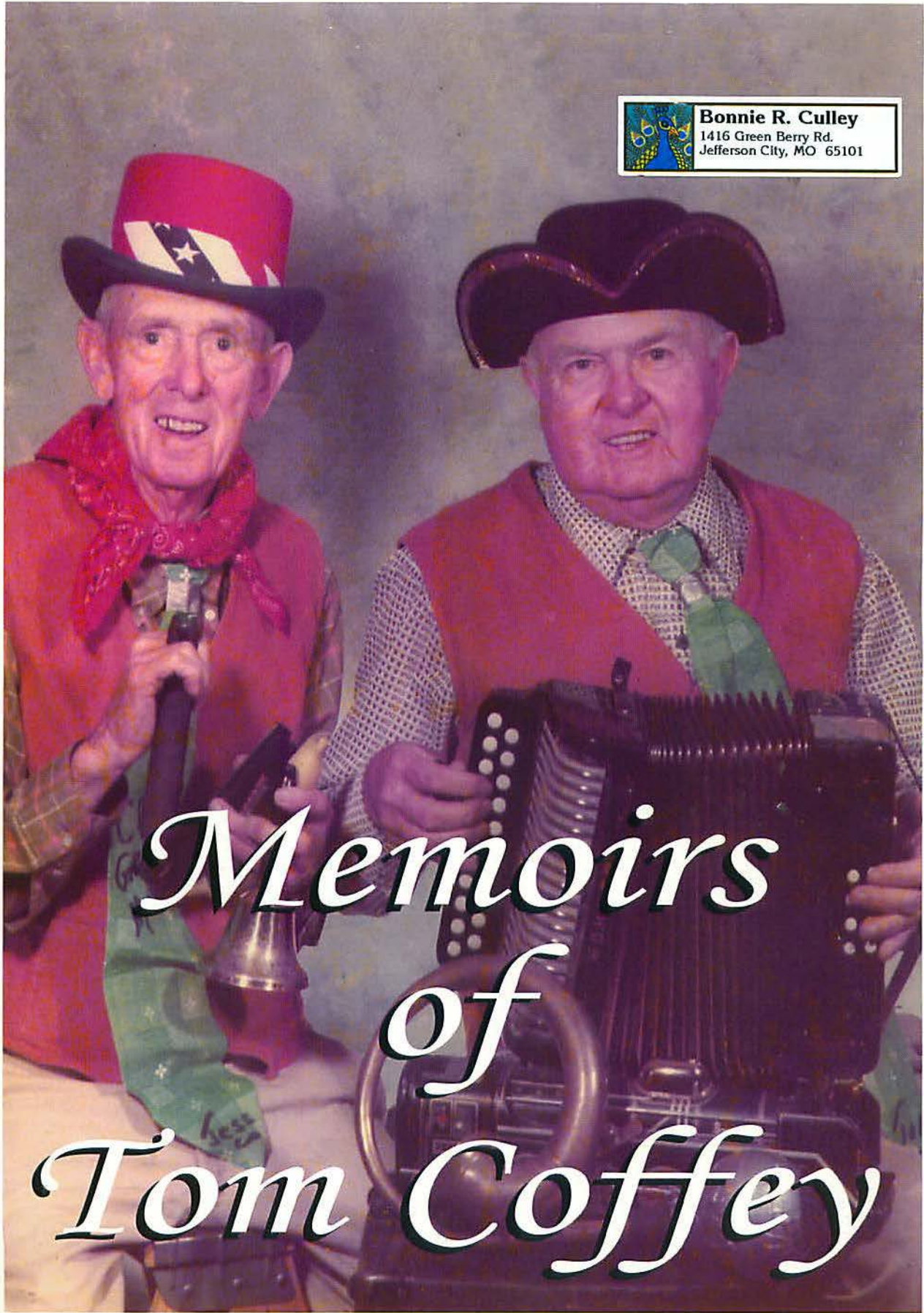
 **Bonnie R. Culley**  
1416 Green Berry Rd.  
Jefferson City, MO 65101



# *Memiors of Tom Coffey*

# THE COFFEY FAMILY

The first Coffey to come to Maries County was Marvel Coffey and his wife, Rachel Boone Coffey. Rachel's brother, Jonathan Boone, led a group of settlers here about a year earlier and Marvel and Rachel followed to Maries County about 1834. ~~Marvel was the son of James Coffey who was born 1777 in Albemarle County, Virginia, died 1840 in Wilkes County, North Carolina. James married Deliah Ferguson on August 21, 1799. James and Deliah were the parents of seven children: Thomas, Jesse, Levaney, Marvel, Eli, Myra and Louisa.~~ Marvel married Rachel Boone, whom he had grown up with in North Carolina. When they arrived at the forks of the Maries, a little settlement was already taking shape there by the name of Stoney Point, which later boasted a blacksmith shop and other businesses. This settlement is long gone. By 1850 Marvel and Rachel were both dead, leaving behind eight children: Elizabeth, Lavina, Temperence, Irwin, William B., Squire, another daughter, name unknown, who married William Moss, and Campbell Coffey.

young Marvel (bc)

The Coffey's did their part to serve the Union during the Civil War. John Campbell, 30, Squire, 34, William B., 25 and John M., 19, all served in Captain Latham's local militia company. The following year they all enrolled in the 9th Provisional Enrolled Mo. Militia, where John Campbell served as bugler. Finally in 1865, John Campbell and John M. were drafted. They fought in the 11th Mo. Infantry through the capture of Fort Blakely, Alabama, and did not return home until January of 1866.



*Campbell Coffey, Son of Marvel and Rachel Boone Coffey.*



*Caroline Eads Coffey, wife of Campbell.*

Campbell was born in 1831, probably in Tennessee, and married Carolina Eads, born March 1, 1834, the daughter of Benjamin Eads.

Campbell died May 8, 1892 and is buried on the Bill Buschmann farm in a small fenced cemetery. Caroline died September 11, 1900, and is buried in the Vienna Public Cemetery.





*Hiram Kinsey and Mary Ann Evans Coffey.*

Hiram Kinsey Coffey was born March 8, 1862, in Maries County and died here November 13, 1925. On June 13, 1886, he married Mary Ann Evans who was born June 24, 1861 and died February 9, 1931. She was the daughter of Jesse and Nancy Evans. On her tombstone Mary Ann is listed as Mary Ann Sally Coffey. Hiram and Mary Ann are both buried in the Vienna Public Cemetery.

Hiram was a farmer, but in 1901 the area suffered a dry year and Hiram and Mary Ann moved to town on what is now known as the old Coffey place on V Highway. Hiram earned his living by doing odd jobs.

They were the parents of seven children: Sidney, born April 4, 1887, died March 18, 1922, married Kathryn Weidinger April 21, 1914; Linnie Gertrude, born July 2, 1889, and died in 1973; Earl R., born June 14, 1892, and died April 14, 1968; Elizabeth Caroline (Lizzie), born November 19, 1893, married a Behm, and died March 31, 1977; Sherman J. Coffey, born March 14, 1897, and died September 12, 1972; Jesse Lee, born April 14, 1900, and died July 23, 1989; and Thomas Roy, born February 13, 1906.

Earl, Sherman, Jesse, and Tom never married; Linnie married Jesse Snodgrass.



*Tom, 1908  
2 years old.*



*Tom about four years old. His sister, Linnie made his suit from an old dress.*



*Tom, 1914  
Aged 8 years.*



*Tom and his violin.  
About 14 years old.*



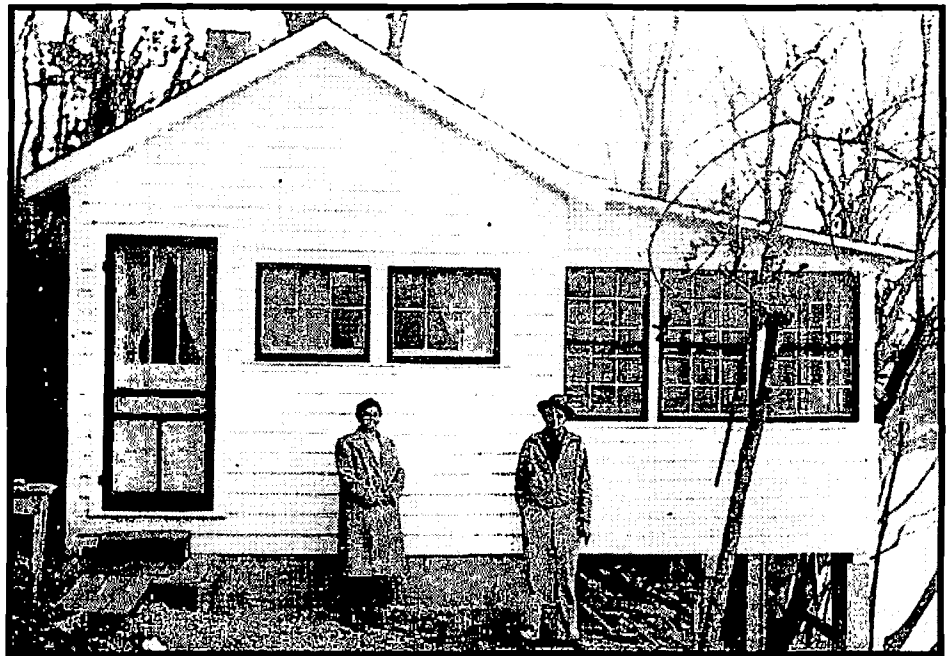
*Oldest brother William Sidney and bride Kathryn Weidinger - 1914*



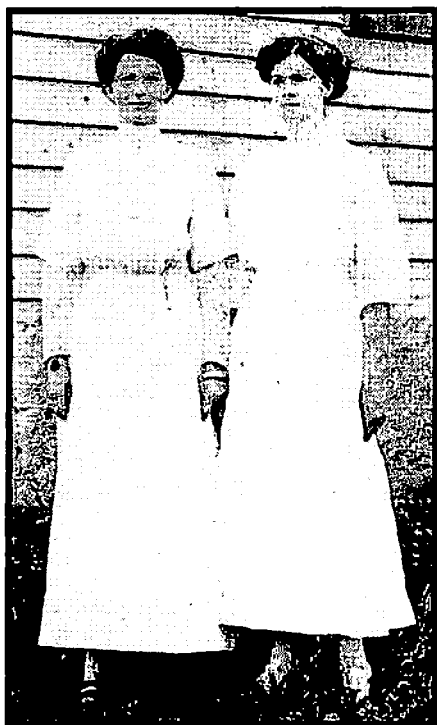
*Wedding picture of Tom's sister Linnie and husband Jesse Snodgrass.*



*Tom's brother Sherman.*



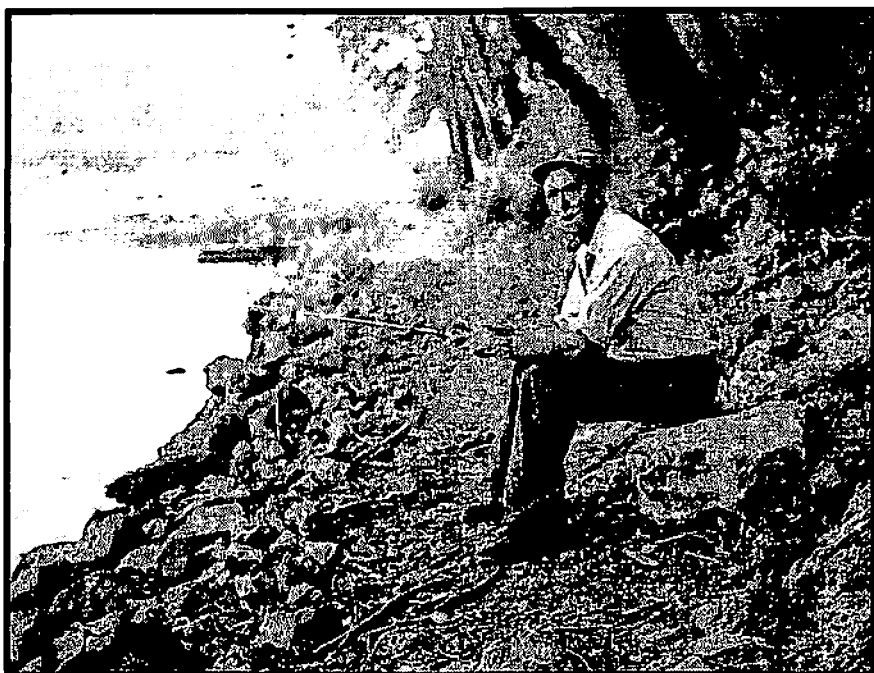
*Linnie and Sherman at their cabin on the Gasconade.*



*Tom's sisters, Linnie and Elizabeth.*



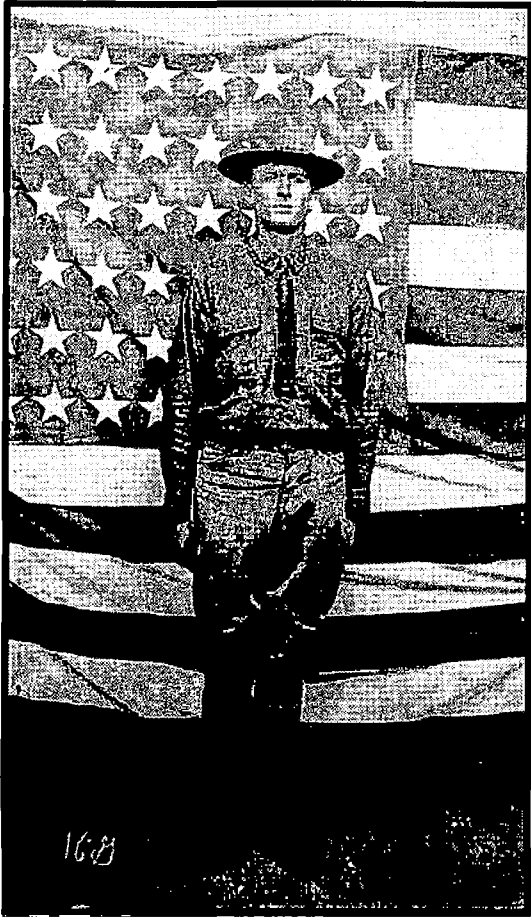
*Mary Coffey Copeland and Elizabeth Coffey (Copeland-Ballance).*



*Jesse Coffey - fishing on the Gasconade.*



*Jesse Coffey  
Born 1900  
Died July 23, 1989*



*Earl Coffey - W.W. I*



*Earl - Big Fish.*



*Earl - 1957*



*4 Generations of Coffey Kin.*



# TOM COFFEY

I was born February 13, 1906, at Vienna, Missouri, on Highway V. Hiram Kimsey was my father, and my mother was Mary Ann Evans. Everyone called her Sally. We lived on a farm but moved to town in 1901. Dad said that was the "dry year". All they raised was wheat.

My brothers and sisters: Sid, Lennie, Elizabeth, Earl, Sherman and Jesse were all born on the farm. Jess was born in 1900. After we moved to town we lived about a quarter mile from Vienna, just out of the city limits on Highway V. just off 42.

We didn't have a car for a long time. Dad raised a garden and potato patch, and also an orchard. I didn't get to go to town much when I was little because I was too big to carry. We didn't have any toys to play with like dominoes or checkers. We made our own toys and played with buttons. Back then we had firecrackers at Christmas and that was a big deal.

