

# THE LIFE BOOK



# Preface



It has often occurred to me that there are a number of things that transpire during our lives, of more or less interest to ourselves and others, that we should make note of—a kind of setting "*milestones*," so to speak, and to leave some record for others.

Cellini said that, "*Every man that had proved himself superior to those of his time should write an autobiography.*"

This qualification would relieve many of us of the task. However, I do think that it would at least be interesting for each of us to make some record of himself and of things that have transpired in his time that would be of interest in the future. It is with that in view that I make the succeeding notes.

A. Babb

Oct. 16, 1925

Births - BABB Family

<b>Names</b>	<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>Where Buried</b>	<b>Date of Death</b>
Isaac Louis Babb	Nov. 13th - 1816	Wortham, Texas	Aug. 1892
Lucy Ann Stanley	Feb. 28th - 1830	Bremond, *	Dec. 25th - 1919
Elizabeth J. Babb	Aug. 8th - 1854	Bremond, . "	Aug. 15th - 1921
William M. Babb	Apr. 4th - 1856	Missing	
Ella Babb	June 13th - 1858	Denison, Texas	Jan. 1st - 1913
Charles C. Babb	Feb. 9th - 1861	Fairfield, "	Oct. 24th - 1865
Ione Babb	Jan. 11th - 1863		
Arthur Babb	Oct. 31st - 1865	<i>Ennis, Tex.</i>	<i>Oct. 28th - 1951</i>
Guy H. Babb	June 12th - 1869	Wortham, Texas	Sept. 27th - 1880
Annie L. Babb	Mar. 15th - 1872		
Hugh T. Babb	Mar. 28th - 1875		

OWEN Family

Jane A. Owens	Aug. 21 <sup>st</sup> 1847	Fairfield, Tex	Sept. 15 <sup>th</sup> 1865
Alice Owens	Mar. 10 <sup>th</sup> 1849	Denison, "	Mar. 9th 1891

MARRIAGES

Madison C. Owens and  
Lucy Ann Stanley      Oct. 15th - 1844

Isaac L. Babb & Lucy A. Stanley Owens  
Married      Oct. 18th - 1853

Alice Owens Married  
W. O. Butler,      Died Jul. 18 - 1910  
    Three children born:  
    Herman H.      "      Aug. 11 - 1880      Died Jul. 18 - 1934  
    Ozell      Oct. 26 - 1882  
    Lilian      May 27 - 1885      Died Feb. 4 - 1934

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**Editor's Note:** *There are six errors contained in the information above.*

- 1. The Owen family probably spelled their name without an "s."*
- 2. Alice Owen Butler died in 1892, not 1891. Her first name, Virginia, is missing.*
- 3. William O. Butler died on June 18, 1910, not July 18*
- 4. Herman H. Butler died in 1935, not 1934.*
- 5. Ozelle Butler's name is misspelled and her first name, Lucy, is missing.*
- 6. Lillian Butler's first name is also misspelled.*

*With the exception of Arthur Babb's date of death and burial place (presumably added by one of his daughters), all the above information was written in his own hand in the original book. Information in italics on the following page was also written by someone other than Arthur.*

*No corrections were made to Arthur's spelling on this page or the next.*

FAMILY OF I. L. & L. A. BABB

Elizabeth J. Babb, Married  
Fred Walker, to whom four  
children were born.

Emmett Married Frances Nawaski  
Mar. 14 -, 1897  
Ella, Married Carl Kacie (*J. K. Cayce*)  
Fred Jr. Married

Kate L. Married Felix Ludwig  
Jan. 20 - 1959

William M. Babb, Married  
Amanda Oliver. No children.

Ella Babb, Married Chas. Heason,  
no children were born to this  
issue.

Ione Babb, married,  
William Kitson.  
2 Children born  
Edwin, and  
Guy H.

Arthur Babb Sr. Married  
Bertha McCanless, June 15th - 1893.  
Three children born,  
*April 7 - 1894* Tressa, Married H. A. Butler - July 31 - 1920  
*Nov. 2 - 1907* Evalyn; and married *O. B. Willingham* - Nov. 19 - 1949  
*Sept. 15 - 1909* Arthur L.  
*Jan. 24 - 1937* buried Dallas, Tex.  
Tressa Butler, Married  
H. Allen Butler Jul. 31 - 1920  
Bertha Hellen, Born Oct. 1 - 1923  
Married *Bruce H. Koepeke* Aug. 6 - 1949  
Divorced Jan. 8 - 1959

Annie L. Babb, Married  
William Bartee  
5 Children wer born  
John, - whome died in childhood  
Vera, - married Clarence Jones  
Mattie  
William Jr. and  
Lucy

Hugh T. Babb, Married  
Chick Stegall.  
3 - Children were born  
Ralph, at Denison, Tex. Sept. 22 - 1905  
Carl " " Sept. 12 - 1907  
Lolita " " May 3 - 1910

Carl Babb married Thelma Wiley  
May 23, 1928

FAMILY OF

Arthur and Bertha Babb

BIRTHS

Arthur Babb Sr. - Born, Oct. 31 - 1865  
Bertha McCanless Babb, Nov. 22 - 1876

DEATHS & Place of Burial

*Buried at Ennis Oct. 28 -1951*  
*Buried at Ennis Apr. 25 - 1916*

Children

Tressa Babb, Born, Apr. 7 - 1894  
Evalyn Babb, " Nov. 2 - 1907  
Arthur L. Babb " Sept. 15 - 1909

*Buried at Dallas Jan. 25 -1937*

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**Editor's Note:** *As on the preceding two pages, no corrections were made to Arthur's spelling and all entries shown in italics appear to have been written by someone other than Arthur.*

# A Brief Family History



## *My Father*

My father, I. L. Babb, was of English descent. His grandfather came direct from England in an early day. I would like to say he came on the *Mayflower* but this little craft is too crowded now. However, he came and settled in Virginia.

My father's father, Joel Babb, migrated to Tennessee in early manhood<sup>1</sup> but I do not know whether my father was born in Virginia or Tennessee.<sup>2</sup>

My grandfather, Joel Babb, married Miss Kirby, who was my father's mother.<sup>3</sup>

My father left home when quite a youth. I have heard him speak of brothers and sisters but do not know how many or their names. I have heard him mention a brother Joel and, I think, William.<sup>4</sup> He also had a brother Frank that came to Texas in pioneer days. He was first in the merchandise business at Sherman, Texas. He later moved to Possumwalk in Denton County, where he was killed by Northern soldiers in a difficulty arising out of the soldiers taking saddle girths from new saddles in his store.<sup>5</sup>

Frank Babb left two or three sons, some of whom raised families in Texas—but I have never met them.

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<sup>1</sup> Joel Babb cannot be found in 1810 or 1820 federal census for Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, or Tennessee. He is listed, however, in the 1830 federal census for DeKalb County, Georgia. Although Arthur says his grandfather migrated to Tennessee, Joel Babb is not listed in the 1840 or 1850 federal census for that state.

<sup>2</sup> Arthur wasn't the only one who wasn't sure where his father was born. According to the 1860 federal census for Anderson County, Texas, Isaac L. Babb was a native of Tennessee but the 1870 federal census for Freestone County, Texas gives his birthplace as Georgia, which is possible (see note above). The 1880 federal census for Freestone County says he was born in Virginia.

<sup>3</sup> Owing to the difficulty in ascertaining where Joel Babb was living at the time of his marriage, the date of which is unknown, I have been unable to confirm this information.

<sup>4</sup> I haven't been able to confirm the existence of William Babb but according to federal census records there was a Joel Y. Babb, age 42, born Georgia, living with his family in Bonham, Fannin County, Texas in 1870.

<sup>5</sup> This sounds like an interesting story but I have been unable to confirm the existence of Frank Babb or the town of Possumwalk. It's too bad Arthur didn't provide more details, but maybe this is all he knew.

My father made a tour of Texas in his early manhood, I think about 1843.<sup>6</sup> He crossed the Red River at Preston Bend.<sup>7</sup> Denison, at that time, was not on the map. Sherman was a small village, but had quite a settlement about it.<sup>8</sup>

From Sherman they came cross country to Dallas. There were no settlers between these points.

Dallas had only a few houses at that time. The courthouse was a one-room log cabin with a clapboard shutter.<sup>9</sup>

There were several prospectors in the party—6 or 8, all men. Just before reaching Dallas they had a skirmish with a small band of Indians. Captain Denton, who was one of the party, was shot and killed with an arrow, while attempting to unhitch a brown mare that had been tied out for a decoy. It had been raining and the river was up. They swam their horses across to the opposite side of the river and camped for the night.<sup>10</sup>

The next morning they went back and recovered Denton's body. It had not been molested. The mare was still standing tied and his mule was feeding nearby. They buried the body on the banks of White Rock Creek,<sup>11</sup> wrapped in his blanket and sent both the mare and his mule to Mrs. Denton by one of the party that had become discouraged and was turning back.

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<sup>6</sup> Arthur is probably mistaken about the year. Isaac Babb probably made his tour of Texas in 1841.

<sup>7</sup> Author Sam Acheson writes: "In 1840 the twenty-three year old William Preston was named captain of a company of Republic of Texas regulars who were stationed in an improvised frontier protection fort on the Red River in what is now Grayson County. It was in a curve of the river which also had a good landing place for a crossing of the river. Leaving the army, young Preston installed a ferry, which soon became known as Preston's Ferry. The curve in the river became known as Preston Bend, and the settlement that grew up around both was called Preston Bend. The ferry and townsite now lie at the bottom of Lake Texoma since the completion of Denison Dam." Sam Acheson, *Dallas Yesterday* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1977), pp. 101-102.

<sup>8</sup> According to an historic marker erected in 1972, the town of Sherman was not established until 1846, although there may have been settlers living in the vicinity prior to that time. The town is named for General Sidney Sherman of the Texas Army and San Jacinto fame, *not* Union General William T. Sherman. See Claude W. Dooly, *Why Stop?* (Odessa, Texas: Lone Star Legends, 1978), p. 474. It is true, however, that Denison "was not on the map." It was not established until 1872. See *Denison, Texas Centennial: 1872-1972* (Denison, Texas: Heath Printing Co., 1972), p. 2.

<sup>9</sup> Although Dallas did indeed have a log cabin for its first courthouse, the town was not founded until November 1841. The events Arthur describes here occurred in May of that year. See Steven R. Butler, *John Neely Bryan: The Father of Dallas* (Richardson, Texas: 1991), p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur was aware that his father's account of Captain Denton's death differed from other versions. See notes that accompany the longer version of this story, "The Death and Burial of Captain Denton."



I have not read Judge Bates' History of Denton County but it should contain these facts—as the county was named for this Captain Denton.

The party went from Dallas to Brenham,<sup>12</sup> as they had heard there was quite a settlement there. At Tehuacana Hills there was also a small settlement, which is in Limestone County.<sup>13</sup>

When they came to the place where Waco now stands, there were a corps of engineers laying out a town site.

At times, my father said, one could see a hundred buffalo at one site and deer could be seen in small droves galloping across the hills, making for the waterhole, while the coyote was slinking from one clump or bushes to another, and the prairie dog, owl and snake lent their presence to the scene. Must this not have been a most beautiful scene - a happy Plains family at home?

He said there was a well-established settlement at San Antonio.

He did not locate in Texas on this occasion but returned to the old States, coming back about 1846.

Upon his return to Texas, he married and settled in Fannin County. I do not remember his saying what his first wife's name was. It appears she did not live long however. I do not know whether there were children or not.<sup>14</sup>

At the time he first met my mother in 1852 she was the widow Owen, with two little girls, Jane and Alice - 3 and 2 years old respectively.<sup>15</sup>

In the succeeding year, October 18th, 1853, the widow became Mrs. Babb.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Some say that Denton was buried beside Fossil Creek or Oliver Creek. See notes that accompany, “The Death and Burial of Captain Denton.”

