

MY LIFE STORY

as written by and told by

THOMAS HORTON WALKER

to

Carolyn Walker Wood

And

Joel C. Walker

1975

Prattville, Alabama

My Life Story – Thomas Horton Walker

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My Life Story – Thomas Horton Walker

FAMILY:

As I begin this, an autobiography of Thomas Horton Walker, I shall try to go as far back as I can remember. I know that I was born September 17, 1902 according to all records. My mother was not attended by a physician at my birth, but by a mid-wife who was my aunt, Sally Ellis, a half-sister to my mother, Idella Hall Walker. My mother was married to Charles Thomas Walker and I was the seventh child and third boy. To this union of my Father and Mother, the following children were born: Lena, Willie, Bert, Bettie, Wheeler, Ila, Horton, Lucy, Allie and Bonnie Walker.

The best records I can obtain, my Grandfather Walker was killed in one of the last battles of the Civil War and was buried in or near Selma, Alabama. I have made several trips trying to find his grave, but have been unable to do so. I've found cemeteries with unmarked graves, grown up with honeysuckle vines and trees with no monuments or markers, which make me sad that my ancestors would fight for what they thought was right and no effort to mark their grave.

My father's family was said to have come from Georgia. My father had one brother, Joe Walker, who was a contractor and after he retired, moved from Chattanooga, Tennessee to St. Petersburg, Florida, where he died about 1941. He visited me after I was married. He had no children.

Daddy had one sister, Mollie, who married Eugene McGee. To that union they had enough children to make up for Uncle Joe. My Aunt Mollie had 13 children: Willie, Mamie, Joe, Woody, Oddie, Sam, Fred, Ed, Walker, Claton, Lawyer, and Harvey.

My Mother had 3 brothers: Robert Hall, Calton Hall and Ed Hall. Robert Hall was killed in an attempted robbery. Uncle Calton was married and had one son, Robert and five girls-Bessie, Eva, Birdie, Rosa and Etta Mae. Calton was married to Jennie Chism.

Let me tell you about my Mother and Father. There never has been or never will be a pair of more honest and one who had an abiding faith in the Lord and Church than both. Their word was their bond. Charlie Thomas Walker was for many years a member of the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church and as long as I can remember Daddy was a Deacon in that Church. My Mother was a member of the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church and as long as they lived we would go to one church on one Sunday and to the other church the next. They were both buried at the latter where all my other members are buried and where I will probably be buried.

SCHOOL AGE MEMORIES:

I don't pretend to remember to tell what I know back to my birth, but the things that I tell my sister Willie, about events that happened, she said I was 1 ½ years old at the time. One of my further back remembrances was when a cousin, Rose Hall was lost and was found in a huge gully not far from home. Another when John McAfee, Ben McAfee and I were playing in the barnyard and suddenly the herd of goats Mr. McAfee owned came home to their young, while we were playing with their kids. It was a frightening sight to be in the goat lot and all those nannies coming over the ramp into the goat pen bleating. My early memories of school was when my oldest sister, Lena took me to school with her one day and at recess in a game of "Push up," she had let me wander too close to home plate and the batter slung the bat into my head and I had to be literally carried home after school, and was "toted" by my sister Lena

My first day in Grammar School (as it was called then) was to Mr. John Hicks, who was a strict disciplinarian in those days. He was hard but fair. He ruled with an iron hand. Well, I can remember that up on the stage h1the corner where we all could see, was a bunch of hickory sticks four to five feet long and when he saw a student talking, he would walk up to that corner and get one of the switches and begin to limber it up by bending and twisting. He had all grades from first to eighth and a long recitation bench up front and when he'd want a first grade he would say, "First grade" and all first graders would march up and have a seat on the recitation bench, and it was the same with all other grades.

We went to school in a one room school which was later built for a two room by a petition and we had for heat in winter a pot bellied stove that we burned wood in. This wood was brought in by students from the nearby woods. And it was an honor for two or three of us boys to get permission to go to the woods for kindling and wood to start the next fire with. Sometimes a generous farmer and parent would bring in a load of wood if he was in good faith with the principal.

We got our drinking water from two large buckets of water that were brought in from a spring near the school. The honor for bringing a bucket of water was also extended to a student or two for good behavior.

We had no out door or in-door toilets. The girls had one section of the woods and the boys had another section. We had not heard of a Health Department.

CHILDHOOD HOME MEMORIES:

Log rolling: When I was only a small boy my father bought an 80 acre farm and only a few acres were clear land (cultivated) and in order to have more land to cultivate, we had to clear the land by cutting the trees and cutting up for a “log rolling.” The trees were cut up into 8 to 10 foot lengths. Everybody in the community would be invited to come and help roll the logs to "tote" them and pile up to burn. A man would put a pole under one end and another man on the other side would lift one end and 2 men with a pole on the other end and literally tote to the pile to be burned. There were thousands of feet of timber that could be sawed into lumber. While the men were piling the logs, the women would be preparing a big meal and actually it was a social gathering.

When the logs were piled, they would be burned and I can't forget when Dad would let me go out after supper to burn the logs. What a sight, with dozens of piles on fire at night.

Birds would roost in the brush piles and we'd go bird threshing before the brush was burned. We'd get all around the brush pile with a torch and shake the brush. When the bird flew out we would knock it down with a brush, clean them and barbecue in the fire.

Saturday Wash Day: When I was a small boy every Monday was wash day for the girls of the family. The boys would have to go into the woods adjoining the house and get ‘lightered’ knots and build a fire around the wash pot down under the hill where we got our drinking water. The spring came from under the hill and was cold. My mother would churn the milk and we'd take the butter and buttermilk and put it in the spring to keep cool until night. But on Monday my sisters would take the dirty clothes and put them in a wash pot and boil the clothes, then take out and with a batting stick, beat them on a wash block, then put them in a separate tub of clear

water to rinse, then hang them on a line to dry and the next day they took them and sprinkled starch on them and ironed them. There was no such thing as a washing machine.

Later on in life my father bought a hydraulic ram from Sears, Roebuck and put it in to pump water up the hill. It was run by pressure and had no maintenance cost. I remember it cost \$23.00. It pumped water up the hill to the house. We used kerosene lamps until Dad got a carbide light system for every room in the house. It cost \$260.00 on installment.

One of the most horrible experiences I had while I was in Grammar School was while Miss Brown was my teacher. I can't recall her first name, but in the late afternoon I had to go to the bathroom (woods) and I raised my hand and she said "Horton, we will be dismissed in 10 minutes." I said "Miss Brown, I've gotta go NOW" and I started for the door. She headed me off from the door with a switch. There was a high window near the door and I started out the window. She grabbed me by one hand as I was half out the window and at the same time pouring it on me. I finally broke loose and said to myself, "maybe I can make it." I had to run across a baseball field to get to the woods. (Remember we had no toilets). As I got near the woods there was a large log at the edge. As I jumped over that log it was too late, the damage was done. When I got home two miles, I got a whipping for a messed up pair of overalls.

When I was a small boy, I went barefoot all summer and had one pair of shoes when cold weather came. I recall one winter I had to wear my leftover shoes from last winter until Christmas. I recall when my Dad came in before Christmas and said, "Hort, here is your Christmas present." I opened it and it was a new pair of brogans. I put them on and they felt so good I ran out into the field like a young horse when you pull the bridle off in a pasture. I usually had two

pairs; one old pair for everyday wear and I'd save the new pair for Sunday wear, and my Sunday suit the same way.

LAWLEY, PLEASANT GROVE MEMORIES:

After that year my parents allowed me to go to Lawley to attend 7th grade. I boarded with my cousin Henry Head family. I'd help pay board with potatoes, corn meal or other farm products and get up before daylight and fire tank for railroad trains. This was a boiler to pump water to all a new experience to me, but a pleasure. My principal that year was George Thompson, whom I found out later was the father of Obie Thompson, once Chief of Police in Prattville, Alabama. Later he (Obie) died of a heart attack.

We had a principal of the school at Pleasant Grove, Cliff McGee, who coached us in basketball and we'd play other grammar schools, such as Lawley, County Line, and Stanton that were near enough to walk. Prof. McGee rode a mule to school and he would let members of the team who had to walk to play these games, ride the mule one mile each.

I recall that every chance I had to make money when we "caught up" with our work on the farm. Dad would let us "hire out I can well remember picking cotton for Mr. Henry Latham all day for a peck of peanuts. I took the peanuts, parched them and walked two miles to Jackson Lumber Company, who had a railroad run near Little Creek and sold them to the railroad men for 5¢ a package. I recall the steam engines that pulled the log train were fired with pine knots. They kept a crew of men along the track to bring the pine knots from the woods and pile beside the railroad for the train crew to pick up.

