



## **My Family**

By Sarah Catherine Williams Shaver Pitts

On November 3, 1922, at 3 AM, with old Dr. Pfohl in attendance, a squirming baby girl, with dark hair, was delivered to Ella May Wyatt Williams and Edgar Reynold (Ray) Williams. This birth took place at their home, and was the second and last child for this couple, the first being my brother, Ray Wyatt Williams, who was born May 9, 1917. This was a proud and momentous occasion for Ray and Ella. They had wanted a boy and a girl, in that order, and they were happy.

They sent out birth notices to their family and friends, announcing my arrival and my name of Sarah Catherine Williams, weighing 5 pounds and 11 ounces. I was named in honor of my paternal grandmother, Sarah Prascovia Clark Williams, and her mother, my great-grandmother, Margareth Catherine Stockinger Clark.

I was always a lively little girl, never walking, always running, and Mother said that I never looked where I was putting my feet; I was always looking up and ahead. One of my earliest memories was falling in the grocery store, Williams Grocery, which was located at the corner of West First Street and Hawthorne Rd. in Winston-Salem. This store was owned by one of my father's brothers, Louis and his wife, Nona Garwood Williams. I remember running in the back of the store and stumbling. I must have been all of 3 years old. I remember my mother scooping me up and off to the new and only pediatrician in Winston-Salem, a Dr. Butler, and receiving a few stitches in my chin that had met with a protruding nail in the floor at Uncle Louis' store. I still have the scar on my chin.

Another time when I was about 4 years old Aunt Mamie, Uncle Rad's wife, was visiting and for some reason I got angry with her. I remember telling her and everyone else who was on the porch that I was going to leave home, run away and eat woolly worms and die. I picked up my little purse and started walking up the hill. I probably got as far away as 50 feet. I do not remember who convinced me to return home.

I remember that Uncle Louis had a big barrel of crackers that sat beside the counter in the store, and customers were encouraged to pick up a cracker and sample it. I remember Aunt Nona laughing and telling about one very particular lady who had phoned in an order --- they made home deliveries of groceries in those days --- and she wanted to know if the toilet paper was fresh.

Now-a-days there is no big barrel of crackers in grocery stores; all crackers are

purchased in boxes, and if you don't like the crackers you have to eat them anyway or throw them away, but in those days you could sample a cracker. As I write this that building is still standing, and is, I think, a dance studio.

Mother and Dad were both born in the Fork Church Community in Davie County, NC. Mother was the second surviving child out of eight children and the oldest female child of John Noah Wyatt and Sallie Bailey Wyatt. They lived on No Creek Road, close to the intersection of Williams Road. Sister Dora had preceded Mother, but she died in her early teens, age 13, I think, from appendicitis.

I do not know exactly where Dad was born, but the Williams family had a fire early in his life, and lost all of their belongings. They relocated on the acreage of land in the heart of Fork Church Community, across the road from Fork Baptist Church, and maybe a thousand feet or so behind the row of little buildings that faced the church. I remember the house had two huge gardenia bushes beside the front entrance. I remember that the family always gathered in the dining / kitchen / sitting room area in the back of the house. The house was an L-shaped house, with the kitchen being in the one-story, short part of the L. The rest of the house was two stories high. The kitchen area was always the warmest place in an old house, for the stove was a big wood stove. Those stoves were built with a receptacle on the side to hold water, and the heat from the stove would keep the water hot. In those days kitchens were usually located at one end of the house, though connected. I suppose that most fires were started in the kitchen, albeit it separated from the rest of the house. In larger homes, where you had many helpers (in earlier days there would be many slaves) the kitchen was not connected to the house.

My first memory, when I was possibly 2 or 3 years old, is of Dad taking me outside one night to tap a kidney, and as I squatted I looked up into the sky and saw a car in the sky. I knew it was a car because it had two head lights just like a car. I obviously had a logical mentality. (Smile)

The home place had a storage / ice house. I remember going into the ice house to get ice for tea, and I remember going to a spring located some 50 feet or so from the house from whence we got the butter, milk and eggs that been immersed in containers to keep cool.

I do not remember what kind of car we had. We were fortunate in having a car at all, but I think that it was a T-model Ford. Cars in those days did not have heaters, and Mother would bundle Brother and me up in blankets to keep warm. The roads were wagon tracks, and not exactly smooth for the wheels of an automobile. I remember that we got stuck in the mud more than once and Dad would have to push us out. But

we always made it to Grandma's house. The song about going to Grandma's house in the snow for Thanksgiving is a true picture of a reality of by-gone years.

I retrospect, I think that I lived through the best of times. The world was a quieter place then, people were more honest, and businesses had more ethics. Your handshake and / or your word was your honor. We had neighborhood schools, children were reared and cared for by their parents, radio and telephones had been invented, penicillin came into being early in my life. We had automobiles instead of horses. There was no need to lock your house if you lived in a good community. TV has robbed our children of their innocence and since the children today are bussed to and from school TV has also robbed them of their ability to explore the world around them. We have made house-plants out of the children. Here in Winston-Salem, where we have few days below freezing, as soon as the temperature drops 5 degrees below normal people reach for their heavy jackets. The children are not allowed to "toughen-up".

In the earlier days of our country, every child and adult in the home place knew about the presence of guns. They were taught by their parents how and when to use a gun. All women knew how to protect the home from whatever wandered into the yard. In today's world, the women are scared to touch a pistol, much less use one to protect themselves or their children. Sometimes I am ashamed of the lack of gumption that the modern-day woman has.

And so it goes----

by Catherine Williams Pitts, 11-3-1922 --- Dec. 1999

## NEVER SAY THAT WORD AGAIN IN MY HEARING

Brother Ray used to tell the story about the time that he got in trouble with Dad.

We lived about one walking mile from the grammar school. It was Central School, which was located on the lower edge of what is now Old Salem. The principal was Miss Annie Wiley, one of the three daughters of Calvin Wiley, for whom Wiley school was named. There were two paths we could take to walk home. One path took you past several filling stations on the left, and on the right was about two blocks of houses in which some of the black R J Reynolds Tobacco Co. workers and their families lived.

Brother was walking home from school one day with several of his friends, and they became engaged in a little dirt-clot battle with several of the black children. Brother climbed on top of a high area beside of a spot from which much dirt had been removed. He threw a red dirt clot down at one of the little black children. There must have been a rock in the middle of the clot of dirt, for when it hit the black child it cut a gash across his forehead. Brother was scared to death.

He turned, and ran home as fast as his little 11 year old legs would carry him, rushed into the house and up the stairs to his room, slamming the door as he entered. Shortly after that Dad arrived home. Brother dashed from the house, ran to Dad, and confessed that he had killed a little black kid. Dad asked if he knew where the child lived, but of course, Ray did not know. Dad and Ray went to the area, and found the family with the injured child. Dad convinced the mother to allow him to take the child to Dr. Pfohl to get his cut treated. The mother consented, and they went to see the doctor.

When they arrived back at our home, Dad cut off the motor, turned to Ray and asked exactly what had taken place. Ray explained. And when Dad admonished him for throwing things at people Brother said, "But he's only a nigger."

To my father "them" were fighting words. Dad gave Brother quite a tongue lashing, and warned him that he never wanted to hear him use that word again, that the little Negro children were God's children just as he, Ray, was. This made such an impression on Brother when he told me, 40 years later, that he still could not use that word in any manner.

I had always taught my children that using a slang word that belittles and denounces a race of people was not to be tolerated in my household. And I think that I succeeded.

This is a good place to tell about Dr. Pfohl. He was, to my knowledge, the only family

doctor in that part of Winston Salem. He lived in the Old Salem Community. He was a rather rotund individual, always dressed in a three-piece suit, with a watch in the vest pocket with a gold chain connected to another place on his suit. I wonder where the other end of that chain resided - ??? Dr. Pfohl spoke very slow, with perhaps a two second delay between each word. One learned to wait patiently for the full sentence, for he could not be hurried. When Ray was a small child he became ill, and mother took him to see Dr. Pfohl. The doctor told Mother that Ray was allergic to milk; she must quit feeding him milk. She did, and Ray got better. Some time later, she re-introduced milk to Ray, for in her mind all children needed cows milk. When Ray got sick again, Dr. Pfohl said to Mother, "Have -- you -- been -- feeding -- him -- milk -- again?" Mother replied in the affirmative, to which Dr. Pfohl said, "If -- you -- keep -- that -- up -- you -- will -- kill -- him." Needless to say, Mother fed Ray no more milk. In later life Ray drank butter milk, and could eat some ice-cream.

## SNOW DAYS

Each time that we have a little snow or ice I remember the snow storms that we had here in Winston-Salem when I was a child. I remember a deep snow, along about 1927 or 1928. In those days small schools were built in the area of the city where the population was heavy, so that children could walk to school. Just think the amount of money our city and county governments would save if all the grammar schools were small, and situated in the middle of a housing development. Smaller classrooms, and better neighborhood camaraderie. The PTA's would flourish. Closed communities could have their own grammar schools.

Back in 1928, the children walked to school, rain or shine, snow or sleet. I remember waiting with Mother on the front porch for Brother to come home from school. The snow plows had come through to scrape the roads, so there was quite a big build-up of snow on the side of the road. I remember that we saw Brother's head bobbing up over the high mound of snow, and Mother was relieved.

In later life, when I was 20 or so, we used to get our sleds and go to the top of Doune Street. The down hill ride started, I think, at Cascade Ave., crossed Gloria Ave., Vintage Ave., and ended at Main Street. A big oil barrel would be found and a fire would have been built in the barrel for warming our hands. We would sled piggy-back down that long hill.

Another favorite hill was Vintage Avenue where we lived. The last block was steep, emptying into Washington Park. We would build up the snow at the curb, so that we could sled right over the curb, down the steps, into Washington Park, wend our way through the trees, and stop, or go around, and / or sometimes through the Pavilion. I cringe at the thought of that now, for we could have killed ourselves. I was at least 25 years old the last time I took that ride.

The City blocked off the adjoining streets so that we could play, and people who lived on those streets were understanding.

Backing up a little, I remember getting a pair of skates. They were 4 wheel skates, and Mother would not allow me to bring them into the house; I had to leave them on the front porch. One morning I rose to find that my skates had been stolen. After that, the new skates were brought inside.

## MY FATHER, EDGAR REYNOLD (RAY) WILLIAMS CWP 11/15/92

My wonderful father was such a teetotaler. He told me once that had he been a drinking man he would have taken to the bottle after my mother's death. He loved her so much. We never had any of the "spirits" in our home, so naturally my brother and I had to taste the forbidden fruit.

One time, after I had separated from my first husband, Dad, Mother, Bess and I were playing bridge, and in some way the use of alcohol came into the conversation. Being at that time a know-it-all at the tender age of 20 or so, having had at least three drinks of that beverage in my entire life, I said something like, "Oh, alcohol is not so bad. I've had several drinks and it didn't make an alcoholic out of me."

My father, with a horrified expression on his face, said, in a sotto voice, "Do you mean that you, MY DAUGHTER, have had alcohol in your stomach?"

And with a negative shake of his head and with shoulders drooping, he laid his cards down on the table, rose and went to the basement to vigorously shake down the coals in the furnace.

After he left the table Mother said to me, "Did you have to tell him?"

I shall never forget that. Unfortunately it did not stop me from drinking alcohol, but perhaps it caused me to reflect upon the evils of such. Maybe that's the reason I never became an alcoholic.

That brings to mind the time Dad caught my date and me kissing in the living room. I was 17 years old, and dating Connie, who later I married. Dad disapproved of him, and for good reason, but I was young and romantic, and so innocent as to be ridiculous. Connie was 4 ½ years my senior, and Dad would only let me have one date per week. We had the living room to ourselves, Mother and Dad were in the little back room where Dad had his desk, and Mother was crocheting. Dad's way of announcing that it was time for my date to leave was to get the glass milk bottles and put them outside for the milk man to get the next morning when he made his milk delivery. Can you imagine that fifty years ago we had milk deliveries, and you could call a grocery store for a grocery delivery? But I digress.

This particular night Dad came through the dining room to go to the kitchen to get the milk bottles. When he saw that we were kissing he was so infuriated that he came back into the room with, it seemed to me, at least one milk bottle for each finger on his hands. And they were clanking together, loudly, signifying the degree of anger

Dad felt. When he re-entered the living room from the porch, he paused just long enough to tell Connie that it was time for him to leave, and he wanted to see me in the back room.

