

Chapter 5 Senior Year: 1942-43

There were thirteen in our Graduating Class: Bessie Arvin, Alberta Casady, Cecil Craig, Don Fowler, Mildred Fowler, Kenneth Gray, Dorothy Harvey, Doris Hazen, Imogene Lacy, Roscoe Lane, Lawrence McDaniel, Ruth Sturdevant and Corine Wyatt. Beryl Elmore did not return to school. Corine Wyatt enrolled when school started the fall of 1942. She and her parents moved in north of town near Harvey and Cora Richardson. She rode our school bus. Marvelle Pierce married Ivan Wilson and dropped out of school. Mr. Bailey was still Superintendent and Coach. Miss Wilma Jones and Mrs. Crystelle Mlika were the other teachers. Ruth Sturdevant's father was the janitor. The Grays had moved to Independence, Missouri to work for the war effort. Kenneth stayed in Blythedale with his grandparents so he could graduate that year.

Clyde Foreman drove the bus for our last two years of high school. He had a newer smaller bus and it did much, much better on the mud roads. The school district stopped the bus after our four years but started it again later, as Randall drove the school bus after he returned from World War II.

In the fall, Dorothy Harvey, Corine Wyatt and I were nominated for Queen. We each made long crepe paper dresses to wear to the crowning. Corine made a red dress, Dorothy made a white dress and I made a blue one. Remember, this was during WWII when money and material were scarce. Dorothy was crowned Queen of Blythdeale High School.

Alberta, Bessie and I became very close friends. We called ourselves "We Three" and were together most of the time. Girls were not allowed to wear slacks to school but we did one day and were sent home. We skipped school several times. We didn't really skip school we stretched the truth when we told Mr. Bailey we would not be in school the next day. One day we went to a farm sale. I told Mr. Bailey my dad wanted me to buy some pigs. Another day we attended a funeral of someone we hardly knew. I'm not sure what we told Mr. Bailey the time we walked to the bridge between Blythedale and Eagleville and drank cokes with aspirins. We had been told you could get drunk drinking them but it had no effect on us. Alberta would experiment with smoking but I just couldn't as it made me cough and cough. One day when we went to Bethany we went into the drug store and bought cokes. My first coke from a soda fountain. On the last day of school we went to Bethany to see the movie, Gone With The Wind. We were supposed to practice our graduation procedure that day.

One day Hattie Richardson came to school and got Alberta, Bessie and I. She wanted us to have our pictures taken with her son, Wayne, that was home on

leave from the Army. Wayne wanted some pictures of girls to hang on the walls of his barracks.

I was captain of the volleyball team and one of the leaders of the Pep Squad again. We had another terrific year in volleyball, as we had just about the same players. Only one girl from the team had graduated, Nina Huitt. Freshman Shirley Milligan joined our team as a spiker. I really enjoyed playing volleyball and continued to play for a number of years with teams where I worked and lived. Cecil Craig was captain of the basketball team and star player. Don and Kenneth Gray from our class played basketball on the team too.

Our Senior Class went on a one day trip to Kansas City, Missouri, one hundred miles away. It was the first time I was that far from home and the first time I saw a city. Up to that time I had never been more than twenty miles from home, other than the two trips to St. Joe. My world consisted of our farming community and Blythedale. Eagleville was eight miles from home and Bethany another fifteen miles south. Lamoni, Iowa was six miles to the north and west. Davis City was about fifteen miles cross country to the north and east.

Cecil Craig was now dating Corine Wyatt; Shirley Milligan and Mamie Jeffries were fighting over Daryl Sturdevant; Delbert Shain had gone to work and Kenneth Gray and I were good friends.

I was Valedictorian of our graduating class of thirteen students. Dorothy Harvey was Salutatorian. The requirements were high grades plus you must have been enrolled at Blythedale High School for the entire four years. Miss Jones helped me with my graduation speech. "Hitch your wagon to a star, take a seat and there you are" was our class motto. Our class colors were purple and gold and the class flower was the gardenia. I was offered a scholarship to the Chillicothe Business College in Missouri or to a college in Nebraska. I chose the scholarship to Chillicothe Business College as it was closer to my home and because Aunt Dean and Virginia had both gone there.