In my early years, every house had a Sears Roebuck Catalogue, with last years catalogue being well used in the outhouse! Some of the items offered in Sears 1908 catalogue were: The New Economy Chief Cream Separator \$28.00, Wall paper, 3 cents a double roll of 16 yards, Harpers Cook Book Encyclopedia \$1.12, Easy Riding Side Spring Roundabout (buggy) \$36.95, New Williams Special Single Strap Buggy Harness \$15.96, Imported English Double Row Sheep Shears, 7-inch \$1.24, Big Granite Monument \$72.00, The Famous Red Head Elgin King Bicycle \$14.95, Velocipede (tricycle) \$1.25, Large Lens Walnut Stereoscope, 60 cents, 100 beautiful stereoscopic views of this wonderful and magnificent exposition, 85 cents, Special - The Terrible San Francisco Earthquake and Fire Stereo cards, 75 cents; Gold filled spectacles \$1.85, New Flexible Arm Oxford Cylinder Talking Machine \$14.95, Compact Bridging Telephone \$9.95, The Beckwith Home Favorite Piano \$87.00, Complete Violin Outfit \$2.95, Marceau E-Flat Coronet \$6.65, Railroad Watches \$18.00 to \$68.00, 18-carat solid gold wedding ring \$1.99, The John Cabot Eight Day Mantle Clock \$5.05, Bavarian Translucent China Service for 12 \$12.45, 100 piece rose wreath Haviland dinner set \$31.98, High Grade Bedroom Suite \$24.00, iron beds \$16.45 to \$32.95, brass beds \$16.45 to \$32.95, a complete outfit of Peerless Gray Enamelware \$2.73, Wonder value steel walking plow \$7.13, Kenwood ball-bearing back geared Steel Windmill \$13.75, Church Bell \$10.94, Genuine Mississippi Washing Machine \$5.62, Mississippi clothes wringer \$3.16, Six room cottage \$725.00 (no bath), Eight room house with bath \$1700.00, 4 x 5 Shamrock Roling Camera \$2.98, Wehrle model 22, six hole, full nicked blue steel range \$29.87, A.J. Audrey Hammerless double barrel breech loading shotgun \$13.85, Genuine Smith and Wesson revolver \$11.85, Parchissi game 65 cents, Childs china tea set 23 cents.

I bought my first accordian from Sears for about \$8.00 or \$10.00.

One day I was in town and saw Mr. Tom C. McGee over by Redel's Store. He had the ability to do anything. He was a carpenter and a mailman. I asked him how old one had to be to go to school, and he told me six years old, so I started to school.

Instead of Kindergarten as they have now, our first year was chart class. The students learned their letters and easy words from a big chart in the front of the room. Next you went on to Primer, then grades. The lower grades were held in the second room of the school, and the upper grades were held in the third room.

I remember Cecil Hutchison, my second cousin, for crying at times. His mother would bring him to school and he would beat her the quarter-mile back home.

You had to be good or the teachers could give you a whipping if you needed it. They kept a good supply of hickory switches on hand and the teachers could use them, and did!

When it snowed over ice someone would bring a sled to school and a good time was had sledding, with the kids piling on.

I remember that once we had a Maypole dance.

As far as we kids were concerned one of the most exciting things to happen at school was when a steam engine chugged down the street. Everyone liked to hear them run and we'd all rush to the window to watch it go by.

Steam engines were used a lot back then. They had a separator to thresh the wheat. They were also used to saw wood and lumber.

This is a good place to tell you a funny story about a steam engine show that Louie Wenzel of Vienna told me, about Bill Meyers.

Around 1900, Bill Meyers at Myerstown had a steam engine. He sawed wood and lumber. Bill heard there was to be a steam engine show in St. Louis. His 12 year old son, Clint went with him. At the show there was a big mud hole and the challenge was to go through it. A lot of men tried, but their wheels would always spin out in that hole. No one could manage it. Clint said he could do it, but since most of the men there had tried and failed, they sure didn't think a twelve-year-old kid could drive the steam engine through the mud.

Finally, though, one man agreed to let Clint use his steam engine. Clint climbed on and cut the speed down. In front of all those men and without any trouble, he drove right through the mud hole. Then the others wanted him to drive their steam engines, too, but he wouldn't do it. He won the prize, ten dollars and a gold watch.

These days there is a steam engine show at Rosebud, Missouri, during the last week in July, which is getting bigger every year. It's called the Owensville Thresher Show. I played my one-man band there several times.

I don't know when the old school house was built. My brother Jess started to school there in 1906. It had a porch on the East side and the well was at the end of the porch facing north. A lot of pictures were taken of the old school. My Uncle Jim Coffey and someone from Duncan Studio in Belle took pictures.

After the school moved to a new building, Ray Curtis had a silent picture show in it.

Charley Parker bought the old school house, and he and his mother Arizona Goldmine Parker and his brother, John lived in it for years. At one time Johnny Sudheimer owned it. Part of the old schoolhouse was moved to Highway 42, where Millard Leuthen lived for years, and part of it was moved to a spot behind Melvin Wansing's filling station, and the Lauderback family lived in it. The rest is still standing and Charles and Virginia Buschmann have made a nice house out of it.

The school had an outdoor basketball court. We had a team we called the Bloomer Girls. The teacher played and practiced with us.

About 1918 or 19 we moved to a new school house on Highway 42 toward the Gasconade River. In the grades every Friday we would have arithmetic, spelling, or geography matches. I was

good at multiplication and geography. In seventh and eighth grades we would go on field trips, and that's where we went, too, to a field.

One recess after practicing basketball, I went in the school house and down the hall to the teacher's room. Kergie Crum was the teacher. When I walked through the door, I felt a pain in my neck. I went to see Dr. Ferrell and he examined me and said that I had leakage of the heart and I would probably grow out of it, but no more playing basketball. He gave me some medicine. I guess I outgrew it, because I am now 90, but I never played basketball any more.

The first day of high school I noticed a boy I had never met before. It turned out to be Charley James, from Bloomgarden. Charley and I became best friends. We talked over everything. We were on the baseball team with Bugs Birmingham and Cecil Hutchison.

Madolyn Baldwin was ahead of me in class. She lived out in the country and rode a horse to high school every day. She kept it in Tim Terry's barn during the day.

I didn't learn much in high school, I guess. I couldn't do much Algebra, Geometry or Latin. I did pretty good in Agriculture, but was best in ancient History. I never dreamed that I would some day see England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland, when in the Army.

I was in several plays. We had them at the end of the school year. One time, I forgot my lines and had to back up and start over. Sometimes a kid would freeze with stage fright and a teacher would have to come out and get him.

I worked as the school janitor for one or two years. Had to get up early to fire the furnace.

During the summer, I came to town looking for a job. I split cook-stove wood for George Cansler for ten-cents an hour. He said he would raise my wages to fifteen cents an hour. I also split wood for Tim Terry at fifteen cents an hour. His house stood, and still stands where the new American Legion Hall is now. When I was ten years old, I remember attending a picnic on what is now the Legion grounds.

Unlike a lot of parents back then, my dad let me keep the money I earned. I worked at the Farmers Exchange for Joe Fennessey, testing cream. The last year that I went to high school, I quit working there. My brother Jesse took my place and he worked for the Exchange until he retired, testing cream, taking care of chickens, buying fryers, and grading eggs. The eggs were graded by holding them up to a box with a light in it to make sure they were fresh.

I graduated from high school in 1926 and I still have my class ring. After graduation, I helped build the bridge on the road to Brinktown. Noah Finn and I were carpenters. Mr. Brink from Brinktown was the boss and the bridge is still in use today.

One time a man working with the Geological Survey in Rolla contacted me. He needed help and we went through the woods measuring elevation. I earned \$4.00 per day and \$1.00 for board. That was a real job – good pay – but it only lasted a couple of months.

## **THE OLD COURTHOUSE**

When the old courthouse was still standing, there was a big yard where the kids played games like Pens Down or Mumbley Peg. That yard was the scene of lots of activities. The churches had ice-cream socials there. The members would donate plenty of milk and eggs because everyone had cows and chickens. Then they would all take a turn cranking the freezer to make ice cream. They would raise money by selling the ice cream with soda crackers for so much a dish. That's right – soda crackers!! I don't know why people stopped eating ice cream that way. It was good! Try it sometime!!

We had court a lot, usually lasting for a week. Seems like court week was always a rainy one. Albert Burns owned the hotel, and it was always full during court week. Gene Burns and I cooked beef in a big black iron kettle outside. Court was held upstairs, but the kids stayed in the hall downstairs. If we happened to be upstairs, we usually came downstairs by means of the large railing, and were stopped by the big post at the bottom. When we got tired of sliding we would go out to the south side yard and try to pump the well dry.

The court yard had a big chain through a wooden post for hitching horses, mules, and buggies. It wasn't very sanitary because when it rained it became a mud hole. In 1918 when the boys were going to the Army, they tore it down one night, piled it up and it never was put back. Several people drove up to hitch their team, but there was no place to tie up.

There was a hitching place below the scales, out on the street. There was a lot back of the store always filled with cattle, mules, and horses. There were a lot of mule buyers, and they brought a hefty price during 1918. A rider on horseback could lead eight mules to the nearest railroad station or to a corral at nearby towns. I spent some time guessing the weight of cattle before they were put on the scales.

## **FREEBURG ROAD AND HIGHWAY 63**

The Freeburg road was hard paved in 1928. We didn't get to use it much before the highway came through. It was dug out of the ground and hauled away in wagon beds made out of two-by-fours. It was easy to dump. My brother Sherman worked at this. He had to pick out the rocks. Jess was little but he held the big heavy rooter team. A hitch till plowed the hard pan out. I worked a little picking rocks out of the wagon, and also helped shoot out tree stumps with dynamite for \$1.00 per day.

In 1930 when they started paving Highway 63, I got a job digging out for culverts. The day I got my first pay check, I was fired. The next day I saw the boss and asked why he fired me. He said to come back to work, and I stayed with them to the finish at Rolla. I was paid 25 cents an hour.

Mart James and I were carpenters. We were getting ready to pour the base for a pier. We were cleaning up around the wood guide to hold the dirt back. When we went to work the next morning, the side had caved in. Lucky for us!

I was working for Fennessey again in 1928. Jess bought an old Model-T. Sherman worked it over and we named it the "Alley Rat". Jess was always one for naming things. It didn't have a top and you had to climb over the doors to get inside. The brakes weren't very good and you had to crank it or put in a battery to get it to start.

Herbert Hoover was running for President for the first time. I won \$25.00 on the election and gave it to Jess to repair the "Alley Rat."

Cleve Hutchison had a Model-T Ford. His son, Cecil, showed me how to crank it. If you took hold of the crank with your fingers, you had to quickly release the crank or it might fly back and break your arm.



# THE DEPRESSION

When Hoover ran the second time, the Depression had started. Harry Spratley and I got jobs at St. Clair, Missouri, paving Highway 30 to St. Louis, for 25 cents an hour, plus some overtime, and board was \$1.00 per day. I came home one time. Harry had a car. I think I saved about \$70.00 that summer. I spud the rail keeping the cement from coming over the rail - this keeps the finish slick. I almost got too hot one time.

Hoover got beat in the election, and the Depression was getting hotter all the time. Roosevelt began to get busy. Several banks were closing. George Cansler, banker, went to my sister, Lennie Snodgrass and her husband, and my brother Earl, and pleaded with them not to draw their money out of the bank. Without their money the bank would have to close. They left their money in and the bank stayed open.

Before World War II, wages were very low, if a job could be found. Farm workers got about \$15.00 a month. If you tried to hire out for odd jobs, you might get \$1.00 a day on the days there was work. My brother, Sherman, and Tony Schwartze built a nice home for Joe Volmert for 25 cents an hour and they got their dinner free. They just had a hand saw. During the Depression, if you got hold of some money, everything was cheap.

One February during the Depression it was so cold that just above the old bridge the ice froze about 15 inches thick. Theron Parker had a truck and Warren Bodendick had a barn in the old Latham house, so we put up ice! I think Frank Liesman helped us out on that deal, too. We got a load or two of sawdust and we had some ice out on the river bank. Theron got a job at the Old Soldiers Home in St. James, so he moved and took his truck. That was the end of our Ice Company. The ice on the bank melted. We needed more sawdust. One block of ice never melted. I guess the rest of the blocks kept it cold. We sold ice to Albert McDaniel, and made \$1.00 a day. It wasn't long till they made ice in Dixon, and Albert bought ice from them.

The first car I ever saw was the one Father Fugel had. He met the train in Freeburg to pick up some passengers in 1918. John Goeller had a 1914 Ford with a brass radiator. The first Model-T had solid tires on the back, with round holes in the tires. Well, it was interesting seeing the different makes of cars produced. Milt Shockley sold Maxwell cars, and I got to drive one. When the Model-T came out we would give a quarter to ride out to Franks Road going to Argyle or Freeburg. That was what we called a switch: the road went left to Argyle or straight to Freeburg. That was where we would turn around.

During the Depression Theron Parker moved Joe Hagenhoff from Hay Holler, near Meta, to Vienna. He put up a blacksmith shop. That was when the WPA was building ponds, doing road work, building the courthouse, hauling gravel for all kinds of jobs, and Joe kept the equipment in shape. He could do anything you needed. He could fix it or make it, and shoe the horses and mules. He was so busy he had help when he moved the shop to his house about 1948. I was in the gas business by then and had a big truck. The bed had high sides in order to haul bottles of gas. I told Joe I needed a wheeler with long handles. He did some measuring and came up with one just right to load and unload the bottles. I asked how he made the curved handles, and he said he found a tree and bent them around the tree.

A.S. Henderson had a blacksmith shop, Charles Kehr had a blacksmith shop. He was good, and could make anything. When we hauled coal from Sligo it had to be a certain kind. Henry Hefti had a blacksmith shop. The blacksmiths made caskets, just plain wooden ones, nothing fancy, until Carl Birmingham opened the funeral home. John L. Fennessey had a blacksmith shop where Hefti was. On one side of the shop we boys pitched horse-shoes.

In the late twenties we would have circuses - some good, some bad. Some had elephants, and some of the boys would get jobs carrying water for the elephants.

We also had medicine shows and vaudeville most of the time. The boys would throw eggs at the show people. One time Jess and a friend went to a show that was so bad, they didn't want to walk out, so they quietly lifted up the tent flap and crawled out.

The Rock Island Railroad went through Freeburg and Argyle about 1901 or 1902. Dad never had a regular job so he helped drive hogs to Freeburg. They took along a wagon so that if one of the hogs gave out they could haul it. Dad helped saw wood, thresh, and fill silos. There was a two day \$2.00 per day poll tax to keep the roads in shape. Everybody was expected to help or have someone work in their place. People who didn't want to work on the roads would hire Dad. He got \$2.00, plus his \$2.00.

One time when I was working at the old Exchange, Brance Massey came in and asked if I wanted a rabbit dog. I said yes, so he gave me a spotted hound. Dugan from Brinktown gave him the dog, and he could run rabbits. When Hood Vaughan was down at Dugans chasing foxes, Hood told Dugan about the dog running rabbits and he said "kill the dog if you want to", so the Breeden boys and others wanted to have a fox chase so I took Dugan along. They built a fire, and I held my dog, but when the chase came close, I dragged my dog where the race was and he started racing. I went back to the fire. One of the hunters asked whose dog was leading the race and I said "my rabbit dog". After that, he was a fox hound, one of the best. No more rabbits!

About 1930 I had another rabbit dog. His name was Jingle. He was fast! That old rabbit had to get up and go. You had to be ready to shoot when the rabbit came by. If Jingle lost the track, he would circle wide and pick it up again. We had a little farm. Jess and Earl took him out to the farm to chase rabbits, and when he passed by them, he was hot and he went down to the creek 200 or 300 yards away and that was the last time we saw him. When we went hunting, he was hard to catch. He wanted to stay in the woods. Yes, we looked in ground hog holes, but we never found him.

## WORLD WAR I

Several boys went to the Army. Happy Kehr got a furlough and the people of Vienna put on a Bond drive. Brother Earl went to France, Brother Sherman (Bum) was on the ocean one day and news came out that the war was over. So the ship turned around and headed for home. When Earl came home we killed a mess of squirrels and put on a big dinner. Earl was in the Artillery at the front. He and his buddy carried the first Browning machine gun into action. This gun made a difference in the war. Everybody was glad this war was over. Vienna and Maries County had a lot of men in the war.

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I had a Model-A truck, with single back tires. The rear end got torn up. Charles Parker took me to Jefferson City. We couldn't find any truck, but on the way home I saw an old truck so we stopped.