<sup>12</sup> Another version of the story says the party went north and disbanded in what is now Grayson County. Again, see notes that accompany “The Death and Burial of Captain Denton.”

<sup>13</sup> This town was originally called Tewockony Springs. See New Handbook of Texas, Vol. 6, p. 236.

<sup>14</sup> I have been unable to confirm this information. If Isaac Babb came to Texas in 1846, he somehow managed to elude the census taker in 1850. There is also no record of an Isaac Babb being married in Fannin County during the 1840s or 1850s.

<sup>15</sup> Lucy Ann Babb (nee Lucy Ann Stanley) was first married to Madison C. Owen, who died 23 June 1852 in Dallas County, Arkansas. Together they had three children: Jane, born 21 August 1847 in Arkansas; Virginia Alice, born 10 March 1849 in Arkansas; and Endora I., born 24 December 1851. The last-named child probably died in infancy or early childhood, which explains why Arthur seems not to have known about her.

<sup>16</sup> I have been unable to find an official record of this marriage in either Fannin County, Texas, where Arthur says his father lived, or in Anderson County, Texas, which is the first known county of residence of Isaac and Lucy Ann Babb together.

## ***His Personality***

My father was about 5' 9" high and weighed about 145 lb. He was of fair complexion, with high color in his cheeks, light blue eyes, and brown hair that was thin and silky. The heavy suite of hair that marked the present generation comes from my mother or the Stanleys.

He was slender and of nimble movement, neat of habit and dress, and the healthiest man that I ever saw, I believe. He was never ill enough to go to be seen by a doctor and if he ever consulted a physician I did not know of it - except for the illness of which he died, of course.

He was a cabinet workman and wheelwright by trade and was noted for his skill. he could do many other things too. He could build a house complete, including foundation and chimneys, and make with his own hands every piece of furniture necessary for the complete furnishing of the house "*except a chair,*" and then build a fine carriage for the family to go to church in—and in case of death, he could also make the coffin.

He made the coffin for each member of his own family that died, up to the time of his own death.

I have often wondered how it was possible for him to so well have mastered so many trades. He sure must have began early in life, for I have heard him say he could fill a wheel when a mere child too small to take it off the hubstand when complete. And the day he was 16 years old, he finished a fine carriage, all his own work.

I have only one piece of his hand-work—a small dressing table that he made for my mother shortly after their marriage. It remains to this day just as his hand left it more than 70 years ago.

But he was not very fatherly. He wouldn't spank one of the children, no matter what they did. Nor would he get a bucket of water or make a fire. He came home from the shop and sat down and read his books and if the children got to turning over the table and chairs he would call Mother—and when she came in we would run to him and he would not let her spank us. Mother called him Mr. Babb. He was just like a boarder on the place.

Notwithstanding that his early education had been sadly neglected, he was one of the best-read men in the community. Every man of importance for miles around came to

exchange books and talk with him. When we went to move, the books were no small consideration. I have seen 4 men carrying a box of books and another yet to go.

## ***My Mother's Family***

My mother, Lucy A. Stanley, was the second child of Thomas Stanley and Bettie Rose, both of Virginia.

The names of the family as I remember them: Nat, Lucy Ann, Laura, Lysander, Edward, Frances, Thomas Jr., Belle, Mack, Melissa, Bettie, Robert.<sup>17</sup>

My mother's father, Thomas Stanley, was of Scotch descent and was reared by two old maid aunts who would call the children "*bonnie lads or bonnie lasses*" if they did them a favor. One of them lived to 94 and the other to 103 years of age.

He was of average size, dark complexion, with black hair and eyes, and Mother's mention of him makes me know that he was a most kind and fatherly man. Once, when a boy, I chanced to visit a little town where he had lived and a man that knew him said, "*My son, when your grandfather died, this community lost one of its best citizens.*" He was a building contractor.

He died at a little past 56 years from an operation.<sup>18</sup>

Grandmother was of Irish and Scotch descent, of fair complexion, and had red hair. She was truly an aristocrat, high-spirited and self-willed, and well-educated for one of her time.

They were both of the old Virginia stock, if that be worth anything.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> According to census records, the children of Thomas and Elizabeth (Bettie) Stanley were Lucy Ann (Arthur's mother and my great-great-grandmother), Mary Frances (my other great-great-grandmother), Lysander E., Elizabeth (Bettie), Laura F., J. V., Daniel M. (Mack?), Thomas H (Thomas Jr.) , Robert M., and Rosena. I've been unable to find a Nat, Edward, or Melissa.

<sup>18</sup> It appears that Thomas Stanley died sometime between 1854 and 1860. He is listed in the 1850 federal census for Union County, Arkansas. In 1854 he witnessed a deed record for his son-in-law, Alfred Butler (the husband of Mary Frances Stanley and the author's great-great-grandfather) in Anderson County, Texas. The 1860 federal census for Freestone County, Texas indicates that Elizabeth Stanley, who was then living in the community of Butler, was a widow. Thomas Stanley's actual date of death, however, is unknown nor is it certain *where* he died. It's too bad Arthur didn't name the community in which his grandfather resided. I have been unable to find a record of Thomas Stanley's burial in either Anderson County or Freestone County. Probably, his grave is unmarked.

<sup>19</sup> The 1850 federal census indicates that Thomas Stanley was a native of North Carolina. His wife may have been born in either North Carolina or Virginia, according to the 1850 and subsequent federal census records.

I think their first two children were born in Virginia. But my grandfather seems to have moved often, gradually coming west as far as he could well do without exposing his family to hardships or getting too far from good schools.

I think his first move was to Tennessee, then to Mississippi, then to Arkansas, and then to Texas.<sup>20</sup>

## ***My Mother***

My mother was of large frame (*but not fleshy*), had a dark or rather swarthy complexion and dark grey eyes - penetrating but with a soft expression, and the most musical and best modulated voice that I ever heard, I believe. Her articulation was so clear and distinct, and her pronunciation so correct. I am sure I never heard her make use of a slang phrase in my life.

She was quiet and composed always. I never saw a storm so severe as to make her lose her composure. She was not afraid of anything, so far as I could tell. I have an idea that if she had been a man she would have been a most dangerous foe to have met on a battlefield. But any prisoner would have been fortunate to fall into her hands. She was so fair and so just. And if you could have listened to one of her lectures, if you had disobeyed, just a few well-directed words made you condemn yourself.

But she was always kind and forgiving too and never too busy to stop and listen to your complaints. And if I was sick, I never called to her at night that she did not answer in that same tone just as though she was waiting for me to call. I used to wonder when she slept. And if I became discouraged or impatient with conditions, as I sometimes did, she always had so much encouragement to offer that it was a real pleasure to come with my complaints. She had an abiding hope that never left her to the last day she lived. I have sometimes thought hard of Nature, that I did not inherit some of those rare qualities so needed to weather the storms of life.

This was not all. She was the best disciplined person, man or woman, that I ever met. Everything moved like clockwork: Monday was washday; Tuesday, ironing; Wednesday, mending; and Thursday she returned all the neighbors' calls, etc. Saturday,

all unfinished jobs must be completed - the candlesticks and knives and forks polished, as well as your shoes blacked (*or you would go with them dusty on Sunday*).

The children were assigned specific tasks each week, and the next week shifted. If the task was not done, there was no trouble placing the blame.

Now you may think she was severe. No indeed! If one of the children was not feeling well and wanted to sleep late, it must be disturbed. But would you play "*hooky?*" I assure you that you would not many times, and if you did, would she whip you? No, that was the hard part. She very likely would not say anything to you at all, while you were wishing all the time that she would. You simply had to make your own confession. And would she forgive you? "*Oh yes my son, I will forgive you for anything that you can forgive yourself for.*"

She always insisted that you keep on good terms with yourself. "*Be true to yourself and you can be false to no man.*"

If I did something wrong, Mother was the first one I wanted to see. She insisted that our mistakes were but stepping stones to success. But we must make them useful. She had little patience with repeat error.

She was generous in allowing time for amusement - but you had to let her know when and where you were going and must return promptly. I do not believe that I ever left home once that I did not let her know where I was going, and when to expect me back.

If this be boasting, I trust you will be patient - but it seems to me that it would be ungrateful to fail here to mention that it has been my pleasure to hear her say, "*Arthur never gave me an hour's trouble in his life, except anxiety in his sickness.*" Whatever failure I may have made, I at least am proud of this.

Mother's education was considerably better than the average person of her time. She was well-versed in Astronomy and Geology, and other courses of study in this time. It was remarkable how she kept up with the present-day pronunciation of words and the like.

She was religiously-inclined, but broad of views, while reared under the influence

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<sup>20</sup> Federal census records confirm the order of this westward migration.

of the Presbyterian faith.<sup>21</sup> She held to no particular creed, regarding them as a matter which placed more confidence in your conduct than in your faith. But she was a firm believer in miracles, the immaculate conception of Jesus, etc. I know now more than then how I must have annoyed her with my skepticism, with which she tried hard to be patient, and I tried hard to restrain. She would say, "*I do not understand why the boy asks such questions!*" And the boy did not understand, but I do now. It was that inquisitive faculty that makes men seek for truth, beginning to assert itself.

Well! I am about to get off the subject, to discussing myself.

She was inclined to be slow of movement, but neat and clean—painfully clean. I have often heard her say, "*There may be an excuse for poverty, but there can be no excuse for uncleanliness. If it be necessary to wear rags, they must be clean.*" This was not all. You must clean of mind and clean of body. Self-respect was the first requisite to true manhood.

I could fill many pages with her suggestions and advices, but what I have said, which I assure you is not overdone, will give you a fair idea of her, in general.

Mother spent her last days with Sister Josie at Bremond, Texas, where she is buried. She had previously lived with Sister Ella at Denison, Texas. After Sister Ella's death, January 1st, 1913, she made her home with Sister Josie. I wish to say here, for both Sister Josie and Sister Ella, that they were as kind and good as daughters could be to a mother. She did not have an ungratified wish, I do believe.

Death came to Mother about 4:30 o'clock, Christmas morning, 1919.

When I realized she was passing away, I said to myself, "*It is about the time that she, on former Christmas mornings, was slipping cautiously out of bed and distributing the scanty gifts in our little stockings.*" That Christmas was a gift to her from the hand of Nature, which was to repay her for 90 years of hardships and disappointments.

*"Why weep for death? 'Tis but a fever stilled, a pain suppressed, a fear at rest, a solemn hope fulfilled."*

- Lubbock.

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<sup>21</sup> Lucy's father was a founding member of the First Presbyterian Church of El Dorado, Arkansas.

# Myself



It was on Halloween night, 1865, that a little life came into the Babb family, to fill the vacancy, in a way, made by the passing out of two others in less than two months time.

The soldiers had just returned from the War and there was a scourge of chicken-pox that attacked the ready, frail form almost the first day. For more than a month it lay wrapped in oiled cloths and could not so much as have a little cotton slip.

But it is not necessary to say that I survived - for otherwise I would not be here recording the occurrence.<sup>22</sup>

This was at a little town in East Texas - Fairfield, the county seat of Freestone County. Indeed it was not on a railroad, or is it yet for that matter. There was only one railroad in the state at that time - that was the H. & T. C., extending from Houston to Millican, a distance of about 75 miles.<sup>23</sup>

The family had come from Palestine, Texas<sup>24</sup> to Fairfield, but did not remain very long, moving to a still smaller town, about 13 miles west. At that time it was called Woodland but was later renamed Bonner.<sup>25</sup> It was one of the most ill-adapted places for my father's vocation that you could possibly imagine. There was not a place of attraction or a point of advantage so far as I could tell. I have often wondered what could have suggested the move.