While I was in "Grammar School," very often I would go home with one of my best friends to spend the night. I recall my good friend

and classmate Russell Shoults-who would spend the night with me and the next night I'd spend the night with him. I recall one night I was at his home, we went opossum hunting with his neighbors (who after 40 years I learned was Mother and Uncle of my friend and Police Chief of Prattville Police Dept.) and one who in 1975 I sat up all night with in Selma Hospital and he later passed away. Russell Shoults, who never finished high school but was one of my best friends.

Another fall I recall I hired out to Uncle John Ellis to pick cotton for 50¢ per hundred and board. On Friday when I was "paid off," I put the money in a tobacco (Bull Durham) sack and headed home three miles away. I was so happy I'd stop every mile and count my earnings.

THOUGHTS OF HIGH SCHOOL:

After my year at Lawley I decided I might go to high school but the only high school was at Centreville or Clanton. I didn't have a chance to go to Clanton. My brother-in-law, Carson Snead, wrote me a letter and said they (Carson and my sister Lena) would be glad for me to come up and go to Bibb County High School at Centreville, to high school. I went up and enrolled. Professor Watkins was principal and one of my first subjects he signed me up for was Latin. I couldn't read English, much less Latin. I got SO homesick that after one week I caught the train back to Lawley and didn't go back (a mistake). I got odd jobs during the winter. One was working in log woods where they used oxen to haul logs. My job was to clear roads for log haulers and sometimes at the saw mill.

UNCLE ED HALL AND HUNTING:

My Uncle Ed Hall would come and want me to go hunting with him. He was a bachelor and seemed to like me. I recall we had a fine squirrel dog, old "Ball." We would go several miles up one branch and down another. Old Ball didn't miss many. We went several miles back in the hills where no one lived or hunted. One day we had been hunting for several hours and had a sack full of squirrels. When we came to a "moon shiner's" house and Uncle Ed asked him if he would sell him some whiskey and I never forget what he said. "No Ed, I don't have a drop. About how much you want?" When told it was \$2.00 a gallon, Uncle Ed bought a gallon in a jug. Uncle Ed told me to put it in my sack. I had a squirrel sack over my shoulder that we put it in. We started toward home and Old Ball kept treeing squirrels. Every time we killed a squirrel, uncle would take a drink, and by the time we got home, he was walking unsteady and when we got home he asked me to hide the jug in a stump hole in the woods.

My first shot gun was a 12-gauge single barrel which I paid \$4.00 for. I had sold goat hides I had bought for resale at a profit, and saved enough to pay for it. I kept it until I broke it over a hog that I was chasing out of the corn field. We had a split rail fence around the field and it had found a broken rail and was eating my father's corn. The hogs ran out in the woods and all the farmers fenced in the farm. The hog didn't want to leave, and charged me and I hit it over the head with the gun, breaking the stock.

HIGH SCHOOL:

The next September my brother-in-law, Carson Snead, wrote me and begged me to come back to high school. He said I'd have a room- mate. Judge Pratt's son Edward, would board with them and I'd have a roommate. I went back because I became interested in athletics

and stayed on that year and the next three to finish with honors in the Class of 1924.

There were many things that I count as eventful while I was in high school. I had many teachers and coaches who had an everlasting influence on my later life.

When I enrolled in high school I was afraid of all the upper-classmen. Some of them were the sons of merchants that had credited my father for groceries. Of course I had an inferiority complex. Those boys that had been my playmates were the sons of the very merchants who had extended credit to my father for groceries.

HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL:

My sophomore year in high school was uneventful until my coach John Paul Creel was at the railroad station and bid me 'goodbye' and as he did, he said, "Horton, I'm depending on you next year. Throw a football around this summer and be ready for next year." Because I spent my summer plowing "Old Dutch" and that was as I later learned pretty good conditioning for football. Next fall we had our regular football beginning. I tried my best and I'll never forget as we did our last scrimmage for a trip to Talladega High on Thursday at the end of practice. Coach Creel, our coach, was to announce who would make the trip to Talladega for the game. When he called out "Horton Walker," I almost had a heart attack. We went to Talladega via car to Ashby and by train to Talladega. It was an experience that I will not forget. When we got to Ashby, Alabama, while waiting for the train to arrive, Coach Creel had us (in our best clothes) out in a pecan orchard near the depot, running signals. We went on to Talladega and stayed at Purifoy Hotel and some were assigned to homes in town, and that night we were assigned dates to go to Talladega Country Club. I had a date with a girl named

Ernestine McBride. I didn't know how to dance the modern dance, so I just sat on the side like a wall flower.

The next day at the game, we didn't have enough shoulder pads for each player, so coach Creel called Edward Pratt and me over, and said, "Ed, go under the stand and let Horton have your shoulder pad. I'm going to put him in at guard." I didn't know guard from end. We were trounced.

A game the next year at Bessemer we were supposed to be trounced about 30 to 0, and when we were warming up, I saw my opponent at center and he weighed 212 pounds. I weighed in at 135 wringing wet. I walked over to Coach Creel and showed him my opponent in the game. I was scared to death. I said, "Coach Creel, what can I do with that giant?" I shall never forget his answer. He said, "Horton, did you ever see a bantam rooster fight a Rhode Island rooster?" and I said 'yes.' He told me to "get under him. A little man can lift more than a big man can push down." That man didn't do anything with me. Our score was 0 to 0.

During that year we played Marion Institute, a two year college team. We beat them when Albert Belcher, Our fullback marched 90 yards in 16 plays for the win- Marion hired our Coach the next year, which was my senior year. Coach Burney Acton took his place as coach.

My first high school coach, John Paul Creel probably had more influence on my life than any other man. He was always a gentleman and many times gave me advice. I recall one day I arrived in his class early and one of my best friends came in late. She was embarrassed by coming in late and I crooked my finger at her as if to tease her. Coach Creel saw me and said, "Horton, do you want me to give you a thrashing?" It hurt me worse than if he had. After class, I told him that

I had not even had to have a thrashing from my father and I didn't feel that the offense was equal to his threat. He said, "Horton, I don't apologize but if it hurt your feeling, I'm sorry - but if you ever need one, I won't hesitate to give you one." We have always been the best of friends. He was a leader and friend and a hell of a good coach.

On the football team we had about eight players who were boarding students and Coach Creel told us he would like for us to board at what we called 'the boys dorm,' between high school and Brent, which was the big colonial home built in the 1800's. Coach Creel was boarding there and we had curfew at 7:00pm, unless we had special permission. We got some good training while there. Coach Creel would have us alternate in asking blessing at each meal, and insisted on our attending Sunday school and Church. I will never forget slipping out before bedtime in pajamas to the sugar cane patch and hide it under the bed.

I recall some of the football players who were boarding students, and stayed there. Lloyd and Troy Rowe, Manley Goodwin, Raymond Lippett, "Sunshine" Eunice Chism was my roommate and is now a pharmacist at Clanton, Alabama. we had a good time and on occasions like Halloween, we put a live cow on the stage of the high school. Next morning, Professor Ralph Thomas called a few of the boys in and said, "Boys, you had a good time getting the cow up there; now let's see if it's as much fun getting it out." The next year we disassembled a one-horse buggy and assembled it on the stage facing the audience, shafts and all.

One Friday morning Coach Creel came to me and said, "Horton, we are supposed to catch the train to Montgomery to play Lanier, and Paul Meigs (a member of the team) is not here. Take my model T car and go down to Paul's home and tell Paul to put on a pair of shoes and come on." I went down below Brent to get Paul, and he was plowing

a mule. I told him what Coach said and he said, "I'll have to put up my mule and change trousers." We caught the train to Montgomery and played Lanier and I think we scored 12 points that night. We stayed at the Greystone Hotel that night and I rode my first elevator. During my four years in high school, I took part in football, basketball, baseball and track and if letters had been awarded as they are now, I would have received four letters in my senior year. The four years I went to high school as a boarding student, I was neither tardy or absent.

MORE CHILDHOOD MEMORIES:

Maybe before I get any further with the story, after finishing high school, I better back up and tell you something of my early memories. When we were growing up and living in the country, we had few things to do and no way to travel except horse and buggy or walk. During the summer, we were allowed to attend a barbecue or picnic, as they were called and play baseball games and go to the "wash hole," which was one mile from our home. The boys would walk that mile to go to the "wash hole" and on Sunday PM we'd all of the community would go to the creek. Our bathing suit was the one we were born with. And the boys would see which one would strip the farthest from the creek.

