

From the Cedars



of Lebanon

To Acadiana

SAMUEL J. REGGIE



L I F E

The biblical span of human life is three score and ten years. Our lifetime is but a moment out of eternity for us to say yes or no to Divine Love. It is a short time when God is choosing the cast of the eternal drama. It is said that life can be compared to a theme composition which each of us must write. Some make of their life a comedy, full of fun and pleasure. Others make theirs a tragedy, ending in misery in this life and in eternity. Others really never know what to make out of life. Their life theme is a story of misguided priorities with no noble purpose, signifying nothing. But we, I hope, because of our training and faith, know that life is an introduction to eternity. An introduction we can write in letters of gold, if we wish - by attempting to live holy lives through prayer and devotion, by never having any feelings of hatred towards anyone, and especially, by being of service to those in need, especially the sick and the poor. Wise people hold that it is vastly more important to make a good life...than to make a good living.

Samuel J. Reggie

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

INTRODUCTION

PROLOGUE

PART ONE: LEBANON AND THE LEBANESE PEOPLE

PART TWO: FROM THE CEDARS OF LEBANON

PART THREE: BISHOP HAYEK'S MANUSCRIPT

PART FOUR: GENEALOGY OF THE REGGIE FAMILY

DEDICATION

In gratitude to my ancestors who dwelt in the land of the cedars which was blessed by God and who filled my veins with the blood of the Faith, and who gave me such a great heritage which I proudly pass-on to my children, I humbly dedicate this to:

The memory of my beloved parents,
Fred Reggie, 1896 – 1943

and

Victoria Andraous Reggie, 1898 - 1973

who made it all possible,

and who taught me to dream.

And this is especially dedicated

to my dear wife, Barbara,

and our cherished children,

who made the dream come true.

Samuel Joseph Reggie

FROM THE ROOTS OF THE CEDARS

Like a cedar of Lebanon he will send down his roots; his young shoots will grow. His splendor will be like an olive tree, his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon. Men will dwell again in his shade. He will flourish like the grain. He will blossom like a vine, and his fame will be like the wine from Lebanon.”

HOSEA 14:5-7

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Because this is such a personal story, my own, I acknowledge in the book itself those special persons who have significantly influenced my life. There are so many others too numerous to mention who helped throughout my life as I fell backwards, stumbled, walked along, or sometimes ran ahead of myself.

I had no idea that preparing a book was such a monumental task. I am deeply grateful to those who helped me put it together. In the long and sometimes complicated process of bringing it to completion, I happily experienced the saintly patience of my wife while I spent those many hours doing the necessary research and writing; I received the infinitely invaluable help, guidance and assistance of the members of my family every time I felt any self doubt; I was gently prodded and encouraged by my dear friend, Monsignor A. O. Sigur, and I was provided with historical books about Lebanon and its people by the very cooperative friends at the Acadia Parish Library and other area sources.

Most of the ideas I expressed in this book are the result of the influence of the many good people who helped shape my life. My thoughts, I hope, were written as they would have wished.

The historic literature on Phoenicia, Lebanon, and the Middle East is vast and varied. Because of time constraints, the lack of availability of some of that literature, and the irrelevance of much of it to my book, I confined my formal research to the following publications:

Al-Hoda, *The Story of Lebanon and its Emigrants*.
John B. Christopher, *Lebanon Yesterday and Today*.
Robin Fedden, *The Phoenix Land*.
Leila Merrell Foster, *Enchantment of the world, Lebanon*.
John Glubb, *Syria, Lebanon, Jordan*.
John Gray, *The Canaanites*.
Donald Benjamin Harden, *The Phoenicians*.
Philip K. Hitti, *Lebanon in History*.
Marie Karam Khayat and
Margaret Clark Keatinge, *Lebanon: Land of the Cedars*.
Malcomb Kerr, *Lebanon in the Last Years of Feudalism*.
Camille Mirepoix, *Lebanon in Pictures*.
Gerald Newman, *Lebanon*.
Harvey Henry Smith, *Area Handbook for Lebanon*.

INTRODUCTION

During the past few years I have had a strong desire to tell my children and grandchildren about some of the life experiences of my forebears and of myself. Because circumstances never allowed me to make an orderly presentation to my children, not individually nor collectively, I have now chosen to make an attempt to put into writing what I have been told about those who have gone before me, and also about some of the major events in my own life. I firmly believe that my sainted ancestors would want me to pass this knowledge on to the generations which follow me. My only wish is that this information will help my descendents learn more about their family, and because of this knowledge, live more honorable and noble lives. I do not fancy myself a writer, but if this story is to be told, I must expose my literary inadequacies.

The information in this book is assembled in four parts: In PART ONE I have compiled a history of Lebanon and of those people called Lebanese. It is not meant to be a complete history of Lebanon, although much critical history is included. PART TWO is a narrative written by me of what I know about my forebears, and what I recall about principal events in my own life. This was the most exciting part of this book for me to write. In it I sought to take the reader with me to review the ups and downs, the happiness and the sorrow of my life as I recalled them. PART THREE contains an English translation of a handwritten transcript of a history of the Reggie family as written by a Bishop Hayek in Lebanon. This transcript comes to us from a cousin who resides in Ohio, and whose family retains the name of Hayek, an earlier family name of the Reggie family. PART FOUR is composed of charts which present, as best I can assemble, the genealogy of the Reggie family and that of the Andraous and Maawud families, my mother's family

branch of my ancestry.

I have incurred many debts in the course of preparing this book. I owe more gratitude than I can express to my nephew and Executive Editor, Gregory Frem Reggie, who read and reread the complete manuscript and whose comments and criticisms were unerringly on target. I am also grateful to him for willingly, skillfully and regularly make the necessary adjustments and refinements to my computer in order to get all this in proper form for the printers and book binders. I owe special thanks to my dear and patient sister, Yvonne Reggie LaHood and my very knowledgeable brother Edmund Michael Reggie for all the names, dates, places, photos and other important information they provided concerning our ancestors; I owe profound thanks to my brother Emile Anthony Reggie for obtaining the manuscript of Bishop Hayek and its translation, and to my daughters Mary Elizabeth Reggie Ferris and Donna Marie Reggie Fruge' for all their "school-teacher" kindnesses and editorial skills which helped bring all of this to completion. I thank my lifelong friend, the Reverend Monsignor Alexander O. Sigur, for his insistence that I write this, and for his journalistic ideas.

God bless all of you!

PROLOGUE

To my Children and grandchildren:

Three score and fifteen years ago, Victoria Andraous Reggie and Fred Reggie (Feyawd Araigi) brought forth into this nation, a son, dedicated to the proposition that he would be cherished and reared in the love of family and of God, and they named him Semaan. Most outside his family called him Sammy.

Because this is written about myself, shortly after October 6, 1996, my seventy-fifth birthday, when I am a few years beyond the biblical span of life, I thought a play upon President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, a classic model of the noblest kind of oratory, would be a fitting way for me to begin writing what I think will be just the opposite: A relaxed, casual and jovial chronicling of some things which happened before and after I was born, and which I wish to pass on to my children. I write this also because of the words of my lifelong friend, Msgr. Alexander O. Sigur, when he encouraged me with the Latin phrase, "Quod non est in scriptis, non est in mundo", which loosely translates into "What is not in writing, is not in the world."

Now that I have reached seventy-five years of age, I realize I no longer fit the "middle age" category, but I do not think of myself as being old, so let's just say I'm "getting there." With getting old in mind, however, it occurs to me that it might be useful, or at any rate amusing, for others to know about some of the things of which I will write, while I am still able to remember any of it. It is because I want this "history" to be known to my children that I attempt to put it into writing. Cicero said, "To never know the past is to forever live as a child".

Just as others might write about events in their own

lives, I believe that I am the only person at this time, in this place, who can attempt to write about my knowledge of my family and about my life experiences. This will be all about how I see and remember things about my life. Here's one more philosophic excuse for writing my story: A Chinese proverb states, "When an elderly person dies, it is the same as a library being burned down." Is it believable that I might be a library!

Some who read this might have a better knowledge of persons, places and events than I. Some might find errors or wrong conclusions included in my writing, or they might be disappointed in what I write and how I write it. To them, as I beg forgiveness for whatever they find wrong, I suggest they take time to write their own "true" history of those persons, places and events. I ask them to do that in order to clarify the misrepresentations they noticed, and I ask that they look kindly upon me for at least making the attempt to write this. For you see, I did the best I could.

Because I am not a typist, this is written using only two fingers, and requires hours upon hours of time for research, writing and rewriting. I trust that I am able to put this in a condition to be worthy of presentation to you. And I pray you will find it interesting enough to continue reading.

I write this because I want to share with you, not out of a sense of accomplishment, but rather out of a sense of small successes and victories (and a few set-backs), those experiences which have helped me deal with whatever problems or tasks I had before me. It is written so that when any of you encounter in your life, some small but consistent disciplines, you, too, will see them as helpers which build character and lead to success in a way I could only dream of. Underlying all my writing is the happiness of knowing that I had industrious, pious and honorable ancestors; and Papa's and Mamma's loving, caring and superb guidance, training and good example. Their lives were truly an inspiration to me. I also have the joy of knowing that I have always had a very loving and

wonderful family: Wife, children and siblings who have supported me all my life: All the way!

I pray this will also serve to record some things and events which have taken place in my lifetime. If I skip or forget to include some things, maybe that's what I purposely intended. Or possibly, I have lost the memory of certain events. That's the price one pays for reaching seventy-five years of age!

One thing I will never forget, however, is that I am an American! Yes, an American of Lebanese heritage, but an American first. This country has given all of us the opportunity to worship as we please, to get all the education we desired, and the privilege to work at whatever profession or trade we wanted for a means of earning a living for ourselves and for our families. Even if the United States of America is not the perfect "Shangri La", it is by far the greatest country on earth. And I thank God for my being a citizen of this great land.

At the outset I wish the reader to realize that I lived during one of the greatest times in human history. Even though I will not offer any in-depth history of the great events in the world during my lifetime (that can be read elsewhere), I wish to share a few ideas about life in my time.

When I was born, a common means of transportation was a horse, or horse and wagon, just as it had been for thousands of years. Everyday-people did not have telephones. Homes were heated with coal or wood burning heaters or by fireplace, and no home had air conditioning. Much of the house lighting was done by kerosene lamp or candle. Whatever electric service there was at that time was very limited; And there were no electric lines outside of many town's boundaries. There was very little indoor plumbing except in large cities, and most cooking was done on wood burning or kerosene stoves.

In Crowley, as in most Louisiana towns outside of New Orleans, the streets were dirt, gravel or, on special streets, paved with wood blocks to subdue the dust and mud.

Where there were sidewalks, they usually were made of wood.

There were very few automobiles and they were owned, usually, by the rich. Today, even the children get their own vehicle as soon as they get a driver's license. Airplanes were double winged, single-engine propeller models, and many trucks were chain-and-sprocket driven. Now, twin or tri-jet-engine planes fly in and out of Lafayette all day and night while larger and faster planes fly to and from larger cities around the world. Infectious disease was the leading cause of death and there were no antibiotics, no chemotherapy, and no elegant surgical techniques as practiced today.

As time passed, I witnessed many changes in lifestyle for my generation. New knowledge about eating and living habits were researched and developed, and wonderful inventions were implemented which brought us into the present, when we now send men to the moon or to live for months in outer space.

Today, forty percent of American homes have personal computers, and almost everyone has television and several telephones. Even the wireless, hand-held model telephones now abound.

Life expectancy, which had been fifty-nine years when I was born, has increased to over eighty due to the great medical discoveries and advances, such as open heart surgery, heart transplants and transplants of other internal organs. I personally had bilateral carotid-artery surgery done to clean plaque build-up. I am now recuperating from having heart by-pass surgery, and I have had two new "steel and plastic" hip joints installed to replace diseased ones. And I can walk and run as well as anyone my age, and even some those a bit younger.

The changes in the world during my seventy-five years have been spectacular, and I sincerely thank God for giving mankind the knowledge to bring us to this point. In my lifetime we have literally gone from the horse-and-buggy way of life to the digital, hi-tech, sophisticated way of doing

things. We are now hearing that scientists have identified about seventy genes which cause some of the most serious medical and mental problems of today, and before long they will know how to "treat" those genes to eliminate particular problems afflicting mankind. I'm sure those of you who read this book will see even greater things being done during your lifetimes.

I predict that by the year 2025 banking will be done by electronic mail, never leaving one's home; money will hardly be needed because almost everything will be bought and sold by using cyber-cash or cyber-bucks. Nearly everyone will be using electronic money or cash cards of some kind. And I'm afraid you will have to endure some bad things from those who will learn how to "cheat" the computers: Disruption of air traffic control, electric power distribution and banking. Even the U.S. defense department might be "invaded" through the computers for no good!

Children in school will not be taught as is done today: segregated by age, each subject-lesson having its specific hour of the day, six-year-olds inter-acting only with six-year-olds, etc. Instead, I see that all subjects will be "taught" by computers, covering a wide range of subjects at the same time. And probably this will even be done by video at home.

I further predict you will live longer and healthier, provided your living habits and diets adhere to what is known and proven in your time. And you will do this as you travel to Mars, or beyond!

Finally, my "journalism coach", Monsignor Sigur, told me to be careful how I write this because manuscripts are usually very straightforward and somewhat "dry", and my work should capture the *real me* through the way I compose this. So, for better or for worse, here is the real me, here is my rambling conversational monologue. I hope you can stand it. Good luck, Dear Reader!

PART ONE

LEBANON AND THE LEBANESE PEOPLE

From time to time, the identity of the people of Lebanon has been confused, and some mistakenly refer to the Lebanese people as Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, or Arabs. In an attempt to shed some light on the truth of who Lebanese people are, it is necessary to delve a little into the historic background of Lebanon. Most of what is written here is known from oral history or has been garnered from many reliable sources including historical books written by some very eminent students of the history of the region of the world known as the Near East and the Middle East. A listing of those writers and the titles of their publications which were researched by the author, can be found in the Acknowledgement section of this book.

The nation of Lebanon is truly a vibrant green “island” between the Mediterranean Sea and the vast, dry desert of the Middle East. Its mountainous character and its lush fertile land stand out in stark contrast to the hot, dry and barren lands of its neighbors.

Lebanon lies approximately on the same global latitude as southern California, and it enjoys rainfall, sunshine and weather conditions very similar to that of the Golden State. The maximum temperature in July is usually about 87 degrees Fahrenheit, while most of the mountain areas are blessed with cool breezes all summer long. Two of its mountain peaks are snow covered year-round, making it possible for the local citizens and tourists to sunbathe on the beaches or swim in the Mediterranean during the morning and forty-five minutes later, be skiing on the snow covered slopes of the mountains.

The geographic location of Lebanon, situated on the

eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, makes it ideal for keeping the nation focused on the West for trade, education, intellectual stimuli, styles and customs. The topography makes it more like Europe or western United States than the dry desert countries of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, Iraq, or the other Arab countries of the Arabian Peninsular.

