked for the Interstate Railroad at Andover. He was a machinist (mechanic) working on the steam locomotives. I remember that they blew the whistle at noon for lunch. Most of the time Dad took his (lunch) "bucket" with him when he left in the morning.

Dad and Mom were both smokers. All the boys smoked at one time, but I don't think either one of my sisters ever took a drag as long as they lived. Dad used to tell the story of Edward smoking. We had a fireplace in every room of the house (5 rooms), except the bathroom and the kitchen, which had a cook stove. Dad said that when he went to bed at night he would always light up a cigarette and smoke about half of it. He would flip the butt on the hearth of the fireplace in the bedroom. He said Edward would always be sitting in the living room listening to the radio, and when he heard that butt hit the hearth, he would come into their bedroom to say good night to them. The whole time he would be trying to kick the butt out of the bedroom to the hall so he could smoke it. He really thought he was fooling Mom and Dad.

I remember when Harold left for the Navy, just before the war. He got on the train at Appalachia. Edward joined the next year (1942), after Pearl Harbor. Mom didn't want him to go, but he did. I remember Mom cried a lot during the war. It was because she was so worried about Harold and Edward.

I remember when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. We were all around the radio listening to the news flashes. Mom was crying because she knew that Harold's squadron was not in the USA at that time. Dad and Edward were cussing those "damn Japs." I was eight years old and I thought it was all exciting. But I remember hoping the Japs didn't come to Andover. All the boys in Andover started playing war games instead of cowboys and Indians.

My mom told me that during the war, the Andover Church was always open, day or night, seven days a week. Anyone that wanted to come in and pray could come in, and if they wanted someone else to be there with them, all they had to do was ring the church bell. All of the men from Andover came back home after the war. One man (Junior Mercer) was a gunman on a B-17 bomber that was shot down over Germany. He bailed out and was taken as a prisoner of war. He was liberated after the war and came back home.

I remember when the war ended. I was at the railroad shops when one of the workers there got a call from his wife and told him the war was over. I was 12 years old. We started blowing the whistles on the trains and then other people started coming to the shops. We lit fusees and rang bells and blew whistles till all the steam was used up. Everyone in Andover was out celebrating. A big prayer meeting started at the church. It was an exciting time.

I remember one time we worked odd jobs to get enough money to go to the Saturday movie at Appalachia. We were standing at the bridge that comes into Andover trying to get a ride (it was only a mile). Preacher Waller, the pastor at the church, stopped and gave us a ride. We got in the back seat and he asked where we were going. We told him we were going to the movies. He started talking to us about wasting our money on that "trash" and could put our money to a better use. Well, as luck would have it, when we got to the ticket window, the theater had raised the prices and we were a few pennies shy. So we went to Uncle Joe's candy store and spent what money we had on candy and then headed back to Andover — walking!

Well, guess who came by and offered us a ride. Yep, it was Preacher Waller. He said that he thought we were going to the movie. We told him we had thought about what he told us on the way down and we decided to not go to the movie and waste our money and decided to save it and give it to the church the next morning. He told us how proud he was of us and gave each one of us a big apple. Not only that,

during his sermon he told the whole congregation about it. I was scared to death that he was going to invite us up front to put our money in the collection plate, but he didn't.

Andover was a railroad town. The Interstate Railroad hauled all of the coal out from the coal mines. The railroad yard was only about 100 yards from our house. We could go over there and hop a car to Appalachia, Norton, and all the coal camps. The nice thing was that you always knew the train was coming back to Andover with empty cars, so it was never a problem getting back home. You could always get into an empty boxcar and go even farther, but there was a problem getting back. When you got to the bigger places like Bristol, Knoxville, and Chattanooga, it was usually Southern Railroad, and you never knew where their trains were going. You could end up almost anywhere.

I remember when Dad and three other men were going to Pennington Gap one Sunday to see a baseball game. On the way there (in Daddy's car, an old Plymouth), Dad lost control of the car and they missed a curve and crashed into the "cliff" on the side of the road. Mom told us that he hit some loose gravel and lost control. All the men were injured and Dad had the worst injuries. Mom took me and Elva to see him in the hospital at Appalachia and she said we cried because we couldn't see our daddy. He was so beat up we didn't even recognize him. Mom said it changed his face so much he didn't look like the same person. It pushed his face in and his left arm and elbow was mangled, and he had trouble with that elbow until the day he died.