In season we'd have an egg boiling and "possum" hunt. We'd build a big fire in a pine grove where we could boil the eggs that we saved up during the week by slipping an egg or two out of the hen nest so our mother wouldn't miss them. We'd raid the sugar cane patches also. We'd take a "corn sack" to put the "possum" in. Sometime when we'd get two or three in the sack, they'd get to fighting and we'd have fun trying to stop them. When we'd finish the hunt, we would divide the opossums.

We always went to Sunday school and after Sunday school we'd all head for the 'wash hole.' On Sunday night we'd get someone to have a "singing" or a party. We were never allowed to have a party on Sunday night. But we would call it a "singing" and after a few songs we would do a little "Courtin" - that was our social life. We had no movies nearby or any kind of entertainment but to go to someone's house for a party.

In season, we did a lot of hunting, mostly for rabbits and squirrels. We thought nothing of walking eight to ten miles and hunt all day, going down one stream and up another with a dog. "Old Ball" was one of the best squirrel dogs I ever saw. He was a mongrel probably sired from a pointer and a hound dame. Some days "Old Ball" was lazy and for a while he'd just trot along behind us, and when he did this, we'd call him to us and get a switch and give him a thrashing and tell him to "go get 'em" and in a few minutes he'd have a squirrel treed.

On the farm we would work in the field until Saturday noon. Then on Sat. afternoon we would go fishing, swimming, or play baseball. I shall never forget one Saturday at noon Daddy told me to let the other ones who were going fishing on Big Creek, and he and I would go to Little Creek. He evidently knew where they were. We brought back a big string and the first big bass I ever caught with a cane pole.

In the fall when we harvested the wheat crop and it was cut and bundled by hand using a 'cradle' scythe to cut it. Lay it on the ground to "cure," then thresh. A time to look forward to each fall was the trip to the flour mill. My father would let me make the trip with him. Two-horse wagon loaded with barrels of wheat to the water mill at Six Mile. The trip usually took two days, so we'd camp out one night. My mother wanted water-ground meal, so on Friday or Saturday, we

would shuck and shell corn to take to the water grist mill. The nearest one to our home was the Holsomback Mill about five miles and my job was to take old “Nellie” or 'Dutch' and put a sack behind me and go to the water mill. I always looked forward to the trip because I would fish in the pond while he ground the meal. If when we arrived at the mill, there was no one there, we'd ring a big bell and the miller would tie his plow mule to the fence and come grind the corn. I took most the trips in the buggy because the meal always got hot in the mill and it was not very comfortable to ride on hot meal in summer time. In summer when it was dry, I'd always drive through the ford of the creek to water the horse and to wet the buggy wheels.

My first bicycle: There were only two bicycles in my community. I bought a young calf for \$3.00 and in those days our cows grazed back on hundreds of acres of land that then belonged to Mineral Land Company and our 'dry' cows would be turned back on that land and we wouldn't see them for a month. So I kept the calf until it was a good sized steer and sold it for enough to buy a bicycle. I paid \$25.00 for it. It had a carbide light and I felt that that was something to have one of any kind, but to have one with a light. Alsie Maness had the other bicycle and we'd get together and ride on Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday night I was more tired than if I had been plowing. We commercialized with those bicycles. We would charge 5¢ to ride around the school house, and you would be surprised how many nickels we would get on a weekend

I recall while hauling lumber from Thompson Lumber Company to Lawley, which was 5 miles up a log road up Oakmulga Creek. I passed by Henry Latham's house on Hicks Bottom and where his daughter Jesse would come to the door and wave. I got up courage enough to stop the team and talk to her. I told her they were having a "Protracted Meeting" (revival) at Friendship Church and I'd like to drive over (with horse and buggy) and take her to the meeting. It was

about 5 miles away and half of it through woods on an old log road. To my surprise, she accepted and we went courting to this church and back with no light on the buggy, without a single bump against a tree. I didn't even get a 'good-night' kiss. She is now the owner of an 86 mobile home trailer court in St. Petersburg, Florida.

When we got the crop "laid by" I had to take Old Prince and round up the 'dry' cattle that were on the range. We always had a bell on the oldest and most easy controlled cow. She was called the "bell cow." That's the way I'd find the herd in the woods. When I found them, I started the 'bell cow' toward home and the others would follow.

Sometimes we were after dark getting home, but I'd lie down on my saddle pommel and Old Prince would go through the marshes and undergrowth. We'd get them up in the pen and salt them and feed them so they would come back when we turned them back. The cattle dipping law was passed and every two weeks we would have to round them up and dip them for ticks. Sometimes when we needed meat on the table, we picked out a fat steer and butchered it. But we had no freezer, so we would share a quarter of it to one neighbor, a forequarter of it to another and when they killed one, they would repay the quarter of beef. What we had after Mother fed the family, a portion left would be let down in the well to keep cool, or put it in the cold spring under the hill where she kept her butter and milk. If neighbors didn't want any, we would take some of the beef to Lawley and sell to the section hands who always had money on Saturday, when they got their checks cashed. I always bought the hides of the cows butchered in the community and nailed them on the wall to cure. After they "cured" I'd ship them to Birmingham Hide and Tallow Company. I'd make a profit on them and when I got my bicycle, I'd ride it for miles and where I'd see a goat, cow or "possum" hide on the side of the barn, I'd stop and buy it, then ship it.

Everybody had cows and goats and when they needed meat they would butcher it for food. There was no federal inspection of fresh meats then. Sometimes when we took meat to town to sell, we'd put fresh peach tree limbs and leaves over it to keep cool, and keep the flies off.

The only time we had ice in those days was for 4th July. To get ice for 4th July ice cream, we'd have to order 100 or 200 pounds from Montgomery to be delivered by train five miles from my home. On July 3rd someone would meet the train and the ice would be shipped to us in a sack of saw dust. It was taken home and buried to keep from melting. I remember once a train wrecked near Maplesville, spilling a box car of ice. The railroad gave it away to anyone who would come get it. Some took wagon loads and buried it in the yard for later use.

On one of my first all-day picnics, I had a whole quarter to spend. We walked five miles to W.R.K. Sanford place, who had a big picnic annually. I bought my first cone of cream. I had never had the luxury of eating ice cream from a cone. I bought one for 5¢ and didn't know which end to start from. I thought maybe you were supposed to bite off the little end and suck it through, but when I saw how others were eating it, I thought that cone was the best I had ever tasted, so I spent all of my quarter for ice cream in cones.

As I stated, we had no place to go for entertainment, such as movies, etc. But sometimes someone would spread word of a square dance at someone's house. They would take all furniture out of one room and get Mr. Jim McGee or Mr. Kelley to play the fiddle. It was kept a secret because the church (Baptist) would, if they had proof, turn the member out of the church. I recall I was wearing knee pants and I'd join in and was said to be a good square dancer. I'd dance on

my heels, and they always watched me swing my gal on my heels.

HIGH SCHOOL AND EARLY JOBS AND MORE HIGH SCHOOL:

Summer employment while in high school, between my sophomore and junior year in high school, I applied for several jobs. One was with the fire department in Selma, when I heard of a vacancy. While I awaited a reply, I found a job as truck driver hauling lumber for a Mr. Moore at Active, Alabama, just north of Lawley. I drove an International that was second-hand, from daybreak until dark, for two dollars a day and board. I had a room in Mr. Moore's home and no indoor running water or toilets, and no screen doors or windows. I recall Mrs. Moore would have a peach tree brush to keep flies off while we ate. I had no helper on the truck. Had to load and unload the 1x4 lumber 16 feet long. I had to hustle to get in two loads a day to the side track at Active. It was a relief when I got a letter telling me to report to the Selma Fire Department. When I reported, they told me I would be paid \$70 per month. Work would be 48 hours duty with 12 hours off and would sleep at the Fire Station. During the three months I was a fireman, we had three fires. We played dominos and checkers for pastime. But many times we wished someone would set a chicken house on fire. The confinement was boring.

The next summer, 1923, between my junior year and senior year in high school: After my final exams my junior year, when I got off the train at Lawley, a member of the Paint Crew on M & O Railroad had just come home for the weekend and said they had a vacancy on the crew and said Mr. Mabry asked him to bring a good man back to take the place. I told him I was the man he had been looking for. I went back with him and started work on Monday. We lived in the railroad camp cars with a full time cook and a free pass anywhere on M & O. We had to paint the signs and railroad depots. I put in a full-

time three months and by September 1923 when school began, I had a little bank account to help me my senior year in high school Dr. Williams had a drug store in Centreville and sent for me to work in the store after school, but I had the little tad in the bank I had made that summer, so I declined and played football. I've never regretted it, because my experience in athletics was worth more.