I went to the back room with a nonchalant air (tho' scared to death), dropped down across the bed, mother calmly crocheting, and Dad tapping his pencil on the desk. I received quite a lecture. When I came in from school the next day Mother was sitting in her chair in the corner of the room, smoking a cigarette. She tried to keep a straight face, but finally gave up all pretenses and laughed so hard that tears were running down her cheek. But to Dad it was not funny. That is when I shared my first cigarette with my Mother.

I learned, after Mother's death, that Mother went to visit our next door neighbor the next morning, a lady who I refer to as "Aunt Het", and laughed so hard that Aunt Het feared she might have a heart attack. According to Aunt Het Mother said, "What did Ray expect?" Mother was far more realistic than Dad. I was a good looking girl. I deserved to be kissed.



## TALES FROM MY FATHER, EDGAR REYNOLD (RAY) WILLIAMS

My paternal grandfather was John Radford Williams, Jr., son of John Rufus Williams. This tale is about John Rufus Williams, called "Squire," who was a Justice of the Peace.

Quoting my father: "He was an awful old man, don't want to tell you much about him. He was the one who would say "Ah- the devil" and make a spitting motion over his shoulder. One night after Squire had gone to bed, and it was about 3 AM, he had a knock at the door. When he went to the door he asked who was there."

"Sambo and Mary."

"What do you want, Sambo?" asked Squire.

"Me and Mary wants to get married," said Sambo.

"Have you got any money?" asked Squire.

"Yassah, I'se got \$1.00."

"Shove it under the door." They had a crack under the door two inches wide.

Sambo put the dollar under the door. "Have you got your license?" asked the Squire.

"Yassah."

"Shove it under the door," said the Squire. He did. "Now go home and consider yourself married."

Squire used to come to grandfather's house and stay two or three days. When he left he always took enough grain and corn to take to Uncle Chalmus's house for his horses. Dad didn't like that. After Squire's wife died Squire went to live with Chal for awhile-- until he remarried. He left all of his furniture with Chal. P.R. gave a bureau to Peggy Garwood, (m Bennett) that had been Squire's. When grandfather's house burned the only furniture that Chal gave grandfather was a pie safe. With a metal front.

The old home place over at Fork was owned by Squire. Chal used to live in it. Squire owed some money to a lawyer, and lost the house to him. Then he rented the house from the lawyer for \$50 a year. After grandfather's house burned, from which they saved a bureau now owned by Uncle Cary, grandfather bought the house from the lawyer.

Dad grew up on the farm, and remembered old ice houses in the community, but they did not have one at that time. The ice used to be cut from a pond and sometimes the ice would be two inches thick. When he was 20 years old he went to a boarding school at Churchland, in Davidson Co., N.C. He told about how the boys used to go out in the community on a snowy night to overturn johnny houses. One man rebuilt

his out-house between two big trees so that it could not be turned over. Some of the boys put a stick of dynamite under it and blew it up. Dad claimed that he had no part in it, but he laughed when he told it.

He left Churchland at the age of 22, and taught at a little school house near Reeds Crossroads for one winter. He taught the English language, which had never been taught there before. He says the place was never the same. Then he married my mother, moved to Winston (now Winston-Salem) and went to work for RJR Tobacco Co. He lived in Winston-Salem the rest of his life. While at Churchland he lived with a Hedrick family. They had a dog that disliked everyone except the family. One day Dad asked Mr. Hedrick for his rifle to go hunting. As soon as he started out the dog went with him, and was his friend forever after.

My father was a kind and generous man. He was very paternal, always putting his family first and always looking after them. I can't imagine him ever looking at another woman with lust in his eyes. He had eyes only for my mother.

## MY MOTHER, ELLA MAY WYATT WILLIAMS

My Mother was a gentle woman. After her death, in 1945 I had many stories told to me about her life as a child. Grandmother Sallie had, in total, 11 children, but only 8 survived. Mother, being the second oldest and the oldest girl, got the bulk of the jobs looking after the household. Aunt Ruth, Mother's brother Bill's wife, told me about spending a night at the Wyatt's home. She said that Mother got up in the morning, made breakfast for everyone, packed all of her brother's and sister's lunch for them, got them off to school, washed up the dishes, got herself ready for school, then went into Grandmother's bedroom to tell her that she was leaving for school. Grandmother, still in bed, told Mother that she still had time to make the beds.

Dad told me that he promised Mother that she would never have to go back there to live again.

No doubt about it, Mother was the sister to which the rest of the children responded. After her death, and after Grandmother's death, when it came time to settle the estate Mother was sorely missed.

Mother was an excellent seamstress. She kept me dressed in nice clothes. She loved to go bargain hunting for fabrics, and she usually succeeded. Dad had bought her a Singer Sewing Machine, one of the treadle machines. In those days, when most of the clothes were hand made and the stitches put into the garment by hand, the sewing machine was a great improvement. She never taught me to sew. People, even today, want to make life easier for their children than it was for them, and in so doing they fail to teach them the lessons that they had learned. Mother was no different. She wanted me to have a happy childhood, different from hers, and that is what I had. The happiest of childhoods. But when Mother died, she had failed to teach me how to run a house, how to cook, how to clean a house, how to sew, how to do the beautiful finger work that she did. She had dreams of me being a concert pianist. She had only to look at my little hands to realize that was an unrealistic dream. I could not, and still cannot, reach an octave easily.

Mother tatted, crocheted, quilted, baked, and did all of those wifely things with joy. Or so it seemed. I never knew her as one adult to another adult. She became ill when I was about 16, and I knew her only as a sick parent.. She died when I was 22, from coronary thrombosis.

The only way that Mother knew to discipline Ray and me was to switch us. She would send us into the yard to break off a switch (if she didn't have several kept in a glass of water in the kitchen, keeping it fresh and pliable), and then she would attack our legs.

One day, when Ray intervened on my behalf, Mother turned on him with the switch, and the switch broke striking his high-topped boots. She was angry, Ray was swallowing his laughter, and I escaped. But it worked. We didn't like to be switched, and fear of the switch kept us in line.

I remember getting a switching one day, just before going to Grandmother's house. In order to make everyone feel sorry for me, I painted all of the switch streaks on my legs with Mercurochrome. (For those of you who do not know what Mercurochrome is, it is a bright red medication that does not sting.) Mother did not see this until after we arrived at Grandmother's house, when someone asked her why my legs were painted. She laughed, and told them that I had misbehaved. I did not receive the condolences I wanted.

My fondest and instant memory of my mother is of her laughing. She had a terrific sense of humor. She was a gentle and loving mother and wife. I loved her. And I still miss her. I also got her inability to sing. She had an awful voice. I wish I could hear her sing today.

## MY FATHER AS SANTA

After Tom and I were married, we lived in Dad's house for about two years. Dad moved out, wanting to give young Tom the opportunity to bond with Husband Tom. Two years later Dad and Bess moved back into the house and all of us lived there until Tom and I found the little house on Knollwood that we bought and moved into.

A couple of years after I gave birth to Andy, when Andy was old enough to know about Santa Clause, Dad decided that he wanted to see the children when they rose on Christmas morning to see the toys that Santa had left. Of course, Young Tom, (my son) already knew about Santa, being about 12 years old, but Andy was still a little child.

We would leave the house unlocked on Christmas Eve night, and Dad would slip in about 6 AM, come through the house Ho-Ho-Ho-ing and waking everyone up. He would announce that Santa had arrived at our house, and the kids were to get up and see what Santa had brought.

Dad really enjoyed that as much as the children.

After opening the Santa things, we would go to Dad and Bess's house for breakfast, and open gifts there. Bess would always serve a big breakfast.

After breakfast, we would go to Mom Pitts house and deliver gifts and receive gifts there, then return home for the rest of the day. Those were good years.

Speaking of Bess, she was the old maid in the family. For years she had lived many a month/year with us. She and her friends would decide to get an apartment, then after a year or so, they would move on, and Bess would return to our home. She was like a sister to me, and we fought like sisters. After Mother died, it was only natural that she and Dad would marry. Dad needed someone to take care of him-- he was not a man handy in the kitchen -- and Bess was ready for retirement plus her health was not good, so they decided to marry and take care of each other. She was a good wife to him, and she could make the best chicken pie I have ever had. In her later years, after the death of Dad, if she wanted to get all of my family together, and Brother Ray, of course, she would announce that she was having chicken pie on a set date and everyone would be there. When she died I lost my second Mother.

My father, Edgar Reynold (Ray) Williams, (11/27/1981 --- 6/10/1968) had a lovely blessing that he always said at the dinner table:

Heavenly Father,  
We thank Thee for this food.  
Bless it for the nourishment of our bodies,  
Forgive us our sins and save us,  
For Christs' Sake,  
Amen

Dad was not a deeply religious man, but he always insisted on having grace before a meal.

## LETTER FROM MY BROTHER, RAY WYATT WILLIAMS

Sgt. Ray W. Williams, 34435399  
69 T.C.S. 433 T.C. Group  
APO 713, Unit 1, % P M  
San Francisco, Calif.

Saturday, 8 July, 1944

Dear Sis,

I got your air-mail letter yesterday, and have been pretty disturbed, naturally. I have known, of course, that you have been unhappy for a long time. I have also known, approximately, what your problems are. But there isn't much advice I can give you. The same kind of things have always troubled me. Whether you know it or not, sis, with all our differences in nature, we are a great deal alike in one respect: Our family doesn't know us, really understand what makes us tick.

I think your trouble is that you are impatient, with all the troubles that impatience brings. That is what made you get married, when you should never have done so. But you are being unnecessarily hard on yourself when you begin to blame yourself for your marital flop. Even if Conrad had been anything but a damn fool, the odds were against the thing's succeeding. You were under terrific social and economic pressure from the very beginning. Also, both of you were psychologically unprepared for marriage. In my opinion you were less to blame than anyone else involved; on the contrary, you were the principal cause for its lasting as long as it did. This inferiority complex you seem to be developing is simply nonsense. You are loyal, industrious enough, you have a good sense of humor, and you have guts. There is no reason why your next marriage should not be a success, provided you have a good husband.

One of the things I think you ought to do is read more. You have never taken much interest in political, social, and literary affairs. With all your musical talent, you have never actually sat down and listened to good music for long at a time and tried to get everything possible out of it. The fact that you aren't conversant on these subjects goes a long way in causing the people you are associated with to regard you as a child. You seem to be in earnest about going into business. Every good business woman I have ever known has been a person of wide knowledge. The more you know the more valuable you will be. A good conversationalist, particularly if she is a woman, can go a long way. Gossips almost invariably are ignorant people.

Don't you worry yourself about your divorce and taking care of Tommy. You have a

cast-iron case and only the war can cause any hitch in the proceedings. You are welcome to all the money I have, and I want you to use it, whether you have to or not. As far as Tommy is concerned, I say again, don't worry.

You only have to act naturally to get along. You don't have any trouble making friends. I know you are going through some tough times, but you must try to alleviate them, not make them worse.

When I get back, I fully expect you to be single again and a great deal more content than you have been for a long time. Then we'll take ourselves a vacation.

Take it easy, honey, and keep your chin up. -----Love, Ray



## A GIFT OF LOVE FROM MY PARENTS-----CWP 3/93

When I was a 5 year old child I started piano lessons with a Mrs. Mendenhall who lived on South Main Street in Winston-Salem, NC. I studied under her during most of my grammar school years with the exception of the short time I took lessons from my cousin Hazel Turner, Aunt Minnie's daughter, who came to live with us. Then mother and dad found a new teacher, a Mrs. Katherine Shore. Of the three, Mrs. Shore was by far the best teacher. She was young and aggressive, while Mrs. Mendenhall was not as well versed in the techniques of hand position. I studied under Mrs. Shore until I went to college in 1940, majoring in music. While in college I made the biggest mistake of my life by running away and getting married.

When I was about 13 or 14 Dad and Mother gave me a new Wurlitzer Baby Grand piano. I was so thrilled! I still have that piano until today. I guess one of the reasons I cherish it is that it represents love, a gift of love from my parents.

Under Mrs. Shore I entered all the regional and state contests that were offered, and I always left them with either a good or excellent rating certificate. Some of those certificates are still around, stuck in music books. One time, at the end of the regional contest being held at Elon College, one of the judges had Mrs. Shore bring me to one of the practice rooms. He gave me additional coaching to prepare me for the upcoming state competition. I was flattered that he would take the time for me.

In high school I accompanied Henry Newsome playing his violin. He was very good. We played together about 3 years. When he entered violin contests I always accompanied him. Sometimes we would provide the entertainment at the Woman's Club in Winston-Salem. Several times I was invited to perform as a soloist.