There was, however, quite a settlement of well-to-do families that had been slave-

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<sup>22</sup> Although Arthur survived the epidemic, his eighteen year old half-sister, Jane Owen, did not. She died on 15 September 1865, about six weeks before Arthur was born.

<sup>23</sup> The Houston and Texas Central was one of the few antebellum railroads in Texas. By 1860 it extended from Houston to Millican, in the Brazos Valley below Bryan, and had a branch line to Brenham. See Rupert N. Richardson, et al, Texas, The Lone Star State (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 168.

<sup>24</sup> The 1860 federal census for Anderson County, Texas shows the Babb family living not in Palestine, but in the smaller community of Plentitude. They may have lived in Palestine, however, at some point.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur has the name order reversed. The community was first called Bonner, then Woodland. See History of Freestone County (Fairfield, Texas: Freestone County Historical Commission, 1978), p. 73.

owners.<sup>26</sup> Some of them had visitors from New Orleans, Galveston, and Houston - as their children finished school at one of these places.

The only that I have ever been able to assign for these neighborhoods was that the wooded parts of the state were settled first, on account of having use of the timber for building log cabins, making rails, and the like. Our house was a little log cabin with a stick and dirt chimney. Perhaps you never saw one. Well, you didn't miss much.

We were living at this place when I can first remember. Can you recall the first thing that you remember vividly? Very likely you cannot. But I can. The first thing I remember, a hog had me down. We had a peanut patch near the house and the older children were out there digging peanuts. It appears that I was attempting to go to them when a pet pig, about half-grown, attacked me, knocking me down. Brother Willie ran and picked me up and kicked the pig square between the eyes with his heel. That sat him back on his hocks! I can even remember how it made me feel good to see the old pig get what was coming to him.

The next thing I recall is awaking from a nap. I had fallen asleep on a little trundle bed that the children slept on at night, that was shoved back under Father's and Mother's bed during the day. It was drawn about halfway out and Sister Alice<sup>27</sup> was nearby ironing one of my little pink dresses. She said that she was going to visit Aunt Laura<sup>28</sup> and asked if I would like to go. I must have said yes, for I went. I do not remember leaving home but I can recall the trip. We went on horseback. Father went with us. He rode Old Frank, a big, grey stallion, and Sister Alice rode Fannie, a small bay mare that paced. I rode behind Father most of the way because Old Frank's back was broad and flat and made a comfortable place to sit.

Uncle Josh, as we called him, was jailer. Bud, my cousin, was a few years older than myself.<sup>29</sup> He and I would stand and talk to the prisoners as they looked through the

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<sup>26</sup> This is true. The 1860 federal slave schedules reveal a large number of slave-owners residing throughout Freestone County

<sup>27</sup> Virginia Alice Owen, or "Sister Alice" as Arthur called her, was actually his half-sister (and my great-grandmother).

<sup>28</sup> Aunt Laura was Laura J. Wallace (nee Laura J. Stanley), a younger sister of Arthur's mother Lucy Ann.

<sup>29</sup> Uncle Josh was Joshua G. Wallace, Aunt Laura's husband. He was also the contractor who built the jail, which was completed in 1858. Today the building houses the Freestone County Museum. Cousin Bud was probably E. D. Wallace, born about 1864.



bars of the upper windows. He would go up when they fed the prisoners, but I was afraid.

It was while on this visit that Aunt Laura and Sister Alice made my first pants.

It was while living at the old Woodland home that Guy, the one after me, was born. He was red-headed. I can well remember him learning to walk.

It appears to me that I can remember every animal on the place, including the cats and dogs. And it seems to me unfair to not at least record their names here, as they contributed to such a large part of my childhood.

Old Sam was the cat that we used to take behind the door, in the dark, and rub his back to see the sparks. But when he got enough of the fun and ran under a chair, we had to keep at a distance.

Cuff was the dog - that is, the big dog. He was a kind of dark grey color, something the color of a German Police dog, but as best as I can recall, he was no special breed - just dog dog, or common cur, but the most vicious dog that I have ever seen from that day to this. He was not afraid of man or beast. We had to keep a block of wood chained to him, to keep him in the yard, and the only way he ever hurt one of us children was by running over us with that block of wood. We could beat him with our little fists until they were red, and the little ones could get straddled on him and jump up and down, and the most he would do was to get up and go off to another place and lie down. But if he slipped the collar and got that block off, he would go out in the woods and catch grown cattle and throw them down and hold them until someone came and choked him off. One could not believe, who has never seen the trick done, that a dog can throw and hold an ox. But old Cuff would show you just for the sport. He was the terror of the neighborhood. He was poisoned several times but Mother managed to cure him—except the last time.

Nero was a little dog that looked like a fox. He was very old and one morning we found him dead.

Birdo was about half the size of an average dog. He was white and speckled with a little red, kind of like a flea-bitten horse - and the meanest wretch that was ever wrapped in dog hide. He would not take a whipping off one of the children. Brother Wil-

lie was the only one that could manage him and sometimes he would have to whip him most severe. But he was a most excellent dog for catching wild animals. He would kill snakes, skunks, or any small animal that crossed his path.

Birdo came to a sad ending by refusing to get off the railroad track for a hand-car. He died growling and gnawing the end of a tie.

Well, I must be skipping along. I have only covered about five years of my own life and have fifty yet to do, so I cannot stop to chase butterflies.

## ***My First Move***

We left the old Woodland home, I think, in the autumn of 1871, and moved near Mexia, where the older children cultivated a small crop on the Harper Spillers<sup>30</sup> farm and Father worked in town, coming home on the weekends. I think we lived at this place two years. Nothing of importance occurred during our stay here except that Annie was born at this place and named for Miss Ann Spillers.<sup>31</sup>

We next moved near Wortham. At that time it was called Longbotham.<sup>32</sup> The name was changed shortly after we arrived, perhaps within only a few months. The place at which we lived was about two miles south of Wortham - right down the railroad, and it was at this place that I saw my first train.<sup>33</sup> I think it was 1874. The engines and cars, that I now know to be small, certainly seemed to me big things, tearing through the country faster than horse could run. The engines all burned wood and back of the field there was timbered land where men cut wood and stacked it near the track, convenient to throw on the tender or the engine. Sometimes Brother Willie would take my younger brother Guy down to see them "*wood up*," as they called it. Sometimes, for his helping hand, they would give him a ride to town, while we stood gazing as the train pulled out of sight and

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<sup>30</sup> This was probably W. H. Spillers, a Kentuckian who settled in Freestone County prior to 1860. See Steven R. Butler, *Historical & Genealogical Handbook of Freestone County, Texas*, revised edition (Richardson, Texas: 1997), p. 17.

<sup>31</sup> This may have been Mary Ann Spillers, who was about 24 years old when Annie Babb was born. See *Historical and Genealogical Handbook*, p. 17.

<sup>32</sup> The town was originally named for the Longbotham family, natives of Alabama who were among the earliest settlers of Freestone County. See *Historical and Genealogical Handbook*, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> This would have been the Houston & Texas Central Railroad, for which Arthur later worked.

left us dreaming about what we would do when we were men.

This place was called the Manning Farm.<sup>34</sup> We lived at this place four years. Father ran a wheelwright shop at Wortham, walking the 2 miles morning and evening every day. He must have missed some days, during bad weather, but somehow I can't remember it.

I went to school some while living at this place. First, at Wortham, I think in the autumn of 1875. I was then 10 years old. The older children had taught me the letters and so I could spell a little already. The older ones had been kept in school pretty well. I think they had about as much education as most children of the community and made a good appearance wherever they went.

My first school teacher was a Mr. Milner.<sup>35</sup> I went 3 weeks and had to stop for some reason that I can not remember.

My next school experience was at the old Bounds schoolhouse,<sup>36</sup> about 1½ miles south of where we lived, away down in the woods, on the banks of the Tehuacana Creek. Mr. Preston was the teacher.<sup>37</sup> I went part of 2 terms, during the winter of 1876-'77, but attending very irregularly - perhaps about half the time.

My youngest brother, Hugh, was born while we were living at this old Manning place. My childhood memory of this old home is most vivid: The old peach orchard and the woods back of the field where I used to set my trap. The stock too: Old Ann, the old bobbed-tail, red milk cow that would give a good pail of milk and then kick it over; and the yoke of oxen - Jo and Berry. How could I write the smallest sketch of my life and leave these old lads out? I feel that I would be an ingrate. It was from them that I learned my first lesson in human nature. Now you say, "*Learn human nature from an ox?*" Yes-sir, I have traced every attribute of my dumb companions right in to the domiciles of my most respectable neighbors and found but little improvement.

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<sup>34</sup> There were several members of the Manning family living in Freestone County prior to 1860. See Historical & Genealogical Handbook, pp. 18, 31, and 72.

<sup>35</sup> There was a Milner family living in Freestone County as early as 1860 but I have been unable, in subsequent federal census records, to find a Mr. Milner who was a schoolteacher.

<sup>36</sup> There were also several members of a Bounds family living in Freestone County during this time. However, I have been unable to find any reference to the Bounds schoolhouse in the History of Freestone County.

Old Jo was the most faithful and patient animal that I have ever seen. His face wore an expression of benevolence. He was calm and dignified, ready to obey orders always. In other words, he was a natural gentleman. We could ride on his back or pull his tail, or if he chanced to be lying down, we could crawl all over him and he would not get up until the last one of us was off. He was even careful not to strike us with his horn if flies bothered him.

If we caught old Berry lying down, Guy and myself would take the yoke and drag it up and put it on his neck and fasten the bow with the key on top. Then we would take a stick and make Berry get up and then we both would raise the other end of the yoke and in our child's voice would call out, "*Come under Jo!*"—and the big old fellow would come walking slowly up, chewing his cud, and lower his head and put it under the yoke.

But old Berry—he was mean and showed it in his face as well as his conduct. He had but one horn and when he got a chance, would strike at us with that horn. He was lazy, overbearing, and obstinate—and greedy too. If we fed them together, he would always get the lion's share. But there was one thing: As good and kind as old Jo was, he would not take too much off of old Berry. Jo had two good horns and he knew how to use them. And Berry knew better than to get too gay with him.

Old Berry was mad most of the time, except when he was lying down in the shade or eating. You could not have any fun with him. If we wanted to swing on to his tail, he would kick us. And if we climbed up on him when was lying down, he'd jump up and spill us off and threaten us with that old horn of his. You could not ride on his back either. No sir! You just try it once.

One day, we were coming from the field. Myself and Guy were riding on Old Jo's back. Guy was behind and somehow a thrill of sympathy seemed to strike him and all of a sudden, he said, "*It's not right for both of us to be sitting up here on Old Jo's back and Old Berry to be going along there without anything. A plague on him, I am going to ride him.*"

His expression kind of excited me at first, for I knew what was going to happen and was about to beg him not to let his sympathy make him do something desperate. Be-

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<sup>37</sup> I cannot find a Mr. Preston, schoolteacher, in either the 1870 or 1880 federal census for Freestone Coun-

fore he made a move to change, I looked for a place for him to land, but seeing we were in plowed ground, I thought he could not get badly hurt so I offered no objection. The oxen were walking right along, no doubt thinking of getting home and taking a good rest. Guy stood up on Jo's back, holding on to my shoulders, and then jumped down on Old Berry's back.

Berry never stopped. The ox gave a snort that could have been heard a hundred yards and Guy went high in the air, right over Berry's head. Old Jo was the only one who did not know what had happened.

Berry began running but I hollered at Jo and he swung back, circling old Berry round until he finally got him stopped. Guy came walking up—the dirtiest boy you ever saw, his sympathy all gone. We both rode Old Jo the rest of the way home.

