Life Story

of

William Henry Bliss

Spouses

Savilla Evelyn Long

Mildred Emily Smith

THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOKLET

We are putting these booklets together on our ancestors, not for the purpose of aiding in any genealogical research, although there might be that possibility for some readers. We are not making an effort to include all the names, dates, and places we might discover if we searched. We do not want to take that much time because of the magnitude of our task.

Our intention is to preserve the life stories of our ancestors as completely as we can. The family traditions, anecdotes, and accomplishments that might be lost to our posterity if we don't record them. There are also mementoes, certificates, photographs, especially photographs, that might be forever lost if we don't find a way to share them. This is our effort to do so.

We feel it is not an accident that so many family records have ended up in our hands from both sides of our families. We feel we have them because we will take care of them and share them. We are getting old and we realize that if we die without doing something about these family treasures, they will probably not be preserved for future generations. We're not sure how to share them but preparing these books and booklets is at least the first step. Our children or grandchildren may have to take it from there and we trust that they will. *William P. & Donna Tyler Bliss*

WILLIAM HENRY BLISS
1904-1982

1914-18

1922-25

1944-45

1958-60

Life Story
of

William Henry Bliss
Spouses
Savilla Evelyn Long
Mildred Emily Smith

"MY LIFE STORY"

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page No.

The Happy Marriage

MARRIED

2 July 1954	Reno, Washoe, Nevada
When	Where

William Henry Bliss
HUSBAND

18 November 1904	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Birth Date	Birth Place
25 April 1982	Portland, Multnomah, Oregon
Death Date	Death Place

Mildred Emily Smith
WIFE

10 July 1913	Wenatchee, Chelan, Washington
Birth Date	Birth Place
28 Feb 2008	Milwaukie, Multnomah, OR
Death Date	Death Place

Other Marriages

MARRIED

15 June 1929 (Div. 1940) — When

Gering, Scotts Bluff, Nebraska — Where

Savilla Evelyn Long — SPOUSE

13 February 1912 — Birth Date

North Platte, Lincoln, Nebraska — Birth Place

29 August 1977 — Death Date

Long Beach, Los Angeles, Calif. — Death Place

MARRIED

June 1943 (Div, 1945) — When

Elko, Elko, Nevada — Where

Margaret Magnuson — SPOUSE

Children

Wilbur Lee Bliss
NAME OF CHILD

5 May 1930
Date of Birth

Gering, Scotts Bluff, Nebraska
Place of Birth

16 July 1948
Date of Marriage

Donna Elverda Tyler
Married To Whom

Dorothy Ilene Bliss
NAME OF CHILD

10 January 1933
Date of Birth

Gering, Scotts Bluff, Nebraska
Place of Birth

20 December 1951
Date of Marriage

Broadie Firman Jones
Married To Whom

Mehl Step Children

Merle Sebern Mehl
NAME OF CHILD

30 April 1936
Date of Birth

Sedro-Woolley, Skagit, Wash.
Place of Birth

10 November 1956
Date of Marriage

Shirley Jean (Zitzow) Burrill
Married To Whom

Arlene Joyce Mehl
NAME OF CHILD

27 April 1938
Date of Birth

Sedro-Woolley, Skagit, Wash.
Place of Birth

25 March 1957 (div)
Date of Marriage

Howard L. Ransom
Married To Whom
(2) Lloyd D. Lytle

Janet Maureen Mehl
NAME OF CHILD

21 Jan 1940
Date of Birth

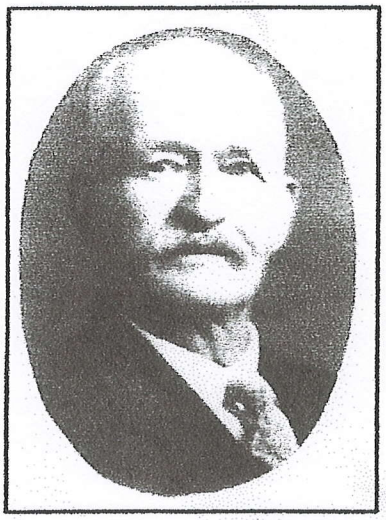
Sedro-Woolley, Skagit, Wash
Place of Birth

11 August 1961
Date of Marriage

Dennis Cranor
Married To Whom

Mildred's Children

William's Parents



John Henry Bliss
(1860 - 1941)

&

Eliza May Shively
(1871 - 1948)

MARRIED

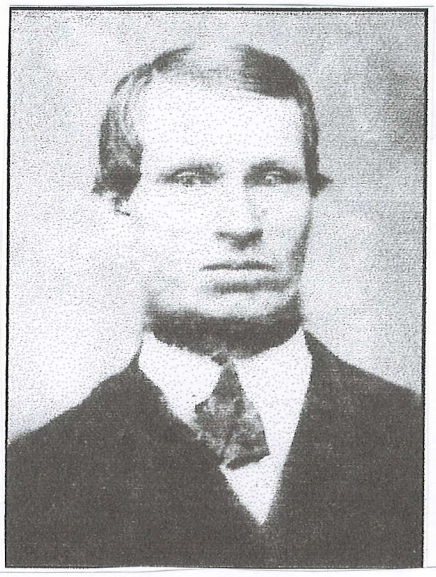
6 June 1894	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
When	Where

John Henry Bliss
FATHER

14 May 1860	Barton, Washington, Wisconsin
Date of Birth	Place of Birth
21 Oct 1941	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Date of Death	Place of Death

Eliza May Shively
MOTHER

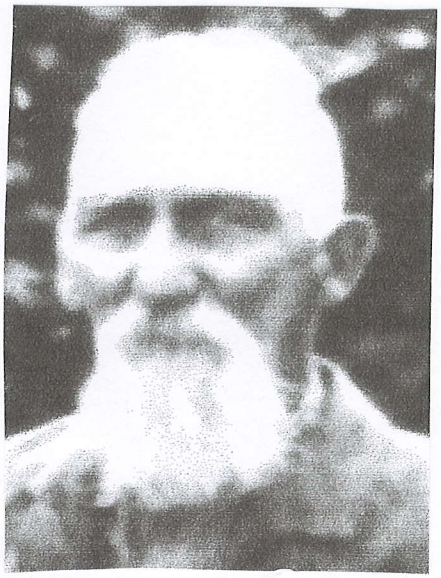
10 Feb 1871	Tama City, Tama, Iowa
Date of Birth	Place of Birth
3 May 1948	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Date of Death	Place of Death



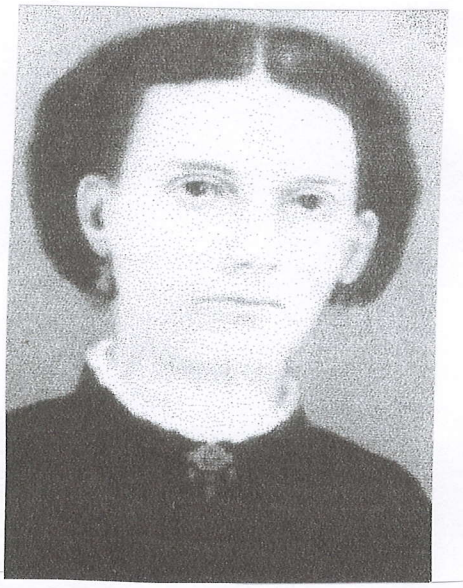
Alanson Newton Bliss
(1828 - 1887)

Henrietta Agen Bliss
(1824 - 1900)

Will's Grandparents



Henry Shively
(1832 - 1917)



Elizabeth Ann Richards Shively
(1831 - 1878)

GRANDFATHER(Father's Side) Alanson Newton Bliss	Date of Birth 12 May 1824	Date of Death 29 Nov 1900
GRANDMOTHER(Father's Side) Henrietta Agen	Date of Birth 7 May 1826	Date of Death 29 Oct 1887
GRANDFATHER(Mother's Side) Henry Shively	Date of Birth 28 Jan 1832	Date of Death 26 Jan 1917
GRANDMOTHER(Mother's Side) Elizabeth Ann Richards	Date of Birth 16 Jan 1831	Date of Death 20 Jan 1880

Bliss Family Tree

MY FATHER
John Henry Bliss

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
14May1860 Barton,Wisc.

MARRIAGE DATE MARRIAGE PLACE
6Jun1894 Albion, Nebr.

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
21Oct1941 Gibbon, Nebr.

BROTHERS & SISTERS
George W. Bliss

Eliza A. Bliss

Charles S. Bliss

Dau. (died infancy)

Horatio Whitney Bliss
(his twin)
William Henry Bliss

Alice L. aka. Rosina
& Mary

Abba M. (died infancy)

Viola Bliss

HIS FATHER
Alanson Newton Bliss

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
12May1824 Rochester,NY

MARRIAGE DATE MARRIAGE PLACE
22Feb1847 Milwaukee, WI

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
29Nov1900 Langford, SD

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Mary Bliss

Salina Bliss

Sophronia Bliss

Roena Bliss

Thomas Bliss

Emily Bliss

HIS MOTHER
Henrietta Agen

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
7May1826 Down, Ireland

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
29Oct1887 Barton, Wisc.

BROTHERS & SISTERS
(Unknown)

Thomas Bliss

HIS FATHER
12Jun1779 Boston,Mass.

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
1806 at Boston, Mass.

MARRIAGE DATE MARRIAGE PLACE
1828 Rochester, N.Y.

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
Nancy --- Nathaniel

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Mary Ann & Martha(twins)

Nancy -- Chauncey

Bathsheba -- Samuel

Charlotte -- Sally

HIS MOTHER
Mary Payson

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
1787 in Massachusetts

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
1Dec1865 Dodge, Wisc.

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Unknown

Unknown

HER FATHER

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH

MARRIAGE DATE MARRIAGE PLACE

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH

BROTHERS & SISTERS

Unknown

HER MOTHER

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH

BROTHERS & SISTERS

Shively Family Tree

MY MOTHER
Eliza May Shively

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
10Feb1871 Tama,Iowa

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
6Jun1894 Gibbon,Nebr.

BROTHERS & SISTERS
William B. Shively

Rosa Ann Shively

Daniel Shively

George W. Shively

Son (died infancy)

HER FATHER
Henry Shively

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
28Jan1832 Massillon,OH

MARRIAGE DATE MARRIAGE PLACE
26Mar1859 Huntington,IN

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
26Jan1917 Fullerton,NE

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Jacob Shively

Valentine Shively

Owen Shively

Elizabeth Shively

Mary Ann Shively

Lucinda Shively

Rebecca Shively

HER MOTHER
Elizabeth Ann Richards

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
16Jun1831 W.VA

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
20Jan1880 Fullerton,NE

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Eli Richards

Amaziah L. Richards

Hannah C. Richards

HIS FATHER
Daniel Shively

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
13Apr1796

MARRIAGE DATE MARRIAGE PLACE

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
7Aug1884 Andrews,Ind.

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Unknown

HIS MOTHER
Mary/Sarah Weaver

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
4Sep1794

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
29Aug1847 Andrews,Ind.

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Unknown

HER FATHER
William B. Richards

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
1782 PA

MARRIAGE DATE MARRIAGE PLACE

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
7Jun1864 Andrews,Ind

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Unknown

HER MOTHER
Rosanna Filer

DATE OF BIRTH PLACE OF BIRTH
1797 Virginia

DATE OF DEATH PLACE OF DEATH
7 Feb1864 Andrews, Ind

BROTHERS & SISTERS
Unknown

John Henry Bliss + Eliza Mae Shively Bliss + Family. William standing at right.

Goldie

"Will from Blanche"

Hazel

18 yrs.

"Gladys, age 11 years - July 17, 1920

"Age 13"

FAMILY HERITAGE
CRESTS, PHOTOS ETC

William's Parents,
Eliza May & John Henry Bliss

At left, Charles Bliss,
John Henry's brother, and
his wife Mary.

Above - Viola Collett,
John Henry's sister,
taken about 1907 or 1908

WILLIAM'S FATHER'S BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Eliza Bliss Sherman and below, her husband, Robert.

Charles (Uncle Charlie) Bliss in his Civil War uniform. He and their father, Alanson, fought in this war.

(Uncle Will) William Henry and his wife Rachel Bundy

John Henry Bliss

Eliza May Shively Bliss

Standing, from left to right: Blanche, Gladys, Voilet, William. Seated, left to right: John Henry, Darold, Goldie, Hazel, Lilah, Eliza.

Eliza May Shively's Mother (Eliza May was William's mother), Elizabeth Ann Richards

Eliza's father, Henry Shively and his 2nd wife, Adaline Virginia Richards Shively

Eliza's brother Daniel and his wife "Aunt Sadie." Her mother was a Richards also

Catherine Everhart,
daughter of
Alice Bliss Everhart
who was William's
father's sister.

Bliss Children

Gladys, the baby, then around the circle counter clockwise -- William, Lilah, Voilet, Hazel, & Goldie

Bliss Girls

Goldie standing, then seated, left to right, Lilah, Voilet & Hazel

On the back of this picture William's sister Hazel had written: "John H. Bliss - taken at Albion, Nebraska about 1902."

Hazel said this was a picture of herself and her sisters. It gives a much better view of the house than it does of the little girls. It was probably the Bliss home in Albion, Neb.

William's sister Hazel
and her husband
Theodore Ecklun

William's brother Darold
and his wife
Rozella

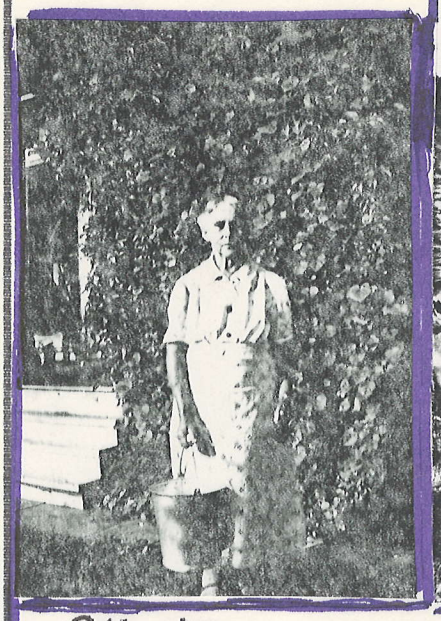
Aunt Lilah + Uncle Slim Fox

Lilah and Earl Fox

Gladys and
Joe
Prickett

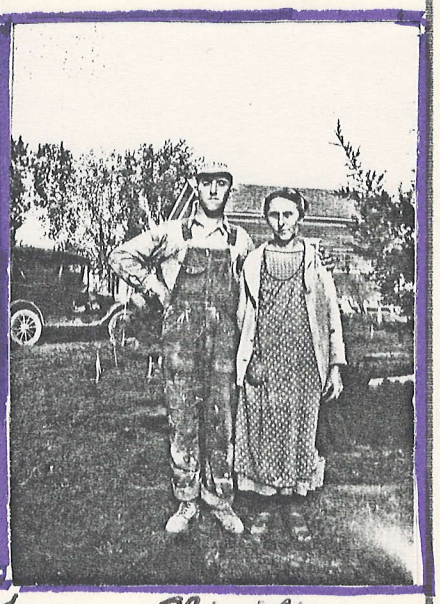
Goldie

Anna Voilet and Family



Eliza May

William & his Mother – Eliza May



Sorry – But they Say Even a Poor

John Henry Bliss

John Henry

Picture is Better Than a Thousand Words

Sada Soul Shively –
William's Aunt
and Harold's
Mother
Age 83 – 1962

William & Sisters Hazel, Lilah
and Gladys abt. 1970

8 Grade. Report for the Year Beginning Sept 4 1922, and Ending _____ 19____

BRANCHES PURSUED	MONTHS 1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	QUARTERLY TESTS 1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Agriculture	90	92	93							86			
Bookkeeping													
Civics		85	85							68			
Drawing													
Arithmetic	93	93	93							49			
English Composition	90	90	90										
Geography	92	90	90							86			
Grammar	82	75	76							48			
History	90	88	88							68			
Mental Arithmetic													
Orthography		88	88										
Penmanship													
Physiology	90	90	90							74			
Reading	93	92	92							87			

REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAW

TO PARENTS: The Compulsory Attendance Law requires that children between the ages of seven and sixteen must attend school two-thirds of the time such school is in session. It is the duty of the teacher, or any member of the Board of Education to report any violation of this act to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who shall immediately investigate the case, and if necessary give written notice to the persons violating this act. If one week after such notice is given and persons are still living in violation of this act, then the county superintendent shall file a complaint against said persons before the county judge. It is the duty of the county superintendent to enforce the provisions of this law from the time of the receipt of the report of the first month of school. If parents will carefully observe items 1, 2 and 3 upon receipt of this report card at the end of each month, and see to it that their children are in school the required length of time, trouble will be avoided.

The Compulsory Attendance Law provides six exemptions which cover all necessary absences from school, and parnts should immediately notify the county superintendent as to the reason of non-attendance on the part of their children.

REPORT AT ENDING OF	ATTENDANCE AND DEPORTMENT MONTHS 1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th
1. Days Required by Law	14	27	40	54					
2. Days Present	20	40	55	65					
3. Days to Make Up	0	0	0	0					
4. Times Tardy	0	0	3	4					
5. Habits of Study	G.	G.	G+	G+					
6. Neatness	G.	G.	G+	G+					
7. Deportment	90	92	91	92					

GRADE
Excellent 95 to 100
Good 85 to 95
Fair 75 to 85
Unsatisfactory, 60 to 75
Poor Below 60
Required Average, 75%
Minimum 60%

Bill's 8th Grade Report Card. Teacher: Olga Sea

Earlier teacher, sister Hazel on left. Not sure who the other pictured sister is. Probably Dolbie, I think.

Bill's old school house in Sumner, Nebraska

A poor copy of Bill's family's picture. Bill is standing at the right. The original does have the father in attendance.

The Birth of William Henry Bliss

William Henry Bliss
My Full Name

Albion, Boone, Nebraska — Place

18 November 1904 — Date

William wrote that when the time came for him to be born, there was no telephone and his dad took the team of horses to go to get the doctor. Mrs. Anna Kirkpatrick who was their neighbor stayed with his mother and served as midwife, since little William arrived before the doctor did. William wrote the following about his birth:

"On November 18th, 1904, between 11:00 A.M. and 11:45 A.M., at a farm near Albion, Nebraska, I put a stop to my mother's activities of getting the 12 o'clock meal ready for my father and four sisters. I decided (my first decision) to be born into the world and be counted. My father said I arrived just in time for dinner. I was named for father's twin brother." William said he was "born hungry!"

William's Mother

William's mother, Eliza May Shively Bliss was short of stature and the story was told that as a girl she worked in a cafe and they had to build a platform for her to stand on so she could reach the stove to cook. She was always willing to cook & feed any who dropped in.

We can find no writings of William's regarding his mother. However, there are several letters from her to him that reflect a mother's love for her son and all her children. Frequently she repeats praise she has received for her family and expresses her pride in them and their accomplishments. One quote:

"Blanche's boss said she was the best stapler he ever had. No wonder I swell up when I hear these things. And Mrs Alin said I had the best children in the world. Oh! me oh! my."

Eliza May was rather short and must have had lots of energy to raise such a large family in a farm setting. She loved music; her family organ now a treasure to her descendents. Her grandchildren remember that and her wind-up phonograph and thick records fondly. She was skillful in all the homemaking arts and pieced and quilted many beautiful quilts. Other kinds of handwork such as crocheting were also among her activities.

Eliza May was the youngest child of her parents and moved with them from Tama, Iowa to Merrick Co. Nebraska when she was one year old. What her early religion was, we don't know, but in 1926 she joined the Gibbon Presbyterian Church and remained a member until her death.

Pictures taken of Eliza May in her later years indicate she must have had a stroke as there is a definite droop to one side of her face. She died at age 77 of a heart ailment. She was much beloved of her children and grandchildren. William's children weren't privileged to know her well but Wilbur spoke more than he knew when asked to describe her. He said: "She was a grandmother."

A recently recalled story William told about his mother was the time she had told him to pick the cherries but he "forgot." Before bedtime and well after dark his mother asked "where are the cherries you picked?" With a lantern he had to go out and pick them, all the time scared of the dark. He learned a lesson. William also remembered that his mother always filled a glass of milk for him at bedtime.

Eliza May

William's Father

1st Wife Died

Boy Child

William wrote: "My father, John Henry Bliss, was born in a country house near Barton, Wisconsin (a twin to William Henry Bliss) on May 14, 1860. He moved to Nebraska when 18 years old. Lived around St. Edward, Nebraska while a young man. He married and his wife died, leaving a baby, Frank, who was adopted out to his aunt. Later, at age 28, my father married Eliza May Shively."

Harsh

John Henry Bliss was 5 foot 7 inches tall and weighed 165 pounds, according to an application for Old Age Pension. One picture said to be of him (taken from a distance) shows a heavy dark beard. Later pictures show a clean shaven face and a balding head, which William did not inherit. John was evidently a stern disciplinarian because William told how his dad took a buggy whip to him when he was about 14 or 15. William left home at that time as a result , at least briefly. William often alluded to the difficulty of his childhood under his father's harsh rule.

Fish Story

John grew up in Wisconsin, near West Bend in Washington County. William's brother Darold remembers: "My dad telling us kids he had caught fish so long in Wisconsin that when he threw them over his shoulder their tails touched the ground." They thought it just another fish story. Years later when Darold traveled to Wisconsin he found an old-timer who remembered "Johnny and William" and who verified the fish story. On that same trip he was able to locate the house where their father grew up and visit the cemetery where the grandparents they never knew were buried. According to a note just found, William and Darold were together on that trip.

Regardless of his harshness, John Henry had a poetic side to him too and wrote this lovely poem when his mother died. It was published in "The Democrat," the West Bend newspaper.

His Poem

We are weeping today o'er our mother,
Her children in grief bow their head,
And tears, from eyes unused to weeping,
Now fall for the honored dead.

The folds of our loved starry banner,
Drooping low, as in pity to say:
Oh weep! For the head of the family
With mourning is buried today.

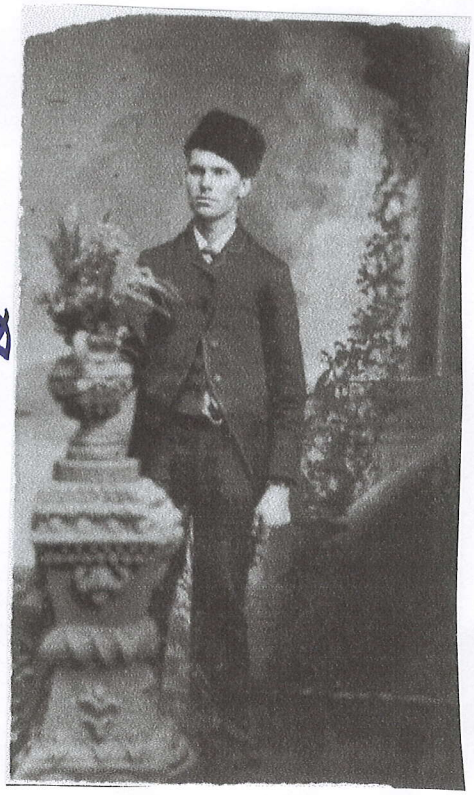
Oh, husband be the thought of contention
Of pity let nothing be said;
With emotion too sacred for utterance
Oh, whisper it: Mother is dead.

She has left us a noble example --
Her life book, a record all fair;
Her life was so quickly taken,
She rests now in peace overthere.

Tenderly, mournfully, sadly,
Our last parting tribute we give;
Ever dear in the hearts of the people
The memory of mother will live.

Let the family so deeply afflicted
Submissively bow o'er the rod,
And look up in faith -- never doubting
The wisdom and goodness of God.

John Henry



PUBLIC SALE

Having sold my farm I will sell the following chattels at public auction at my farm 5 miles west and 1½ miles north of Kearney; 2 miles north of Alfalfa Center; 4 miles east and 1½ miles north of Odessa; 4 miles south and 1 mile west of Riverdale, commencing immediately after lunch, on

TUESDAY, MARCH 13, '23

FREE LUNCH AT 11:00 O'CLOCK—BRING YOUR OWN DRINKING CUPS

7 - HEAD OF HORSES - 7

Consisting of 1 Black Gelding, 7 years old, weight 1400; 1 Black Gelding, 9 years old, weight 1600; 1 Gray Mare, 6 years old, weight 1400; 1 Strawberry Roan Gelding, coming 3 years old, weight 1000; 1 Black Gelding, coming 2 years old; 1 Mare Colt; and 1 Gray Gelding, 8 years old, weight 1600.

20 - HEAD OF CATTLE - 20

Consisting of 6 Head of Milk Cows, now fresh; 2 Head of Milk Cows, fresh soon; 3 Milk Cows (Dry); 1 Poll-Durham Bull, 1 year old; 1 Yearling Heifer; 1 High Grade Whiteface Bull, 2 years old; 6 Calves.

18 - HEAD OF HOGS - 18

Consisting of 4 Sows with pigs; 12 Bred Gilts to farrow fore part of Arpil; 1 Bred Gilt, to farrow fore part of May; 1 Duroc Boar.

Farm Machinery, Household Goods, Etc.

Consisting of Hay Rack and running gears; 2 Wagons; 1 Spring Wagon; 1 Single Buggy; 1 Grind Stone; John Deere Lister, good as new; John Deere Two-Row; Corn Planter; International Cultivator, good as new; Deering Hay Rake; Dane Hay Sweep; Lavory 20-ft. Steel Harrow, new; Gale 12-in. Gang Plow, new; 9-inch Walking Plow; Roll Cribbing; International Power Grinder; Post Hole Digger; Chain Pipe Wrench; 2 Scalding Barrels; 2 Sets Work Harness; Set of Single Harness; Set Shafts; Roll Hog Wire; Some Hog Troughs; Some Wild Hay; Some Cane; About 40 feet Hose; Some McCormick Repairs; 1½ Bushels Alfalfa Seed; and about 15 Bushels Yellow Dent Seed Corn; Other articles too numerous to menion.

HOUSEHOLD GOODS: 3 Beds Steads; 1 8-foot Dining Room Table—a Good One.

TERMS OF SALE:—All sums of $10.00 and under, cash; over that amount, eight months time will be given on approved security bearing 8% from date interest from date of sale. No property to be removed until settled for with the clerk.

J. H. BLISS, Owner

COL. L. A. KOEPPE, Auctioneer. E. R. GILLESPIE, Clerk

H. A. WEBBERT, PRINTER, KEARNEY, NEBR.

In 1936 John Henry went to Wasthington State to visit his twin. This account was in the local newspaper: "TWINS UNITED ON 76TH BIRTHDAYS." John H. Bliss comes from Nebraska to celebrate anniversary with brother in Lynden. Two brothers who had not seen each other for 23 years, are celebrating their 76th birthday anniversary in Lynden today.

Undoubtedly two of the oldest living twins in the state of Washington, William H. Bliss and John H. Bliss are having a great time at the former's home on Lynden, R. 1, recalling the experiences of their joint cradle days.

John Bliss came here from Gibbon, Nebraska, to celebrate the anniversary with his brother, and to visit with his son, also a William H. Bliss, and his daughters, Mrs. O.P. Staley of Lynden and Mrs. Earl Fox of Custer. Another daughter, Miss Blanche Bliss, accompanied her father from Nebraska.

This is the first time that John Bliss has been west of the Rocky Mountains. Both of the Bliss twin brothers are in good health and they have several other brothers and sisters living in the east.