They used to have week-long revivals at the church using visiting preachers. This one time they put some speakers on top of the church so everyone in Andover could hear the revival. There was a young girl from Appalachia that was a real good singer and they asked her to sing one night. The story goes that this "old sot" was coming up the railroad from Appalachia. He had been drinking beer in one of the cafes and was drunk. They said he came barging into the church and said he wanted to be saved. He said he was coming up the railroad and started hearing the voice of an angel singing to him and calling him home.

Every house in Andover had a coal house and a smoke house. My brother Harold opened up a store in our smoke house and sold candy, drinks, and peanuts. Someone broke into it one night and stole everything he had. That put him out of business!

My friend Don and I also used to go up the mountain side by the railroad. We would find nice round or flat boulders and roll them down the hill. They would knock over small trees and fence posts. One day, one went all the way down and went through the roof of a supply house owned by the Interstate Railroad. We thought that was fun and tried to get some more through the roof. We didn't even think that someone could be in there, or of the damage we were doing. We didn't get caught.

The company store at Andover took "scrip" for goods sold. This scrip was only good at the company store. It was really a letdown to do a lot of work for someone so you could go to a movie and they gave scrip for pay. The movie house did not take scrip.

I earned money by chopping a bushel of kindling wood for a dime. We had to go to the mountains and haul out dead chestnut trees to cut. We could pick a gallon of blackberries for a quarter. That was hard, hot work for a kid. We could go on the railroad and pick up three coal buckets of coal for a quarter. None of us boys wanted to cut grass.

There were no power mowers then and grass had to be cut with a push-type reel mower. It was hard work. I remember sometimes I would be running (or walking) down the road in Andover, and one of the ladies might come out on the front porch and ask me to go to the store and bring back a loaf of bread or some other groceries for them. The reward for that was usually an ice cream bar (Brown Mule) or a Popsicle.

I remember how I used to hang out at the dispatcher's office on the railroad. It was in the big office on the second floor. The dispatcher was in constant contact with the train conductor at all times. Communications were by telephone. There was a direct line from different locations throughout the rail system. Pertinent information like the names of towns and directions were always spelled out and

repeated back. There was also a telegraph key and a ticker tape machine. Western Union telegrams could be sent and received from there. The railroad was really an interesting place to hang out. I always loved the railroad and trains.

On New Year's Eve, they let us blow the train whistle at midnight for five minutes. You had to get there early to get a train that was "steamed up." I remember we would listen to the train whistles and guess who the engineer was. They all had their own "signature" with the whistles. I had two uncles who were engineers.

There was a Coke machine in the big office and cokes were five cents each. I found out that you could pry open the small door where the cokes came out, and at the time, my hand and arms were small enough to go into the machine. You could feel around and find the neck of the bottle and trip them out and get a free Coke. There was also a steel washer they stocked at the tool shed. It was about the same size and weight as a nickel. It worked real good in the Coke machine.

I remember when my sister, Elva, had diphtheria. We were all quarantined and couldn't leave the yard, except for Mom and Dad. Our house was beside the school and I remember playing in the yard on that side of the house, walking on the top rail of the fence and yelling and distracting all the kids in school. The teacher went to the post office and asked Mom to make us stay on the other side of the house and play. I don't know how long we were quarantined but it seemed like a very long time.

The post office was on the other side of the house, and Mom worked there. During the war she was "on the verge of a nervous breakdown" because of all the worrying about Harold and Edward being in the war. The doctor advised her to get a job to take her mind off that and she went to work at the post office. There were only two people working there. When the postmaster quit working, they gave Mom the job, and she was there until she retired.

I always wondered why the doctor didn't think Mom had enough of a job with a husband and four kids still at home. I really liked it because I always figured if she was at the post office, that would make me free as a bird to do anything or go anywhere I pleased. But in Andover, you knew everyone and they all knew you. So no matter where you were or what you were doing, there were always adult eyes seeing you.