It had dual wheels, so I bought it for \$15.00. If you got stuck you could put a pole between the tires and get out. I did a lot of hauling with it. I would haul corn for 5 cents a bushel, and could haul 70 bushels at one time. One time when I was going uphill the truck reared up. I got it back against a tree and went down to the river and got some help. Walter Terry, Chester Dambach and maybe someone else all got on the front fender and the weight pulled the front down so I went on up the hill.

The Ford truck had an 8 foot bed on it. I parked it on 1st Street on a fill facing east, and next to it was a filling station. There was a concrete slab between the buildings and two gas pumps. I went in the north door and heard my truck coming backwards – with no driver. I thought it would roll across Highway 63. When it got to the filling station it made a quick turn to the left and started to go across the slab of concrete. There was about 12 feet between the building and 2 gasoline pumps, and the truck was 8 feet wide. Joe Wansing said “my Dodge”! He had parked it at the end of the slab. We both must have gone out the door and grabbed the front fenders at the same time. The truck stopped - about a foot from the car. It’s anybody’s guess if the truck just stopped on its own or if we stopped it. No Insurance.

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One time I had a small cement mixer that I got from John Goeller. We worked as partners. When Albert McDaniel poured the foundation for the store, he had a big mixer. He also had my mixer, so we finished up in one day. The engine had a short belt that caused trouble because it would slip. I was mixing cement at Jake Weidinger’s house and the engine wouldn’t run, so we mixed on boards, a sack at a time and turned it with 2 shovels. It took two men to do it. We finished the job that day.

## SCRAP IRON DAYS

I sold my Model-T Ford to George Backues for scrap iron, and he removed the body parts down to the frame and made a wagon out of it. This was back in the Depression days. He had one of the first rubber tired wagons around, so what did we call it? A Hoover Wagon.

I was buying scrap iron and also old cars. When I got a load I would take it to Jefferson City, across the river to Tanners Junk Yard. I bought paper and a little junk. I didn’t make much money. I didn’t operate very long. I was going into the Army in 1942, so we closed out. I bought a good organ, tore it up and got a little piece of iron. I saved the fancy top. You didn’t get much iron from a piano, either. Lots of junk I bought would be antique now, but you had to have storage.

When we closed out the smoke house I had a lot of kids there the last day and we put on a parade throughout town. Sam Crider bought my old Dodge. I traded with him and got \$15.00 to boot. He ran the old green Chevrolet several years after I came back from the Army. Jeff Duffin was working in the Triple A office and so was Carl Duertche.

When they started Fort Leonard Wood Army base, anybody could get a job. Several from Vienna got jobs there. Lots of stories came out of Fort Wood. Several of the help weren’t carpenters, but they wanted to get paid as carpenters, though. One fellow even had to hire a carpenter to make a tool box for him. Another guy put a 2 x 4 on his shoulders and walked all day. He didn’t have anything to do and wanted to look like he was making a delivery.

I worked two or three weeks paving. Just before I went into the Army I bought a 37 Chevy. I had about three weeks before they delivered it.

The Lions Club put on a fishing derby several times at Indian Ford Resort, on the Gasconade River. I played for it several times. They always caught several fish every time.

In December of 1988 the Shell Oil Company's gasoline pipeline broke and spilled a lot of oil. They did a good job of cleaning it up.

In 1982 the Gasconade River flooded and I think it was the biggest flood in my lifetime. A few days later it came up and lacked 6 feet as big as the first time. The first time there was about 2 feet of water in our club house basement.

The 1963 flood wasn't quite as big, but it caused a lot of damage. That time it was at the bottom of the door into the basement of the Coffey brother's club house.

One time I played at the new American Legion Hall for the Logan McDaniel reunion. My hat was out for donations and the collection was pretty good, because a good crowd attended.

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I had a famous baseball team named the "Stiff Nine". Leo Graham was the sports writer, though he never attended a game. He would put a write-up in the Gazette every time we played. It was a comedy write-up. Earl Coffey named the team, because he said we always put up a stiff fight. We played for fun - didn't expect to win many games.

We played Osage Bend along Osage River. The diamond was really smooth. Jeff Duffin did a good job playing second base, but we were getting beat. We had a part of the Jay Bird Band with us, so I told Henry Breeden to get his guitar; Jess got his harp and I got my accordion, so we decided to try something. We had a bus load of rooters with us so I told them to start hollering, and luck was on our side. The Osage Bend team got excited and we rallied and won the game.

The next time we went to Camdenton. We didn't have a good pitcher so we usually hired one from Dixon or some other team for \$15.00. Alfro Lawson said he would get a pitcher. He had on a pair of overalls, and didn't look much like a pitcher. He wasn't so hot and I don't know how many runs they got off him. The score-keeper quit counting. We got out our instruments and went to playing. But that time I think the music made it worse. We had a bus load of rooters hollering, but that didn't help. They had basket dinners and I think some of my players ate too much.

Jess was the centerfielder, but had a bad shoulder, so we had to relay the ball in. Jess hit a single. The other players were: Jeff Duffin, Carl Baldwin, Alfro Lawson, Earl Fennessey and Earl Coffey.

One time I got a game with Sears Roebuck from St. Louis. Clyde Honse was our pitcher. He had good control and could really throw hard. He was late getting there, so I got in my truck to go after him. I got stuck in a creek, but finally got out, and Clyde had to walk for 2 or 3 miles. I asked what happened and they said Sears team came and we beat them. The game was over.

Tweedie Shoe factory from Jeff City had a team and we played on our diamond. We would give about \$5.00. We played on the school diamond and they couldn't charge, but we passed the hat. We never did get the hat full.

Rollie Hemsley and Hershel Martin were professional ball players and sometime would play with our team.

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Professor Wilson asked me to get up a town basketball team. He said we could play at the Catholic School, on the second floor. The hall was small and that suited us. We would run out of



stamina if we played on a big court. Martin played with the Phillies and Hemsley played with the Browns. They played basketball with us regularly. There was a telephone gang working around Vienna and I found out a man named Gibbs was supposed to be good, so he played a few games with us. He was good and we won a few games. Professor Wilison said we owed for the suits, so we collected at the door and paid for the suits.

Well, I thought we had a pretty good team. Martin coached and played. Martin and Hemsley both played in a game we had with Algoa from Jeff City. They had a regular sized court and it looked like a big field to us, so we ran out of wind, which caused us to get beat. Don't remember what the score was, but I was glad when we finished the game.

## TOMS TOUR OF DUTY

I went into the Army in 1942. Didn't pass the first time, but several weeks later they called me again. I passed that time. They pulled my teeth and I got an infection in my gums and spent a couple of weeks in the hospital. I got false teeth but never did have a good fit while in the Army.

Carl Duertche had been in the Army before. He was in the reserves, so when war broke out he was called to Jefferson Barracks in St. Louis. When I went through the line, Carl was in uniform and he fitted me out. I was used to working for him, so it was hard to believe he was waiting on me. I went out to drill. I always got behind someone that was good at leading. One boy had been in the CCC camps and knew all the drills, so I just followed him.

One day I was the leader – they gave me the command and I went the wrong way and the ones behind me did the same. We ended up in a field. Next day I was in the “goon squad” for people who couldn't march. Luckily I got transferred to cooking school.

I went to cooking school and made first cook. Then I went to Mess Sergeants school. I was in Jefferson Barracks for two or three months and then came home on a three day pass.

On the day they shipped me out, I went to Hill Field, Utah. There was a company of 32 Repair Squadron getting ready to go to Africa. That time I got my shoulder thrown out of place and didn't have to go. Instead, I got a furlough home. While I was home, my brother bought about 15 acres of land, joining the 12 acres we already owned.

One time I went to Windown, Utah, on the Nevada Railroad line. When the repair squadron shipped out I went to San Marie, California. I did a lot of cooking. When I got some time off I went to Santa Barbara, California; the Pacific Ocean; and once I went to San Luis Obispo.

We did pretty good in the kitchen. One time we had some squash but nobody would cook them. I cooked them and they were delicious – we called them sweet potatoes. One day I had to make Chop Suey. The recipe called for six gallons of bean sprouts. It turned out a little too soupy, but was pretty good. We made our own sheet cakes and doughnuts. An officer would come and eat doughnuts.

The main thing was to keep the floor clean. One officer smelled the mops and said they were sour. One time when I was on duty outside, there was a cook really moving around. I asked his name and he said Chassean. They looked up his record and found that he was a cook in college before he joined us.

I pushed KP. I had two soldiers on KP duty. They would volunteer to clean pots and pans all

day, which was kind of surprising because nobody liked to clean those big aluminum pots. But apparently word got around that our company was putting out good meals. There were several other companies on the same base, so several from those companies would get in line and we had to issue them a pass to eat with their own company.

One time we had to move to another hall on the same base. We always had meals on time. When we cooked mutton, it didn't take much - a half of one would be plenty and we usually tried to mix something with it. Then the soldiers would come through the line baa-baa-ing like sheep. One fellow was always complaining and we called him "Crying Slim".

I heard they were getting ready to move me, and sometimes rumors were right. The officer said he had a mess sergeant retiring, so I was made Master Sergeant. More pay and a good deal for me.

When I was at Saint Marie, I got a V-mail from a good friend, A.J. Fennessee. He was in England at Huntington Air Base, near Bury Saint Edmunds.

One day I took off, didn't know where. The railroad went along the Columbia River, and we could see Indians out there fishing. We landed at Base Pendleton, Oregon, where they had a rodeo for several years. The rumors were flying that ships in the harbor were waiting for us. In a few days we took off on a 3000 mile trip.

I was planning on going to New York for sight-seeing, but someone looked up my record and found that I had never fired a carbine, so I had to go to base to learn how. Spent the whole day, went somewhere where they put targets on a railroad track and we fired at the targets.

The next day we drilled down railroad cars and learned how to get on the train. The next move was to get on the boat. I looked out the porthole and saw the Statue of Liberty. It didn't look so good when you were leaving the USA.

There were 11 ships in the convoy. My ship was in the middle, called the Monterrey, a two stacker. It took us 11 days to get across. The Monterrey was sunk later during the war.

It wasn't long until the Medics came and gave me a shot for something.

When you looked at ships before you went to bed, the next morning when you looked, it seemed they had never moved.

We slept in bunks and had to change to the upper deck, on the floor about half way out. It was dark on the ship, so you just had to find your place to lay on the floor. If you had to get up you had to step over the one lying next to you. The first empty spot you found, you just laid down without any cover.

It came out over the speaker that we were headed for England. Well, that was good news for me. I wasn't in any Company - was Mess Sergeant on my own. One night it got real cold. I guess we went up north to dodge submarines or something.

We passed the Isle of Man and when we got real close the sea gulls came out. We landed in the harbor at Liverpool, England. We stayed in the harbor all day. When it got dark we moved out and got on a train. The cars were different than we were used to. We went to the depot where most soldiers go in England. I was first cook and had a Mess Sergeants rating. They had a big kitchen, and I helped the cooks. I learned how to make fruit bar cookies, 400 at a time. I stayed there a few days and then I shipped out to an old brick plant that was being used as an English Camp. They had a side kitchen, and I was first cook. We made the fruit bar cookies. They were about two and a half inches long and a little over one inch wide. We would take our knuckles and make impressions on them that looked like

waves. We had some helpers. Officers would come in to get cookies and doughnuts.

I stayed there a couple of weeks and the order came for me to move out. A Captain in the infantry was staging the resting up. He was in the kitchen where we did the baking. He was in charge of me to get me on the train. He grabbed my duffle bag, put it on his shoulder and we took off to the train. That was the Captains job - to get me on the train.

I rode all day - didn't know where I was going. I landed at Huntington Air Base. I guess I was in the Air Corps near Bury Saint Edmunds. When I got on the base I saw a soldier and asked what company was on base. He asked who I wanted to see, and I told him I was looking for A.J. Fennessey. He said "follow me" and took me to A.J.'s room. I was really glad to see him. I worked for his folks in Vienna. I still have the V-mail letter he sent me when I was in California. A.J. had some candy and I was glad to get some of it. When I got some cigarettes I paid him back. He was getting letters from my home town and he would tell me the news. It was a couple of months before I got mail and a hometown paper.

Huntington was a big base and the big kitchen was something like a fireplace. They had long pans they would pull out, load up with pies and cookies, and push back in to bake. I was in the baking department, and it must have been around Thanksgiving or Christmas because we were baking pumpkin pies. We ran out of pumpkin so we used sweet potatoes and didn't have any kicks.

I was in charge of keeping the room clean, and I had to go around and wake the boys up in the morning. That was the last of my cooking. I still had my Staff Sergeant rating until I got out of the Army.

I was on the move again - went to Snaur Heath base up around Norge. It was a bomber base. I didn't have anything to do, so they put me in the office and I volunteered to help the carpenters pulling racks to hold tires. I got acquainted with some folks outside the base to do my washing. They had a boy about 10 years old. We walked to the village. I didn't have a pass to leave the base. The MPs caught me and sent me back to the base.

D-Day was on. Big bombers were leaving the base every few minutes. That is when the war with the United States and Germany really started to heat up.

My next move, which was my last, was back to Huntington Air base. This time I moved into a barracks with A.J. Fennessey, my buddy from my hometown, Vienna, Missouri.

I was in the end where the old stove was, so I fired the stove. The kitchen was near by. There was a place where we could get cokes, cigarettes, candy, etc. I was settled down at last. I worked in the carpentry shop in the big hanger. No more moves! Well, the big stove came in handy. My sister sent me a gallon of candy, and I put a wooden handle on the bucket and used it to pop corn. My buddy from Iowa and his brothers were farmers and they sent plenty of popcorn. Leo Malone's (my buddy) sister worked in a factory making cherry chocolates, so she kept us in chocolate covered cherry cordials.

One day I went to Burrough Saint Edmunds and bought a fiddle. Instead of a scroll on the neck, it had a serpent's head. I showed it at the carpenters shop and one of my buddies asked if I wanted a case for it, so he made me a case from scratch. He got tired of putting the finish on it and the boss finished it for me. I still have it.

We had a real football team at Huntington. I went into London one day to watch them play. We were alerted that a big buzz bomb was headed our way in the day time. A.J. and I went outside to a shelter, made out of brick, about three or four feet high. It was a little higher than the Barracks. About

100 to 200 feet to the side we watched it hit the ground and blow up, about one-half mile away. I think when they ran out of gas they landed and blew up. We could see the fire.

## AROUND LONDON

I went to the House of Parliament. Big Ben is very impressive with its big hands, the large one is 14 feet long, and the small hand is 9 feet long. You can drive a double decker bus through where the face is. The only time it stopped was when a worker hung his coat on the big hand. I also saw the Tower of London, where it is said they used to hide jewels in the walls.

I saw the Changing of the Guard at Buckingham Palace, and also Trafalgar Square (with all the pigeons). I saw a big hole in the ground where a V-2 hit in front of a park where they had a free speech.

When I went inside at St. Paul's Cathedral there was a barricade around a hole in the floor where a dud bomb had hit. You could see St. Paul's Cathedral from any place in London. An ex-soldier told me the same story about the hole in the floor.

I also visited Madame Trousseau's Wax Museum. It was really good. You had a hard time keeping from speaking to the statues. Some of the statues were from the United States.

One day I was on my way to Ireland. They had a V-J-Day parade. I have a picture of the King and his daughters.

After the war, I visited a British mine sweeper. The man in charge picked me and three other soldiers to go down below. He had a bottle of rum hidden. I don't know why he picked me out of all that bunch. He thought he was really doing something. I guess that stuff was hard to get, but it tasted really bitter. Well, I tasted of it, that's about all.

I also saw a captured German submarine that was on display.

One day I went to a place called Petticoat Lane. Not much was available but there were things sold on the black market. They had a lobster there, but it looked too much like a crawdad to me. I never could eat stuff like that.

The Red Cross ladies were real good about taking us around places. Another time I went to see the fishing boats with a doctor from Scotland. They were fishing for herring. Young people were following them and they cleaned the herring. One time I went to the Isle of White where Henry VIII had his palace. I bought a paperweight full of sand that looks like a rainbow. I also visited a school at Cambridge. It was a school for retarded children and the pupils put on a play. In the United States we are just starting to do things they have been doing in England for a long time. One time I went to a meeting where Clement Atlee was running against Winston Churchill for Prime Minister. They had a V-2 on Display. (see picture in picture section).