Henry had never been able to win the highest award in a contest, and his Mother was determined that he would get that award in his senior year, so she enrolled him, in secrecy, under another violin instructor. His regular instructor, who I will refer to as No. 1, coached him to play the required number a particular way, and Instructor No. 2 taught him to play with a different interpretation. We were still debating which version to use when we entered the auditorium, until we looked out at the judges and saw that Instructor No. 2 was one of the judges. (It seems that one of the pre-chosen judges had fallen ill and our No. 2 was called in at the last minute.) Needless to say we played the number as he had taught us, and Henry won the coveted award. Mrs. Newsome was very happy!

One time my grammar school sweetheart, Milton Graham, bicycled over to Reynolds Auditorium to hear me perform. There were about 30 students who were entered in

my age class, and all of us were required to play the same piece of music. Mother and Aunt Bess confessed later that they got so tired of hearing the same number being repeated 30 times that they made a game of it. About 5 years ago I saw Milton for the first time in about 50 years, and he mentioned the contest, with the 30 renditions of the same number.

After my divorce from Connie I moved back home and again took up the study of music under a Mrs. Anscombe, a piano teacher from Salem College; she was also a neighbor. Mother was ill, son Tommy was a baby, and I was working at RJR Tobacco Co. There was little time to practice. I finally quit. In 1945 Mother died and I quit work to take care of Tommy, Dad and the house. I had no money to spend on the piano to keep it in tune. In 1947 I married Tom Pitts, and since he showed no interest in my piano, and we had no money for tuning, I stopped playing.

We bought a little house too small for a piano. During the years it was shuffled back and forth several times between dad's and our house. Years passed, and in the 1970's, after I had moved to High Rock Lake I loaned the piano to the new Civic Center in Lexington. The piano was way too small for the Civic Center, but it filled a need until those in power could buy a bigger and better piano; then they returned the piano to me at the lake. I spent about \$500 getting it back in shape, new ivory (?) for the keys, major work on the sounding board, etc. And now it is used by me, for my entertainment. Tom and Andy remain unimpressed with my skills, for I did go about 30 years without playing at all. It took a lot of work to get my fingers to perform right and find the keys without my looking at them. I will never regain my former skill, and since no one appreciates it but me, there is no incentive to do so. One time I thought about selling my piano, and my son Tommy begged me not to do so. After all, he cut his teeth, and the marks still show, on one spot of the piano where he sat, as a baby in a high chair, and listened as I practiced. He is now dead, and his family would not care to have it. It requires space in a room. Tracy wants it, but I do not know where she would put it.

Musical talent seems to have run in the Williams family. My uncle Cary directed a choir, and my Father was quite proficient with a harmonica. I suppose music lessons were unheard of in his community in his growing-up days, and I assume Dad's love of music had a lot to do with his understanding of the needs of my brother and me. Of course, Brother Ray was quite talented with his trumpet, and several times he jammed with Louis Armstrong and his jazz band. Ray also did a lot of arranging (musically) during his college days while playing in bands.

Our mother's contribution to our musical careers was chauffeuring us to and from lessons, and enduring the noise we made in practicing. I am not sure I would have had

her patience.

Even though I don't use the piano as much as I should, every time I look at it I see a gift of love from my parents.

CWP March 1993

This update:

This is added in February, 2005. In the summer of 2003 at my request, Tracy and her family came here from Texas, rented a UHAUL, and we loaded all the heirlooms in the truck and they took it all to Texas. The list included:

The piano, the great-grandfather clock that was my gr-grandfather Williams Walker Wyatt's clock, as well as his desk, Gr-Grandmother Emily Foster Bailey's blanket chest and her dresser, the rocking horse that had been Brother Rays, the wicker rocking chair from Grandmother Wyatt's house, the corner china cubbard that had been built by Uncle Rad especially for my Mother, along with all the Apple Blossom china and crystal from my first marriage, and the sterling silver from the second marriage, the bedstead from Gr,gr,gr Uncle Rich , who was Emily foster Bailey's brother, and many other things.

## SOME OF MY CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

The children in my neighborhood who I grew up with, walked to and from school with, and played and fought with, were Hilda Holden (nick-named "Chicken"), Betty Sue Frazier, Billy Barber, Bruce Hall and his older brother J. M., and Dewey Stonestreet and his older brother Connie. Shirley Edman moved into the house beside of us later.

My upstairs bedroom was not air conditioned; no one had AC in those days. We had no choice except to "sweat it out." My room was directly over Mother's and Dad's room. One night when I was about 12 or 13 years old, and it was insufferably hot upstairs, really too hot to sleep, I crept down stairs to seek a cooler place. I quietly opened the front door so as not to disturb Mother and Dad, and went outside to sit on the front steps where it was much cooler. It was nearing midnight, and since we had no TV in those days, and since dad went to work about 7 AM, Mother and Dad had early bedtimes.

While quietly sitting on the front steps I heard some one coming up the hill, talking quietly. As they neared my house I saw that it was Dewey and Bruce. They did not see me. I said, "Hi". They looked around, surprised, and said, "What are you doing there?" I was wearing a pair of shorts and a well-constructed halter top, that covered all! I explained that it was too hot upstairs to sleep.

Those of us who grew up together were accustomed to gathering "at the corner", which meant the top of the hill. Cater-cornered were two open fields, on one we played softball, and the other corners were where the Barbers and the Millers lived. This was at the corner of Vintage Avenue and Park Blvd. The three of us wandered up to the top of the hill and sat down on the curb stone under the street lights. This was about 1933 or 1934.

We sat talking as only 12 year old children can. Remember that we were not nearly as streetwise as children of that age are today. We were a group of innocent children who did not know what sex was. At least, I was innocent! In those days there were not many cars around, and the world was relatively quiet. As we sat talking we heard a car approaching several blocks away. We just knew that it was the boys' older brothers, Connie and Jim I couldn't be seen talking with two boys at that time of night! And the boys could not be caught talking with ---of all things ---a GIRL ! Heaven forbid!!! And, worst of all, there was no place to hide !!! Except across the street ---- in the Millers yard --- up a tree! So I ran. The boys boosted me up the tree, and I stayed and waited. They hurried back to the corner, and tried to look as nonchalant as possible. Can't you just picture two 12 year old boys looking nonchalant? Of course, Connie

and JIM had gotten a glimpse of someone running across the street. The boys denied this; Connie and JIM tried to wait them out. Finally after what seemed to me to be hours, JIM and Connie left, I shimmied down the tree and scooted home, never to tell my parents of this episode in my youth. They never knew that I had left the house.

These same two boys, Dewey and Bruce, were our paper delivery boys. One day I grumbled that I wish they could throw the Sunday paper upstairs into my bedroom window so I would not have to come downstairs in the early morning hours to get the funnies (now called comics) on Sunday mornings. They said that they could do that. So we decided that I would tie a string around my big toe, put a rock on the other end of the string, and hang it out the window to the ground below. Then they could pull the string, waking me up, and I would open the screen so they could throw the paper through the open window. We did just that. We followed the plan. In the early morning they jerked my toe. I got up, and there were the boys standing in the neighbor's driveway, just past the break of dawn, poised to throw the paper. I opened the screen that was hinged at the top, held it open, they threw --- and missed the opening! There was about eighteen inches between the upstairs wall and the rain gutter, and the paper fell in the gutter. By this time the boys were literally rolling on the ground with silent laughter, holding their bellies, for if they had made any noise they would have aroused my parents. I had to remove the string from my toe, and with much trepidation I managed to reach the paper, all the time Bruce and Dewey were laying on the ground, waiting for me to fall. I remember that I was rather scantily dressed, which may have added fervor to the sight presented to the two boys. I have enjoyed the memory more than the actual happening. This is another of those things that you don't tell your parents.

For some reason, this reminds me of Hilda. I think the reason we called her "Chicken" was the time Billy Barber (who lived next door to Hilda) and the rest of us tried to convince her that if she would take an umbrella and jump off the garage the open umbrella would allow her to float slowly down to the ground. She didn't want to do it, and we all chanted "Chicken". She jumped and fell hard, spraining a few appendages if I remember correctly. We should have had our hides tanned for that little trick. And Chicken would have been justified had she never spoken to any of us again.

When Shirley Edman and I were in the 14 to 15 year old range we were dating Wilbur Decker (who Shirley later married) and Troy Watts. We were such innocent children. Shirley and I did not know how to make babies, but we knew that kissing and petting were BAD ! And FUN ! One day the four of us decided to meet in Washington Park, our hangout located at the foot of our hill, about midnight. In those days one could wander about in relative safety. We did not have the meanness that exists in the world today. This necessitated our slipping out of the house after our parents had retired for

the night. I waited at the top of the stairs until mother made her final trip to the bathroom and flushed the commode. The noise from the flushing would cover noise from the few steps on the stairs that squeaked, and the opening of the front door. I found Shirley waiting and we scooted down the hill to meet the waiting boys. Yes! they were just boys!

Several nights later --- it was a Saturday night --- when we repeated this escapade I made the mistake of slipping back into the house at the same time my brother Ray was returning from a date. I had been caught! Needless to say, after the lecture that Ray gave me, putting the fear of the Lord AND MY DAD into me, I never repeated this tryst.

Wilbur Decker smoked a corn cob pipe, which supposedly made him appear older and irresistible. One day Shirley and I caught a bus for town and I bought my own corn-cob pipe. When I returned home and mother saw my pipe she sat me down IN A ROCKING CHAIR -- YET --- with Dad's pipe tobacco, and handing me some stick matches told me to smoke all the tobacco in my pipe. Every time the fire died out in the pipe, which seemed to be every pull on the pipe stem, Mother made me re-light it. I was forced to smoke the whole pipe full. Along about that time Dad arrived home from work, and they assigned me the job of chipping the ice for the tea from the block of ice in the ice box. This necessitated my leaning over the side of the ice box, almost standing on my head, which did nothing for my already upset stomach and dizzy head, and using the ice pick. Dad said, "Honey, I see you need to learn how to break in your pipe." He and Mother were enjoying my discomfort. That ended my pipe smoking.

Which reminds me of my old Gr-Great Aunt Eliza, who was my grandfather John Noah Wyatt's maternal aunt. Great Aunt Eliza dipped snuff, and one day, when I was a little tyke, I begged her to let me dip some snuff. I could not have been more than four years old. She broke off a twig from the bush by her door, and told me to chew it until it was soft and gooey. I did. Then she gave me a dip of her snuff. Yuck!! Well! That cured me of THAT. I still cringe at the thought. Some lessons you never forget.  
CWP 7/93

## ABOUT MY SONS

### ANDY PITTS

My second son, Andy, was born December 23, 1951, a Christmas baby. He was a happy child, laughing and smiling a lot. He cut his teeth, crawled, walked and talked all at the usual times. At 16 months old he had meningitis, temperature was unreadable, for about ten hours. Packing him in ice under a fan brought his fever down to 106 degrees. We were told that if he survived he would have brain damage. Well, he did survive, but if he had brain damage it made him more intelligent. We learned many years later that his kidney failure probably was caused by the meningitis.

He was a most unusual child. A most interesting child. He was a pacifist, one who would run children-who-would-fight out of his yard and told not to return unless they could play peacefully. He would have been a terrible soldier, for he was truly a pacifist. I spanked him one time when he was about four or five, he never cried, and when I stopped he looked at me and said, "Why would you try to hurt me?" End of spanking for punishment. With Tommy that was the only thing that worked, but with Andy it was not an effective way to punish him.

He was a very persistent person, lived, loved and breathed electronics. In the 3rd grade he repaired the principal's television. In the fourth grade he took over the responsibility of handling the public address system in the school. At about the same time he was asked to put on a Mr. Wizard type show at the annual PTA fund raiser. He did, calling his show "Mr. Wizard, Jr." and helped raise money for them. The principal spoke to me about putting him in Brunson school for the gifted children, and I refused, feeling that he needed to be around "regular" folk. Later, Brunson School called and asked him to come to their fund raiser and hold such a show. He did, for a couple years, then he rebelled, saying that they had smart kids there; let them do it.

He was diagnosed at the end of first grade as having dyslexia, causing him reading problems. I found this interesting, because he could read schematics in electronics before he learned to read words. Following directions, from the lady who gave the diagnosis his reading and writing improved, but his spelling was atrocious! Since he was ambidextrous he could solder with either hand, but could not write worth a damn.

When he was about 9 years old he and his step-grandmother Bess collaborated to put a miniature light in the miniature Moravian stars that Bess was making. Bess would make the little stars, and Andy would make the electrical components necessary to have a lighted star. They had quite a small business going for about 5 years, until

Andy tired of it.