John and William Bliss were born at Barton, Wisconsin on May 14, 1860. They were never separated for any length of time during the first 20 years of their lives but since that time they have been together on few occasions. John Bliss plans on spending the summer here."

(The date is missing on the article but it would have been about 1936)

According to his obituary, John "was one of the older and esteemed members of the Masonic Lodge at Gibbon. ...He received the highly appreciated 50 year membership honorary medal. He liked his Masonry and often referred to it and his Masonic Brothers. ...He was actively employed at farming and carpentering throughout his long life until recent years when a stroke of paralysis reduced his usefulness. Mr. Bliss had many friends among the young as well as the old. He was of a practical turn of mind and gathered much knowledge throughout his long life, and delighted in telling his experiences of bygone days."

In addition to his farm work, John Henry was also a road builder who was elected to two 5 year terms as County Road Builder Overseer. William (his son) helped him sometimes grading, building bridges, etc.

The Bliss twins together in 1936
William Henry on the left and
John Henry on the right

William's Brothers + Sisters

The children of John Henry Bliss and Eliza May Shively Bliss (William's parents) are as follows:

Hazel Belle Bliss born	24 May, 1895	at Albion,	Boone Co.,	Nebraska
Goldie Leora Bliss....	29 may, 1897	at Albion,	Boone Co.,	Nebraska
Anna Voilet Bliss born	9 Aug, 1899	at Albion,	Boone Co.,	Nebraska
Lilah May Bliss born	4 Sep, 1901	at Albion,	Boone Co.,	Nebraska
Son	26 Dec, 1903	at Albion,	Boone Co.,	Nebraska
William Henry Bliss	18 Nov, 1904	at Albion,	Boone Co.,	Nebraska
Gladys Opal Bliss born	7 Dec, 1908	at Sumner,	Dawson Co.,	Nebraska
Blanche Verl Bliss....	16 Aug, 1913	at Sumner,	Dawson Co.,	Nebraska
Darold Wayne Bliss....	19 Dec, 1917	at Sumner,	Dawson Co.,	Nebraska

Hazel remembered William as the mischievous little brother who was spoiled by four older sisters and a father who was happy to have a son at last.

Of all his brothers and sisters, William was closest to his sister, Lilah, who was closest to him in age. Through the years there was quite a bit of strife between the Bliss brothers and sisters, but never, we beleive, between Lilah and William.

Since William's earliest memories were surely of brothers & sisters and home, this may be a good place to mention their homes, of which details are scarce.

Homes

#1 - William Bliss was born in 1904 and lived in a farm home near Albion, Boone, Nebraska.

#2 - When 15 months old, in 1906, they moved to a farm near Sumner in Dawson County, Nebraska (this was the place of the fire).

#3 - In 1919, when William was about 14, they moved to an 800 acre ranch 3 miles south of Miller, Nebraska. They were there only two years. This was the period when William had a falling out with his father ("My father took a buggy whip to me."), and went out on his own.

#4 - Things must have gotten better at home because when William's family moved in 1922 to a farm 6½ miles west of Kearney, he said "we" moved. There is an ad (flyer) for an auction they held there that reveals some interesting details of this period of the Bliss family.

Continued

#5 - William said his father traded his 160 acres for property in Gibbon, Nebraska. William may never have actually made his home there, though it remained the parents' home for the rest of their lives. About this time William went to work on his sister and brother-in-law's farm north west of Holdrege, Nebraska. This was 1923 and William was on his own.

In later years this large family of brothers and sisters have been alternately on good terms and bad terms -- sometimes because of misunderstandings and sometimes because one or another took unfair advantage of one or another. Two of William's older sisters were always loyal friends to William as well as to each other -- Hazel and Lilah. In 1981 Hazel said in a letter: "I still miss Lilah. She wrote me a card or letter about every week, then got so sick she couldn't but started in again when she was better. We were very close always...."

The two brothers, William and Darold, though separated in age by 13 years, had a close relationship, each speaking fondly of the other. William said once of Darold: "He has a way of putting words together. When he was in the service during World War II he sent items to the local paper. Some of them were real good." This poem is an example:

TO ALL MOTHERS OF SONS IN THE U.S. SERVICE

We are here for call to duty,
We came from far and wide
To protect a peaceful nation,
Where you in peace abide.

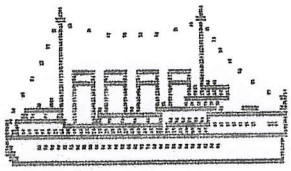
You have raised your sons for freedom,
In cause for Liberty,
And mother, we here salute you,
From ports across the sea.

We salute you for your courage,
Your tender, loving smile.
That makes the peace we're fighting for
A thing that's well worth while.

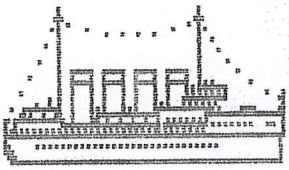
And in thoughts you're with us always;
You're always in our hearts
We wish you years of happiness
The world each day, imparts.

So to all you faithful mothers
With sons across the sea,
May this Mother's Day be joyous --
My wish to you, from me.

--- A Soldier Son



IMMIGRANT ANCESTORS



Most of the ancestors of William Henry Bliss came to America so long ago that the reasons seem to have been lost. The AGEN family (William's father's mother's people) came to America the most recently. They probably left Down, Ireland because of the Irish potato famine. They arrived on American shores in 1837.*

The Shively Family that were most likely the ancestors of William, came to America from Switzerland.

* Actually, the Potato Famine was 10 years later.

The Canadian Connection

The Bliss name ancestors came from County Gloustershire, England in the early 1600's, settling first in Connecticut. Several generations of Blisses lived in Massachusetts, and then the branch William would descend through settled in Rochester, New York. William's great grandfather, Thomas Bliss, died in Rochester in 1828 and a few years later part of the remaining family went to Toronto, Ontario, Canada. Alanson, William's grandfather, and his brother Thomas farmed there. Both are listed in the Toronto directories in 1845. They remained there only two years. Their sister Emily and family were in Canada with them and Emily died during their time there. In late 1846 the family left Canada and traveled on Great Lakes ships to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The 1850 census shows Alanson's family living right next door to his brother Thomas and their mother Mary in Washington County, Wisconsin. They remained in Wisconsin, raising their family there.

Toronto

The Agen family arrived in America and soon settled in Rochester, New York. It seems likely they knew the Blisses there because both families went to Toronto at the same time and then on to Wisconsin at the same time. Perhaps one of Alanson's sisters married an Agen boy but that remains to be proved. Alanson married Henrietta Agen shortly after arriving in Milwaukee, February, 1847.

Neighbors

The Shively's and Richards came to America early on also.

a Mormon Connection?

It would seem that William's ancestors were simple, hardworking folk who neither gained fame nor infamy. Will's father and grandfather were farmers & cattle growers but this appears to have been unusual in the Bliss ancestry. They lived in town in Rochester, New York and we find tailers, wagon makers, and grocers in the family.

Since almost all of William's descendents are active members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, there is some curiosity as to how much contact and/or even knowledge Will's ancestors had of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet. Rochester and Palmyra, New York are near neighbors and there is little liklihood that the Blisses were not aware of the Smiths. It is the sincere hope of this generation of Blisses that that generation had no part in the persecutions suffered by Joseph and the Smith family in the late 1820's and early 1830's.

The Blisses lived not that far from Palmyra, N.Y. "then"

Dear Uncle Will

Out of Touch

The John H. Bliss family lived away from most of their relative and thus William and his brothers and sisters grew up without much knowledge of their relatives, especially the Bliss relatives. Their mother's parents lived in Fullerton, Nebraska, about 60 miles away, so they knew that side best. Darold, William's brother, said in a letter to Wilbur: "...We seldom heard any of our parents' brothers and sisters ever being discussed. About the only time we heard of any of them was when we received word one of them had died." Two beautiful photograph albums containing pictures of Bliss relatives was given to Wilbur by William's sister Hazel, and though she was the oldest of the children, she could identify none of them. William and his brother and sisters were not even certain of their grandfather's given name.

Twin Brother

But at least one near relative was important in William's life -- the uncle for whom he was named -- his father's twin, Uncle Will. It was Uncle Will who loaned William the money to get to Washington State, to get his family there, to get started in business, etc. He was a colorful and much loved uncle. William's children, Wilbur and Dorothy remember him fondly and still repeat stories about him. Once, when an old man, Uncle Will was up in an apple tree picking apples. Savilla, seeing him, and concerned for his safety, called out: "Uncle Will, you get down out of that apple tree." He was startled and fell. The family rushed to his side to see if he was okay. Looking up, he said simply, "Well, b'god, I'm down." And indeed he was.

Apple Tree

Following are excerpts from Uncle Will's newspaper obituary:

WILLIAM H. BLISS SUMMONED SUNDAY

Funeral Services Conductd Wednesday For Lynden District Resident; Came Here in 1910. William Henry Bliss, a resident of the Lynden district since 1910, passed away at a Bellingham hospital Sunday following an illness of one month's duration.

Mr Bliss lived for many years on a farm close to the intersection of the Guide Meridian and the Glendale highways. He had many friends throughout the Lynden district who learned with sorrow of his passing.

Mr Bliss was born at Barton, Wisconsin on May 14, 1860, and he spent his early life there. Following his marriage to Rachel Bundy on March 13, 1899, the couple moved to Langford, South Dakota where a daughter, Henrietta, was born to them.

Eight years following the death of his wife, who passed away on July 3, 1902, Mr. Bliss and his daughter moved to Lynden and settled on the place where he resided at the time of his death. His daughter passed away eighteen years ago.

Mr. Bliss was engaged as a farmer. He became quite well known during his long residence in this county and made friends easily. At the time of his passing he was 78 years, seven months and seventeen days old.

Surviving relatives include one twin brother, John Bliss of Gibbon, Nebraska; one granddaughter, Vivian Crabtree of Lynden and several nieces and nephews.

William Henry Bliss, twin brother to William's grandfather, John Henry Bliss. He had one daughter, Henrietta, named for his mother, Henrietta Agin Bliss.

William's daughter Henrietta + her husband, Harry B. Crabtree. 1918.

William with his granddaughter, Vivian Crabtree.

Keep Sakes

There are a few family treasures that have been passed down to William's descendents and it is probably well to make a record of them here.

Organ

The pedal organ that belonged to Eliza May Shively Bliss that William inherited has been passed on to Wilbur and from Wilbur to his son Daniel, who has promised to restore it, replacing the top part of the organ that was removed by a pastor of the church to whom the organ had been loaned. Or perhaps it was given to the church and later returned to or purchased by the family.

Quilt

There is a wedding-ring pattern pieced quilt that Eliza made, which William's sister Hazel gave to Wilbur. It is well worn but shows still the skill that went into it. Hazel said she could identify materials that had been used in dresses for the Bliss girls.

Albums

Hazel also passed on to Wilbur two old photograph albums with beautiful family portraits -- said to be of the Bliss family in Wisconsin. She could not identify the people in the pictures. Also from Hazel to Wilbur came a book of recipe and household hint clippings collected by Eliza May Bliss. And two of Eliza's "sad irons" were passed on to William's brother Darold and his son, Wilbur.

William passed on to his son some of the mementoes he had of his father's.

Cane

Among these is a beautiful hand carved walking stick, his antique lunch pail, a shaving set with straight edge razor, mug and mirror; a brass tobacco cannister; pocket watch; and a double barrelled 12 guage shotgun -- all well loved by Wilbur and admired by his children and grandchildren. There was also a rusted old carpenter's plane which was William's father's and which has been beautifully restored by Wilbur's son Dan as a gift. It is now a popular family conversation piece. Wilbur also has and uses the crowbar made by John H. Bliss.

Among William's things that have been given Wilbur are his coin collection, his childhood books, baby clothes and his old lock boxes. Also in Wilbur's possession are photographs, letters etc. that belonged to William.

Watch

Lunch Pail

Shot Gun

Plane

Crowbar

Razor

Mug

Early Memories

This story was told by William as one of his earliest memories:

"At the age of 4 years, on the 4th of July, toward evening, I went with my older sisters as they drove the milk cows up from the pasture. I saw that our house was on fire. I thought it was fun and said "Goody, goody, the house is on fire." Later I shed tears as I found that my bed and my black hat had burned. We had to sleep in the hay loft while our new home was being built."

William's very first job was selling bunches of onions at 5¢ a bunch to people around town and to neighbors.

He remembered working in the hayfield, piling hay. He ran the stacker and rake and his dad put a platform on the rake as he was too small to reach.

He sent away for picture postcards to sell at 10¢ each and pencils at 5¢ each. He was a business man at an early age!

Water Play?

It seems all children like to play in the water and it seems little William was no exception. He told this story on himself:

"At age 5 slipped while playing at full horses watering tank and fell in. I caught the edge of the tank and pulled myself out, wetter but a little wiser. I went out to the grainery to dry off so the folks wouldn't find out."

William said later that he had enjoyed playing ball as a child, riding his bicycle and horses, and playing outside games.

His friends and family called him Bill usually, but often he answered to Will, and Billy.

Religion

Farming and related activities provided the livlihood for the John Bliss Family. They were strict and hardworking parents. William said there wasn't much play as he was growing up and that his parents were not very demonstrative with each other or to the children. This background was hard for William to overcome later in his own family relationships.

It seems certain there was some religious instruction in the family. William mentioned joining the Presbyterian Church when he was 14. There was some familiarity with the scriptures.

John Henry was a practicing Mason and therefore believed in Christian ideals.

EARLIEST MEMORIES CONTINUED -- as written by William Bliss himself

1/2 Bro.

My name is William Henry Bliss, son of John Henry and Lydia May Bliss. I have one brother, Darold Wayne Bliss, and sisters Hazel, Goldie L., Anna, Gladys, and Blanche. One half brother, Frank Reynoldson and sister, Lilah M. Fox, deceased.

Birth

I was born in country north of Albion, Nebraska on November 11, 1904. First memories start quite young. My father let me off at neighbor's and I was taken in their home. They used (the two girls) me as their baby -- one trying to get me, the other protecting -- this before I was two years old. It really scared me.

Windmill

After moving to the farm southwest of Sumner, Nebraska, perhaps as early as three years old. I remember going with my mother to get cobs near our home (I think it was a sod house.) I saw a windmill near by with wheel broken and tail hanging down. I asked my mother where this was. She was surprised when I mentioned it as she had not thought of it until I asked her where it was. At the same place I also asked her about a pole shed with straw in part and some poles loose. She told me it was the same place and I was two or three years old.

Skunk

When five years old I went to school (over 2 miles) and we walked both ways. When coming home one day I met a skunk coming my way in the cow path. I tried to scare it but it kept coming. After throwing a sandwich at it, I then tried my lunch pail. I missed both times. I ran to the side and the skunk went on in the pathway.

Hogs

On the farm we had hogs, horses, cattle and chickens. While small I was the cob picker-upper from the pig pen and horse's feed box. Later it was milking and feeding calves. Then on to working the horses on different machinery. I also received the job of herding hogs each day. This netted me a runt pig and when sold I received around $7.00. After buying a claw hammer, which I still have, I had enough to put $5.00 in the bank in my own name. The bank's name was Eddyville State Bank, at Eddyville, Nebraska.

Cows

In 1919 we traded our home at Eddyville, Nebraska for 800 acres 3 miles south of Miller, Nebraska, farming 200 acres, the rest pasture. I had the job of helping with the farming and taking care of cattle. We took in other people's cows to pasture at so much a head per month, also taking care of the water for them. We had a windmill and tank for storage. When the wind did not blow I pumped water with a 1½ horse power gas engine.

Shot in Leg

In November of 1919 I went hunting rabbits on Thanksgiving Day with my cousin, Lester Shively, and Leroy Carmichael (a neighbor). Somehow the gun Leroy was carrying (a 22 repeating rifle borrowed from me) went off, shooting me in the leg. I still have the bullet in my leg -- the doctor couldn't find it.

Hogs Again

In 1921 Dad sold the 800 acres and put his part in a 160 acre place ½ mile west and 1½ miles north of the famous 1733 ranch northwest of Kearney, Nebraska. I helped my dad farming and on the side bought two female hogs that were going to have babies. I raised 13 of them and sold them at a public sale in the spring of 1923. My father traded the 160 acres for a 13 acre track in Gibbon, Nebraska, at the southeast corner of town.

Friends + Enemies

His cousin, Harold Shively, was William's childhood, as well as lifelong friend. At one time William's sister Hazel was their school teacher and she said they were naughty little boys. In his own writings William mentioned Knowles Carpenter but with no clue as to whether they were near the same age. His age at the time would have been about 5 and we suspect Knowles was older. Their "friendship" was apparently short lived. William wrote:

> While our house was being rebuilt after the fire, I picked Enemy #1. Knowles Carpenter decided to help mother look after me. So besides washing my face in cold water (I even resented it being washed in warm water), he also made me eat cabbage. It took me to the age of 17 to learn to eat the stuff."

Starting School

No record has been made of William's first day of school. He simply said:

> "At age of 5 I trudged 3 miles to my first school, District 39, Dawson County, Nebraska. To get me out from underfoot I was sent along with my 4 older sisters."

This was at the Sunny Slope Grade School at Eddyville, Nebraska.

Favorite Childhood Things

As a child, William must have been an avid reader and he must have loved his books, because he kept them throughout his life. Only since his death have they been passed on to his son. There are several Horatio Alger Jr. books, "Struggling Upward" and "Shifting For Himself" among them. There's also a book named "Motor Boat Boat Boys -- Mississippi Cruise" published in 1912.

Music and songs were loved by William too. Here and there through his papers can be found words of songs he has written down. One school composition book holds the words to numerous Christmas songs written in his own hand.

William had a special black and white kitten who loved him. Perhaps this was "Pompey." He also had a dog named "Teddy." He enjoyed playing ball, riding bicycle, & horses, and playing outside games.

Will Was a Tease and a bit short

Even as a little child, William was a tease. His oldest sister, Hazel, told about one evening when he was missing and their mother was in a panic and had the entire family searching for him. Pretty soon 2 year old William laughingly peaked out of a box he was hiding in. This was only the beginning. He remained a tease throughout his whole life. He loved to laugh and when he laughed it seemed he laughed with his whole body.

William was shorter than the other boys his age but it isn't likely they picked on him. For 13 years he was the only boy in a family of girls and if he had to fend off a sissy image, he did it successfully.

Brushes With Death

No doubt William had his share of childhood diseases, though we have no record of them. He did have a close call once as a teenager. His younger brother, Darold, remembered this occasion.

William and a friend had gone rabbit hunting and there was an accident with the gun. William was shot in the leg. The doctor came to the house to remove the bullet, and it was only later that the family realized how dangerous it had been. The doctor used ether to put William to sleep, while using a kerosene lamp to see by. There could easily have been an explosion.

William told of breaking his arm while a youngster.*

The family lived so far from most other relatives that they were hardly aware of serious illnesses and deaths among their grandparents and other relatives.

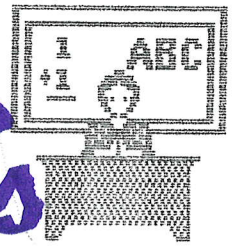
*He said: "I broke my arm falling out of a cherry tree at the famous 1739 ranch near Kearney on June 26 (probably 1916)."

Fearless William

It would be easy to describe William as "fearless." If he had fantasies and aspirations, they probably had to do with earning lots of money and being successful in business.

But speaking of being without fear -- how about the time, in the early days of air travel, he hired a pilot to fly him home? The plane was home-made with a water cooled car engine. It had an open cockpit, a two seater. He was in Gering and wanted to go to Gibbon, which took 11 hours by train. It was only a three hour flight. The plane was to land in Lincoln, but would fly right over his parent's place. The fare was $9.89 and William told the pilot: "I'll pay you double if you'll let me off in the field." The pilot agreed. When at the right place, William signalled the pilot and he landed in his dad's alfalfa field. He said later that they landed safely among a bunch of curious kids.

There is a picture among William's mementoes of him in front of that homemade airplane in his father's alfalfa field.



William's School Days

Fortunately William left a few notes about his school days which are quoted below:

1st T'chr.

"At age of 5 I trudged 3 miles to my first school - District 39, Dawson County, Nebraska. I was sent along with my older sisters to get me out from under foot. My first teacher was Myrtle Burk. We later split the district and we had to walk only a little over ½ mile to school -- District 10, Dawson County. I put in 6 grades there. This was Sunny Slope grade school at Eddyville, Nebraska.

Best T'chr

"The first teacher I had in our own school was Kate Cunningham who is still the sweatheart of my studies. I always liked arithmetic. Second was history and geography. But I always received the worst grade in history. I knew the story but could see no reason to know the date something had been discovered. So on exam day I just guessed and got a grade of around 38 for putting down something. I managed through the years to get into the 7th grade -- when my sister Hazel taught our school. (Hazel said that William and his cousin Harold were very naughty little boys during that 7th grade year)

Quit School

8th Grade

"I talked Dad into letting me quit (after 7th grade) and help him move the ranch to Milly (Miller). Later, when we moved to Kearney, I got the urge for learning. So after falling out of a cherry tree and breaking my arm on June 26th (probably 1916), I started 8th grade at Alfalfa Center. I never did take the 8th grade exam. (His 8th grade report card remains and we see that William's grades were between 85 and 95 which was termed "good." There was one exception -- a 76 on grammar -- only "fair.") His teacher that year was Olga Sea.

One Room

Harold Shively tells the story of how he and William used to throw spitballs while in Katie Cunnihgham's class. She reprimanded them by taking handsfull of their hair and pulling it. Thinking to outsmart her they had their hair cut real short. She was more than their equal because without hesitation she just took a ruler and tapped them on top of the head (with no hair for padding!). They let their hair grow out as fast as possible. Of interest is that all the grades were in one room in that school.

Always a Student

During William's youth the usual goal was to complete 8th grade, after which they were required to take an examination to prove they were adequately educated. Those wanting to become teachers attended "normal school" in order to be accredited. Those intending to go into "the professions" continued their schooling.

Home Study

Later, about 1925, William took a home study course from "Chicago Engineering Works." Many papers were saved from that course, all showing grades in the high 90's.

Missed Registration

William didn't complete the 8th grade because his broken arm healed sufficiently for him to return to work and it was necessary for him to do so. However, he intended to return to school the next fall. It seems he must have thought he could pass the 8th grade examination because he said he was going to sign up for normal school. He was, however,working on his sister, Hazel's farm at that time and dependent on them for transportation to town to register for school. They failed to get him there before the deadline so he missed his chance that year.

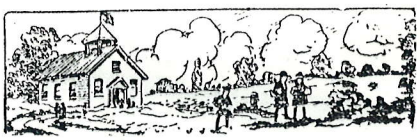
School of Hard Knocks

William Henry Bliss was a very well educated man, though not from having attended college and not only from the "school of hard knocks," though certainly much learning came from that source. William always studied extensively concerning his jobs and business. His mind was sharp -- he was a quick learner and retained well what he had learned. He studied real estate and easily passed the exams so he could sell real estate. He continued studying and educating himself through life.

When Sister Hazel was William's Teacher

School Souvenir

EDUCATION ALONE CAN CONDUCT US TO THAT ENJOYMENT, WHICH IS, AT ONCE, BEST IN QUALITY AND INFINITE IN QUANTITY- MANN



SUNNY HILL SCHOOL DIST. No. 10

Sunny Hill Twp., Dawson Co., Nebr.

HAZEL B. BLISS, Teacher
W. C. Bloom, Co. Supt.

School Officers

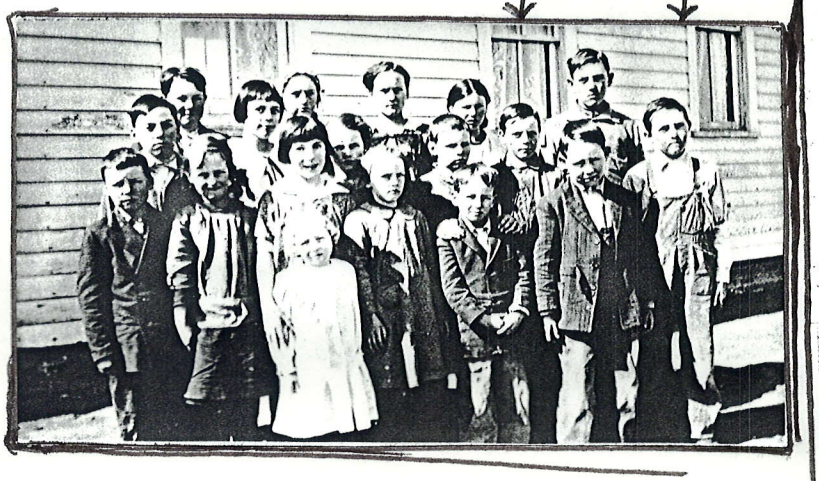
A. W. Guernsey, Director
Dan Shively, Treasurer
Ed. Tucker, Moderator

PUPILS

Blanche Bliss
Flossie Deardorff
Calvin Deardorff
Rosetta Deardorff
Magdalene Murray
Earl Foster
Marjorie Guernsey
Maxine Guernsey
Gladys Bliss
William Bliss
Harold Shively
Lilah Bliss
Gladys Murray

"Advance in learning as you advance in life."

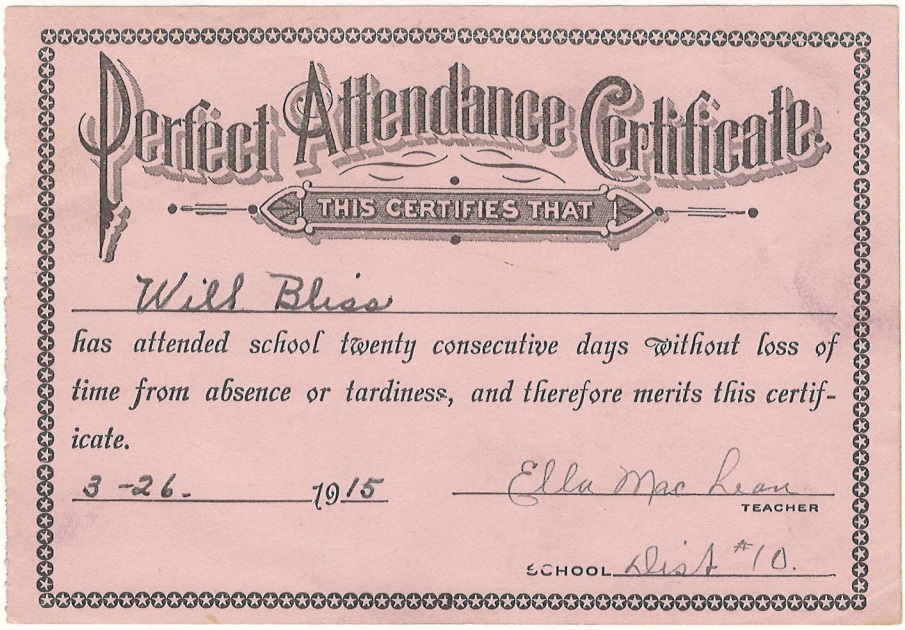
Harold William



Wm Bliss 1920

PHOTOGRAPHS

William's old school house at
Sumner, Nebraska - District # 10



Perfect Attendance Certificate

THIS CERTIFIES THAT

Will Bliss

has attended school twenty consecutive days without loss of time from absence or tardiness, and therefore merits this certificate.

3-26- 1915

Ella MacLean
TEACHER

SCHOOL Dist #10.