One time when I was in Ireland I stayed at Belfast. I visited the Giant Causeway rock formation. It is really something to see. I also went to free Ireland. They checked us at the border and when we came back they checked us for goods that we weren't supposed to buy. When I was in Dublin, I visited Guinness Brewery and tasted the beer. They grow hops there too. At one time it was the world's biggest brewery.

They wouldn't let us go to the Blarney Stone, afraid we might run out of fuel on the train.



After the war when I was in Belfast, Ireland, General Eisenhower came in the hotel and visited us.

Somewhere in England, I bought a small accordion, just like the first one I bought from Sears. I brought it home with me.

I made one trip to Scotland, staying in Edinborough. I saw the Walter Scott monument. Close to Glasgow I rode a boat up and down Loch Lomond. The scenery was the best. I took a railroad trip to Inverness and Aberdeen. This is close to where the Loch Ness monster is supposed to be, but I don't think there is anything to that. It is a clean city with cobblestoned streets. It was hard to get a clear picture because of the fog. If the sun was out for even a half minute, you'd better snap a picture. Stopped to see Fourth Bridge, and walked out on it. Well, that was a good trip to Scotland.

When I got back to England, I visited Ipswich. I bought a small, good-looking pearl piano accordion. I couldn't play it so I sold it to the fellow that had the carpenter shop. Later he bought himself a big one, so I bought it back for half price. I finished the case and sent it home.

When World War II was over, A.J. and I, Vienna boys, picked up the Stars and Stripes newspaper, edited by Ernie Pyle, and went outside. We held it between us and someone took our picture. Here is what was on the front page:

### GERMANY QUITS

Were we happy!! The war was half over. After that we started to sign up for Japan. The young guys were going to have to go fight. It wasn't too long before Japan surrendered. Quite a big bomb made that happen. We would have lost a lot of men if we had gone to Japan.

## HEADED FOR HOME

After the war was over if you were in the States, and 38 years old, you could get out of the Army. If you were overseas that wasn't possible. I was still in the carpenter shop for a while. Then one day I was transferred to a fighter squadron. I moved to another barracks waiting for a ship to come take me home. One day we went to South Hampton Harbor. I kept looking up to see the top deck. Would you believe it was the Queen Mary?

I was on the top deck. It had been made into a troop ship and hauled many soldiers to war. So many soldiers had cut their initials in the top railing, there was no room to put mine. I didn't have anything to do, so I played my accordion. One of the pictures I had taken looks like about 25 soldiers standing and facing me. They began throwing big English pennies out on the floor. I picked them up and brought them home with me, close to 100. After we got out of the harbor a little way, dogs began to appear. I don't know where they had hidden them.

Well, it took about 3 days to cross the Atlantic. We left England on November 4, 1945. When we landed in the States, a small ship met us with a band. They played "Alexanders Ragtime Band". It sure sounded good, and the Statue of Liberty really looked good this time. When we marched off the ship, I looked back and it was coming out of the water. By jumps, it was loaded with people. Every soldier walking off meant less weight. Every time I looked back it was higher out of the water.

I was real lucky to come home on a ship like the Queen Mary. It wasn't made at the biggest ship yard, it was made at the ship yard where they had the best workers. I guess we went to Camp Kilmer.

I called my sister at Vienna, Missouri. She told me that Earl Fennessey had landed in the States. I was looking everywhere for him. So when I got on the train, I started looking for him in every car on both sides. When I found him, I pointed my finger at him and said "there you are". He jumped, then recognized me and said he thought the MPs were after him. Earl Fennessey had been in India. He was A.J.'s brother, who I stayed with in the English Barracks. I worked for their parents in Vienna.

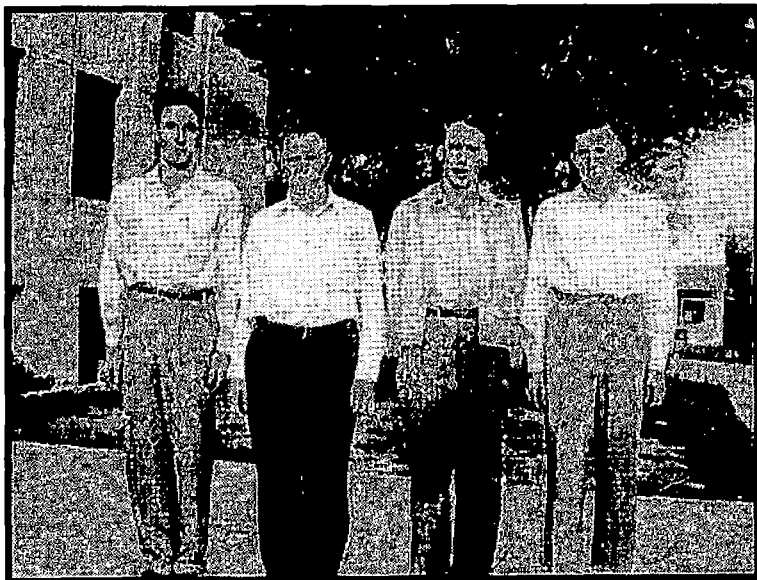
Well, we arrived at Jefferson Barracks. The first soldier I saw was Jeff Duffin, from my home town. My, he really looked good. He asked if we wanted the Eisenhower jackets - we said we sure did, so he hid them and after inspection, he gave them back to us. I told him I needed a new pair of high top shoes. So we went to where Wayne Hefti was working and I traded him an old pair for new ones. Hefti was also from Vienna. Just before we landed we passed a small boat and saw Andrew and Virginia Buschmann on it.

Well, what luck we had next. We were in St. Louis, out of the army, with mustering out pay, and on foot. So we called Earl and Mary Chambers and they offered to take us home. Over 100 miles. A friend in need is a friend indeed.

Now I was free as the birds, so the first thing I did was buy the small building on the corner of Elm Street (now Coffey Street), from Mrs. Joe Weidinger. Mrs. Effie Murphy lived there and I told her that when she found a place to move to, to let me know. I wasn't in any hurry.

My brother, Sherman, was in the Wadsworth Army Hospital. They said he wasn't very good, so I told the doctor that I was going into business and wanted my brother to help me. They thought it would be a long wait and I figured they were right if he stayed there at Wadsworth Hospital. It wasn't long before they moved him to Topeka, Kansas, to another hospital. They had patients making all kinds of things. He could do embroidery and make things with his hands. He made a lamp and sent it home. He got better real fast, came home and helped me several years.

# TOM'S TOUR OF DUTY OVERSEAS



*The men that were inducted with Tom. L to R: Jim McKinney, Tom Coffey, Bud Liesman and Earl Fennessee.*



*Tom in uniform.*



*Tom in uniform.*



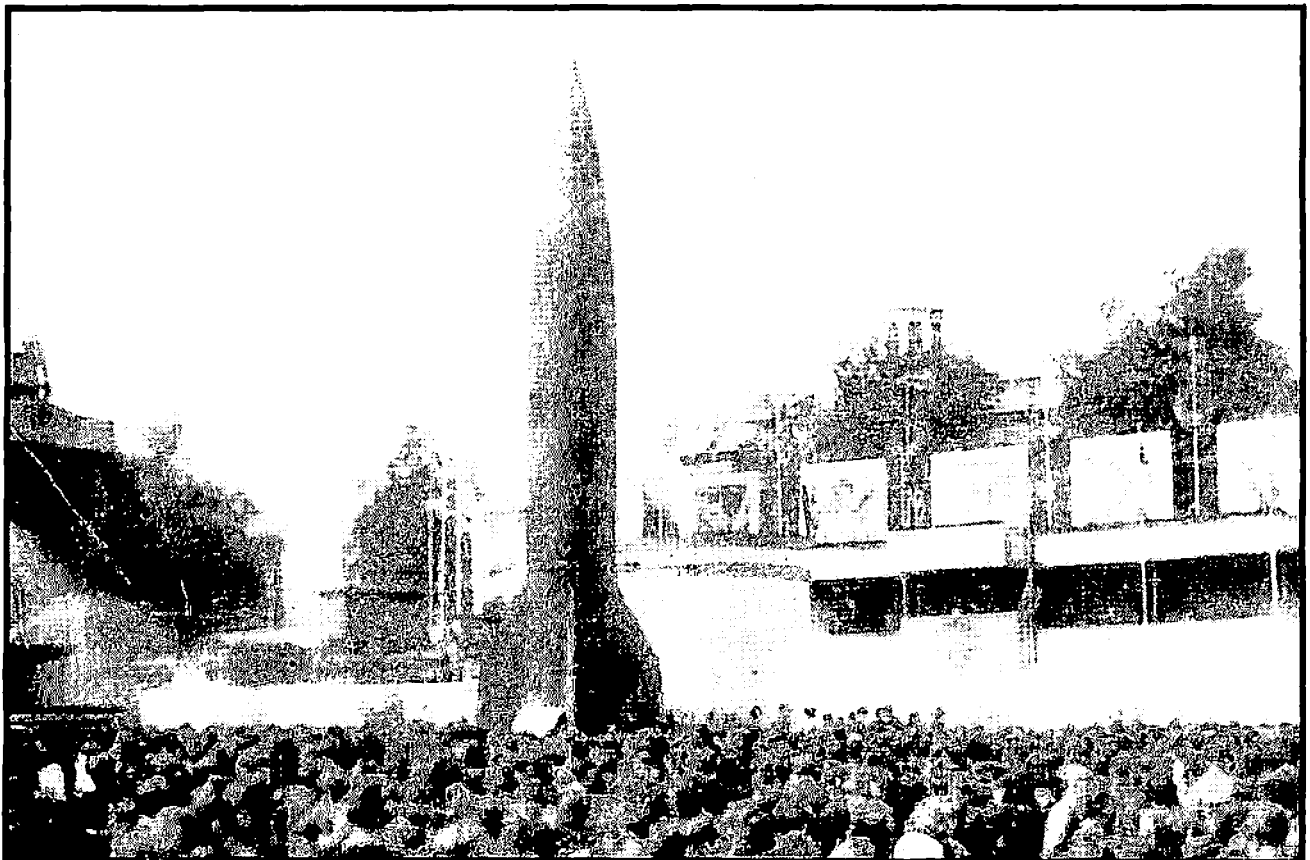
*Tom in uniform.*



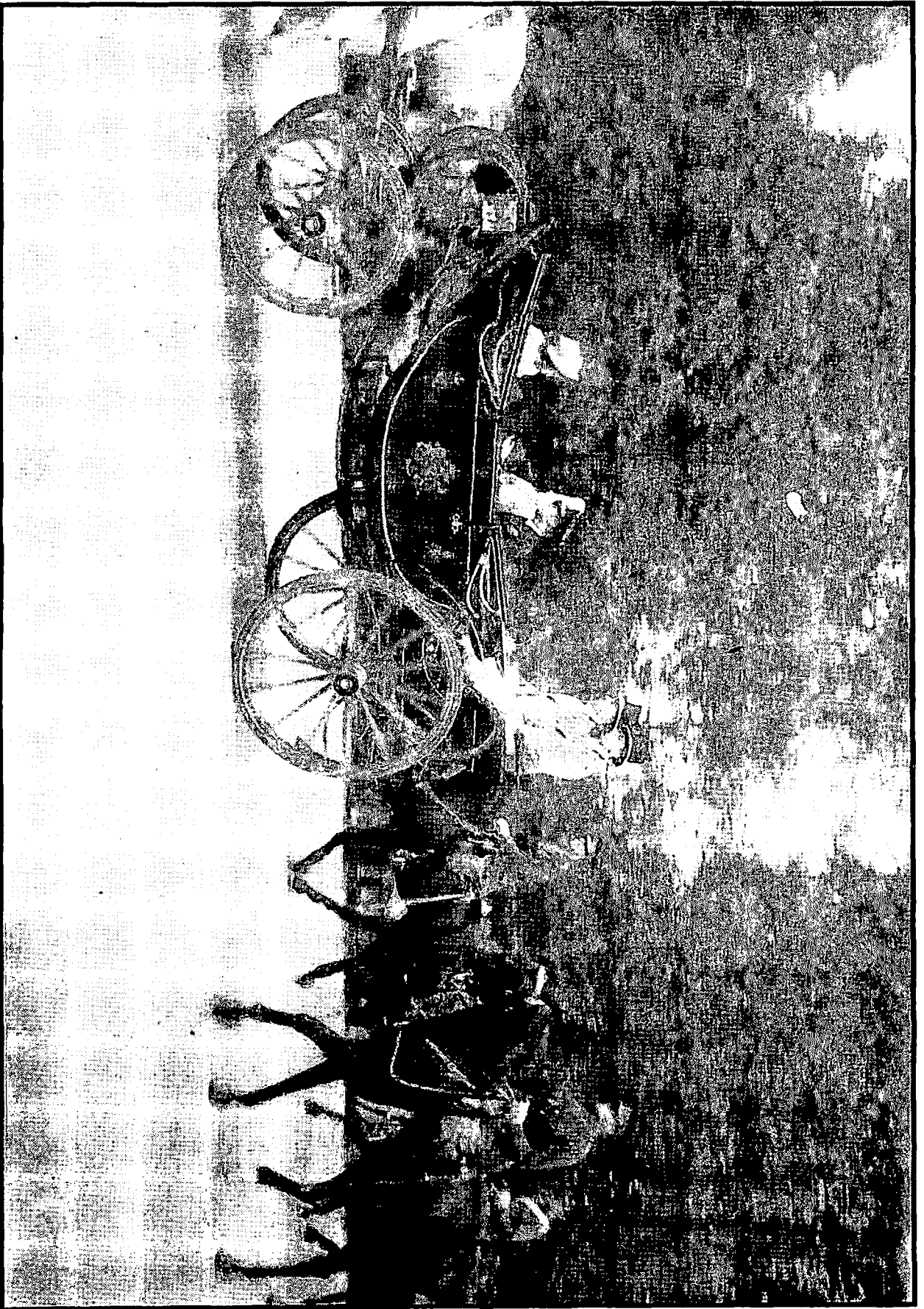
*In Norwich, England. Standing L to R: Charles Viessmann and Sam Shockley. Front: A.J. Fennessee, Tom Coffey and Harold Nichols.*