## ***My First Horse***

About the year 1875, Brother Willie traded for a dun mare. She was what we termed "*an outlaw.*" She was wild and unruly and could not be broke for either saddle or harness. She would buck every time the saddle was put on her. We got Bill West, "*a young Negro man that afterward was hanged to a tree for the mistreatment of Miss Udia Carruthers,*"<sup>38</sup> to break the mare to ride—but if she was given a week's rest, she had to be broke again. It was too expensive, so we gave up the idea. In the meantime, she had to be taken care of until we had a chance to trade her off to someone that did not know her. If she got loose, she would go back to Blue Ridge, about 15 miles west,<sup>39</sup> and would be a total loss, as she could run faster and longer than the best horse in the neighborhood. Well, I was assigned the care of her. I had to water her and stake her out to grass twice a day. When the water was dried up in a nearby pond, I had to draw water from the well and pore it into a little long trough that conducted it into the big water trough in the front lot,

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ty, Texas. He must not have taught here very long.

<sup>38</sup> During this period, several black men were lynched in Texas for the rape, or alleged rape, of white women. This sounds like such a case but I have been unable to find out anything about it. Nor have I been able to find a Bill (or William) West or a Udia Carruthers listed in the 1870 or 1880 federal census for Freestone County, Texas. Here, Arthur seems to be quoting a person or from a printed source.

<sup>39</sup> Blue Ridge, located in Falls County, was further than 15 miles. See [New Handbook of Texas](#).

for her to drink. I have never seen an animal that could drink quite so much water, I don't believe, except perhaps Old Berry.

One day this mare, Dollie Varden, broke the rope and got loose. It was during the fall of the year. They opened the gate and ran her and her colt into the field and thought she was safe, but they did not know Old Dollie Varden like I did. Just as I expected, she did not stop but kept going right through the field to the back—and over the fence she went without touching a rail. Looking back with a loud snort, she waved goodbye with her tail and headed straight for Blue Ridge. The little bay colt was left behind. Dollie Varden was of modern mind. Her liberty meant more to her than her child. We never saw her again.

My task was not lightened, as I had expected, for the motherless colt had to be cared for and there was no question as to whom this task befell. It grew to be a very pleasant one, however, for I soon learned to love the colt dearly, and it responded generously. Mother gave me a name for it, "*Lucy*," which pleased me greatly for that was one of her own names.

Lucy grew fast and must have had at least one respectable parent for she was a much better creature in both disposition and appearance than her mother. But as Mendel tells us, "*we must not expect too much from children of outbreaking parents, the tendency of heredity is too strong to be overcome by training or environment*" - but she was a big improvement over her mother.

One summer afternoon, I was taking a nap. When I woke slightly, I could hear Mother and Brother Willie, who sat near, talking. These words fell upon my ear - it was mother speaking, she said: "*You ought to give the boy that colt. He took care of that old outbreak of a mother near a year and has cared for the colt since.*" I did not move. I tried to stop breathing and was so afraid they would hear my heart beating - for it was sounding quite loud to me.

For my life, I could not hear Brother Willie's reply. I remembered he did not always comply with Mother's wishes—but sometimes he did. Now, what would he do on this occasion? That was what had me guessing.

Brother Willie soon left the room and Mother was called out for something too.

When they were both out, I raised up and looked around. No one was in the room but myself. Quietly, I stole out to the peach orchard. That is where I did all my thinking. In my boyish way I debated and took into account that Willie and myself were not of the same trend of thought and there was none too much congeniality between us—but how much bearing this feeling would have on the subject I could not decide. It was not the usual time to take the colt in, but I must see her. When I got in sight, she neighed to me as usual, doubtless a little surprised at my early appearance. She laid her. She laid her chin on my shoulders and I put my arms around her neck and wondered if she was mine. I knew that she thought she was all the time. I had resolved never to tell her any different.

Brother Willie had come home for the weekend. He was working for Mr. Jon Longbotham.<sup>40</sup> When I had brought the colt in, he walked out. When I saw him coming, it excited me. In some way it was close to the feeling of fear. It must have been very much like a girl feels when she expects that the man is going to propose to her. When he came up to where I had stopped, for Lucy to enjoy a few bunches of choice grass, he asked how the colt was getting along and said something about how it was going to make a nice animal—and then he casually walked away. Now what do you think of that? I felt plumb weak. I wished I could have kept my composure like Lucy did as she carelessly nibbled the grass and knocked a fly off her nose, against my shoulder. I was of a great mind to sit down and cry. How could I stand it a whole week if he went back to work and did not mention it? The next day, which was Sunday, I would not play. Guy complained to Mother, "*Make Arthur come and play with me.*" But I just went to the peach orchard and sat under a tree all alone. Late that evening, just as I was fixing to put Lucy away for the night, Brother Willie came out again. It did not excite me this time. I was nearly mad. He walked up and said to me, "*How would you like to have that colt for your own?*" "*Oh fine!*" I exclaimed. "*Well,*" he said, "*you may have it. I will give it to you.*" "*Sure enough?*" I asked, "*You're not joking?*" "*Yes,*" he said. "*Mine to keep?*" I asked again. "*Yes,*" he replied, "*If you don't believe it, ask Mother.*"

We proved everything by Mother. If she said yes or no, that settled it. Well, I

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<sup>40</sup> Jonathan Longbotham (8 June 1829-4 July 1891) was a long-time resident of Freestone County. He is buried in the Longbotham Cemetery in Wortham. See Historical & Genealogical Handbook, p. 17 and History of Freestone County, vol. II, p. 85.

threw the rope down right there and made a break for the house, where Mother assured me that the colt was mine for keeps.

There was a dark spot ahead of me, however, that I least expected. But that is one kindness of Nature. It gives no warning. You just go right on and bump into to it.

Something more than 2 years had passed and Lucy had grown to be almost as large as the average pony. Father had cautioned me not to get on her back, telling me that it might make her sway-backed. I had refrained from the temptation of sitting up on that pretty, flat back so long, and had dreamed of how it would feel to sit up on my own pony. One day Father was looking at her. She looked so big and strong. He said I could begin riding her. I made no delay. I easily made arrangements with Guy for a similar treat if he would lead her around while I enjoyed the first ride—since she knew nothing about being guided with the bridle. We took turnabout and had a great day. And the next day I actually rode her down to the big gate by myself. I was like Cressus on his temporary throne, to watch the battle of Hell's Pond. I pronounced myself a happy boy—but not for long.

Two or three small meteors had fallen in rapid succession, and then one big one. This set people to talking and prophesying the end of the world. To add to all this excitement, the meteors were followed by an eclipse of the sun. Just think of this happening as soon as I had got my pony so I could ride her! Mother assured me it was all a mistake and that there was no danger. But the usual comforting effect of her counsel did not seem to work. I had too much at stake. I decided to take my troubles to the Lord. I retired to the peach orchard and took a position as I thought most pleasing to his sight and asked God most earnestly to reconsider this rash act that I had heard he was contemplating at this most important time. I called his attention to the fact, as he well knew, that I had worked so long and patiently to get my pony to where I could ride her. To be robbed of this pleasure was too much!

And the Lord, as he did when speaking with Moses (*Ex 22 - 14*), "*repented of the evil that he had intended to do*," and my prayer was answered.

Perhaps I have been of some service to the world after all.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> See Arthur's detailed account of this episode, "My First Horse and How I Saved the World," pp.74-82.



Can you imagine my feeling some years later, sitting in a dining car and being served a splendid meal while speeding by the place where the little old engine used to stop and "wood up" and looking out on the other side, I could see the clump of bushes at the back of the field where I used to set my trap. And passing further on, I could see a few fragments of the old orchard that once held so many of my boyhood secrets, and I could also locate the old homeplace—where a few old stumps were all that remained of the once beautiful oak grove that stood a little ways in front of the house. Then came the little prairie where I staked out Old Dollie Varden to graze, and picked sand-burs out of my bare feet as I came back to the house.

I could not quite see the old schoolhouse, but "Parson Bound's"<sup>42</sup> house still sat on the banks of Tehuacana Creek - and I wondered where Pos Bounds was, whose funny face suggested his name.<sup>43</sup> And where was Zeb, who stammered? We boys could not understand why he did not stammer while singing. And Dan Black,<sup>44</sup> who could run faster than any of us. I even thought of my "Barlow" knife. Did you ever see a "Barlow?" Well, if you did not, you never had a real good knife.<sup>45</sup>

It here dawned on my mind, as never before: How temporary are human affairs.

I am getting a little ahead of my subject, however. I must here tell you, as you will later see, before this experience just related occurred, we had lived a second time at the Old Manning farm.

## ***A Bad Move***

In the winter of 1878, we yoked up Old Jo and Berry, and began loading to move.

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<sup>42</sup> Arthur is probably referring to the Reverend J. Hill Bounds, who, in 1867, established a Methodist Protestant Church at Wortham. See History of Freestone County, vol. II, pp. 203 and 206.

<sup>43</sup> The identity of this boy who resembled an opossum is uncertain, apart from his being a member of the prolific Bounds family.

<sup>44</sup> There were several families bearing the surname Black in Freetone County at this time but I have been unable to find any with a son named Dan.

<sup>45</sup> Arthur was not the only one who thought a barlow knife preferable to all other pocket knives. In Tom Sawyer, which was first published at the time Arthur was a boy, author Mark Twain wrote about the superiority of a "real barlow." I agree with both these gentlemen: I too own a barlow knife.

The summer before, a man by the name of Milton Wynn<sup>46</sup> had induced father to go back to the old Woodland community to do some work of different kinds. He worked down there all the summer and would come home about once a month. Mr. Wynn, and others, persuaded Father to move back to the old neighborhood. But the next year was very dry. Crops were practically a failure, and the work contemplated was put off. Conditions were not looking good.

In the autumn of 1879, Mother received a letter from the law firm of Pulumn and Hobson at Memphis, Tennessee. It said that she had been named as the sole heir to the estate of L. E. Stanley, deceased, consisting of a \$30,000 bank account, a brick business house and part of a stock of dry goods, a brick residence, and several vacant lots at La-Grange, Tennessee.<sup>47</sup>

This surely made things look brighter. I was never so glad to hear of a man's death in my life.

While we knew it would have to go through a process of law, we could not imagine its taking more than a few months, or a year at most. But the relatives soon got wind of the good news, and Judge William Reagan, who married Mother's sister Bettie,<sup>48</sup> immediately protested the will. I think the estate was settled in 1885. We got about \$3,000 and the relatives nothing. And with it all, I never heard Mother speak an ill word against a single one of them.

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<sup>46</sup> This may be the same Milton Wynn who is listed in the 1860 federal census for Freestone County, Texas. See *Historical & Genealogical Handbook*, p. 30.

<sup>47</sup> L. E. Stanley's will, which reads more like a long letter, is a curious document. It begins by telling of a visit by his niece Mary Frances Butler (nee Mary Frances Stanley) during the summer of 1878. The old man, who paid Mary's train fare, didn't like it that she brought James, her eldest son, with her and disapproved of the young man carrying a pistol in his carpetbag. He was also taken aback by some of Mary's remarks and concluded "that their object was or is to get what little I have." Whether Mary and her son were as badly behaved as the elderly gentleman alleged or if there was simply some sort of misunderstanding is uncertain. At any rate, Stanley concluded by stating that he would "rather Lucy Ann Babb, who resides at Wortham, Freestone County, Texas and L. E. Stanley, my namesake, who resides at or near Weatherford, Parker County, to have what I have than any of the rest" although he admitted that a letter Lucy wrote to him in February 1879 was the first he had ever received from her and that he did not know her personally. The original of this will is in the Tennessee State Archives in Nashville.

<sup>48</sup> William Reason Reagan, the brother of Confederate Postmaster and Texas Senator John H. Reagan, married Elizabeth Stanley, daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Stanley (and sister of Lucy Ann Babb), at Fairfield, Texas in 1856. The town of Reagan, in Falls County, is named for him. He and Elizabeth had two sons who were later accused of being horse thieves. See *New Handbook of Texas*, vol. 5, p. 467.