Bill Bliss photos
Probably about 1930

Raleigh came
before Watkins.
about 1930
Bill on the left.

1939

Harold Shively and Wm. Bliss
Cousins
and life long friends.

Military Service

William trained with the Nebraska National Guard several summers during the 1920's. In a letter written in 1945 William wrote: "On October 16th we register for the Army. I must register either as married or single. I have no desire to go in the army at this time." As the war progressed William became eager to defend his country and while waiting to be drafted, three times tried to enlist Once he tried to get into the Navy and twice into the Army. Each time he was told to wait to be drafted. In a letter dated August 20, 1942 he said: "I have to go on defense right away and later I am to go into the Army. Being single, I am to be ready when I get my call -- so said the draft board."

So he began to put his affairs in order -- fully expecting to be called up. Still deeply depressed over the breakup of his marriage -- he had the fatalistic view that he would die in the war. He wrote: "Why should I come back .... Come back to a broken home, broken heart and broken spirit. I would have no desire to come back to a life as I have had to live these past three years." When he sent Wilbur and Dorothy back to their mother at the end of the summer he feared he would never see them again.

On December 7, 1942 he wrote: "I still had hopes until yesterday. No one gets in over 37 years old. After you and the kiddies left I was so blue I wanted to be in the Army and get clear away from this world. I tried the Navy once and the Army twice and was told to wait until I was drafted. My last chance is now gone."

MILITARY PHOTOGRAPHS

(NEBRASKA NATIONAL GUARD)

N.N.G. 1927.
CAMP ASHLAND
HOW. Co. 134 Inf.
Photo by Macdonald LINCOLN

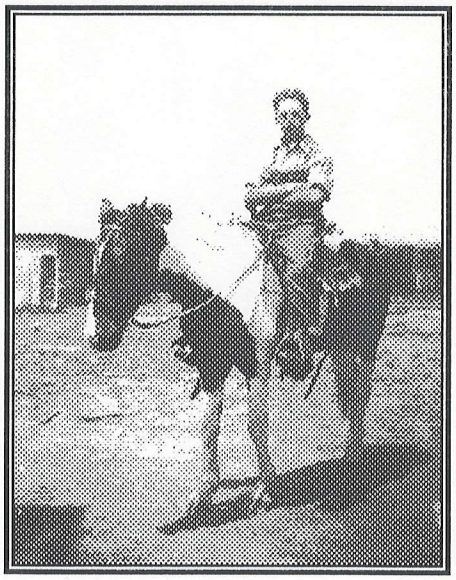
1928.

CHILDHOOD PHOTOGRAPHS

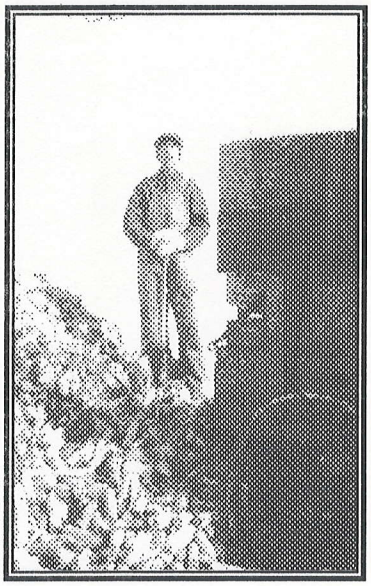
"John H. Bliss and son, William H. Eddyville, Nebraska:

"Mama, Lester (Shively), Will, and Darold"

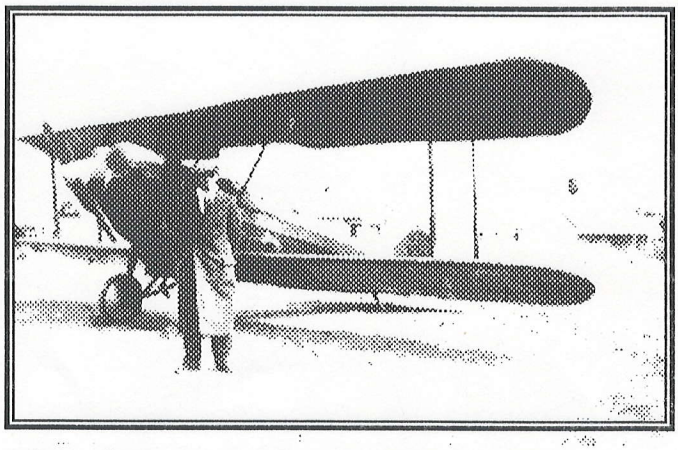
"John Bliss's Horses"



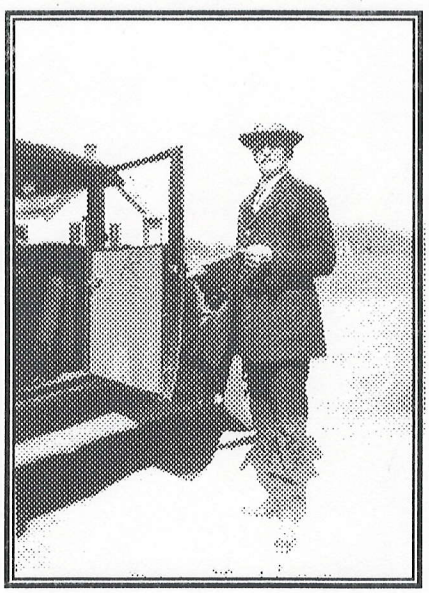
Bill Bliss and his horse ~ 1920



Bill harvesting corn.
at Miller, NE ~ 1924



Bill Bliss by airplane. Written on back:
"Getting ready to leave Gerring."



John Henry Bliss by family car.

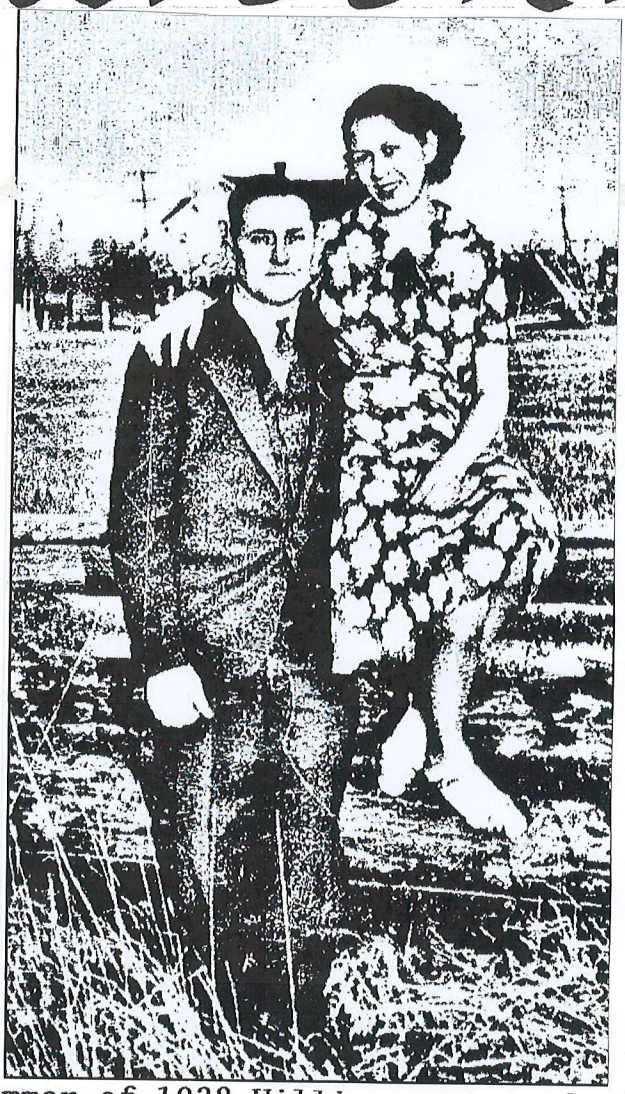
CHILDHOOD PHOTOGRAPHS

"John H. Bliss and son, William H. Eddyville, Nebraska:

"Mama, Lester (Shively), Will, and Darold"

"John Bliss's Horses"

Courtship~



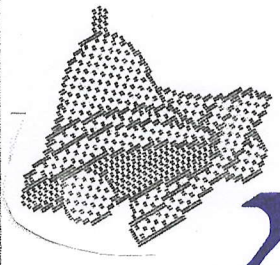
During the summer of 1928 William went to Gering, Nebraska o work at the Great Western Sugar Factory harvesting sugar beets. is father also worked there during the season and was acquainted ith Clark Long, of Gering, who likewise was employed there. lark liked young Will Bliss, and, it turned out, so did his oung daughter, Savilla. William and Savilla met at Church and ince he was one of the "older fellows" she was very flattered by is attention to her. As William put it: "I first met Savilla velyn Long in the Christian Church at Gering. I saw her several imes and then asked to take her home."

Gering had a big Oregon Trails celebration in July and Savilla nd William attended together. Before the festivities had ended hey were in love and had agreed to go steady. Savilla was 16 and illiam 24. They dated while William worked at the sugar factory ut when the "campaign" was over he went to South Dakota to farm. e are not certain whether or not there was an exchange of letters n his absence.

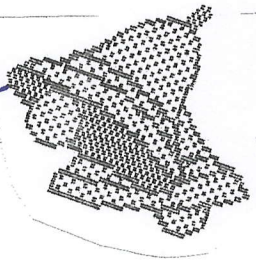
Engagement

Although there was an understanding between William and Savilla before he left for South Dakota where he was farming on the Indian reservation, theirs was a very short actual engagement. Being away from her persuaded him that he should press for an early marriage. He returned to Gering in June of 1929, and knowing he could only be there a short while, convinced Savilla to marry him and return with him to South Dakota. She was enough in love with him to give up her plans to complete high school, with only a year to go.

With no time to spare, William H. Bliss and Savilla Evelyn Long decided to be married on June 15, 1929 in her parents' home at Gering. Friends Jesse and Opal Spray were their choices for attendants.



And, With no Time the



Wedding

In Home of the Bride's Parents

On June 15, 1929, Savilla Long and William Bliss were married in the home of her parents, Clark and Leila Long. Savilla wore her Junior/Senior banquet dress her mother had made. It was beige georgette over rose satin. Leila's red peonies were just beginning to bloom and she picked them to add to the beauty and fragrance of the wedding. There were friends and a lovely dinner, and many wishes for happy lives together. In spite of the hurried preparations, their wedding was a lovely occasion.

The newspaper account reveals that the nuptial ceremony was pronounced by Rev. E. H. Maynard and that: "The happy pair left for Batesland, S.D. after the wedding but will in due time return here to make their home. Each of them has a circle of warm friends who wish them great joy in their wedded life."

Honeymoon?

The trip back to South Dakota would have to be considered their honeymoon. Unfortunately disaster awaited; as there was crop failure and great financial loss. William then took his bride to Albion, Nebraska to meet his parents, brother and sisters. The anxieties no doubt lessoned the pleasure of these trips. In addition, William was sick with an infected jaw. A difficult beginning for 24 year old William and his 17 year old wife.

PHOTOGRAPHS

William & Savilla Bliss

William took Savilla to Gibbon, Nebr. to meet his family shortly after their marriage. This is Savilla and his sister, Blanch on his father's horses, probably Charlie and Willard also shown below:

Early Marriage

Illness

Many early adjustments were needed in William's first marriage but were not made. Savilla was young. William suffered illnesses and terrible worry about supporting them. Because of the trying times and health problems each of them had, they were often separated for lengthy periods, preventing those "early adjustments" they so much needed to help their marriage survive.

Great Depression

Setting up housekeeping was no easy task for William and Savilla, so plagued were they by financial difficulties from the first moment. William had suffered great losses because of the failure of the flax crop in South Dakota and work at the sugar factory was only seasonal. They made their first home in McCook, Nebraska and in short order, Indianola, Franklin and Gering. Neither of them wrote any details of their first homes and none can remember their speaking of them. Certainly there was no vine covered cottage. The Great Depression that began the same year as their marriage was having its effects already.

Anniversaries

We have no record that the anniversaries of this first marriage were ever noted or celebrated. Later William would mention every anniversary of the day Savilla left him. That date remained forever fresh in his mind.

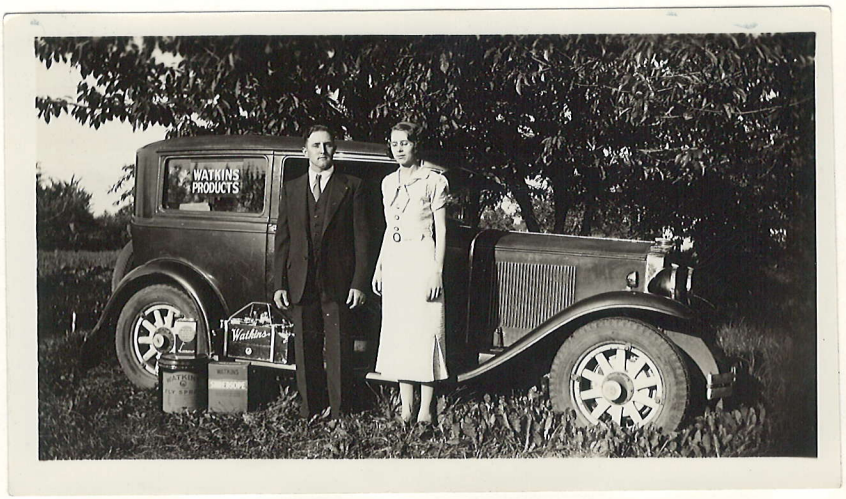
Relatives

William knew Savilla's parents, liked them and was liked by them. His letters expressed concern for them up until the times of their deaths. He even offered to have them live with him at one point, long after the divorce from Savilla. He wanted to help provide for their care and financial needs. William was good friend with Savilla's brother Donald for many years.

Savilla had greater problems getting along with William's family -- not with his parents we believe, but with his brother and sisters. But of course these siblings could not get along well with each other either. Savilla did, however, love Lilah and Hazel and corresponded with them throughout most of her life.

PHOTOGRAPHS

1930



1934

1936

1939

Problems + More Problems

Problems were never lacking in William's first marriage; a great many of them attributable to the time in which they began their union. Many problems were major ones -- finances, health, and being apart.

Depression

On the surface everything looked fine with the marriage of William and Savilla, but things were not fine. Savilla, all her life, praised William for his hard work and the success with which he supported the family during those hard financial times. But this required long, long hours away from home as he traveled around to the farms selling his wares. Savilla felt her emotional needs were not being met. She felt William's expectations were far too great and that there was little appreciation for all her hard work and all that she accomplished. William, for his part, perhaps took her for granted, but he no doubt felt his greatest responsibility during those hard times was to support his family and he was very successful at that. He probably didn't even realize his marriage was failing until Savilla announced she was leaving.

Money

Illness

Within two months of their marriage Savilla was pregnant and sick. William had an infected jaw bone that would not respond to treatment. Their financial situation was such that Savilla did not have proper nutrition for her pregnancy. Weeks before the baby was due she went to her mother's home -- their first separation. Loving letters were exchanged. After the baby's birth Savilla remained in poor health. Savilla's sister Nellie lived in Long Beach, California and William sent her and Wilbur there to spend part of the summer. Perhaps this was the summer of 1931; we're not sure. While there both of them suffered from infectious boils. It wasn't the therapeutic vacation that was intended.

Shared Home

Maybe part of their problems are revealed from this brief comment in Savilla's life story: "...It seemed as though we were never alone as a family. When Bill's sister Lilah broke her leg she stayed at our home where I could give her care. Bill's brother Darold lived with us quite a bit of the time, his sister Blanche, and others were with us from time to time."

Fights

Perhaps the best way to give an account of the problems in William's first marriage is to quote directly from letters he wrote to Savilla urging a reconciliation:

"We took each other when we were both young and green. We fought through a lot of tough battles together. You were a child of 17. I raised you for 11 years. My 11 years were more important than your folks 17 years."

"Remember Honey, I had no clothes either. I never put anything on my back or in my mouth better than I brought home to the family."

"I don't think it was God's will for us to quarrel and fight all these years but I do think we can make it up to him."

(Continued)

(PROBLEMS CONTINUED)

"I gave you your two chances when you asked me to. It was not easy. But I loved you enough to believe you and try again."

Bill's Pleadings

Aug. 1940 "I love you Savilla, and always have only I was too dumb to show it. I'll never be again.... "Honey, I may have been the worst man on earth but I was asleep and woke up. I dread the day when you pass from my life for good. Please don't.....You have tried and if you will again you will have all the cooperation you have always asked for. I promise you if you'll live half as much for me as you used to care I'll live all for you in return....I'll make up for the heartaches I caused you."

Money + Church

A later letter also indicates that attendance at Church was a problem. William didn't go along as willingly or as often as Savilla wanted.

And money problems. There were always money problems -- brought on by crop and business failures, sickness and doctor bills. Later letters give details on considerable indebtedness; bills William agreed to pay and continued to pay on well into the 40's.

Bills

"Kid, I was asleep for several years. Asleep while my happiness and things that mean more to me than anything else.... Asleep because I wanted to get bills paid and a home paid. My mind was on such things instead of on the one that loved me.... It is a price I'll never get paid, a price I'll have to pay on as long as I live and even into the next world."

"As to praise, I should have given it direct to you. I praised you to everyone else. I did it so much on the route; I forgot to give enough of it at home. Finding fault. I am really, truly sorry and will see to it that I won't do it again..... I have faith in you and faith in God to move this mountain that is between us."

Sorry

"I have decided you are boss. When you want me there for meals or bed I plan on being there when you say. I just want a complete change of all things."

"I said I was sorry I said you could not get a man to look at you.... You forgave me, Honey, and you hurt me a lot when you write such things. Do you like to tear me to pieces? Please, Honey."

2nd Marriage

MARGIE MAGNUSON

Move To Ill.

William, weary of his lone and lonely life, finally began dating a bit in 1943. Few details are available but he evidently met Margaret (Margie) Magnuson Wilke in Washington. His life sketch tells: "I met Margaret Wilke and she had moved to Palatine, Illinois. I received word of her serious illness, asking me to come." He did so and while there found he could help the war effort by working in a defense plant there. He signed up to work for McDonald Douglas and went back to Washington to arrange things there. William headed back to Illinois by car and Margie took the train part way to meet him.

Mr.

They were married on May 15th, 1942 in Elko, Nevada and they traveled together back to Illinois. They made their home in Palatine and tried to find the happiness they both needed.

Mean?

But this marriage too seemed troubled. Wilbur spent some time with them during the summer. He liked Margie and had a good time while with them but was aware the marriage was less than happy. Margie wrote a letter to his mother once saying Bill was mean to her and not to send the children. Then she promptly wrote again saying everything was fine and to send them. Wilbur's impression was that Margie was a coquettish, flippant little thing and somewhat emotionally unstable. He feels certain his father was not mean to her.

Sick

In William's life sketch he wrote: "Margie was sick before we married and had a serious operation while we were married and we never did get a real start."

Div.

In any event the marriage was short lived. They were divorced on 14 December, 1945 and William went back to his lonely existence in Washington state.

Margie

3rd and Happy Marriage

MILDRED EMILY SMITH

William, with his usual brevity, wrote in his life sketch that he "met Mildred Mehl in Bellingham in 1950 and around 1952 started seeing her and her children, Merle, Arlene, and Janet."

Mildred's first husband had been dead for some time and she and William had mutual friends, the Mullikins and they played cupid. Friend Janet and her husband, Fred, knew William was selling Watkins products in the Blaine and Custer areas around where they lived. They took Mildred to the Watkin's office and introduced them. But Mildred didn't like salesmen and wasn't interested. She stood back and looked out the window while waiting for her friends to complete their conversation with William. Janet and Fred were moving to California and William was assisting them. William said later that he had his eyes on her that day and promised himself to get acquainted with her.

BOOK 238 PAGE 342

398636

Marriage Certificate

State of Nevada
County of Washoe } ss.

This is to Certify that the undersigned District Judge, did on the 2d day of July A. D. 1954 join in lawful Wedlock William Henry Bliss of Lynden State of Wash. and Mildred Emily Mehl of Bellingham State of Wash. with their mutual consent in the presence of Vera Whitehead and John W. Lewis who were witnesses.

A. J. Maestretti
District Judge

Filed at the request of Judge A. J. Maestretti
Date JUL 6 1954 Book of Marriages, Records of Washoe County, Nevada
Indexed ✓ Ella S. Boyd County Recorder

Gladstone OR 1954

original

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Bill & Mildred

Together

Fudge

After the move to California was accomplished, Fred, who loved to make fudge, sent some back with William to take to Mildred. That was an excuse to go see her, and it worked. They went out together and she helped him by making his payments while he was traveling.

Dates

Mildred worked in Bellingham for the school district. William changed from Watkins to Crowell Collier but he was still a salesman and still on the road. They dated when he was in town for four years.

Mother's Day Date

Kids

One memorable date was a Mother's Day when William took Mildred and the children on a boat ride out to an island to have dinner. He wanted it to be very special and told Merle, Arlene, and Janet to have steak. They wanted, and had, hamburgers and milk shakes. He never got over that.

Love

Reno NV.

It took Mildred a long time to get over not liking salesmen but she gradually warmed under William's attentions. A sincere "like" grew into "love." In the summer of 1954 they left the children with relatives or friends and headed for Nevada. They stopped in Portland and stayed with William's cousin Harold Shively and wife Mildred before driving on to Reno, Nevada.

The wedding ceremony itself was not real romantic but remembering it brought Mildred and William smiles and laughter through the 28 happy years they spent together.

$10.00

They went to the courthouse where the judge who was to marry them had to find people working there to be witnesses. The judge rattled off the ceremony ending with: "I now pronounce you man and wife -- that will be $10.00 please."

Casino

And thus they were married on July 2nd, 1954. For William the lonely, troubled years had ended at last. Their wedding trip in Nevada continued on a track that was not as humorous at the time as it was to seem in memory. They went into a casino to see what it was like, and a gaudy shill pointed at William saying: "That's my boyfriend over there." "We hadn't been married half an hour," Mildred said.

Police

The next day they went on to Las Vegas. It was the 4th of July and very crowded in town and very hot. While they went into a shop, William accidently left the motor running on the car while parked in a parking lot and locked. The police knocked the window out to turn off the motor. Fortunately nothing was stolen but they were dismayed enough to change their plans and leave town. Not a real romantic beginning.

Love and Laughter

Meeting the Grandchildren

From Las Vegas they drove on to Long Beach, California, arriving unannounced at Wilbur's and Donna's apartment. As luck would have it, Savilla was there visiting when they arrived and 3rd wife was introduced to 1st wife. Probably this meeting at this time was unfortunate because there were still strong, unresolved feelings between William and Savilla. On a honeymoon trip no reminders of that kind were needed. However the meeting was cordial and Savilla soon left. There were 3 grandchildren there to meet and become acquainted with -- Andrea, Randy, and Daniel. Andrea, William's oldest grandchild, was four years old -- just at the age of her first memories.

Andrea's comments (given at William's funeral) about this union pretty much express the feelings of William's family:

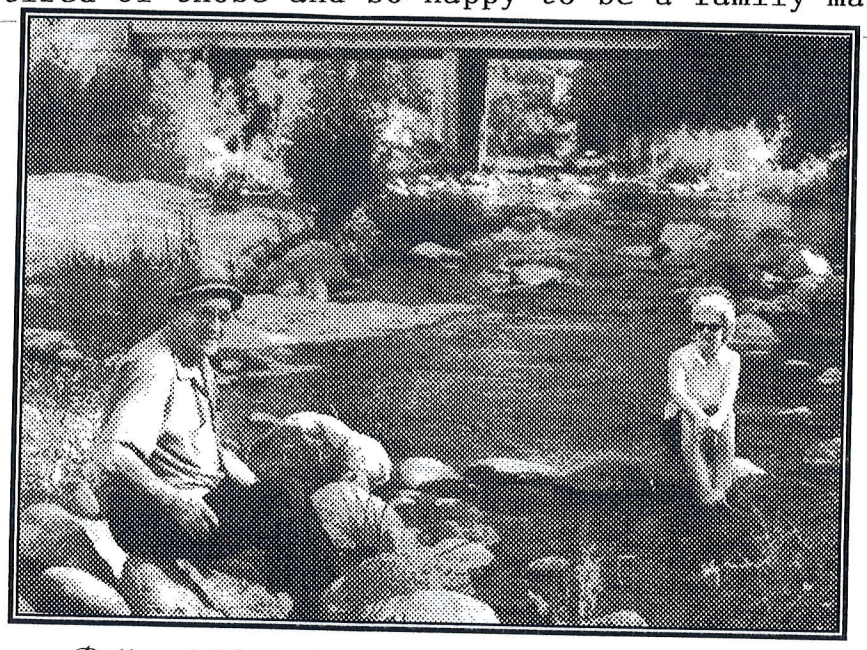
Joy

> "I don't have any memories of Grandpa before he found Grandma, but I've heard that he was lonely and could be pretty difficult at times. But no one can be anything but happy around Grandma Bliss. She has so much sweetness that some of it had to rub off. She finds pleasure in every part of nature and life. Everyone near her is made happier by her presence. Grandpa was especially. We're glad he was lucky enough to find her, both for himself and for us..."

The newlyweds had to decide where to live. Mildred owned a home in Bellingham and William owned property in Lynden. They decided to settle in Gladstone, Oregon north west of Portland. Mildred told William she would work to help if they could buy a nice home together. He was still on the road a lot and the two girls were still home. Merle was in high school and wanted to complete his senior year in Bellingham and they arranged for him to do that.

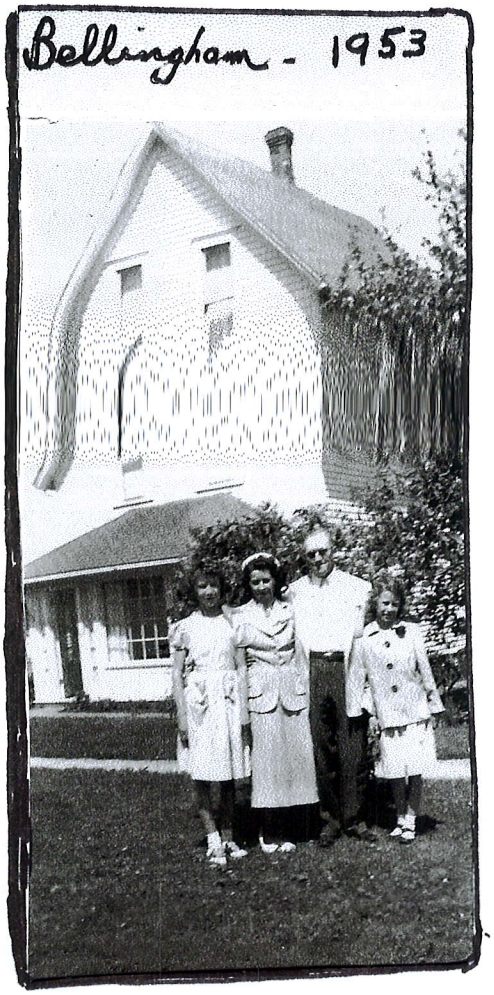
Compromise

They bought a lovely home and set up housekeeping together. William rejoiced to give up motel living and eating in restaurants. He was so tired of those and so happy to be a family man once again.



Bill and Mildred at Oak Creek, Sadona, Arizona

Bellingham - 1953



This is the special day Bill took us to Whidby Island for Mother's Day steak dinner - of course the Kids ordered hamburgers and milkshakes!