I was given a part in the senior play, which I considered an honor. I was the husband of Wanna Mae Pattridge and our director of the play was Miss Loretta George, who later married Frank Head, attorney in Centreville.

In the play, I was supposed to kiss Wanna Mae each time I left and returned to the stage. When we first started reading the script I told Miss George if I was to have that part, I wanted to start as the book said. She agreed and the next question was getting Wanna Mae to agree. We finally started doing as the book called for and afterwards Miss George never had any trouble getting me to practice. By the time the play was given, we were pretty good performers and we remain (Wanna Mae and I) the best of friends today.

COLLEGE: UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA:

In the summer of 1924 when I finished high school, Professor J. R. Alexander, the principal of the elementary school, asked me if I wanted to paint with him during the summer. He took contracts during his summer months. He knew I had painted on the railroad the previous summer and I was glad to get the job because I knew I didn't have a chance to get a job or go to college. He paid me \$3.00 per day and I kept my boarding place with Mrs. Bolling. Going to college hadn't crossed my mind, but in September when my classmates began preparation to go to college, they would ask me where I was going. Frankly, it was embarrassing because I had no money to go and

couldn't expect any help from home. But when my class-mates began to go to the railroad with their baggage, I decided I'd try, so I packed a suitcase and went along. I had no room reservation or had not applied. My brother, Wheeler, who was a flagman on M & O Railroad, had a room in Tuscaloosa and when I got to Tuscaloosa, I'd sleep with him and use his room while he was away. He traveled from Montgomery to Artesia and wasn't in all the time.

I went to the University and got in line for registration and when I got to Dean Barnwell, who was then registering students in Manley Hall. I was so frightened and homesick. I looked up in Woods Hall, Manley and Garland Hall and saw those upper classmen chasing freshmen with a slat. When Dean asked me what I wanted to take, I asked him what he had, so he said I suppose I wanted to take A. B. I told him I just wanted to go to college, so he assigned me to A. B. school.

I finally found all my classrooms but couldn't pay my tuition and buy my books too. So they deferred my tuition to later, which was only \$20.50 per semester. I went to class for about two weeks and didn't see any chance, so I packed my suitcase and told Mrs. Zennia, the landlady where my brother had the room, that I was going home. She asked me to stay on and I'd like it better. I did, and the next day I saw on the bulletin board three months' board and room for \$45.00. I thought if I only had that \$45. I'd move in the dorm. I wrote my Dad and told him about it. He borrowed the money and sent me the money, and I bought the three months room and board and moved in Garland Hall. My roommate was Virginus Jones from Camden.

After a few days, a Mr. V. P. McKinley in the faculty, had a letter from my brother-in-law (Carson Snead) asking his help in securing a job. Mr. McKinley informed me of a job in Comer Hall, I

was to work two hours each afternoon and get up at 5am on Sunday to fire the big boiler to heat the dormitory and Morgan Hall. I had to blow the flues in afternoons. My shift on Sundays was 3am to 2pm. I was paid 25¢ per hour. That was \$5.25 I received each Saturday and my board at the bull-pen was \$5.06 per week. So I had 25¢ to buy pencils, stamps, etc. I knew I had to get another job, so I got a job at a department store in Tuscaloosa (Hodges Brothers) on Saturday 12 to 9pm at \$5.00. That helped.

I got a contract with Captain Kidd Cleaning Co. I was to pick up laundry and cleaning at night in the dorms. The cleaners would pick it up the next morning. I got my laundry and cleaning plus 20%, so I began to see daylight and when the football teams went out of town, one of them (football players) would give me 25¢ per meal to wait on his three tables. In those days athletes had to wait on tables for their scholarship.

At the beginning of my second year, Ralph Adams, who was Dr. Denny's administration assistant told me I was appointed monitor in my hall (Garland) and I'd get my room free. What a monitor duty was, I never knew, but if trouble was reported in the dorm, I was to take care of it. I had several different roommates each year. My freshman year was Virginius Jones from Camden; sophomore year was John Wright, from Wedowee (deceased); junior, Parker Steele and Bull Durham; senior year, Lee Burchfield (deceased).

During my freshman year, I avoided hazing for almost a semester. One day I was trying to study and someone above me kept knocking on the window and I thought it was a freshman. I knew as I stuck my head out the window and shouted, "freshman, cut out that noise!" an upper classman looked out and said "I'll be down to see you in a minute." When he got through with me my backend was like a beef liver. That was my first. Then before Christmas, the football

players from the gym where most stayed, would come by to wish us a ‘Merry Christmas.’ I’ll never forget when one night Pooley Hubert, the all time All-American came around and I locked my door on second floor and with my trunk rope tied to my bed, I went out the window and slid down the rope to the ground and spent the next two hours in a class room in Comer Hall.

Eating in the boys dining hall (bull pen) was an experience. All the football players ate there and most of the table waiters were football players. I recall such men as Dick Hammer, Harry Holder, Raymond Pepper, Grant Gillis, Red Barnes, Bruce Jones, Talbert Brown, Hoyt Black, Floyd Dobbs, Red Garrett, Pooley Hubert, John Mac Brown, Bill Buckler and others.

It was fun to be eating and someone would slip around to the light switch or fuse box and turn off the light. In a hall of some 200 men eating at six to eight at each table, when the light went out, everybody pushed his chair back and ducked under the table because someone was sure to throw a biscuit or cup across the room. Mrs. Grace McCloud was dietician and she would try to find the guilty person who turned the light off. No one would tell her.

Many times when the football team would go out of town for a game, one of them would give me 25¢ a meal to wait on his table. He usually had three tables to wait on.

I also supplemented my earnings when one of the football players who sold sandwiches and cokes at a local pool room; he’d pay me 25¢ per hour to take his place. I saw many different characters on that job.

My holidays during Christmas in my freshman year and sophomore year at home were nothing but boring. I had no

transportation and after a night or two, I became restless and actually wanted to be back at the University. In my junior year, first semester, I had to have some way to earn some money to pay my second semester fees. I talked to my military instructor and Sgt. in charge of the armory, and he said they could use me to paint guns racks and tractors, etc. during the holidays. He gave me the keys to the armory and I worked ten hours a day for the two weeks while the other students went home on Christmas holidays.

I kept my room in the dorm, which had no heat while the students were home. I'd go to the power plant in Comer Hall to take a warm bath or go to bed to stay warm in my room. I'd get my meals at a cafe during the holidays. My sister, Lena Snead, would send me a big box for Christmas...fried chicken, fruits and cakes, etc. Believe me; I ate on that for a week. When the students returned from the holidays, I had enough money to pay my second semester fees. I got awfully lonesome alone in that cold dormitory (Garland Hall)...not another person in it. I did some good studying when it was comfortable.

I had several dates with local girls to pass away time at night. One I will never forget. I called the girl's dorm (Tutwiler Hall - since been torn down). A girl answered and I asked if she was a student and she said she was, and it was too far for her to go home for Christmas. I told her I was lonesome and would like to come over. She of course said she didn't know me and I didn't know her, and how would she recognize me. I told her I would whistle coming down the walk to the dorm, and asked her to open her window and when she heard it, she was to come down. When I went down the walk in front of the dorm, I whistled the tune I had used on the phone. When I opened the front door, she was waiting. You can't believe me when I tell you she was as broad as she was tall! She was from the Bronx, New York, a different nationality and was wearing a rattlesnake top coat! I think

she was expecting me to go to a movie, but I was so shocked I was stunned, and after a short visit, I became ill and excused myself. I never saw her again during the year, to recognize her.

I had another blind date from a phone number one of my frat brothers gave me, when he learned I was to stay over for the holidays. It turned out that she expected a drink and I had no money or knew not where to buy it. But I knew where the contractor of Bidgood Hall had a charred keg, in the office while he was building. I had night-watched in the office at night, to relieve another student who was the watchman. It was locked up in a small closet in the office, but one could climb over and get a drink. I climbed over and handed her a drink, and she said I better give her another one while I was in there. I complied and we got back in the U-Drive-It and started home. (My bed-time). She said she was not ready to go home. She wanted to go see her love. She directed me to the Funeral Home and there asked me to wake the man, and if I didn't, she would scream. I didn't know the man, but was afraid not to. It was cold and I told him I had someone who wanted him in the car. He got his night robe and came out in the cold, and when he saw her, he told me to take her on home. I didn't know if he would beat me up for having his girl out. Believe me, when I got her home and inside of the door, I took off. I have never heard of her again. I later learned he was a married man. I told my frat brother I didn't appreciate that date.