We graduated from high school the middle of May, 1943. In June Don left for the Navy. Cecil Craig and Kenneth Gray went into the Army. I decided to enroll at Chillicothe Business College for the summer session as I was anxious to begin my new life. Remember, I dreamed of seeing what was over the next hill or around the next bend!

Chapter 5 Chillicothe Business College: Summer of 1943

Attended Chillicothe Business College:

Loudine Hill : May 1928 - November 1928 (6 months)
Virginia Fowler : September 1941 - August 1942 (12 months)
Mildred Fowler : June 1943 - August 1943 (3 months)

I, Mildred, enrolled for the post-graduate stenographic course at the Chillicothe Business College that began the first of June, 1943. To get to the college I rode a small bus that left from Bethany. It went cross country stopping at several towns on the way to Chillicothe. It took us, forever. Along the way another girl got on the bus that was going to Chillicothe to college too. It was dark by the time we arrived in Chillicothe. A car was waiting at the bus station for us and it took us to our dorms. I stayed at Vincent Hall. That is where Virginia had stayed. Vincent Hall was a three story building. My room was on the third floor. Another girl was already in the room, when I told her my name she said, "I don't like that name, I think I will call you Mickey". And I have used that nickname ever since. The house mother explained to me that we were to make friends with the other girls in Vincent Hall as it was to be like a sorority but I became friends with a girl in a different dorm. I never did like for someone to tell me what to do. Later that summer when it turned hot my roommate moved down on the first floor, as it was much cooler down there. I then had the room on the third floor to myself.

I should tell that when I decided I would go to business college Mom and I went to the Feed Store in Blythedale. We bought feed in sacks made of colorful print to make my skirts, blouses and shorts to wear to college. By working in the cafeteria at college I received free meals. I did not do the dishes or help with the cooking. I cleaned off the tables.

There were not many students there that summer, especially boys as most of the boys were in the service. Martha and Mary Moore, granddaughters of the President of the Chillicothe Business College, Allen Moore II, attended college that summer with me. They were nice and friendly but did not mingle with the rest of the students.

Besides our secretarial subjects we played sports. A nice looking young man taught me to play tennis. We played in the Tennis Tournament as a mixed double. I, also, played in the girls' singles. I did not win but I did enjoy playing. One of the girls in Vincent Hall warned me to stay away from the tennis player as she was interested in him.

I played as catcher on the softball team. We had a series of games. Our team was the champion team. Each player received a little gold softball. I have my softball metal on my charm bracelet.

On Saturdays a group of us would walk down town Chillicothe or to the park. It became a joke as there was a Girls Reformatory in Chillicothe too, and those girls would walk down the sidewalks with guards, singing as they walked.

Some of us attended Sunday School and Church at the local Baptist Church. The church had a very active group of boys and girls in the Young Peoples Department.

I did not go home often that summer as it took too long to ride the bus home and back to college. It would take until midnight Friday to get to Eagleville and then I would need to leave home Sunday noon to get back to Chillicothe by midnight. The bus route changed after my first trip to Chillicothe. I would ride the Jefferson Bus Line from Eagleville to Cameron; change there to a bus going to Chillicothe. It still stopped at all the small towns along the way and took hours and hours. Now you can drive from Eagleville to Chillicothe in about an hour and half.

The middle of August, those of us living in Vincent Hall moved into the remodeled Empire Hall. I was only in the Empire Hall about two weeks when I completed my three months post-graduate stenographic course. I decided I was ready for the next chapter in my life-go to Kansas City and look for work.

After graduating from high school Bessie Arvin went to Indiana to live with her parents. She married Paul Palmer and continued to live in Washington, Indiana.

Alberta Casady attended Maryville Teachers College and taught in some of the country school. While teaching at Cisco School she stayed with my parents. When Randall returned home from overseas he and Alberta started dating. More about them later.

Note:

Cisco School closed in the early 1950's. Dad, Clarence Fowler, purchased the land and building in October 1955. In 1966 Dad sold the property to the Mt. Pleasant II Church for a parsonage.

Blythedale High School's last graduating class was in 1952. The Blythedale School District consolidated with Hatfield and Eagleville. All students now attend North Harrison School in Eagleville, Mo.

Chillicothe Business College is now closed.