Stepping from the past to the present, I will say: It is now just past 12 o'clock Christmas night—1925, and my mind is skipping over the many Christmases that I can recall between the dates that I first recorded in this sketch and the present. One that predominates is that of 1919. At this corresponding hour, Sister Josie and myself sat by Mother's bed, waiting for the end.

I went to school some, while living at the Wynn place. We had to go to Woodland - about 2½ miles. We walked down the Fairfield road about 2 miles until we crossed Grindstone Creek, then turned to the left and climbed over a fence and went through a field (*the old Hinds place*).<sup>49</sup> After passing through this field and getting over the other fence, I would give Guy the dinner bucket and books and I would pick up an arm or a turn of wood and carry it to the schoolhouse, as other boys did coming from other directions. It would suffice to keep us warm during the day, if it was not too cold. On very cold days, two boys at a time would be detailed to go out and get an extra supply. If I was the first to reach the schoolhouse, as I often was, I would build a big fire and have the room warm for the teacher, Mrs. Campbell,<sup>50</sup> when she arrived—which she seemed to appreciate so much.

I think I went to this school about two months or more. I do remember that I went one solid month without missing a day - the only straight month that I can recall in my school life.

Mrs. Campbell seemed to like me and sometimes showed me favors, which I could not understand. I was not accustomed to being favored.

## ***Another Move***

Before winter was over, we were arranging to move back to Wortham. Father had

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<sup>49</sup> William Hinds and his family were early settlers of Freestone County. See Historical & Genealogical Handbook, p. 29.

<sup>50</sup> I have been unable to find a schoolteacher by the name of Campbell in either the 1870 or 1880 federal census for Freestone County, Texas.

formed a partnership with a Mr. Hankins,<sup>51</sup> to operate a wheelwright and blacksmith shop at Wortham - Father doing the wheelwright work and Mr. Hankins the blacksmithing.

The task of pulling the heavy wagon over the muddy road was not for poor Old Jo and Berry this time. Old Berry had become disgusted with this neck of the woods and stole off, without even letting Jo know it, and went back to the old Manning farm. A very cold spell came, accompanied by snow. We could not find Old Berry to feed him. After the spell broke, we found him back of the old Manning field, dead. He was getting old and was thin and could not stand the wintry blast. Old Jo stayed with us but Father traded him the next spring to Al Snapp<sup>52</sup> for a little sorrel horse.

On returning to Wortham, we located just out of town, about a mile southwest - on Granddaddy Longbotham's<sup>53</sup> place, where Guy and myself made a little crop.

Nothing of importance occurred here except that Mother went to Tennessee.

## ***Back to the Manning Farm***

During the winter of 1879 and `80, we moved back to the old place of our early childhood. Although only 2 years had passed since we had left it, it seemed to us quite a long time. This old place meant a great deal to us in our young lives. It was here that our first real experience in life began, "*when reason was beginning to unfold.*" Besides, we lingered at this place longer than at any other one place.

After getting things a little straight after the move, Guy and myself hurried to take a survey of our old tramping grounds. We went to the back of the field where we used to set our traps and found some pieces of old traps scattered about. We next explored the old peach orchard. It was beginning to show the effect of time, as well as of neglect. Many of the trees were missing. We made a pledge to each other that when we became men, we

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<sup>51</sup> This was undoubtedly E. Hankins, who is listed in the 1880 federal census for Freestone County, Texas as a 32 year old blacksmith residing at Wortham,.

<sup>52</sup> Albert N. Snapp (18 May 1840-2 February 1915), a native of Illinois, is listed in the 1880 federal census for Freestone County, Texas. At that time he was 40 years old and a stock-raiser by occupation. He is buried in the Wortham Cemetery. See History of Freestone County, vol. II, p. 118.

<sup>53</sup> Arthur may be referring to Thomas Longbotham, one of the older members of this family. See Historical & Genealogical Handbook, p. 17.

would buy the old place and replace every tree and make it just as we had known it. But this, as most of my resolutions, was never consummated.

I was now past 14 years of age and Guy passed 11 years. Although he was nearly 4 years younger, he had passed me in size. I was always sick.

We made quite a crop this year for two chaps of our age. We sold the first bale of cotton about the 15th of September and bought a new cook stove.

Then came a dark place. It was one Sunday evening. A boy-friend of ours, Charley Ragsdale,<sup>54</sup> had come home with us from Sunday school. Brother Willie's wife, Miss Mandy<sup>55</sup> as we called her, had spent the day with Mother. We were detailed to walk home with her. She lived at Wortham. Charley was going home too and we walked up the railroad a way, to wait for Miss Mandy, as it was on her way. We had not gone far when we met some boys, Charlie's older brother among them, going to a persimmon grove about § mile to the east of the railroad. Guy insisted that I let him go with them and meet me on my return. I objected, as I did not want to come back alone, but I never thought of harm befalling him. Miss Mandy had lingered, talking longer than usual, and it was getting near dusk as I returned. When I was getting near the place where I expected Guy to meet me, I saw Sister Josie and Mother coming hurriedly. I could tell that Mother was in distress. I hurried to meet them. Mother, not knowing that we had separated, asked me where Guy was. I told of him going with the boys to the persimmon grove. They told me that information had been brought that he had fallen and was seriously hurt. It made me dizzy and a pang of remorse shot through my mind that I did not object more strenuously. They did not know where he was. I started to the persimmon grove. It was now dark. I cannot describe my anguish and distress upon reaching the grove and finding no one there. I then started to Wortham, thinking he might have been carried there. Someone met me and told me that he was at the home of Mr. Longbotham.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> This young man was probably the son of W. F. Ragsdale, who is listed in the 1880 federal census for Limestone County, Texas.

<sup>55</sup> This is a reference to Sarah Amanda Babb (nee Sarah Amanda Oliver), who, according to the 1880 federal census for Freestone County, Texas, was 15 years older than her husband, William Babb. Although Arthur refers here to his sister-in-law as "Miss" Mandy, she and William were married by this time.

<sup>56</sup> Probably Jonathan Longbotham.

Guy never regained consciousness and died in about 3 days.<sup>57</sup> This was my first deep sorrow. There had been no deaths in the family since before I was born.

I never went back to Sunday school after the Sunday we were there together and Charley Ragsdale came home to dinner with us. I now have the two little story books that we got from the library the day of his accident.

It was a trying task for me to accustom myself to do without his companionship the next year.

The winter of 1880-'81, we moved again—this time about 1½ miles northeast of Wortham. Father continued working in the shop and I made a little crop. There was but little land for cultivation at this place—about 15 acres I think. We planted it all in corn. I therefore had quite a bit of time to work for neighbors, especially in the fall, and I got myself some good clothes and a trunk to keep them in and began to feel like somebody.

We called this the Snapp place. Not because it was a snap by any means, but because we rented it from Mr. Al Snapp. It was a one-and-a-half story box-house and the coldest place I ever saw in winter.

Here, I am going to skip details. In the spring of the following year, 1882, I went to live with Sister Alice and Cousin Will, as I called them, Sis Alice having married Cousin Will Butler. Therefore, he was also my brother-in-law.<sup>58</sup>

Mother took the two younger children and went to live with Sister Ella at Denison, Texas.<sup>59</sup> Ione, the sister next older than myself, divided the time, living first with Sister Alice and then with Sister Josie.<sup>60</sup>

About 3 years passed and Mother's estate in Tennessee was settled. In the summer of 1885 she bought a small farm about 2½ miles northwest of Denison. In December of

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<sup>57</sup> Hugh Babb died on 27 Sept. 1880. See p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> As mentioned previously, Virginia Alice Owen, or "Sister Alice" as he called her, was Arthur's half-sister by his mother's first marriage to Madison C. Owen. William O. Butler, born in Fairfield in May 1856, was the son of Arthur's uncle and aunt, Alfred and Mary Frances Butler (nee Mary Frances Stanley). William O. Butler was a first cousin to both his wife Alice, as well as Arthur. And, as Arthur says, Cousin Will was also his brother-in-law.

<sup>59</sup> By this time, Ella Babb had married Charles Heason, an English immigrant.

<sup>60</sup> "Sister Josie," Elizabeth J. Babb, married Fred Walker. They lived in Bremond, Texas.

that year I closed my business affairs with Cousin Will and made arrangements to go up and take charge of the farm. I had 2 horses, Lucy and a bay mare that I had traded for, Molly. At that time, we could not ship livestock by weight and as it would cost too much to charter a railroad car, I decided to ride them through. It was about 150 miles.<sup>61</sup>

I bought a nice new saddle and made ready for the trip. The weather was good enough for the time of year when I started. I stopped the first night at Corsicana and the next day, about 4:00 P.M., I passed through Ennis. I was very close to my wife but did not know it. She was then only a little girl, 9 years old. The third day out I reached Dallas late in the evening. It had been raining slowly most of the past two days and the roads and streets were very muddy. Elm Street at that time had no streetcar line or paving. I saw a milk wagon drawn by 2 horses, stuck right at the H. & T. C. track. The wheels were down to the axles and they hitched on another team and pulled out the wagon tongue! The driver had to unload his cans. There were no milk bottles then, except for babies, and not as many of them as nowadays.

The streetcars were drawn by little mules that wore little bells on their hamstrings, so you could hear them coming and catch your car.

There was a streetcar line on Main Street and one they called the Belt Line, and possibly others - I couldn't say.

I didn't want to stop in Dallas, as it would cost too much to put my horses up a livery stable and lodge myself at a hotel. I decided to keep going and take a chance on stopping at some farmhouse. I do not know where I turned off Elm Street, but I headed for the McKinney Road, McKinney Street now. I got out of town a mile or so. It was still raining slowly, and beginning to freeze. The roads were very bad and my horses fagged. I saw a big brick house off to the left, in a big oak grove. I rode up and called out. A young man came out and I asked him if I could get lodging for the night. He said, "*I'll ask Ma.*" He immediately returned and said, "*Get down and come in.*" There followed him another young man, shabbily dressed, that I afterward learned was the hired hand who cared for my horses. About the time I had got good and warm by the big fire, supper was announced. The father, a stately old man about 60, who had sat by the fire reading since I

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<sup>61</sup> See Arthur's more detailed account of this trip, "A Chapter of Life."

first came in, got up and led the way to the dining room. I ate with the family. The hired man ate after we finished. Not long after we had returned to the big fire, the hired man appeared at the door to show me to my room, which was also his room. We soon got well-acquainted. I took the advantage to learn all about our landlord. To my inquiries, the hired man said, "*He's old Jack Cole,<sup>62</sup> a civil engineer and surveyor. He laid out most of Dallas and the country around. He's pretty rich. Them's his sons. The one come out to the gate and the one that sat by the fire all the time, he's sick. They are going to send him out west. Them two big gals that come in to supper, that's his daughters. And the old lady, you heard her called "Ma," you bet she rules the roost. What she says, goes. Good ol' woman though.*"

The next morning, when I had finished my breakfast, I saw my horses saddled and at the horse-rack. When I inquired as to my bill, they referred me to "*Ma,*" who would not accept a cent and wished me a safe journey to my own mother.

I never pass North Dallas High School that I don't think of that night's lodging. How could I then imagine that someday I would have children going to school in a building on the site of the old lot and barn, where the hired man milked the cows and cared for my horses?

The house stood where the little park now is just north of the school. But the good hosts! Where are they? Gone like the "*ships that pass in the night.*" I hope that I have been as good to someone as they were to me on that cold and dreary night.

I completed my journey and reached the little farm home at Denison the day before the new year, 1886.