JUNIOR SALES TRIP TO BROOKHAVEN, MISSISSIPPI:

In my senior year, I ate my meals at the fraternity house and kept my room in Garland Hall because I got my room free. I had spent the summer after my junior year working at Woodward Iron Company. My roommate and I had taken a two week sales course in our junior year. When school was out, we were to go to Brookhaven, Mississippi, to sell books, Bibles, etc. We packed our little bag and

took our samples, caught a train to Brookhaven, Mississippi. When we arrived, we were supposed to get the endorsement from the Baptist preacher. We got a room at a cheap hotel and the next morning went to the preacher for an endorsement. We caught him at the wrong time, and he refused. We put our little sample under our coat and would take alternate houses. He'd give the sales talk at one, and I the next. At the first house, he gave the long sales talk and thought he had the sales sewed up, when she informed us she was Jewish and her religion was different. That took our pep out and we decided we were no salesmen. We caught the train back to the University and decided on hitch-hiking to Detroit to work for the summer. We dumped all the baggage except some underclothing and socks and got out on the highway. Back in those days there were not many paved roads. We made slow progress. In four days we got to Louisville, Kentucky. We were both getting low on money and decided we'd get a room at a cheap hotel and see if we could get some money from home. We told the manager of the hotel we had no money but if he'd let us stay until we could hear from home, we'd pay him. He was kind and when he learned we were University students, he agreed.

We wired home for money and I knew that it would take days for me, because my home was in the country, and my telegram would have to be mailed out on the route. Finally, after several days it seemed, we had gotten down to a hot dog a day. I got a message to go to the First National Bank and pick up \$20.00. I knew my Dad had to borrow the money, but anyhow I took the telegram to the bank and showed it to the President and he said "anyone could send that." I think he saw we were honest and got his book of Banks and he asked me who was president of my home bank. I told him and he said 'no.' And I said Mr. Brooks had been replaced by Mr. Smith. It was right, so he said he'd take a chance. My pal and I went to get a square meal

and pay the hotel bill. I caught a train home and my buddy went on to Detroit.

I worked at Woodward Iron the remainder of the summer. Twelve hours a day for a week, and night for a week. My position was Heater Helper. I had to reverse the machines that controlled the fire in the furnace. It was twelve hours walking from one end of the block or furnace to the next and that had to be at a military pace in order to be at the right time for the reversal. I even had to eat my lunch walking from one station to the next. Working 12 hours a day gave me no time for recreation or social contact.

I boarded in Brighton and if I was on time each morning, I could catch the morning train and ride to the plant, but if I didn't, I had to walk three miles. While I worked there 12 hours with no social life or time off, I saw old men with families who had spent their lives there and never had time to know much about outside. No time with their families, etc., low pay, long hours. That was one justification for union. Now they work eight hours with all fringe benefits. A job as that, I realized if an education would get me out of such a life as those elder men had, I'd do anything to get it. I worked twelve hours a day without a break for \$3.45 a day. By the time I was to start back to school, I had a total of \$60.00 to start to school on. School life working my way was a breeze compared to that life.

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA ROTC:

I took military training which was required of all male students at that time, the first two years. My junior year I took advanced ROTC, which gave me a commission as 2nd Lieutenant, and I would be paid \$9.00 per month. I was promoted to Cadet 1st LT and was put in Seacoast Artillery. My senior year I was made Battery Commander and promoted to Cadet Captain. I loved military because I had joined

Alabama National Guard while I was in high school and had been Supply Sgt. in my company. Military was the only course I made A's in.

When I finished my senior year, I received my commission as 2nd LT, and I began to try to decide what I would do. I applied for duty as CMTC Instructor at Fort Barrancas, Florida. COL Hartman Butler, my instructor and PMST at the University, had been made Post Commander at the fort and I was very fond of him, and he thought I was a better officer than I was. I sent my application through him and he approved it with a flattering recommendation, which was tantamount to my selection. It would pay more than I had ever made in my life. But it was only 30 days. I had not found a job. So after I finished the duty tour, I enrolled at the University and applied for several jobs as coach of football. During the summer course at the University, I took a coaching course under Coach Wallace Wade, who was one of the leading coaches in America. He had defeated Washington in the Rose Bowl. I was interviewed by several principals of high schools, but all wanted men with experience. One principal of Gordo was taking a summer course at the University and he interviewed me three times. He said "I'd like to have you as my coach but you haven't had any experience." I asked him how could I ever get any experience if everybody did the same thing.

ALMOST BACK TO UA, BUT PISGAH HIGH SCHOOL INSTEAD:

I decided since I hadn't found a place to teach or coach, I'd go back to school. I lacked some credits on my degree because I had changed courses and had to take some more educational courses to get a teaching certificate.

Ralph Adams, Dr. Denny's administrative assistant, informed me if I would come back, they'd give me free room and \$100 to serve as monitor of three dormitories...Woods, Garland, and Manley Halls. I settled down early and the day I was to register, I had a telegram from my fraternity brother, I. J. Browder, who knew I had not found a place. He was principal of Scottsboro High and knew of a vacancy in the Pisgah High School. The telegram stated that if I wanted the job, to come at once to Pisgah to start as soon as I could get there. I packed my little foot locker and went to Maplesville ticket agent and asked him for a ticket to Pisgah. The agent said "we don't have Pisgah on the railroad." He looked on the map and told me I'd have to go to Chattanooga, change trains and get another train back to Scottsboro, which was 18 miles across the Tennessee River from Pisgah. I caught that next train to Chattanooga, arriving at night and the train to Scottsboro didn't go until the next day, which was Sunday. I had never been to Chattanooga before and when I got off the train, I asked where the nearest hotel was. The agent pointed to one across the street. I got a room for \$2.00 and didn't sleep much because I couldn't lock my door in the cheap place.

The next morning I got the train to Scottsboro. On arrival, I called my friend, I. J. Browder, who had recommended me for the Pisgah place. He came to the station and got me and my baggage, took me to Sunday school, Church and lunch and said he would drive me over to Pisgah that afternoon. The distance to Pisgah was over unpaved roads, via ferry of the Tennessee River. His home was not far from Pisgah. When we arrived in the little town of Pisgah, I met the chairman of the Trustee and he helped me find a boarding place. I finally found a room and had to take my meals across the road.

My room was supplied with a bed, a straight chair, a rocker, a dresser with a water bucket, dipper, and bowl to bathe in. The toilet was out in the barnyard - a two holer.

My tour as a teacher in the school was anything but pleasant. I had to teach classes that overflowed from others...one 9th grade English, Jr. Math, etc. I was so dissatisfied that I told the principal I would resign the next week. He asked me to at least make out the month. I promised him I would, and by that time I became better satisfied. It was such a change from University life. I had no electricity, had to furnish my own firewood. My only heat was a fireplace and I had to draw water from a deep well. I began to meet some fine people and they'd ask me to eat chitterlings when they would kill hogs or rabbit hunt. On Saturdays I spent many lonely days and nights on weekends. No car. I wasn't financially able to buy a car. My salary was \$111.00 per month. The only way I could go to Scottsboro on weekends was by mailbus, which was run also for hire.

One day during basketball season (we had no football), the coach of basketball asked me to take the team to Ft. Payne that night for a game. He had come down with the flu, and couldn't go. I took the team and told them I'd be the boss and order their supper and instead of their buying candy bars, cokes, etc., I gave them a meal that a team should have. When the half was over, we made a few adjustments and we beat a team Pisgah had not beaten in five years. The team came back to Pisgah and told that they wished I was coach.

At the end of the season they were to go to the tournament and the captain of the team asked the principal if he couldn't let me go in the coach's place. They wanted me to go as coach in place of the regular coach, and finally told the coach they wouldn't go if he went. The principal asked me if I would go and I told him I would not unless the coach requested it. He finally did and before I left, I had a

meeting with the team and made a few rules, and that I would be the boss on the trip and they would have to comply. They agreed.

We won all the games up to the final, and had no game in the afternoon, while they were playing consolations. The team wanted to see the game, but I felt that for them to stand or sit around and watch would get them too keyed up. Browder had a bedroom with three beds and told me I could use it. I took the team (only six players) to the room and told them to undress and go to bed. They thought I was crazy. "We want to see the games," they said. They couldn't understand going to bed in daylight. The game was to be at 8:00pm and at six, I took them to a movie to keep their minds off the game, and rest.