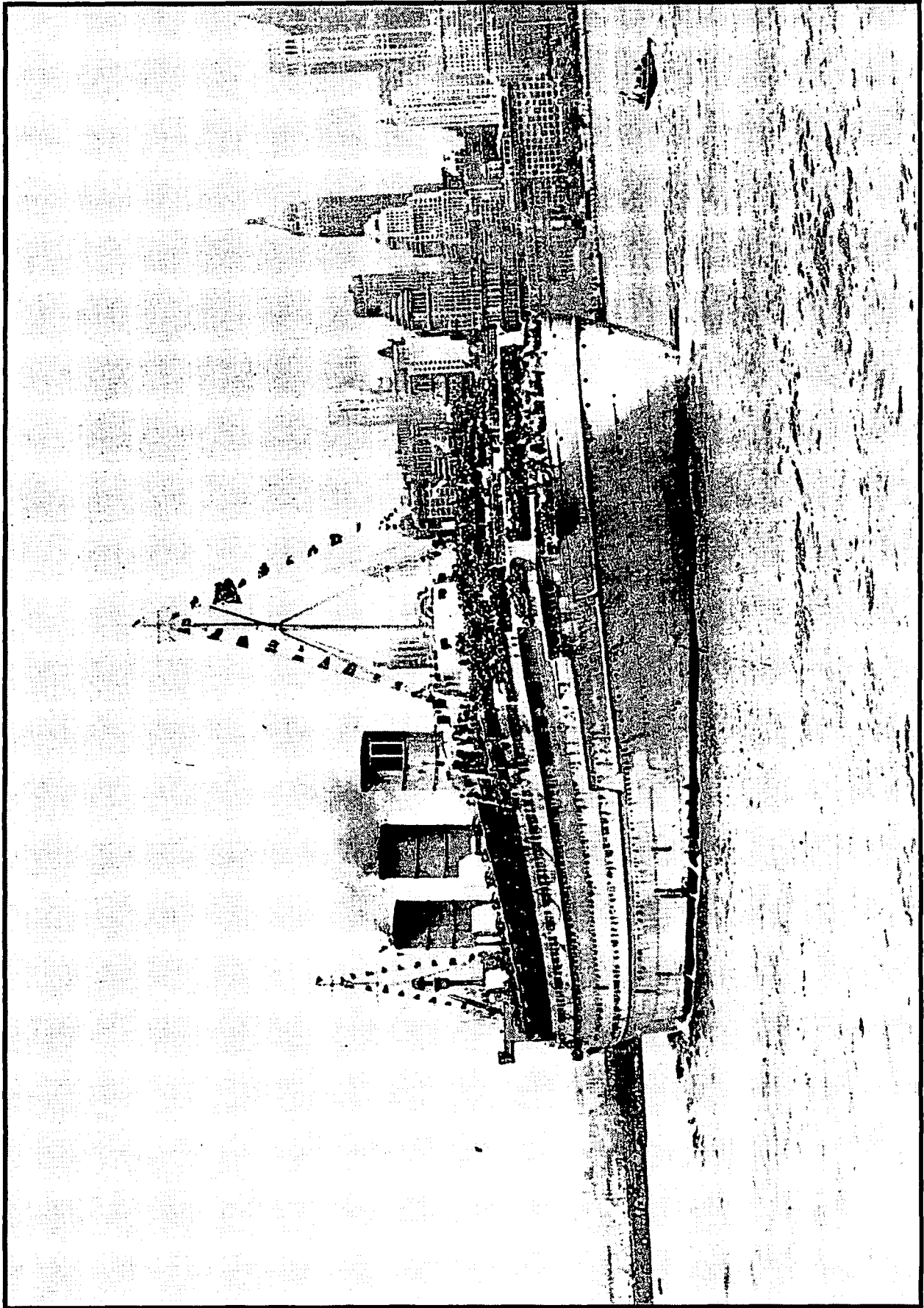
*ON LEAVE about 1944. A.J. Fennessee and Tom. They both served overseas during W.W. II, and had a chance to see a parade and various sights while in England.*



*A V-2 Rocket.*



*Parade featuring the King and Queen of England and their daughters.*



*The Queen Mary - on War Service. This is the ship that Tom came back to the United States on, after his service overseas.*



## BACK HOME AGAIN

Jack Louderback wanted me to be in charge of the city street lights, so I contacted all the merchants and they donated so much a month and we had street lights.

The American Legion had bought a building and it needed a roof, so I got some lumber from St. James.

It wasn't very long until Mrs. Effie Murphy moved out of the building I had bought from Mrs. Joe Weidinger, so we decided to move in. It was very small. Mrs. Mae Nichols offered to sell me a wicker set, so we were in business. We named our new business "The Swap Shop". I went to auctions, mostly farm auctions, and bought items to sell. I bought some antiques, and one time bought some incubators to hatch chickens. Well, I couldn't give them away.

The hardware salesmen wouldn't call on me. They just waited on their old customers while I was in the Army. In 1946, when I started in business, I didn't have a phone, so I got hooked up with Owen Redel's feed store.

I had a rough time getting started. Couldn't buy anything to fish with, so I went to Freeburg and bought some hooks and line from Mr. Dickneite. That helped a little.

One day Willard Massey from Jefferson City came in looking for some fishing equipment. He said when he went fishing at the lake he bought his supplies from Kure Fishing Supplies. He had supplies at his house and also delivered around the lake. We made several trips. Jesse Carroll drove the truck most of the time, and his wife always had a pie or something good for us to eat before we left.

One day I saw Ermil Jones at Rolla. He had a furniture and appliance store, so I made a deal with him. He would provide the furniture and appliances and I would haul and deliver it.

Well, I had something to sell then. It wasn't long until I signed up with Ure-Gas and they also had appliances. Earl Allen worked for me, and Lillian, (Earl's wife) was my bookkeeper. I had a big truck and Ermil and I made several trips to St. Louis to buy furniture and appliances. We had some good wholesale places to buy. One day Ermil sold out and I bought what he had for my place. It cost \$3000.00 and I had to go borrow the money. I sold Maytag and Speed Queen appliances. Sold a lot of them and won a trip to Newton, Iowa to see the Maytag plant. After I bought out Ermil, I bought at the same place he did, so now I was a Frigidaire dealer.

Earl and Lillian won a trip to Florida and New York, and to the Indianapolis 500 auto races. I went with Earl to the races. First and last time I was on an airplane. We were just sitting on it and these guys crawled under it and fixed it with wrenches.

Two salesmen, one from Witte and one from Shapleigh came, so they kept me in hardware.

I bought some lumber and my brother built a room on the side of the building at the corner of Elm (now Coffey) Street. Later on we tore the back out of the building and added to the room we built on the side, which stretched out the room a long way. Some time later Louis and Harold Holman built on a side room to store hardware. That was the last of the additions.

I sold Kelvinator Deep Freezers - sold so many I won a coat.

Mrs. Joey Murphy had a variety store on the corner of Elm and 3rd Street. I bought a tablecloth rack from her. Mrs. Murphy had two dealers in Springfield, so when Mrs. Dessie Bilyue started working for me she went to those two wholesale dealers and bought for me. By then we had a good variety of merchandise to sell.

Yes, I did a little swapping. I swapped a tiller for a cow and calf. One time I swapped for a donkey. Jesse Bilyue was pasturing it for me and he swapped it for a Hampshire gilt. She had 12 pigs so we sold them and divided the money. One time I bought the Mrs. Joe Weidinger house, next to the highway. I did some repairs and rented it for several yeras. After 12 years I sold it. I bought the building from Mrs. Joey Murphy's estate; kept it for 12 years - stored furniture in it and call it "The Bargain Barn". I sold it to the Helton brothers, and bought the Liesman store building across from the courthouse.

I bought the Redel Store building, kept it for several years then sold to Western Auto. Junior Crum has repaired 3 rooms of it and has them full of appliances. In two years he will have the rest of the building. What is left of my furniture will be moved to the Liesman building on Fourth Street.

When I bought the Swap Shop building, Mrs. Weidinger wouldn't sell the lot back of mine, close to Highway 63.

Paul Sandbothe said he bought the lot and was going to build a shoe-repair shop. I told Paul I was going to tear the end out of the building he was looking at. If he would give 5 feet and I would give 5 feet, then we'd have 10 feet between the buildings. This was much safer in case of fire. So now we had our own alley. Paul had a repair shop in the Redel building. He was good at his job, and prices were cheap: one shoe for 10 cents of a quarter; half soles and heels weren't high. Some of the shoes we now get from overseas are not worth repairing. Paul finally quit and now Vienna has no shoe repair shop.

Jefferson City Distributors Wholesalers opened up, so I bought merchandise from them. The furniture was good and reasonably priced, and we could take our customers in the show room. One advantage to that was the short hauling distance and we had a few days to pay. One time we lost a chair on the highway. Les Armer, the driver of my truck, went back to get the chair and two men were getting ready to take it. Les was Deputy Sheriff of Maries County, so that may have helped him get it back.

One time Les and my brother were hauling twin wash tubs on a stand. For years I could find legs and other parts to set up the twin tubs, but no tubs. I asked Les if we didn't get tubs with those legs, and he said the tubs fell off the truck and mashed them and they threw them away. I stayed with Jefferson City Distributors for 3 or 4 years till they went Retail and went down the drain. Good thing for me!

## **THE 1962 WORLD'S FAIR**

Off we go to Seattle, Washington to the World's Fair, with Frank Hodge and his boys Jim and Bill. I was always interested in World's Fairs. I have a clock made at the Chicago World's Fair in 1883. I have a book from the St. Louis Fair in 1904, the year ice cream cones were introduced to the world. The Chicago Fair had the first Ferris Wheel. The committee wanted something big, so engineers from Chicago made the Ferris Wheel. They moved it to St. Louis for the 1904 fair. It took about 57 box cars to move it. When the fair was over, they scrapped it.

Frank found a place to stay in Seattle, and he was the cook. When I walked the grounds I was surprised. The grounds were black topped, which made good walking. One pavillion from Brazil had free coffee. It was really strong - I could taste it for a good while. You could ride from one place to another in the air. We also rode the mono-rail from town to the fair grounds. The space needle was the best thing at the fair. The elevator looks like a bug going up to the first floor. Next floor had a revolving

kitchen. We didn't go to the top. Jim and Bill decided not to stay very long, so we got down. I guess all three of us felt safer on the ground. I have a book and a needle from the fair.

I was doing a little bowling in 1962. Jim claims it was his first time bowling and he beat me every game. Later on in this story we will play a game of golf in Dixon, Missouri.

We stayed part of three days at the fair and then started home. We stopped at Yellowstone National Park. I saw a moose going to a watering hole, and Frank was a little too friendly with the bears to suit me.

We visited one buiding where they sold souvenirs and they used pine logs to support the roof.

Every place we stopped to eat I asked for boiled potatoes. I finally found them - also roast beef and gravy.

We came back through the Black Hills and stopped at Mount Rushmore where the presidents are carved in the mountain. I saw some buffaloes in a pen. Well, it was a swell trip and after 32 years I still remember it.

One trip to Silver Dollar City with Jesse and Dessie Bilyue we had permission to play on the grounds before we started. Every place we played a crowd would gather round. While I was playing a man came and asked if I'd ever been in a town close to Springfield (Marshfield). I told him yes and he remembered that I was with the men that bought the oxen for the parade in 1955 for the Centennial celebration of Vienna (100 years).

Jesse, Dessie and Jess took a tour around the grounds, and I stayed and played. It was a nice trip and not forgotten.

The next trip was with Jesse and Dessie to Mountain View for something like a fair and blue grass music. Jimmie Orchard gave us \$75.00. I asked Jimmie where the stage was and he pointed to a new hay wagon and said we should use that for a stage. About 30 minutes before the show a man came over and said that he bought the wagon, and he hauled it away. So we had to set up on the ground near the bottom of a hill and it wasn't too good of a stage.

When Jessie and Dessie hauled us they always tried to see the town. One time we visited a museum out in the country and they had bought some old buildings and put them together. The proceeds went for a worthy cause. And one time they visited a large spring.

One time Jess and I went to the first annual Kahoka blue grass festival at Clark County Fairgrounds in Kahoka, Missouri, on August 10, 11, 12, in 1973. Bob and Berniece Bullock furnished the transportation in their new 1973 Chevrolet.

Some of the bands that were there were: Jimmie Orchard and his Ozark Blue Grass Boys from Eminence, Mo.; Ralph Withers, Harold Rowden and the Blue Grass Five; Blue Grass Association from Kansas City; Lyman Enlow, one of the best fiddlers; my friend Calton Framey from Conway, Mo.; Rich Orchard and Cedar Hill Grass from Barnhart, Mo.; and Bill Jones and the Blue Grass Travelers.

## **DOLL RACK DAYS**

During the depression, if you didn't have a job, well, you just made one. I made a doll rack game and went to picnics. The American Legion had a picnic and that was the first one I took my doll

rack to. I always gave half the profits to the group that was having the picnic.

Lay down a nickel and pick up a quarter. You got three balls for 5 cents and if you knocked down three dolls you'd win a quarter. That's when a nickel was worth something and a quarter was a lot of money. Knock down two dolls in a row and you'd win your nickel back. There were 12 dolls, all in a row and they all looked the same. The wood had lead in the bottom so they would stand up when you hit them. You had to hit them hard and just right to make them go down. It was a working outfit.

One of my friends made a rack with just one doll. They soon broke him. They had a target to throw at.

I was at Brinktown and a candidate was running for Senator and he was making a speech. His name was Harry S. Truman and later on he became President of the United States.

One time I ran the doll rack at Iberia. Charles Liesman helped me and his grandpa had a bowling alley – a portable one. One night we ate cold watermelon. Guess that was my bed, that bowling alley. That was the longest bed I ever slept on. Yes, after eating cold watermelon I got cold and had the chills.

The next time I went to the Safe Fair, Henry Breeden and a friend borrowed a striking machine and went with me. Somebody had a ball game throwing at a target made to look like Hitler. We took our bedding along with plans to sleep in the back of the truck. As we were preparing for bed, Henry said "there's already someone in our bed." It turned out to be Albert (Jersey) Potts from High Gate. He had just made himself at home in our bed.

When I went to the Army that was the last of the doll rack. I loaned it to someone and lost track of it. Sometimes I would get someone who could win often.

## CRABGRASS MUSIC

The Coffey Brothers, Tom and Jess had fun entertaining the public with Crabgrass Music for about 58 years. The bands that I mention are the bands that we have been to festivals with. There were several other bands on the shows. They always advertised the Coffey boys as Crabgrass Comedy.

One day a stranger came in to the Swap Shop. He said "I saw you on TV." I told him that when we played at Kahoka we were on the Quincy station and he said that was where he saw us. I have a souvenir of the program. We got \$100.00 for expenses. That was a good trip, thanks to Bob and Berniece Bullock who made it possible for us to go.

\*\*\*\*\*

One time I hired a rock and roll band from Jefferson City; a teen age band or maybe a little older. They were some relatives of friends and cost \$15.00. They were playing across the street in front of the double doors at Redel's store. Well, they had drums and everything to play loud. A lady came to listen and her two small black dogs were lying on the sidewalk. When the band blasted off you could have heard them a mile away. The two little dogs, with their ears pinned back, starting running across the street yelping, and yelping. A car was coming down the street and they ran under it and came out the other side. They were getting away from that loud rock and roll music. Ha, Ha, well, I got my money's worth that day!

I was asked to come to the first bluegrass show held at West Fairview School. I had some help with Jess, but we never got to play. The next year we got to play. We could always get the Blue Grass Band to help us. We played every year, most of the time on Sunday. I was helping the Vienna Fair at

the same time. When they moved to Bill Jones Park we played on Labor Day. Then they started Decoration Celebration Blue Grass and we played twice during the week-end. Several times there were 22 states represented. Good eats, like my favorite dish – peach cobbler.

Harold Rowden's band helped us several times; so did Jimmie Orchard's band. Shirley Vaughn would play the bass fiddle to liven up the show. She played with Parker's Mountain Blue Grass Band from Arkansas.

\*\*\*\*\*

Frank Hodge was ready to take a trip south to Gainesville. They put on ""Whooping and Hollering Days" so I went along and took my accordion. I got permission to play on the grounds. One of the committee came to me and said they were ready to put on the cake walk. At first the law wouldn't let them, but now they said it was o.k., but since they didn't have any music they asked me if I would play. They put numbers in a circle, and charged 10 cents or more to walk. People would walk around the circle and when I stopped playing they would stop on a number, and certain numbers won a cake. Well, they had several cakes and it gave me a work out. The next day there was a big parade. They wanted us to stay over, but we went to Silver Dollar City but didn't see much. We wished we had stayed in Gainesville.

Jessie and Dessie made another trip south to a Blue Grass show. Jimmie Orchard would always find a band to help us out. If his band wasn't there sometimes they would call us Crabgrass comedy. If any of the crowd was asleep we would always play first to wake them up. Crabgrass music was different instruments than Blue Grass. Accordions, Jess played the mouth harp and bones. He could imitate hungry cattle, bull frogs, wild geese, etc. I always helped on the geese and it was Harold Rowden's favorite.

If Jimmie Orchard was there, he and Jess would go coon hunting on the river bluff. They wouldn't take any dogs, because Jess could make a noise that sounded just like a coon dog. Well, they always hit a cold trail. After a while the trail got hot again and it wasn't long until the raccoon went up a tree, just from hearing Jess.

There are always 3 or 4 dogs in a race. Each dog has a different bark and they really sound off. After awhile the coon jumps out and then we had a coon fight. One dog would always yelp like he was hurt and I would holler "bit through the foot" then finally kill the coon. When Jess would imitate, one old hound at the farm house would howl. He was afraid to come out to see the coon fight.

Well, we were a long way from home. We didn't think anyone would know us. Harold Helton from Vienna was working for the telephone company so he came and visited us.