The two high mountain ranges of Lebanon lie almost directly North and South, and are parallel to the Mediterranean shoreline. The range nearest the sea is named Mount Lebanon, and rises almost out of the sea to a height of 11,000 feet. The other, on the eastern border, is the Anti-Lebanon Range, whose peaks reach a bit less than 10,000 feet above sea level. Between the two mountain ranges is the Bekka plateau: flat, about fifteen miles wide and seventy-five miles long, and has perfect climatic conditions for growing top grade wheat, barley, corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, and sugar beets. The narrow strip of land between the sea and Mount Lebanon, however, is green and fertile, and on its terraced hillsides growers provide enough olives, fruit and vegetables for local consumption and for export.

In addition to the thousands of olive trees grown in Lebanon, fruit trees grow in abundance, the greatest number of which is a specie of apple which rivals the "Granny Smiths" of New England and the "Delicious Reds" of Washington State. Among the many other fruit grown for home use or for commercial purposes are figs, melons, apricots, peaches, pears, oranges, grapefruit, satsumas, kumquats, pomegranates, plums, bananas, dates, and grapes for eating and for wine making.

On both mountain ranges are natural lush forests of conifers of many species, and in some areas are found those special trees which produce the pine nuts (*sno-bur*) upon which the Lebanese chefs depend for flavoring their many delicious tasting dishes. Lentils and chick-peas grow profusely wherever cultivated. Mulberry trees are

cultivated for use in the silk making process.

The wild flowers, as well as the cultivated ones, have an intense aroma, and their growth seasons are a bit longer than are enjoyed in America. Among the flowers which grow in abundance are: several varieties and sizes of roses, lush bougainvillea, bright colored hibiscus, and extra large sunflowers which are grown for their seeds as well as their beauty. The variety of cut flowers customarily grown in American gardens, such as marigolds, petunias and pansies are seen in many Lebanese gardens during their seasons. Lebanese homemakers lavishly decorate the outside and inside of their homes with seasonal flowers.

The description of the topography and landscape of Lebanon would be incomplete without mentioning the great cedar trees which have grown for centuries on Mount Lebanon. The cedar is so closely connected with Lebanon that it has become the national symbol, and it proudly displayed on the nation's flag, on postage stamps, on coins, and almost everywhere favorable advertising is desired. The cedars of Lebanon are to Lebanon much the same as the giant redwoods are to California.

At one time, there existed large forests of cedars in the mountains, but over-harvesting has dwindled the number of "giants" to about 500. A few of the oldest trees have been assessed as being well over 1,000 years old, while many others are believed to be more than 500 years of age. Some cedar trees measure as much as fourteen feet in diameter and have an overhead foliage spread of about 100 feet.

The Bible refers to the cedars of Lebanon in several passages. To name just a few: In 2 Samuel 5:11 it is recorded that Phoenician cedars were used to build a palace for King David. In 1 Kings 7:13-14, Hiram I, King of Tyre, is summoned by King Solomon and commissioned to furnish cedar timbers, architects and builders to construct the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, which would

house the Ark of the Covenant. The prophet Zacharias in Chapter 11, in writing of the destruction of Jerusalem, particularly the Temple, refers to the Temple as Libanum, since it was constructed of cedars of Lebanon. One also reads in 1 Kings 26-27 that it was the Phoenician seamen who developed and trained a navy for King Solomon.

The Lebanese government now has strict laws in place which prohibit cutting any cedar tree, anywhere in the country. It also initiated a large reforestation project in 1955, and young cedars are flourishing throughout the mountains.

The Republic of Lebanon is approximately 130 miles long and from twenty to forty miles wide. Its area is a little less than that of the State of Connecticut. It is bounded on the north and east by Syria, on the south by Israel, and the Mediterranean Sea bathes its entire western border. Its coast line is varied from sandy beaches to rugged rocky coves and tranquil bays. The coast is very similar to that of California, and its water is usually calm, without too much surf.

While Lebanon enjoys approximately 300 days of sunshine and 35 to 50 inches rainfall annually, beyond the Anti-Lebanon Mountains on the eastern border of Lebanon stretches almost 1,000 miles of desert reaching all the way to the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. This entire area receives very scant rainfall, has no rivers, and, except for some desert cacti and flora, almost no flowers or crops. Almost everything is imported into each kingdom or country. As strange as it might seem, Saudi Arabia must import sand for use in making concrete. The one thing they have plenty of, native sand, is not suitable for that use.

The earliest recorded historic facts about the land we now know as Lebanon indicate that Lebanon was inhabited by the Canaanites, who also occupied the region that is called Syria and Palestine. This habitation is known to have occurred prior to 5,000 BC. The area's

name was Canaan, and its principal cities were Byblos, Sidon and Tyre. It is generally understood that the Canaanites were the conquerors of Egypt as long ago as 16,000 BC, but the exact date of the beginning of their habitation in the land we now know as Lebanon is not known. Through the years, these people and their descendants spoke a mixture of languages: Phoenician, which was closely related to the Moabite, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Arabic.

Early in the 3rd Century BC, a Semitic people, the Aramaeans, overran the desert area of Mesopotamia (Iraq) and most of the land westward toward the Mediterranean Sea, driving the Canaanites out of the Bekka Valley in the eastern part of the present day Lebanon. Because the mountains of Lebanon, which run north and south, were a natural barrier against the invaders, the Canaanites remained in the coastal area between the sea and the mountains. Even though the Canaanites resided chiefly in the coastal area of Lebanon, they eventually adopted the language of the Aramaeans: Aramaic (Ara-may-ic), the language spoken by Jesus and His Apostles.

Sometimes around 1300 BC, a race of people from Asia Minor, the Philistines, made an invasion from the sea into the coastal area of Lower Canaan and gave that land its name, Philistia. About that same time, another Semitic group, led by Abraham, migrated into Lower Canaan from the north and east, from the area of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, while more of his followers came up from the south, from Sinai and Egypt. Those Hebrews were possibly a mixture of two Semitic peoples who eventually adopted the language of the Canaanites, Aramaic, which they acquired in Palestine.

Lebanon, the coastal state which forms part of the crescent of the west coast of the Mediterranean Sea, and is the place where three continents join, was a welcome place for seagoing peoples. One of the most important groups of people ever to live in Lebanon were the

Phoenicians, the “sea people”. For about three hundred years, 1200 to 900 BC, the place we now call Lebanon was inhabited by them and was known throughout the world as Phoenicia. Phoenicia had no other formal name throughout all the subsequent years when it was conquered by so many different peoples, except in more modern times, when its name became Mount Lebanon or Lebanon.

Phoenicia experienced complete independence and was free from foreign domination for more than three hundred years. The Phoenicians, during that long period of independence, established themselves as the outstanding traders of the entire Mediterranean area because they were such skillful sailors and trustworthy businessmen. Many of them were wealthy merchant family men, who were renowned for their peace-loving ways, their art and religiousness, and for their disdain for war and military activity.

Human remains excavated from the soil in Lebanon date back to the early Stone Age. Some tools unearthed at several sites in Lebanon show that the inhabitants used polished-stone tools and tools made of metal. Pottery, weaving and evidence of cattle raising and agriculture were found and dated to the *late* Stone Age.

The Phoenicians were the first people to build ships which could safely sail to places a great distance away, and by routes far from the sight of land. The ancient pharaohs of Egypt referred to them as “The Shipbuilders”. Not only were they good shipbuilders, but they were known for their skills as construction engineers and as innovative architects and builders. With the cedar timbers of Lebanon, they built the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem.

Their new architectural ideas for ship building led to the construction of larger ships which incorporated manual rowing and cloth sails, for use during periods of “good winds.” They invented the “double-decker” ships

which had room for oarsmen on the lower level and cargo and passengers on the upper level. Because of the large and sturdy boats they built, the Phoenicians were able to sail to new places farther from homeport than ever before in the history of man.

The Phoenicians were the first to discover that a certain star in the heavens could be used for navigation because of its fixed position in the sky. By using that star as a navigational aid they were able to sail far from the sight of land, and make a safe return. Other peoples, especially the Greeks, began calling that star the "Phoenician Star". Until the French Physicist Petrus Peregrinus, in 1269, "magnetized a small needle by drawing it over a sphere of loadstone" to fashion a compass (*Collier's Encyclopedia*), the "Phoenician Star" was used by navigators of every nation. It would later come to be known as the "North Star".

By using their "Phoenician Star" as a guide, the Phoenician sailors were able to sail as far west as the Azores, beyond the Strait of Gibraltar, and according to Greek historians, they circumnavigated the African continent during a three year journey. Although Portugal was for a time credited with being the first to accomplish that feat, later historians have proved that it was the Phoenicians who did it first, a thousand years before.

During the Dark Ages, another small "nation" of people who lived in the western Pyrenees along the Bay of Biscay were also known as "the Sea People". They were the Basques, who were great sailors and who built large and sturdy ships. Sounds like the rebirth of the Phoenicians! They never disclosed, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries where they were catching cod fish in very large quantities, drying and salting them down so the fish could be eaten months after they were taken from the ocean. Making fish last that long was quite a feat for those times. It was guessed that the fish were taken in an area not yet known to the world. And that was true.

Like the Phoenicians of old, those Basque fishermen were going where no sailors of their era ever went. In 1530, approximately thirty-eight years after Columbus discovered America, British navigators found a settlement of Basques on the eastern shores of Canada which had been home to Basque fishermen for over a hundred years. They also found there, more than a thousand fishing boats which regularly supplied cod fish to “mother” ships which sailed back and forth from their homeland on the shores of the Bay of Biscay. Didn’t Columbus discovering the new world? Historians might not always have it right, do they?

Back to the Phoenician story. To insure their commercial position of importance between East and West, and to increase their personal wealth, the Phoenicians began establishing trading centers in several areas along the entire Mediterranean coast. Those centers were primarily in north Africa, Turkey, Greece, and in several countries of Europe. The centers were established for trading purposes only, because the Phoenicians were peace-loving people and had no desire to subjugate any people to Phoenician laws. They were traders, not conquerors.

As early as 1100 BC, the Phoenicians had established trade centers in Tunis, Corinth, Thebes, Malta, Palermo, Venice, and several cities in Spain. It is not known if they established their trade centers along the Atlantic shore of Europe, but history records with certainty, their sailing into the Atlantic Ocean. The Phoenicians, like their descendants of modern times, could easily adapt to life in new places because of their friendliness, their hard work, their tolerance for others’ customs, and because of their liberal mindedness.

The Phoenicians also became skilled jewelers as evidenced by excavation-finds of recent years. Their artists could express themselves through pottery-making after they introduced the potter’s wheel to the world. Some became

expert furniture makers, using the wood of the cedar trees. Many were known for their ivory carvings and for building furniture with ivory inlays. Others excelled in metallurgy, while others developed the art of embroidered cloth. They also discovered that they could enhance their dull garments by dyeing them with color.

Those astute Phoenicians learned how to make the first dye known to man. For a long time, India was erroneously credited with that discovery. They made purple-red dye from a sea snail, the murex, which was prevalent in the bays along the shores of the sea. The dyed cloth of the Phoenicians became popular and was well received everywhere, especially among the royalty and the wealthy who could afford the costly dyed garments. It is known that Cleopatra and Helen of Troy wore garments dyed with Phoenician purple. In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke, in chapter 16:19, tells us "There was a Rich Man who was dressed in purple...". Purple garments became a status symbol for the rich and the rulers in many lands. That custom prevails to this day. Kings, queens, cardinals and bishops wear purple or red color to signify their high position in life.

It is believed that the Greeks gave those particular Canaanites the name Phoenicians because of the purple dye they discovered and used to color the fabrics which they wove.

The Phoenicians reduced the laborious drawings of hieroglyphics, picture writing, to simple symbols which eventually became the alphabets we use today. Their set of alphabets consisted of only twenty-two characters, including the letter "a", but no other vowels.

To make the art of writing easier and readily transportable, the Phoenicians made writing paper from the reed called papyrus which grew near the city of Byblos. When the Hebrew prophets' writings were later translated into Greek, those translations were compiled into the Bible, which was named after the city Byblos,

from whence came the papyrus.

Gradually, in time, their commerce brought them more and more into interaction with the Greeks, as is evidenced by their exchange of poetry, religion and philosophy. For example, the Phoenician god Baal became the Greek Zeus, and Tammuz and Ashtart of the Phoenicians became the Adonis and Venus of the Greeks.

In the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*, Homer often writes about the Phoenicians. He specifically writes about “the embroidered robes, rich work of Sidonian women.”

The early Phoenicians worshipped the “nature gods,” Mother Earth and Father Sky. In their early history, they had no belief in an afterlife, but they did believe in reward and punishment for good or evil deeds. Eventually, though, they would come to have a belief in an afterlife. Their accepted form of worship was to offer sacrifice by burning the blood of a lamb and produce of the field. They exchanged many worship practices and social customs with the Greeks.

Trade was also carried on between Phoenicia and Egypt as long ago as pre-dynastic times. Because of the treeless condition of the Nile Valley, the Egyptians depended upon the Phoenicians to supply cedar timbers whenever wood was needed for construction purposes. During the period of pyramid building in Egypt, many Phoenician merchants gained much wealth supplying cedar wood for timbers inside the pyramids, and from selling gum for the mummification of Egypt’s dead elite. Phoenician glass, furniture, and wool and linen fabrics were found in some of the tombs of the royalty of Egypt, including the tomb of their king, Tutankhamen.

Some years after that close relationship began between those two peoples, Egypt invaded the coastal cities of Phoenicia, and ruled over that area for approximately fifty years. Egypt’s purpose in invading this land was to be able to tax the wealthy Phoenicians. The Egyptian influence, however, was not of much

consequence in the everyday life of the natives. Except for the taxes collected from the Phoenicians, the Egyptians made no other demands, nor did they require any change in the way the people of Phoenicia governed themselves.

The next invaders of Lebanon were the Assyrians, who came in 842 BC, but captured only the coastal cities which were then ruled by Egypt. During the Sixth Century BC, a new wave of invaders arrived from Babylon.

The Babylonian culture and religion eventually had a greater influence than either the Egyptians or the Assyrians upon the people, after Phoenicia and Syria were overrun by these Mesopotamian invaders. (ca. 561 BC) Their occupation did not last long, however. Those Babylonian Semites ruled until the Persians drove them out after the death of their king, Nebuchadnezzar (2 Ki 24:7)

In 539 BC, Cyrus of Persia (Iran) captured Babylon and eventually drove the Babylonians out of Phoenicia. This occupation included all of Phoenicia and Syria, and was to last until 332 BC. Alexander the Great would eventually conquer the entire area.

In 336 BC, Alexander established Macedonia's position in Greece before leading his 30,000-man "modern" army in the overthrow of the Persians. His final battle in winning control of the area was fought at Tyre in southern Lebanon in 332 BC. Then, he had control of Greece and all the Near East. Eventually Alexander would conquer the entire Persian empire.