Fred + Janet Mullikin who played "Cupid"

Mildred's memories of Bill

LIFE WITH "MY BILL"

By "his" Mildred

Life Movie

Bill often expressed himself in a way that showed deep thinking. He said, "Our life is recorded, not only in the Book of Life of Our Lord but also in our own mind, as memories. It reminds me of a long, long film reel - the little and the big occurrences of our passing years are imprinted on it, to be 'seen' in our memories, sometimes many years later as we visualize the different things that have happened along life's pathway."

Mtg.

Our life together began July 2, 1954 and holds many very precious memories for me. We met through mutual friends, Janet and Fred Mullikin of Custer, Washington. Bill was a distributor for Watkins Products in Bellingham at that time. I went along when Janet and Fred stopped in to see Bill at his office to make arrangements for a trip to California with him, as they were moving and had shipped their things ahead.

Fudge

When Bill was ready to return to Washington, Fred had some chocolate fudge ready for him to bring to me and the children. That was a "sweet" beginning of our friendship. We soon began dating.

New Job

Bill sold out his Watkins dealership and went to work for Crowell-Colliers Magazines, working with the American Legion Auxiliary. He was field manager with a crew of 5 to 8 men. He would go ahead of his crew, contact the American Legion Auxiliary, the Chamber of Commerce, and City Hall of the various cities to get permission and a license to "work" the town selling magazines. The money went to furnish hospital equipment, wheel chairs etc. to anyone needing it, free of charge as long as needed. He did very well at this job, earning enough to pay off his home on the Guide Meridian in Lynden, also a new car, and won many trophies and bonus prizes.

Proposal

I was working as secretary for the Bellingham School District, living with my three children, Merle, Arlene, and Janet at 607 Wilson Ave. in Bellingham. Bill convinced me, after two years of seeing each other whenever he could leave his work area and get back to Bellingham, that we should get married.)Probably thinking to save all that gas and travel time!) At times he would drive most of the night, sometimes nearly clear across Oregon after working all day! Was I worth all that?! Evidently he thought so.

Honey Moon

Anyhow, we were married in Reno, Nevada, July 2, 1954. I left my children with good friends and we had a wonderful honeymoon trip to California, Catalina Island, and lots of interesting places. When we returned I sold my home and we bought a new home in Gladstone, Oregon. Bill, working for Crowell Collier all over the state, was away from home a lot, coming home on weekends whenever he could. I went to work as secretary to a County Agent in Oregon City.

Bill Being Grandpa

Wilbur, Donna and Andrea
Visited us in the Gladstone House.

Sandy

In 1955, as we were driving around the country side one day, we came upon a little cabin near a creek with big, tall fir trees around it. It made us wish we could live there. After checking with a Sandy realtor we found out that the people who owned the property had just listed it for sale that very day and hadn't had time yet to put up a For Sale sign. We bought it, and later several other joining acres, making it 54+ acres in all. We fin-

Dream Home

ished the cabin to make it livable, piped in water from a hillside spring, and in 1957 when both Arlene and Janet had graduated from high school, I quit my job and we sold the Gladstone home and moved to our Sandy property. Merle was by this time working in Bellingham and Arlene married and moved to New Jersey. Janet soon found a job in a bank in Portland and moved.

Nutria Loss

Another business "adventure" -- we believed what a salesman had told us about making a heap of money raising nutria, a fur bearing animal, and how our Sandy place would be ideal for a nutria ranch. We invested in 4 mated animals, having built several concrete holding pens with water piped to them from the spring on the hill (the nutria is much like a beaver and needs water for swimming, cleaning, and grooming themselves). It didn't work out as well as we had hoped. We did have a large number of fur pelts for the market and sold a lot of animals for breeding to other ranchers. The rude awakening, however, came when the head guy of the association took the pelts of several ranchers (ours among them), sold them, and left the country, going to South America, we later found out. Sometimes we learn the hard way!

Their Work

Bill went to work for AAA Motor Club in Portland and I began a Civil Service job with the State of Oregon (Social Security Division for Public Employees) in 1958, driving the 30 miles each day from Sandy. Lucky our places of work were within a block so we could both ride in together.

Sedona AZ

When Bill began having severe respiratory problems, doctors said he had chronic bronchitis and advised him to try a drier climate -- so we pulled up stakes again and moved to Sedona, Arizona in January, 1961. We had been on a vacation trip to look the area over and saw the Kellers (the real estate people who helped us in buying the Sandy place). They told Bill if he wanted to move down, they would give him a job as salesman, selling real estate. That really appealed to us as we had really fallen in love with the beautiful little town of Sedona and the surrounding Red Rock Country.

Selling Real Estate

So Bill took several weeks of training and began selling real estate for Glenn and Mary Lou Keller in March, 1961. It was rather "slim pickin's" for a few months until he could get acquainted with the area and the new job. It was somewhat different than selling a product as he had been doing for years: magazines, Watkins and Rawleigh home products, encyclopedias, stainless steel cookware, etc. But he really enjoyed it, matching up people with the home of their choice. He prided himself in finding just what the prospective client wanted and needed. He was very successful and made many lasting friendships. We lived in Arizona a total of 16 years, trying Phoenix for a few months

Mayo Clinic

Because of Bill's health problems we made a trip to Rochester, Minnesota to the Mayo Clinic for a check-up every year or year and a half. The doctors there told him he did not have bronchitis but an allergy to smoke and exhaust fumes. So, we of course started dreaming of returning to Oregon - someday, we said! In 1975 a check-up showed up a small malignancy of the prostate, for which Bill underwent an operation.

Bill was Ill

Back Home

In 1976 we sold our home in Sedona and moved back to Sandy to our new home we'd been planning and working for so long. Our last trip to the Mayo Clinic Bill was diagnosed as having acute leukemia. Medication kept him going for quite awhile but a side effect caused cataracts to form on his eyes, causing near blindness just prior to his death April 25, 1982.

Good mg

Our life together was filled with fun -- also good times and other times not so good. We traveled a lot and enjoyed each other's company while seeing many interesting places -- back and forth between Oregon and Arizona every year for 16 years; one wonderful 6 week trip into Canada and then across the U.S. to Maine, down the East Coast Highway to Florida, Louisiana, Texas -- back to Arizona, and several trips to California and to Washington.

Of all the places we traveled to, we decided Oregon was the place for us.

Love

We didn't always agree on everything, but always, arguments or not, there was always a good night kiss and "I love you" before going to sleep. He was mighty good to me those 27 plus years -- and until we meet again someday, I'll always miss "my Bill!"

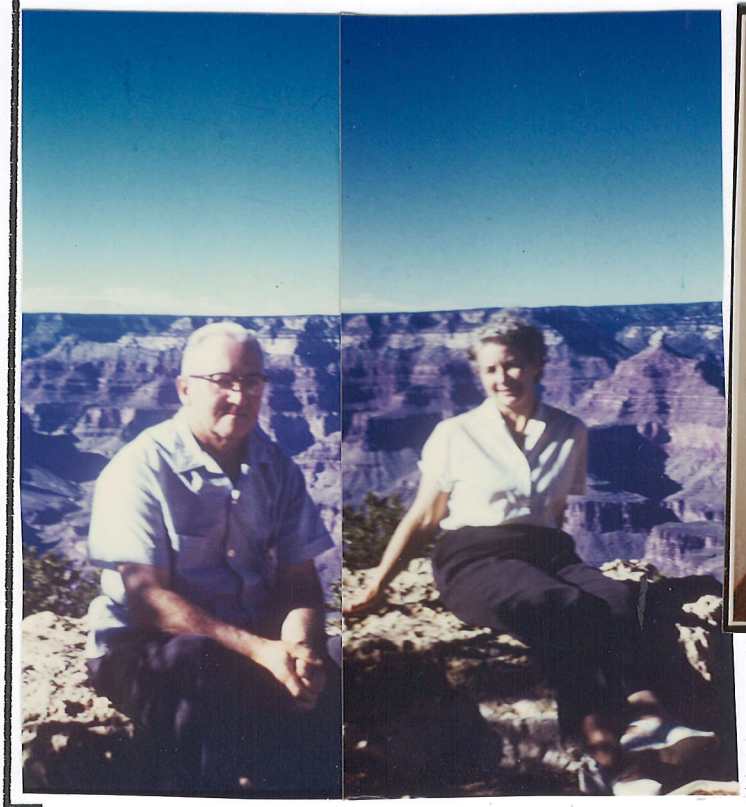
In Sandy - 1958

The Kitty and Kiddies they Loved

Nubbins

William and Mildred with Wilbur's Children,
(left to right) Daniel, Larry, Randy, Andrea.
About 1960

Jon, Merle, Janet, Arlene + Mildred
August 1983



Together
Wherever

About The Children

Waiting

Savilla went to live with her parents before Wilbur was born, so her mother could assist her. She wrote letters to William from there, telling him about plans to buy a baby buggy from Spiegel on time. She asked his permission, if the baby was a girl, to name her Willetta, for him (Dorothy can be glad she wasn't born first).

Wilbur Lee

It was a boy, of course, and the "Wil" part of his name is after his father's William. Wilbur Lee was born May 5th, 1930, less than a year after his parents' marriage, in his Grandma and Grandpa Long's home. He had lots of dark brown hair, blue eyes, fair skin, and weighed 7 pounds. Savilla noted that Wilbur first smiled on July 5th, put his hands out to Opal Spray on September 27th, fell off the bed on July 10th, fell out of a chair on October 2nd, first crawled on November 22nd and burned his hands on November 23rd.

Pink 2

Sweet little birth announcements, filled in with William's handwriting, have survived the years. They are edged in pink. At the time of Wilbur's birth and for some time thereafter, William was sick with a jaw infection. Then Wilbur was gone for the summer of 1931 to Long Beach, California. No doubt these interfered somewhat with William being able to enjoy fatherhood. Soon he would be away from the family himself.

Dorothy Ilene

The financial problems of the Depression continued unabated in 1932 and William spent that summer in Lynden, Washington working on his Uncle Will's farm. He was back in Gering for the holidays and for his daughter's birth on January 10th, 1933. They named their dark haired, dark eyed baby girl, Dorothy Ilene. Their family was complete. Dorothy also weighed 7 pounds. Her mother wrote that as an infant she didn't want to be held or cuddled very long and as a little girl was often quiet and sometimes mysterious for one so young.

Apart

While the children were little William was spending long, long hours working to support the family. But his children meant a great deal to him. His letters to Savilla after their separation reveal deep concern and longing for them. Many letters were signed: "Love and Best Wishes to my three Darlings, Bill."

Letters

Following are just a few excerpts from his letters to Savilla regarding the children. Many, many more of similar vein could be included.

(Continued)

Tell me

(SPECIAL MEMORIES OF EACH CHILD CONTINUED)

"You must realize, Savilla, you have the children with you and know what they say and do. The only way I have is what I hear and you haven't averaged over once per month."

Dorothy Ill

June 1, 1940 - "I thought sure you would send me the airmail I asked for and let me know how our Dorothy is. I have been worried more about the fever than any contagious disease."

"Do the kids ever want me?"

Love them

August, 1940 - "Kiss the kiddies for me and tell them I love them and want them to come home and play with me. Let's all be playmates. What do you say Savilla? We'll make our little home sing with happy people."

Need you

"You are my guiding hand. I need you and as for being capable, you are the one. You and our kiddies. They are ours. We brought them up this far together and they need us both."

Church

August 1, 1940 - "Will you do me a favor, Kid? Please take Wilbur and Dorothy to church. Church is much better than other places to go and will do you good."

"Take care of your health and tell me how the kiddies are, what they say and do, if they ever think of me etc."

B'day

January, 1941 - "I want to get a card and something for Dorothy's birthday today. So far I haven't been able to get anything. Poor little lady girl. I miss her and Wilbur a lot."

"Wilbur said the other day that he asked you to come back and live with Daddy again. I asked him what you said. He said you told him it could not be accomplished. Why not?"

Why not?

March 24, 1943 in a letter to Wilbur: "Are you taking good care of Sister? Remember we will always have to look out for her."

"...I wish you kiddies were here to make the trip with me. I miss my honeys a lot. Perhaps God will be more lenient soon. Surely I don't rate all the heartaches."

Dear Kiddies

"Dearest Sonnie Boy (March 30, 1941) I have been thinking about you all day...."

Tie Clasp

November 6, 1940 - "I always wear the tie clasp you kiddies gave me. It was what I have needed for several years and because you gave it to me makes it better still. - Love & Kisses to my Two Sweet Children, Daddy Bill."

Teaching Son

Wilbur remembers his father teaching him to drive with great appreciation and remembers still some of the good counsel he received. Often he quotes William telling him: "You may be right as right can be but still be dead as dead can be." William was a skillful driver and especially adept at pulling and backing trailers, a skill he taught Wilbur and Wilbur in turn taught Randy.

His Step Children Remember

SPECIAL MEMORIES OF WILLIAM FROM MERLE, ARLENE, AND JANET

Janet

Janet remembers that he was too strict -- she thought at the time. When she was 15 ("almost 16"!) and wanted to go steady with a special boy -- Bill put his foot down and said no way! Of course she survived, after some tears, and soon discovered she didn't really like the boy all that much anyhow. After many other boy friends and a few years later, she met and married Denny and was grateful to Bill for his concern for her.

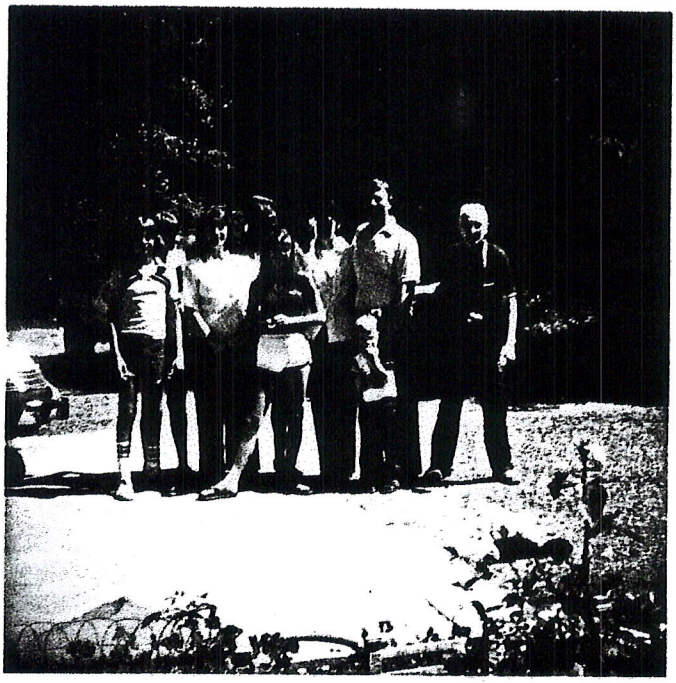
Arlene

Both Arlene and Janet can think of and laugh at the time Mildred and Bill left them doing the breakfast dishes while they had to go to town. They were not to turn on the TV until their chores were done. For some reason Bill had to go back to the house for something he had forgotten. There on the television screen was the little tell-tale light that remains a short time after the TV is turned off. They had seen us drive up and hurried to turn it off, but the evidence was there on the screen!

Bill was a strict but good influence on their lives. They were at the age when they needed a dad and their own had died of cancer. They missed him so much and Mildred says: "I'm afraid I couldn't take his place and ended up spoiling them trying to make it up to them. They came to love Bill and appreciated his wisdom and guidance as they grew older."

Potato Salad

Arlene remembers Bill as being a great tease, he was always teasing her about something -- boyfriends etc. She also remembers the time he couldn't finish the potato salad. They had taken their lunch for a picnic near a lake -- potato salad included, of course. It was a very warm day and he insisted that they should "clean up all the food so it wouldn't spoil." They had all had enough but there was still potato salad in the bowl. Bill ate and ate and ate and finally just couldn't eat another bite. Oh, how he hated to throw out that last bit! The kids never let him forget it either! The one time he had too much potato salad. Bill, throwing away potato salad?!!!



William With the "Gang"

Raising the Kids

Obey

It's hard to know just what William's child rearing philosophy was -- the children weren't with him that much. Certainly he believed they should be obedient and not talk back. In September, 1941, after their first visit with him after the divorce, he wrote the following letter:

No Belt!

"Well Savilla Kiddie, I have sent you the kiddies which mean more than anything or anybody except you. ...I told Wilbur to tell you he should not wear the belt pants as they will make him have appendicitis. Dorothy was well all the time except a couple times indigestion. They are sweet kiddies and I have lots of plans for them. I find they sass a lot and also must betold several times before they get anything done."

Tell me all

As their father, he felt he had a right to be informed of everything concerning them, as indicated in this letter excerpt:

"I am going to know who the children are with and where, also anything that takes place of interest with them. I am to hear how they are at least once every week or two."

Ah to Laugh

Visits

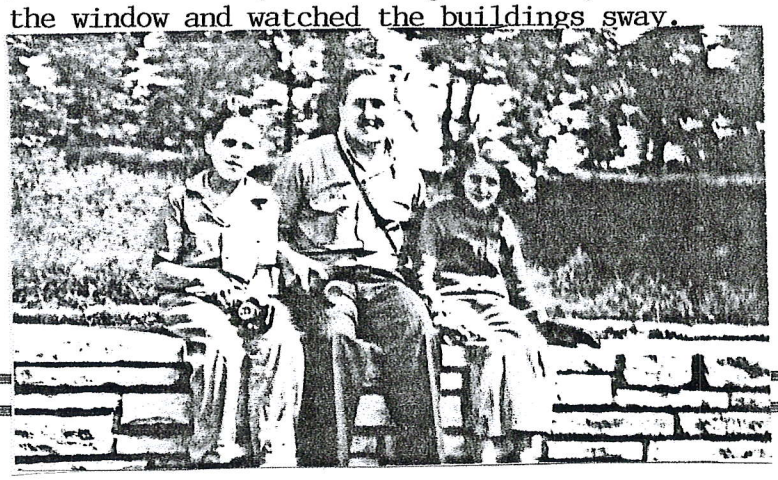
Letters Wilbur wrote to his mother during his visits with William indicate that his father did many things to give the children a good time when they were with him. Letters mention picnics, swimming, carnivals, boat trips, gifts etc. All of these were enjoyable but for humerous episodes, Wilbur remembered these 2:

Hornets

The time the hornets were swarming at Lynden and they couldn't get from the house to the car. Wilbur's Uncle Darold dashed out, got in the car and laughed back at them for their cowardice. They could see him through the windshield. Soon he came scrambling back saying some hornets had gotten inside with him. William, Wilbur, and Dorothy had the last laugh that day.

Earth Quake

Another time William and Wilbur were sleeping in a rented upstairs room, sharing a big metal bed. An earthquake hit and was really shaking the bed. William awakened and said: "Quit shaking the bed you darned fool." Then together they went to the window and watched the buildings sway.



William with Wilbur + Dorothy about 1941

Or Weep

Without a doubt William's biggest problems in child rearing came about because of the divorce and the distance between them. Disagreements between him and their mother and worry about their stepfather usurping their love were all among his biggest problems.

After his children left with their mother on January 28, 1940, it was 16 months before he had them with him again. He missed them and didn't feel he was kept well enough informed concerning his children. He often reminded Savilla in letters of her promise to him, which was:

The Promise

"I'll write to you every week no matter who I am with or where I am and I'll see that you have the children every vacation and I'll transport them one way."

The Pleading

Other comments were along this line:

"Remember the children are mine and don't let Jay get the idea they are or ever will be his family: "When anything of importance comes up about their schooling or being, I am to be consulted about it...."

"Please Honey, call them by their own names and see that others do also. Also, watch their playmates and keep them away from the low class."

William had good reason for that concern because their stepfather did have his own pet names for the children, which infuriated William. This letter from Wilbur to his mother tells it all. It was written in July, 1946:

The Names

"(secret) - Daddy's raising another stink about us being called Bud and Dorlene. He said he found a letter addressed to us and he doesn't like our getting mail under W.L.B. Walton. He said he'd write to Jay and see if he couldn't stop it and if it didn't he'd do it the other way. I pray each night that he'll calm down. Jay'll probably get a letter soon. Love, Bud."

One letter to Savilla from William stated: "I haven't said anything against you to the children. But as far as Jay is concerned.... I could never give them a good word for him..."

Children in the Middle

Unfortunately this bitterness came through to the children and became the wedge that would separate him from his daughter's love. Wilbur, a little older and maybe wiser, managed not to take sides in his parents' battles. He suffered greatly because of them but did not take sides. Wilbur verifies that their father did not openly criticize their mother, though the depth of his bitterness was evident always. He would say: "I can forgive but I can't forget." Savilla was critical of William -- trying to remind Wilbur of whippings from his father, that if they happened, he still cannot recall them. She complained about support money not received. On the other hand, she praised many things about William to Wilbur -- his intelligence -- good support -- his driving -- his dancing -- what a good host he was -- many things.

Wise Wilbur

Wilbur could see their problems had nothing really to do with him or Dorothy and just resolved to love them both. And that's what he did, all their lives.

Dorothy Departed

Dorothy, younger, and fiercely loyal to her mother, could not pull that off. She loved her step-father too and would not keep silent at William's criticisms of Jay. Wilbur sees a similarity in Dorothy's and Bill's natures and believes that is why they clashed so. She stood her ground with him one dreadful day until he slapped her "sassing face." He could not call back that slap, and like him, she could not forget. For Dorothy, it seems, the relationship with her father ended there. She would not go again for a summer visit. There were a few more letters (which her mother insisted she write), but very shortly the relationship was simply severed from her side. She did not speak of him to her brother, her children, or anyone else. The barrier she placed seemed permanent.

William Wounded

Rebuffed, hurt and puzzled, William gave into it, speaking of it briefly in a letter to Wilbur and Donna in 1972, expressing sympathy for a heartache they were undergoing with one of their children:

"I know how your heart must ache, as I have had some tough ones to bear up under too and also have a daughter that I also pray will someday let me know what has burdened her heart."

Son's Sadness

Although he kept silent, Wilbur in his heart of hearts sided with his father more often than with his mother. He loved them both he feels, equally. He says today that his relationship with his own father was by far more meaningful to him than that with his step-father, although he didn't live with him most of the time. One of his biggest heartaches is that he didn't somehow help Dorothy to renew her relationship with William before he died. He sorrows that her children were deprived of knowing these grandparents.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Birch Bay Etc.

During the 1930's there were many pleasant family activities for the Bliss family. Wilbur and Dorothy recall with great pleasure the many picnics at Birch Bay. These included family friends, swimming, and lots of good food. They also enjoyed family outings to Lake Whatcom, Mt. Baker, and even Canada, whose border was nearby. There are pictures of the family at the Peace Arch near Vancouver.

Smelt

Wilbur remembers that his dad sometimes took payment for Watkins products in chickens, eggs etc. A favorite barter was when William brought home buckets of smelt (small fish two or three inches long). Savilla would quickly take scissors to them, cutting of their heads and tails, gutting them and then frying them -- a favorite family treat.

Pets

The children had a dog named Trixie and a cat named Minnie who stayed behind to keep William company when the family left. When he was moving to Illinois he offered to ship Trixie to them. They evidently could not take him because of their frequent moves during wartime and we don't know what became of the children's pets.

Visits with Dad

When the children visited William in Washington and Illinois, he entertained them in various ways. However it was necessary for him to continue working long hours. Usually they went to visit Aunt Lilah, William's sister, and they always enjoyed that -- especially her delicious cookies. In Illinois Wilbur remembers a boat trip out on Lake Michigan and going to a big amusement park near Chicago. Also there was a boat trip out to an island on Pugit Sound. William, though busy working, tried to make the visits enjoyable.

1944

PHOTOGRAPHS

WILBUR LEE AND DOROTHY ILENE BLISS

Ready for the long train trip to see Daddy.

With Grandma Bliss in Gibbon. Neb.

William with Wilbur & Dorothy

Harold's wife, Rozella, and Dad Bliss at an Eagles Reunion. Dad won first prize on membership. He tried once to get us, Wellner & Donna, to join the Eagles and took us to a meeting. It looked like an awful waste of time to us. We didn't know he was paid for signing people up.

William Bliss
with a
"Fetching Friend"

Bill's Bachelor Home in Lynden, Washington.
After he married Mildred, he sold it to his sister Lilah's son, Lloyd Laverne Fox.

Before the first divorce
(barely)

Sarilla, Dorothy, Wilbur, Bill

Ditto

Adult Children

Wilbur and Dorothy

When Wilbur left William after summer vacation in 1947 at age 17, the intention was for him to finish high school and return to Washington to go into some kind of business with William. However, love entered the picture and in the summer of 1948 Wilbur got married. Their relationship thereafter always seemed a good one, with a number of visits back and forth and frequent letters. A special period was when William and Mildred lived in Oak Creek Canyon in Arizona and Wilbur's family vacationed there.

This father and son had a lot in common and would both have benefitted from and enjoyed having more quantity time together

William and Dorothy had no adult relationship. William was proud that both his son and step-son, Merle Mehl, served as bishops in their L.D.S. Wards.

Wilbur Bliss w/Wife Donna Tyler

Dorothy Bliss w/ husband Broodie Firmon Jones

2007

These are William's Great Grand Children
Through His Son Wilbur's Son, Daniel.

Where Ancestors Are Buried

William's father and mother are both buried in Riverside Cemetery at Gibbon, Nebraska. His grandmother and grandfather Bliss (Alanson & Henrietta) are buried at the Newark Cemetery at West Bend, Wisconsin (it used to be Barton but West Bend swallowed Barton). The stone has only Henrietta's name but Alanson is buried there also. These cemeteries are well cared for.

The Shively grandparents (Henry & Elizabeth) are buried in Burke Cemetery near Fullerton, Merrick Co., Nebraska. The Shively great grandparents are buried in the Andrews Cemetery. They are Daniel and Sarah (aka Mary) Shively. This is a cared for cemetery and the stone is fairly large and in excellent condition. One stone serves for both of them plus a daughter, Rebecca.

The Richards great grandparents, William B. and Roasana, are buried in Andrews, Indiana also but they are in a small, totally neglected cemetery. They also share a stone but it is fallen on the ground and covered over with brush. It is Bruss Cemetery. Andrews is about 6 miles south east of Huntington, Indiana.

Nebraska and Indiana

Earning A Living

During the Great Depression during the 1930's, William had considerable difficulty in balancing his time at work and at home. At that time, supporting the family took precedence over anything else. Conversation with clients & potential clients usually paid off in increased sales eventually and seemed a necessary part of his business. Perhaps William never completely succeeded in dividing his time successfully.

Worked short time as a telephone linaman until he realized that kind of work was not for him.

Haying in Kansas 1927

working in Casper, Wyoming

#1 - Working on the family farm was surely a full time job for teenage William. He said there was little time for play, even when a child. He worked also for neighboring farmers baling alfalfa etc. Probably his first full time job for someone else was when he went to work for his sister and brother-in-law, Hazel and Theodore Ecklun on their farm near Holdrege, Nebraska the summer of 1923. William never really liked farming but would give it another try or two.

#2 - When William missed getting signed up for State Normal School the fall of 1923, he signed on with his father to work in the Great Western Sugar factory at Lyman, near Gering, Nebraska. He was paid 40¢ an hour (good for that time) breaking rocks for the lime kiln. This lasted four days and then they took him aside and gave him a 37½¢ per hour "easy job" measuring tanks. This was near the end of the campaign or season. Then he was put on as carbonation helper at 42½¢ per hour. At the end of the sugar beet run he was laid off. He was 19 years old.