Tom Coffey's One Man Band played at South Central Livestock Association four times. If it rained we played in the Auction ring.

Jess and I played a couple of times at Three Rivers Annual meeting at Linn. One time after we played we were outside and an elderly lady came towards us and pointed her finger at us and said "You are something else!" Then she turned and walked away.

I played the One Man Band twice. Jim McKinney played with me. The crowd was about 900.

Willard Shockley hauled us up north to a Blue Grass show. It came a big rain, so that put a stop to playing for awhile, but as soon as it stopped we got to play.

Bill James drove us to Westphalia to play for their 150th Celebration.

I played my One Man Band at the 150th Celebration at Rich Fountain. It rained and rained, but the parade went on anyway. I played under a porch by the mess hall.

Bill Jones got us a job at the Lake to play for Governor Kit Bond.

Twice we've played at the James family reunion at Marvin James' home, on the banks of the Gasconade. Marvin had built a big pavillion with a roof. It was washed away by the 1993 flood. Dave James gave us an enlarged picture, framed. Good picture of Jess. It is hanging on the wall of the Coffey brothers house.

Jess spent the last four years of his life at Maries Manor Nursing Home. We played several times at the home. Mrs. Jean Honse helped us a lot with her guitar and singing. Jess was born in 1900. He never failed to play the harp and bones when I asked him, even if it was just 2 or 3 short notes. He never failed to put in a sweet bunch of daises. He passed away in 1989, at the age of 89. We made a tape just the year before. Jess was 88 and I was 82.

Jess was the one that named the Crab Grass music. After a few months I started playing my One Man Band. I had a large old drum, at least 80 years old, bells on my knees and a horn under my foot. The drum had belonged to Ed Lindner from Belle. He played in the Belle Band.

Delmar Backues from Belle drove me around in my 91 Ford pickup. He drove me 4 times to Versailles, 3 times to Owensville, 1 time to Newburg, 6 times for Meramac Days, 2 times to Olean, where my tapes always sold, 2 times to Licking, once to the Humphrey reunion at Iberia, 1 time with Don Kelley to the Old Soldiers Home at St. James, 3 times to the St. Elizabeth Nursing Home, with Ralph Wiles and preacher Don Kelley, once to St. James, twice I played at Morelands Resort. A bunch of friends would get together and stay at the resort not far from Vienna, I would play for them and they would put on a big meal. I played once at Sally's restaurant for a party, at the Maries County Bank Open House and Ellis McKinney helped me play. They had plenty of refreshments and gifts. Jess and I played 35 or 40 times at the Extravaganza at Vichy. We got in free and they gave us \$150.00. At this time I was helping promote the Maries County Fair and I donated the money to be used for getting the road black-topped. Elly Mae from the TV series "The Beverly Hillbillies" was always at the Extravaganza. After I had my stroke I only went 2 days. In 1993, Kenneth Gray took me in a van.

We played several times at Eminence and Rain Tree. Sometimes we would go into town and play at a theater. One time the owner advertised that the Crab Grass band would play at the theater, but the theater burned down.

One time we were playing at Rain Tree and a lady from Dixon was making buttons with our picture on them. The way she made them was fairly expensive. One young fellow asked her to make him one. She said the price was \$5.00. That price didn't scare him, so he bought one.

One time we were playing at Eminence Blue Grass Festival and the band we followed was the Buck White family. He was a professional player. Well, we did pretty good and he stood at the end of the stage and watched our whole show.

\*\*\*\*\*

I played my one-man-band several times at the Parish Hall Sausage Suppers and picnics in Vienna and it always went over pretty good. In 1993, the weather was cold and rainy and I was getting over a stroke. Lawrence Buschmann, my Power of Attorney, helped me and brought me carry-out. I hope that I get to go this year.

My One-man-band played at Dixon Cow Days two or three times. You had to sign up for the cow they gave away. They had a cross-cut saw contest and Ralph Wiles was my partner. We always



did pretty good and won some trophies. I was about 82 or 83 years old.

I played at Dixon for the American Legion picnics two or three times. I also played at Dixon when they dedicated the new Legion Hall.

Jean Honse and I played a few times at Head Start in Vienna. Jean was good playing and singing children's songs. Jean and I played several times at the Senior Center on Game Day. I also played at the School on "Missouri Day".

\*\*\*\*\*

In 1952, Jess and I went with Willard and Viola Shockley, and their daughter Judy, who was eight years old. Judy started crying that a bee stung her. A man stopped and said that if a bee had stung her, he could doctor that. He cut off part of his cigar and chewed it up and put that on where the bee had stung her and it worked.

We went to a side-show. They had a large barrel or tank that was about 15 feet across. A man inside on a motorcycle would go real fast around and around. I was afraid he would come out over the top. It looked real dangerous. They couldn't get any insurance agent to cover him. They also had a very large carnival set up. Big hogs and Missouri mules were on display and they always were a good attraction at fairs.

We went to the second and third Blue Grass Festival at Stafford, Missouri. Willard and Viola Shockley furnished the car. Viola took a picnic basket full of good eats. Better than hotdogs! Willard and I went on a mile drive through Buena Vista Ranch, where there were about 3000 animals and birds, and monkeys in cages. The Blue Grass music was at the end of the ranch grounds.



*Blue Grass Festival - Dixon, Mo. - 1981-82.*

*From L: Jim Winters - Fiddle; Keith Rowden - Bass; Harold Rowden - Guitar; Tom Coffey - Accordion; Jimmy Orchard - Whistle Tube; and Jesse Coffey.*

## **TOM'S TAPES – AND “WHAT THEY SAID”**

“Tommie, we have enjoyed our tape we bought from you and will cherish it forever.” Best wishes Tommie.

Don and Debbie John

“I am happy to have authentic Crabgrass music to let my child, relatives and friends listen to. Thank you for giving it to us.”

Terry, Dave and Chris Schwartz

“You won’t find this music on MTV. More local people should tape their music and sell locally. Thanks, Tom.”

Steve Deaton

“Best music sold anywhere.”

The Bells

“Great stuff – Do more.”

Joe Weidinger

“Tom, I bought your tape and loaned it to my mother-in-law, Sophia Czeschin, at Ferne Valley Nursing Home in Hermann. The staff there borrowed it often to play for the residents. Sophia says they love it. Now I want to buy another tape for me to keep.”

Janice Wagner Branson

“I bought your tape and really enjoy it.”

Viola Corey

“Tom, we bought one of your tapes and we like it so much we keep it in the car and play it when we go out on a long drive.”

Goldie Brune

“I think your tapes are great. They’re better than Billy Ray Cyrus.”

Jacob Cahill



*Playing in the Iberia Gym - 1972. Tom Coffey, Harold Rowden and Jess Coffey.*

Music party at High Gate at the home of John Stumpf. L to R: Cleon (Tootsie) Crum, Laverne Hawkins, Corrine Stumpf, Jesse Coffey, Carmolee Stumpf Cornick and husband Don Cornick.



Some of the Blue Grass Boys. Jess Coffey, Tom Coffey and Jackie Hawkins.



Jess and Tom.



Tom Coffey's One-Man Band - ca. 1985.



*At the Hat Factory.  
Jess and Tom Coffey.*



*American Legion Float.  
Featuring Richard James, Jr. and  
Tom Coffey.*



*Maries County Centennial  
Celebration 1955.  
Bottom Row:  
Ellis Crum, Tom Coffey, and  
Hal Picker.  
Top Row:  
Joey Murphy and  
Sylvester Buschmann*

*Old Settlers Bench.  
L to R:  
Harry Spratley, Bill James,  
Earl Albertson,  
Norbert Viessmann, and  
John James*







*Old Fashioned Butchering.*

*l to r: Joe Crider, Sam Crider, Ray Schwartz, Ralph Wiles, Leo Crider, Leon Otto, Ernie Otto, Chris Albertson, Kenny Moses, Derick Otto, Travis Otto, and John Schwartz.*



*Coffey Brothers Cabin on Gasconade.*

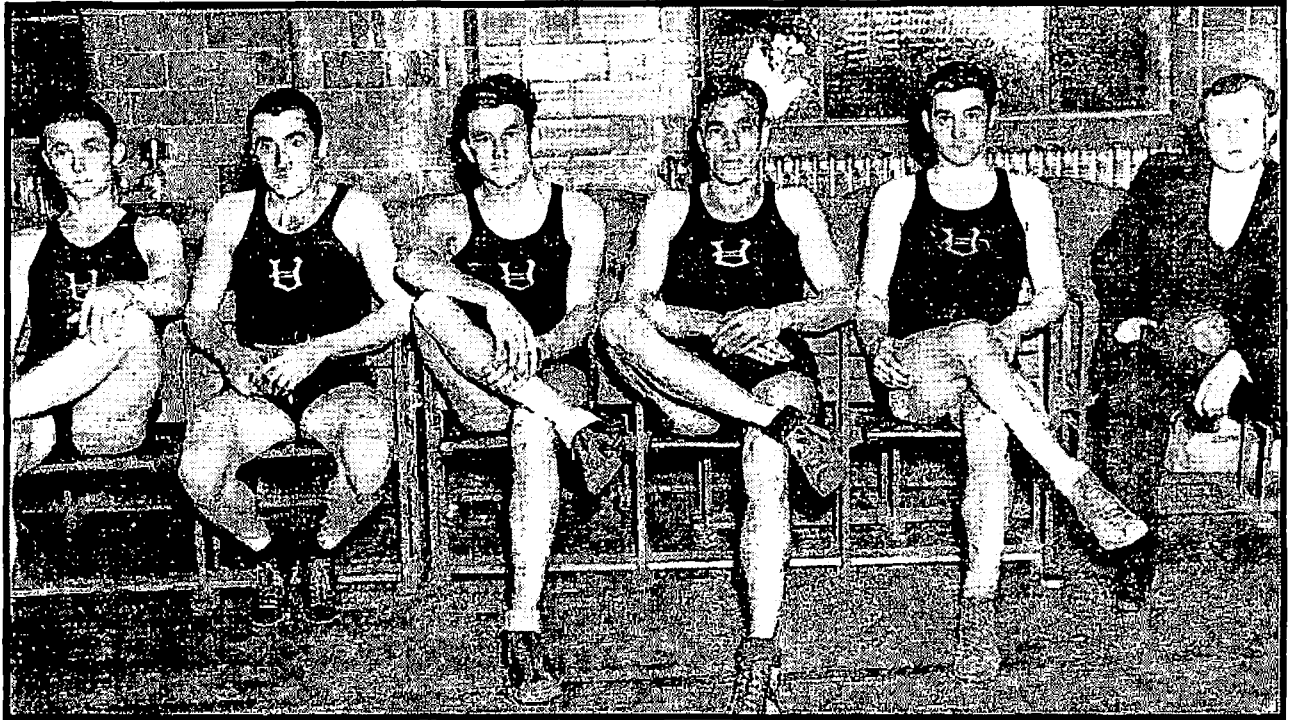


*Coffey Brothers Memorial  
American Legion Hall*

*Leo Thompson, Tom Coffey, Richard James, Jim McKinney  
(back) David Martin and Corey Steinman.*

*Old Friends  
Bottom row: Cecil Hutchison, Mabel Otten, and Sherman Coffey.  
Center: Linnie Snodgrass, Jesse Snodgrass, Nettie (Coon) Hutchison and Zetta Mosby Turner.  
Top row: Jesse Turner:*





*Basketball Team of the 30's.*

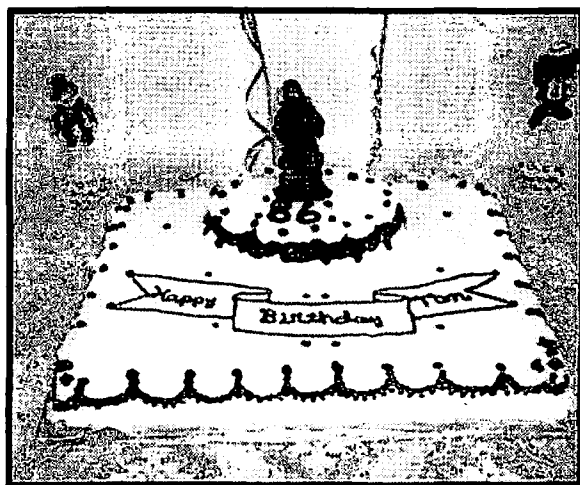
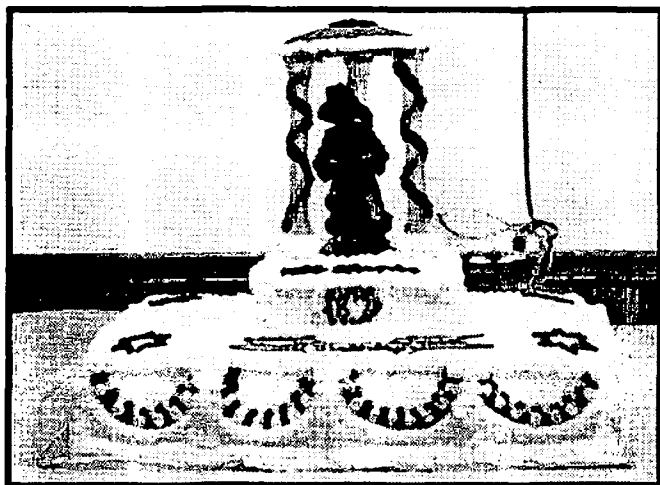
*From the left: Henry Duffin, Jeff Duffin, Alfred Bullock, Hershell Martin, Rollie Hemsley and Tom Coffey (coach).*



*Tom with his huntin dogs.  
We don't know whether they are  
rabbit or fox hounds!*



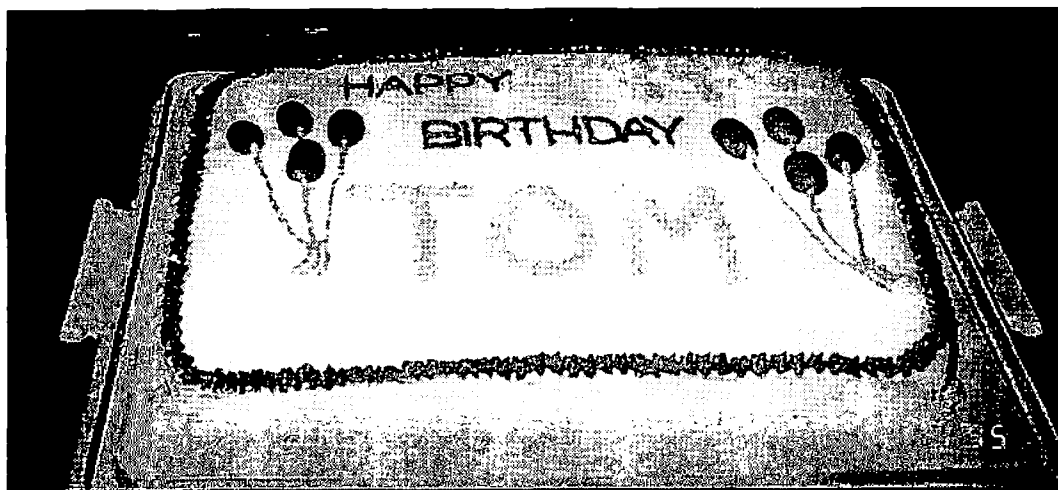
*Rev. Don Kelly, Tom, Cindy Veach and  
Grandson Gary Tung.*