I remember Mom telling about a time Edward played hookie. The next day he went to school and the teacher asked where he was yesterday. He told the teacher that he only had one pair of pants and he had to stay home so Mom could wash them. After school the teacher told Mom about it and said it was all she could do to keep from laughing.

I remember the school did not connect to the sewage system like the rest of the town. About 30 yards behind the school were two outhouses, one for girls and one for boys. We boys always watched for girls to go in their outhouse to use the bathroom and we would throw rocks and bounce them off the outhouse and watch the girls come out crying.

The school was a two-room school, the first, second and third grades in one room, and fourth and fifth grades in the other room. When we passed to the 6th grade, we went to Appalachia and finished there.

The houses in Andover were all connected to a sewer system, so we had indoor toilets. The bad part was that the sewer dumped into the creek right under the bridge. We used to stand on the creek bank and throw rocks at the stuff that came out of the sewer and floated down the creek. Sometimes in the summer the creek would get low and the sewage wouldn't float away. The railroad would come over and spread lime around to kill the smell and cover it up. We could flush stuff down the toilet and then run over to the bridge and watch it come out.

I remember one guy at Andover. His name was Walter, but everyone called him "Dip" because he dipped snuff. He got as far as the third grade and stayed there until he reached 16 and could quit school. He sat in the first row at the end near a window so he could spit out the window. That was his seat and no one

would ever try to sit there. He went to work at the RC Cola bottling plant at Appalachia. He was still working there when I joined the Navy.

I remember in the summer, peddlers would come into Andover selling peaches, apples, water melons, and other goodies. They had a whole truckload. When they crossed the bridge, about every boy in Andover would follow the trucks and try to get their goodies. Actually you could probably say we were stealing them. Sometimes they would give each of us some, hoping we would be satisfied and go away. But there was just something special about “snitching” them. They eventually quit coming into Andover.

Andover was the only place I knew of where the dogs had a last name. Every dog in Andover was called by the last name of the family that owned it. There was Joe Taylor, Scrappy Collier, Tip Willingham, Bowser Willingham, Bingo Willingham, just to name a few. There were no female dogs in Andover as far as I remember. Often someone would let out a stray at the bridge, and it seemed it was always a female in heat. Every dog in Andover would follow her around and they were always fighting. You could hear them at night up in the mountains barking, fighting, and carrying on. Every dog in Andover would be gone for a few days, and finally come back all tore up and starved.

I remember a stray had a litter of pups in our chicken house. Something happened to the mother, and all the pups died except for one. They were less than a week old. I took that one dog and put it in a box behind the stove in the living room. Mable (Harold’s wife) gave me a baby bottle to feed it with. It cried all the time and I don’t know how everyone put up with it. I would get up at all hours of the night to feed it. I called it “Rock” because it was solid black (like one of the guys that worked at the railroad shop who they called Rock). Well, it survived and I still had that dog when I joined the Navy. When I came home on my first leave, Rock was gone. He got run over by a car.

We had a “slop” bucket on the fence post in the back yard. If you had any food left at the end of the day, you would put it in the bucket. Every evening, a person would gather the slop and mix it with mash and feed it to their hogs. When they slaughtered and cut up the hogs, they would make sausage and give some to all the people that had saved slop for them. There were quite a few pig pens up in the hollow.

Hog killing time was an exciting time. They would shoot the hog and cut its throat to “bleed” it. Then they would pour boiling hot water on it and scrape off all the hair. They would then get the kidney and bladder and blow them up and play football with them. The girls would play jump rope with the guts. They would boil the intestines in a big iron pot over a fire and render all the fat, which they would use to make lard and lye soap. What was left over was called chitlins, which they would eat. It was quite an experience. Hog killing time was usually in November. Then it was cold enough to keep the meat in the smoke house where they cured the meat.

We didn’t have pigs as far as I can remember, but we did have a milk cow, and Mom raised chickens. Mom would milk the cow and we had plenty of milk and she would make butter. The leftover milk after the butter was rendered was the best buttermilk I ever tasted. To this day I still love a big glass of cool buttermilk.

We had a chicken coop and a fenced area to keep the chickens. We had plenty of eggs, and every Saturday evening Mom would kill two chickens for Sunday dinner. I remember watching her get a chicken by the head and wring its head off. She was really good and would always end up with the head in her hand. The headless chicken would flip flop all over the back yard till it finally died. She would then scald it and pluck all the feathers off and cut it up to cook.