That night when they won the championship, they told me, "Now we see why you did that-of putting us to bed and going to the movie." when we returned to Pisgah with the trophy, the trustees met us and it was then they offered me the job of coach the next year. I told them I'd take it, provided they would let me have a football team. They agreed, and promised me a \$50 monthly raise.

TEACHING AT CHILTON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL:

My duties the next year, in addition to coaching, was to teach science. I enrolled in University of Alabama and during the summer course; I came upon a friend, Lucious Knox, who had been manual arts instructor at Clanton (Chilton County High School), my home county. He said he was not going back there. I got the name of the principal and I already knew the county superintendent. I was reared about a mile from him. I had seen him at AEA in Birmingham, and he had asked me if I didn't want to come back to my home county. I told him he better not offer me a job.

I wrote Lloyd C. Warr, Principal of the high school (Clanton), applying for the vacancy created by Knox's resignation. I gave B. Lawrence as reference, who was the Superintendent mentioned above. I also went by to see Mr. Warr and talked to him about the job, but I couldn't determine by the talk with him whether or not I had made an impression. But when he asked the Superintendent, whom I had given as reference, he was convinced. So I had a letter from him confirming my employment. It made me very happy because I felt I could do a better job at or near my home. I had no car at that time and it was very lonely on the mountain with no way to travel at Pisgah. I sat down and wrote the chairman of the Board of Trustees at Pisgah, tendering my resignation and recommending Edgar Pruitt, who had not found a place to teach. He was at the University that summer. He was employed to take my place. I felt better when I learned he had taken the place after I had told them I'd not be back.

Taking a place in Chilton County High School was a new experience to me. When I arrived, I could not believe that students could be so well behaved. Discipline had been a problem for the teachers at Pisgah, and when I found that Mr. Warr had such fine discipline, I couldn't believe it. My first year as manual arts instructor gave me a chance to do extra things such as refereeing basketball, etc. It so happened that the coach of football that year had followed one who had the backing of all players and students. He evidently didn't have the confidence of his players and about mid-season they gave up football and the coach resigned. The next year Principal Warr asked me to take the head coaching and athletic director. I was to coach football, basket- ball, baseball, and teach manual arts.

I had to start from scratch. I had to convince players who had quit the year before, to come back. I had to rebuild football fences.

We had wood board fences and it was in a bad state of decay. I had no gymnasium to play basketball. We played on out- door courts.

I considered my first year a success. After getting back to playing football, we had a 4-4 year. And the next year we got better - our record was better each year. We played our games on Friday afternoons and didn't have enough crowds to pay our way, so we actually took one afternoon off so our players could sell magazines to raise money. Our gate receipts were less than \$50 per game.

I appeared before the County Board of Education to plea for money to build a gym, where we could play basketball and have physical education in inclement weather. The Board said they needed a bus shed, so they would pledge \$600 to build a bus barn large enough for a basketball court, with lean - tos on each side to put buses in. when the bus building was finished without a floor, we hauled clay soil in and packed it until it was hard enough to play on. We ran water to the corner in a room for a dressing room, with cold showers. When our players came in for showers after practice and turned on the cold water, you'd hear them yell!

I organized a tennis club and had the first tennis court for the high school.

I had some fine boys on my squads while I was coaching and those living today are my best friends. I feel I accomplished something of value while coaching. I coached the first football player from Chilton County to get a football scholarship. The last game I coached, he (Jesse Frank Foshee), kicked the first field goal that had ever been kicked against Selma High School. In that game, October 1933, he was the only player (high school) that scored on Selma High that year. They were undefeated and unscored on. Only Marion

Institute scored on them.

In 1933 we scheduled Selma for a money game. We knew we could not beat Selma, but the week before the game I took Jesse Frank Foshee, who was captain of the team, and taught him to kick field goals. He had a good leg and I knew he could do the job with a lot of practice. Thirty minutes after practice each day the week before the game, I had him practice.

On the morning of the game, I took him and the team out on the field and told him if we got the ball inside of the 30 yard line and saw that we could not get a first down, to take the ball himself and run it in front of the goal, and drive toward the goal. That would put him in the place to kick. We punted to Selma and they fumbled the kick on the 25 yard line. We recovered. On two plays, we got nowhere. Jesse was calling the plays. When they lined up to kick, Jesse forgot to call the snap and we got a 5 yard penalty for delay of the game. After the penalty, he called the snap and kicked the most beautiful field goal one ever saw. That was the only high school that scored on Selma that year.

I think teachers of those days were more dedicated than today in the thirties when we did not get paid during the entire year. We were issued warrants or scrip "I owe you" from the state. We only had 8 months, so we agreed that we'd teach another month free so the kids would receive credit. The PTA promised to pay our board, if we'd teach that extra month. Where can you find teachers today who would do that?

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS – MCCLELLAN COACH:

In 1933 President Roosevelt started the Civilian Conservation Corps to aid the unemployed. He called up Reserve Officers to run

the CCC Camps. I was a 1st LT in the reserves, so I was called into service. I got orders for October, so, I resigned after the Selma game mentioned before. My orders took me to Ft. McClellan. It was a boost for me, because my salary as coach was \$165 per month. As 1st LT, I drew \$190 plus subsistence. I bought gas at 9¢ per gallon, so the salary was not bad for those days. I stayed at McClellan as athletic officer, since I had coached before entering the service. My biggest job was giving calisthenics in the early morning to hundreds of recruits.

My next assignment was to a black company. We had segregation then, so our company was all blacks. My duty was mess officer. I had the responsibility of buying all food not issued by Quarter-master. On camp the enrollees worked in the forest, building fire lanes and fighting fires. We usually had 200 enrollees, 2 officers, and one Doctor. Then the Forestry Service had the Superintendent and several foremen. We (the Army) housed, fed, clothed and paid the men. We turned the men over to the Forestry Service in the morning and they would work them, and then bring them back to us at the end of the day.

During the tour, one day one of the foremen told an enrollee to do a job, and there was a refusal, so when they arrived back in camp and unloaded, one of the blacks approached the foreman and struck him. That led to practically a riot. We were instructed to run all troublemakers out of camp and keep them out all night. The next day an investigator from McClellan came and when all troublemakers were tried, 87 were discharged. In a few days we got new recruits to fill in. All was quiet in the future.

My next assignment was as Commander in Abbeville, Mississippi, some 10 miles from Oxford, Mississippi. This was a very

pleasant tour, but during the tour we disbanded the camp and moved to Louisville, Mississippi.

MARRIAGE:

It was during my tour of duty with the company at Abbeville that I got married to Josephine Martin, whom I met while coaching in Clanton. She taught there while I coached. I had been promoted to Captain and I felt that I was making enough to support a wife. In fact, I got a raise in salary when I married. I had become engaged to her while I was on duty at Northport. I recall that when I bought the engagement ring, I paid for it with the warrants, I.O.U, I had received, instead of money-while teaching in Clanton. I took a 20% discount. I took a two day leave while commanding the Abbeville Company, to get married. We were married in the McCoy Memorial Methodist Church (in Birmingham) where Josephine's mother was a member. The Pastor was U.S. Pitts and he performed the ceremony. I had known him as Student Pastor at the University. We were married at 4:00pm on Friday and after the wedding, headed back to my command. We had an apartment on University Avenue, near the University of Mississippi, with Mrs. Meeks.

After a few weeks there, I learned that a friend from University of Alabama was married and living upstairs. He was Hugh Quarrels, a math professor at University of Mississippi. We were very pleased to find someone I had known before. Our stay there was short. Before my tour was up, I had orders to move my company to Louisville, Mississippi I had been relieved by Capt. Pheeny Crane because my tour was to end in 30 days. I was sent to Louisville with an advanced cadre and set up the new camp. I was to hire carpenters and make arrangements of well drilling, etc.

When my tour had ended, I went home to await my orders and while I was there, my mother passed away. I got up one morning and went to the kitchen when Mamma had gone to prepare breakfast. I asked her how she felt and she stated she didn't feel well. I asked her to go lie down and I would prepare breakfast. She complained of a severe headache and I went for Dr. Parnell, our family physician, six miles away. We had no phone. Dr. Parnell said he'd be there as soon as he got dressed. I had rushed back and when I got back, she just turned her head away from me and breathed her last breath. She was 66 years of age.