*Various pictures of  
Tom's Birthday celebrations  
at the Legion hall.*



*Tom's 89th Birthday Cake.*



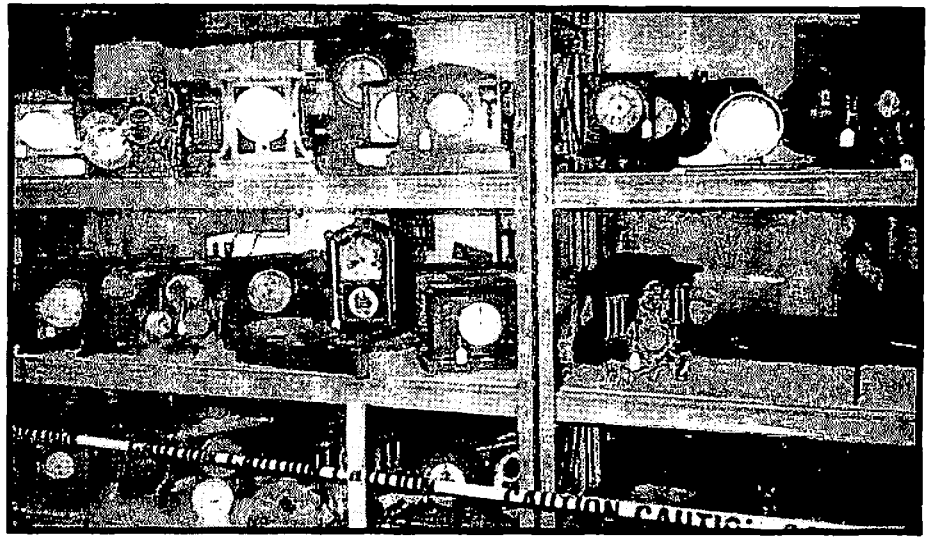


*Ronda Slone on Bass, Dwight Slone on Guitar, Tom with Drums & Bells, and Gary Tung (with small guitar), Don and Linda Kelly's Grandson.*



*HAPPY BIRTHDAY TOM! - Senator Sarah Steelman was among the man well-wishers for Tom Coffey's 94th birthday bash. which was celebrated Saturday, Feb. 12 at the Coffey Brothers American Legion Hall in Vienna.*

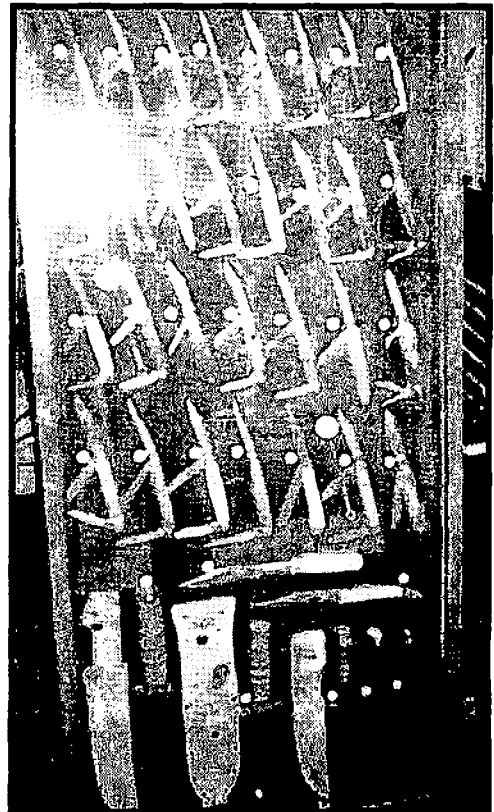
*Various pictures  
of Tom's sale.*



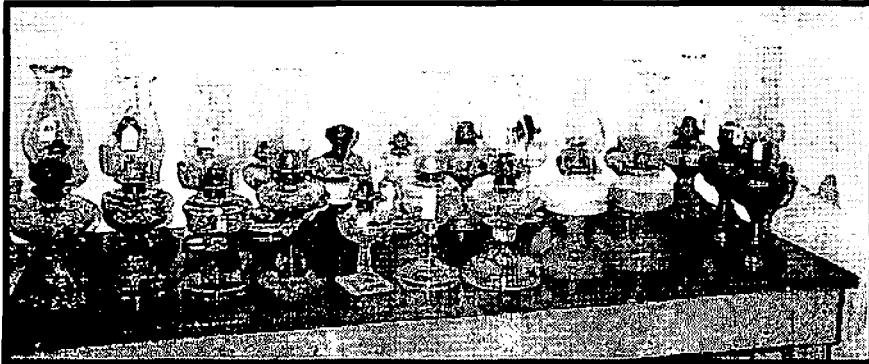
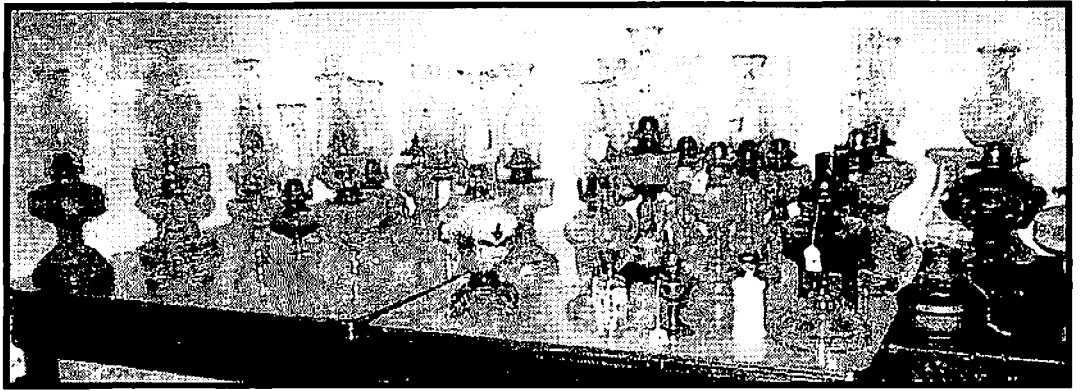
*Tom's clock collection.*



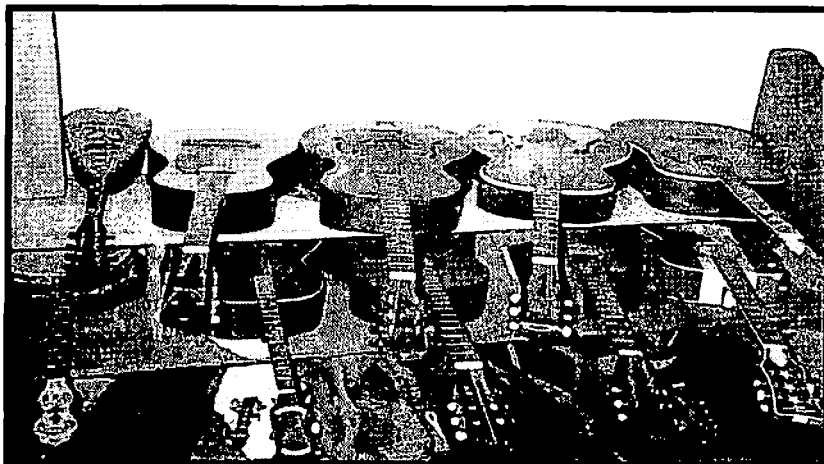
*Tom's knife collection.*







*Tom's lamp collection.*



*Tom's guitar collection.*



Jim Hodge, who beat me bowling on the trip to the Seattle World's Fair, got ready to go with us to Dixon for a game of golf. Frank Hodge and Hoke Eads went along to see some fun.

My first time playing, believe it or not, I could drive that ball pretty good. After we got up a hill to do some putting, that is where I failed. I hit the ball too hard. Jim didn't razz me too much. Hoke and Frank didn't either. They didn't think I would do that good.

The second time I played golf, I went to Rolla. When I got about to the end I hit a ball so hard that it went in the top of a big tree. When it came down, I put it in my pocket for a souvenir and that was the end of my golf-playing.

\*\*\*\*\*

Before much work was done on the public cemetery, I would clean anyone's lot and keep it clean for \$1.00 a year. Sherman Davis would dig a grave for \$9.00; \$11.00 if I had to haul the extra dirt away. It took two days. I also helped a man from Washington, Missouri sell grave stones.

We had several boys help us, who were pretty good workers, and they got paid \$2.00 a day. After we finished you could mow the cemetery with a mower. I had an old Chevrolet. It wasn't a regular pick-up, but the back end was built so you could haul gravel or rocks, and it was used a lot. I think the cemetery committee gave me a little gasoline money. It was hard for me to buy gas, even though it was only 15 or 20 cents a gallon. I don't see how the tires stood up, because the boys always got a big kick out of putting on a heavy load.

Mr. Leslie Hutchison said he could get the NYA Youth project if I would oversee the job. We had to get it through Professor Wilson at school. The NYA only furnished the help. Money was really scarce, but we got about \$150.00 in donations. We charged 25 cents to make a head stone. The cement cost us 15 cents, but the gravel was free, so we made a little money on the head-stones. We made about 150 with names and about 150 without names. Arthur Eads carved the name on the stones with a nail.

## **JIM BURNS AND HIS HORSES**

In the early thirties, Jim Burns was buying lots of horses and mules. In 1934, his cousin Bob Burns, from Billings, Montana, came out on a visit and told him that there were thousands of horses in Montana and much cheaper than they were here, and that he should come there and buy, then ship them back home. So in 1934 he traveled 1500 miles to Montana, bought a carload of horses (34) and shipped them to Meta, Missouri, where four boys on horseback drove them to our place, which was a 10 mile trip. Then they were halter broke and sold, being the first of 1370 head shipped back and sold in Maries County.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dr. John B. Underwood, M.D., an early country doctor located in the High-Gate, St. James area is well remembered for being a good doctor and also for being a rough talker. When working on the highway, I was removing the overhead concrete forms from underneath a bridge and got a piece of concrete in my eye and it hurt terribly. Someone drove me to the office of Doctor Underwood, then located in St. James, and after a few choice unprintable words, he removed the object from my eye and I fully recovered. I never forgot Dr. Underwood and what he did for me.

## **WHAT A SIGHT**

One time when I was down at the MFA Exchange, a lady said “Tom, if you want to see a sight, go out to the old poor farm”. I went out and it was truly an unbelievable sight. The entire place was covered with wild geese. I heard later that it was estimated there were 5000 geese in that flock.

## **WHAT A LOAD OF WASHERS**

An old washing machine sat outside of my Vienna store for possibly 50 years; so long in fact, that a tree grew up through the center of it. In 1991 a man by the name of Lee Maxwell, living in Eaton, Colorado, had an article in Reminiscence Magazine about his 400 washing machines which he restored to their original condition. In 1995, a follow-up story was printed stating that he had acquired another 90 machines, and had pictures showing them in their restored condition. Part of the story follows: “One of our most memorable experiences was when 90 year old Tom Coffey of Vienna, Missouri offered me a machine under one condition – that I cut down the tree growing through the middle of it! That washer sat outside his store for 50 years. Later, when Barbara and I removed two more washers from his “Fibber McGee” shed, Tom brought out his One-man-band instruments and serenaded us with his own special brand of good old Missouri “Crabgrass” music. The music was inspiring, but those machines were heavy. Once again Barbara reminded me that I should collect something a little lighter”. Tom’s washing machine was an old wooden Maytag.

## **ASTRONAUTS ON THE MOON**

When the news on television announced that Astronauts had safely landed on the moon, I opened the door and walked outside on my porch, looking upward. The moon was in the west and looked the brightest I had ever seen it. I said to myself ‘the astronauts are up there on the moon and I don’t believe it’. I then thought of the rhyme “the cow jumped over the moon” and I remember thinking, boy did that cow have a long jump!

## **CRABGRASS MUSIC IN LIBRARY OF CONGRESS**

U.S. Representative Ike Skelton, 4th District, has placed my tape featuring “Crabgrass” music in the Library of Congress where it will remain for all future generations to know where “Crabgrass” music got its roots.

## **MEMBER OF MISSOURI BLUEGRASS ASSOCIATION**

On my 90th birthday, I was made a member of the Missouri Bluegrass Association. They presented me with a shirt and cap, with my membership inscribed on both.

## **PUPILS MAKE ME A BIRTHDAY CARD**

The students of the Visitation Catholic School in Vienna presented me with a very large 90th birthday card which they made on the computer that I donated to their school.

## **COMMUNITY CELEBRATES TOM COFFEY'S 90TH BIRTHDAY**

From the Maries County Gazette: On February 11, 1996 approximately 200 people gathered at the Coffey Brothers Memorial Legion Post #12, in Vienna on Sunday, February 11 to sing and wish Tom Coffey a happy 90th birthday.

The festivities began at 2 p.m. with singing, games, door prizes, and lots of fun. A carry-in meal followed at 4 p.m. Everyone signed a guest book as they entered the building. Master of ceremonies was Jim Orchard. Tom enjoyed his afternoon as he talked to friends, played along with the bands, and enjoyed a fabulous dinner and cake.

## **A VISIT WITH TOM COFFEY**

Collecting antique washing machines is not the usual kind of hobby an electrical engineering professor assumes at retirement. It is however, one that has been very enlightening, not only for the machines but for the people you meet along the way.

Barbara, my first wife of 44 years, and I were on one of our biannual hunting excursions with our motor home towing an 18 foot tandem axle trailer. For some reason we came onto Vienna, Missouri and Tom Coffey's hardware store. Our hunting trips never have an itinerary but we couldn't have done better had we used a dozen AAA trip planners.

It was just before lunch when we stopped to stretch our legs and to inquire if there were any "junk" dealers around. Tom's hardware store was much like you would expect on the Walton's, complete with a pot bellied stove and two chairs for him and a friend to chat away the hours. After some time, and a pause in the conversation, I was able to ask if there were any prospects of finding old washing machines around. After a few more minutes convincing the guys I was not completely crazy Tom remembered there was one out back he had put there some 30 years ago. Out back I went to look.

In a thicket I could make out there indeed was a machine, or at least the remains of one. With it's legs buried in the dirt there was a tree about 8" in diameter growing right up through the frame of the machine. No worry, Tom having a hardware store also had a saw. So saw I did, and the machine was mine. He gave it to me, and it is one of my most prized of the 570+ in my collection. I have sent Tom pictures of the "before and after" for this machine and he can show you them.

After the machine was rescued from the bush Tom mentioned in passing there may be another one or two in his garage up the street. I offered him a ride but he needed his afternoon walk, and besides by the time we would get to his house he could set up his "band". If I can walk that fast by the time 85 years catches up to me, I'll have the world's largest washing machine museum.

Yes, Tom had a garage, and the garage had two washing machines that were of much interest to me. But I didn't know Tom was related to Fibber McGee, at least his garage looked like it. It took me two hours to unload the garage to get to the machines. But during this time Tom sat Barbara down and proceeded to serenade her. If you have never been treated to Crabgrass music while digging for old washing machines, then you haven't lived. Tom sings and plays more than several instruments all at once. You would think the guy has 4 arms and 6 feet. We really enjoyed it and especially under the circumstance of being there in person.

About sunset, after Barbara helped me load about 600 pounds of machines, we headed down the road with very fond memories and listening to Crabgrass music played so eloquently by Tom and his one man band. I sure could have used some Ben Gay from sawing the tree, unpacking and packing the garage and from loading my half of each of the 3 machines. But they were good aches and only temporary and I would go back again, and indeed we did a couple of years later. Tom was still there chatting with his friend. I didn't dare ask if he had any more trees to be removed or garages to be rearranged.

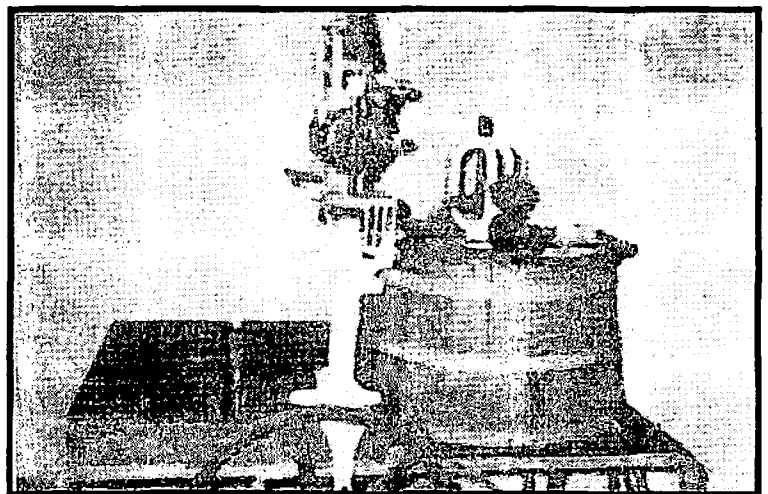
If you come to see Tom, I am sure he would play for you, and if you come to see me, I will show you Tom's machine and tell you the story again.