Despite all those invasions and occupations, the Phoenician sailors remained the envy of the entire Mediterranean population. It was through their efforts that the way of life of the Phoenicians was made known to all the coastal areas throughout the Mediterranean. For example, to all peoples they met, they contributed the arts of peace, trade, commerce and municipal life.

Through the years, Phoenician merchants built more new cities around the coastal areas of the Mediterranean

and incorporated into municipalities those scattered populations wherever they found them. They demonstrated to the people the advantages of forming cities instead of living here and there as nomads, and they actively spread their belief in an after-life for all mankind. They were influential in teaching the rudiments of architecture, sculpture, gemology, astronomy and pharmacology wherever they stayed for any time, or where they built new cities.

Even though Lebanon suffered several conquests, its language remained Aramaic always. After Alexander the Great captured the Phoenician coast, Phoenicia continued to enjoy a friendly relationship with Greece as it had done for many years, and was free to continue its commerce around the Mediterranean. Even before Alexander arrived there were thriving settlements of Greeks in all the port cities of Phoenicia, and they flourished and increased even more-so after his reign began. Phoenicia was to live in tranquility until the death of Alexander.

About twenty years after Alexander's death, in 301 BC, the Seleucids under one of Alexander's best Macedonian generals, Seleucus, annexed Syria to its dynasty and founded the city of Antioch in northern Syria.

With the assistance of able Phoenician sailors, Seleucus defeated the Ptolemies of Egypt in a major sea battle and then took under his protection the coastal land of Phoenicia, and allowed the cities of Tripoli, Byblos, Tyre and Sidon to acquire their own autonomy. That was done to insure that the status of Phoenicia would be a continuum of that under the rule of Alexander the Great.

The Greek influence in Phoenicia was greater than that of any people in the history of the country. The smooth interaction between the Hellenistic lifestyle and that of the Phoenicians led to good living conditions, orderly growth in education, the building of more cities, and sustained commercial progress during all of the nearly one thousand

years of the Greco-Roman civilization in Phoenicia.

One small example of the smooth interaction between the Phoenicians and the Greeks, is the account of one of many Hellenized Phoenicians, Zeno. During the Third Century BC, he taught a “strange” philosophy which held that all things are governed by unchanging laws, and man should follow virtue alone, and have no real feelings about much. This philosophy was accepted by some of his students, but it did not receive wide acceptance in his native Lebanon. Incidentally, because his classroom in Athens was under a porch or colonnade (Greek: stoa), we get the English word “stoic”, meaning indifference to feelings of joy, grief, pleasure or pain.

Antioch, Laodicea (Latakia) in northwest Syria, Berytus (Beirut) and Ptolemais (Acre), became typical Greek cities. Aramaic continued to be spoken by the natives, especially in the mountainous regions, while in the rest of Phoenicia, Greek and Aramaic culture intermingled. The Greeks became orientalized while the Orientals became hellenized. Most educated natives and businessmen of Phoenicia were bilingual, speaking Aramaic at home and Greek for professional, academic and business purposes.

With the spread of the Greek language in Phoenicia, and Antioch and Laodicea in northwest Syria, Greek literature and philosophy was readily accepted and studied. Schools were opened in the principal Phoenician cities to teach and study Greek literature. The two cultures became so entwined that they even exchanged the names of their own pagan gods with each other, as we saw earlier. Even their foods and eating habits took on a tasty similarity, while trade between the two countries flourished.

Of all the names wrongly used to identify the Lebanese people, possibly Greek comes the closest to being partly accurate. For it was with the Greeks, more than any people, that the Phoenicians had the greatest intellectual

activities, and with whom they shared their customs.

As a personal note, I am proud to state that my maternal great, great, great, great grandfather was of Greek lineage, Libian Andraous Kuriakos. (See family tree chart in PART FOUR of this book.) As a matter of record, no one in our family, from the earliest recorder progenitors of the Reggie (Araigi) and the Andraous families, down to the generation of Emile, Yvonne, Samuel and Edmund, is descended from the Turks, Armenians, Syrians, or Arabs.

In 64 BC, the Roman legions under Pompey entered parts of Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine and incorporated them into a Roman Province, with its capital in Antioch. The Greco-Roman civilization would dominate Phoenicia in a positive way until 634 AD when, sadly, the Arabs would come. During the Roman period, Phoenicia enjoyed a true renaissance in culture, language, education, trade, growth and total freedom to continue on its rightful path to greatness among the countries of the West. It enjoyed that renewal while being encouraged by the even-handedness of Greco-Roman tolerance for its way of life. That was all to end with the coming of the Arab Muslims.

One of the reasons for such harmony and progress during those years was the ancestry of several Roman leaders. Septimus Severus, founder of the Severus line of emperors, was born in one of the colonies of Phoenicia on the North African coast. He was Phoenician by birth and ruled from 193 AD to 211 AD. History records him as speaking Latin with a Phoenician accent. He married a woman from Emasa (Homs), north of Damascus. Perhaps because of his lineage and that of his Syrian wife, Severus adopted policies for the area which were truly pro-Syrian and pro-Phoenician.

Severus allowed natives to freely enlist in the Roman army, whether they were land owners or not. He named many Phoenicians to positions of authority throughout the empire, and he granted Roman citizenship to many local communities, which put them on the same level as towns

in Italy. Severus' imperial rule ushered in a period of peace and prosperity for all the Empire, from Britain to the Rhine, to the Danube and to Phoenicia.

Another Severus, Alexander, who became Emperor at the age of fourteen in 222 AD, was born of a mother who was Phoenician, intelligent, and favorably inclined toward the Christian religion. After Alexander became Emperor, at his mother's request he forbade emperor-worship, and he had installed in his private chapel images of Jesus, Abraham and Zoroaster, an old Persian teacher. He was tolerant of all religions in Phoenicia, especially Christianity.

During his reign, the people enjoyed tranquility throughout the empire. Lebanese merchants, business agents and builders were welcomed in every established community in the Roman Empire. Major business centers were established by wealthy Phoenicians in Rome, Naples, Ravenna, Trieste and in Syracuse in Sicily. About that same time, Lebanese business communities were created in Cordoba and Malaga in Spain, in several cities in Greece, in Cologne, Germany and along the Danube River.

Lebanese commercial activities were at their greatest in Paris, Orleans, Bordeaux, Lyons, and in Arles, a city in southern France near the site of the death and burial of Mary Magdalene, one of Jesus' disciples. Trade in and out of Lebanon increased substantially and its citizens enjoyed prosperity, peace, and a comfortable, upscale lifestyle.

Many people in Phoenicia and other parts of the Roman Empire came to believe in the divinity of Jesus and converted to Christianity during the Second and Third Centuries AD. With the advent of Christianity in the Roman world, among the first to embrace the new faith were the people of Phoenicia. In Acts 11:25 it is written that it was at Antioch that those believers were first given the name of "Christians". And Trye became an early seat of Christianity following Jesus' healing of the daughter of

a Phoenician woman on His journey to Sidon (Mt 15:21-28).

It is recorded in Acts 11:19, that after the martyrdom “of Stephen, the Apostles went as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word.” Later, St. Paul would found communities in Tyre and Sidon.

Lebanon, which occupied a special place in man’s intellectual progress, was now in the forefront of the advancement of mankind’s spirituality. However, because of their belief in the divinity of Jesus, and because of their zealous belief that God is the Father of all men and that all men are brothers under God’s Fatherhood, many Lebanese Christians were to suffered martyrdom at the hands of the “infidels.”

Included among them was St. George. who, according to legend, saved a young maiden’s life by slaying a dragon in the bay of Beirut. This brave act led to his being martyred by the soldiers of Emperor Diocletian. His story was eventually carried to Europe by the Crusaders, and the English adopted him as their patron saint in the Fourteenth Century.

A Catholic royal order of chivalry, the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George, founded in 1110 AD with the sanction of the Church in Rome, also adopted St.

George as its patron. One of the Order’s missions in the United States is to encourage Catholic Boy Scouts to gain knowledge of the Church, and to show respect and care for all in need. Today, the chivalrous and brave St. George is the patron saint of all Catholic Boy Scouts of America.

Near the end of the Third Century, Sidon, a port city in southern Lebanon, became the seat of a Catholic bishop, and in the Fourth Century, Beirut had its own bishop. It was the Bishop of Sidon who attended the 325 A.D. synod in Nicaea, the council which promulgated the Nicene Creed. This Creed expresses the truths and belief which all Catholics hold concerning the Holy Trinity, the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus, and their

belief in the Catholic Church. It is prayed regularly by the faithful, and is prayed during every Mass, even now.

Christianity made much headway throughout Lebanon even though the Roman governors who ruled over Lebanon attempted to discourage the people from converting to the religion of Jesus. They directed very harsh and cruel punishment upon anyone who openly professed a belief in Christ. It would be that way until 313 AD, when Emperor Constantine the Great, declared in the Edict of Milan that Christianity was an accepted and legal religion in the Empire. Then, for the first time, peace came to Christians everywhere.

In the latter part of the Fourth Century, there lived in the Bekka region of Lebanon a holy man, who was a priest and hermit, whose name was Marun or Maron. By his exemplary life of piety and holiness, he drew many converts to the Christian religion. His followers grew in number until they became known by his name: Maronite Catholics. He established several monasteries in the region, and one of them grew in size until, in the Eleventh Century, it was home to more than 800 monks. Eventually, the monks of St. Maron would establish monasteries throughout the Near East. St. Maron died in 410 AD.

Late in the Fifth Century, the Empire was divided into two parts. One part, which was ruled from Rome, was the Western Roman Empire. The other, ruled from Constantinople, became the Eastern Roman Empire, or Byzantine Empire. Lebanon came under the rule of the Byzantine Empire, but its people were not in harmony with the Byzantine rulers, nor with the Orthodox Christianity of Constantinople.

A large rift grew between the people of Lebanon and those rulers, and eventually a formal schism between them developed because the Lebanese beliefs were closer to the beliefs of Rome than to those of Constantinople. Eventually this schism, plus the hatred engendered

because of the bad treatment and high taxes imposed by the Byzantine governors, would lead to the fall of the Byzantine Empire in Phoenicia.

On the heels of the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in Phoenicia, invaders from Arabia over-ran Lebanon, and brought with them their new religion, Islam, and they called themselves Muslims, meaning “those who submit to God”.

Muslims are followers of the Prophet Muhammad, who claimed to have their holy book, the Koran (*Quran*), revealed to him by the angel Gabriel in 622 AD, with his flight from Mecca to Medina. The Muslim calendar begins at the year 622 AD, the year of Muhammad’s flight. That is year 1 for them.

Those Muslim Arabs fully conquered peaceful, Catholic Lebanon by the year 640 AD. They would eventually go on to conquer more lands along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea including North Africa, Spain and southern France; and they would impose, at the point of a sword, their religion on peoples as far away as India. I am told that in the Koran it is written, “There is more truth in one sword than in ten thousand words.” They made converts by threatening death as instructed by their Holy Book. They must have preferred the use of the sword instead of using education and enlightenment.

For a while, the invading Arabs tolerated the Lebanese practice of Christianity, but that did not last long. By 660, the Muslims, whose beginnings were in Mecca and Medina in the Arabian Peninsula, established their capital in Damascus, Syria. From this location it was easy for them to force their religion and the Arabic language on the people of Lebanon. The Christians resisted the Arabs’ pressure and fled higher and higher into the mountains and lived among the famous cedars of Lebanon. From that time on, the Maronites would call the cedars their home, where they lived austere and simple, though industrious, lives in good times and in bad times. This is

the ancestral home of the Reggie family. We, too, are from the cedars!

In addition to Muslim raids into the mountains and the cedar forests to destroy the Roman Catholics, there was constant persecution by the Byzantine Christians of Syria who felt that the Lebanese Catholics should be more in line with the Eastern Orthodox theology than with that of Rome. Even the cedars did not offer much refuge from the onslaught of those two alien groups.

As an outward demonstration of great concern and worry about the double persecution of Catholics in the Lebanon, the Church in Rome, at a December 15, 687, Conclave of Bishops, elected the Bishop of Antioch, a Lebanese by birth, its new Pope. He took the name of Sarguis I, and, because of his piety and good works, was later canonized a saint by another Pope.

In the meantime, the Maronite Catholics offered what resistance they could to the invaders. They felt somewhat safe living in the mountains of north Lebanon until 750. It was then that large numbers of well equipped Druse soldiers invaded the mountains and killed all the Christians they could find. Additionally, they burned or destroyed every Catholic church which had been built since the birth of Muhammad, the founder of Islam. During this horrible time, many Catholics fled the mountains for somewhat safer places in southern Lebanon.

Those were difficult times for Christianity, and for the freedom of the people of Lebanon. There still remains until today a strong resentment by the Maronites of Lebanon, towards the Arabs and the Greek Orthodox because of their unholy and harsh treatment, which included the death of thousands of followers of Jesus. The Arabs treated the Christian population of Syria and of Palestine, the birthplace of Christianity, as brutally as they treated the Lebanese Christians.

That harsh treatment, and the second-class-citizen status of the Christians of the region continued for years,

and became even worse when, in 1029, the Islamic Seljuk Turks overran Syria, Lebanon and the Holy Land. The Seljuks were determined to pillage, rape, torture, maim and kill everyone who did not convert to the Muslim religion. They committed those monstrous acts with a vengeance.

The Christians of Lebanon were forced to live under the tyranny of “blasphemy laws” under which a person could be thrown in prison for life for only speaking ill of the Muslim holy book, the Koran. For just uttering the name of Muhammad, the founder of Islam, a Christian could be put to death. Muslim street gangs would mete out “justice” on the spot without any trial by a court of law and with complete impunity.

Unruly mobs of young Muslims would enter Christian towns shouting militant Islamic slogans, destroying churches, homes and business places before setting them afire. Muslim habits have not changed much since.

Armenia, which embraced Christianity since early in the fourth century due to the apostolic work of St. Gregory the Illuminator, has been invaded by the Muslim Turks time and time again. As late as 1896, more than two hundred thousands Christian Armenians were massacred by the Turks, and today the Orthodox Catholics of Southwest Armenia are being persecuted and killed on a regular basis by the Muslims of Turkey.

At present, in Pakistan, the Muslims there treat the less than two-percent Christian minority in that country in much the same way they treated the Christians of Lebanon in the Seventh and Eight Centuries. They seem to never end their persecution of peoples of other faiths, even though they say that their faith is based upon peace and love for all.

The Muslims, the Seljuks of Turkey, the Sunnis of the Arabian Desert, and the Shi’ites of the Caliphate of Egypt, ruled over Lebanon and Palestine for a period of some 450 years. Those were the “darkest hours” in the entire

history of Lebanon. The population had never suffered as much under any previous conquerors.