CCC – MUNFORD:

I substituted as a teacher for Luther Little in Junior High School for a few days while awaiting orders. A vacancy occurred for Educational Advisor in the CCC district and Dr. Flinn called me and offered me the job. I accepted and was sent to Ft. Payne to take the place vacated by Barksdale. He decided to come back after three weeks leave, and I was sent to Munford Camp. There the men, a black company, built roads and cabins for Chehaw State Park, which is now one of Alabama's finest parks with native rock cabins and a large motel with hiking trails and fishing lakes at the foot of the highest point in Alabama. Some 2400 feet above sea level, this park has family cabins or motel rooms.

CCC – CLANTON:

While I was there at the Munford Camp, Major Harold Harper, district inspector, said he needed an Educational Advisor at the Clanton Camp and if I'd like the change, he would have me transferred. It was just what I wanted. I had been coach and athletic director at Clanton before I went to CCC and I immediately agreed to

the transfer. I was happy to get back to Clanton, where I had many friends and my old players that I had coached.

I bought my first home at Clanton--a brick veneer, 3 bedrooms with brick 2 car garage and a couple of acres. I borrowed the down payment of \$500.00 and the price of \$4500 to be paid back at \$35 per month. I also bought furniture for the house on credit. I stayed at Clanton as CEA for five years and one day Captain Scruggs, district executive, whom I had served with at Munford, called me and asked if I'd accept the Camp Commander's post, which was a promotion. I immediately accepted.

U. S. ARMY ACTIVE DUTY - PENSACOLA:

On March 1, 1941 I was ordered to active duty at Camp Davis, North Carolina. It was not a surprise because we were about to get into war and I held a commission as Captain in the Reserve Corps. I had my home and had bought and went in debt, so I called my instructor in Reserve at Atlanta and asked if he could get my orders changed to Ft. Barrancas, Florida. Here is his reply: "Captain Walker, this is war time and we can't send officers where they want to go." I explained that Pensacola was where I had done all of my training and where my unit was (13th Coast Artillery) and I could come home to my family on weekends and arrange for my family affairs, so he said "I'll do what I can." The next day I had a wire saying to report to Pensacola.

My first child, Thomas Horton Walker, Jr., was less than one year old and I felt that I could see them better from Pensacola. When I reported to Pensacola, LT Frank Harris was Adjutant of 13th Company and I had been on duty with him before. He informed me that I'd activate a Seacoast search light battery and we were to set up a cadre and await men to man it. This went on for some three weeks or

a month, and one day he announced they had a vacancy for two captains in Puerto Rico and asked for volunteers. Captain Bean, from Georgia Tech, and I volunteered.

U. S. ARMY - PUERTO RICO:

In a few days we had orders to sail from Charleston, South Carolina to San Juan, Puerto Rico. I got a few days leave and went home and we started packing. We rented our home furnished and took just what we could pack in my Pontiac. Tommy was about 11 months old. We arrived in Charleston too late to get our car on the ship we sailed on. It was quite an experience for both of us. We were at sea three days and the anticipation of our arrival in a new country was overwhelming.

When we arrived, we had to get rooms in the hotel downtown San Juan. The Spanish speaking attendants in the hotel could speak no English. I had studied Spanish two years while at the University, but many years since had left me without much Español.

It took us a few days to get a place to stay. So finally we found a place with a fine Spanish family who couldn't speak our language; only the man could speak English. We got one room and Captain Bean and his wife and child got one room. The meals were typical Spanish and we had to get used to it.

We lived with the Lemas for about a month when we found an apartment on third floor. It was nice but costly in those days, and we dared not leave the back doors unlocked. After we got settled, I was assigned to command a native Puerto Rican Artillery battery at Ft. Buchanan, some four miles away from my apartment. It was no easy task to take over the natives, some who had never known what

discipline was. COL Flannagan told me he was going to try and see if a U. S. Officer could command the Spanish speaking battery.

We were living in tents and it was pretty rough until we got barracks to move to. I had a few non-coms that had attended college but had no knowledge of leadership. They were slow to respond. They always thought when they got an order mañana (tomorrow) was OK. I had found a young man who said he was a graduate in Law from the University of Puerto Rico and I made him my battery clerk, and he could speak English fluently.

I was ordered to move my battery to Punta Salinas, which was across the bay from San Juan, and set up a defense of San Juan harbor. My battery was composed of three 155mm guns and a search light.

U. S. ARMY – START OF WORLD WAR, ST. THOMAS:

Of course on December 7th, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, all the dependents we had with us were ordered home. I can never forget the morning I took Josephine and Tommy to the plane and stood there and watched the plane soar out of sight. I didn't have much hopes of seeing them for some time. I went back to my battery and soon had orders to move it out to the Virgin Islands, St. Thomas, and set up a defense of Charlotte Amalie Harbor. To my surprise, when we arrived at St. Thomas, we learned they were English speaking and it made it easier. We were housed in tents for a while until we could get barracks and the officers later were invited to the Marine barracks for food and lodging.

It was such a good change. We had been eating canned goods and dehydrated food and to get to eat fresh Vegetables and sleep in a good bed was a treat. The water in St. Thomas was rainwater caught

in a basin by concreting the mountainside. We had water shipped in tankers. Many times how I wished I could go down to the cold spring in the country where I was born, for a cold drink of spring water.

The stay in St. Thomas was a pleasure if one could be happy without his family. The climate was wonderful and the beaches were clean and clear.

My duties while I was there were so many I had no time to get lonesome or sorry for myself. My specific duties were:

quartermaster	sales officer
utilities officer	engineer property officer
signal property Officer	purchasing & contracting officer
ordnance property officer	chemical warfare property officer

While I was in St. Thomas, I got a ten day emergency leave** to come home and when I went back was in San Juan awaiting the plane back to my station. I talked to my regimental commander and he informed me that upon my arrival in St. Thomas, I'd have orders for further duty. When I got back, I was ordered to set up a harbor defense of 155mm guns at Mayaguez, on the other end of the island. What a pleasure it was to be told that my troops would be continentals! We set up pyramidal tents in a coconut grove with a grapefruit grove on the other side. I had three good junior officers- Crane, Merrill and Furgeson. We were isolated fifty miles from another base.

After this defense was set up, I was relieved by Captain Snow and was ordered as Battalion Executive to COL Steele at Borenquin Field, which was since changed to Ramey Field. Not long afterward, I was promoted to Major and given command of a C. Provisional Battalion.

****While I was stationed at Borenquin Field, Puerto Rico, I was confined at the hospital when I got a cablegram from home saying my father wasn't expected to live. I called my Doctor and asked him if I could be discharged so as to get an emergency leave to come back to Continental U.S. and he approved the request. When I arrived back home, he was dead and buried the day I arrived. He died of cancer at 77. I returned to Puerto Rico and my battalion in ten days.**

U. S. ARMY – CAMP DAVIS, WILMINGTON, AND ORLANDO:

After nearly 3 years in Puerto Rico and St. Thomas, I was sent back to the U.S. and ordered to Ft. Eustis, Virginia. There I had no assignment - just awaiting orders later to Camp Davis, North Carolina to Coast Artillery School. When the school was over, we were ordered to Orlando, Florida for ten days just for observation, and a few days rest.

When I went to Camp Davis, it was the first time I had a chance to have my family with me. Carolyn was born while I was on leave in change of station, in December 1943. In Wilmington, North Carolina all I could find was one room at the edge of town, with cooking privileges and an outdoor toilet, but we would have taken anything.

U. S. ARMY – CAMP HULEN, TX; FT. BLISS, TX:

From Orlando, I was ordered to Camp Hulen, Texas, a forsaken place some 100 miles from Houston, Texas. There I was the most miserable person I had ever been.

I went to the mess hall and saw an officer whom I had known as Student Pastor at the University. It so happened that when I married he was Pastor of the McCoy Memorial Methodist Church in Birmingham. I spoke to him and asked him if he remembered getting

me in trouble. With a surprised look on his face, he asked me 'how?' It so happened that just 10 years from that date he had married me! He remembered then and said what hour was it? It was 4 o'clock on June 8, 1934 and this was June 8, 1944 at 4 PM. That day we had a long visit, (U. S. Pitts was the pastor.)