She would cut open its “craw” and empty the gravel out and cook it. She also cooked the livers for Dad. Sometimes there were even egg yolks in them. When we kids were being bad, her favorite threat was, “If you don’t be good, I am going to wring your neck.” Boy, the visions that went through my mind. It scared me into being good.

Below Andover (heading toward Appalachia) there was a swinging bridge from the railroad to Callahan Ave. Just across the bridge there was a café and the owner was named Johnny Woods. He was a black

man and drove the school bus for the black kids from all the coal camps and Appalachia area. There were no black families in Andover.

We boys would all pool our pennies and go to the back door of his café and ask for a quart of beer. He would tell us he couldn't do that because it was against the law and he would get in trouble. We would wait around the side of the building for a few minutes then go back to the back door and there would be a brown bag with a quart of "Koenig" beer in it, and our money would be gone. We would then go back up the railroad to the bottom and drink the beer. Of course, a quart did not go very far with five or six boys drinking it. Then I would be afraid to go home because Mom might smell it on my breath, and she was a teetotaler. I was about 14 or 15 years old then.

Whenever us kids got in trouble and were going to get a whipping, Mom would make us go out to the lilac bush and cut a nice "keen" switch to be whipped with. She would switch us on the back of our leg below the knee, and it felt like bees were stinging. Boy, would we dance!

I remember one day a bunch of us guys were hanging out on the bridge and someone offered me a chew of tobacco. Well, several of them were chewing and it looked easy and they seemed to enjoy it. So I took a chew of Beech Nut. I chewed on it for a while, and as hard as I tried I could not keep some of the juice from trickling down my throat. I started getting dizzy and my stomach started flopping over. I had to spit it out and go home.

Mom and Dad were sitting on the front porch and I went in the front gate and fell down face first in the grass. Mom asked me if I had been drinking beer or home brew and I just shook my head no. I was holding on to the grass to keep myself from flying off the face of the earth. I was so dizzy. Dad came down the steps and walked over to where I was lying. He asked me if I had been smoking and I just shook my head no again. Then he asked me if I had been chewing tobacco and I just puked up everything.

On the other side of a hollow was a big field where we could ride a piece of tin off of it. It overlooked Andover, too. We would take a piece of metal siding, bend up the front and use it as a sled. On one part of the hill was another cliff, and one day me and two other guys were showing off in front of some girls and rode the tin down. Well, it got a little off course and went over that cliff. We hit a barbed wire fence, hit a pole, and landed in a corn field. It was in the wintertime because the corn had been cut and the ground was frozen. I landed on the side of my face. It was all scratched up and I had a mouth full of mud. The inside of my mouth was bleeding, but I had all of my teeth. The girls laughed at us and asked if we would do it again.

The man that delivered the mail to Andover was Wiley Collins. Everyone called him "preacher." He worked at the service station across the bridge and twice a day he would go to Appalachia and pick up the mail bags for Andover and all the coal camps and deliver it. He would stop at Andover on his way back and pick up the outgoing mail. I believe Andover was the only one that got two deliveries and that was because of the railroad and the Central Supply. The afternoon run was the one that went to all the camps. I used to wait on him at the post office and ask him if I could ride with him to the other camps. There was Arno, Derby, Osaka, Roda and Stonega. He would usually let me go with him, and drop me off at the post office on his way back. I was 10 or 11 years old then.

The Service Center (we called it the "grab all") was a combination service station and grocery store. The guys working there would pump gas, change oil, fix flats, and do other mechanical work. If someone came into the store for something, they would wipe their hands with a rag and come in and wait on people. They cut baloney and everything. That's where we would go to get our ice cream, soft drinks (we called them "dopes"), candy and other goodies. The building is still there but has been closed since the late 1950s. There was also a man named Raymond Thompson who worked there. His nickname was "Tip Board" Thompson. He sold "tip boards," which were used to gamble. You would pull tags off the board and when they were all sold, you pulled the tag off that had the winning number — something like a lottery.