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<sup>62</sup> John N. "Jack" Cole was the first official county surveyor for Dallas County. Author Sam Acheson confirms that Cole "built a fine brick residence about where Fitzhugh intersects Cole Avenue today." Acheson also notes that the Cole Farm, which included land on which North Dallas High School still stands today, was the site of one of two competing state fairs held in Dallas in October 1886, less than a year after Arthur Babb spent the night there. The other fair was held at the site of present-day Fair Park. See Dallas Yesterday, pp. 104 and 239.



## *On the Farm*

The farm, as before stated, was about 2½ miles northwest of Denison. There was only about 60 acres, 30 of which were in cultivation and the rest in pasture.<sup>63</sup> There was a little creek that wound round the foot of a hill, upon which the house stood - cutting it off from the field, with some trees and quite a bit of underbrush along the banks. The creek was fed by small springs that ran most all the year. It was, upon the whole, quite a picturesque little place. The hill was so steep on the north and west sides, we called it "Pike's Peak." The house was small, but fairly good and warm. The barn was very good too - so Lucy and Molly were quite comfortable in their new home.

I shall never forget the many nights that Hugh and I lay in our little room, listening to the whippoorwills, screech owls, hoot owls, and every conceivable insect, that kept up a serenade far into the night. It had a rather melancholy, but soothing, effect.

I do not feel particularly proud of my record as a farmer. The field had been wonderfully neglected. There was lots of grubbing to be done and fences to be built. Hugh was only a little boy and I had no help whatsoever. I stuck it out 3 years, making a crop and working in town at the carpenter's trade when the crop was off hand. I can well remember the contractors' names, for whom I worked. The first was W. E. Hill, an Englishman, then Jake Louder and Mr. Worcester.

In the fall of 1888, work in the building line was very slack and crops that year were none too good. It was quite hard for the little farm products like chickens, eggs, butter, and the like, to fill the family needs. I had begun to tire of farm life and also felt that I was not making good as a farmer.

It was in November, think, that a railroad building gang of the H. & T. C. was making extensive repairs to the buildings at Denison. I went down to where they worked and sought out the foreman, to make application for work. He was pointed out, a typical old Southern gentlemen. E. O. Jones. It's a queer name isn't it? He did not give me much encouragement, but said to come back next morning for an answer. The next morning I was promptly on the scene and got the job - \$2.00 per day and \$15.00 per month board, or

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<sup>63</sup> Deed records in the Grayson County courthouse confirm the sale as well as the size and location of this land. See footnotes for "A Chapter of Life."

50¢ per day. \$1.50 per day was not much to keep a family of five, but with the little we could sell off the farm, we made out. The work lasted about a month and then outfit was to move. As there was no steady work to be had in my line in Denison, I decided to leave with the crew. I hired a young man, by the name of Will Calahan, to hold the fort on the farm. Hugh was getting large enough to help some, so I felt fairly safe in leaving the old farm.

## ***Leaving the Farm***

The move was southward, naturally, as Denison was the northernmost terminus of the H. & T. C.<sup>64</sup> We drifted down the road, stopping at many towns to make light repairs.

In this gang of about 15 men, there were a few who I wish to mention, who have meant something to my later life. First, the foreman, E. O. Jones. He was doubtless from some aristocratic old family. With him were two sons, Charley and Walter. Charley, the oldest, was Assistant Foreman. Walter was quite a few years younger. As a matter of age, I was right between them. Walter and I grew to be great friends and one of the few friends that I have succeeded in keeping all these years.

Then there was another man, H. G. Grigsby. He was an elderly man, small but not frail. We called him "*Dad*." He had a far better education than most men of his vocation, and was well-versed in past and present affairs of human life. He was of exceptional good disposition, flavored with a highly-developed sense of humor that made him altogether a very pleasing personality. He also entertained the highest sense of honor. I therefore found in him not only a very pleasant but a valuable friend.

Although he was some 20 years my senior, we walked and talked together like Socrates and Plato and I feel sure that I am a better and wiser man for having been associated with "*Dad*" Grigsby.

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<sup>64</sup> From its original terminus at Millican, the Houston and Texas Central Railroad reached Corsicana by 1871 and the "arrival of its first train in Dallas, on July 16, 1872, afforded the people of that city the occasion for a great celebration." The following year the H. & T. C. reached Denison, a town which didn't exist

L. C. McAlister, who was also in the gang, I found to be far above the average man in honesty and integrity. He too is still my friend. I met him on the street a few days ago. Although he is now 72 years of age, he looks well and is in good spirits.

And Old John Barthet - "*the French cook who would say `God bless you Art`*" when I brought him in some choice kindling.

During the winter of 1888 the outfit drifted as far down the road as Garrett, then went out a branch, at that time "*The Texas Central.*" We called it "*The Nickel Plate.*" It is now the Texas Midland.<sup>65</sup> Then we went all over the road.

They next winter, 1889-`90, we moved to Dallas to build the roundhouse. At this place two young men joined the gang - Fletcher and Edd Barnes. Fletch was Edd's uncle. It was easy to see that were something above the rank and file, so Walter and I were glad to welcome them.

The next year, the division headquarters of the road was to be moved from Corsicana to Ennis. Accordingly, the building gang was ordered to that place to construct a roundhouse, shops, etc. On July 4th, 1891, the cornerstone of the roundhouse was laid.<sup>66</sup> We had a picnic and a general blow-out. Edd Barnes had told me that he knew a family in Ennis by the name of McCanless. He pointed one of the boys out to me the day of the picnic. There were two boys and two girls, he said, but one of them was only a little girl going to school. He promised to take me to see them some evening if I would promise not to make "*eyes*" at the big girl. I vowed I would not, "*Honest!*" Not long after, Edd said that we were to call on the McCanless family that evening, and maybe there would be some other girls there too. But there was not.

The mother was a fine-looking old lady, with black eyes and olive complexion. The father, two boys, and the young lady, Miss Eva, received us. They were a social, pleasant family to call on - one of those that makes you enjoy the evening. The younger boy, Ernest, played the guitar splendidly.

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until the Missouri, Kansas & Texas (Katy) line crossed the Red River from Indian Territory in 1872. See Texas, the Lone Star State, p. 274 and Denison, Texas Centennial, p. 5.

<sup>65</sup> "The Texas Midland, made famous by the wealthy Hettie Green and her son, Col. E. H. R. Green, was a short railroad running from Paris to Garrett. It was extended into Ennis in 1904." See Edna Davis Hawkins, et al, History of Ellis County (Waco: Texian Press, 1972), p. 112.

<sup>66</sup> "In 1891 Ennis became a division point of the H. & T. C. Railroad...[and] shops and roundhouse were built." See History of Ellis County, Texas, p. 111.

About an hour passed. I think there was a little stir in the room that caused me to look up. There was a little girl standing by a little table, with some books lying on it. I had been busy talking and had not seen her enter the room. It was Miss Eva, I think, that said as I rose to my feet, "*This is our Sister Bertha.*" She was a most beautiful little creature, with soft brown eyes, rosy cheeks, and black, wavy hair that fell carelessly about her shoulders. Her upper front teeth lapped slightly, but that seemed to add to her looks. But she was only a little girl about 14 years old.

On the way back, Edd asked me how I liked the family and his girl—referring to Eva. "*Oh fine,*" I replied, "*but I wish I hadn't made that promise.*" "*Oh, but you have done made it.*" he said, adding "*Now you have to keep it.*" "*All right.*" I replied, and I did.

We had received such a friendly welcome, mostly for the reason that they had known Edd's family in Tennessee, and me because I was Edd's friend. Neither of us was slow to take advantage of the situation and called again often.

I always liked to go along with Edd for sometimes other girls would be there. I enjoyed talking to Hix, the older brother. He was about my age and was well-read. Later, I began to take lessons, from Ernest, on the guitar. Just an excuse I guess—for I never could play. I have the old guitar yet.

It was not long before I began to look for the appearance of the little girl, which was after she had finished her lessons. I felt disappointed if she did not put in an appearance. I was afraid to ask about her, lest the old folks would get wise—and what might she think too? Time thus passed until November 1891, when the gang was disbanded and I returned to Denison. I am willing to admit it was a sad parting for both of us.

Upon returning to Denison, I did not go back on the farm, but worked in town for contractors. By this time, I was getting top wages—\$2.50 per day, 10 hours work, and sometimes I was made foreman.

It was in February, I think 1892, that I was recalled to the H. & T. C. and given charge of an emergency gang to keep up building repairs.

In May 1893 I received instructions to the effect that E. O. Jones had been reinstated as General Foreman in charge of buildings, to whom I would thereafter report. It gave me great pleasure for the old "*War Horse,*" whom I'd known so long, to have author-

ity over me. I felt secure. Naturally, I would be his Assistant Foreman,—so I thought. And I was to be married on June 15th. Surely things were beginning to come my way.

My gang was at Dallas at the time. It had grown to 15 men. About the 15th of May I received a message from Mr. Jones stating that he would be in Dallas on #5. Near train time I started to the depot, but the train passed me on the way. It sure did thrill me when I saw the familiar old form standing on the rear platform. He got off and came down the track to meet me. I could not have been more rejoiced had I been meeting my own father. He seemed glad to see me too. We talked over conditions and arrangements. He instructed me, when I had the work at Dallas completed, to proceed to Allen, about 20 miles north, to move the depot—at the completion of which I was to report to him at Melissa,<sup>67</sup> where he would be building a new depot.

I did not ask him for any position or offer any suggestions, thinking it not necessary and leaving everything to his own discretion.

I was married at the appointed time,<sup>68</sup> and the work at Allen being near completion, I secured rooms at Melissa with Dr. Rutledge and his wife. They were a very gracious family.

Mr. Jones had secured the service of a man by the name of Tom McNab to be foreman. The depot at Melissa being complete, the outfit moved to Waxahachie. McNab quit and Mr. Jones replaced him with another man. I must admit I was disappointed and hurt.

I had rented a house in Ennis and sent for Mother and Sister Ione. Hugh was working in the gang with me.

Things rocked along until January 3rd, 1894, when orders came to reduce the gang. I was promptly let out. I was humiliated and hurt—but what could I say or do?

Building activities were below normal at Ennis, but I found a little to do. A little more than a month passed and then there came a cold spell and snow. I contracted a severe cold and had to stay home one day. The next morning, about 8 o'clock, I had the hardest chill that a man ever had and recovered. This was February 14th, 1894.

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<sup>67</sup> Melissa is located north of McKinney, in Collin County.

<sup>68</sup> Arthur's mention of his wedding is curiously brief! At any rate, Arthur Babb, age 27, and Bertha McCannless, age 16, were married on 15 June 1893, probably in Ennis.

A doctor was summoned, who pronounced it pneumonia. More than a month passed. I continued to grow worse. A string was drawn across the entrance of the porch - "*No Visitors Admitted.*" I could turn my head and look out the window and see them walk away. It was during this time that Bertha gave birth to a little girl. Although I could not so much as have my head raised from the pillow, they brought the little one in for me to see and told me it was a girl. I said call it "*Tressa*"—but never told anyone why.<sup>69</sup> As they thought I was going to die, they did as I requested.

I shall never forget the kindness of friends and relatives during the subsequent trying days. I can never hope to repay to humanity the service so graciously rendered. Sister Josie and Sister Ella passed backward and forward from their homes alternately, spending much of their time with me. And Mother McCanless was at hand day and night.

From the time I was first stricken down, there were 76 days during which I did not put my foot on the floor.

It was in November of the same year that they took me to Dallas. Dr. H. K. Leak operated upon me for an empyema<sup>70</sup> that had formed on the inner chest walls, from the effects of the pneumonia. This resulted in the loss of my right lung. As a result, I wore tubes in my side for about 3 months.

The next year I was not worth much, but managed to live, spending the time among the relatives. They all treated me so kindly. I could fill here many pages with the kind and generous acts I received at their hands—none of which I assure you is forgotten. It would indeed be consoling if I could ever hope to repay such service to humanity.