I was assigned to a skeleton battalion then and when I reported, the adjutant told me they had no vacancy for a Major. I told him that I certainly hadn't requested to be sent there. And if he had an order for a Major to deport, I'd be glad to go (even overseas). I was put in a small arms school for three weeks and on the last day I was to take exams that PM. When I went to officers' call at noon, my Commander handed me a telegram which ordered me to Chicago to 8th Service Command. COL Summers said I could wait until Monday and orders would be issued. He asked me if I wanted to take the small arms exam and I said "thank you, I'll ride on this telegram order." I was afraid by Monday it might be cancelled. I packed my duds, cleared station and took two sides of a triangle to go by my home in Clanton to see my family. I drove to Chicago, and reported to the 8th Service Command. They had no orders on me and said just hang around until orders came in. I was registered at the Stephenson Hotel and decided I couldn't afford a room there after a week. I asked 8th Service Command to put me on per diem or send me to a permanent station. I stayed in Chicago three weeks awaiting orders. I saw more shows, circuses, professional baseball games than in all my life.

Finally, after three weeks in Chicago, I got orders to go to Ft. Bliss, Texas at El Paso. And what a mistake in orders to go from Texas to Chicago, then from Chicago back to Texas. It was a long trip by car and, with gas rations, I found that I had to do some maneuvering to find gas available to go back by Clanton to see my family. I had never been to Ft. Bliss and I was quite surprised when I

arrived there, that it was an old artillery base which had a training adjoining in the deserts for anti-aircraft.

U. S. ARMY – DISCHARGE:

While there I heard or saw the name of one of my fraternity brothers at University of Alabama, whom I had not seen since in school. We visited briefly one night and I never saw him again. It was not many days later that one night I had an awful pain in my stomach and reported to the post infirmary. I was sent to the William Beaumont General Hospital and went through 5 ½ months of tests and finally they said I had duodenum ulcers and would get the maximum treatment. They sent me home for a 30 day convalescent leave. I went to Clanton where my family was, and after 30 days I reported back to the hospital. They treated me for a period and the decision was that I had the maximum treatment and that I was to meet a board of officers (medical) for a disposition. They met and retired me for a disability. Actually I didn't want to leave the service, because when I was a kid, my oldest brother (Bert) had been killed in WWI and we were fighting the same enemy. I was relieved and went home for a rest. Joel was born about then-January 17, 1945.

VFW OFFICER:

After several weeks at home, I was interviewed by Department Commander Joe Denabury and Dept. Shorty Reynolds, Adjutant QM and offered a job as Extension Officer for the V. F. W. (Veterans of Foreign Wars). I accepted and began to travel to reorganize VFW posts that had died for lack of interest.

After a couple of months I learned that I could not travel and get the diet I needed for my ulcer, so I resigned. My fraternity brother, I. J. Browder was state personnel officer and he sent a man to see me

and see if I would be interested in a job with Industrial Relations. I declined because of the salary. A couple of weeks later, Mr. Major came to see me and offered me \$50 per month more than the state merit system called for. I agreed and took the job. Frank Broadway was Director and after a few weeks it was a clash of personalities and I resigned.

After Shorty Reynolds died, the VFW Council of Administration elected me to take his place as Dept. Adjutant Quartermaster. I had my office in the Bell Building in Montgomery. My duties included finance Officer for the state VFW. This position I held for 8 years, being re-elected annually. I enjoyed the experience traveling to National Conventions in Miami, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, and Washington, DC to lobby for bills for veterans.

PRATTVILLE:

After a few years I began to see that I was on a one-way street. If I stayed on 20 years, I'd still be just Adj. QM. I resigned and in a few days, the Water Works Board asked me if I'd consider the position of Superintendent of the Water Works of Prattville. I accepted and about this time the city population was 5,000 and had begun to grow.

It was at a time when my three children would be in high school and college. I had been retired from service and needed some money to supplement and pay for three children in college. The time I served as Superintendent of Water Works was 1953 to 1968, and the population tripled and the customers tripled, crowding all utilities. After we got our last child finished from college, I resigned on my 65th birthday and began to enjoy my life that had been filled with hard work. But I was never unemployed for more than 3 months in

my life. I never forgot my father telling me that "any work that is honest is honorable." Work keeps the mind busy.

RETIREMENT:

Since I retired I have traveled, played golf, organized VFW, fished, hunted and gardened and my life has been filled with pleasure and work that not many can equal. I have been lucky all my life. I have never had any large bank account, but have never wanted for many things that I couldn't get. If one wants anything bad enough, he can get it. God has been good to me, although I never pass a day without pain. My ulcers are of a type that ache but not bleeding, and the doctors will not operate for my hiatus hernia - they say they have never been successful with such operations.

I felt that I was fortunate to get to be the only member of my family to visit my brother's grave in France. Bert was wounded in a shell burst when he drove an ambulance to the front to get comrades who were wounded. He died the next day in a hospital (1918). I went to Frankfort, Germany accompanied by my brother-in-law, COL James E. Neal in 1974. We went mostly by military aircraft to Frankfort, thence to Chateau Therry, France by train. Riding the European trains was an experience I will not forget. I had ridden many American trains, but they can't equal the European train. They were electrical and fast. They don't announce the stations. They give you a schedule when you buy a ticket and when the time of departure comes, you better be at the track, and when your time of arrival comes, you better have your baggage in hand. 3,000 trains run out from Frankfort daily; one every five minutes.

My niece, Mary Lou (Snead) Yarchin was the only relative who had ever visited Bert's grave. She had written to us about it while her husband was on duty in Germany. The fact that she had been there

made it seem more real. It had always seemed like a far away dream.

I have had a lot of fun and enjoyment since I reached retirement age. I have been luckier than my fondest dreams. Since I saw my three children through college and they are all succeeding in life.

About five years ago, in 1970 we bought a cabin on the backwaters and I can go there to fish, hunt and relax. I have been a member of a hunting club in Coosa County where I can go spend the night at the cabin and hunt the next day with the club.

LATER ADDITIONS:

(This ended the part Daddy (Thomas Horton Walker) wrote at first. Later he added on to his story, and it may not be in any certain order.)

My father's family was said to have come from Georgia. My father had one brother, Joe Walker, who was a contractor and after he retired, moved from Chattanooga, Tennessee to St. Petersburg, Florida, where he died about 1941. He visited me after I was married. He had no children.

Daddy had one sister, Mollie, who married Eugene McGee. To that union they had enough children to make up for Uncle Joe. My aunt Mollie had 13 children: Willie, Mamie, Joe, Woody, Oddie, Sam, Fred, Ed, Walker, Claton, Lawyer, and Harvey.

My mother had three brothers: Robert Hall, Calton Hall, and Ed Hall. Robert Hall was killed in an attempted robbery. Uncle Calton was married and had one son, Robert and five girls: Bessie, Eva, Birdie, Rosa and Etta Mae. Calton was married to Jennie Chism.

I feel a very deep appreciation to some of the people who encouraged me to get an education. My Mother, who had no education, always encouraged me and when I was in high school, she would slip a dollar or two in my hand when I left to go back to school. I know she sacrificed and did without something to give it to me. I shall never forget how proud she was when I graduated from high school and she and Dad saw me get my diploma. And even when I was attending college she gave me encouragement.

To my sister, Lena (Snead) I give credit for the encouragement. She always told me how her principal, P. G. Maness washed his own shirts and socks while attending college. She attended Livingston College going directly from 8th grade as a special student until she received a Teachers certificate. She taught for several years and knew the value of an education.

When I retired from service in 1945 for a physical disability, I thought that I'd go back to school and study law. Many of my friends, including Buster Bell, attorney and close friend from Huntsville, had encouraged me to. I went to Ralph Adams, who was a close friend and executive administrator to Dr. George Denny while I was there. He met me in the office when I requested my credits, to take over to the Dean of Law. He told me that they still had my diploma there on file and asked if I wanted it. I asked him why I hadn't received it before now and he said I owed the University \$15, which all students had to pay, for the sheep skin. I paid him the \$15 and received my diploma, which I had earned but had not been able to pay for.

The reason I was in the Class of 1928 and am on record as graduating in the Class of 1932, which my diploma shows. My senior year, I decided I'd teach and coach athletics in high school, and in order to do so, I had to get an educational certificate and I had not

taken enough education courses to qualify for one. So I had to go to summer school and by 1932 I had enough for a certificate and diploma. I had been teaching since 1928 on a temporary certificate.

MEMORIAL LIVE OAK:

Plant live oak for memory- My son-in-law, Smythe J. Wood, came to visit us on Christmas 1975 and brought me a live oak plant that he had sprouted from an acorn from the University of Virginia, his alma mater. It was in a cup and I set it out in my front yard in memory of him, and I am nursing it carefully and hope it will grow up to be a big tree and be there for years after I am gone.