He chose to go to Parkland High School, even though most of his friends were going to the more prestigious Reynolds High School. Parkland was starting a pilot program, aimed at smoothing the way for college bound students by giving extra freedoms to those whose grades were above average. Since Andy had never functioned well in a tightly structured environment we agreed for him to enter the pilot program. He and Dr. Sandefur, the principal, became good friends, and Andy, with several close friends, had a great time in High School. He chose not to graduate with his class by dropping English (a required subject) just before the end of the year, allowing him to stay over an extra year to get in another math class that he wanted and needed for electronics. After graduation he attended Davidson County Community College for three years, taking as many classes that he could. I always thought it interesting that he took control of his education at such an early age, deciding that he would not graduate with his class, but would stay over another year to get the course he wanted and would need.

During all of these years he worked, starting about the age of eighteen, for WXII Television as an engineer, and for various radio stations. He was holding down two jobs when he became ill at age 26 with kidney failure. He passed the necessary tests that allowed him to work as an engineer at a TV station. He reasoned that would be an easy way to make money that he would need to go to college. As an engineer, he was well paid.

In his early youth -- the "Santa Clause" years and grammar school years -- he never, not even once, asked for toys. Not even for birthday! He asked for tools, scopes, drills, tool sets, radio kits, anything that aroused his curiosity as to what made it tick, how did it run, etc. In grammar school he earned pocket money by fixing radios and TV's for neighbors. He bought much of his own equipment out of his earnings.

Andy has grown into a wonderful person. He has become increasingly sensitive to the feelings of others, and shows a great deal of compassion for his fellow man. He has an over-abundance of integrity and personal honor. He claims he is an old '60's child since he still wears a long beard and long hair, and owning no formal dress wear and no trousers except jeans, and wearing only T shirts. He does not know how to knot a tie properly. He cares very little for convention, finding it useless and boring. He is now 41 years old.

He has coped with Renal Failure magnificently. Especially for a guy who has phobias about anything that has to do with doctors and hospitals. He is fast to stand up for his rights with the medical profession, and to help others that need help.



Today he is busy with computers. Since he cannot work full time, (his health will not permit it), he keeps busy running an Internet Service, called Red Barn Data Center, Internet Services. He and I are equal partners in this service. He is making his mark in his field. I feel sure that had not ill health intervened he would have chosen something else in the field of electronics for a profession, but he is fortunate that he can be reasonably happy with this. I love him very much. He is my back-bone, my strength, my friend and my confidant. CWP 7/93

## TOMMY PITTS

My son, Tommy, was my child from my first marriage to Conrad Elbert Shaver on Dec. 16, 1940. I had just graduated from High School and was in my first semester of College at Woman's College, University of N.C. I was age 18 in November and ran away from college in Dec. to marry Connie in York S.C. This marriage nearly broke my parent's hearts. I was ill suited for marriage at that age. I had been protected all of my life, and had no idea what I was doing. I knew nothing. I was so ignorant. Connie and I really never had a chance. He was without a job, had no ambition, was an usher in the theater when I met him, my father offered to get him a job at RJR Tobacco, but Connie refused. Needless to say, the marriage soon went sour, as much my fault as his. On April 11, 1942 my son was born, and named Conrad Elbert Shaver, Jr. Connie and I separated after 21 months of marriage. He joined the Marines, I moved back home with Dad and Mother, went to work at RJR, and when mother died in 1945 I stopped work and stayed home to look after Tommy and keep house for Dad.

Tommy was a beautiful child. Cute as he could be, and I loved him with all my heart, just as any mother loves her first born. Tom and I had been dating since Tommy was 3 years old. When I married Tom Pitts in 1947 Tommy was almost 5 years old. In the separation agreement in Nov. 1942 Connie agreed to pay child support. We were divorced in 1944 after a two year separation. When Connie returned home from WWII he never offered any support. After Tom and I married, Tom adopted Tommy, and we changed his name to Thomas Reynold (after my father) Pitts.

Tommy was a very skilled artist, like his biological father, but untrained. He was a very rebellious child, with a winning smile. He was a handsome little boy and accepted Tom as his father. Tommy was loved by all members of our family. I loved him and I miss him very much, but I don't think he ever forgave me for giving birth to Andy. . A GRADUATION PRESENT TO ME, CATHERINE WILLIAMS PITTS, FROM MY FATHER, EDGAR REYNOLD WILLIAMS, in 1940, but not found until 1980.

In 1980, after the death of my aunt/step-mother Bess, I was charged with the responsibility of going through all of the things in the home-place at 320 Vintage Avenue in Winston-Salem, NC. where I was born in 1922. Upstairs, packed away in a closet, was a scrap book, still in its original box, that I had obviously received as a present when I graduated from Reynolds High School in 1940. It had never been used. Since it was 40 years old and yellowed, my first thought was to throw it away, which I ultimately did, but before doing such a deed I rifled through it to be sure nothing was tucked between the pages.

Imagine my surprise when a sheet of paper fell out, with the following poem written by my father. I honestly do not remember ever having seen it (but what silly 18 year old remembers such as that 40 years later?), and I wept when I read it.

The ordered days of student discipline have closed;  
Ends now the quest for lore within calm class room walls.  
Oft-fingered books and much-used pencils lie deposited  
Where class discourses once echoed, now silence falls.  
Having fulfilled those cultured duties here imposed,  
You bravely bid class mates sad adieu, and go,  
Calmer than creatures less equipped would have supposed,  
To face life's great reality of joy and woe.  
So as you sail upon life's multi-charted seas,  
Seeking success and happiness upon the shore,  
May worthy dreams evolve into realities  
To bless you and abide with you forevermore.  
June 11, 1940

(signed) "Grandpa" Why my father signed it "Grandpa" I'll never know, unless he was seeing his baby graduate and, therefore, he felt old like a grandfather. CWP 3/1994

## ANOTHER LETTER FROM MY BROTHER, RAY

I just found a letter that my brother, Ray, wrote to me probably in the year of 1937. He went to college at Chapel Hill, NC in the fall of 1936, the same year I entered Reynolds High School. This letter was rather a cute letter, just what one would expect from a freshman, and the occasion was the removal of my tonsils. The "Goitie" to whom he refers was our Aunt Bess, whose middle name was Gertrude. We aggravated her by calling her "Goitie".

Friday, July 26

Dear Catherine,

How are your tonsils? Pap's letter said that you were getting along fine; I hope that such is still the case. I suppose, however, that you are at home by now and are back at the old stand doing business as the problem child of the age. Now, behave yourself, and you will valetudinate in short order.

Well, the Professor and I got here intact, and, generally speaking, in a contented state of mind. I passed everything O.K., making only a D on Marriage, which seems to indicate that I will be only a passable husband. But that doesn't concern me in the least. I spent most of my time on the Philosophy course. That grade has not come through as yet, but I know that I passed it with a good lead, probably batting a B.

At present I am taking a course in Historical Geology and an English course in contemporary Literature; they are taught respectively by a Mr. Pedwards and Mr. Prussell, who, although both pronounce their names with silent p's, do not come from the same pfamily. The Geology lab is taught by a chap named PmacCampbell, one of the Alabama PmacCampbells. The main drawback is the number of books, viz., five, that I have had to buy for the class taught by Mr. Prussell. But you know that we Pwilliamses are a sporting clan and not easily turned aside from the accepted plan of action-- so I bought the danged things. Good books they are, too.

A couple of days ago I ran afoul of a most personable young miss with whom I am planning a tryst tonight. A most personable miss. What I mean to say is, you know the kind-- makes a fellow think of vine-covered cottages, with a sweet little wife dressed all in lavender and lace to sooth your tired brow after the daily toil is o'er. But you can rest assured that if I detect signs of subversive activity on her part I will cast her aside like an old shoe. We Pwilliamses can be firm.

Is Goitie still improving? Tell her to go easy on the food. I mean, there is such a thing

as gluttony. I trust that the mater and the pater are hale and hearty. Take care of them and yourself, and I'll probably see you ere the season is o'er.

Love, Ray

## REFLECTIONS ON LIFE --- CWP 10/93

On Monday night I had a call from Al Thompson, son of my first cousin Jo Ann Wyatt Thompson, daughter of Rad and Mamie Wyatt. He was looking for a relative-tie to the Civil War. He was wanting to take part in the Enactment, and needed a blood relative tie to that war. On Tuesday we spent a number of hours in the Salisbury, North Carolina/Genealogy room of their library, to no avail. (Later he found a connection on his father's side.) But being with him brought back long-suppressed -- (and unhappy) -- memories.

Mother and Dad bought our home about six months before my birth. Several years later mother's brother, Uncle Rad, who was an excellent carpenter, added a second floor to the house. When I was in my early teens Uncle Rad and Aunt Mamie, his wife, and their only child, Jo Anne were left homeless by a hurricane in Florida. When they arrived at our home dad and mother welcomed them and took them in. They lived with us for about two years, maybe more, maybe less, until Uncle Rad got on his feet again. He bought a building lot on Sunset Drive in Winston-Salem and built a home, with an upstairs apartment.

Several years later I went off to college, ran away and married on Dec. 16, 1940, gave birth to son Tommy in April 1942, separated from my husband in Sept. of that year, and moved back in with Mother and Dad. Mother's health worsened, and by late 1944 Dad decided that the presence of a baby in the household was detrimental to Mother's health. He went to Aunt Mamie and Uncle Rad and asked them if they would be willing to take Tommy and me into their home. I was working at R.J.Reynolds, Tobacco Co. in the office, and needed someone to care for Tommy during the day. Aunt Mamie and Uncle Rad said they would think it over.

Several days later they informed Dad that they would take Tommy, but not me. This was quite a shock to Dad and me. Naturally, neither of us had any thought of separating mother and child. Tommy and I remained at home. I never cared for Uncle Rad and Aunt Mamie after that.

I was pondering this morning. Why was it so offensive to them to take me in? They had a rental apartment upstairs. I do not remember if it was rented at that time, but they also had a spare bedroom, Aunt Mamie did not do public work, and had nothing much to do all day long. I was not a bad person, although I had shown a decidedly determined streak when I left college to marry, but I was willing to work and pay for my mistakes. I have always been a kind person; stubborn, yes; mischievous, yes; independent, yes; good sense of humor, yes; easy to get along with, yes. Looking at this, then why was I so undesirable?

The only answer that I can think of is that in those days leaving one's husband and getting a divorce was disgraceful! I was the first family member to get a divorce. That was 40 years ago! I guess it was a sign of the times.

About three years ago another first cousin-once-removed said to me that she felt as if she had disgraced the family since she was the first to get a divorce. She was so relieved to learn that, no, SHE was not the first. Both my brother and I had that dubious distinction.

My Mother and Father instilled in me a sense of values such as self- worth, self esteem, pride, honor, my-word-is-my-bond, etc. I see humor in things no one else sees. I hope I am as kind as they were. It is a credit to them, and my brother, that I was not permanently scarred by Uncle Rad's and Aunt Mamie's rebuke. Dad never mentioned this again. In retrospect, I think that it did scar me psychologically. The fact that I have never forgotten it speaks for itself. Later when Tom and I married, Dad moved to Uncle Rad's house and Bess moved to Aunt Thelma's house for several months hoping that my son would bond with his new father. Housing was in such short supply at the end of WW II. CWP 10/93

## THE TALE OF THE CEMETERY PLOT

Sometime in the late 1980's my cousin Peggy Garwood, the only child of Lillie Williams Garwood and Spurgeon Garwood, told me that our Williams family owned a plot of land in the Fork Church cemetery in Davie County, NC. Uncle Cary was the last one buried there. I suggested to Peggy that we should give the land back to the church, since none of us planned to make use of the cemetery.

I spoke with the officials of Fork Church and they knew nothing about the Williams family owning any land in their cemetery, but noted that no one was buried in that stretch of land except Williamses. When Uncle Cary died in 1989, (he was the last of the children of that generation) I asked my cousins who had been caring for him to give me any of the old papers that they might find in his house. Consequently, one day they called to tell me to come over there. They gave me a stack of folded papers about 8 inches high. I gave them a cursory glance, noted that they seemed to be mortgage deeds and such, tossed them into a corner of my bedroom, and didn't bother with them until five years later when I was deep cleaning the room.

Talking with Peggy in 1994, she told me that her husband, Bill, was suffering with cancer, and they had decided that, even though they had plots of land in the Forsyth County Memorial Cemetery in Winston-Salem on the Yadkin Road (where my parents, brother and son are buried), they had decided that they would like to be buried in the Fork Church Cemetery where her parents are, but that no one could find the deed to the Williams tract. They had searched the records in the Mocksville court house, but could not find any evidence that a deed had ever existed. It was a month or so later that I cleaned my bedroom.