Jerusalem, the holy city where Christ was crucified, died, and was buried, and is sacred to Muslims, Hebrews and Christians alike, was under very strict and harsh governance of the Muslim rulers. Christians were not allowed to visit any of the many shrines in the Holy Land.

Finally, the Roman Pontiff, Pope Urban II, a native of Chatillan in the Champagne region of France, and one who had a strong love and concern for the Christians in the Near East, decided to act against the unjust behavior of the Muslims. Under his direction, in November 1095, a council in Clermont, France, called for the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre of Christ from the hands of the Saracen "infidels," and the ouster of the Muslims from all the Holy Land. He prayed that this action would open the land for religious pilgrimages and lead to the reunion of the Eastern Church with Rome. He directed that a Crusader army be dispatched to free the religious shrines from the grips of the Muslims.

The first Crusader army, led by Godfrey de Bouillion, reached the Holy Land in 1097, and it was not until 1101 that the city of Jerusalem was liberated. There would be seven more Crusades to follow during the next 170 years.

In "A Transcript by Bishop Hayek", which follows in PART THREE of this book, is recorded the name of one of two cousins who arrived with the Eight Crusade, and who remained in Lebanon and began the family we now know as Reggie. My personal suspicion is that they might have been descendants of some Lebanese merchants who populated France years before, and wanted to accompany the Crusaders in order to liberate their "ancestral home."

In a previous paragraph above it was noted that my mother's paternal family branch, the Andraous family, had their beginning with a man of Greek origin, and now it is seen that my father's paternal family tree had its origin with the Crusaders. As a matter of record, the Reggie

family, even though its name went through several changes, descended from one of those two cousins who came with the Crusaders. (See PART THREE and also see family-tree chart in PART FOUR in back of book.)

As the Crusaders traveled through Lebanon on their way to Jerusalem, many Christians who were good horsemen and extremely skilled archers, joined in the overthrow of the Arab Muslims throughout the entire area. The Lebanese Christians joined the crusaders in the contest between the Cross and the Crescent, and enthusiastically picked-up the Crusaders' slogan, "*Dieu le volt!*", with their own, "*Allah be-reed*", which translates into "God wills it!"

In 1109, Tripoli in north Lebanon was freed from the Muslims by Crusaders led by the French General, Count Raymond de Saint Giles, once again renewing the strong ties Lebanon had with France and other Western nations. (In recognition of the hero status accorded him in Lebanon, the name Raymond is given to many Christian boys, even to this very day.) Beirut and Sidon were liberated in 1110, and Tyre in 1124. The entire coast of Lebanon, as well as the Lebanon Mountains, was free again to confess its preference of religion.

The Crusaders took back to Europe, along with the new learning they had acquired, products which were new to them, and crops that were strange to their lands.

One custom the Crusaders also took home from Lebanon was the planting of a "Mary's Gardens". These were little beds of flowers grown in a small area, and usually had an image of one kind or another of Our Blessed Mother at its center. The flowers usually were of the kinds which had been given the name of Mary, or a description of some of Her attributes: marigolds (Mary's gold), petunias (Lady's praise), or pansies (Lady's delight). European housewives made a practice of having a Mary's Garden near the entrance of their homes during medieval times, and until the Reformation. In some parts of Europe the custom has

been revived. It is reported that the first Mary's Garden in the United States was planted in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

With their new found freedom, many Christians left the confinement of the mountain areas and began their own settlements in towns and villages south of Beirut. They were very influential in developing the areas near Beit-al-din, Deir-il-kamur, Sidon, and as far south as Tyre and Marjayoun. A large, prosperous population of Christians have made these towns their homes ever since.

The Boustany (sometimes spelled Bistany) family might have been one of those who migrated south. The earliest records known to this writer show they fully populated a small town named El Debbiye, which was one-hundred percent Boustany, before some of them moved to Deir-alkamur, about eight miles away.

During that period of peace and freedom, the Maronite Christians opened new dialogue with the Church in Rome and the two have been united ever since. The Maronite Church has never suffered a schism with Rome, and now the two are as one. The Maronite Church is the only Eastern Rite church which can make that boast. The Pope initiated and promoted much charitable and missionary work in Lebanon, and he encouraged and assisted the Franciscans, Dominicans and Carmelites to open convents, schools and churches there. This Papal encouragement lead to the Jesuits and the Capuchins opening their own schools and hospitals throughout Lebanon to serve the needs of the population.

Eventually, Pope Gregory XIII in 1584, establish a special school in Rome, the Maronite College, where bright young Maronite students from the Jesuit schools in Lebanon could enroll for advanced studies. The Pope also offered free scholarships to many of Lebanon's poor, but smart, students for study in Rome at the Maronite College. Some Lebanese students went on to become ordained priests. More than a few of those men remained in Rome

after their studies were completed, and filled prominent positions in the Latin Church.

Patriarch George Amira who became the first Maronite Patriarch, studied as a young man at the Maronite College in Rome. After becoming Patriarch he introduced the reformed calendar of Pope Gregory XIII to the Maronite Church in Lebanon. Lebanon became the only country in the Near East to adopt the Gregorian calendar for its official use in commercial and other activities, just as was done in all nations of the West. The Muslim kingdoms continued to use, even to this day, their Islamic calendar which holds that dates begin with the flight of Muhammad, in 622AD. Not with the birth of Jesus, 1AD, as is used in the rest of the world.

This holy man, Bishop Amira, was also the Patriarch who sent the eleven-year-old Stephen Douihi of Ehden, to Maronite College in Rome. Stephen Douihi would eventually distinguish himself as a scholar and as a gifted writer. He proficiently and diligently recorded all important events and dates concerning the Church, and became the Patriarch upon the death of Amira, his benefactor and mentor. To this day, Patriarch Douihi is known as the “father of Maronite history”.

Because of its fidelity and loyalty, the Maronite Church became a favorite of many Popes. The Church in Rome became a constant guardian of the Maronite community in Lebanon. There were regular widespread celebrations in Lebanon with much thanksgiving and praise for the “Pope of Rome”, Urban II, who initiated the action which returned Lebanon to its pre-Muslim Arab/Turk existence.

Old commercial ties with Europe were renewed and new ones were forged as trade began again between Lebanon and Europe. Once again, Lebanon was on its way to its rightful place among the trading countries of the world. But that jubilation was not to be permanent. Even though many Muslims who lived in Lebanon were very

successful in their business endeavors, there was constant discontent among those who were not sufficiently educated or were too slothful to apply themselves to lifting their standard of living. Disaster was to come again!

In less than two hundred years, the Muslim Arabs were to make their return. Much to the sorrow of the people of Lebanon, for they knew that they would once again suffer much, including death, at the hands of the hate-filled occupiers of their homeland.

In 1144 the Arabs began waging war in the areas which the Crusaders had liberated; and where the people enjoyed religious, cultural, educational and commercial freedom. It was under Saladin, (*Salah al-Din*), the dominating, shrewd, inspiring and persuasive Muslim leader and warrior, that the Muslim Arab armies captured Jerusalem in 1187. He was Kurdish by birth and steeped in the religion of Islam. Because of his brilliant leadership he was to become one of the most famous Arab heroes of all times.

During the battles with Saladin, the Crusaders were able to hold only Tripoli and Tyre in Lebanon. But by the 1200s, they were driven out of those places by Saladin's cohorts, the Muslim Mamluks of Egypt.

With the total withdrawal of the Crusaders from the area, the Hospitaller Order of St. John, which had come with the Crusaders to provide medical care and armed protection for the sick, and supplied hospital care to the native population during the half century of their presence, withdrew to the island of Rhodes. Eventually, with the approval of Emperor Charles V and Pope Clement VII, in 1530, they would move to the island of Malta off the southern tip of Italy. Their official name became: The Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta.

The Order's origins date from 1099, making it the fourth oldest religious order of Christendom, preceded only by the Basilians, the Augustinians, and the

Benedictines. This religious confraternity is active today around the world in its apostolate of service to the sick and infirm. Today, their Hospitaller service extends to any needy person, Muslims included. This writer is proud and pleased to be an active member of that honorable Order.

As soon as the remaining Crusaders were driven out, the fate of the Lebanese Christians was sealed again, and thousands of Maronite Christians were slaughtered and their cities laid to ruin. The Crusaders and the Mamluks left a legacy of ill will which turned into extreme hatred and suspicion between the Christians and Muslims which has persisted to this day.

The Mamluks, whose armies were made up of Turkish slaves, ruled the Near East until 1516 when the Ottoman Turks came into power. During those 300 years, innumerable Christians were slaughtered by the Muslims, and more than 80,000 Christians fled to the nearby island of Cyprus and elsewhere.

The broad arc of the Fertile Crescent of coastal Lebanon and Palestine once again came under the Islamic conquerors who fell heir to the arts, sciences, learning and lore of the natives, and they inherited the advanced Hellenistic learning of the Greco-Roman culture which the Lebanese had adopted. The invaders made exceptional progress in the field of medicine, philosophy and poetry. In the field of Arabian poetry, Omar Khayyam is one of the greatest among his countrymen with his "Rubaiyat" and other great works. He and other Arabs became learned in mathematics and in the field of astronomy.

Little by little, the more powerful and cunning Turks of the Ottoman Empire forced the slave warriors of the Mamluks out of the Near East. Lebanon, which never really subscribed to the way of life of any of the previous conquerors, found itself existing in a vacuum under the new invaders, the Ottomans. Lebanon, which at one time had been at the heart of the civilized world and the center for international trade, now under the Turks became

intellectually sterile and commercially stagnant. This came about because the Turks stopped all trade and all communication between Lebanon and the West. Lebanon was allowed to trade with Turkey only, or no trading was allowed!

Life for the Lebanese became very difficult. Commercially, the Muslim business men suffered almost as much as the Christians. Even though Turkey referred to Lebanon as “Ottoman Lebanon”, the people of Lebanon knew they were Lebanese, but never Turks! They put their love and dedication to nationalism on a par with their religious beliefs.

From 1516 until the beginning of World War I, Turkey ruled the district called “Greater Syria”, which included Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. For this reason, Lebanon is sometimes mistakenly called Syria. They administered the district with varying degrees of harshness. Depending upon the temperament of the Sultan in Constantinople or the *Emir* who was sent to Lebanon as governor, the fate of the people rose and fell like the tide. One lasting thing, however, which came from the Ottoman governance, was their system of forming “millet”, or small communities of people of the same faith who governed themselves, but paid taxes to Turkey. Christians had a millet, Druse had a millet, Muslims had a millet, etc.

The Druse are a conservative, secretive religious sect which is an off-shoot of Muhammadanism, and they generally lived in the Anti-Lebanon Mountains on Lebanon’s border with Syria and in southern Lebanon. They believe that God was reincarnated for the last time on earth, in the form of their “founder” and prophet, Al Hakim, in 1016. The name of the sect probably comes from the name of one of their early religious leaders, Muhammad al-Darazi. Because they are secretive about their beliefs, they hold no congregational religious services. When with Christians, they worship as Christians. When with Muslims, they worship as

Muslims. They like to be called *Muwahiddun*, "Those alone".

With that system of millets, the separation by confession, there was some semblance of peaceful times in Lebanon, though poverty and harsh living conditions were rampant. Under that system, the Maronites were able to reopen some of their trade routes with the European continent, and received some relief from the overbearing controls the Muslims had originally put in place.

Because their trade with the West, especially with France, eventually began to flourish and benefit the Lebanese, the Egyptians, who despised the Turks, invaded the coast of Lebanon in 1832, in order to share in the trading wealth the Lebanese were beginning to enjoy. Because the Christians dominated the trade with Europe, and that trade gave Egypt certain benefits, the Islamic captors from Egypt made many concessions to the Christians.

This gentler action towards the Christians angered the Muslims of the area, who themselves, were not as industrious, and did not enjoy the good life of the Christians. By 1840 the Muslims in Lebanon began an open rebellion against the Egyptians, which led Austria and Britain to join with the Ottoman Empire to drive the Egyptians out of Lebanon. This new and terrible war wrecked havoc on Lebanon and its people for nearly a decade, and it is estimated that more than forty thousand Christians and Egyptians were killed by the Turks and Druses during that time.

In about 1860, the Ottoman Empire began to suffer decline, and was no longer able to successfully subdue the Christians of Lebanon. Their next step was to sow seeds of discontent between the Druse population in Lebanon and the Christians. The way the Turks accomplished this was to force Christians to move out of their own millet into areas populated by the Druse. Because the Druse were unhappy with the Christians coming into what they considered their

domain, they readily accepted the Turks' encouragement to wipe-out the Christians.

Though fewer in number, the Christians prevailed over the Druse. They made great strides in their new land and handily won the economic leadership of areas once occupied only by the Druse. They accomplished this because they had become better educated and were aggressively pursuing commerce. The Christians also became more influential in world politics and in financial matters. The Druse, even though jealous of the Christians because of their successes and because of their higher standard of living, never attempted to educate themselves nor apply themselves to raising their own status.

The Druse, with strong leadership support and financial assistance of the Turks, were able to retaliate by taking over some Christian towns and villages. The Lebanese Christians, being a peaceful, non warring people, had no military leaders to direct them in the defense of their homes. The Druse marauders robbed homes, convents and churches, and burned each in turn.

It was reported by an American missionary that it appeared to him that "the Turkish army was there to restrain the Christians while encouraging the Muslim Druse to massacre the Christians." It was not difficult for the Druse to carry out their slaughter because they had the tacit approval of the Turks. This was another terrible time for the Christians of Lebanon, but especially hard for those who lived in the northern mountainous areas. More than 10,000 Christians were killed by the Muslim Turks and their "brother" Muslims, the Druses.

The Maronites, through the Pope in Rome, sought help from the outside world. France, in 1860, learning of the massive slaughter of its Maronite Christian friends in Lebanon, persuaded Russia and Prussia to aid it in bringing some kind of peace to Lebanon. France, itself, sent an army of 7,000 to Beirut to assist the Christians, and to restore order.

Under pressure from Europe, the Ottomans, in 1864, then divided Lebanon into two parts: one part included a portion of the southern coastal area and the Bekka Valley, and had a Muslim majority; the other part was made up only of Mount Lebanon, which had a Christian majority. Under this apportionment, each area was allowed some autonomy and allowed to promulgate laws for its people as it saw fit. With this kind of freedom, the Christians began “dreaming” of *total* independence. Their patriotic nationalism rallied them to work hard for freedom. It was not enough for them to just survive, they now envisioned a free country of their own.

The Christians, because of their way of life, and with so much contact with Western culture, readily adapted themselves to the nationalistic idea. While the Muslims thought only in terms of religious activities and lived as nomads throughout the desert areas, they held no concern for nation-forming. The Maronites began working very hard to make contacts with outside nations who could assist them in achieving their goal of having total freedom in a sovereign country of their own.