My dad won a bicycle on a punch board one time. It was a girl's bike, so he gave it to my older sister Shirley. But he told her to let me, Elva, and Bobbie ride it too. We had a schedule who would get the bike at certain times. That worked pretty good until it was Bobbie's time (he was the baby). When it was time for him to give up the bike for the next one to use, he would always disappear to the upper end of Andover and we would have to chase him down to get our turn. We would go up the road and he would come down another road. There were two roads and two alleys in Andover, so it was a pretty good chase to catch him (the roads in Andover were not paved).

There was a row of houses across the railroad and that were always "up across the tracks." There was a road that ran from the front road to the back road. We called that the "Cut." So you lived above the cut or below the cut. Our house was below the cut. There was a road that crossed the bridge and went down to the shops across the railroad. That was simply called "the road to the shops." It was a dirt road made of white gravel. The only I.D. for the houses was a number on each house. When I joined the Navy, the recruiter wanted to know my address. I told him it was Andover, VA. He asked for the street name and address. I told him there wasn't a street name. He kept insisting, so I finally told him it was "95 White Road St," and that made him happy (95 was the number on our house). No address was needed because everyone had to go to the post office to get their mail. Mom was the postmaster and knew everyone in Andover.

We would go down to the trash pile and build a fire. We would take an old water pipe and bend one end of it over and crimp it. We would fill the pipe with water and drive a wooden plug in the end. We put the crimped end of the pipe in the fire and let the water heat up. It would build up a head of pressure and blow the plug out. We called it our steam cannon. It would shoot the plug a long way, depending on how tight the plug was. We drove the plug in too tight one time and the pipe blew open before the plug would shoot out. Lucky us, no one was hurt.

Sometimes the State of Virginia would donate supplies and cheese to the school. The teachers would give all the kids an apple and a slice of cheese every day. It was kept in the cloak room. Then at night or on the weekend, we would go through a window and steal apples and cheese.

During one of the revivals at the church, Preacher Mercer was preaching. He was really fired up. I was sitting on the front row and was nearly asleep. He was preaching about money and pulled out his wallet and threw it in my lap (trying to make some kind of point, I guess). When the wallet hit my lap it scared me and I yelled and jumped up. Everyone started shouting because they thought I was saved and got religion.

The preachers I remember doing the revivals were Mercer, Dillon and Gerald B. Price. One night Gerald was preaching on going to hell. Well, up toward Wise, VA, was a place (dance hall) called the "Greasy Spoon." It had a bad reputation and he was preaching about all those people going to the "Greasy Spoon" and said they would "slide right into Hell." I thought that was funny and started laughing. The church got real quiet except for me laughing.

When I was in the 5th grade (at the Andover school), I took on the job of starting the fires in the stoves during the winter. It was a two-room school and each room had a coal burning stove in it. My job was to get up every school morning at 5 AM and go build the fires so the rooms would be warm when school started. The school was next to our house.

Grades 1, 2, and 3 were in one room, and 4 & 5 in the other room. I would "lay" the fire at night and have it ready to light. One morning I went to light the fires and forgot to bring matches with me. So I looked in the drawers of the teacher's desk and found a bottle of "Tips." Now, "Tips" was a breath freshener in a real small flat bottle that was so small you could hold it in your hand and no one could see it. The liquid was green and you would put just a drop on your tongue to freshen your breath. Well, when women used it, it was usually because they were smoking a cigarette and that would take care of smelling it on your breath. I found a box of matches in one of her desk drawers and got the fires going. During the course of the day, I told a few of the guys what I found, and we all decided that teacher smoked. Well, the news

spread like wildfire among us kids and the next day I was in trouble again. When she started asking the kids in the class, it didn't take long for her to determine who started that story."

She sent me home with a note to Mom, and I sure hated to give it to her. I got fussed at about being nosy, untrustworthy, telling lies, snooping, and various other things. When she finished, I said I was sorry and asked if I could go back to school. She said I could go straight to the Lilac bush. Well, I broke off a nice switch and she switched me right there in the yard (the side next to the school) where all the other kids could see. Then she marched me to the school and I had to apologize to the teacher and all the kids in both rooms. And I had to give up my "job" building the fires. So there went my 25 cents a week salary. I was never so humiliated in all my life. I must have been about 10 years old then.