#3 - "In the spring of 1924," William wrote, "I went to Casper, Wyoming and got a job in an oil field on construction. Later took a job at Plant #1 in Casper, working up to a steady job." That plant must have been oil field related. There are old stock certificates for that period showing William invested in some oil wells.

#4 - William said he let a drifter talk him into quitting that job to go harvesting. "No good," he said.

#5 - The fall of 1924 found William back at the sugar factory, again a carbonation helper and again laid off at the end of the "sugar campaign."

#6 - In the spring of 1925 William headed south on a great adventure, hoping to find work as well. He worked briefly for the railroad as a "packing shed operator." Then in Tampa, Florida he worked loading and unloading ships. He found that dangerous and quit in a few hours. He gave up and went home.

#7 - William worked at the sugar factory again in the fall of 1925 and before the end of the campaign was promoted to the evapor-

The Douglas Aircraft Company

WILLIAM BLISS, M554, suggested torque tube assembly No. 5103783 be completely assembled in one department, eliminating six pulley brackets. Cuts down reworks, saves time.

Danger

ators at 50¢ per hour. "I worked on through and had the job of emptying the huk pulp warehouse by suction fans (the first time ever attempted in the world). I was covered with pulp several times and so asked for a safety rope and belt to keep from being covered and smothered. The next year I warned the new man about the rope and belt. It was disregarded and he lost his life on February 14th. Later another man lost his life the same way."

Carpentering

#8 - In the summer of 1926 William transferred to Minator to help build another sugar beet factory. He worked there as carpenter's helper; at the coal pits; as the store room attendant; and at glazing glass. Later he was a painter's helper.

Painter

#9 - In the fall of 1926 William went back to the Gering factory as a carbonarion foreman for the campaign and then continued on as head painter. This pattern continued for three years.

Flax Farmer

#10 - In the spring of 1929 William went to farm some Indian land in South Dakota, north of Gorden, Nebraska. We don't know how this opportunity originated but he signed a lease with the Indians owning the land in the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and proceeded to raise flax. This farming venture was a failure because the flax seed he bought was imported from Australia and unbeknownst to him was for fiber rather than seed. There was no market for his crop. He lost all he invested. This was the year of the stock market crash -- worse was yet to come.

Rawleigh Salesman

#11 - It was 1930. Newly married and broke, William took a job at McCook Nebraska (Red Willow County) as a Rawleigh Products representative selling household products door to door. As William put it: "Hardships came thick and fast." William became very sick with an infected jaw so there were doctor bills and lost time on the job. Farmers who had bought products with every expectation of being able to pay them, had no money to pay. The depression had hit hard and William couldn't collect his accounts, putting him, in his words, "past broke."

Depression Failure

But this job was important -- it was William's first selling job and it showed him a way to support his family and earn his living for the rest of his life. William was a natural salesman. He loved people and had a very friendly manner. He was enthusiastic about his product, his customers, and was a hard worker. William had found his niche in the world though he probably didn't realize it at the time.

In Debt

This failure was a greater set back than William's family realized until recently. After his divorce 10 years later there was still an indebtedness to Rawleigh Products for $800! It seems this indebtedness could only have originated at this time. This was one of the debts William outlined to Savilla that he was still working on clearing up.

Collecting

#12 - After the failure in McCook in 1931, William moved to Franklin, Nebraska to take another job. We don't know what it was but he said that because of his indebtedness to the Rawleigh Company he was "not permitted" to start. He tried collecting but people had no money to collect, so no luck.

(Continued)

(FULL TIME JOBS I'VE HAD CONTINUED)

Harvest

#13 - In the spring of 1932, desperate, William sold his equity in their car for $28.00, bid his family goodbye, and crawled on a frieght train heading west, looking for work of any kind. He finally arrived at his uncle's farm in Lynden, Washington. He worked there haying and harvesting for board and 25¢ per hour. He returned to Gering in the fall -- again by freight train.

Sugar Factory

#14 - William again worked at the sugar factory, for the campaign only, as a carbonator helper.

Farm

#15 - In the spring of 1933 William again left the family and headed back to Washington State to work for his uncle and others there where an abundance of food was being produced on the small farms. William said: "By working and saving what I could, I borrowed $30.00 from my uncle and sent for my small family. We worked for our board and later I paid the balance they thought we owed."

Watkins

#16 - Quoting William: "In September (1933) I, having got my uncle and neighbor to sign for bond on goods from the J.R. Watkins Company, I borrowed $35.00 from the bank (my uncle signing for me and also signing at the Lynden Department store for our needs). I put $30.00 in a Model T and put the other $5.00 on food and gas. Starting a successful Watkins business."

Gas Station

#17 - The Watkins business continued through the years combined with other profitable enterprises and jobs. In 1934 "I gave $50.00 down on an old house and $20.00 plus interest per month, making the start of a service station and store. The price was $2500.00." William and Savilla operated the neighborhood store and Standard Station for three years before leasing it to the Standard Oil Company for ten years.

Ship Yards

#18 - About 1941, in an effort to aid the war effort, since he couldn't enlist, William went to work at the Bellingham, Washington Shipyards Iron Works, while continuing to sell Watkins products.

Aircraft

#19 - In 1943 William put another man on his Watkins route and went to Illinois where he worked at the Douglas Aircraft Company at Des Plaines, Illinois. He said: "I enquired about a big contract of vital war emergency at Douglas. They seemed to need help badly so I signed up with them." He worked as an installer trainee on the afternoon shift. "From trainee I went to Installer 3 and Installer 1 -- and crew manager, on to assistant foreman nose line and final assistant foreman in trouble shooting for the entire department, on through the plant, on into field and hangers by the time the plant shut down at the end of World War II.

Mfg.

#20 - When the war ended William stayed on in Illinois, working for Benjamin Electrical Manufacturing Company in Des Plaines, Ill. through the fall of 1945 and spring of 1946.

(Continued)

(FULL TIME JOBS I'VE HAD CONTINUED)

Watkins

#21 - William returned to Lynden, Washington and took back his successful Watkins dealership. He said: "I had all the business and more than I could handle from the start."

Brother Partner

#21 - "In 1949 I took my brother in as partner and took Whatcom, Skagit, and San Juan Island Counties over for Watkins Distributor. We just got it going when we had trouble with the West Coast manager so wound up quitting it." This trouble undoubtedly had to do with the Watkins Linament problem. But William continued to believe in Watkins products and always kept some on hand for self, family, and friends.

Crowell Publishing

#22 - "I went to work for the Crowell Collier Publishing Company in 1950, working as representative for 1½ years when I was promoted to field manager." William was very successful, earning many trophies and prizes for his efforts. However, there was some difficulty over bonuses and he quit while they figured it out. Later that year (1954) he went back to work for them.

Nutria

#23 - But, said William: "I had a double cross from my former boss in Crowell Collier, also my supervisor, so I quit them." He went to work raising and selling nutria (a small fur bearing animal) from their property in Sandy, Oregon.

Cookware

#24 - William in his life sketch failed to mention selling waterless cookware but it was probably in the early 1950's, possibly during the time between the two periods he worked for Crowell Collier. This also was a product William believed in and he did quite well with it. He undoubtedly changed companies for better opportunities and benefits.

AAA Ins.

#25 - "In October 1957 I started work for the Oregon Motor Association (AAA) for membership and insurance." More trophies -- because William always succeeded, no matter what he sold. What he really sold was himself. He wouldn't sell anything he didn't believe in and people knew it. That was the secret of his success. With this job he was on the road a lot. He won many, many premiums including two typewriters, watches, radios, waffle irons, toasters, etc.

Real Estate

#26 - William studied, then took out a real estate license in Arizona (passing it on March 14, 1961) and became a successful realtor, working for Keller Realty Company in Sedona, Arizona. He had met the Kellers when he bought the Sandy, Oregon property from Kellers, and followed them to Arizona. Naturally William was successful at selling real estate too, often selling the very houses they lived in. After all, to a salesman, a good deal is a good deal!

In 1976 William sold his last place and returned to Oregon. Retired!

THE FOLLOWING THREE PAGES CONTAIN AN ACCOUNT OF WILLIAM'S LIFE, WRITTEN BY HIM IN 1979, AND CONTAINING MOSTLY INFORMATION ABOUT HIS WORK EXPERIENCES.


Rawleigh's
HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS
William H. Bliss
Indianola

WATKINS
PRODUCTS
Watkins

Williams Own Account

Looking for work

Not having anything to do, I worked at odd jobs when I could get them. I signed up for work in Gering, Nebraska at the Great Western Sugar Company. I worked the beet season, around 100 days. In the spring Roy Carmichael and I took a side door Pullman (freight train)to Cheyenne, Wyoming. It started to snow so we bought a ticket on a passenger train for Casper, Wyoming. Arriving there, we signed up for work in oil fields and were helping build a big building. The water was not drinkable so we quit. Not having money for return trip to Casper, we started out on the 60 or 80 mile trip on foot. A trucker gave us a ride to Casper. We started out each morning and made the rounds of all the plants looking for any kind of work. There were 50 people for every job. We had a place to board and room (after I put up my Kodak for security). We decided to split up and if either of us got a job we would both eat (this is referring to Earl Foster, who apparently joined him at some point). I came back one day and he had left the place we were staying at. Later I heard he went home. The 2nd day alone I received work at the Standard Oil Refinery working the yards and loading coke in box cars.

The South

I worked into July and thought I would try the harvest fields. Finding nothing, I went to my parent's home for a short while, then took a freight train to Cheyenne, Wyoming and looked up Leroy Carmichael. He was being let out of his job and decided to go with me to the West Coast to look for work. We decided to leave the next evening and he came in saying there was a lot of work in Florida, why not go there? Enough said. We left the same night, going east instead of west. We traveled to Omaha, Nebr. then through Council Bluffs to Kansas City, Mo. Got on wrong train and wound up in Hanabal, Mo., then St. Louis and on through the south on the way to Florida. They were really rugged in the south for riding freights so we started hitch hiking. We wound up in Atlanta, Georgia, then on south (peach country) and received work with packing and shipping peaches. I was the shed foreman and he was in charge of loading them in Pacific Fruit Express cars.

Selling Peaches

Later we shared expenses on to Tampa, Florida. We tried working on the docks, unloading big ships. Leroy got real sick so I wired my dad to get $100.00 from the bank where my credit was good. He sent the money and we bought a Buick for $50.00 and started home, getting as far as Memphis, Tennessee, where we ran into the back of a Ford that stopped without signalling. They tried to get the police to arrest us but they had received word of how it had happened from firemen that had witnessed it. We fixed a flat tire and started on through Arkansas. The automobile was now in bad shape and we sold it for $25.00 and started on to Gibbon, Nebr., bumming rides on freights. We stayed at my folk's place for a while and then I signed on again at the Great Western Sugar Co. at Gering, Nebraska. I worked the season there and then worked picking corn, bailing hay etc. and other odd jobs.

The Docks

By about 1926 I had a steady job at Great Western Sugar Company at Gering, Nebraska. A lot of my friends were out of work and I didn't really know how lucky I was to have health and a steady job. I really (now that I look back on it) was, so I thought, better than most. This went on for a few years and then things started happening.

Sugar factory

Depression Days

William's Account Continued

Flat Crop

Rawleigh

Mayo

Jaw Inf.

Wash. State

Watkins Co.

Along with my job, I signed up for rental land (160 acres) on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. I then leased 200 more acres for crops, all from Indians. I came home and married in 1929 andthings started happening to me from that date on. Crops were good but prices low so I took a big loss in finances. I had given up my job (my heart on making a lot of money) and worked some of the property. When things became worse I signed up with the W.T. Rawleigh Co. for territory at McCook, Nebraska, Red Willow County. Things were not good and it was hard to get by, being married and a lot of extra expenses. But I worked hard until June of 1930, when without any warning, I became seriously ill. I was unable to work and the doctor bills piled up --also other expenses. I was unable to even go out to make collections and as a result I became flat broke. No health and doctor bills kept climbing along with all others and I finally lost my car and had no transportation. I heard of the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minnesota and wrote them.

The Mayo Clinic wrote back and told me if I could come there and had enough money for a week's stay, they would see me through. Things looked real bad. No money, no collections. I had rented the leased land to a man, giving me ¼ of the crop raised and I had not heard any more from him. I did not know what to do. I now also had a son and along with that expense, and the wife doctoring with one doctor after another, bills kept climbing.

Then the Lord stepped in and I opened a letter from Batesland, S.D. and a check for $100.00 -- my total amount due me for rent on all the land. I took the train from Gibbon, Nebraska for Mayo's. Now my weight had gone down from around 165 pounds to 87 pounds. I could barly walk. Mayo's found my trouble, infection of the jaw bone, caused by a dentist killing the nerve in a tooth. I paid Mayo's $30.00 on my total bill, leaving me owing them $70.00. This took me over 15 years to pay. They offered me credit at no interest.

My bills high and no health, I took a freight train to Lynden, Washington where my Uncle lived in 1932 -- my bills now over $8,000. I still was not able to do much. I helped harvest. I took a freight train back to Gering where I was able to get a job during the sugar beet campaign at $3.40 per day. A loan from Uncle Will helped me bring my wife and son (and now I had another child, a girl) and daughter to Washington. Earlier I had helped harvest for 25¢ an hour and now my wife and I worked for Uncle Will for our board -- her with the house work and me around the farm and in the garden.

In the fall of 1933 my uncle and neighbor (who I had worked for from time to time) signed my bond for $211.00 to the J.R. Watkins Co. I worked real hard, as best I could with still poor health, and little by little, I was able to build my stock -- also with the good will of my customers. Since then a lot of them have become my very good friends and still are. They, most of them, didn't have anything and so gave us a lot of different garden things to eat. I went to the bank and borrowed $35.00 that bought a cheap Model T with no locks on the doors. I traded cars for better ones as business increased.

William's Account Continued

Divorce

Our marriage was not good and we wound up with a divorce. When Savilla left (by that time I had pretty good credit) me for another (meeting him in California), I at least thought I had things under control. I still owed a lot of money -- around $8,000. All these bills cost me an additional 10% interest. I was able to keep most under control. Before the X wife left, her name still on my credit, the bills came in a bunch and kept coming. Her doctors (many different ones) and bills from different stores. Trunks, suit cases, and clothes galore. I couldn't make myself believe she had run up that many bills. I wrote her about the different ones and asked if she had charged them. When I waited around two months and no word, I started to pay on them along with the other things I had to pay.

War & Shipyards

The war came along and in 1942 I was able to rent out the home and the oil station. I tried to get into the U.S. Armed forces three times. No luck. Then took up welding and went to work at the ship yards. Later I signed up to work for Douglas Air Craft at Park Ridge, Illinois. I started at starting pay and wound up assistant foreman. I was trouble shooter on all positions from assembly lines in the hanger to the field.

Watkins

After the war I still owed a lot of money and came back to Lynden after another failure at marriage, and started up my Watkins route again. This was in the spring of 1946. Later I became a distributor of Watkins Products in three counties. I had 19 representatives. When business was good the general manager came up and demanded that I put in more advertising than I earned in profit. This ended it.

Crowell

I then went to work for Crowell Collier Publishing Company and after two years ended up as field manager. By keeping property, the value was up, letting me at last sell some. After all the bad years I was able to pay off my debts in full in 1954. It took over 14 years and all the blessings I now have are from my Father in Heaven. I love Him and His Son with all my heart.

I also married the best, and a very lovely life mate in 1954. We are nearing 24 years together now. Her name is Mildred. We married 2 July 1954 in Reno, Nevada. Not luck, just the Lord's blessing. My only payment to Him is to believe in Him.

Happy Marriage!

"My Payment to Him Is To Believe in Him"

MEMORABLE JOB EXPERIENCES

Watkins Linament

No doubt there were many memorable experiences for William but the one we most remember him speaking of was the "Great Watkins Linament Travesty." Watkins had an excellent linament but they didn't sell it only as an external remedy but as an internal one as well. It seemed that a teaspoon or so of red linament taken in a glass of warm water was an aid to overcoming the stomach flu. The salesmen were instructed to sell it for this purpose and William himself was sold on the use of it for this purpose, taking it himself and giving it to his family. The trouble was that Watkins was not paying a tax required for internal medications. When it came to light there was a big court case concerning it. If lost, Watkins would have to pay penalties plus back taxes for many years. Watkins Co. could go under!

William's supervisors asked him to testify that he and other sales people had not been instructed by the company to sell linament as an internal medicine. William had too much integrity to purjure himself and instead left the company. That must have been a very difficult step because he liked and believed in the products, knew them well, and was very successful, at that time being over most of the northwest United States. His descendents appreciate his good example!

CHANGING JOBS

Health and/or

Excluding during the trying Depression times, when William changed jobs it was for a variety of good reasons. With Watkins it was a matter of integrity. With Crowell Collier it was a problem with his supervisors who evidently did not keep their promises regarding bonuses. William would be one to stand up to his superiors if he felt certain he was being dealt with unfairly. It was their loss. Top notch salesmen like William Bliss do not grow on every tree.

One time William changed jobs for health reasons. He appeared to have bronchitis and expected the Arizona climate to benefit him. The opportunity for selling real estate was there. He grabbed it, and of course, succeeded.

Crowell Colliers 1950's

Self Employment

William had many experiences with self employment including a very early attempt at hog farming, about which we have no details, except that he didn't exactly "make a killing." This idea apparently stayed with him though because there was a plan for Wilbur to go into a hog raising venture with him after he (Wilbur) finished high school.

Flax farming on the Sioux Indian Reservation was an effort at self employment that failed partly because of having the wrong seed and partly because the Depression had begun and prices had dropped.

To be a dealer in a home products company is really to be self employed -- in business for yourself. Therefore, when William sold Rawleigh products in 1931 and began with Watkins products in 1934, he was really self employed. A real "business head" was needed to succeed and as detailed earlier, William was very successful with Watkins products. Wilbur remembers going with him to the train depot to pick up shipments of products the farmers had ordered; filling the car and strapping some to running boards and fenders. He would immediately begin the rounds to deliver them. Wilbur said his dad really needed a truck.

Having been so recently impoverished, the opening of a gas station and neighborhood store in Lynden, Washington was a rather surprising venture for William. He bought a large old house on the main street in Lynden for $50.00 down and converted the front of it for business purposes. The family lived in the back and upstairs. He continued his Watkins business and together he and Savilla kept both businesses going. There was some hired help, but only a minimum amount. They built up a successful business together.

Wilbur remembers the store and gas station fondly -- except when he had the mumps and whooping cough at the same time and his mother was too busy in the store to give him much TLC. He remembers the time drunken sailors were in the store buying fireworks. One actually lit a Roman candle in the store, endangering everyone and everything. William bodily removed him, showing amazing strength. The Roman candle shot out front, narrowly missing the glass tank of the gas pump that was filled with gasoline (the old gravity feed type). What an explosion that nearly was! In 1937, probably wanting a more normal home life, William leased the property to Standard Oil Company and bought a home elsewhere.

A different kind of venture in self employment came about in 1955. William and Mildred had bought over 50 acres of land near Sandy, Oregon and William decided to go into the fur business. He bought cages, bought nutria (a small fur-bearing animal similar to mink) and began breeding and raising them. Not afraid of hard work, William put his all into it. For whatever reasons, he became disenchanted in a couple of years and went back to selling. Perhaps even then wearing animal skins was becoming unpopular & William realized it.

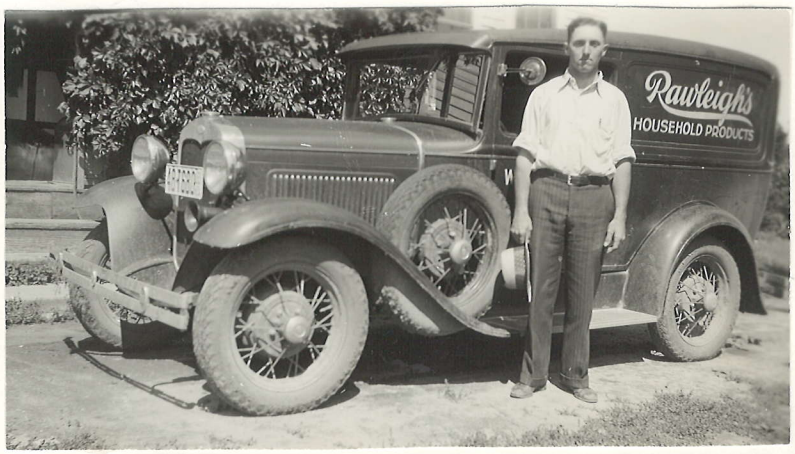
PHOTOGRAPHS

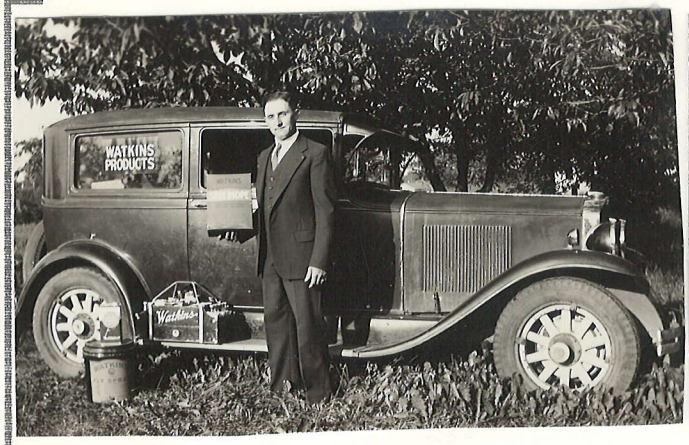
Hazel & Ted Ecklun Place about 1923
when William worked there

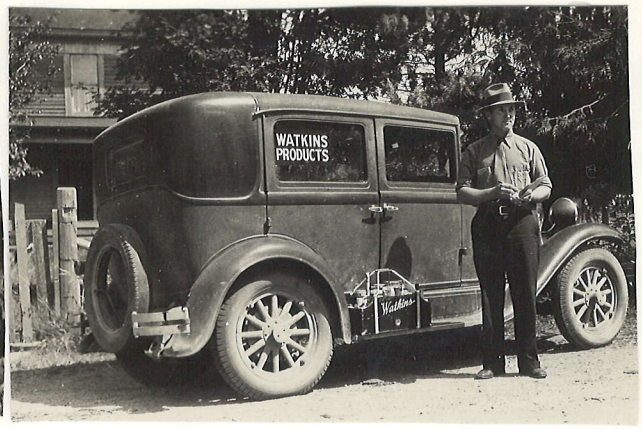
William helping out on
farm at age 16

William at the
Sugar Factory in
Gering, Nebraska
1925

Selling Rawleigh
Products -- 1930







1937

1939

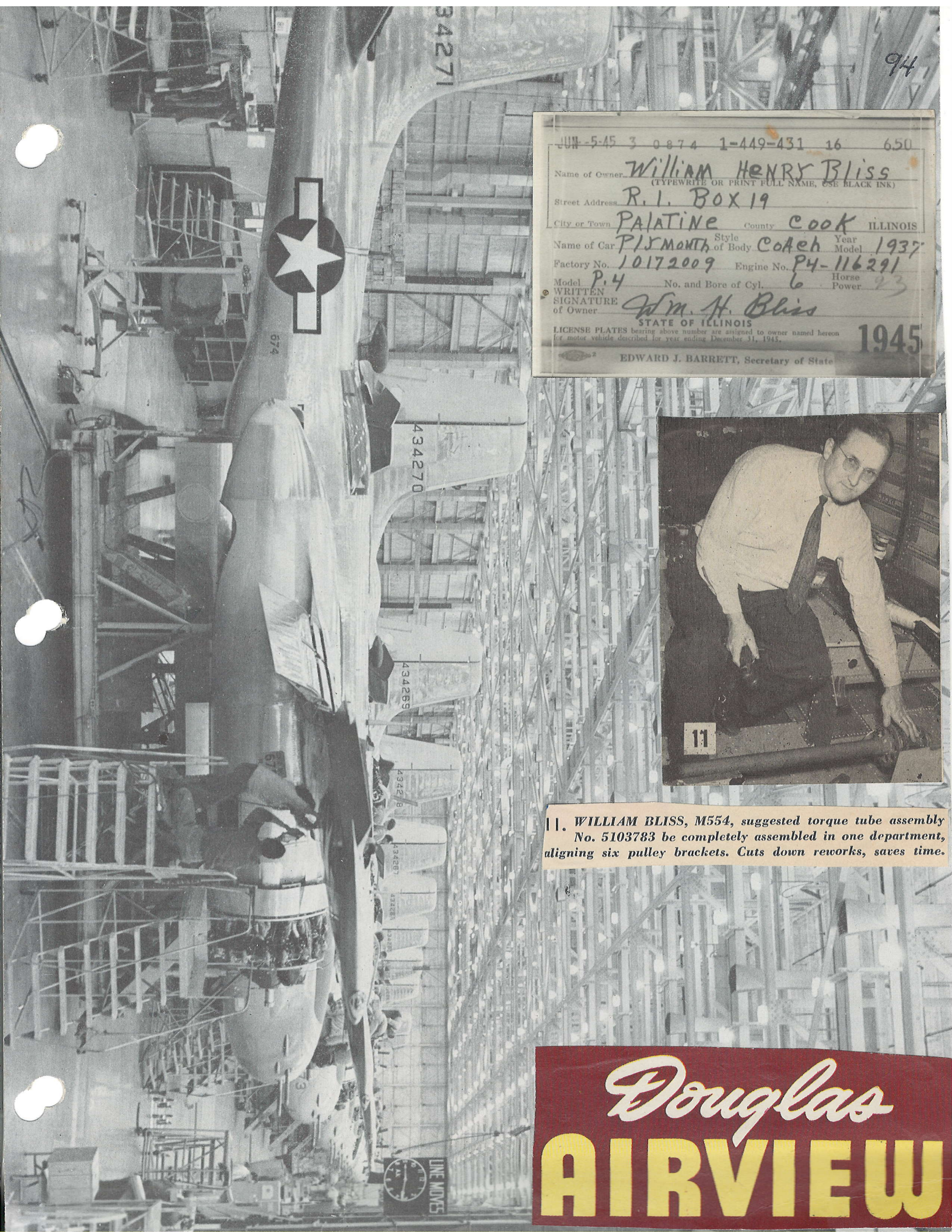
INVOICE

WILLIAM H. BLISS

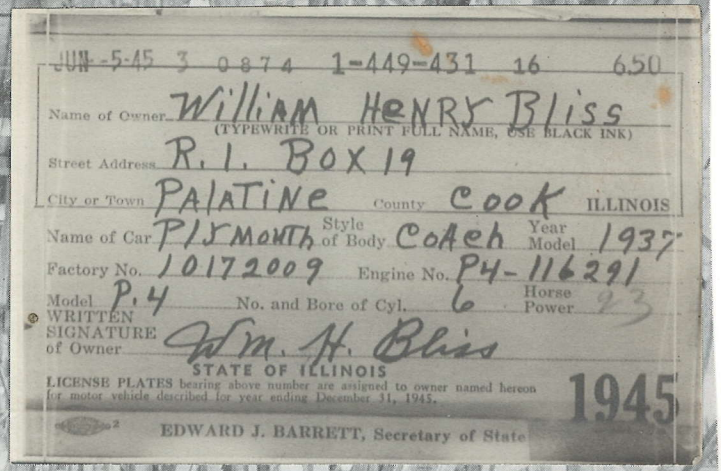
WATKINS DISTRIBUTOR

1801 ELLIS STREET—PHONE 5438

BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON



11. *WILLIAM BLISS, M554, suggested torque tube assembly No. 5103783 be completely assembled in one department, aligning six pulley brackets. Cuts down reworks, saves time.*



JUN-5-45 3 0874 1-449-431 16 6.50

Name of Owner William Henry Bliss
(TYPEWRITE OR PRINT FULL NAME, USE BLACK INK)

Street Address R. I. Box 19

City or Town Palatine County Cook ILLINOIS

Name of Car Plymouth Style of Body Coach Year Model 1937

Factory No. 10172009 Engine No. P4-116291

Model P4 No. and Bore of Cyl. 6 Horse Power 93

WRITTEN SIGNATURE of Owner Wm. H. Bliss

STATE OF ILLINOIS

LICENSE PLATES bearing above number are assigned to owner named hereon for motor vehicle described for year ending December 31, 1945.