Because of some small successes made by the Maronites, the Muslim masses in Lebanon, except the Druse who had become friendlier towards the Christians, tried in every way available to them to thwart Christian efforts for an independent state. The Druse found that they could work for the Christians and earn enough to make a better living for themselves than before. Even today, the Druse do seasonal work in the fields of the Christians harvesting fruit, olives and vegetables, much like the migrant workers in California, Arizona and Texas.

Slowly, the effort of the Maronites for a free nation began to pay off. In 1867, the heads-of-state of several European countries met with Turkish leaders and forced the Turks to accept the formation of a constitution for a semi-independent Lebanon. Under this constitution, the Lebanese could determine much of their own governance,

provided that met with the approval of the governors and *emirs* the Turks had chosen to oversee the day to day activities in Lebanon.

In spite of those Turkish picked leaders, Mount Lebanon, as it was then named, soon became a governmental, educational and commercial model for the entire Ottoman Empire. Mount Lebanon then was no longer part of "Greater Syria", even though it is sometimes referred to as Lebanon, Syria: As though it were a state within a nation.

During the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, some Christian governors of Lebanon, even though chosen by the Turks, encouraged and supported large scale missionary activities by the French, German and British churches, and also by the Americans. Those activities led the Western nations to know Lebanon better, and therefore have more interest in a free Lebanon.

The steady growth of the missionary activity brought about the opening of many schools and several universities. The largest of the universities were two: The well received and prestigious Universite' St. Joseph which the French opened in Beirut, and in 1866 the Americans began the renowned, even to this day, American University of Beirut, which had the best educational facilities in the Near East. After Lebanon was to receive its independence, it would found its own institution of higher learning, Lebanese University, in order to train more teachers for the education of all its youth. Its emphasis was on teaching every citizen to read and write.

With the notable successes of the Christians, and the recognition of their ability to move forward in a civilized manner, once again, there came jealousy and renewed hatred from the Muslims of the Arab world and Turkey.

The Lebanese people were again to suffer much from the many raids into their prosperous towns by the hatefilled Muslims. Between 1890 and 1920 more than 80,000 Lebanese fled the country. Some fled to avoid

being killed, some because they had very little possessions left which they could call their own, while others preferred to leave rather than lower their standard of living. Some 60,000 emigrated to the United States, while others went to Canada, Brazil, Australia, and several countries in Europe. Approximately one-fourth of those who came here settled in southern United States.

Even though the official position of the Turkish government was that of a benevolent occupier, many of its appointed leaders were cruel to the local Christians. They allowed their Muslim brothers to massacre and harass the Christians regularly. Many Turkish soldiers participated in those aggressive acts towards the Christians with complete impunity. Their leaders simply “looked the other way”.

Firsthand stories from the parents of this writer included such things as the odious act of Muslim horsemen who dragged large tree branches behind their horse, passed back and forth through the vegetable gardens of the Christians, tearing up all the plants by the roots and totally destroying the gardens.

Other Islamic raiders traveled in groups who stormed into the homes of Christians ripping up furniture, scattering foodstuff everywhere, defecating on the floors, setting bonfires with the firewood intended to be used for cooking, and many other such atrocities.

My mother remembered being very frightened as a child when a band of militant Muslims entered her home one day and completely ripped-up everything in the house. They opened the small doors at the bottom of the pantry-bins which were built like hoppers, allowing the rice, cracked wheat, flour, sugar, beans, lintels, honey, olive oil and syrup to pour onto the floor of the kitchen. They then used shovels and their feet to mix all these commodities until nothing could ever be salvaged. What waste my parents suffered! What terror she and her parents experienced! The Muslims hated the Christians for many

reasons, but especially so, because of the higher standard of living the Christians enjoyed.

One of the most appalling acts ever committed against the Christians during that time was for Muslim horsemen to ride into the churches while Mass was being celebrated, and with drawn swords ride around inside the church slashing to death the kneeling congregation. After a while, the Christians devised a way to halt this practice. The church doorways were usually tall, arched and had double doors, which when opened could allow easy entry to a man on horseback. The remedy was to install large timbers low enough across the door opening to allow only a walking person to enter. One of the double doors was firmly secured so it could not be opened, making the doorway small enough so that only one person at a time could pass through.

Witnessing Turkish nationalism and enjoying little *official* freedom, caused the Christians to become firmer in their desire for a totally free country. They petitioned the Turkish leaders for freedom, but that was never granted. Lebanon had to wait until World War I to get any relief. Turkey made the mistake of joining the war on the side of Germany, Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria.

The Ottoman Empire cracked down hard on all under its rule during the war, but Lebanon was treated far worse than any others because of its known sympathy for the Allies. Starvation and sickness gripped the land, but the Turks would give neither food nor medicines to the Lebanese. Their excuse for not assisting in any way was "because the Allies caused the problem by their blockades." Malaria and typhus raged throughout the population. It is estimated today that about 60,000 died from starvation or sickness, about one-fifth of the population.

French troops were welcomed in Lebanon in 1918, and they remained there as a result of a mandate from the League of Nations. Both being Christian people, the

French and the Lebanese enjoyed a respect and love for one another for many, many years. Now, here were the French helping their old friend, again!

On one occasion, the French General Henri Gourand in a speech in Lebanon said, "At the foot of these majestic mountains which have been the strength of your country and remain the impregnable stronghold of its faith and freedom, on the shore of this sea of many legends that has seen the triremes of Phoenicia, Greece and Rome and now, by a happy fate, brings you to the confirmation of a great and ancient friendship and the blessings of French peace...I solemnly salute Greater Lebanon in its glory and prosperity in the name of the Government of the French Republic". France then began preparing Lebanon for the day when it would get its total freedom and become a full fledged nation with a government of its own.

The permanent boundaries of Lebanon were established along lines similar to those in place at the time of the Phoenicians. The entire country contained less than 4000 square miles, not even as large as the State of Connecticut. From north to south it was about 130 miles long, and from east to west it measured about 40 miles wide at its widest point, and as little as 20 miles wide near its southern border. Its population then was less than one-half million, with nearly seventy percent being Christians. Maronites, by far, were the largest of all Christian denominations.

During the next few years, France aided Lebanon in making its economic recovery. Trade routes to Europe were re-established, and commerce and travel between Lebanon and the countries of Europe and America increased, giving much monetary gain to Lebanon. Its infrastructure was being reconstructed, hospitals were re-opened, and schools and universities began accepting students once more. Falling back on their Phoenician heritage, the Lebanese began laying the groundwork for more commerce and greater financial stability.

Under French guidance and leadership, Lebanon drew up a constitution for parliamentary rule under a democratic form of government, and was declared a republic in 1926. This made Lebanon the first democratic government in the entire Middle East! True to its history of openness and tolerance, Lebanon, like the United States, had no provision in its constitution for a state religion. This, too, was a radical difference from all the countries of the region. In Lebanon, freedom to openly practice one's own religion was given to every citizen. Lebanese women have equal rights with men and they have the right to vote and hold office.

In 1940, during the height of World War II, France's General Charles de Gaulle, with the consent of the British government, declared the end of the United Nations' mandate which made France a protector of Lebanon. Full independence for Lebanon was proclaimed. This gave Lebanon the added freedom to act as a sovereign nation, even though that was not to be official for three more years.

Lebanon's formal independence day came on November 22, 1943. Its parliamentary form of democratic government elected the French educated lawyer, Bishara al-Khuri, a Maronite Christian, its first president. A Sunni Muslim was selected to be the Prime Minister. This form of shared leadership was to continue for many years. Lebanon then *officially* became the first democratic country in the entire Near East and Middle East. November 22nd, Lebanon's day of independence, is celebrated by its people much like the people of the United States celebrate the Fourth of July. At Lebanon's invitation, France remained as a protector until 1946.

Some in Lebanon, who wished Lebanon would never get its formal independence, caused much trouble towards France in hopes the turmoil would stop the process. That way, Lebanon could be absorbed into the sphere of Arab dictator nations and kingdoms. Even today, there are

those people who still condemn France as being a malevolent invader. While in fact, France assisted Lebanon to become a truly free country where its Christians could openly practice their faith.

LEBANESE NATIONAL ANTHEM

<i>Kollana lilwatan</i>	<i>Lil'onakil'alam</i>
<i>We're all for our Country</i>	<i>We'll keep high our flag</i>
<i>Mil o'ayni zaman</i>	<i>Saifona walkalam</i>
<i>From years long ago,</i>	<i>Our swords and our pencils,</i>
<i>Sahlona waljabal</i>	<i>Manbiton lirrjal</i>
<i>Our valleys and mountains</i>	<i>The creation of men,</i>
<i>Qawlona wal'amal</i>	<i>Fi sabilil kamal</i>
<i>Our words and works,</i>	<i>To reach for the greatness,</i>
<i>Kollana lilwatan</i>	<i>Lil'ola Lil'alam</i>
<i>We're all for our Country,</i>	<i>To keep high our flag.</i>
<i>Kollona lilwatan</i>	<i>Kollona lilwatan</i>
<i>We're all for our Country.</i>	<i>We're all for our Country.</i>

The young country of Lebanon, because of its Muslim population and the Arabic language spoken there, was slowly being drawn into the sphere of Muslim kingdoms which surround it. Neighboring Arab kingdoms desired to have Lebanon under their influence, and in no way were interested in Lebanon's nationalism. But because of its Christianity, its strong and longtime ties to the West, Lebanon was able to continue its progress in the commercial world of Europe and America. This generated much hatred among the Muslims of the surrounding

nations.

Even though Arabic is the spoken language of the people of Lebanon, it is not an Arabic nation. Because Spanish is the official language of Cuba, that country is not Spanish. Nor is Austria German because of its German language. Austria is Austrian. So, too, it is with Lebanon. Its spoken language is Arabic, but its people are not Arabs, except those who migrate to Lebanon and never profess to be Lebanese. We in the United States speak English, but we are Americans, not British!

Generally, the Lebanese found it easier to socialize and trade with Frenchmen, Englishmen and Americans than with the people of the Arabic world. Their affinity with Western culture and customs is evidenced by their migration and travel which has overwhelmingly been with countries of the West. Few Lebanese ever emigrate to Arab kingdoms. Almost all Lebanese students who desire advanced academic studies go to Western nations, not to Arabic kingdoms or nations. Except a few who study at the American University in Cairo.

Lebanon struggled to open avenues of trade with more and more countries of Africa, Europe, Canada, the United States, South America, and Australia. The Christians worked to enhance their ties to the West while the Muslims in Lebanon wished for dominance by Arab nations. Lebanon's past experience with Muslim conquerors, its religious differences and freedoms, and its higher standard of living forced it to reject all efforts to unify it with the Islamic world. The new nation tended to keep itself apart as much as was practical.

Lebanon got a taste of being a player on the international stage of politics, in spite of its small size. It signed the original United Nations Charter and sent delegates to the first meeting in 1945 in San Francisco. Lebanon's delegates were heard in United Nations meetings in Washington, Paris, London and elsewhere as they advanced in prestige, while eloquently speaking for

the high ideals of a free world. They felt a real sensitivity for the plight of small nations and their efforts for independence.

Because of heavy campaigning by several Arab nations, Lebanon, in 1945, joined the group of Arab countries in what was called the Arab League. This association was not a good one for Lebanon. The young nation would soon make a major blunder. Because the Arab League would form a solid front against the new nation of Israel, Lebanon participated in an invasion of that country in May of 1948 by supplying soldiers to serve under Arab leaders.

Lebanon, being a Christian, peace-loving nation quickly realized its mistake in joining with the Arab forces which wished to destroy Israel. Lebanon was a nation of people who attempted to live with respect, kindness and love to all mankind as taught by Jesus' words recorded in Mt. 5:39, "If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also". Alone, Lebanon signed a peace treaty with Israel ten month later. The warring action of the Arab League was not in keeping with the moral creed of Lebanon which was to live and let live. Lebanon's action was not well received by the members of the Arab League, but they took no immediate action.

In a short while, after withdrawing its forces from the Arab League, the pride of the Lebanese people in their country drove them to improve every facet of life: education, health care, commerce, finance and foreign trade. That pride helped Lebanon enjoy great prosperity. With its growing prosperity, it become an important player in the international arena. It played a much bigger role in international finance than its small size would suggest.

Lebanon, which favored free trade, encountered a real problem with Syria which favored tariffs on products imported from Lebanon. Syria, in order to slow the flow of Lebanese goods into its borders, imposed heavy tariffs as a means of enriching its coffers at the expense of Lebanon.

That action cause Lebanon to work harder to open more commercial markets in the West.

Lebanon became an important hub for many multinational corporations, and a thriving center for commerce with all of Europe and America because of its sound governmental policies and its economic stability. During Lebanon's "good days", in addition to many European companies, there were more than 125 American corporations with established branch offices in and around Beirut.

The financial climate in Lebanon was so solid that Beirut became the banking capital of the area. There were no fewer than twenty foreign nations' banks located in that city. Lebanon soon became the "Switzerland of the East", while Beirut, because of its beauty, climate and safety, was named the "Paris of the Mediterranean".

Because of Lebanon's accessible seaports which served the entire Mediterranean coastline, a massive pipeline was laid to transport oil from the Saudi Arabian oil fields which were located on the Persian Gulf to Sidon.

From Sidon the oil could be easily shipped to the countries of the Mediterranean. When it benefited the Arab countries, they were willing to use Lebanon's excellent location, climate and stable government.

With its snow-capped mountains near the cedars and its white sandy beaches on the Mediterranean, Lebanon became a tourist attraction for the wealthy of Europe, Egypt and the Middle East. Tourism eventually would account for a third of Lebanon's gross national product. Many luxury high-rise hotels were built in the principal cities and near the beaches. A casino to rival Monte Carlo was built a few miles up the coast from Beirut at Jounie. The famous Lido of Paris frequently presented its song and dance extravaganzas in the casino.

With the huge inflow of money from tourism and the growing international trade, more and larger banks were founded. Banks in Beirut became the place for major

banking activities for the money-men of Europe and of the Middle East. It was a safe place for kings and princes of the oil-rich kingdoms of the desert to deposit their riches made from the sale of vast amounts of oil.

Money was available for lending to local merchants who wished to expand or start new businesses, and much money was lent for building whole communities of tall apartment buildings and homes for individual families. Lebanon, with its large influx of cash, went about building and improving its highways, schools, parks, public lands and tourist sites. Under the "Point Four" aid program of the United States, Lebanon was able to match funds to build a four-lane super highway which connected Beirut and Tripoli.

Additional money was devoted to starting a new system of state schools which offered education to more and more of its citizens until the literacy rate reached nearly ninety percent of the population. That percentage was even better than that enjoyed by the USA. By 1975, nearly 10,000 students were enrolled in its six universities, institutions of higher learning.

That same year, Beirut was home to about fifty daily newspapers which were published in Arabic, English, French and Armenian. Beirut also became the premier center for book publishing in that part of the world.