The president of the Interstate Railroad that I remember was A. L. Holton, Sr. (his son was, in later years, the governor of Virginia). I wanted to build a shed. I asked Dad if I could build it in the yard and he asked what I would build it out of. I told him lumber and tar paper. He told me it was impossible because the president of the railroad, Mr. Holton, would have to OK it, and even so, where would I get the materials with no money. I said I could gather it up some way; maybe get a job and save my money (I was not even a teenager yet). He said that Holton would have a fit when he saw it. So I went to Mr. Holton's office. I walked in and his secretary asked if she could help me. I told her I wanted to see Mr. Holton. She asked me, "Aren't you one of Fred Willingham's boys?" I told her yes and I gave her my name. She said to have a seat and she would tell him I was here to see him. She came back out of his office and said I could go on in. I went in his office, sat down and he asked me how he could help me. I told him I wanted his permission to build a tar paper shack in our back yard, but my dad said I would have to get his OK to do it. He said he would think about it and let me know.

Later on that day a truck from the railroad came to the house and unloaded a stack of 2x4s, nails, tar paper tacks, and several rolls of tar paper. I had my answer and my supplies. I ran back to the office and went up to Mr. Holton's office and thanked him. When dad came home from work he told me to never do anything like that again, but he was grinning at me. He said it was the talk of the shop all day. My cousin Robert and I put up the frame, covered it, and had a real "Shack," as Dad called it. We spent one night in it. It didn't last long, but we enjoyed it for a few days.

We were playing in the creek under the bridge (which we were not supposed to do), and my younger brother, Bobbie, found a condom (back then, we called them rubbers). He was playing with it and some of the older men loafing on the bridge told him it was a balloon — said he should see how big he could blow it up. I knew what it was, but I thought this was so funny. Bobbie blew it up and it was huge. One of the guys told Bobbie that he ought to blow it up real big and take it home to show his momma. We only lived a short distance from the bridge and you could see it from our front porch.

Bobbie blew it up real big and started toward the house. Well, I ran ahead of him to the house, laughing as hard as I could. He ran in the house and Mom was in the kitchen. She asked what I was laughing about and I told her I was laughing at Bobbie. She asked why and I told her to look out the front door. She looked out the door and there was Bobbie walking down the road with that thing blew up so big you could hardly see him! She ran to the front porch and yelled as loud as she could to Bobbie to throw that thing down and get in the house. I am laughing so hard my sides were hurting. Bobbie came in the front gate and Mom got him by the arm and took him straight to the bathroom. Boy, was she mad! She took Bobbie and started washing his mouth out with Octagon soap. I was laughing as hard as he was crying.

When Mom was satisfied that his mouth had been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, she told me to go out to the lilac bush and cut her a good switch. Well, this really pleased me, as Bobbie was about to get a good switching on top of the mouth getting washed. I went out to the lilac bush and broke off a real nice switch and took it to Mom. I gave her the switch and she said, "Now Jerald, pull up your britches legs." Things all of a sudden took a turn for the worse. I said, "But Mom, I didn't do anything wrong — it was Bobbie." She said, "Pull those pants legs up." Well, I pulled them up about halfway and she said to pull them up as far as I could or she was going to yank them all the way off. I pulled them up as far as I could and she commenced to switch the back of my legs. Wow, it felt like a thousand wasps stinging my legs, and I was really yelping.

She finally quit switching me and I must have danced for another five minutes. She was really mad and I wanted to get out of that house. She asked me if I had learned anything from this and little 'ole smart ass me said, "Yes, I have learned to stay as far away from my little brother as I can. I started to run, but she grabbed me by the arm and we went around in a circle, with her switching away at my legs, and me crying and wondering why I was taking all of the punishment. She finally quit and went to the living room. Mom was sitting on the couch crying. Mom told me I got that whipping because I was older and knew better. She said I should have made Bobbie throw that "thing" down. I never said anything, but I knew that if I had said anything to him, he would have said, "Shut up or I will tell Momma." That was his favorite saying.