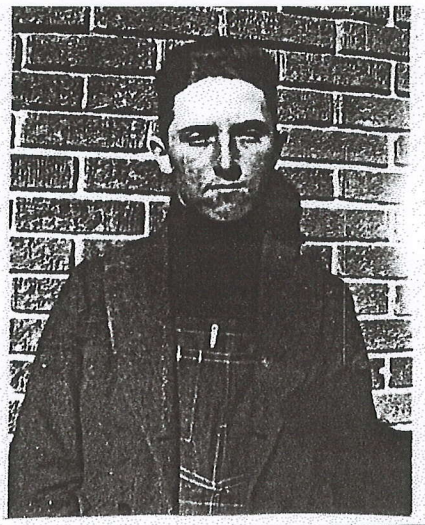
1945

EDWARD J. BARRETT, Secretary of State

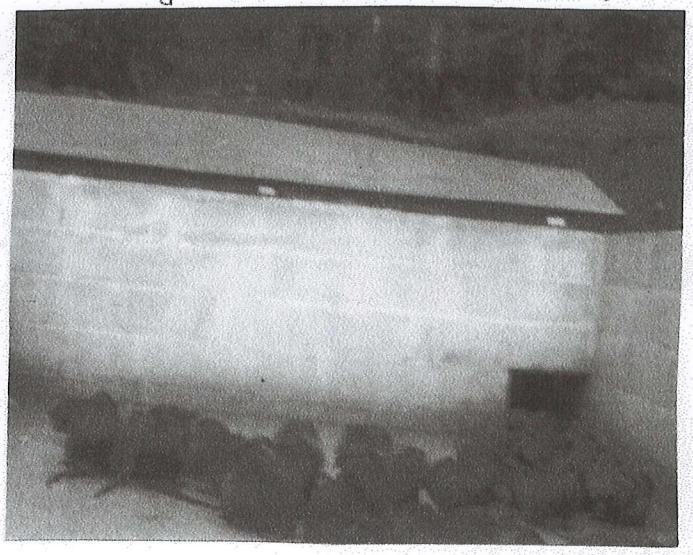
11. *WILLIAM BLISS, M554, suggested torque tube assembly No. 5103783 be completely assembled in one department, aligning six pulley brackets. Cuts down reworks, saves time.*

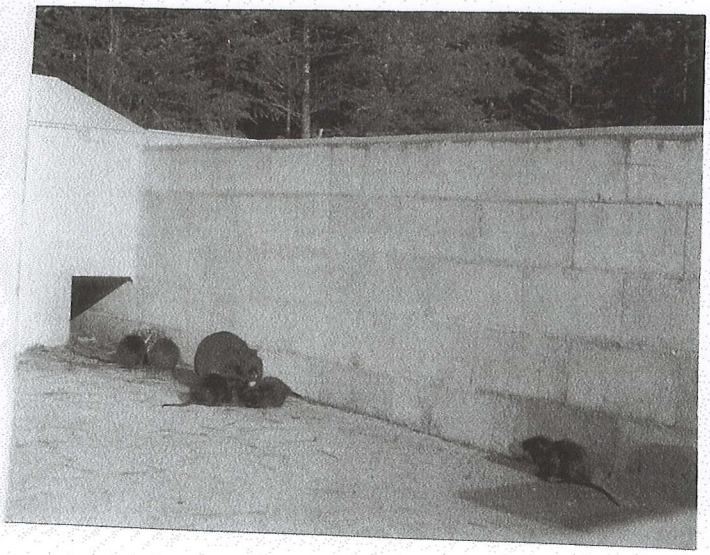
Douglas AIRVIEW

at Seger factory - 1923



Crowell-Collier job at Klamath Falls, Oregon. Worked in all kinds of weather.





After buying the Sandy property William took on another venture - raising nutria for fur. He built several concrete pens and bought a pair of animals. They were very prolific and we soon were pelting. Market wasn't as good as hoped for but we sold a lot of animals to new ranchers. The promotor whom we trusted as a friend took several hundred tanned pelts - ours and several other ranchers', and left the country. So - all we had to show for our labors & investment was my nutria jacket - we learned the hard way.

Home Addresses and Localities

#1 - During the years between 1922 and his marriage in 1929, William worked and lived here and there, including in Casper, Wyoming, Gibbon, Gering, and other Nebraska towns, and South Dakota. Details on homes and addresses are unavailable.

#2 - Details of William's and Savilla's first home after they were married are not available but William related that after the failure of his Rawleigh business there he and Savilla were reduced to selling furniture and household belongings in order to eat. This was 1929.

#3 - Indianola, Nebraska. No information available but both Savilla and William stated they lived in Indianola briefly shortly after their marriage. Savilla wrote William letters there while in Gering at her parents' home awaiting the birth of Wilbur in 1930.

#4 - Franklin, Nebraska -- no information available.

#5 - Gering, Nebraska -- 1932 - 1933. Actually, during most of the time William's family lived in Gering he was in Washington State working on his uncle's farm to support the family.

#6 - The family lived at William's Uncle Will's home working for him for room and board while getting situated. Whatcom County, Washington was a beautiful place of dairy and chicken ranches, orchards, fir and pine trees and fresh air. It was very refreshing after leaving the dust bowl that Nebraska was at that time.

#7 - In 1934 William bought an old house in Lynden, Washington and converted the front of it to a gas station and neighborhood store. He paid $2500.00 for it $50.00 down and $20.00 plus interest a month. Later he leased it to Standard Oil Company for ten years, making enough to pay for all the improvements etc. Eventually it was sold.

#8 - About 1936 the family moved to a house out in the country near Lynden, Washington. This house had glass doors and glass door handles and the children called it "The Glass House."

#9 - About 1937 William bought a house on the Guide Meridian (a N/S roadway that makes a straight line from Canada to Seattle). Savilla and children left from this house in 1940. There were two houses on the property. On the north side of the house there was a driveway and then an apple orchard.

(Continued)

Wilbur remembers a pear tree that was so loaded with pears the branches couldn't support them. In one letter to Savilla, William said: "Our pear tree is loaded to the ground....No one can can them like you or cook nearly so good." Here they raised chickens, ducks and Banty chickens.

#10 - A year or so after Savilla left him, William rented out the largest house and moved into the small one. Wilbur said it was very small. This was about 1941.

#11 - The house on the Guide must have been sold because Wilbur remembers his father was renting a house in Lynden when he spent the summer -- probably 1943.

#12 - William married and moved to a little white frame house in Palatine, Illinois. There is a picture of that house and Wilbur remembers it quite well -- especially where the sun beat in and killed his white rat which had been left in a cage while they went to an amusement park.

#13 - Returning to Lynden, William bought another piece of property on the Guide Meridian where he had a small house built in 1946. Later he sold this place to his nephew, Lloyd Fox (Lilah's son).

#14 - Being a traveling salesman, William lived largely in hotels and apartments between 1948 & 1954. He kept his home place in Lynden to come home to whenever possible. He sent money to Mildred to make payments on home and car & had both paid off before they were married in 1954.

#15 - William, Mildred, Arlene and Janet lived from 1954 to 1957 in Gladstone, Oregon at 1510 Windsor Drive. Mildred had sold her home in Bellingham to go towards this lovely home and in addition was working full time to help it fit within their budget. Son Merle had remained in Bellingham to complete school. He then stayed at Mt. Vernon working and later married a Mt. Vernon girl.

#16 - In 1955 Mildred and William bought acreage in Sandy, Oregon in beautiful surroundings. They bought 20 acres and later enough more to make 53.64 acres on Bear Creek. In years to come they would sub-divide part of it. They sold William's cousin (and good friend), Harold Shively an acre near where their home was to be built. In a letter Mildred said: "I know they're going to love it out there under the big trees -- so peaceful and quiet after living in town." When they bought the property, a small house stood on the grounds. In 1957 they sold the Gladstone house. At first Mildred rented an apartment in Oregon City while the girls were in school. William lived in the little house at Sandy raising Nutria and making improvements as his work schedule permitted. They finished the inside of the little house and Mildred and Janet joined him there. This was about 1958.

#17 - They bought the Sandy property through Keller Realty and William became interested in selling real estate. Keller Realty relocated in Sedona, Arizona and William and Mildred followed them there. William's sister Goldie moved into the little house at Sandy. This was about 1961

William had been suffering from bronchitis and they were told he would find relief in Arizona. When they decided to make the move, they rented a U Haul trailer and packed it with part of their belongings. The remainder of their things they left in the care of daughter Arlene and husband and off they went to Arizona. (Continued)

Mildred went to work in Flagstaff as a keypunch operator for Army Ammunition while William sold real estate in the canyon. She made the daily commute up the mountain and back winter and summer. Her job was stressful, as an error could have sent an American ship to the wrong destination. Fortunately a few years later she was able to transfer to the Forestry Department.

Their first home in Sedona was a small apartment they rented for about four months.

#18 - The William Blisses then bought a 10 X 50 ft. mobile home and lived at the Sedona Trailer Court for nearly 16 months.

#19 - They then bought a beautiful lot at Harmony Hills Subdivision in Sedona and moved their mobile home there on September 18, 1962.

In 1963 Mildred had to return to Oregon to look after her father. She lived in the little house on the Sandy property while William continued on in their mobile home. She expected him to follow her to Oregon but he apparently never found a stopping place. So after her father died Mildred again joined William in Sedona.

#20 - #33 - Being a real estate salesman, William naturally couldn't resist a good buy - or a good sale. Thirteen times they bought houses and William sold them again there in the beautiful Red Rock country of Sedona, Arizona. This was probably good business but a little hard on home life. But they saw it as a way to finance their dream retirement home back in Sandy.

One place Mildred especially loved was a ranch style home on 1½ acres. It had a beautiful big fireplace and was named "Rebel Ranch" even before they bought it. But William sold it, as always. William couldn't resist a good sale even if it was their own home. Sometimes they were hardly unpacked before they moved again.

During the Sedona years Wilbur's family often spent their vacations with William and Mildred. They loved it there in that beautiful country William and Mildred had come to love almost as much as their Sandy property. William knew all the beautiful and interesting places that ordinary tourists would have missed.

#34 and #35 - Somewhere in there William and Mildred lived awhile in both Albuquerque, New Mexico and Phoenix, Arizona. They had gone to both places hoping William could find relief for his severe bronchitis. No relief came and they hated it there.

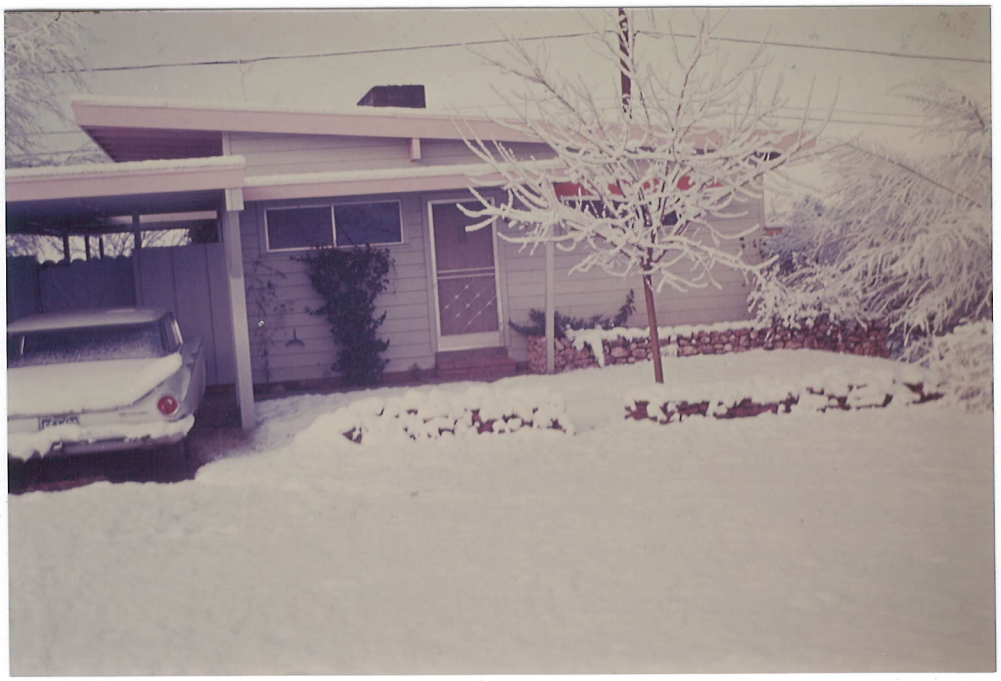
#36 - For several years William and Mildred had been studying house plans and dreaming about the home they would build on their beautiful Oregon property. Finally it was accomplished, with William overseeing every detail. It would be built with 2 X 6 inch studs and very well insulated. The placing of the picture windows to provide the most beautiful view was carefully planned. The most modern conveniences were included -- even a built in vacuum cleaner.

At last their dream home was built and they moved permanently back home to Sandy, Oregon, 41841 Kleinsmith Road, right on Bear Creek. The years there were more limited than planned but just as wonderful as dreamed. They were able to enjoy it together less than six years before William died in 1982.

* Our first rental was a wood shack next to an old house for $3.50 a month. Then we rented for $10.00 a month a vacant house. Later I bought a house for $1650.00, paying $50.00 down and $15.00 per month. I had bought an old house before that for $2500.00, $50.00 down and $25.00 per month. Later I remodeled it some and put in a Standard Oil station. We lived in the back and upstairs and also it was head quarters for my Watkins Products business.

* THE ABOVE PARAGRAPH WAS FOUND AMONG WILLIAM'S WRITINGS AND GIVES A LITTLE DETAIL ABOUT THE FIRST HOMES HE HAD IN THE LYNDEN, WASHINGTON AREA.

* *



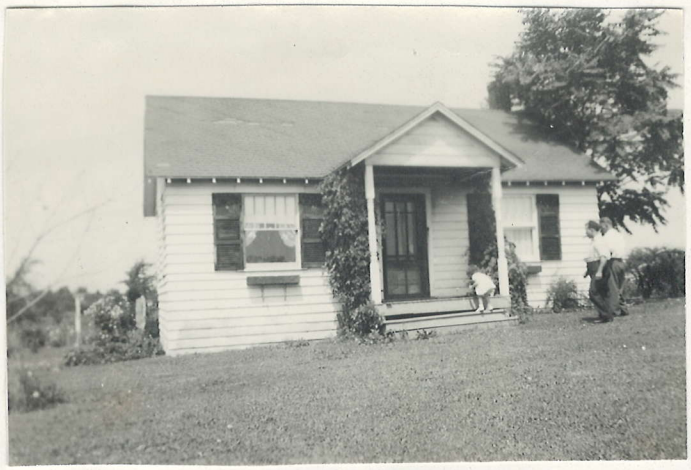
Mildredi Note on back

Don't know if you ever visited us at this place in Sedona - our cute little "doll house", gray with pink trim. You notice the wall in front of the car that I pushed over with the Buick? It connected the main house to a guest house, heavy with shelves built on other side! Nubbins was waiting by the front door for me to come home from work as usual. It scared him & we didn't see him for 2 days. (Roses & nice yard beyond wall.) And notice! It does snow in Sedona!

PHOTOGRAPHS OF HOMES & YARDS

Uncle Will's House in Lynden

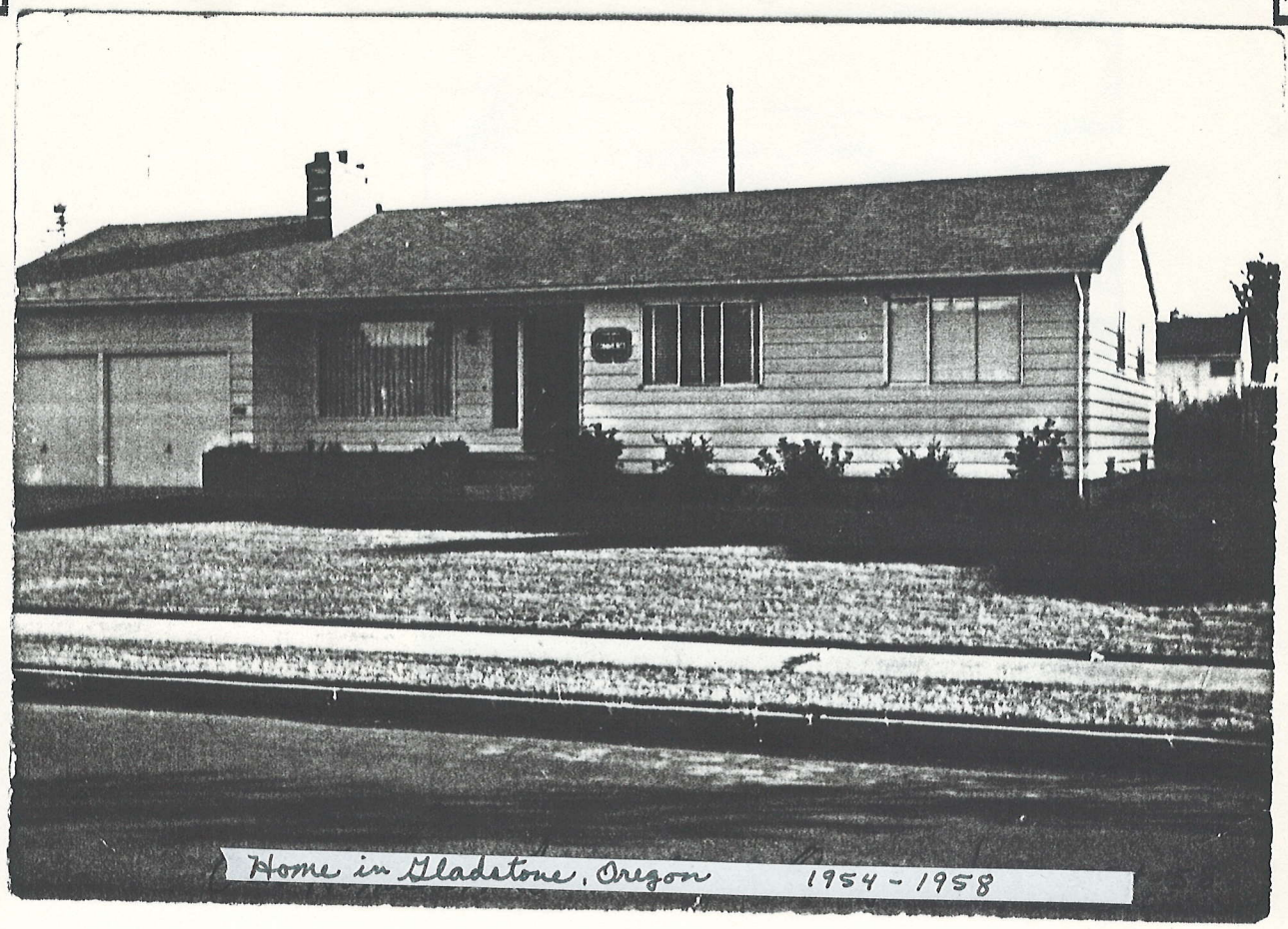
Neighborhood Store in Lynden. Family lived there



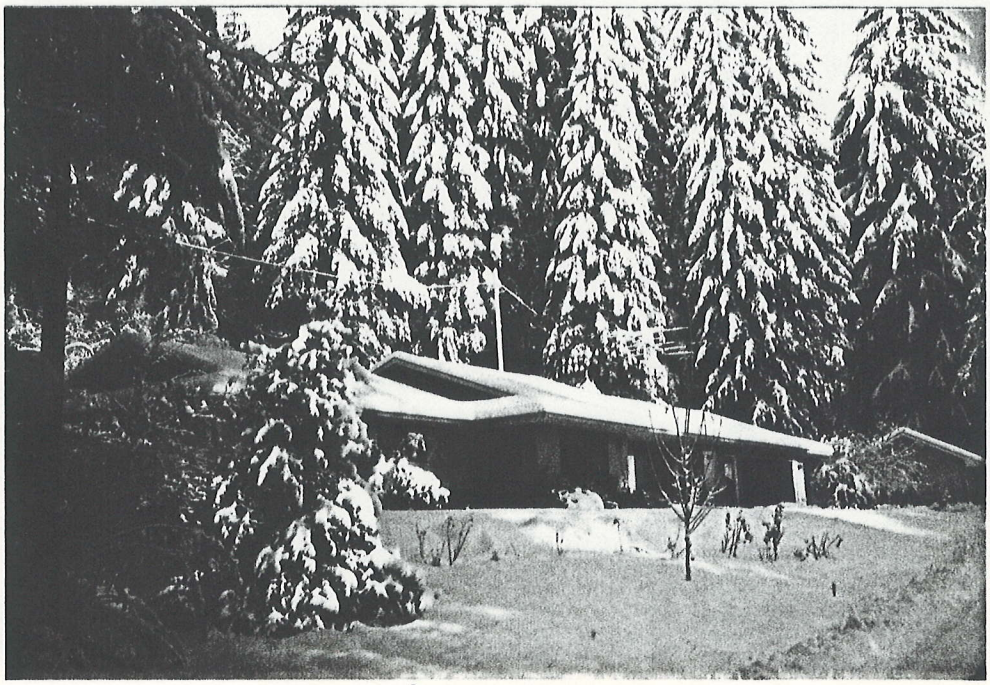
Home in Palatine, Illinois

First house on Guide Meridian in Lynden. That's Trixie with Savilla

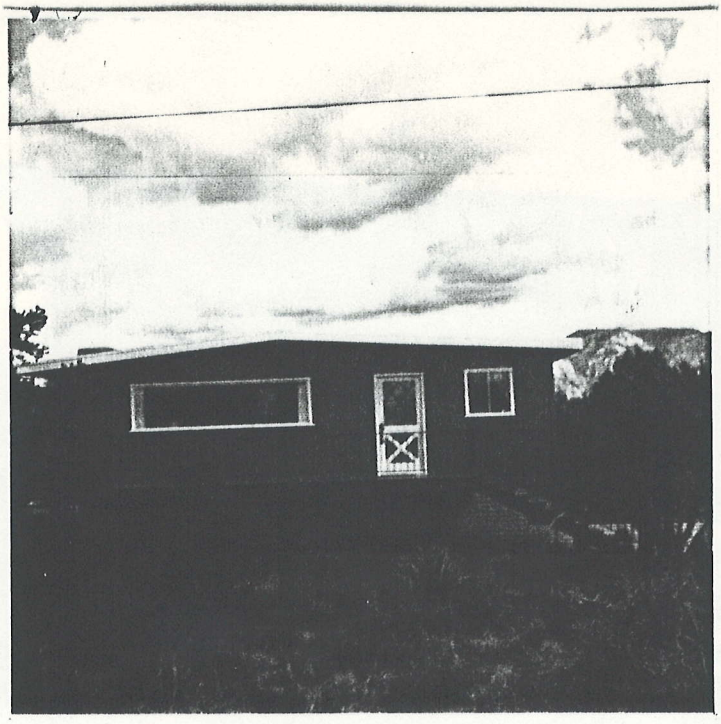
House William built on Guide Meridian



Home in Gladstone, Oregon 1954 - 1958



Dream Home
in Sandy, Oregon



Homes in Sedona, Arizona

Inside the last home in
Sedona, Arizona

Health Record

William enjoyed reasonably good health during most of his life, though there were some periods of illness.

Jaw Infection

In 1930 he had what he described as an infection of the jaw bone. This caused him a lot of misery and he told of spending a lot that they couldn't afford on local doctors and getting no relief. Finally, he wrote: "Got relief at Mayo Brothers at Rochester, Minnesota." He turned to Mayo Brothers again in later years.

Colonitis

In letters he wrote later he told of having been sick a lot in the 1930's and said that explained why he had been so crabby. He said he had thought he had cancer and was worried about providing for his family if he should die early. He was relieved when he learned his problem was "colonitis" and not cancer.

Depression & Cough

After his family left him, William wrote of terrible nervousness and depression. He often couldn't work and feared he was having a nervous breakdown. He had stomach pain and "nervous headaches." His cough, which he learned much later was from allergies, was worse, he said, than when he had the whooping cough.

Gall Bladder

In 1947 and 1948 William was very sick. "I became ill in 1947 and 1948 and after a lot of hospitals and doctoring had my operation for gall bladder in the fall and started to get better at once."

Prostate Cancer

In the late 1970's William began to feel generally unwell. He went to Mayo's and was treated but troubling symptoms persisted. He had prostate surgery and cancer cells were detected but the doctors felt their treatment would be sufficient and it would not spread.

Leukemia

In March, 1981, William returned to Mayo's with the complaints of anorexia, fatigue and weight loss. Their diagnosis was alarming: "acute myelomonocytic leukemia with anemia, weight loss and fatigue; adenocarcinoma of the prostate (stable) and abdominal aortic aneurysm." The doctors at Mayo's thought his leukemia was unrelated to his prostate cancer. They noted also loss of hearing, especially in the right ear.

Losing Battle

The Mayo doctors forwarded recommendations to William's Oregon doctors and he returned home to battle these new enemies in earnest. It was a losing battle. Mildred kept Wilbur informed of the situation in letters, excerpts of which follow:

Cataracts

"(no date) "Wilbur, your Dad's cataracts (due to his medication) are causing him a lot of frustration. Everything is hazy he says, but still he reads and works his puzzles and watches television. I got him an 8 X 10 magnifying glass that helps. I took him to the

(Continued)

eye clinic last week and he can have an operation on the worst eye anytime he wants it done. They'll implant a lens (permanent) and the doctor said that should help a lot. The other'n need not be done yet. But I guess the decision as to when is up to me, so I say the sooner the better -- probably next month. I'll keep you posted. He'll only need one day in the hospital."

(That surgery could never be done) Doing Better?

"(no date) Hi again! Just a note this morning. Wanted to tell you your Pop is doing real good, Wilbur. Dr. was quite pleased with his progress this last appointment. Bone marrow test had to be postponed till next month -- that one of course will tell us more accurately. But he's gaining in strength, walking more, and even out piling wood yesterday!! Hauled some in the wheel barrow to the back of the house. So that is real progress, isn't it? A month ago he just felt more like lying down all the time. Dr. told him to exercise more, so he is now and feeling stronger for it.