Lebanon's international airport at Beirut became the busiest airport in all the Near and Middle East. Thirty-seven airlines flew in and out daily to satisfy the travel needs of businessmen and tourists. Two of those airlines belonged to Lebanese corporations and a third was the nation's own airline. Somehow, those three airlines displayed the famous cedar tree on each of their airplanes. It seemed like the modern airport with all its international flights had taken the place of the Phoenician ships, to once more become the crossroad between East and West.

With the heavy traffic of tourism and commerce, it was only natural for more and more high-rise luxury hotels to be

built. The pride of Beirut was the new Hotel Phoenician which cost more than nine and one-half million dollars to build. It was designed by Edward Stone, an American architect. The popularity of the Phoenician Hotel caused it to rival the prestigious and traditional St. George Hotel in prominence. The St. George Hotel, named for the martyred knight who slew the dragon, had hosted royalty and other dignitaries from foreign countries throughout the world. Although the Phoenician was more modern, the St. George never lost its clients who enjoyed the lavish hospitality it offered. Beirut boasted of having nearly one hundred hotels which earned the rating of first class or higher, listed in the international hotel registry.

Financial stability, a booming economy and a large tourist population caused real estate values to escalate. Very few single-family home sites were available in the cities and in many of the smaller towns. Real estate in Beirut cost about as much as property in Manhattan. Because of Lebanon's small size, and because much of it is mountainous, suitable sites for private homes became scarce.

Lebanon has very, very little natural resources, whatsoever. Its strength came from its people who generally were well educated, with about fifty percent of its population middle class. These people enjoyed good incomes – either from jobs they held or from operating their own businesses. Small manufacturing businesses which made silk and cotton textiles, cement, soap, matches, packaged olive oil and wine accounted for about thirty percent of Lebanon's gross national product. Today it is less than eight percent.

Because they were happy and fun-loving people the Lebanese enjoyed themselves by entertaining one another regularly, and by buying fashionable clothing and fast, sporty automobiles. Money was spent so lavishly in Beirut, it earned the name "the big money town"!

With the fast pace, and the hustle and bustle of

Beirut, the government had set aside several areas as green parks and places of rest throughout the business district. At its center was the large, beautiful and restful park known as the *Burge*. It was a square of green space which was landscaped with sculptured shrubs and hedges, flowers and date trees. The tall shrubbery which formed its outer borders shut out the heavy traffic which passed by.

The streets were filled with automobiles, either privately owned ones or commercial taxis, trolleys and busses. Movement of the pedestrians was usually fast, except when one wished to shop for elegant jewelry fashioned from gold. There was one street, for pedestrians only, called the *Souk*, where one jeweler's store was next to another, and that one next to another until one realized that the entire street was nothing but jewelry stores. There were more than one hundred shops selling handmade gold jewelry which contain diamonds, emeralds, rubies, pearls, sapphires and other precious stones. Prices were generally about the same from one jeweler to another. Only the designs and workmanship differed. Prices change almost daily, depending on the price of gold in the world market that day.

Beirut's answer to Beverly Hills' Rodeo Drive or Rome's Via Veneto is the *Souk-il-Tawil*. Here the rich shopped for the latest Parisian fashions in men and women's clothing and shoes. However, the average Lebanese found it easier and cheaper to shop in other stores located throughout the city.

Usually, Christians bought and wore Western type clothing: single or double breasted suits, neckties and hats for men, as do their counterparts in Paris, Rome, London or New York; the women wore French and Italian fashion knee-length skirts and dresses, floral blouses, trim suits and high-heel shoes. The Muslim men, by contrast, wore a long nightgown type garment, or they wore pants which balloon-out at the thighs and fit snugly

around the calf of the legs. Their heads were often covered by a scarf-like cloth or by a *fez*. The Muslim women usually wore an *abaya*, a long black cloak which covered head and body over a long dress which reach to their feet and had long, full sleeves, and buttoned-up collars. They covered their heads with a scarf which was wrapped around so that it conceals all of their face, except their eyes. The great differences in the clothes worn by the people made it very difficult to assimilate or “blend in” with others of another faith. People in Lebanon customarily dress by confession!

The people of Lebanon enjoyed entertaining themselves by getting together with friends for a night of eating, dancing and singing. It took very little encouragement to get a few friends to join in a *sahria*. The younger crowds frequented the many discos in the city or took in the latest released Hollywood or French movie. They enjoyed tennis year round, and they attended soccer or field and track meets in the giant 100,000 seat Chamoun Stadium in Beirut.

Sunning on the sandy beaches, swimming, snorkeling or water skiing was enjoyed by some so often that they rented cabanas near the Mediterranean Sea all year long. Snow skiing was at its best on the slopes near the cedars. Fishing in the coves and among the rocks along the shoreline was a hobby of almost anyone who had the opportunity. The Dog River, and several of Lebanon’s other rivers yielded good catches of fresh water bass at certain times of the year. Horseracing was a weekly event in the hippodrome located in a small pine forest near the Beirut airport.

For those who wished for more serious relaxation there was the National Museum of Art with its relics of Lebanon’s ancient past – from the Phoenicians to modern times. One could view collections of Phoenician jewelry, as well as crowns and other jewelry worn by kings and queens of Byblos, from the fourth century BC. Also on

display, in addition to paintings and tapestries, were artifacts from the Greco-Roman period.

During the summer months, from June to September, an International Arts Festival was held at Baalbek where Lebanese and foreign companies presented operas, music concerts, dramas and ballets. "Hamlet" was a real favorite of the Lebanese.

Lebanon had many very talented and artistic people in its population. Some were goldsmiths who were renown for their design and creation of exceptionally beautiful gold jewelry, studded with diamonds or semi-precious stones. Others were architects whose talents were utilized in the growth of Lebanon and in many foreign countries. Furniture designers and interior decorators had wide ranging reputations. There were many excellent literary writers in Lebanon, the most well known was Khalil Gibran.

Freedom to worship as one's conscience dictated was evident by the large number of churches and, in some areas, mosques, which were built throughout Lebanon. Many churches were built by denominations from the United States and England, in addition to the Catholic churches already there.

Foreigners who visited Lebanon liked the country very much because of its Western customs, its modern social life, its religious freedom, its industrious demeanor, and its renowned hospitality. The Lebanese welcome, "*Ahlan-we-sahlan*" was freely and sincerely spoken to all visitors. It loosely translates into "your family here, welcomes you with good health". The Lebanese character was a composite of friendliness, resourcefulness, practicality, and energy, while engaging in gayety or seriousness. A true Lebanese was patriotic, believed in strong family values and care for neighbor, and kept his God near his heart.

Then came the establishment of the State of Israel!

After the United Nations forced England to cease its rule over Palestine, the new nation of Israel was formed in 1948 and occupied a sizeable part of Palestine. Because many Palestinians were either displaced or chose not to live under Israeli rule, the United Nations directed that more than 280,000 of those people were to move into Lebanon, while others were allocated to Palestine's neighboring states. If those refugees would have been sent to Muslim countries instead of to Christian Lebanon, it might be possible for Lebanon to still be a respected participant in world events. This migration was a terrible burden for Lebanon and its less than one million inhabitants, because almost all these refugees were without money and needed housing, food and clothing. After that export of humans from Palestine, there were only 200,000 Arabs left in Israel. Today, the number of Arabs there has grown to nearly a million. Lebanon and Jordan received more than their fair share, and those refugees have multiplied in numbers there, too.

Generally, these new-comers considered themselves to be, before all else, Muslims, and they lived unto themselves in refugee camps. They never participated in the day-to-day civic affairs of Lebanon, except to "lobby" for monetary assistance from the government, for health care and all the other necessities of life. Some of their women in Lebanon were shown on television making solemn vows to spend the rest of their lives "producing" babies to make soldiers who would drive the Israelis out of Palestine. Those displaced Palestinians adopted a slogan which said, "Push the Jews into the sea". To the eventual detriment of Lebanon, the population of those non-Lebanese immigrants grew by leaps and bounds!

Their refugee camps became the breeding grounds for terrorists who wished to overthrow the Israeli government and reclaim their homeland. The many raids they made into Israel, and the many car-bombings they fostered, only

made the Israelis firmer in their efforts to thwart the terrorists' attacks. Because they were filled with hate and frustrations and not satisfied with their unsuccessful efforts against Israel, many of them would eventually turn their attention to destroying Lebanon, their host country.

While the dislike of one another was steadily growing between the Christians and the overwhelming number of immigrant Muslims, in 1956, barely a dozen years after Lebanon found its independence, Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal causing the British and French to land military forces in Egypt. This crisis quickly escalated into an East-West confrontation between Russia and the United States. All the Arab countries of the area broke diplomatic relations with Great Britain and France, while Lebanon remained steadfast in its friendship with the West: Great Britain, France and the United States. The pro-Western stance of Lebanon aroused the hostility of Syria and Egypt.

The decision of Lebanon not to break its relations with the West caused the Muslim Arab world, including the immigrant Muslims in Lebanon, to again become inflamed in their hatred of Christian Lebanon. Now their slogan about pushing Israel into the sea became, "Today, the Jews; tomorrow, the Christians". And they meant it!

When the President of Lebanon, a Maronite Christian, accepted the "Eisenhower Doctrine", a plan put forth by the United States which would guarantee the independence of the nations of the Near East, including Lebanon, the anger of the Muslim population in Lebanon exploded, and civil strife gripped the tiny new nation.

Anarchy ruled the day as gun-toting Muslims roamed the streets killing as many Christians as they encountered. Lebanon's small army and police force were hardly a match for the Russian and Egyptian equipped Muslims. Many on both sides of the confrontation died.

The Christians of Lebanon felt even more fear for the safety and sovereignty of their nation when neighboring

Syria and Egypt united to form the United Arab Republic, and Iraq and Jordan formed the Arab Federation. And to give them more to fret about, immediately thereafter, the pro-Western government in Iran was toppled. These three events gave the Muslims in Lebanon a greater will to fight, and to do so more determinedly. In the meantime, the United States earned a new name from the fanatical Muslims, "The Great Satan."

The Muslims in Iran began exporting a terrorist movement to countries outside its borders. The largest group of Iranian terrorists, called Hezbollah, is now based in southern Lebanon from where they launch attacks against Israel, while others of them commit terrorist atrocities against Americans working or visiting anywhere, but especially in Western nations.

There exists in Egypt a Muslim terrorist group called Islamic Jihad. They, too, have followers in Lebanon and have exported their hatred around the world. They have been involved in terrorist bombings and killings everywhere.

In addition to Libya's Qudaffi, who funds and trains terrorists to kill non-Muslims, there is a Saudi Arabian multi-millionaire Muslim, Osama Bin Ladin, who hides-out in Afghanistan from where he sends out terrorist to commit murder and mayhem. It is estimated by the U.S. Government that he has a minimum of 3,000 fundamental Muslims trained to do his bidding. Bin Ladin called upon all "good" Muslims to heed the directives of their Faith and kill every American and Jew wherever they find them in every country of the world. It is rumored that he has offered a "reward" of ten thousand dollars to anyone killing an American.

Terrorist attacks have been carried out by one fanatical Muslim group or another throughout the world. Rockets were fired at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut, a car bomb in Beirut killed 241 U.S. Marines and 58 French soldiers, an explosion near a U.S. air base in Spain killed

18, a terrorist bomb on a TWA 747 airplane killed more than 300, a car bomb at a U.S. base in Germany killed 20, terrorists hijacked a cruise ship in the Mediterranean Sea and killed an American and threw him overboard, others bombed the U.S. Embassy in Beirut killing 63, they blew up three large airplanes belonging to non-Arab nations, in a German night club near a U.S. Army base one hundred fifty were killed by a terrorist's bomb, and the killing goes on and on. There have been more than 300 acts of international terrorism every year for many years. What hatred!

Those terrorists make up a very, very small percentage of the Muslim population, but they give all Muslims a bad name. There are many good, intelligent, hard working Muslims everywhere, especially in America. The surgeon who performs an almost miraculous surgery and saves lives might very well be a Muslim. The attorney who serves the needs of his clients in an honorable way might be a Muslim. The eminent professors in America's greatest universities might be Muslims. But their Muslim brothers who do all the hate filled killings give all of them a bad name.

In July, 1958 about 2,000 U.S. Marines arrived in Lebanon in an attempt to make peace between the Muslims and the Christian President Chamoun, whom they hated. Their presence did very little to bring about peace between the Muslim immigrants and the government. The Marines were withdrawn before order could be established in the country.

Coming under heavy pressure because of all the turmoil among the people, and because the country he loved was on the verge of collapse, President Chamoun agreed to resign, thinking this action would calm the insurrectionists. After Chamoun's resignation, a less pro-Western army commander assumed the presidency, and a bit of peace prevailed for a while.

Slowly the Lebanese economy began to improve, but

not fast enough for many of the Islamic refugees who wanted a bigger part of the prosperity which the Christians and a few Muslims were able to enjoy.

Those trouble-makers in Lebanon, who had encouraged terrorists to come into Lebanon to fight for their cause against Israel, persuaded the terrorists to turned their efforts against Lebanon instead. The fire which the terrorists rained down on Israeli villages south of the Lebanese border with Israel was slowed because their attention was turned towards their new enemy – Lebanon, the country which gave them refuge. The internal violence and subversion grew more fanatical day by day.

In the meantime, Palestinians refugees in Jordan were making raids into Israel from that frontier, and Israel was retaliating with destructive force against all of Jordan. Jordanian King Houssein, being fearful that the Israeli Army might invade his country, took defensive action to safeguard Jordan.

Because Jordan's army was much larger and stronger than Lebanon's, in 1971, King Houssein's forces fought the Palestinian refugees within the borders of his kingdom with such force that more than 150,000 of them fled to Lebanon, increasing the numbers of disgruntled Muslims in Lebanon to very dangerous proportions. This was dangerous for Lebanon and Israel, but much worse for Lebanon which had no strong military force to contain the anarchy of the Muslims already within its borders.

The foreign population make up of Lebanon became overwhelmingly Palestinian, followed by Jordanians, Syrians, Kurds, Afghans, and others from several Islamic countries. And none of these came to Lebanon to help it grow and prosper.

With a greatly enlarged refugee population in Lebanon, the Palestinian terrorists in Lebanon were emboldened to resume their raids against Israel until that country fought back with a vengeance. From 1970 to 1974, the Israeli Air

Force pounded suspected terrorist strongholds inside Lebanon as far north as Tripoli, while their armored divisions drove roughshod over everything in South Lebanon.

The Israelis bombarded Lebanese town after town until they drove their tanks into Beirut. Their excuse for the invasion was to weed-out all terrorists in Lebanon. We now know that their action had minimal results in removing the troublemakers. Well equipped Israeli troops still, to this day, remain in Lebanon occupying about one-third of its land in the south.