*Tom with the saw.*



*The machine as I found it.*



*Finally, the machine as it looks today.*

Lee Maxwell  
Collector of Old and Unusual  
Washing Machines  
35901 WCR #31  
Eaton, Colorado 80615

## **COFFEY NOMINATED FOR AWARD**

Vienna Businessman Tom Coffey, who donated land to his city for an Industrial Park has been nominated for a statewide award for his contribution to local economic development. Tom was a representative in the annual competition for the Governor's Outstanding Community Economic Development Leadersip award.

Coffey is owner of Tom Coffey's Swap Shop in Vienna and has long been active in promoting his community and Maries County. He has worked to promote the county fair for years and recently participated in "walk-a-thons" and other local efforts to raise funds for industrial development in Vienna. In January he donated \$25,000 to Vienna Community Development Corporation to purchase land for a future industrial park.

Coffey has received awards from the Meramec Regional Planning Commission in the past. In 1986, Coffey received the MRPC's award for Outstanding Performance in Voluntarism.

## **FROM THE DAILY CAPITAL NEWS Vienna Man Continues Giving To His Hometown**

VIENNA, MO. (AP) – After a lifetime of quiet generosity to the small farm town his family helped settle in the 1830's, Tom Coffey keeps on giving.

His latest contribution, however, was not so quiet. He celebrated his 90th birthday Sunday by throwing his own party, drawing a crowd of nearly 200 people.

He even helped provide the entertainment, coaxing "She'll By Coming Around the Mountain" from his 50-year-old accordion. He's no amateur, he and his late brother Jesse had a band and played what they called "crabgrass" music, their version of bluegrass.

Well wishers lined up to shake Coffey's hand and deliver birthday cards, balloons and flowers. He even got a teddy bear.

The Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts helped sing "Happy Birthday." Neighbors brought some of their home cooking to fill the smorgasbord.

The party was just Coffey's latest offering to Vienna, population 611.

"They gave me a surprise party a few years ago and I don't like surprises," Coffey explained earlier. "So I decided to take over and make it a party for the whole town."

Coffey rented the American Legion Hall, bought an 19 pound ham and hired three bluegrass bands to play at the party.

His money built the Legion Hall. He purchased a \$25,000 tract and donated it for the town's industrial park. The lifelong bachelor has financially supported the Maries County Fair and the county historical society, and he contributed the first \$20,000 for a new fire station.

Coffey equipped the county jail with new surveillance cameras. He set up three scholarships at the public high school, then bought a classroom computer for the Catholic School. Through the years, he has sponsored community baseball, football, and bowling teams.

"It will all be worthy stuff. It's a present for my town instead of giving it to my relatives, since I don't have any close ones". Coffey said. His nearest relatives are elderly female second cousins who live far away and are financially set, he said.

Coffey has lived on his monthly Social Security check, splurging only on an occasional new pickup truck. The trust fund, which won't start spending until his death, was financed by thrifty living and inheritances from Coffey's long deceased brothers.

Tommy is really conservative. But I think he's the kind of a person you only meet once in your life. "He won't take anything from you, but he'll give you everything," said Lawrence Buschmann, Coffey's banker for 35 years and a member of the trust's three-person board.

Coffey opened his Swap Shop in 1946 after serving as an Army cook in World War II. He bartered, bought and sold housewares, paint and new and second-hand furniture. The shop has hundreds of old clocks and lamps, which Coffey, now semi-retired after a mild stroke, won't sell because visitors enjoy looking at them.

His shop and house are on Coffey Street, which the town renamed last year to honor it's low-key benefactor and his family.

"It wasn't an honor he sought. But the Coffey name won't live on with children or anything like that, so it was important to remember him," said the Rev. Don Kelley, pastor of Vienna Christian Life Center.

Entertainment for the afternoon included Harold Rowden and the Bluegrass Five; Rowden Review; Neil Backues; Bluegrass Express with Larry Fitzpatrick; Boy Scouts; Girl Scouts; Jean Honse; Rhonda Sloan; Ellis McKinney; Don Kelley; Jim Orchard (mandolin and fiddle player); and many others.

Thomas Roy "Tommy" is well known throughout central Missouri as Vienna's One-man-band. He was born February 13, 1906, in Vienna, the son of Hiram and Mary Ann "Sally" Evans Coffey. The family lived on a farm before Tommy was born, but moved to Vienna in 1901, when the area suffered a dry year. Tommy attended local schools and during World War II served with the U.S. Army and was stationed in England.

He is the owner of the "Swap Shop" which sells nearly anything you would want to buy, and has two furniture stores as well.

For many years Tommy lived with his brothers and since his last brother, Jesse, died, he has lived alone. Jess and Tom had a band they called "The Jay Bird Band" that was also well known. They played mostly at pie suppers.

Tommy has a "One-man-band" that is well known and in demand to play at many musical events, fairs, parades, and festivals.

Tommy has been one of Vienna's biggest boosters and has kept alive much of the musical tradition of the area as well as pushing for civic improvements. Tommy donated enough money to the city for them to buy the land needed to begin an Industrial Park.

He has donated many items for display to the Old Jail Museum and continues to support the Historical Society. He also donates \$50.00 to the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, but announced at his party that he was increasing his donation to \$100.00.

In October of 1995, residents of Vienna presented to the City Council a petition to change Elm Street to Coffey Street in honor of Tom Coffey. In November the change was made.



We wish Tom Coffey a very happy 90th birthday and hope he has many, many more.”

## **Coffey Nominated For Award**

Vienna Businessman, Tom Coffey, who donated land to the city of Vienna for an Industrial Park, has been nominated for a statewide award for his contribution to local economic development. In 1986, Coffey received the MRPC's award for Outstanding Performance in Voluntarism.

## **TRIBUTE TO TOM COFFEY From the Congressional Record**

**HON. IKE SKELTON  
of Missouri  
In the House of Representatives  
Tuesday, February 8, 2000**

Mr. Skelton. Mr. Speaker, it has come to my attention that the residents of Maries County, Missouri, are gathering to honor one of their leading citizens, Mr. Tom Coffey, on his 94th birthday.

Mr. Coffey has a long history of public service. He began by volunteering to defend his country in the European Theater during World War II. After the war, he returned to Vienna and has remained a lifetime resident. He adopted the people of the City of Vienna and Maries County and has made significant contributions to the community over the past 50 years. Mr. Coffey provided generous financial support to build a fire station in Vienna, donated land for a business development site and established three scholarships for graduates of Vienna High School. He also purchased land to build the American Legion Hall and then deeded the property to the city.

Additionally, Mr. Coffey has been the leading force behind the Maries County Fair for more than 40 years and was one of five citizens to establish the Old Jail and Historical Society. He is planning to continue to support the community for many years in the future and he has designated more than 30 organizations to receive annual grants from his trust. I am not surprised that the city of Vienna wants to express their gratitude to Mr. Coffey on the occasion of his 94th birthday.

Mr. Speaker, I know all Members of Congress will join me in paying tribute to Mr. Coffey for his outstanding dedication to the community and selfless public service.

Tom Coffey's brother, Jesse, was admitted to Maries Manor Rehabilitation and Care Center in Vienna, Missouri on December 27, 1985. Jesse was a resident until he was hospitalized on June 27, 1989 and expired at the hospital on July 23, 1989. During his three and a half years as a nursing home patient, Tom visited him three times daily, almost always at meal time. Tom devoted himself to his brother, always by his side offering encouragement and coaching him. He was willing to make any sacrifice necessary to improve his brothers quality of life. He often brought Jesse's favorite food from home and fed him if necessary. He brought Jesse's beloved spoons and bones, spending hours with him playing music and conversing "old times". He purchased ceramic figures of dogs, knowing Jesse loved dogs and brought the family pictures of Jesse and his dogs to stimulate his mind and hoping to provide a source of enjoyment for his brother.

Each party at Maries Manor that included musical instruments, Tom always attended and included Jesse by giving him his spoons and bones to play along. Jesse was his happiest when entertaining and Tom was his happiest when Jesse was happy.

When Tom suffered a fall in 1993, he came to Maries Manor for a short stay from May 3, 1993 to September 7, 1993. After he completed his physical therapy, he returned to his home but kept Maries Manor in his thoughts. With his creative ideas and motivation he assisted Maries Manor with several successful fund raisers.

Unfortunately Tom fell in August of 1995 and required hospitalization for a fractured hip. He was re-admitted to Maries Manor on August 23, 1995 to the skilled unit for physical therapy. The well-known Tom Coffey determination prevailed and Tom returned home on September 29, 1995 with a walker and a multitude of good friends assisting him with his needs.

Tom had a pacemaker implanted before he entered Maries Manor January 3, 1999. On January 3, 1999, Tom returned to Maries Manor as a permanent resident. He chose a private room close to a nursing station. Tom is a very scheduled person that sets goals and works very hard to meet them. He has a physical therapy routine that he completes every day to remain as independent as possible. He continues to contribute his time and ideas to the community by staying in close contact with his friends and all the people who love him. We appreciate Tom and his many accomplishments. The community of Vienna and the county of Maries may never experience another person with the generosity, dedication, and love that Tom has shown our community.

The walls of his room are covered with letters and acknowledgements of his many generousities. He cherishes every one of them from the proclamations from county and state representatives to the cards and letters from the local scouts and Interparish School children.

# In Memoriam

## In Memory of My Friends....Gone but not forgotten

Tim Tackett, veterinarian; Paul Sandbothe, owner of the Shoe Shop; Joe Zimmer, who ran the station on Highway 63; Carl Caldwin, postmaster, teacher, and historian; Carl Birmingham, undertaker; Bill Parker, sheriff; Columbus "Snitch" Parker, sheriff; Lloyd Nichols, drug store; George and George William Redel, store keepers; Ike Helton, hoe-down fiddler and played at the fair, and Virgie, good cook; Harold Holman, fisherman and deer and turkey hunter; Virgil Thompson, guitar player and cross-cut saw man; Cecil Hutchison, store keeper, bowler, cousin, and good pal; Paul Hollenbeck, good buddy (had Hollenbeck Title Co., and was Judge), and historical-minded person; Jesse and Lennie Snodgrass (their store was a good place to loaf); Joe Rudroff, janitor at Maries R-1 School and carp fisherman; Frank McDaniel, who operated a store and restaurant; Raymond Birmingham, salesman and buddy; Walter Terry, ex-county judge, pony puller, CB operator, coon hunter, bowler, trap shooter, school bus driver, and coyote hunter; Everett Elrod, gave me some wood the beaver had carved; Theron Parker, good story teller, farmer, cattle buyer and trucker; Buel Fannon, postal worker and good friend; Anthony Redel, worker at the Visitation parish and good handyman.

Frank Hodge, County School Superintendent, Circuit Clerk, and helped with the ball teams. We made a trip to Seattle to the World's Fair. When Frank and his bulldog would come over to spend some time at the Swap Shop, Pluto was always eager to take my place on the blanket pad on the sidewalk whenever I had to go inside.

Ed Hamilton, good neighbor at the Coffey Clubhouse on the Gasconade River; also, John Riley, Everett Davis, Sam Claghorn, and John Ellis.

The Vienna carpenters, Sherman "Bum" Coffey, Tony Schwartz, Wm. Joe Weidinger, Joe Weider, and T. S. McGee. Carpenters made 25 cents an hour plus one meal a day while they were building Joe Volmert's house. Bum and Tony were main carpenters.

The doctors: Jose, Ferrell, Gibbs, and S. C. Howard; Charley Viessman, fiddler; county officers when the new courthouse was built in 1941-42; Presiding Judge, George L. Chambers; Associate Judges Fred Helton, R. E. Terrill and Theodore Feeler; Clerk, J. Ray Moss; Treasurer, Forrest Roberds, W.P.A. Eng., Willard Finn; W.P.A. Supt., Al R. Bethel.

The bankers, Tom Felker, John Coats, George Cansler, Travis John; Frank and Minnie (Kehr) Liesman; the Hasting family; and McGee family, the Felker family; the Canslers; and our own big league baseball players, Rollie Hemsley and Herschel Martin.

Long-time friends Jesse and Dessie Bilyeu. Jesse carried mail from Dixon to Vienna; Dessie worked for Frank Hodge at courthouse, also at Swap Shop many years, prepared income tax for surrounding area people. Jim Murphy, managed Langenberg hat factory, civic minded; A. J. Fennessey, longtime friend and together in England during World War II; Leon Finn, fisherman and electrician; Wash Snodgrass, rural mail carrier, hard worker for American Legion, mushroom hunter; Jesse Coffey, played the mouth harp and the bones, did barnyard imitations, worked at Exchange 38 years and retired from there.

John Curtis, worked at Swap Shop (Leon Finn always said he didn't know how one man knew

so much), electrician; Joe Murphy, store owner, fisherman (caught fish given to me and mounted by Lola Adkins); Viola Shockley, helped with Jess when he went to the doctors, and gave me her button collection when she went to St. Louis; Ethel Parker, school teacher in Vienna and Alaska several years; Allene Parker Hopkins, school teacher; Irene Terrill McKeever, school teacher, piano player, came from Arkansas to play at the Fair, also band teacher; Carl Wansing, real neighbor; Joe Fennessey, started MFA Exchange, then a service station and a truck line and provided work for many local people.

And Tony Buschmann, an observant man with a marvelous memory who could tell you about all the old area families, and knew the date when any house or building in the area was erected.

I started the Swap Shop in 1946. My brother, Early, financed me and brother Bum worked for free, after his retirement.

I'm preparing another page to remember more of my friends in Volume III of the Maries County history books.

Vienna and Maries County will celebrate their Sesquicentennial in 2005 - and the Old Jail also. We're already making plans for this event.

*Thomas R Coady*

# Senator John McCain

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 12, 2000

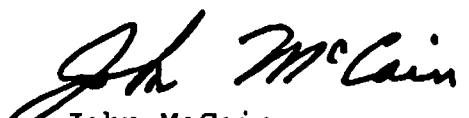
Dear Tom:

Please allow me to add my birthday greeting to the many you have undoubtedly received from family and friends.

You have the good fortune of looking back on many wonderful years. As a devoted family man and philanthropist, you have been an inspiration to many in your community. It is my hope that your 94<sup>th</sup> birthday will be a source of great happiness and joy. Best wishes to you on this very special occasion.

Happy birthday!

Sincerely

  
John McCain  
United States Senator

JM:es



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Mr. Tom Coffey  
Vienna, MO 65582

Dear Mr. Coffey:

May I take this opportunity to join your many friends and loved ones in wishing you a happy 90th birthday. May you have health and happiness in the months ahead and many happy returns of this anniversary.

Warm personal regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Lybyer", written over the typed name.

MIKE LYBYER  
State Senator

ML:ds



## AFTERTHOUGHTS

The Book has gone to press and Tom has some after-thoughts! He wants to thank everyone who bought fishing supplies or equipment from him. After WW II it was hard to find fishing equipment. Thanks to Jesse Carroll who took him to the Curry shop in Eldon to get supplies – Jesse liked Mrs. Curry's pies!

Ralph Wiles and Don Martin were fishing at Bell Chute. Ralph "caught" a brand new Zeb Co Rod & Reel. The next day he was there and discovered he'd been fishing at the mouth of a log. Ralph says he still has the rod.

Ralph Crismon wasn't much of a fisherman, but went along sometimes. At one time he caught a gunny sack full of fish.

Tim Tacket and Joe Rudroff often fished at Toms Club house - Joe would keep the big carp and give Tim the small ones - but after eating some of the small ones that Viola fried, Joe said, "I oughta kept them – I've been giving you the wrong ones"!

Tom says "Thanks to all who patronized the Swap Shop and Bargain Barn. And if you bought anything from the Swap Shop – hang on to it - it may be valuable one of these days".

Thanks to Ralph Wiles for delivering furniture and taking Tom to the Extravaganza and other places many times.

A relative of Gene Schwartze caught a 10 lb. Walleye - and Tom had it mounted and it hung for years in the Swap Shop.