Now, as I write this page and think that nearly every hand that ministered to my wants and needs has passed from this field of human action, it impresses upon my mind how temporary are human affairs.

*"How sad it seems, this common thought, All things that are, must ere be nought."*

- *Khayyam*

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<sup>69</sup> Arthur apparently never wrote down the reason why either. It remains his secret to this day.

<sup>70</sup> An empyema is the presence of pus in a body cavity.

## *A Struggle for Health*

The next few years were a struggle to regain my health and make a living as nearly as possible—the shortage being made up by relatives. I could do but little work, so I turned my attention to job work—light repairs, etc. When I heard of a man that was contemplating some repairs or additions to his home, I called upon him and tried to make a sketch showing him what I thought necessary to give the best arrangement at the least cost. It was in this way that I acquired my first knowledge of drawing.

I had a small set of drawing instruments that Hugh had given me. I do not know how he came to have them - he never would tell. (*Maybe it was because he knew the game better than the other fellow.*) Nevertheless, they sure did serve me a good purpose.

I drew fairly well from the first attempt. I surprised myself. Hix was a great help to me. He had already acquired a fair knowledge of drawing and gave me many pointers.

In the summer of 1896 I went to Ardmore, at that time in the Indian Territory—now Oklahoma, where I worked in the office of C. E. Troutman, architect. I made a few friends who were worthwhile. Conditions were ripe for a man of my experience and I was ripe for the condition and was not blind to the situation - but Bertha did not want to make the change and I gave it up.

I returned to Ennis and engaged in drawing and contracting. Early in the spring of 1897 I secured the contract for the construction of a residence for Tom Eavret, at Bremond—and before finishing this, I received a letter from my boyhood friend Walter Jones, at Houston, requesting that I come to Houston, upon completion of the work at Bremond, and build his home.

I complied with his request and spent a pleasant summer in Houston, Bertha and Tressa together with me.

The pretty wife and child attracted much attention, of which I was justly proud. My health had improved beyond expectation and I was again on the uphill road. We returned to Ennis and during the succeeding year, 1898, I engaged in drawing and estimating for B. F. Sargent, a local contractor.

Yet there was plenty of competition and I could not keep steadily employed. It was quite a struggle to keep the little craft afloat.

## ***Back to the H. & T. C. R.R.***

I think it was in January 1899 that C. E. Jones<sup>71</sup> offered me a position as Assistant Foreman in charge of an emergency gang. In the meantime, the old man died and Charley succeeded him. It was none too good an offer but it was steady work and that was the big thing. "Something to do" - What is the trouble?

There is not a period in history when this subject has not been discussed. It concerned the early pharaohs of Egypt, and was doubtless a factor in the building of the pyramids. Percales of Ancient Greece took this matter up with his governors. At the gate of Temple of Jerusalem, when Jesus approached the idler, he said, "*Why stand here idle?*" etc.—and his reply? "*Because no man has hired us Lord.*"

Whoever may dispute this surely does not know what it is to seek earnestly for employment and to endure hardships and insults for just enough to live on.

Back to the subject: I was assigned one car for living quarters and from 3 to 5 men to keep up light repairs. I stuck this out a year and was made Assistant Foreman of the main gang in May 1901.

By January 1902 Charley Jones had dropped out and I was appointed General Foreman in charge of structures. I had worked from the bottom to the top of the building department.

Dad Grigsby was still in the gang and was getting old and needed a lighter job. So I made him foreman.

In the meantime, I had bought a little home just across the street from the old McCanless home and was paying for it. I had also bought a piano for Tressa and was giving her music lessons. She was now about 9 years old. Things now were coming my way.

We had lost Mother McCanless and Daddy McCanless<sup>72</sup> was living with us. This made a nice combination, that I felt safe in leaving home. During this time Mr. H. J. Helland was Division Engineer and A. V. Kellogg, Supt. M. of W.—H. & T. C. lines—both of whom were my friends. But there were changes in administration and I resigned at the close of 1905 to keep from getting fired.

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<sup>71</sup> Arthur probably means E. O. Jones.

<sup>72</sup> The 1900 federal census for Ellis County erroneously lists Stephen McCanless as head of the household.



## ***Contracting Again***

Returning to Ennis, it was up to me again to try my hand at contracting. The field did not look too promising. But there was no choice and I did manage to land enough work to get me by until May 15, 1906—when I received a message from Mr. A. V. Kellogg, requesting my services to construct him a residence at Houston. I accepted and subsequently, spent another pleasant summer in Houston. Bertha and Tressa went with me. We secured rooms with Mrs. Vance, mother-in-law of Robert Kerr, the florist, who also roomed there.

The house was built of concrete blocks and made a beautiful home. I have a photo of it framed.

I shall never forget our pleasant strolls, of evenings in the downtown section, and hitching Old Dan to the buggy on Sunday and taking a drive down the Harrisburg road. What would I give for such pleasure next Sunday, February 7th, 1926. It was nearly 20 years ago. What a change. However, changes must come and it is a part of our duty to adapt ourselves to conditions and take responsibilities that circumstances make necessary.

When Mr. Kellogg's house was near completion, Mr. W. A. Spalding, who had been made Division Engineer of the H. & T. C., sent a wire offering me the position of Superintendent of Buildings, and sent transportation.

## ***A Trip to Washington***

At this juncture of my writing, the Office of Valuation, of Dallas, received a message from Washington, D.C. requesting my presence before the Bureau of Valuations, then in conference with carriers on the cost of reproducing their various facilities—a work in which I have been taking a part for the past 10 years.

This was on Feb. 5th, 1926. On the 8th, a Monday, I left Dallas at 5 P.M. and reached Washington on Wednesday at 8:15 P.M. I had quite a nice trip but found the capital city wrapped in snow.

I did not go into conference until the next Monday, which gave me a few days for

sightseeing. I availed myself of the opportunity to visit some of the historical places, as well as some of the national buildings. Here, I can hardly resist writing at least a brief description of what I saw and how I felt while viewing some of the old scenes so familiar to us in history—but both time and space forbids. Besides, such is not a purpose of this sketch. So I will have to pass it up. For further notes, see my "*Sketch Book*."<sup>73</sup>

Returning to my subject: On completion of the Kellogg residence, which was in the latter part of October, I returned to Ennis, together with Bertha and Tressa - all that I had at the time. Settling myself in the little home covered with wisteria, and with autumn roses blooming in the yard, now all paid for, the little family well and steady employment ahead, I felt comfortable. My health had improved wonderfully and job at Houston had netted me a little needed cash to clear up some back bills. So the skies were more clear than I had seen them in quite a while. This did not last long, however. Early in the spring of the following year, 1907, Mr. Spalding resigned and was succeeded by Mr. Denny Parker—afterward railroad commissioner and a very fine man. But on account of other changes, I resigned—I think in April 1908, and returned again to contracting at Ennis.

Another little girl had come to the family on November 2nd, 1907. Just missed my birthday by two days. Now Evalyn, here you are! What are you going to do about it?

## ***An Interruption***

At this juncture, I am 61 years old - October 31, 1926, and am in good health, except for a slight cold. I have just returned from Louisiana, where I have been superintending the construction of some buildings. An account of my trip is given in my "*Sketch Book*."

I am boarding the children with Tressa. Evalyn will be 19 years old November 2nd, or say the day after tomorrow. Arthur (*son*) is 17 on September 15th. Tressa and Allen are doing fairly well. Helen, their little girl, is 3 years old. Son has a job with the T. &

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<sup>73</sup> See "Mount Vernon" in "This and That," pp. 92-93.

P. R. R. and seems to be doing very well. Evalyn is taking a course in shorthand and typewriting. So you can see that my load is getting lighter. I have a very good position and my duties are light. So it is again revealed that *"nothing is as good or bad as we first expected."*

I perhaps have a few years ahead of me and expect to make the most of them. My years of sorrow and disappointments have not subdued my appreciation of nature, nor my interest in the affairs of life. My mind is alert and my memory good—and my health was never better. So you see, I am still *"going strong."*

I have 15 days vacation before the beginning of my next job, at which time I will return to dear old Louisiana and continue my *"Sketch Book"* that I began on my previous trip.

### ***With the S. A. & A. P. R.R.***

It was in latter part of September 1908 that I received a letter from my long-time friend, Hans Helland, offering me a position as Superintendent of Buildings on the S. A. & A. P. R. R.<sup>74</sup> It was quite a surprise. I had not heard from him in some time. The letter was written from Yoakum, Texas. I had two or three small contracts on hand at the time. While the position offered a better future, I could not well dispose of my obligations. So I wrote him a letter to that effect, refusing the offer. He replied by wire, saying to meet him on arrival of #5 at Ennis. I did so. He was enroute to Waxahachie, where he lived at the time. I went with him, that we would have time to talk matters over. He offered inducements that I could not well afford to turn down. I returned home to talk the situation over with Bertha. We decided it was best to make the change. We regarded it as an opportunity to escape from a cramped condition in the field of contracting that I had struggled with for about six months—with but little success. I therefore began to make arrangements to that end. John Staples, who was supervising work for me at the time, agreed to take the contracts off my hands and I made it satisfactory with the owners.

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<sup>74</sup> The San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railroad was chartered in 1884 to connect San Antonio with Aransas Pass, a distance of about 135 miles. See New Handbook of Texas, vol. 5, p. 798.

Having completed all arrangements, I prepared to leave Ennis. I was wondering all the time what the change would mean to me and to those entrusted to my care, but had resolved to accept the results, for better or worse, without complaint—and "*she*" agreed to share the same with me.

I shall never forget my feelings as the train pulled out that night. I could hardly consent to take my seat. I had spent my life along the line of the H. & T. C., and to go so far away seemed like a trip to a foreign country to me. But that was not all. I was leaving Bertha and the two children. Evalyn was just a year old. I did not know how long it would be before I could see them again.

I arrived at Yoakum late in the evening of the following day. I think it was September 10th. It made me feel good to see Mr. Helland's familiar and smiling face, framed by that neat, trimmed beard. I had brought two men with me - Will McColonhor and Bud Ruffin. Will afterwards killed himself but I do not think this job was the cause, for it proved a very pleasant one.

We spent the next night at San Antonio and the following day we took the train for Kerrville—the northern terminus of the S. A. & A. P. lines, located about 70 miles northwest of San Antonio.

Mr. Helland had advised that my first duty would be to build a combination freight and passenger depot at Kerrville. Afterward, I was to supervise the construction of a general office building at San Antonio. Although the latter building was never constructed, we did build the one at Kerrville.

## ***The Village in the Hills***

Kerrville is situated at the foot of several small mountains (*or large hills, if you prefer*) none of which I can remember the names of except Teives Mountain, to the east. The line of the S. A. & A. P. finds its way to this little Dutch village by winding between the foot of hills and after a climb of about 700 feet, or say 10 feet to the mile after leaving San Antonio.

You could not imagine a more picturesque little village than Kerrville.<sup>75</sup> It was surrounded by hills. The waters of the beautiful Guadalupe rushed by it to the west, falling over rocks into big pools as clear as crystal, there resting awhile, then taking another start, running, jumping, and falling over some more rocks, etc. Pecans and cypress line the banks. The cypress begins with small branches at the top. Each succeeding branch is a little longer than the one above, sweeping outward like the roof of a Chinese pagoda. Now you look at the picture and say, "*Where are they?*" Well, they are there all right, you will just have to go a little further down the river.



*I sent this postcard to Bertha, Nov. 10 - 1908. Let's go fishing!*

Speckled trout are plentiful in the streams, deer make their daily trip to the water-hole, and wild turkeys still visit the wheatfields.

Well, I cannot linger longer in those beautiful hills. You see, I have just passed my 43rd milepost and have quite a span to cover. Some of it is over a rough and rugged road, so I must be on my way.