While Lebanon was able to stay out of all the past wars in that region, war came to it from within, from the Palestinian refugees; and from without, from the Israelis. While Lebanon could do nothing about the Israeli invasion of its sovereign territory, its small army fought as hard as it could against the Muslim militias within its borders. Those Muslim refugees were fighting for a share of Lebanon's prosperity even though they never declared their citizenship nor did they contribute to Lebanon's wealth. On the contrary, they were a heavy drain on the resources of their small host country, which they hated. They had no loyalty to either Lebanon or its flag.

1975 saw the fiercest fighting in Lebanon since the troubles began in 1948. A civil war broke out which pitted right-wing forces against left-wing forces, Christians against Christians, Muslims against Muslims, and Muslims against Christians. The civil strife intensified as the insurrectionists seized more and more of the peoples' land. In 1976, Syria gave strong support to its Islamic brothers, the Palestinian refugees inside Lebanon, by giving them money and equipping them with the latest Russian armaments.

However, when their PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) "brothers" began to make great gains against all their enemies in Lebanon, Syria reconsidered its position. Syria then feared that if a pro-PLO

government were to be installed in Lebanon, Israel might be provoked into an all out war against Lebanon and the PLO occupiers of Lebanon, thereby putting Israel's determined and mighty army across the long frontier abutting Syria.

Syria's position in that matter took a one-hundred-eighty-degree turn. Syrian President Asaad decided it was in his best interest to stop aiding his "brothers", and he began assisting Lebanon in quieting some of the Muslim forces which had become so powerful. Lebanon very quickly agreed to accept Syria's help, and that led to Syria moving its army into Eastern Lebanon, which Syria was very pleased to do. After that "kindness" from Syria, much of the fighting, ceased. The PLO leadership was expelled from Lebanon by the Syrian President in 1982. That civil war, which truly began with the coming of the first Muslim Palestinian refugees, was catastrophic for Lebanon in many ways.

The Lebanese government by now had completely collapsed, the economy was in shambles, its beautiful buildings were mere shells, and there were more than 40,000 people dead from the fighting. It has been estimated that it would require nearly three billion dollars to restore the property damage alone. Beirut was a gutted city with most of its wealth gone.

As late as 1982, there were still some 300,000 unemployed. Tourism and foreign commerce had vanished. Even worse than all of this, Lebanon was occupied by 30,000 Israeli troops, 70,000 Syrian troops and more than 11,000 guerillas of one group or another...in addition to the estimated 850,000 Muslim Palestinian refugees who had no allegiance to Lebanon, and whose numbers kept swelling everyday. Lebanon's population before the influx of all those foreign people was approximately three million citizens. Today it is about one and a half million. Most of its patriotic, industrious, educated people have fled.

The Lebanese people have a proud heritage. Since Phoenician times, they have been peaceful, excellent traders and businessmen, well educated and in the forefront of the “international” scene for advancement, growth, and improvement in lifestyle for all. But those who inhabit Lebanon now are not descendants of the Phoenicians. They came from other places and have no allegiance to Lebanon.

President Ronald Reagan, in 1982, in a gesture to all parties, sent a force of U.S. Marines to Beirut to act as peacekeepers. Because of past close ties between Christian Lebanon and the United States, the Marines were welcomed by the Christians, but not at all welcomed by the Palestinian Muslims. Syria let it be known that it, too, strongly opposed the presence of the Marines in Lebanon.

From time to time, shots were fired upon the Marines and one or two of them would be killed now and then. This harassment of the Marines continued throughout their stay in Lebanon, until the mass murder of many Marines took place. Late that same year, a suicide-terrorist drove a truck loaded with dynamite into the Marine compound killing himself and 241 United States Marines and 58 French soldiers. Shortly thereafter, President Reagan withdrew the remaining peacekeepers.

When Iraq invaded its neighbor, Kuwait, U.S. President George Bush, with the concurrence of a group of world leaders, formed a multi-national military force capable of invading Iraq to force their withdrawal from Kuwait. This was actually an American project, but to make it appear like the entire world was against Iraq, a few other nations agreed to be a part of the group.

With only Saudi Arabia and a couple of very small Arab nations voicing opposition to Iraq’s invasion, President Bush saw the need to include Syria in that force to show Arab unity in defeating one of their own. In order to get Syria to sign-on, President Bush allowed Syria to quietly occupy the

only remaining territory in Lebanon that was governed by the Lebanese Christians. To complete its part of the deal made with President Bush, Syria had to send only a very small, token number of men to be part of the multi-national force. Those soldiers were not expected to fight against their fellow Muslims in Iraq, and they saw no military action.

After President Bush's deal with Syria, Lebanon was then fully occupied by foreigners; the Israelis, the Syrians and the Palestinians. It no longer has any Christian leadership, nor does it have much to say about the day-to-day governance of itself.

Syria, which is well armed and assisted by Russia, is the dominant force in the daily life and regulation of Lebanon, and it dictates for Lebanon whatever it deems to be in the best interest of Syria. Lebanon's "puppet" President and Prime Minister do whatever they are told to do. The Syrian President played his cards like a sharp poker player while dealing with President Bush, and he won what he wanted all along: The occupation of fertile and industrious Lebanon. He accomplished that with no objection from any nation in the world. And now, the glory of Lebanon is in shambles.

Even though Lebanon, from its beginning, was the only true democracy in the entire Near East and Middle East, it was not allowed to determine its own destiny. Beirut, the "Paris of the Mediterranean" was until very recently divided by a "Green Line" which created a border within a border. This only enlarged the division between the patriotic Lebanese and their unappreciative refugee guests whose allegiance is not to Lebanon, and also between the patriotic Lebanese and their conquerors, the Syrians. To make matters worse, many of its hardworking, educated, middle and upper class citizens have left their homeland to begin anew in Europe or America. That "brain drain" has been very costly to Lebanon.

During the first few years of its fifty years of independence, Lebanon was an active member of the United

Nations, working for and defending the interests of other small, less fortunate nations of the world. In the last half of its independent life, it is being severely depressed, and its sacred land is occupied and desecrated by many strangers who have no real interest in the Lebanese country or its people. At present, there seems to be no strong nation willing to come to Lebanon's assistance in its darkest hour since the nation was formed.

If Lebanon's future could be foretold, it might show that Lebanon, which has been dominated by more powerful neighbors ever since Phoenician times, will somehow survive. But it will never survive as the Christian nation it was earlier on. The odds are too strong against that ever happening. Too many of Lebanon's Arab Muslim neighbors have moved into its once peaceful borders in overwhelming numbers and with such great force that Lebanon, on its own, can never overcome that heavy burden. It is only prudent to expect that solutions to the nation's problems will not come easily. Lebanon's government will possibly remain democratic in name for a while, but eventually it can become only a puppet state of one or more of its Muslim oriented neighbors, and it will continue to be occupied by alien people who do not care what happens to Lebanon. Since it is most unlikely that there will ever be another Crusade, it seems like the Crescent has become mightier than the Cross!

PART TWO

FROM THE CEDARS OF LEBANON

My story about my family.

Maybe this should be entitled, "Grandfather Remembers". I offer my memories so that you will know that I was once a kid, too. That I also had to be taught and had to learn from my parents and those persons in my life who were such good guardians of the history of my ancestors. I learned that those who went before me would be proud of me as I attempt to pass on to you what I learned about them, and about life during all my years on this good earth.

I learned that my paternal grandparents, Ameen Araigi and Nazha Estfan Araigi, who lived in Zghorta/Ehden, Lebanon, made several trips back and forth from Lebanon to the USA. The conditions of their travels is not known to me, except that I remember hearing that passengers were shuttled from the shore at Beirut to a waiting ship anchored some distance away because there were no port facilities for docking a ship in Lebanon.

Zghorta and Ehden are two towns in northern Lebanon about twenty miles apart. Uniquely, both towns are the hometowns of my people. Zghorta is located in the foothills of Mount Lebanon, about seven miles inland from the Northern port city of Tripoli, while Ehden is about twenty miles away and high up in the mountains near the famous Cedars of Lebanon of which the bible speaks. Most families live in their homes and work or operate their businesses in Zghorta during the cold months, and they live in "duplicate" homes and work in or operate "duplicate" businesses in Ehden during the warm months. Only a skeleton force lives

year round in each town. They are watchmen of some sort.

Picture of Ehdén without snow
goes here.

Under the cedars, overlooking the sea.


EHDEN

The picture of Ehdén WITH snow
goes here.

Winter's first snowfall.

In each of the two town of approximately twelve thousand inhabitants there are about seventeen parish churches: all Catholic, of course!

My maternal grandparents, Khalil Andraous and Nazha Maawud Andraous, had the same set-up as the Reggie Family: two homes, two work places, etc. like the rest of the citizenry. I regret that I do not have as much knowledge as I wish about comings-and-goings of Mamma's family, because they never emigrated to America. I do know, however, that they came from a long line of pious, religious people.

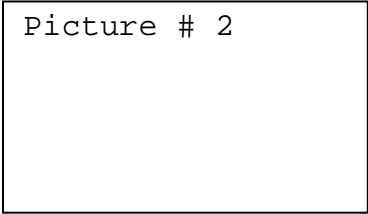


Picture # 1

Bishop Slimain Maawud, ca. 1825
Great Uncle of Victoria Reggie

Sitty's family, the Maawuds, can boast of having at least one bishop, several priests and monks in the very immediate family. Some in the family are direct descendants of married clergymen. For hundreds of years, priests of the Maronite Church were permitted by the Vatican to get married if they or their parents had sufficient wealth to support his family. Today, Maronite priests very rarely get married, if any at all do.

Picture # 2



Victoria Reggie's Great Grandfather
Father Yousef Maawud II on left,
with Pope Pius IX (with crucifix), 1868

At a time when my paternal grandparents, Ameen and Nazha Araigi, had only two children, Feyawd (my father, who was born on Christmas Day 1896) and Asaad, they made a visit to the USA sometimes around 1900. They left their two sons with my paternal great grandparents, Romanous and Dura Araigi.

Jiddy Ameen and Sitty Nazha, on their first voyage overseas, went directly to Mexico for a visit with his brothers, Pedro and Elias, who had been living there for some time, and then they traveled to Springfield, Mass. where his sister Rose (Wardie) Stevens lived. (The grandmother of Richard Stevens of West Springfield.) During their long stay in Springfield, a daughter was born to them, Adele; and another son, John, was born.

After a period of time they took their two small, American born, children and returned to Lebanon. But before very long, they made another trip to the USA, leaving all the children with their grandparents, Romanous and Dura. This time Jiddy and Sitty came to New Orleans because they had friends there who suggested a good living could be made in that area. I have no knowledge of Jiddy's occupation while in New Orleans. While living there, another daughter, Amelia, was born to them in 1910.

Shortly thereafter, while Amelia was still an infant, Jiddy became ill and they made yet another return to Lebanon where all the family was re-united again. Gradually, his health improved and he began to feel better.

As a means of making a living for his family, Jiddy Ameen engaged himself in some type of drayage business utilizing a horse and wagon. I was told he hauled olives and olive oil across the mountains into the Bekka valley between Lebanon and Syria where he traded for wheat, which he brought back to Zghorta.

On one such trip, Jiddy and his young son, Feyawd, who was the eldest child and one day would be my father, were ambushed by a band of Muslims in a wooded area

across the mountain top. Jiddy quickly instructed my future father to run for cover while he attempted to negotiate with the robbers. The bandits insisted on taking everything he was transporting in exchange for Jiddy's life. He agreed to give them all except his horse, which he told them he needed to earn a living for his family. At that point they shot him to death, cursing him and Christ, his Messiah. Then, they took everything, as twelve year old Feyawd watched from his hiding place. (ca. 1911)

Muslims generally hated the Lebanese because of their Catholic Faith and because the Lebanese were different from them. The Lebanese, as a rule, strove for their own advancement in the world while attempting to live the Gospel message. The Muslims, however, were contented to live unto themselves in nomadic tribes, moving from place to place, and shut away from the West. As the Christian Lebanese continued to advance themselves, the hatred and jealousy of our people by the Muslims became even more fierce. Turkey, Syria or Egypt, all Muslim nations, often warred to be able to include tiny and defenseless, though fertile and industrious, Lebanon in their boundaries.

As I write this, Syria occupies most of Lebanon with its army, and it compels all commerce of occupied Lebanon to be carried out only with or through Syria. Because of kidnappings and terrorism by fanatical Muslim groups there, America had imposed a travel ban for travel to Lebanon by Americans. That ban was in force for more than nine years for safety reasons. President Clinton has recently negotiated some kind of "open door" policy with the president of Syria and the "puppet" president of Lebanon. He took that action mostly at the insistence of Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy after my brother Edmund made the request of the senator. Lifting the travel restrictions could be good for US businesses which engage in international commerce, and also help Lebanon and its very few remaining Christian entrepreneurs.

One might think that in such a climate all our people

would have become cynical and lost faith in man and in God. They have not! Faith is all they have. Their real wealth is their firm belief in God. I write this so you can better realize that my family, and maybe yours, too, if you are not of the Andraous-Reggie lineage, enjoys a heritage which has a very strong religious foundation.

Sometime after Jiddy Ameen's death in Lebanon, my grandmother, Sitty Nazha, now known in America as Elizabeth Reggie and affectionately called "Lizzie", made another trip to the USA, bringing only Adele with her. Asaad and John remained in their grandfather's home, and Amelia was left to live with her brother Feyawd and his young spouse, Victoria Andraous (born April 16, 1898), and their only child, a son named for his grandfather Ameen. My widowed grandmother and Adele settled in New Orleans again.

Sitty, being the bread winner, began a business of selling fine table linens, fancy bed covers and other elegant items for use in the home. Her clients were the rich who lived in the large and beautiful homes on St. Charles Avenue and elsewhere in New Orleans and in its suburbs. Sitty carried a bundle of her goods under her arms as she walked from one prospect to another. God bless her. What a pioneer. Young Adele went to work in a furniture factory where she installed the cloth coverings on sofas and chairs.

After some time passed, my grandmother wanted Amelia to come from Lebanon to live with her and Adele in America. From an immigration standpoint that was easy because Amelia was already a US citizen because of her birth. Getting her to the United States was something else!

My grandmother sent my father funds to purchase tickets for ship travel to America for himself, my mother, Victoria (who was several months pregnant with her second child), my brother Ameen, who was about four years of age, and for Amelia, who was about eight years old. Papa secured a one-year visa from the U.S. Immigration Service for himself and his family.

It is not difficult to sense the fear and anxiety of my parents as they agreed to make the voyage to America to bring Amelia to her mother. Papa rarely traveled beyond the city limits of his hometown, and Mamma certainly never left her hometown except to move back and forth with her family and all the citizens from Zghorta to Ehden and back, as the seasons changed. They truly were small town people with hardly any worldly experiences.

In those days, passage from Lebanon aboard a freighter, which was not fully loaded with cargo and could accommodate passengers, would cost about twelve to fifteen dollars per person. Adjusted for inflation, that would be about one hundred and fifty-dollars in 1996 dollars. That meant Sitty Nazha must have had to amass the equivalent of six hundred dollars for their tickets.