One night I picked up all the papers that cousin Fred Williams and his wife had given me. Imagine my surprise at finding the deed that Peggy had been trying to find. This land had been purchased and the deed created in April, 1927. Grandfather John Radford Williams had bought 1/10th of an acre, 30 feet by 187 feet and 7 inches. He had the deed notarized, but had never had it recorded. The deed specified that it was to be used as a family burial ground.

I called Peggy, she expressed delight, and I made a copy and mailed it to her. Two weeks later I entered the office of the Register of Deeds in Davie County, handed them the deed that was yellowed with age, and asked them to record it. I apologized for being only 67 years late, but explained that I was only five years old when the purchase was negotiated and signed, and I could not drive a car at that time. We all chuckled, smiled, I paid them \$14.00, and the deed was recorded.

I took a copy to Fork Church and gave it to the minister who said, "We thought WE owned that land." I said, "No, we own it." He shook his head and said, "The Lord works in mysterious ways," and I replied, "Yes, and he knows whose shoulders will carry the load." We both laughed. Since then, Peggy's husband, Bill Bennett, has "gone to his reward", and was laid to rest in Fork Church Cemetery in the Williams family plot. CWP 11/6/1994



## SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS !!!

Yippee. I did it again. Seventy five years ago today I emerged from the warm and protective womb of my mother; I was a tiny baby, full of spirit and wonder at this world I entered. It has been an interesting life.

At the age of 5 I started piano lessons, and excelled at the piano until I graduated from High School. I won many awards, and was invited to perform for a number of functions, notably entertaining the women at the Winston-Salem Women's Club. I accompanied a fellow violin student, Henry Newsome, for several years, and we won awards at all the levels, including the state level, just I did as a single soloist.

Romance blossomed in my last year of High School, and when I entered college my parents hoped that I would come to my senses. I did, but far too late. I made the biggest mistake of my life when I eloped in Dec. 1940, from college, had a son in April 1942, and divorced in 1944. I was ill prepared to support myself, having taken college preparatory subjects in High School.

My second biggest mistake was marrying a second time in 1947. My first marriage should have made me realize that I was unsuitable for the state of matrimony that was popular and in existence in the mid 1940's. I was taught by my parents that I was equal to any other person, especially equal to a man, in the realm of brain-power and intellect. Unfortunately, women in that day and age were expected to "obey" their mates, even though obedience may have been unwise and detrimental to the family. On our honeymoon my new husband told me that he didn't love me, and that he married me to gain a family, thereby using my son and me to put himself on the same social level as his peers who already were married and had families. I convinced myself that I would teach him to love. I was wrong.

In later life I have gained some wisdom in this sphere and have come to realize that this was a very popular reason for a man to marry in the earlier part of our history, and still was in existence in the 1940's to, perhaps, a lesser degree. I think this mind set still exists today, and probably will continue to exist as long as marriage is expected of couples who have a desire to propagate. For generations women have been taught that it is just as easy to fall in love with a rich man as a poor man. This is not only a female objective, but also a male objective. I have come to realize that love is a dream that usually exists in the female mind. Men are material oriented, whereas women are dreamers. For men to understand women I suggest they read the novels that women read, and they may begin to understand them. For women, they should read magazines like Playboy, to understand the male gender. Men declare their love, not with honesty, but with lust, out of necessity, to catch their victim.

We lived a near-normal married life for 17 years, at which point I quietly bailed out by finding a job and going to work. Today we are still married, although we have not lived together for the past 33 years. I am still quite fond of and respect my husband, but I know that we are not compatible for marriage. He gave me Andy and also adopted Tommy, giving him his name, and for that I will always be grateful.

Andy was born in 1951 and for the past five years we created and have successfully operated the Red Barn Data Center, an Internet Service. I live alone, and though not really happy, I am content. I accept life as it is, and try to be the naturally happy person that I really am. Andy is the light of my life, and my reason for living.

But hey---- I have made it for 75 years, so we will now try for 80. CWP 11/3/97

FROM CATHERINE MERRITT IN MT. AIRY CAME THIS LETTER

When my father died in 1968 Mrs. Oscar K. Merritt (Catherine Merritt) from Mt. Airy, a fellow weaver, and a woman with such grand charm and grace sent me this note:

Dearest Catherine,

How suddenly this blow came to you all. Two things stand out as I think of it-- the great sweetness of his character, his gentleness and then your most loving devotion to him. I never saw such truly close bond--you understood each other! And I sensed what a great joy it was to him! as well as yourself. We are looking forward to your "luncheon" visit when it suits you to come. Our love to you all-----(signed) Catherine and Oscar

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My son Andy, I have mentioned earlier, developed Renal Failure at the end of his 26th year, spent two years in a wheel chair, and has recovered enough to be able to walk again with braces on his legs and feet. I wrote the following in the fall of 1990, after he bought a different car for himself:

I feel so humble tonight. Andy had finally decided to let go of his little sports car that he bought about the age of 19, to drive to and from college. Throughout his illness he has steadfastly held on to his little car as if it were his link to health and better times. In the last several years he has become steadily stronger and has at last outgrown his need for this little car, and has recognized his need for a larger and more conventional car, with air conditioner, power brakes, etc.

Two days ago I called my old and good friend Andy Carros, one of the owners of Mr. Barbeque in Winston-Salem to inquire about his health, for I had heard that he is taking chemo for his fight with cancer. He is in remission. In our conversation he asked about my Andy, and upon learning that he was looking for a good used car offered one that he had for sale. He had just what we needed at a price we could afford. Everything fell into place. For the first time in twelve years I watched Andy drive to my house on the lake. I was reminded of watching him take his first steps, go off to school the first day, get his driver's license, --you know all those "firsts", and now he can drive an hour's journey again. Surely I can be forgiven for those several tears that crept down my cheeks. C.W.Pitts Fall of 1990

## A VISIT FROM MY BROTHER RAY

This morning I was re-arranging some books on a book-shelf and I picked up the Joy of Cooking book that had belonged to my brother, Ray. I carried the book back to my chair and opened the cover and wrote Ray's name on the inside cover so that Tracy would know that this book had belonged to him.

After returning the book to the book-shelf, and returning to my chair, I noticed a small folded piece of paper on the floor by my chair. I picked it up, opened it and read, "Happy Birthday, Sis (signed) Ray."

I had not rifled through the cook book, merely folded the cover back and wrote Ray's name, then replaced the book on the shelf. After collecting my thoughts, I retrieved the book, re-opened it and put the word "From" above Ray's name. It now reads, "From Ray Williams." Then I stuck the little piece of paper on the same page and replaced the book. **THAT PIECE OF PAPER DID \*NOT\* FALL FROM THE BOOK WHEN I FIRST OPENED IT.** Weird. C.W.Pitts 12/10/90

## LETTER TO MY GRANDSON, JONATHAN

The following is a letter to my grandson, Jonathan Pitts, after learning that he had a tough year in school following the death of his father, my son. This was sent at the beginning of the new school year:

Dearest Jonathan,

I had hoped you and your mother would make it to N. C. this summer. Perhaps Christmas? Your mother told me that school did not go too well last year. That is understandable. You had a very emotionally upsetting year with the passing of your father. But life continues for the rest of us. You are now at a crossroads, one of many that you will reach in the span of your life. The spot you are in at this moment in time is your preparation for adulthood. There was a time, only several decades ago, when education was out of reach for many young people. It was not as necessary then to be well educated as it is now. But in today's world it is of utmost importance. You are old enough and, I hope, wise enough to recognize the limitations your dad faced because he failed to take advantage of the educational opportunities when it was offered to him. I will never forgive myself for running away from a college education when I had the opportunity. In your father's absence I want to remind you that you will never have this same opportunity again. To not make the most of this opportunity while you can would be a terrible and sad mistake. Please do not make the same error your dad and I made.

Much love, DaBaby 8-20-1990

P.S. When you were small your dad and I talked of our hopes for your future. He said that he hoped you would go forth and get a college degree. We all love you very much. C.W.Pitts --8/20/1990

## A RECONCILIATION PRAYER

My son Tom is dead. He died eight days ago. During this past week I have gone through the emotions of a sense of tremendous and emotional loss, anger, guilt and relief. At last he is out of this rat-race and is at peace. I have concluded that it is necessary for my well-being to admit, without guilt, that I am relieved. His death was sudden, due to an intra-cerebral hemorrhage.

He had a winning smile, a soft voice and a loving attitude when he wished. But he was not a good son, nor a good brother, and especially he was not a good friend to himself.

I loved him with the intensity that only a mother feels for her first born. I will miss him!

Apparently his soul, with its many, many conflicts, decided to withdraw and start over again. I pray he will find peace in his next existence.

I think that the Creative Forces, or God, if you will, in his wisdom loved us enough to allow Tom to begin again, to have a NEW beginning, and to remove him from our lives so we can spend the rest of our days here on earth in peace.

May my husband Tom, son Andy and I, along with son Tom's soul find this peace now. And may God's light shine on his widow and son. Amen 8/12/89 C.W.Pitts

## MY BOTHER RAY

On Tuesday morning, Sept 5, 1989, my brother, Ray, died in his sleep. His death, like Tommy's, was unexpected. He was in a rest home recovering from a fall that left him with a broken hip.

My brother was a very smart man. He took to "book-learning" easily, excelling in all his subjects. He was also a beerholic, having been in treatment several times.

I have many fond memories of him. When I was a child he used to pay me ten cents to shine his shoes when he was preparing for a date. I learned that I could dampen his white shoes, dust them with talcum powder and collect my dime. I remember the double-barreled rubber band guns he made each of us one rainy day. We spent two days "battling" throughout the house. Our poor patient mother was still finding rubber bands behind pictures on the wall a year later. Even though he was five and a half years my senior he still played with me. I cannot remember him ever uttering a harsh word to me.

The string story is one of my favorite memories. He knew of my habit of waking in the middle of the night for a trip to the bathroom. I had been pulling childish pranks on him for some time, such as crackers in bed, etc. He slipped into my bedroom one night after I went to sleep and wove a string web from the dresser legs, bed legs, chair legs, and any other leg that happened to be around to which he could tie a string. In my memory it was a perfect web, with the ball of twine left in the center as if it were the spider. When I woke for my nightly trip to the bathroom I stepped into this web. He said that I screamed. I doubt that, but I surely yelled like hell. I never attempted to top that prank.

Ray started his early life as a jazz musician, playing a trumpet. He always encouraged me in my musical studies at the piano, and he regretted my first marriage for he felt, and rightly so, that ended my musical career. I was quite talented.

He married (at the end of World War II) Jean Marie Ott of Austin, Texas. They had one daughter, Tracy. Ray and Jean divorced about twenty years later.

Tracy and I tried to give Ray the kind of grave side memorial service we felt he would like. Jake Gottschalk gave the eulogy, citing a brief history of his friendship with Ray, and I told the string story, at Tracy's request. Tracy placed some of Ray's ashes in the ground. Then we played a pre-recorded tape of Louis Armstrong, including a rendition of "Didn't he ramble." We hid the portable tape player in the boxwood at the corner of the family cemetery plat in Forsyth Memorial Park on the outskirts of

Winston-Salem in Forsyth Co., N.C. We knew my brother would feel well remembered.

I loved him. I will miss him. 9/24/89 C.W.Pitts



## A DREAM

I dreamed of my son Tom several nights ago. We were in this large entrance hall and his quarters were to the left of the front door, and my (our) quarters were to the right, but it was all in the same house, sort of like a duplex. He had Jonathan with him; Jonathan appeared to be about 14 yrs. old, which was Jonathan's age when Tom died.

I had the impression that Tom had been with us for several days, and I asked him what were his plans. He said, "I'll assume another identity, another name, and start all over again." I asked, "What about Jo Ann?", and he said, "She will be joining us when we go." I said, "But Son, you're dead!" and he said, "Things are not always what they seem, mother." Then I said, "Then you must have faked your death" and he only smiled and shrugged. I said, "But I saw you-- you are dead." And then I woke up.