No — Worse

"(no date - maybe May of 1981) Wilbur do you plan on coming up anytime soon? I just don't know how much longer your dad will be able to really visit with you; the medication he's taking is affecting his memory and thinking. Some days he's quite alert, then again he'll ask me the same things over and over as if he'd just thought about it. It's pathetic really to see him this way after such a sharp mind before. He was so very sick to his stomach and complaining of head pains and blurred vision last Friday so we took him into the University of Oregon Health Center where his doctor is. We had an appointment for the following Monday but the doctor said we'd better get him right in -- he was afraid the leukemia had invaded the brain and central nervous system. But it was evidently just a build up of the medication (Prednisone), or in his weakened condition, a bit of flu virus hit him. Anyway, with two days in the hospital and intravenous feeding, they built him up so at least he has better color and a little more pep. But really, Wilbur, he isn't very good. I really worry about him, he seems so frail and thin. I was going to call you Saturday but waited for word from the doctors as to what I could tell you, then they said he was so much better we could bring him home Sunday so I decided not to worry you then.

Lost Heart + Hope

"He is eating much better now and gained 2½ pounds while in the hospital two days! Whatever it was they gave him sure helped -- at least temporarilly! Just thought you should know how things are. We have to take him back to the doctor June 18th and in the meantime see an eye specialist about his blurry vision. He doesn't drive anymore, of course, even said he got lost the last time he went to town alone. Doesn't go outdoors anymore unless to go to the doctor etc. I try to get him to go out and sit in the sunshine (when we get any!) but even that doesn't appeal to him. Mostly he just sits or lies down and tries to read or watch television. Doesn't sound like our same ol' Bill, does it?! Medication is helping leukemia and building up the blood though, which is good, it's just the side effects of it that's troubling him now. Hope they can find something better.

(Continued)

(HEALTH THROUGH THE YEARS CONTINUED)

"We took him to the doctor again today for blood tests. The doctor is quite concerned that the leukemia and white cells have increased and become more active since we last saw him in November. We are going to try a different, fairly new medication, and see if that will help. The other alternative is treatment in the hospital. I do hope he doesn't have to take that chemotherapy. It makes them so miserable and sick. I'll take him to the lab in Gresham each week, then back to the doctor March 10th. Hope he will be looking better by then and he won't be feeling so tired. Just lies down mostly. Needless to say we can't go ahead with the scheduled eye surgery the 25th -- next week. I'm so sorry about that 'cause his eyesight is getting really bad, seems worse each day. Nothing he can do to pass the time. I have to help him now with most things -- eating, bathing to some extent etc. So far he's easy to help though and very cooperative. Still has that sense of humor.

Please Come

"I was thinking, Wilbur, if you are going to be off work and can come up, I will gladly send you plane fare. It might give your Dad a boost. With leukemia we just can't know how much time we have left. I know I will have to face up to reality sooner or later (lots later we hope!). Let me know when you could come, if you can -- okay?"

Goodbye

Wilbur did go right away and was sorrowful to find his dad so disheartened by his illness. He was most disturbed about his loss of eyesight and felt that if he couldn't see, life was not worth living. His sense of humor had finally deserted him and he felt it useless to continue the struggle. Death came on April 25th, 1982.

And For Mildred 25 Years of Loneliness Began

Allergies

In the 1950's and 60's William became troubled with bronchitis severe enough to prompt a move to Arizona, and even try New Mexico for a while. The complete relief he hoped for did not come. Later he wrote that his bronchitis turned out to be allergy to smoke, exhaust fumes etc. So their beloved home in Sandy, Oregon was a better place than most to find relief.

So They Happily Went Home!

Accidents

Gun shot

William was no stranger to accidents. He was shot in the leg while hunting when a teenager. The doctor operated on him at home and the story was that part of the bullet was not retrieved and remained in his leg for the rest of his life.

Broken Arm

While still a teenager, William fell out of a cherry tree and broke his arm. This was at the "famous 1739 Ranch near Kearney, Nebraska." Famous for what, we don't know, but evidently it was famous in those parts.

William wrote: "In 1929 I got kicked by a Case tractor, hurting my arm." How bad the injury was we don't know but it was bad enough that he couldn't work and was the excuse he used to leave South Dakota and return to Gering, Nebraska long enough to get married.

Tractor Accident

Car Accident

The next accident we have record of was in September of 1940 when he had a car wreck. There are pictures of the wrecked car and he gave this account in a letter to Savilla, Wilbur, and Dorothy:

(Continued)

(ACCIDENTS CONTINUED) Car Rolled Over

"I went over to Coolie Dam last Saturday... and came back Monday. I stopped and picked up Mrs Wilson, another lady, and her little girl, and Louise Jansen.... It started to rain this side of of the mountains. Not far north I struck some black top pavement and it was like glass. The car started to skid, turned end for end and off the pavement to the right. Hit a guy wire on a phone pole. Rolled us over once and back on wheels again. We were shaken up and Mrs. Gertzen got her collar bone broke.... I got a deep gash on my arm that bled a lot and have had to have several stitches taken. If it had not been my arm it could have been my neck. I guess it was close.... You almost lost your trouble maker.... Can't you say we will fix up our broken ends and mend them unbreakable again?"

Fall - Breaking Arches

About 1944 while William was working at Douglas Aircraft in Illinois, he was working about 20 feet up in the nose cone of a plane. He lost his balance and fell out. He jumped to keep from falling on his head and broke the arches in both his feet. For the rest of his life he had to buy special shoes with built up arches.

Disrupted Trip

The next accident we know about was in the 1960's. William and Mildred were making one of their trips between Oregon and Arizona and had a wreck in a Chevrolet they owned. William's back was injured and he had chiropractic treatments. Mildred's thumb was painfully injured. The wreck disrupted their trip and plans to the extent that they were not able to attend the Mormon Temple to do their own work, as planned. Though perhaps not a major accident, that was a major disappointment.

Tree Fell on him

On August 19, 1972, William wrote to Wilbur from Sedona, of another accident: "We will be taking off for Mayo's the 23rd and have an appointment the 29th. While in Oregon a fellow cutting some trees for our road dropped a tree on me (July 20th 9 A.M.) and I have been trying to get over the injuries every since. It was the top of the tree and the branches gave me a real beating. I'll know more about it when I get to Mayo's."

Describe William Bliss

William Bliss had blue eyes and dark brown hair. He stood about 5 foot 6 inches. He was short and wiry and strong enough to stand up to those much bigger than him. On two known occasions he physically subdued troublemakers. Once in the neighborhood store when a drunken sailor was being careless with 4th of July fireworks and once with a criminal type. A prisoner had escaped by assaulting an officer and tried to force William to drive him away. No way! William captured him and returned him to custody.

A Banty rooster comes to mind when trying to describe William Bliss -- small, feisty and handsome.

William was sometimes a little bit chubby but never very overweight. The Bliss men tend to carry a little pot out front and William was no exception.

Handsome Bill

Religion

The first religious note we have from William is that he joined the First United Evangical Church at Kearney, Nebraska at age 14. This is particularly interesting because at about the same time his parents were joining the Presbyterian Church. Why he joined a different church than his parents, we do not know.

Af few years later while working at the sugar beet factory at Gering, Nebraska several seasons, he wanted to attend church. In his own words: "I attended several churches but settled with the Christian Church and put my name on the roll."

During his first marriage William often attended the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with his wife and children. Years later, on 7 January 1961 he, along with his wife Mildred, was baptized into that faith. They were members of the Sedona, Arizona Branch.

"Dry Mormon"

William's conversion to the Mormon Church took many, many years. Or perhaps he truly was converted in the 1930's but waited until peace had come to his soul for baptism. During his troubled years he wrote in a letter:

> "When I can get this settled between us and I can have peace of mind with God, then I plan on joining the Church. Until I can do so I feel like I couldn't do it justly."

Baptism

The peace of mind came; he and Mildred took the missionary lessons, and were baptized January 6, 1961. On the evening they were to go to the church in Portland, Oregon for their baptism, they invited two elders for dinner before going. A chicken dinner was prepared and just as they were sitting down to eat the electricity went off leaving the house in blackness, so it was a candle light dinner. The elders seemed to enjoy it, and it was a pleasant evening. Just as they were ready to leave the house to drive to Portland the power came back on. All laughed at the way the evening turned out and all agreed it was fun anyhow to eat by candlelight!

Yearned To Do Better

Already 57 years old when he was baptized, William did not have a long record of Church service. His frequent moves during his later years prevented him from the kind of Church service he probably otherwise would have given -- the kind he dared dream of in years long past. A 1940 letter from him contained this wistful phrase:

> "Do you think there is a chance of me working up in the Church? Sometimes I wonder if I could reach as high as a bishop. I suppose it sounds funny to you from me."

William received the Aaronic and the Melchizedek Priesthoods, being ordained to the office of an elder. He was a home teacher, made financial contributions to the Church, and supported the local leaders in their callings.

Church Activity

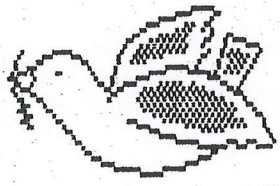
Perhaps we could not claim that William was extremely religious but without doubt he was a believer. William certainly had a basic belief in the goodness of God and in the power of prayer. These were lifelong beliefs from childhood. His letters frequently urged that Savilla take the children to church, to pray and to try to get back her lost faith. This quote from a letter written 8 April 1940 explains some of his basic beliefs:

> "Remember...to always pray. Pray for the right answer to our troubles. Never think of God being unjust, as he puts forth trials and temptations before us. When we win we are stronger for it. Sometimes we go after happiness that is false and God would forfeit and condemn us for taking of forbidden fruit. We've paid up for past sins (you and I). Lets' make no more to have to pay later on. Love, not duty, makes us not plain slaves but willing slaves."

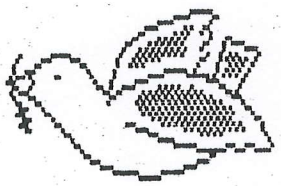
Frequently William spoke of his belief in the herafter and in eternal marriage.

William and Mildred were most active in the Church while living in Sedona, Arizona.

There he had his Patriarchal Blessing, which follows. He also gave a couple of wonderful talks there which have been preserved. One of those follows also.



SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES



Prayers answered, miracles witnessed, searching scriptures etc.)

William himself told of a spiritual experience that meant a great deal to him in this talk he once gave in Sacrament Meeting:

"My dear Brothers and Sisters,

My little talk will be on something that happened in my own family. I hope that it will help you some, either in your lives or that you will be able to tell others and not wait so long to get the word.

I had heard of the Church of Latter-day Saints in 1929, had gone to church many times but just did not feel it was the right church.

The last part of the year 1939 my son, who was about 9 years old, had an accident. He had fallen in some weeds along side of the roadway. Something foreign, perhaps wood, glass or metal had run up under the knee cap of his knee and his leg was stiff. He was not able to bend it. The pain was terrible. Not knowing what to do, we called our family doctor. After the exam he stated there was something under the knee cap and we were to put hot packs on it continually until he came back the next afternoon. If at that time he was no better he would take him to the hospital and operate by taking the knee cap off to remove the object, whatever it was. He said the knee would remain stiff.

When morning came there was no easement of the pain. We were very worried. His mother took the car and went into the small town near us, where the bishop of the L.D.S. ward lived, and asked him to administer to the boy. He had to call the two elders who lived in Bellingham, Washington, 20 miles away. Around 10 A.m. the bishop and the two elders came and administered to my boy, after which they had to get back to their jobs. We said our goodbyes and followed them to the door. Their car had only gone a short distance when we were startled by a shout from the bedroom. We rushed in, not knowing what to expect. My boy was sitting up and was working his leg back and forth. He said: 'Mommy and Daddy! See, I can bend my knee.' He had great faith in the blessing he had been given.

The doctor came as planned. He looked the boy over, checking the knee carefully. He stated he did not know what to think and that the operation was not

(Continued)

necessary. He was sure the foreign object would have to come out and now it seemed to be all right. ...To the best of my knowledge my boy has never had a pain in his knee to this day.

After seeing this happen to my own boy, I still did not join the Church. Many years later, in 1960, we had the elders come to our home and give us the lessons. After four (I believe), we joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This has been a great day in our lives.

I wonder how many of us are wasting the time our Lord has given us. I know that I have wasted many years that if I had taken the right step to gain the knowledge I needed to get started, I could have been doing the work of the Lord that now I see I am so far behind in doing.

I also know that the lack of knowledge in my life is holding me back. I see a lot of years wasted.

Our time is real short upon this earth. We think while young that there is no end to our lives here. When older, we start taking from our Lord's alotment to us of 3 score and ten, or 70 years (if we make it). We look ahead to 70 years. In my case it is now less than 10 years. When we look back, ten years was only a short time ago.

I do hope and pray that you, my Brothers and Sisters, do not follow me in so many wasted years. Work when you can. May God bless each and every one of you.

I ask this humbly in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Bishop Lind of Lynden Ward (or Branch) looked after the spiritual needs of William's family during the 1930's and offered William comfort and council after his marriage failed. It was also Bishop Lind who came to the house when Wilbur was injured. It is probable that Bishop Lind was William's favorite bishop.

Flagstaff STAKE No.

September 20, 1964 (DATE) Cottonwood (CITY) Arizona (STATE)

A BLESSING given by Verd A. Hanks Patriarch, upon the he[illegible]

William Henry Bliss (WRITE NAME IN FULL) son/daught[illegible]

John Henry Bliss (FATHER'S NAME IN FULL) and Eliza May Shively (MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME)

born November 18, 1904 (DATE) at Albion (CITY) Boone (COUNTY) Nebraska (STATE)

Brother William Henry Bliss by authority of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I place my hands upon your head and give you your patriarchal blessing and reveal unto you the will of the Lord concerning your life and I do it, dear brother, that you may find comfort and strength in times of need, for the Lord loves you. Your service to him has been acceptable, and if you will continue to be steadfast and constant in keeping the commandments your vision and understanding of the Plan of Salvation shall unfold before you and the power of the Priesthood shall distil upon you as the dews from Heaven.

The power of healing and the gift of faith shall be bestowed upon you and you shall have the power and faith through the Priesthood to lay your hands upon the sick and they shall recover. You shall be able to cast the influence of Satan from your home and he shall not have power to tempt you beyond your ability to withstand.

The time will soon come when you shall receive the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood and you shall have the opportunity of taking your wife to the Temple and be sealed for time and all eternity and you shall have your family sealed to you and the family ties shall endure accompanied with its joys and happiness that will extend throughout all eternity.

Now dear brother, you shall find much happiness in teaching the gospel both through example and precept to your acquaintances and loved ones and you shall see the spirit of repentance rest upon them and their way of thinking shall be changed and they shall bless your name forever. Your tongue shall be loosed and you shall be able to speak fluently the English language. But moreover you shall be given the gift of tongues and you and your good wife shall have the opportunity of working among people of a different language, but you shall learn to love them and they shall love you.

The Lord has spared your life on various occasions that you might become a member of this great church, enjoying the power of the Priesthood and the opportunity of leadership. Through your faithfulness you shall be called to important and trusted positions in this church. You shall preside over many and your wisdom shall be great.

Lineage of Ephraim

Dear brother, thou art of noble lineage for thou art of the House of Joseph through the loins of Ephraim and art blessed by being allowed to come through this great lineage. You shall see many of the blessings promised upon the heads of Fathers Abraham be fulfilled, for you shall see the remnants of the House of Israel gathered together. You shall see the Lamanites become a white and delightsome people.

You shall see many of the scriptures fulfilled concerning the last days and if you will remain true the destroying angel shall pass by you and not slay you.

Dear brother, I bless you in your body with health and strength. I bless you that your mind may be quick. I bless you with the gift of discernment. I bless you with the power to overcome temptation.

I seal you up that you might come forth in the morning of the first resurrection and receive your exaltation according to thy faithfulness in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

original

STAKE No.

September 20, 1964 — DATE
Cottonwood — CITY
Arizona — STATE

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William Henry Bliss son/daughter/of
WRITE NAME IN FULL

John Henry Bliss and Eliza Way Shively
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Lifelong Friend

Harold Shively, William's cousin and lifelong friend with his wife Mildred.

Mildred (Bliss) said: "I'll never forget how good they were when Bill was ill, they were always there to take us to the doctor and/or hospital whenever we needed them. They've been a wonderful source of support to me, for which I will be forever grateful."

Harold & Millie entertain at several nursing homes & for Senior Citizen dances throughout the county. She plays piano, organ & accordian, Harold, violin. Along with her brother, who plays guitar, mandolin, & trumpet, they organized the Senior's Little Band & play somewhere nearly every day. William & Mildred enjoyed many happy evenings with them in "jam sessions" & practice. Bill loved to play his harmonica along with them .

Groups:

William wrote that he joined the Masonic Lodge in November of 1925 at Gering, Nebraska. His father, John Henry Bliss, was a Mason, as was his mother's grandfather, William B. Richards, and no doubt others of William's progenitors.

In Washington State William belonged to the Delta Farmer's Grange and held positions of leadership in that organization.

William also belonged to several other organizations including Eastern Star, Elks, and Eagles.

Entertaining

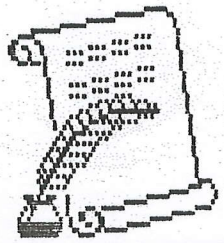
William and Mildred Bliss loved to entertain house guests and were gracious hosts. They just had that knack of making guests feel comfortable and at home. They were perfect tour guides for the local points of interest. The food always delicious and abundant. There were music and singing, walks and the enjoyment of nature. But best of all was the conversation. William had a wonderful memory for and charming style of telling funny experiences from his past. Love and laughter were the best parts of being entertained by William and Mildred. They made you feel really wanted.

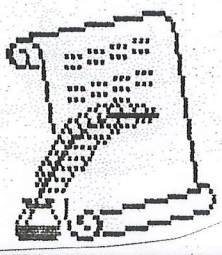
BEING A GUEST

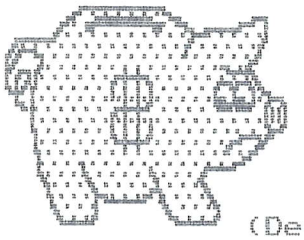
William added a great deal of enjoyment to the homes and socials he attended. He could be counted on to join into the activities enthusiastically and to keep the conversation flowing smoothly. He was a very appreciative guest, especially in praising the cook. To his new daughter-in-law who had made a lousy potato salad, he said: "There's no such thing as a bad potato salad -- some are just better than others." winning a permanent place in her heart.

CORRESPONDENCE

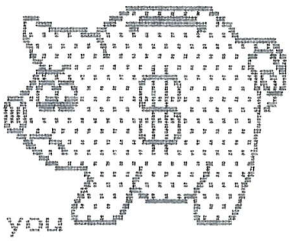
William was a wonderful correspondent, all his life. He was faithful about keeping in touch with his friends and family through letters and often chided his son about his "broken arm" since he was not as faithful about writing. Many of his letters have been saved by the recipients, making possible much of the information that is contained in this life story. William was reluctant to write his life story, feeling that there were too many unhappy times and it would be depressing to write and depressing to read. Fortunately, the real William comes through in his letters.







DEPRESSION, RECESSIONS



(Details of how your parents and/or you managed to get by -- Money saving activities, hand me downs, making over, "Depression quilts" etc.)

The Great Depression, coming as it did, just when William was getting married and getting his adult start in the world, was devastating to him. Probably it did more to mold him than any other thing, firing his determination to succeed regardless of the obstacles and nurturing bitterness that was to be a lifelong plague. It wasn't just earning his living that was affected -- every part of his life was hurt by the Depression. It caused stress and separations that undermined his marriage from the very beginning. His pregnant wife was malnourished and the comforts of home could not be provided. His health, and hers, were affected. Those were terrible days for everyone but William had nothing to fall back on. He had to be tough and he was.

As though the Depression weren't enough -- these were the "dust bowl" days of drought and dust storms on the plains. As Savilla stated it in her life story: "The cities had their bread lines but only those who lived through it know what it was like to plant seed to feed hungry livestock and fowl only to see it dry up in the hot, dry wind -- the valuable top soil blown about and piled in drifts." She continued: "I was expecting another baby in January, 1933 and the food we had (it included green potatoes) was not a good diet for me. It was difficult for everyone that year. Both my father and Bill were out of work, trying desperately to find something to do, without success."

William wrote of "breaking up housekeeping, selling our furniture and worldly belongings one by one just to live." In desperation William left his family and rode the freight trains west in search of work. One time, many years later, William wrote the following to Wilbur; "Don't worry about the inflation. Every time we catch up the unions strike for more money then the purchasing power goes up again. It's a vicious circle for sure. But we can still buy more things for an hour's work than in those days. One hour's work (if we could get it) for a gallon of gas. Top wages were only 25¢ per hour and no jobs to speak of either. Work days were 10 hours if you were lucky, 6 days a week."

In Washington State William pulled things together and from then on his family's material wants were well taken care of; better than most others in the community. But the price was high. It was necessary for him to be gone from home long hours and the emotional needs of his young wife were not being met. His divorce was, in many ways, directly attributable to the Great Depression.

Going to work in a snow storm may not be a "major" obstacle, but it's right up there. Klamath Falls 1958

DIVORCES

(Yours, your parents, your children -- What was cause -- Effect -- What harm or good came -- Changes in lifestyle that resulted -- Feelings etc.)

For William, the breakup of his first marriage was certainly the major regret, obstacle, and heartache of his life. Savilla and the children left January 28, 1940 and for years thereafter he pleaded with Savilla and prayed to God to have his family restored to him.

The newspaper notice read simply:

> "Savilla Bliss has filed suit in superior court for a divorce from William Bliss charging cruel treatment. The couple married in Gering, Nebraska, 1929 and there are two children."

In his life sketch William wrote the following concerning the divorce:

> "In 1940 Savilla, being disatisfied by all the hard knocks, illness and other reasons, decided to leave, filed for divorce and got the decree in February or March. She and the children left for California and other points, putting an end to our many hopes for the future. The next two years I struggled on, not caring too much what happened. I still

(continued)

went to Church and received the moral help of the brothers and sisters even though I wasn't a member."

The marriage had been troubled from the beginning and time has proved that once Savilla made up her mind to leave there was no way to dissuade her. In her own mind she had given enough chances, and had reached the end of her endurance. She was afraid to enter back into what she saw as an impossible, hopeless situation, afraid she could never get up the courage to leave again. Still, it is hard to understand why his anguished pleadings did not soften her heart. They continued for three years -- long after she had remarried.

In March of 1940 William wrote: "When I watched you leaving with the children, the whole world I have been building and planning for our happiness was going south with you. Our only chance in the world to bring up our children and enjoy their companionship as they grow up. I also realized that you and the children meant more to me than anything else in the whole world (even life). If you will only give me one more chance I will prove it to you. Please try to love me and forgive me for the things I have done to hurt you."

Other excerpts from William's letters:

(Oct. 1940 - "When I told you you could get a divorce I thought I had 30 days to change your mind. You always did. I did not know that you had someone else tucked away in your heart to keep the door shut from me. It was the biggest mistake I ever made and I will always have to pay."

"I think about you and the kiddies almost continually. I dream about you again and again."

"Savilla, please don't make another mistake. They cost so much. I know because if I lose you and the children's love I have lost more than I'll ever have. I know what it is to have a broken heart. I have paid dearly the past few months. I will go anywhere and do anything you ask for just to be with you again. I love you, every little hair and wrinkle of you. Just give me even a chance for your love. Make me prove it to you. Make any kind of demand, only don't make me stay away from you. Please, I beg you."

"We have so much to live together for. And you know we can be happy if we try. We have two fine children and we both need them. I also need you. I have suffered day and night since you left me. I have to have you, all three of you, to be happy. I have asked God to give you and the children back to me.

"Take the children to Church, Honey. That is one thing you have against me. I promise to take up Church seriously if you ever come to me."

"I have cleared your name on most of the debts as I promised you I would. There are some hospital, doctors, and about $800.00 to Rawleigh's with your name on. I think it will run around $1200.00.

(Continued)

(DIVORCES CONTINUED)

"I have been hurt very bad, Savilla, I love the kiddies as much as you ever did. ... Honey, I am willing to make a slave of me all the rest of my life just in return for your love and presence. When I think of treasures, money, land, home, cars, everything I might want, then say which one do I want most, they are always the same answers -- you and love. This is my offer or sacrifice. What will you be willing to contribute to the same ending? Answer please. Don't talk around it."

"As to finding anybody to take your place there is no use. I don't go to many shows nor to very many places. I usually play solitaire."

"Lynden Washington
January 28, 1943
January 28, 1940

Dear Savilla, Three long, lonely,dreary years have at last passed by. Years of hope turned into failure. I take this night year after year and let my thoughts drift back with you and my kiddies. I have tried several times to start over and relieve my mind of the past mistakes and sorrow that seems to drag me down wherever I go.... Three years that friends have promised me would erase you from my memory and let me forget you. Three years have gone by and my thoughts and love are as strong for you as they ever were..."

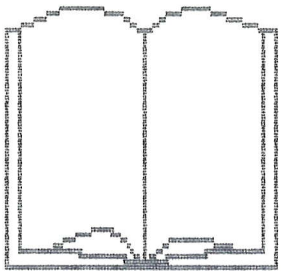
William's letters never stopped lamenting the loss of wife and children nor of his love for them. That he became bitter there can be no doubt but the same was true of Savilla. There can also be no doubt that there existed between these two troubled souls a great love that was never completely eradicated by time or events.

* *

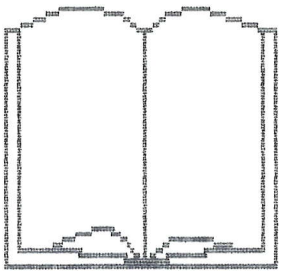
William told Wilbur this popular 1940's song described him:

LAUGHING ON THE OUTSIDE, CRYING ON THE INSIDE

The crowd sees me out dancing; Carefree and romancing;
Happy with my someone new - Oh, I'm laughing on the outside,
Crying on the inside, Cause I'm still in love with you.
They see me night and day time; Having such a gay time;
They don't know what I go through. Oh, I'm laughing
on the outside; Crying on the inside,
Cause I'm still in love with you.
No one knows it's just a pose, Pretending I'm glad we're apart.
When I cry my eyes are dry; The tears are in my heart.
My darling can't we make up; Ever since our breakup,
Make believe is all I do --
I'm laughing on the outside and crying on the inside,
Cause I'm still in love with you.



READING HABITS



(Favorite books, authors & why. Scriptures etc.)

When William was reading strictly for pleasure he loved to read detective stories. He subscribed to "True Detective" and "Inside Detective," magazines with stories of actual police cases.

He also loved the old western stories about Billy the Kid, Wyatt Earp, Indians like Geronomo etc. They also were supposed to be true stories and no doubt that was partly why William favored them.

HOBBIES

(Collections, sewing, cooking, writing etc. -- Why you like them, your accomplishments etc.)

William wasn't inclined to take time for hobbies but he was interested in everything and had some knowledge on most anything you could think of because he was interested, enjoyed studying, and had a remarkable memory. He had a natural mechanical ability and enjoyed tinkering with anything mechanical. He studied the operations at Douglas Aircraft when he worked there and made several valuable suggestions for improving productivity.

William enjoyed collecting coins. He began collecting Indian head pennies as a younster and added Buffalo nickles and other coins through the years.

William had a love for music and was a good dancer. He sang well and made an effort to learn the words to the songs he loved. Among his papers were the handwritten words to "My Wild Irish Rose" and "The Prisoner's Song." He played the harmonica and Jew's harp for his own pleasure.

William's greatest interest, however, was always people. His genuine interest in people made him a wonderful conversationalist. It also helped him succeed as a salesman. William was always well known and well liked in the communities where he lived.

Travels

never overseas?