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<sup>75</sup> Kerrville, founded in 1848, is situated in Texas' famed "Hill Country," west of Austin. It was originally called Brownsborough. See Ray Miller, Eyes of Texas Travel Guide, Hill Country/Permian Basin Edition (Houston: Cordovan Corporation, Publishers, 1980), p. 61.



*This postcard written Bertha Sept. 22 - 1908. I have climbed this hill.*

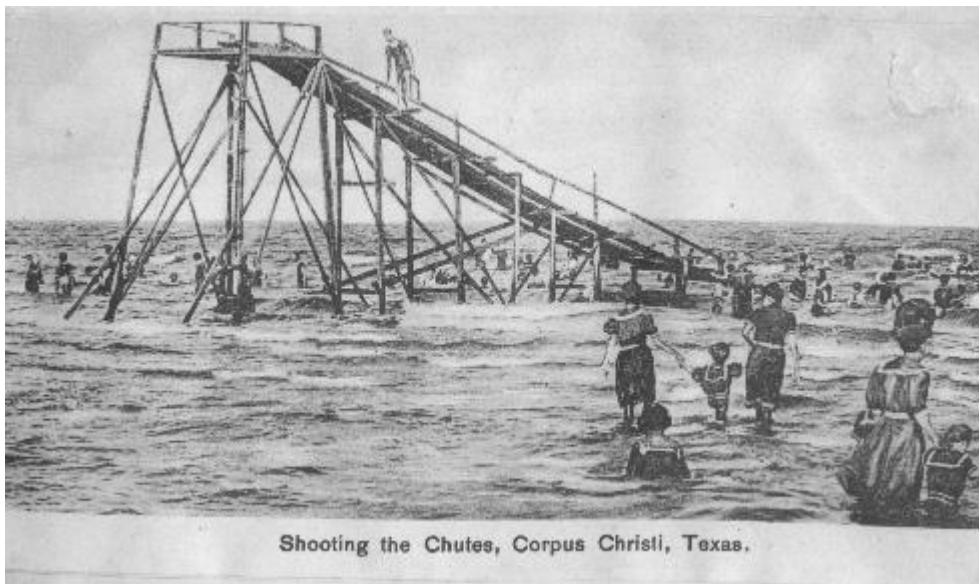
## ***From Mountain to Coast***

The work at Kerrville was completed, I think, sometime about the middle of November. My next job was to be at Corpus Christi.

I went to move the passenger depot and make other repairs. It was quite a change in scenery. The contrast was amplified in my mind by the fact that I was accustomed to neither the hill or coast country. I looked out across the bay at the waves, as they rolled and broke - forming beautiful white-caps. The gulls rose on the wind for the breakers to pass under them, then settled back on the waves, bobbing up and down until another breaker came. It was quite as thrilling as standing on a hilltop watching the graceful raven swaying himself from side to side, beating his way over valleys of green wheat, then elevating his flight to scan the next hill. Two contrasting scenes, equally beautiful. The inland scenes were not without their attractions—the beautiful fields of cabbage, blue-green in hue, beginning to head, and the beets, with their purple and green tops, kept you guessing which was prettiest.

I had written to Bertha and suggested that she and the two children come down to Corpus Christi and spend a month with me and she had consented to do so. I forwarded

her transportation and on December 3rd, I received a message from her saying she would reach Houston the morning of the 5th. I left Corpus Christi the next day at 12:30 P.M. and reached Houston the next morning, after Bertha's train had arrived. Tressa met me at the gate. Bertha had remained in the waiting room with Evalyn, then but a little more than a year old. As I approached the door, I saw her sitting there with the little one standing at her knees. My heart palpitated and I stopped. She was laughing at my excitement. It seemed to me the most beautiful vision of all my life. It was the first time I had seen them in 3 months. We took the next train for Corpus Christi, spending the following night at Kenedy. We left the next morning and arrived at Corpus Christi about noon. That evening we went house hunting and succeeded in renting a little furnished villa on Water Street, from a Mrs. Fox.



*Beach bathing in November.*

We spent a delightful month here. Everything was novel to us all. When the tide was in, the waves formed our back yard, but when they receded, we walked down a flight of steps and walked along the smooth, sandy shore to pick up seashells. I've heard that all this row of buildings were taken to the bay by the storm of 1914 - the one that destroyed so much property and lives throughout the coast country.

The arrow points to the little cottage that we occupied, as best I can tell, in the scene [below].



*On the beach at Corpus Christi. This is where we spent Christmas 1908.*

Having completed the work at Corpus Christi, I proceeded to Hallettsville to make extensive repairs to the depot. I took the little family with me and we found a stopping place with a Mrs. Tipitt, and spent 2 months very pleasantly.

### ***A Stop at Yoakum***

From Hallettsville, we went to Yoakum. It was now the month of April, 1909. The first thing to do was to find a stopping place where the family would be comfortable in case I had to go out on the road and leave them. Someone said that Mr. Newberry might take us for a while until we could get located. I shall never forget meeting him. He was a great big good-natured fellow, one of those that you feel you have always known but never met. He took the matter up with his good lady, or at least he took up to the good lady - I never knew which came first. I rather suspect the latter, for she surely did look surprised. However, we found them a most delightful family and they have remained our



dear friends to the present day.

The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Newberry and 3 sons: Harvey, 17; Henry, 14; and Presnel, 5. Three of the most handsome and best boys that I ever saw, I believe.

My next duty was to inventory buildings. How little did I know that this primary schooling was to serve me usefully in later years.

I took measurements and made sketches of all the buildings on the main line of the S. A. & A. P., from Houston to San Antonio, and from Yoakum to Rosebud on the Waco branch. I also made drawings and described the construction of each building. Then, on account of several new depots being contemplated, together with extensive repairs, I was detailed to do the drawing and estimating—which I followed-up, together with superintending construction, up to the time I left the service of the company.

In the meantime, Bertha, together with the two children, had returned to Ennis to make arrangements for the move to Yoakum. This was in May, I think. After having rented out little home at Ennis, Bertha wrote me and I went home and loaded for the move. We rented a place in Yoakum from Mr. Riggs, on the corner of Ross and Whitfield Streets. We remained there from June 1909 to July 1913, when we moved to the new home we built in the west part of town.

However, so much had happened in the intervening time. On September 15th, 1909, we had a son born. Bertha named him Arthur Lewis—the first name for myself and the second for my father.

I shall never forget my sensation when I realized I was the father of a son. I estimated how old I would be before he could make his way without, should it be necessary. I figured he could make it after he was 17 years old. I would then be 60. I wondered how I would feel at such an age. Well, if you would like to know, read on.

As I am now writing this, I am past the 60th milestone and Son his 17th. The following is a part of his letter to me on his 17th birthday. I was at Plaquemine, Louisiana at the time:

*Do you remember 17 years ago this morning Daddy, the happiness that came to the Babb family about 6 o'clock in the morning? I'll bet you do. Knowing you had a son*

*you could raise to depend on for help in the years to come. My, wasn't that a grand and glorious feeling? I hope things shape out as you thought then. If they haven't, I'll do my best in future to do so.*

The next thing to make a ripple on the ocean of life and rock the little family craft was a message I received from Denison, dated December 29th, 1912. It read, "*Ella not expected to live. Come.*" It struck me like a thunderbolt. I had not heard she was ill. It was pneumonia. I was at a little town on the Corpus branch the time—Skidmore. I went directly to Yoakum to advise Bertha of the sad tidings—which was doubly sad, first because of the impending loss of Sister Ella and second, because of what it meant to Mother. She had made her home with Sister Ella for the past 18 years.

I left Yoakum that night about midnight. It was raining and cold. I heard the cab man call and could hear the horses snort and tramp restlessly on the ground. Bertha got up with me, as was her custom when I was leaving at night. She went with me to the door and bid me be of good cheer. If I had known that it was the last time I was to see her well, how could I have had the courage to withstand the strain before me?

I reached Denison the following night, January 1st, 1913. Sister Ella had passed away in the morning of the same day. She had passed some words with a little neighbor boy and Sister Josie commented that she appeared better, to which Sister Ella replied, "*Yes. I feel good now.*" She died with the words on her lips. Using the language of Ingersoll:<sup>76</sup>

*The dying woman mistook the sting of death for returning health, and said I am better now. Let us hope it is true with all the countless dead.*

15 years have lapsed today since that sad event. Charley, Mother, and Sister Josie have joined her in death and we can only repeat, "*Let us hope they are better now.*"

*"Who knows, I wonder."*

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<sup>76</sup> Robert Green Ingersoll (1833-1899), American lawyer and agnostic.

July 19th, 1928

With the exception of this last paragraph, it has been two years since I have written in my *"Life Book."* Naturally, quite a bit has occurred, for in the event of modern times, things transpire in rapid succession, and as age advances upon us and our steps less brisk, the world seems to speed up and the years are not as long as they used to be.

A cataract that had been forming on my best eye has been removed with perfect success and my vision restored—which is a great relief mentally and otherwise. I have been transferred from the valuation department of the T. & P. R.R. to building inspector, an outside job that suits me better. Evalyn has finished her business course and has a job as a stenographer. Son, or Arthur, in two years worked himself up from \$50 per month to \$135 in the auditing department of the T. & P. He has just been transferred to an outside job with the signal department. Not so good but *"all is well that ends well"*—so says Shakespeare. Let us hope.

## ***Reflections***

When I sketched the preceding pages, although the object is stated in the preface, I cannot help asking myself the question: *"What purpose can they serve?"* The facts set forth are interesting only to myself and most of it is unpleasant. It seems to be resolving itself to a story of disappointing life that is better forgotten than recalled. The question: Shall I continue it?

This is Sunday, June 11th, 1939—just about eleven years since I wrote the previous chapter in my life book. And as before said, all that has transpired, for the most part has been sad. But such is life and we must record it all if we are to give a correct account. So the succeeding chapter will be to connect up the gap, not in detail, but with the most eventful occurrences.

As the preceding chapter was concerning Son and his affairs, I will continue to trace him to his sad ending.

He remained with the signal department about six months and then dropped from the T. & P. payroll. But the following year, I think in 1929 and `30, by reason of a branch

line being built by the T. & P. R.R. from Monahans, Texas to Loving, New Mexico, Son was recalled to serve as timekeeper and material clerk. This work having been completed in 1931, he was again out of employment. The Depression being on, he found but little to do, but in 1933 he found employment with the Knox Street Hardware Company. One day, while out collecting in a small truck, he was struck at a street intersection by a car being driven by Mr. Hugh E. Prather. Son suffered a broken arm, a head injury, and other bruises. This was in October 1932. He remained in the hospital a long time.

Naturally, he brought suit for damages. When the suit was settled in July 1934, he was awarded \$5,000 - but lawyer fees, hospital costs and doctors' fees all having to come out of it, he was left with but little for his two years loss of time and his suffering. He did, however, have enough left to get himself a nice car and some clothes and took Evalyn and I to Mexico in September 1934. We had a most pleasant trip.

Skipping years, I will close this chapter by saying that on January 25, 1937 he died. He was sick only 5 days. Imagine my sorrow.

This is January - 1941.

Let the 3 years go unrecorded. It is best untold and I have nothing to say.

Tomorrow is my birthday - October 31st, 1941. THE QUESTION IS: TO BE OR NOT TO BE!!

My conscience is like an attorney defending a guilty client, whose no one deed is deserving of death or his total deeds worthy of life (*just a loose lever*), that should be hanged for the benefit of society. My life's past acts troop before me like the defeated soldiers of a crusading army, with furled flags and muffled drums—ready to surrender to the King of Fate, that master of men.

*Disappointment, like the slow gnawing of a deadly tooth, it saps old age and hollows eager youth.*

Thus closes my book of life.

**A. B.**