C.W.Pitts

11/28/89

This is a footnote, added on 4/17/91. I think that Tom has been visiting me. Especially when I am in W/Salem, he tugs at my sheets at the foot of my bed. One day I sat up and said, "Tom, if that is you, please go to Florida and see Jonathan. He needs you." It was several months before I had my sheets pulled again. Now when it happens, I just smile, and tell him that I miss him and love him. C.W.Pitts

## MY GUARDIAN ANGELS

Speaking of things that go bump in the night -- we were speaking of such, weren't we? I really had a strange thing happen to me in the summer of 1999. I have a favorite place in my living room, which I call Command Central, where I sit to read the paper, watch TV, or answer the phone. At this recliner chair, I always keep a small towel rag which I had torn from a larger worn-out towel. I use this rag as sort of bib, placing it over my chest and tummy to keep the newspaper ink from getting on my clothes when I read my paper. One morning for some reason, which I later could not remember, I got up from my chair and dropped my towel -- I thought -- somewhere around the chair. When I returned to the chair I could not find my towel / bib. I looked all round the chair, it was not there, then I traced my steps to the kitchen where I had gone when I left the chair, and into the bed room to see where I had dropped the bib. I could not find it.

Let me say, at this point, that there was no one here except me. My door was still locked. My sliding glass door to the patio was still locked, **NO ONE HAD COME INTO THIS APARTMENT**. There are only two windows in the apartment, and the screens were still on them and they were locked. **I WAS ALONE**.

Returning to the chair, I took a more thorough look-around trying to find the bib. Then I again traced my steps, all to no avail. For the third time, I returned to the chair, UP ENDED IT, looked beneath it, around it, dug into the cushions on the side, looked VERY thoroughly all around the chair, and then , in desperation, AGAIN retraced my steps, going into each room in my apartment. No bib to be found.

Defeatedly, I came back up the hallway, all the time wondering what could have happened to my bib. Looking ahead I could see the arm of my chair from the midway in the hall, and there, miraculously, was my bib on the arm of the chair, looking as if it had been dropped by holding it in the center, for it looked like a tee-pee standing at attention. As to how or what put it there, I have no answer.

I will swear on a stack of Bibles that is what took place.

Startled, I leaned against the wall, looked up toward the ceiling and said, out loud, "OK. You-all got me this time." Now, when I can't find my glasses, I say out loud, "Where are my glasses?" And I will soon find them. There have been times when I am napping that the door bell will ring, instantly waking me, and when I go to the door no one is there. But something will probably happen soon, like an important phone call will come through, or a package will be delivered. It is as if my guardian angels wake me when they think I should come to attention. CWP 7/4/2000

MY ANGEL DOG

My Angel Dog appeared in 2006. I woke, suddenly, early one morning, about 4 AM, and upon raising my head from my pillow I found that I had a dog with long fur, such as a Collie or Shepherd, with his head and shoulders thru the beads surrounding my bed area. He was just looking at me. I blinked my eyes, not believing what I was seeing, shook my head, pinched myself to be sure I was awake. Yes, there definitely was a dog standing there, looking at me. I said, foolishly, "Hello Dog. What are you doing in my house?" Reasoning set in-- I knew that nothing could get in my house without my knowledge. Still reasoning-- IF there is a dog in my house, a person had to let him in. IF there were a person in my house the alarm system would have let me know. But regardless--- the dog must be let outside. So I got on my motorized scooter to let the dog out, but-- still reasoning-- I said to myself, when I get on the other side of my beads there will not be a dog there. And there wasn't.

Later that day, after dark, I heard someone trying to break into my metal storage building behind my house. I have security lights with motion detectors at four corners of the house, but there was no light facing the storage building. I reasoned that if I looked out the window, I would not be able to see any thing, but someone outside would be able to see me. So I stayed in my chaise lounge. Shortly after, the noise

ceased. When the would-be thief came around my car-port the yard lights came on; the man continued down my driveway. I immediately called the police for I had a prowler. They came immediately, but of course, the thief was gone. But I had him on tape. The police took the tape for analysis.

An hour later, a lady's house near me was broken into. The man escaped. After that break-in, I was talking with a near neighbor, and at the end of our conversation, I said, "Oh-- let me tell you about my dog." To which she replied, "You've got a dog?" And I said, "Uh-uh- well, sort-of." She asked what kind of dog, and I confessed that I did not know, except it was a long-haired dog. I told about my waking and finding a dog looking thru my beads. I said, "Do you suppose there is any connection between the attempted break-in my metal building, and the break-in at your neighbors?" She replied, "Yes. It probably was a shepherd, and they are known to protect people. I think that Andy was letting you know that you were being protected."

As the old folk would say, "Well, I never!!!"

CWP 2006

## OTHER RAMBLING THOUGHTS ABOUT MY PARENTS AND MY FAMILY

I really don't care much for President Bush. He ran a really mean-spirited campaign, and his first three months in office are something less than impressive. But I do feel that his slogan of a "kinder and gentler nation" is well chosen. Which brings me to my thought—

I think that the single most important characteristic that a person can have is kindness. If I were a magician and could wave a magic wand over the entire human race to instill it with one simple attribute it would be to give it a sense of kindness.

I cannot tolerate cruelty in any form--mentally, physically or psychologically! I go all to pieces!.

I remember my mother, Ella, telling me about my paternal grandmother, Sarah Prascovia Clark Williams, after whom I was given my first name. Mother said that she and my father's sister, Floy, would use gossip as bait to tempt grandmother to say something unkind about someone. Mother said that they never succeeded. Grandmother would find something nice to say even if only to comment about the color of their hair. I have always tried to be like her, but I fear I have failed.

After my grandfather, John Radford Williams, died some of the children convinced grandmother to sell the home place in Fork Church Community in Davie County, NC and move in with my uncle Cary in Winston-Salem, NC. She went out of her head after that. Dad always felt the move was the cause.

Grandmother Sarah was a little woman, about 5 feet tall--my size with less weight. A good cook.

Grandfather Williams was a bearded man and owned a grocery store in Fork. He also owned a flour mill at one time. His father, John Rufus Williams was called Squire, and was a magistrate and/or Justice of the Peace. He was a colorful character. I was a just a little tyke when Grandfather John Radford Williams died. I do remember him with his beard. Andy, who is also bearded, looks so much like him.

My father, Edgar Reynold (Ray) Williams, was also a very kind man. If he disliked a person he did not say much about him. He would shake his head negatively but would not verbalize his dislikes.

My mother, Ella May Wyatt Williams, was a nice person. My fondest memories are of her singing in the kitchen while cooking, a mark of a happy person. She had a

perfectly awful voice, and she would sing in a soprano voice-- hymns. She would also be sitting in the chair in the corner of the living room when I would come in from school. She was a good cook, and did beautiful handwork. She was an excellent seamstress and her crocheting was magnificent. She was a truly liberated woman for her day and age. She dared to smoke cigarettes, although she didn't inhale them. She would take a draw, hold it in her mouth, then blow it out, showing the world how smart and liberated she was. She drove the car, and took brother and me to school, dad to work, picked us up, wrote checks (most women were too shy to do those things) and had a terrific sense of humor. I remember dad buying her a new washing machine. Mother kept it a week, and returned it. She was smart enough to know that this new-fangled machine would make more work for her. She could send the linens off to the laundry (a pick-up and delivery service) and hire a maid to wash the finer things. She was delightfully wonderful! I loved both of my parents very much. I still miss them.

My brother was quite a student and jazz musician. His name is Ray Wyatt Williams.  
C.W.Pitts 4/89

## FAMILY CAMPING

When Andy was about 4 or 5 years old our family started camping every summer at Hanging Rock State Park in Danbury, NC. It soon became an easy way to spend the summer. We never did any rough camping, I called it civilized camping. We had two tents -- one being the tent for Tom and me, and the other the children's tent.

Now, these tents had floors in them and zippered doors. I soon learned that I could go to the carpet store, and the burlap that the manufacturers used to cover their carpets in preparation for shipping were thrown away as soon as the carpet stores removed them from the carpets. They were water-proofed on one side, with burlap on the other side, making them perfect floor coverings for the inside of a tent. Better still, they were free. We purchased good heavy duty air bags, and I cut one inch thick foam-rubber to cover them, making the mattress very comfortable. I made sheets to go over the air bags, and we took our pillows from our beds from home. We slept very well.

We had another tent for our "porch." It had netting for the sides, but it also had a floor in it, which I covered with the "rugs." We took cots and folding chairs with us for the out-door porch. Coleman lanterns gave us our light, and a good, well insulated cooler with a large chunk of ice kept our groceries very nicely. We had a two-burner gas cook stove. We ate at a long, park furnished table, and we had it covered with oil cloth. Over the eating area we had a large tarp that covered not only the table but also the stove and cooler.

The park rangers had gardens, and frequently if they had an over-abundance of tomatoes they would share them with the campers. One of the rangers had bee hives, and we bought honey from him.

The park had a swimming area, and the college guys from the community were the life-guards and summer rangers. They took the kids for nature hikes. They sort of adopted Andy, and he had a great time with them. They put him in charge of the bin where the park attendants tossed the wet towels, and he could be heard singing on the other side of the wall. The college boys made him an honorary life guard. They gave him a hard hat that said "Life Guard" on it, and he made a nuisance of himself checking every one's pins.

When you bought a ticket to go swimming you were given a pin to signify that you had paid for the right to go swim. Sometimes people would sneak past the attendant, and when they were not busy, or saw someone they did not remember, they would check to see if that person was "pinned." One day Andy found a man who did not have a pin. Andy told him, in his 6 year old voice with his hard hat on his head, that

he would have to leave or purchase a ticket. The guy gave Andy some back-talk, telling him that he could not make him leave. Andy ran to the life guard and reported it to him. The big college student strolled over to the man and said, "Didn't our life guard tell you to buy a ticket?" The man made some remark about Andy not being a real attendant, and the student patted Andy's helmet and said, "Can't you read this?" The man left.

One day Andy saw a black snake up in a tree. He climbed the tree and pulled the snake down. The snake didn't like that, so he bit Andy. Andy had to fight the campers who were fixing to use their rusty old razor blades to practice first aid and cut where the snake hit him to suck out the venom, and Andy would not let them touch him. He ran to me for protection. Tommy was old enough to stay at home and not go camping, but he would join us from time to time. He enjoyed it as much as the rest of us. After school was out for the summer we would camp for a two week period, come home for another two weeks, and continue the alternating weeks between home and camping, until it was time to get ready for school opening in September. Many years later, I heard Andy Pitts tell Andy Carros at Mr. Barbecue on Peter's Creek Parkway in W/S that his mom and dad gave him a great childhood. CWP 7-2000

## MY UNCLE BILL AND AUNT RUTH

My Uncle Bill and Aunt Ruth and their two daughters, Mary Frances and Lucille, lived two doors from us. Uncle Bill was the oldest child of Grandmother Sallie and Grand daddy John Noah Wyatt. My Mother was the next child living, so the burden of rearing the children fell on Uncle Bill's and Mother's shoulders. When I think of Uncle Bill I think several things. He was a Bible thumping man, and lived by the rules of Christianity. He went to church regularly every Wednesday night, and every Sunday. Upon his death, we found that his Bible was well worn.

Aunt Ruth was a little 5 X 5 woman, very round, and the first thought I have of her is of her wearing a bib apron and a dish rag in her hand. The ice box was on their back porch, and during the summer if we found that there was a water melon in the ice box we three girls would nag Aunt Ruth until she would cut us a slice. She ran a very meticulous household.

In the evening Uncle Bill would sit on his front porch and smoke his pipe. When he finished his pipe he would get up from his chair, go to the corner of his porch and knock out his pipe on the brick columns. The world was quiet then, and I remember hearing him many-a-night, knowing that Uncle Bill was going to bed, and that it was now time for all the neighbors to go to bed.

Uncle Bill believed that playing cards was the devil's doing, and he didn't like for his daughters to play cards. My family were all solitaire and bridge people, and I remember Mother telling Uncle Bill that there was nothing bad about the girls playing with a few cards, so the girls would come up to our house to play cards, never at Uncle Bill's house.

One time they had their house painted inside, then the painters came to our house to paint for us. Aunt Ruth had one of the girls climb up on a chair to see if they painted the top of the door facings. That had been ignored by the painters, so they had to go back and do that job. Uncle Bill and Aunt Ruth were kind people.

Lucille married Jim Bovender, a local fellow, and they moved to Florida. She had no children, and she died in Florida from Alzheimer. Prior to marriage, she was a school teacher. Mary married Earl Willis of Gastonia, and they had a happy life, so far as I know. Mary gave birth to two boys, and even today they look after Mary, who is now a widow.