William probably never traveled overseas but he traveled extensively in the United States beginning when a very young man of 20. In the spring of 1925 -- well, here it is in William's own words:

In Search of Work

"In the spring went looking for work by the then easy travel method (by side car Pullman - freight train). I arrived from Gibbon Nebraska to Cheyenne, Wyoming and met an old friend there who was working for the railroad but who was fired for talking back. He asked me where I was going, which was perhaps Washington State. He said if I would wait about three days he would go along.... We started out to go west and decided to go to Florida instead.

Hobo Style

"We finally reached Calhoun, Georgia by rail, then hitched rides to Fort Valley where we got jobs -- I as a packing shed operator and he loading cars. We finished up in July and paid for a ride to Tampa, Florida. The only job we were able to get was loading and unloading ships. This was too dangerous and we quit in a few hours. My partner got sick and I wired home for $100.00. I bought a car for $50.00 and we started back. Entering Memphis, Tennessee, we ran into another car. We made it into Arkansas where I sold the car for $15.00 and we made the return trip to Nebraska hobo style."

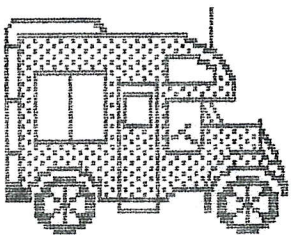
With Brother

Some years later William traveled with his younger brother, Darold. Darold gave this much detail about that trip in a letter to Wilbur:

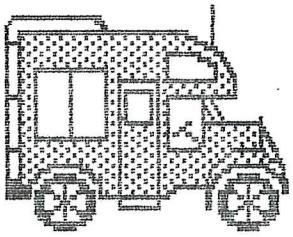
"Your Dad, in his single, younger days had toured the south -- Georgia, Florida and so on. He expressed the desire that he would like to do it again. So we pooled our interests, shared expenses, and made the complete circuit, but that is a different story. We had a cousin, Anna Snell, residing in Oshkosh, Wisconsin and visiting her was our first major stop."

Wisconsin

Darold proceeded to tell of finding their grandparents' (Alanson and Henrietta Bliss) graves at Barton Cemetery and talking with an old timer who remembered their dad, John Henry and his twin brother, William Henry. They were also able to find the home where their father grew up.



During World War II William made trips by both train and car between Lynden, Washington and Chicago, Illinois -- once with a detour to Nevada to get married.



(Continued)

Trips With Mildred

Between Homes

Then later there were numerous trips between Sandy, Oregon and Sedona, Arizona. These last were not necessarily pleasure trips but with Mildred along they were always pleasant. William did the driving almost exclusively (his son's like that too) and Mildred did the navigating.

See The USA

Their 1968 trip was strictly for pleasure. Mildred told it this time:

"We went up into Canada in British Columbia, across through Alberta to Calgary, then down into Montana. Saw Glacier Park, the granite faces in South Dakota, went to Dead Wood where Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickock were from, then over to Minnesota. (She didn't say so, but they probably stopped at Mayo Brothers in Rochester, Minnesota.) We saw beautiful Niagara Falls and went across to New York. We wanted to see the Statue of Liberty but couldn't find it. Went down the east coast to Atlantic City and walked out on the boardwalk.

East Coast

"Arlene was in New Jersey then so we spent a few days there. We went to Washington D.C. and I always regretted that we didn't stay longer -- at least overnight. Guess our time was limited for some reason but we had such a wonderful trip. We went on down Highway 1 on the east coast to Florida. We went out on the Keys as far as we could go. We saw the Everglades, then spent 2 nights in Miami at the Mist Motel, right on the ocean. Very enjoyable. We swam in the Atlantic.

The South

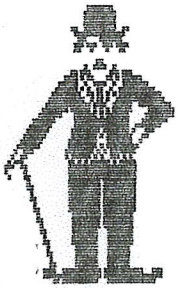
"Then we drove up through Texas and Louisianna and home to Sedona. It was a month or 6 week trip. We left in July and were at Arlene's the end of August. Bill did all the driving and I studied the travel books and points of interest. We enjoyed traveling together."

Minnesota

"As I think back, we did a lot of traveling. We both loved it and now it's a lot of nice memories, yet kinda sad because we thought we'd go back east again. We mostly traveled between Oregon and Arizona but enjoyed many side trips to see relatives and places of interest nearby. Then there were the trips to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. We went there every 18 months or 2 years beginning in 1965. We drove mostly but flew sometimes and always enjoyed the flights 'out into the wild blue yonder.'"

Their last trip was in the spring of 1981 when they went to Rochester and received the sad news concerning William's health.

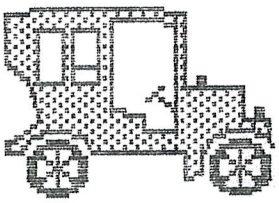
FAVORITE THINGS:



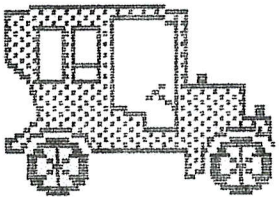
Laughter of Course

William loved to tell jokes and clippings of jokes saved from newspapers and magazines were found all among his things. One frequently told joke had to do with Harold Shively (or anyone else handy). He said:

> "Someone said Harold Shively wasn't good enough to eat with the hogs. I decided I'd stick up for him and so I told them he was too."



AUTOMOBILES



Buick the best, of Course

A dependable car was always necessary for William -- his livelihood depended on them. There are pictures of the early cars he used for his Rawleigh and Watkins' routes. He sold the one he used for the Rawleigh route -- we'll let him tell it. He wrote:

> "Had to sell our new 1931 Ford Model A coupe with less than 7,000 miles on it for $325.00. I owed $300.00. I split the $25.00 or less with Savilla, my wife, and took a freight train toward Washington State to look for work."

We have no record of most of William's cars but once there was a Model T and there was a 1939 Plymouth that was wrecked. There was at least one Dodge and at least one Chevrolet (in which he and Mildred had a wreck)) But for the most part William was sold on Buicks, big Buicks. He loved them and for some time bought a new one nearly every year. Mildred remembers that she drove one of those through a wall. It had nearly 100,000 miles on it and William traded it for a down payment on a house in Phoenix, Arizona.

JAN 23-46 528001 516-794 10.50

Name of Owner Wm H Bliss 341375
(TYPEWRITE OR PRINT FULL NAME, USE BLACK INK)

Street Address 1331 Wetford Ave

City or Town Des Plaines Zone County Cook ILLINOIS

Name of Car Oldsmobile Style Body 2 door Sed Year Model 1940

Factory No. TK734084 Engine No. 6172462

Model TK No. and Bore of Cyl. 6 3 3/32 Horse Power 28 6

WRITTEN SIGNATURE of Owner Wm H. Bliss

STATE OF ILLINOIS

1946 LICENSE PLATES bearing above number are assigned to owner named hereon for motor vehicle described for year ending December 31, 1946.

EDWARD J. BARRETT, Secretary of State

PETS

TRIXIE and MINNIE

During the 1930's William's children had a black and white dog named Trixie and a cat named Minnie. They were good pets and were great comfort and company for him when Savilla and the children left.

Later William was traveling too much to be able to keep a pet. Happily that changed after he married Mildred and once again pets were a part of William's life.

RANGER

Mildred and William got Ranger, the big German Shepherd, soon after they moved to Sandy, Oregon. William's sister, Blanche, got him for them. Arlene took care of him for them while they were away in Arizona. William always loved Ranger and they had him for a long time.

NUBBINS

Nubbins was their beloved cat they both loved so much. They got him when he was a sickly little kitten, from one of William's AAA clients -- a crippled lady. Nubbins was a Manx with a natural bob-tail and he was a devoted pet who used up his nine lives. He was bit by a rattle snake, hit by a truck, and had other close calls. Unlike their dogs, Nubbins went everywhere with them instead of being left in Oregon.

SAM

Sam, the cat, adopted William and Mildred. Came to dinner, she said, and didn't go home. Sam was independent but loving and loved.

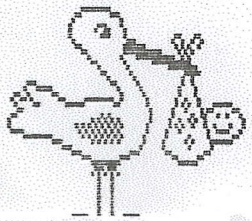
SHEBA

William's last pet, Sheba, their beautiful German Shepherd, was a gift from Blanche in 1979. She remains (in 1988) to comfort Mildred in his absence just as Trixie and Minnie once comforted William in the absence of his loved ones.

WILD CRITTERS

William took great pleasure in befriending the wild animals on their property in Sedona, Arizona. He laid out a fine meal for them each evening and then watched in delight from the window as they feasted -- skunks, foxes, bull snakes, raccoons etc. Susie, the raccoon, was his favorite. She took chicken bones right out of his hand and brought her babies up to show him.

EACH GRANDCHILD



"I just came to see your house."

Distance kept William from knowing Wilbur's four children, Andrea, Randy, Daniel, and Larry, real well but the relationship with each of them was always good and mutually satisfying. His oldest grandchild, Andrea, remembers going to Oregon to visit Grandma and Grandpa Bliss when she was four years old. She delighted William by saying: "I just came to see your house." He often told that story and also how when asked which was her oldest toe, she pointed one out. He gave her horsey-back rides around the house and found being a grandpa pretty much to his liking.

Andrea included some of her special memories in the eulogy she gave at her Grandpa's funeral:

Perfect Host

"Visiting with Grandma and Grandpa was always lots of fun. Grandpa knew all the back roads and all the prettiest views, as well as the best swimming holes. In fact, Grandpa was the perfect host to everyone. He was a wonderful conversationalist with a terrific sense of humor. He loved to tell stories and always remembered every detail.

Loved Nature

"He and Grandma gave us kids an appreciation for nature that we might have missed without them. They loved plants and animals and seemed to know every one nearby. Once when I visited them in Arizona I was tickled to see them set a table out on a flat rock in the back yard and then wait inside to see all the animals come to dinner. They fed foxes, and rabbits, and racoons. Some of them even had names to go with their personalities and characteristics.

Honeymoon Retreat

"When my brother got married and needed an inexpensive honeymoon retreat, Grandma and Grandpa Bliss offered them the use of their home overlooking Oak Creek in Arizona while they were in Oregon. That kind of generosity was typical of Grandpa and Grandma."

Jones Children

There was only a very limited relationship between William and his daughter Dorothy's 9 living children. Rochelle died at age 4 days. Then there were Christine, Laurel, Janae, Bonnie, Mark, Jay, Shauna, Scott, and Matthew. Dorothy had chosen not to include her father back into her life and thus her children hardly knew of their Bliss grandparents. After they were grown, Dorothy's two oldest children, Christine and Laurie, did communicate with him to some extent in letters. This pleased William, who had always longed to have the rift repaired between himself and Dorothy.

Mehl Children

Because Sedona, Arizona was pretty far removed from Oregon, William didn't know Merle's, Arlene's and Janet's children real well until he and Mildred returned to Oregon to live in 1976.

(Continued)

Grandpa's Girl

(EACH GRANDCHILD CONTINUED)

Unfortunately William didn't know any of his grand children real well because they were usually separated by a lot of miles. However, there is no doubt that they were special to each other in a lot of ways. One of them was always known between William and Mildred as "Grandpa's Girl." However, Mildred won't tell which one for fear that one of the others (all special in their own ways) will feel slighted.

Merle's

Merle and Shirley's children are Kevin, Patricia (Patti), Karin, Diana, and Jon.

Arlene's

Arlene's children are Sheilah and James (Jimmy), and Janet's and Dennis' children are Julie Ann and Kenneth.

Ken Bit the Glass

One time Ken and Julie came to stay all night with Grandma and Grandpa Bliss and they had been eating some hard Christmas candy. Ken was about three years old and he came out to the kitchen and asked Grandpa for a glass of water. Bill got a small, thick glass and filled it with water. When Ken went to take a drink from it, he bit it as he had been doing the candy, and it crunched and broke in his mouth. He wasn't excited but Grandma and Grandpa were. Ken always seemed to have a knack for getting hurt. Once when he was 14 or 15 and skate boarding down their nearby hill, he fell and cracked his head open and had to be hospitalized. Ken loves to fish and he and Grandpa would have enjoyed fishing together if they had ever managed it. It seemed Grandpa was always busy!

Julie Artistic

Julie is artistic and makes Christmas cards, doing the letters with caligraphy. She was born on her Grandma and Grandpa Bliss's wedding anniversary -- giving them a special bond.

G'pa Owned all the Trees

Arlene's children loved to visit the grandparents when they lived in Arizona (Sedona). They were New Jersey city kids and they loved the freedom of larger open spaces. Bill once took Jimmy for a walk and he said: "Grandpa, do you own that tree?" Grandpa said yes, and then he pointed out 4 or 5 more trees, asking the same question and getting the same answer. Then Jimmy said: "Boy, Grandpa, you're rich!"

Sheila Ate The batter!

Sheila once baked chocolate cakes for them and ate half the batter. Grandpa and Grandma teased her about that. She stayed a week while the rest of the family went on to California. Her Grandma used that opportunity to teach her to sew, beginning with a sundress.

Music and Laughter

When Merle and Shirley visited with their 5 children, a great time could be expected, with music, singing and laughter -- and always with Grandpa teasing the children at every opportunity. Jon didn't get to know his Grandpa very long, but he loved him. The children were all really good about writing thank you notes for gifts given and those notes have been cherished and saved.

Karen's Kookies

Karin is a good cookie maker and on more than one occasion she made cookies for Grandpa. She's also a good pie maker! Kevin played drums in a teenage dance group. Patti was a Campfire Girl -- now a teacher. Diana was a quiet little girl just filled with love. She's been on a mission.

Retirement? What's That? Lets Build A Bridge

Retirement wasn't in William's nature and since he hadn't been punching a time clock, he seemed to feel no urgency to stop working. The real enticement to retire was to be able to return to their dream home in Sandy, Oregon. And finally they did.

William didn't retire to sit in a rocking chair. There was lots of work to do on the Sandy property. It was a wonderful time for William and Mildred. Bits of letters show their enjoyment:

Feb. 1980 - "Glad you like your Christmas present. Yes, we were tooting up a storm or at least they were. I was trying to catch up. First time we tried it." (about tape they made singing & playing lots of old favorite tunes)

"When Darold, Rozella, Gladys, Joe, Blanche, Anna and Jeanne were here together in September, the Shively's brought their accordian and fiddle over and after dinner we made music and sang. That was fun. Bill played the harmonica along too and Jeanne whistled. It sounded pretty good. Also Gladys played our organ and Joe and Millie harmonized together. We sure like Joe, he's a gem of a guy and Gladys is lucky. He has built her such a beautiful new home. Hope they can come back here sometime."

"The Shively's are nice neighbors -- Harold and Millie, besides being fun to be with, they are always helpful in many ways. We both enjoy the bridge."

Footbridge

Building that foot bridge was William's most enjoyed retirement activity. It is a very fine and attractive bridge that makes it possible to visit back and forth with the Shively's.

"We've been trying to get your Dad's life story down on paper. I get him to talking about old times and family sometimes and I've written quite a bit but 76 years is quite a while to get condensed isn't it? Rainy days seem to be best for it somehow when we can't do much else and he gets to remembering."

Building the nice little footbridge across the creek - over to Harold Shively's

Bill cutting back the bank so we could have a larger backyard - our new home.

THE EULOGY GIVEN AT WILLIAM'S FUNERAL BY HIS GRANDDAUGHTER, ANDREA

William Henry Bliss was born on November 18, 1904 in Albion, Nebraska, to John Henry Bliss and Eliza May Shively. He was the 6th of their nine children and the only boy until Darold showed up when Grandpa was 13. One boy had died at birth.

Grandpa was named for his uncle, William Henry Bliss, who was his father's twin brother. We keep thinking twins will appear again in the family, but so far they haven't. But two of my brother's and their wives are expecting babies, so maybe this will be the year for twins in the Bliss line.

Aunt Hazel, Grandpa's oldest sister, remembers him fondly as the mischivous little brother who was spoiled by four older sisters and a father who was really happy to have a son at last. She told about one evening when he was missing and their mother was in a panic and had the entire family searching everywhere for him. Pretty soon two year old William laughingly peaked out of the box he was hiding in. That was only the beginning! He remained a tease throughout his life. He loved to laugh and when he was tickled, he was tickled all over.

Hazel was enough older that she taught the nearby school that William and his cousin Harold attended. She said they were very naughty little boys. I find that hard to believe, don't you?

Although Darold was much younger, he has a lot of memories of good times with brother William. He remembers very well the time Grandpa got shot in the leg when he and a friend were out rabbit hunting. The doctor came to the house to remove the bullet and it was only later that the family realized how dangerous it had been. You see, the doctor used ether to put Grandpa to sleep and a kerosene lamp was used to give him light to work by. Luckily there was no explosion. He was 16 or 17 at the time and since only part of the bullet was removed, he carried the rest of it in his leg through life.

Of all the family, he was closest to his sister, Lilah, who was three years older than him. Besides the brother who died at birth, Lilah is the only one of his brothers and sisters to precede him in death.

When asked to list some of his brother's hobbies, Darold listed cooking, eating (especially potatoes and gravy and potato salad), dancing; he loved to laugh and had an outstanding sense of humor. But everyone seems to agree that people were his main hobby.

Although they lived on the farm all the time he was growing up, he never liked farming. But he did like animals and as a young man tried an experiment in hog farming that didn't work out. He never gave up his love for cats, though, and had several favorites during his life. I'll bet many of you have heard his stories about Nubbins.

In 1929 William married Savilla Evelyn Long. A year later, my father, Wilbur Lee, was born and a couple of years after that, a daughter, Dorothy Ilene, joined the family.

Those were the years of the Great Depression and it was difficult for him to support his family. He tried a lot of different

(Continued)

(WILLIAM'S EULOGY CONTINUED)

things. He was a carbonator and painter at the Great Western Sugar Factory in Gering, Nebraska. He tried raising flax on the Rosebud Indian Reservation but suffered a devastating crop loss. Then came his first experience at salesmanship when he became a Rawleigh Products dealer. But along with the Depression, Nebraska farmers in the early 1930's had a terrible drought and dust storms to contend with, so there were many uncollectable accounts and he had to give up and go back to work at the sugar factory.

His uncle was living in Washington State, and with his encouragement, William left his family behind in Nebraska and went to investigate opportunities in Washington. He liked what he found and soon sent for his family to join him.

He became a successful Watkins Products dealer and three years later bought a home in Lynden, Washington and converted part of it into a combination neighborhood grocery story and Standard Service Station.

I remember Grandpa telling me that he had quite a head for numbers and could add up a customer's total bill in his head, correct to the penny, as fast as someone else could do it on a machine.

He became active in the Delta Farmers' Grange and a member of the local Masonic Lodge. He had been a member of the Masons for 50 years when he died.

In 1940 his first marriage ended in divorce, - a sad fact that Grandpa didn't fully accept and adjust to for many years.

He returned to being a Watkins dealer full time and had much success because of his great effort and friendly nature. And it was a product he really believed in. I'm sure you've all heard how wonderful Watkins Linament is and how the vanilla just can't be beat.

He was always genuinely interested in people and cared about them and their problems. Bill Bliss was known and liked by everyone in the community. Throughout his life, that was the case wherever he lived.

His children spent summers with him, which gave them more opportunities to travel than most children.

During the World War II years, he worked in Chicago, Illinois for McDonald Douglas. He was a foreman working in the nose section of the DC 3's.

After the war, it was back to the west coast and his usual hard work and dedication as a salesman.

The lonely, troubled years ended in 1953 when he married Mildred Emily Smith and gained three teenage children -- Merle, Arlene, and Janet. Merle said their family met Grandpa in Bellingham, Washington, sometime after their father died. They were introduced through mutual friends.

I don't have any memories of Grandpa before he found Grandma. But I've heard that he was lonely and could be pretty difficult at times. But no one can be anything but happy around Grandma

(Continued)

(WILLIAM'S EULOGY CONTINUED)

Bliss. She has so much sweetness that some of it had to rub off. She finds pleasure in every part of nature and life. Everyone near her is made happier by her presence. Grandpa was especially. We're glad he was lucky enough to find her, both for himself and for us, and how she has touched our lives.

They bought a home in Gladstone, Oregon, where they lived until the children were raised. I think that's when I went to visit them and he gave me horsey rides all over the house. And for years he told about a little girl that "just came to see their house" and had one toe that was the oldest. He was amused and enjoyed it for years.

Once the kids were raised, they set out on an adventure of joyful togetherness. They discovered beautiful Oak Creek Canyon in Arizona and soon moved there to work and to play. The best vacations our family ever had were spent there in that colorful Red-Rock Country they both loved so much. And Grandpa always knew all the interesting places to see that many tourists would have missed.

Grandpa had been so successful in selling household products -- magazines, cookware, encyclopedias, and insurance, that they hardly had room for all the trophies and awards he earned. And while in Arizona, he began selllng real estate. Naturally he was successful with that too. Maybe too successful. Every time we went to see them in Arizona they were in a different house. Grandpa just couldn't resist a good sale even if it was his own home. We used to wonder why Grandma even bothered to unpack.

But once we found them, visiting with Grandma and Grandpa was always lots of fun. Grandpa knew all the back roads and all the prettiest views as well as the best swimming holes. In fact, Grandpa was the perfect host to everyone. He was a wonderful conversationalist with a terrific sense of humor. He loved to tell stories and always remembered every detail.

He and Grandma gave us kids an appreciation for nature that we might have missed without them. They loved plants and animals and seemed to know everyone nearby. Once when I visited them in Arizona I was tickled to see them set a table out on a flat rock in the back yard and then wait inside to see all the animals come to dinner. They fed foxes, and rabbits and racoons. Some of them even had names to go with their personalities or characteristics.

As much as they loved the beautiful country of Oak Creek Canyon, they still loved Oregon more and constantly dreamed of returning. They spent many happy hours planning their dream home which was to be built on the lovely park-like property they owned in Sandy.

The dream home finally materialized, not too many years ago and they began their real golden years. They've had wonderful companionship nearby -- just across the little stream live Grandpa's cousin and lifelong friend, Harold, and his wife Mildred. The last few years have been fun for them all. Grandpa's proudest achievement in recent years was the building of a beautiful foot bridge to connect their two properties. I just wish he could

(Continued)

(WILLIAM'S EULOGY CONTINUED)

have had more time to enjoy the fruits of his long years of labor.

Grandpa, the natural born salesman, could never completely get selling out of his system. Many years later, he still maintained a supply of Watkins Products for his friends, family, and acquaintances. As was always the case with Grandpa, he was completely convinced of the quality of the product or he wouldn't have sold it. He was a successful salesman because his integrity could never be doubted -- and also, of course, because of his natural, friendly manner, enthusiasm, and hard work.

Distance was always a problem and he didn't get to know most of his grandchildren as well as he would have liked or as much as we would have liked. But the relationship was always a good and satisfying one. We're glad to have known him as well as we did.

When my brother got married and needed an inexpensive honeymoon retreat, Grandma and Grandpa Bliss offered them the use of their home overlooking Oak Creek in Arizona while they were in Oregon. That kind of generosity was typical of Grandma and Grandpa.

William H. Bliss is survived by his wife, Mildred, and sisters Hazel, Goldie, Anna Voilet, Gladys, and Blanche, and brother, Darold; his son, Wilbur, Daughter, Dorothy Ilene, and their thirteen children.

In addition, he is survived by son Merle Mehl, daughters, Arlene and Janet, and their nine children. He is also survived by 19 great grandchildren (16 from Aunt Dorothy and my father).

In Memory Of

WILLIAM H. BLISS

Born November 18, 1904

Died April 25, 1982

Funeral Service
Wednesday, April 28, 1982
3:30 P.M. in The Sunset Chapel
Portland Memorial Funeral Home

Conducting, Elder Steven Watts

Invocation, Bishop Merle Mehl

Music Selection, "In The Garden"

Eulogy, Andrea Bliss

Remarks, Steven Watts

Music Selection, "Whispering Hope"

Benediction, Elder Wilbur Bliss

Vault Entombment
Portland Memorial Mausoleum

The Twenty-Third Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the
paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil:
for thou art with me; thy rod and
thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the
presence of mine enemies:
thou anointest my head with oil;
my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life:
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Family Group Record

Husband **John Henry BLISS**

Born	14 May 1860	Place	Barton, Washington, Wisconsin
Christened		Place	
Died	21 Oct 1941	Place	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Buried		Place	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Married	6 Jun 1894	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Husband's father	Alanson Newton BLISS		
Husband's mother	Henrietta AGEN		

Wife **Eliza May SHIVELY**

Born	10 Feb 1871	Place	Tama City, Tama, Iowa
Christened		Place	
Died	3 May 1948	Place	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Buried		Place	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Wife's father	Henry SHIVELY		
Wife's mother	Elizabeth Ann RICHARDS		

Children List each child in order of birth.

1 F **Hazel Belle BLISS**

Born	24 May 1895	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	15 Sep 1986	Place	Kearney, Kearney, Nebraska
Buried		Place	Holdridge, Phelps, Nebraska
Spouse	John Theodore ECKLUN		
Married	31 Dec 1919	Place	Kearney, Kearney, Nebraska

2 F **Goldie Leora BLISS**

Born	29 May 1897	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	13 Jul 1984	Place	
Buried		Place	
Spouse	William aka Willis CLAYTOR		
Married	31 Dec 1919 (Div)	Place	

3 F **Anna Voilet BLISS**

Born	9 Aug 1899	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	27 May 2001	Place	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Buried		Place	Gibbon, Buffalo, Nebraska
Spouse	Charles Walter WILLARD		
Married	6 Sep 1922	Place	

4 F **Lilah May BLISS**

Born	4 Sep 1901	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	11 Oct 1979	Place	Lynden, Whatcom, Washington
Buried		Place	Lynden, Whatcom, Washington
Spouse	Earl Henry aka Slim FOX		
Married	19 Feb 1930	Place	Sidney, Cheyenne, Nebraska

Family Group Record

Husband **John Henry BLISS**

Wife **Eliza May SHIVELY**

Children List each child in order of birth.

5 M **BLISS**

Born	26 Dec 1903	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	26 Dec 1903	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Buried		Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Spouse			
Married		Place	

6 M **William Henry BLISS**

Born	18 Nov 1904	Place	Albion, Boone, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	25 Apr 1982	Place	Portland, Multnomah, Oregon
Buried	28 Apr 1982	Place	Portland, Multnomah, Oregon
Spouse	Savilla Evelyn LONG		
Married	15 Jun 1929 (Div)	Place	Gering, Scotts Bluff, Nebraska

7 F **Gladys Opal BLISS**

Born	7 Dec 1908	Place	Sumner, Dawson, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	9 Oct 1999	Place	Topeka, Shawnee, Kansas
Buried	12 Oct 1999	Place	Beloit, Mitchell, Kansas
Spouse	Frank Russell PITMAN		
Married	10 Dec 1936	Place	Indianapolis, Marion, Indiana

8 F **Blanche Verle BLISS**

Born	16 Aug 1913	Place	Sumner, Dawson, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died		Place	
Buried		Place	
Spouse	Theodore Henry SPRING		
Married	1941 (Div)	Place	Olympia, thurston, Washington

9 M **Darold Wayne BLISS**

Born	19 Dec 1917	Place	Sumner, Dawson, Nebraska
Christened		Place	
Died	28 Jun 1989	Place	Renton, King, Washington
Buried		Place	Renton, King, Washington
Spouse	Rozella Delores HARLAND		
Married	29 May 1952	Place	