When the war was over and Harold and Edward finally got discharged, they came home and went to work on the Interstate Railroad. Edward as a machinist and Harold worked on the paint crew. They painted the engines and railroad cars, and anything else that needed painting. I was on the paint truck one day and they were washing down some new built coal cars (built in Andover at the shops). They were spraying them with paint thinner to remove all the dirt, grease, etc., so they could paint them. A snake came crawling down the track and Harold killed it. It was a copperhead.

Harold and Edward both got married while they were in the Navy. Harold and Mabel had two boys, Fred and Ralph, and Edward and Jenny had twin girls, Sandy and Sherry. They called Mom and Dad "Me-Maw and Bow-Bow." So, of course, every grandchild called them the same thing. Dad, Harold and Edward all worked on the Interstate until Southern Railroad bought the railroad. Harold and Edward lost their jobs, but Dad stayed on as Master Mechanic until he retired in 1965.

Halloween in Andover was two days of destruction to say the least. We would shuck dried corn and take all the kernels off the cob. Then we would go around Andover throwing corn on people's front porches. As soon as we ran out of corn, we would then start throwing gravel. Never could figure out how "Corn Night" got started.

On Halloween night, things really got bad. We would turn over all the trash cans and roll them till all the trash was out of them, and then throw the cans in the creek. The day after Halloween was clean-up day. Eventually, the railroad started sending a truck around Andover and emptied all the cans before dark on Halloween.

When the ladies washed clothes (always on Mondays), they would hang them out on a clothes line in the back yard. Halloween was clothes-line-cutting time, and if it was someone you didn't like, you would cut about 12 inches out of the line so it couldn't be re-connected. Ralph and Edith Callahan lived right on the "cut," and I remember one Halloween, he was watching out his bedroom window and saw some boys cross the fence and go toward his clothes line. He came out his back door and had a shotgun (I don't know if it was loaded or not) and got in an argument with the boys and said he was going to sit up all night and watch out for his clothes line, and if anyone came in his yard, he would shoot them.

A big argument started and I remember that my cousin Robert was one of the boys in the argument. Well, unknown to Ralph, while he was arguing and protecting his clothes line, some more guys were in the process of taking his swing off the front porch and depositing it on top of the post office roof.

In the summer time, we used to catch June bugs, and tie a piece of thread to one of its back legs and use it like a kite. One day I was flying one and Mom told me to take the thread off and let it go free. I whined and said, "But Mom, it's only a bug." She said, "Well, that doesn't matter, what matters is what I asked you to do." Well, how in the world are you going to untie a thread from a bug's leg. I pulled on the thread and just pulled its leg off and it was hanging on the thread. You can probably guess what happened next. Yep, another trip to the Lilac Bush.

I remember during the war, probably 1944, we were at a service in the church. There was a pretty good crowd there. I remember seeing a man in a Navy uniform come in the door, and it was my brother

Edward. Later I learned he had come home on leave to recuperate after an operation. Everyone was real excited and there was hugging, crying, shouting, and a lot of thanks giving.

Mom was a teetotaler. She didn't like alcohol in any way, shape or form. I'm surprised she even used vanilla in cakes and pies. I remember one Christmas, Dad put a bottle under the tree with a tag on it that said, "To Fred — From Fred." Mom was really mad. I guess Dad must have got in the bottle pretty good, because I remember that he was real sick the next day. Mom said he had a hangover.

She called Dr. Sneed and asked him to come to the house and look at him. She met Dr. Sneed at the front gate and told him she thought he just had a hangover and, if that was the case, try to put a scare in him. The doctor went in the house, went in the bedroom, and listened to my dad's listed to his heart. He also took blood pressure and did a lot of other things. Finally, he put all his equipment in his bag, closed it, and sat down on the bed and asked, "Fred, have you been drinking?" Dad told him that he had had a couple of drinks. Dr. Sneed said, "Well, Fred, from what I hear listening to your heart, lungs and feeling your liver, my diagnosis is if you take another drink, the shock of it will probably make your heart stop beating, and if that don't kill you, then probably your liver will explode."

Then Dr. Sneed picked up his bag, and as he left the bedroom he said, "If you need me, Edith, just call. Without another word, he walked out the front door and I just stood there looking at Mom. She had a funny look on her face, and I don't think she really knew if he was serious or not. But, as far as I knew, Dad never had another drink as long as he lived.