CWP (revised 3-9-07)



## MY WORKING YEARS

From 1955 to 1966 I was a weaver. I took lessons from the master weaver, Gypsy Hollingsworth from Walnut Cove. In late 1966, after much soul searching, I realized that I must seek employment in the outside world, and leave the life that had been created with me as the stay-at-home mom. When I told my husband that I was going job hunting, he asked why. I explained that I was insecure both emotionally and financially. One must understand that the marriage that he and I had together was a strange marriage. He told me on our honeymoon that he did not love me, but wanted a marriage and a son so he would be like his peers. When we returned to my father's home after our honeymoon in 1947, (two years following WWII, housing and building materials were in short supply,) my husband informed me that we did not need to go shopping for a double bed, that he had slept alone all his years and he intended to continue sleeping alone. For the rest of our married life we slept in twin beds. As a 24 year old woman having already experienced one failed marriage I was seeking a loving relationship. I am a passionate woman, needing the security of a loving marriage. In today's world, I would have been called a Trophy Wife. I was ill prepared to seek employment, for my years in high school were dedicated to taking college preparatory courses. I had worked during the WWII years with RJR Tobacco Co. in the warehouse department, posting the shipments on a long ledger sheet, that would be sent to their warehouses across the country. This did not gain me any secretarial skills. My boss at RJR borrowed a typewriter and an instruction book from the billing department, and suggested that in my spare time I learn how to type. He was a good boss. It was a learning experience.

I found employment at the beginning of 1966 with Financial Programs, a Mutual Fund Corporation. I passed a NASD exam (National Association Security Dealers), got my certification and started selling mutual funds. Mutual Funds were not as well known then as they are now, so our job was, to a large extent, one of educating as well as selling. I became successful in this endeavor, but the job ran out in 1971 when Financial Programs became a no-load fund. With no commissions being paid, all of their sales force were without jobs. But during that time I had earned a trip to Acapulco, Mexico. That was another learning experience.

I took a job with a sewing machine distributor, which required me to travel the state of NC as a sewing machine sales rep, calling on dealers through-out the state. Thus, I became one of the earlier female traveling sales people. At that time there were not many women in this field. We had to be able to withstand the stigma of being on the road. It was not unusual to check into a motel for the night and be assigned a room at the end of the building, for the clerks at the motel thought that you were there to "turn tricks." The second time through the route was different; by that time they knew that

you were not a part of the oldest profession. I was successful in that job, but was fired because, (in my opinion,) I refused to go to bed with one of the VP's in the home office. This was quite a blow to my ego. I had turned in more sales than any sales rep before me, yet I was fired. I was devastated; but soon got another job with one of their competitors, taking the customers with me, and put the first employer out of business. I was learning the hard facts of the business world.

A year later I bought half interest in a sewing machine store in Salisbury, NC, and stayed there for the rest of that year. My new partner failed to disclose one of the major debts that he had, and, since I had him to sign a contract, he was forced to repay me my investment. In 1974 I opened my own store in Lexington, NC, Catherine's Sewing Center. I sold and repaired sewing machines. Sewing machine repair people were traditionally men, so I pretended that I had a man as my repair person, and when someone wanted to speak to him, I said that he was out at the moment. I did not think the public would accept a female repair person. One day a man came in with a machine that was new, but was not sewing correctly. He said that it had been to three sewing machine repair men, and no one had been able to fix it. So he brought it to me hoping I could fix it. As soon as he left, with my curiosity aroused, I took the machine to my repair bench to see what could possibly be wrong. Most machines had a stitch selector dial on the front panel. When I started up the machine, it was sewing a pattern design, although the dial showed that it should be sewing a straight stitch. I turned the dial to the stitch that the machine was making, tightened the screw on the selector dial, and, VOILA!! the machine was fixed. From that day forward, I never denied the fact that "I" was the repair person. I had quite a business doing the repairs as well as selling new machines. This turned out to be another learning experience.

Soon I was stocking and selling the little Serger machine that had been designed for the home seamstress. The Serger was a machine that cut the fabric, and over-cast the seam all in one operation. The first machine for home use to come on the market was the Baby Lock, and every machine that I got in the store had to have the timing re-set before it could be sold. I soon became known as the serger repair person.

I received a call from the Tacony Corporation, the largest importer of sewing machines in the country, with the exception of Sears and Singer machines. They asked if I would come to the Home Economics teachers convention that was being held in St. Louis, Mo. in several weeks, and demonstrate the serger for the teachers. They paid all my expenses, plus someone to keep my shop for me, and I took off for St. Louis. While there I asked the Tacony Corp. if they were planning to sell the thread that was needed for these machines, and they answered negatively, leaving the field open for me to start a mail order business with serger threads. At the next sewing machine convention I asked for a card table to be set up in a corner, and with an order

blank and 4 colors of thread, my mail order business was founded. As the sales of the serger and the demand for the thread increased, so did my business increase. My best year as Catherine's Threads found me shipping 20,000 cones of thread, with my label in each cone.

In 1984, ten years after opening my retail store, I closed it, and built a room onto my house on High Rock Lake, to house the mail order business. One of the thread manufacturers discovered what I was doing, and they showed up at the next sewing machine convention and sold directly to the distributors who could sell to the dealers at a much reduced price than I could afford. When other sewing machine distributors discovered the same thing, they put me out of business. My sales dropped dramatically. I could not compete with corporate America. That's when I learned another lesson.

In 1989 my first born, Tommy and my only sibling, Ray died, 32 days apart. In 1990 I entered the political arena, and ran, unsuccessfully, for Commissioner in Davidson County. I thought I did well, considering the fact there were 18 people running for a 5-man board, and 7 of those were backed by the sheriff. I came in 8th position. I had no organization backing me. I really learned a lot about politics from that experience.

In 1995 I had to close the doors on the mail order, and I moved to an apartment in Winston-Salem to head the office of Red Barn Data Center (RBDC), which Andy and I had started. We were the first to offer Internet services to Winston-Salem. About ten years prior to that, we were selling Email and Usenet feeds to those knowledgeable on that subject, at \$10.00 per month, to pay our phone bills. At this same time I was also running the mail order business. Andy and I did quite well with the Internet business, but because our costs were so high, we were struggling. We had to teach people about the Internet. Computers were not in many homes. There are a few people today, in 2002, that do not have a computer, but I predict that one day soon computers will be in every home, just as the telephone is in each home. In 2001 I had to close the doors on RBDC and pay off all our debts. We could not compete with Bell South and Time Warner's Road Runner. Fortunately, Tom left me with enough money to pay the bills and do a lot of remodeling to the home place. When I was planning the remodeling, I expected Andy to continue living for a few more years, but that was not to be.

Andy's kidneys failed in 1978, probably due to damage that occurred when he had meningitis at 16 months old. He lived on dialysis for 23 years. He was living with his father in our home, but I was constantly in touch with both Tom and Andy, although I was not actually living with them. I find myself now, in 2002, a widow, living in the home that Tom and I bought in 1949, having buried both Tom, in 2000, and Andy in 2001. Today I am retired, but I have much to look forward to. Remember, I had been a weaver, and I still have my looms. I would like to set them up again and do some

weaving. Also, Andy left me with a large comic book collection which I must catalog and offer for sale. I have a bad knee, but plan on having a knee replacement in 2003. I am fortunate inasmuch as I have many friends, who recognize the problems I have faced during my life, and who have remained close to me. For them I am most appreciative. Without them, I could not face each day. I had my 80th birthday last month, and I am reasonably healthy.

Andy's and Tommy's spirits are with me each day. Life marches on ----- at a fast pace.. CWP 12-2002 MY FATHER, (in retirement), THE WEAVER

My dad, Edgar Reynold (Ray) Williams was one of the kindest people I have ever known. He was exceedingly smart, gentle and a truly nice person. Needless to say, I loved him deeply. He was beautiful.

Dad was the 8th child, next to the last child of John Radford Williams and Sarah Prascovia Clark Williams. To my knowledge he was the only child of that family that went off to boarding school. He had the equivalent of a college education for that day and time. Dad was born Nov. 27, 1891 and died June 10, 1968. After Dad and Mother married they moved to Winston-Salem, NC and Dad went to work for R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company. When he retired he was supervisor of factory #256 shipping dept.

Dad was looking forward to retirement, but realized that he had no hobbies to keep him occupied in his retirement days. He bought wood working tools and set up a small wood working shop in his garage. After about six months of repairing things around the house, and building things that were needed for me and his house, he found himself at a loss as to what to do next. I suggested that he build some looms.

Several years prior to Dad's retirement my husband, Tom, (while working as a photographer for the Winston-Salem Journal and Sentinel) was given an assignment to take photos of Gypsy Hollingsworth, the weaver who was going to start classes at the Arts and Crafts building. When he came home he suggested that I might want to take lessons from Gypsy. I signed up for the classes, and eventually bought a large six harness loom, which I still have today. Now, to return to the story about Dad and his building looms.

Dad and I spent a lot of time researching the building of looms. He eventually bought a small folding floor loom from Dot Carlson, a weaving teacher who had visited the Arts and Crafts classes. Dad took that loom apart, piece by piece, and copied it, building his first loom. After he learned the function of each piece he was in a position to make a few improvements. He built an eight-harness loom for me, which, to this day, has never been used. I hope to use it before I cross over. He built several

rug looms, but most were the folding four harness looms.

Then one day I told him that I needed to find a method for warping a loom that I could do without any help from anyone. That started us into another search, and after spending several months looking at all methods, Dad built a great piece of warping equipment. Unfortunately, it take up about the fourth of an average room. Since I used a 20's size thread for my warp, and had 30 threads to an inch, the equipment has room for 30 large cones of thread, and the reel is two yards in circumference

Unfortunately, Dad accidentally cut himself on his circular saw, and from that day forward he did very little building. He had some palsy, and he was afraid that he might seriously damage himself. That sent him into using the already built two harness rug loom. After weaving some rugs, he wove many place mats and sold them at gift shops in the mountains. Thus, my Dad, the weaver, was born.

Dad's second wife, Bess, (who was my Mother's sister, hence, my aunt, married my father after Mom died,) stated that she did not want to become a weaver, but curiosity got to her. She reached the point that she did some nice four-harness weaving in her retirement years.

Today Tracy and I must carry on the tradition that we have built. We will continue weaving.

## CWP 2-6-2005 MY MATERNAL GRANDFATHER, JOHN NOAH WYATT

Granddad John Noah Wyatt was the last and only son by Williams Walker Wyatt and his second wife, Martha Shelton. Williams had seven children by his first wife, Susannah Cope, who died from Typhoid Fever. Martha was very young, and it has been suggested in the family that she married Williams for his money. Regardless, she was the one who reared Granddad. After Gr-Grandfather William died Martha married Louis Hege, and by him had one child, a girl called Lizzie, who married Houston Davis.

My memories of Granddad were of him taking us children in his buggy to Fork to get a coke. But the memory that I have foremost in my mind is of him sitting in a straight chair, balanced on the two back legs and leaning against a tree in the front yard. He would be at the tree nearest the road, so that friends who came by would stop to chat a few minutes.

Always at his side was the dog, named Shep. Shep was a beautiful shepherd, and was trained to go get the cows into the upper pasture. Granddad would be smoking his pipe, and as the sun started to lower, Granddad would say to Shep, "Shep, go get the cows." And Shep would get up, trot to the barn yard, disappear into the lower pasture and would soon have all the cows in the pasture at the barn.

I have a memory of one of the bulls attacking either granddad or Uncle Wade one time, and Shep ran the bull off. It has been said that were it not for Shep the man would have been killed.

Martha had three sisters, Eliza, Mary and Fanny. It was Eliza and Mary who made the famous Shelton Baskets. One basket sold at an auction here several months ago for \$1050.00. One antique dealer told me that he owns one of the baskets, and he paid \$1600.00 for it. It is probably from the Sheltons that the Wyatt girls, my mother, Bess and sister Thelma, got their creative abilities. I have three of the baskets, and cousin Virgil owns three or four baskets. I remember as a child watching Great Aunt Eliza making a basket.

Catherine, Feb. 8, 2005

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FAILURES

The accomplishments I have achieved during this lifetime on this planet Earth, (aside from the two children I have birthed) are:

I am proud of the role of leadership, along with several officials of High Rock Lake Association, that I played in stopping the building of the Perkins Nuclear Power plant on the shores of the Yadkin River in Davie County, N.C. The fall-out from such a plant would have covered all the citizens in this area, and the amount of water that it would have consumed would have stopped any further industrialization along the Yadkin River all the way to the ocean.

I am proud of having appeared before the North Carolina Board of the Utility Commission in objecting to Bell South's attempt to charge all of their customers \$1.50 per month, ad infinitum, thereby replacing the monies they had been forced to return to AT&T for overcharging them for long distance services. I was the ONLY person to appear at that hearing. Their request was refused.

Many people, including High Rock Lake Assn., had appeared before the Davidson County Commissioners requesting them to adopt a noise ordinance. The commissioners had always agreed that they needed to do that but had never followed through in adopting such an ordinance. I am proud to say that with the help of several knowledgeable people I succeeded in getting this accomplished.

I am proud of the work I, and a few others, did in getting our roads paved on High Rock Lake.

I am proud that I am the first woman who founded a retail sewing machine store complete with repairs (me) in NC.

I am proud of the work that my son, Andy, and I did by being the first to bring the Internet to the citizens of Winston-Salem in 1994. I think that we established the benchmark for the way the people use the Internet.

I have failed to get the law-makers in Raleigh to recognize the fact that we have a rabies epidemic in our state and the need to change some laws in order to control the wild life that is causing this problem. But my life isn't over yet, and maybe I can get that done before I leave this planet.

Jesse Floyd (Jeff) Wallace

I know that all the preceding chapters in this booklet are about my family/families, but Jeff Wallace is as close to me as any member of my family ever dared to be.

In 1995 I moved from my house on High Rock Lake in Lexington into an apartment in Winston-Salem, in order to take care of the office of the Red Barn Data Center. I own two houses on the lake. I immediately rented the house in which I lived, and used the other house for storage. In 1997 I decided that I needed to get the other house ready for renting, and borrowed \$7,000.00 for that purpose. In October I had the house about ready. I had to completed the bath room, installed a shower stall, both houses had been using the same electric meter, so I had to have them separated with a meter for the second house, put in a small kitchen, built a little deck on the water side of the house, install new carpeting, -- well, you get the picture. In September I advertised the house was for rent, and the first day the ad ran I had a call from Jeff Wallace.

Jeff was passing through Lexington, stopped some place for breakfast, picked up a paper and saw the ad. He immediately called. He made a fast trip to see the house, and to cut a long story short, I rented it to him. He had just come out of an unhappy marriage, his third, and was looking for a place to hang his hat. He had absolutely nothing in the way of furniture, having given everything that he had accumulated to his ex-wife. He had nothing to move in, except his clothes. I had two cot-size foam mattresses, and I loaned those to him which he put on the floor for his bed. He came up with two chairs and a small table from a soda shop. For two or three months he slept on the floor, as he tried to accumulate a few things. Two of his best friends, Melanie and Kip Cockerham, soon rented the house that I had lived in. These three people pay rent and take care of my property. They do an excellent job.

About the time that Papa Tom had aged to the point of being unable to do much work around the house, Jeff entered our lives. I have often told Jeff that my Angels sent him to me. And of course, Andy's health did not allow him to do any carpentry work, or anything else that needed tending to around the house. Jeff took over all those chores. One time when the sewer system in the house had locked up, he came, at midnight, to my rescue, and stayed until the Rotor Rooter people arrived and opened everything up.

In November of 2000 my husband, Papa Tom, crossed over, and I started adding to the home place to make room for me, and to make things livable for Andy and me, so that each of us would have our own space. Jeff, Melanie and Kip took off the whole day, packed up everything and moved me. I moved in the incompleated addition to the



home place in July 2001, and in October of that year Andy died.

If I tried to count the many things that Jeff has done to help me since I first met him, -- well --- that would be an impossible task. Only today, two days before Easter, I had the flowers that I like to put on top of the monument at the cemetery ready to take there, but I was afraid to do this alone, for the terrain at the cemetery is not smooth, and I am un-steady on my feet. Jeff drove here from Lexington to go with me to the cemetery, bringing me a milkshake, which he knows I like. We went to the Forsyth Memorial Park cemetery, put the arrangement on top of the monument, where my brother Ray, Mother, Dad, Bess, Papa Tom, son Tom and son Andy are all buried. I told Jeff that when he crosses over he could be buried there as well if he so desires. After my death, there will still be four un-used sites.

Jeff is so good to me that I am humbled by his presence. He possesses the one trait that I value above all other traits, he is a kind person. He is sympathetic, honorable, honest, and very intelligent. He has earned every bit of love that I have for him, and that is a lot. I have never known him to speak ill about anyone. He does not complain. He will get his house when I die. I hope that after my death he will have a happy and successful life. After I cross over I will be watching.

CWP 3-31-05

## A look into the future

Today it is Saturday, May 21, 2005. I am 82 years old. I have a bad knee, but because I had a TIA two years ago my doctor's advise me not to have surgery for fear of a stroke. So I am limited to using a three-wheel scooter. I feel very fortunate that my health is as good as it is. I spend my days mostly reading and some writing..

I have no people in NC except cousins, my children have left this world and have crossed over into, what I think, is the real world. I note that Ruth Montgomery's books refers to our world here as School House Earth. We are here to learn. My niece Tracy in Texas is as close to me as a daughter could be. I do not want her to get a call from NC that I am dead, and for her to have to drop everything in her life to rush here to take care of things. With that thought in mind, I have pre-paid Cremation Services of W/S to claim my body when I quit living and have instructed everyone here to simply send my body to Cremation Services. That way Tracy can take care of things when it is convenient with her. I am leaving a Will, and have left provisions for a party to celebrate my life. I have lived it to the fullest, and enjoyed most of it.

Tracy and I had terrible experiences in 1989 when we had 5 deaths in 33 days. First was my son Tom, August 4, 1989, and my only sibling, Ray, (Tracy's father) Sept. 5, 1989, my mother-in-law Sept 6, 1989, and between Tommy's death and Rays was an aunt of husband Toms, and my last uncle. I do not want Tracy to go thru all that again. So she can choose her time to come here. I am eager to join my sons, but that is not for me to decide. (See the manuscript I wrote titled 18 days in the life of Tracy Perez and Catherine W. Pitts.)

This manuscript will probably not be completed until after I cross over. I am sure that I will add several more pages, depending on the length of my time left here on School House Earth.

Catherine W. Pitts

CWP 5-21-05

## My Friends

It is after midnight, June 12, 2005. Tracy is visiting me from Texas. I feel so fortunate in having her as my niece, as my friend, as my heir. She is a helluva fine specimen of what the female should be. She has all the qualities of a good woman. I wish I had been as finely tuned when I was her age. The best female friend I have locally is Sue Styers. Sue lives on High Rock Lake, and has come to my aid a number of times.

And in thinking about her, my thoughts wandered to the phone call I had tonight from Dr. Jeff Leal, my dentist. I told him one time that he was the best friend I had, and he thought it strange that my best friend would be my dentist. But claiming him as a friend has absolutely nothing to do with his profession. I am convinced that he and I were together in a past life. As my thoughts continued to wander I thought of Bill Everhart..

When I ran for County Commissioner, in 1991 in Davidson County, NC, I (a staunch Democrat,) did so because I had promised Bill Everhart (a Republican) in Lexington, (when he was dying,) that I would file for Commissioner. Bill was the main DJ morning man on the local radio station in Lexington. Through the years, working with him on several boards concerning High Rock Lake, and with the two of us creating my commercials (for my sewing center) on his radio station, we became very close friends. I had a great love for that man. He was such a good friend. When his wife called me in 1990 and said to me, "Catherine, did Bill tell you that he has a malignant tumor on his brain?" Shocked, I answered in the negative. She informed me that he was in the hospital, was going to undergo surgery the next morning, and she knew that he would love to hear from me. I called the hospital, his sister answered, and when I gave her my name, her re-action was to give Bill the phone. Together Bill and I cried about the upcoming surgery; he survived that surgery, but it returned. The last time I saw him he came to my house via boat, he had lost about 200 pounds, was tall and skinny, came into my living room, and engulfed me in a long bear hug. We told each other how much we loved each other. He died about a week later. I could not go to his funeral. We had such fun doing the commercials that the rumor mill linked us together as lovers, which was not true, and I knew that if I attended the funeral rumors would escalate when I wept for him. And I knew that I would weep. We had the kind of love that the wife would approve --- a sisterly/brotherly love. I still miss him. His wife, Freddie, attended the funeral seriously ill from chemo, and she died about two weeks later.

But that was yesteryear. In today's world, I have several good male friends. Jeff Wallace is like a son to me. He has been invaluable to me since the death of Andy. Jeff Leal is like a brother, and oh! What a brother he is! Every woman needs a friend

like Leal. I will never forget how shocked I was at Andy's memorial service to see Leal and three members of his staff there. And I must not forget Tom Rike. His family's summer cottage was across the road from our house at the lake. I had watched him grow from a 16 year old boy into a man. He and I have gone thru many life changes together. I remember the day after my son Tommy's funeral, I was laying on my bed weeping my heart out. Tom Rike (Rike Wrecking Co.) entered my house, found me weeping, laid down on the bed beside me and pulled my head onto his shoulder to comfort me. His shirt absorbed a bucket of tears that day. With a son or a brother, one can get irritated with them, but you still love them, and they remain in your life. And my doctor, Steve Hux -- well, I don't think of him as a brother, but as a very good doctor. If he were not married, WOW!! That would be awesome! An 82 year old woman fantasizing about a 47 year old man. Absolutely ridiculous!!! Fortunately, or unfortunately (depending on one's point of view) the feeling was not mutual. However, everyone needs a fantasy, and Steve was mine. Past tense. Time to find another one. I asked Leal, and he said that he would be my fantasy. He specializes in spreading sunshine. There goes that brother image.

More good friends are Terry Martin, Ronnie Abernathy, and Jon Vickers. Ronnie and Jon were very good friends of Andy's. Terry was a reporter for the W/S Journal. He now lives in Monroe. I miss him. The three of them escorted me down the aisle at Andy's memorial service. And can you believe it? My attorney Frank Bell of Lexington, is a good friend to me. My legal advisor. Then there is the Rev. Ed Needham, my minister. I have been working hard trying to save his soul, since his belief system is different from mine. I like mine better. But he's a good guy. How lucky I have been to have so many great friends in my 82 years on this planet, Schoolhouse Earth. There are others too numerous to mention.

I think all of the above were sent to me by my guides from the other side. CWP 7-12-05 My Angel Dog

Several weeks ago I woke during the night to see a dog on the other side of my beads. (My bedroom is located in my living room, and the area is defined by a wall of hanging beads, and inside the beads is a curtain that I can draw so that no one can see in that area unless one is INSIDE the area.) I repeat, I woke to find a dog, either a collie or a shepherd, standing on the other side of the beads, staring at me. I clearly remember the thought process that I had. I said, to the dog, "Hello dog. How did you get into my house?" - as if I expected an answer. I thought to myself, "There is no way that a dog can get into my house unless there is a person attached. And I do not see a person. Is there a person in another area of my house? How could a person get into my house without my knowing it? My house is too protected by security systems that no one could get in without my knowledge. In either case, I'll have to get up to let

the dog out, because I do not need to have him loose in my house.”

With those thoughts, I rose from my bed and got on my scooter that was parked beside my bed. (With my disability I use a scooter to get around over the house..) I also thought to myself as I got on the scooter that once I got on the other side of the beads there will not be a dog there. And I was correct. No dog.

Shortly after dark the following night I heard noises coming from the metal out-building located about 50 feet behind my house. I wondered what was happening at the building, but since I had no lights in that area, knowing that if I looked out the window I would not be able to see anything because it was dark, but also knowing if there was a person back there they could see me, I remained seated in my chaise lounge. My inside wooden door was open, but the storm door was locked. I waited. Within minutes I saw a man pass in front of my car port, and the outside lights came on. I think that he was planning to try to break into my Red Barn, but the lights changed his mind. The man continued walking and left the area. I dialed 911.

About five minutes later the police arrived. No one was found. My security system had captured the man on tape, so that tape was given to the police. About 9 PM that same night, someone broke into a house across the street on Melinda, and ransacked the house. Probably the same man. Within two weeks they had caught the two men who they think were the culprits, but I only saw one man.

The next day after seeing the man, I spoke with my neighbor. We discussed the incident. I said, “By the way, did I tell you about my dog?” After telling her about seeing a non-existent dog in my room, I asked her if she thought there was a connection between the dog and the prowler. She said that she thought so, since my dog was probably a shepherd, and shepherds were known for protecting people, she felt that he was sent to me by Andy, my son, and his friends on the other side, to protect me. (I had described the dog as being a Collie, but since I am not familiar with that species of dog it could just as well have been a shepherd.)

In retrospect, the whole experience of the dog has a surreal feeling about it. He must have been an angel dog, and I have never seen an angel before. I know that I was not dreaming, for I clearly remember the thought processes I had when I saw the dog. One does not do that with a dream. I am ever so grateful for their protection.

CWP--- Feb. 2006, I think.