They sailed from the port of Beirut, Lebanon aboard a freight ship (no Princess cruise ship) which made several stops along the northern Mediterranean coast to unload or take on more freight. Mamma recalled that the ship stopped at Athens, Greece, to unload cargo and to take on fresh water. The only other port-of-call she remembered was at Brindisi, Italy.

Eventually, they disembarked at Marseilles on the southern coast of France. Theirs might have been a voyage quiet similar to the one made by Mary Magdalene to Marseilles shortly after the crucifixion of Jesus. She died and is buried nearby in St. Maxime-en-Provence. Our Blessed Mother, Mary, along with St. John made their way north from Jerusalem through Lebanon, and on to Ephesus in Turkey.

At the time of my family's arrival in France, steamships to America were on some kind of strike and all ships remained in port. Because there was no ship ready to make the voyage to New York, my family rented a small upstairs apartment (read: inexpensive) in Marseilles while they awaited a ship to depart for the United States.

Their wait lasted about a month before ships began to

sail again, but none to America from Marseilles. The only ships going to the USA were leaving from LeHavre, France, so Papa arranged for his family to make a train trip up to that northern port city. After a short wait there, they were able to sign-up for passage on the ship, La Touraine, for the trip to New York.

In those days most passenger ships sold three types of tickets: first class, second class and steerage (at the lowest deck near the ship's steering machinery). It is not known with certainty which class my family "enjoyed" on their voyage, but I do know that only passengers in steerage (or third class) were the ones who were so carefully examined at the Ellis Island immigration facility at New York. And I do know that my parents were examined. There was even talk of forcing Mamma to return to Lebanon because of her condition.

The voyages across the Atlantic were generally of about fourteen days duration. I do not know how long the La Touraine took to make the crossing. I have some recollection of hearing that women slept in one area of the ship, dormitory style, and men slept in another area.

Everyone traveling in that class had to stand in line to receive their meals and ate wherever they could find space. Many, many passengers became sea-sick, and others hardly ate at all because the food was so different from the customary diets of their native country.

Mamma was very pregnant, less than two months from delivery, when she, Papa, Ameen and Amelia, in June 1920, sailed past the Statue of Liberty on their way to Ellis Island, New York, the nation's major immigration facility.

At the immigration center it was not unusual for families to be divided because one member was refused entry into the United States for medical or other reasons. All rejected persons would be returned home at the expense of the steamship company. The real dread, though, was being rejected and separating family members from one another. My family's first medical examination was

aboard ship, and other examinations followed after they went ashore. An examiner put a chalk mark on the lapel of Mamma's coat signifying she was pregnant. Later, I learned that mark might have been "Pg", for pregnant. That condition could have been cause for her rejection. In spite of the humiliation, and because of their prayers and pleading she was allowed to continue as planned.

All new arrivals went first to a ground-floor baggage room where they left their belongings. Then they climbed wide stairs to the Great Hall, also known as the "Hall of Tears", to await more examinations. This hall got its nickname because this is where many immigrants were rejected, separated from their family, and forced to return to their native country.

Some newcomers were deloused with a flea poison powder upon arrival and again before departing a few days later when the examinations were completed. Some, like Mamma, wore a chalk letter on their coat lapel which the immigration officers placed there to mark their sickness or their social behavior, such as "T" for tuberculosis, "X" for ex-convict, "B" for blind, etc.

While on the subject of markings, I'm reminded of a not so funny incident concerning some Italian immigrants, who at one time, came over in large numbers. Some of them wore a card hung from a string around their neck which stated, "TO N.Y." to insure that they would get to New York. Those letters led to many Italians being called "Tony". A real disgrace they suffered was caused by those who came here with out papers. They bore chalk letters which were "W.O.P.", and that led to Italians being derogatorily referred to as "wops". What a tough time all those scared, poor immigrants must have suffered!

Since the processing procedure for some immigrants required them to stay more than a day, those new comers were housed in dormitories on the island, and were segregated by gender for sleeping.

Because every immigrant was required to have a

“sponsor” in the USA, my father's sponsor was his mother. She had to take an oath stating that she could provide the needs for him and his family, and promised they would not be a burden upon the USA. After Papa and his family completed their examinations and received approval for entry, it was necessary for him to await word from his sponsor before he would be released to travel in the USA.

Papa would assemble with all the other hopefuls twice a day to listen for his name to be called so he could proceed. After three day of not hearing his name, when he was sure his mother sent the proper telegram to the authorities, he spoke of his plight with a Lebanese man who served as an interpreter and who had befriended him. That kind man took Papa to the central office in the Great Hall where he made an explanation in English of Papa's problem. After rechecking the roster of names, they found the name of Fred Reggie, but Papa knew his name to be Feyawd Araigi, not Fred Reggie.

Not knowing his "new" name cost them about three days delay and much worry in the halls of Ellis Island where they feared the authorities might reconsider Mamma's condition and send her back to Lebanon. However, Mamma did tell me that the immigration authorities at Ellis Island treated them with much kindness.

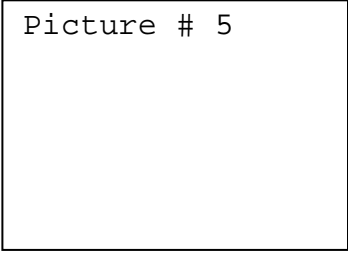
The Reggie name has gone through many changes in the past. The best records found by us show that early on, the name was El Shahyouny, for the name of a town in the holy land where some of my ancestors probably lived, then El Daher because they lived in a town atop a small hill (*daher*), then El Hayek because of that ancestor's trade as a weaver (*hayek*). The El Hayek name alternated with the name Beit Shababe (or Bet Chabeb), but El Hayek dominated. Later, because one of my great, greats owned a pack mule which had a slightly crippled leg (*araigi*) he became known as Araigi. And Araigi is still the family name in Lebanon to this day. In Mexico, too, the name is Araigi, but is spelled Arelle by some of the family. Only in the USA was it Anglicized to

become Reggie, which we use.

Near the immigration facilities on Ellis Island was a railroad station where newcomers boarded trains for all parts of the USA. This service was provided at the Island for the immigrants who were usually frightened, nervous and ready to listen to anyone who "seemed" to be helpful. These trains provided the means of shielding the immigrants from being duped by the "professional" cheaters and con men who were waiting on the mainland in New York City to swindle them out of any money they might have.

After the mix-up with Papa's name was straightened out, and other documents put in order, Papa and the rest of the family passed through the "Golden Door" to America and boarded a train for the trip to New Orleans to be reunited with my grandmother, Sitty Nazha.

In my mind's eye I can see my family at that moment: There was this young man, some seven thousand miles from home, whose name had just been changed, with his pregnant wife and one small son leaving Ellis Island for what was to become the beginning of the rest of their lives in America. How awing this must have been for all of them. (And he had his baby sister with him, too.)



Picture # 5

The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island, 1993

The Ellis Island immigration facility, during its sixty-two year life span saw more than 17 million immigrants pass through its doors to make a home in the USA. In 1954 it was closed and left to ruin. However, in November 1981, a massive restoration project was put into action to save this historic place. Funding for this ambitious work was by public subscription, and I am happy Barbara and I were responsible donors to this worthy project, and are Charter Founders of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation. Because of an added contribution we were able to have the names of Fred, Victoria and Emile Reggie engraved into the "American Immigrant Wall of Honor" which is located on the island. We felt this was the least we could do in honorable memory of our parents.

Ellis Island
Certificate

In the meantime, my grandmother had moved from New Orleans to Crowley to be near some of her cousins, Mrs. Azar (*Alcie*) John, Mr. Paul Karre (*Boulus El O-reeh*) and his daughter Mrs. Saleem (*Miriam*) Karre. Knowing this, should help answer the question: "Why did Papa and Mamma pick Crowley to begin their new life in this New World?"

Shortly after my parents' arrival in Crowley, my sister, Yvonne Marguerite, was born on August 1, 1920, in Sitty's house at number 564, on the East side of Avenue E, between Hutchinson and Sixth Street. So they told me!

After Papa was here awhile, he became restless because he had too little to do to keep himself occupied. He had been very active in Lebanon working as a stone cutter and/or as a drayman, and just sitting around doing nothing made him bored. At 570 Avenue E, at the southeast corner of Sixth Street, was an empty small building with a store-like front and a front room which measured about twenty feet wide by twenty-two feet long, and one long room behind which measured about twelve feet deep by twenty feet across. Here is where Papa, Mamma, Ameen and baby Yvonne would make their first home in America. Papa and Sitty Nazha sparsely stocked the front room with can goods and a few other items for sale to the neighbors. This was the first Fred Reggie enterprise in America.

As their one-year visa expiration date drew near, Papa told Mamma that in the few months of operating their little store they had earned a living and saved nearly three hundred dollars. He reminded her that he could not do that well if they return to Lebanon, and he asked if she would agree to stay an additional year. Since all her family was far away and she was very lonesome for them, Mamma reluctantly and tearfully agreed to Papa's request for one more year. Even though Mamma was the heart of the

family, Papa was still its head.

At this point, I need to digress to tell you that even though Mamma was a respectful daughter with a very religious upbringing, she broke with the norm in her home and, at age sixteen, eloped with my father to be married without her parents' consent! Can you imagine! She must have been tremendously in love with Papa. Mamma's very dear girlfriend, Lateefie Ashy (Olley), was with Mamma for the elopement and the wedding. I'll write more about Aunt Lateefie later.

Because Papa died at an early age in his life and I was too young to really know, I feel certain there was a strong love-bond between them throughout their years together, and they both respected and honored each other's wishes or ideas. I firmly believe this is why Mamma agreed to Papa's wish to stay longer in America.

Originally they came here only for a visit, and now they were facing a longer stay. That was not easy! But that's how love works. As we now know, that year led to another year, and another and another... to a full lifetime in Crowley. It was to be more than thirty years before Mamma would see any of her family in Lebanon again. My heart breaks for Mamma and I cry as I write this. She was such a good soul!

When Papa and Mamma decided to stay longer, they enrolled Ameen in the first grade of St. Michael School. This is worth telling because this is when his name officially changed to Emile. Since then he has used the name of Emile Anthony Reggie and, like a true American Catholic, he had a Saint's middle name. It was customary for a child in Lebanon to be known by his first name, then by his father's name, and then the family name. Example: Ameen ibn Feyawd Araigi would have been his name in Lebanon.

It has been told that when Emile came home one afternoon shortly after he began going to school, he was very happy to have learned a new song. When asked about the song, he proudly sang what he learned, "Zu zu zu za-lee". Later it was turned out to be "My Country 'tis of thee". It all

sounds so funny now, but can you imagine what all the English speaking must have sounded like to that five year old kid from the Cedars far away. I'm sure it wasn't easy on Emile, but he could handle it! And he could handle it all throughout his life. That's what pioneers are made of!

On October 6, 1921 I was born in the back room behind that little store at Avenue E and Sixth Street. I have never found the bronze plaque at that location marking such a great event. But then, the National Parks and Monuments Commission was not yet in existence.

Mamma was frail and in ill health for sometime after my birth. She could not take me to church for my Baptism. After a long delay while waiting for Mamma to get better, I was taken to church by Papa, Aunt Adele, Mrs. Saleem Karre, my godmother, and others of the family.

Across the street from our store/house lived a customer who was a carpenter, Mr. Ove Broussard, who was chosen to be my godfather. Between Mamma's love for the Holy Family, whose head was St. Joseph the carpenter, and Mr. Ove Broussard being a carpenter, I wound-up with a carpenter godfather and was given the middle name of *Yousef* (Joseph).

No original Baptism certificate for me was ever found, but the Baptismal Record at St. Michael the Archangel Church in Crowley *at one time* stated that a baby boy born on October 6, 1921 received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism on November 14, 1921 by Rev. A.F. Isenberg. The baby's name was written to be Joseph Reggie. His parents were listed as Fred Reggie and Victoria Khalil Andraous, and his sponsors as Ove Broussard and Mrs. S. Karre.

When I was an infant, my parents "named" me *Semaan*, after one of Papa's maternal uncles who had died a short time previously. Because I have had some people (from other areas of Lebanon and from *Daher Safra*, in Northern Syria) call me *Simhon*, I suspect the names *Semaan* and *Simhon* are the same, and both translate into Simon. (Either Peter or the other Apostle, Simon.) Evidently Father

Isenberg was not impressed with the name Semaan and recorded my name as Joseph Reggie. Nevertheless, I was called Semaan at home, while my friends away from home called me Sammy.

In September of 1927 when I was enrolled in the first grade at St. Michael School, and I guess because I was known as Sammy, some good nun, possibly Sister Mary Elizabeth, registered my name as Samuel (for Sammy) Joseph Reggie. I think that was the first time I had the name of Samuel.

When I was about thirteen or fourteen years of age, and while helping our assistant pastor, Rev. George Braquet, clean up some things around the rectory, he asked me, "Who is Joseph Reggie?". He had come across that name while re-organizing the Baptismal Records of the church. Upon checking the book we found his birth date was October 6, 1921, the same as mine.

Then and there, after my explanation, Father Braquet wrote in the first name of Samuel for that kid who was listed as Joseph. I finally and officially became Samuel Joseph Reggie. Later, when I became a bit wiser, I kind of dedicated myself to try to emulate Samuel of the Old Testament and humbly adopted his words as my motto: "Here I am Lord, your servant listens. Do with me what you will".

I need to write one more thing about my name. As a student in the eighth grade I fancied myself as being somewhat artistic. I suppose most kids go through that phase, sooner or later. Anyway, I tried printing my name with the letters slanted hard to the right, or hard to the left, with and without shadows from above or below, and on and on. Until one day I tried "stacking" Sammy on top of Reggie. There was no balance to that until I changed the "y" in Sammy to "ie". Then "mm" fit just right over "gg" and the "ie" of Sammie fit just right over the "ie" of Reggie. Voila! There it was, the "perfect" and new name for me, Sammie Reggie, which I informally use even today. "Now you know the rest of the story!"

Let's get back to the chronology of things. We lived another year or two at my birthplace before the family moved to a new location which had a larger store area and a bit more living space, 801 West Hutchinson at the southwest corner of Hutchinson Avenue and Western Avenue.

Attached to the store in back was a long room which ran the width of the building and served as kitchen, dining and living room. And behind that were two rooms, the larger used as a bedroom, and I don't remember much about the smaller one.

This place was in the middle of the Negro section of Crowley. Mamma was very afraid, having never seen a black person in her life. When she was in Lebanon, Mamma had heard about black people, but she had never really seen any. But being the wonderful wife and mother she was, she put aside her personal fears for the family's welfare. My very first recollections in life as a child are of things at this place.

I don't know for how long, but Sitty Nazha and Aunt Amelia lived with us behind this store for some time before Sitty became ill and was diagnosed a diabetic, with some other problems. Because she knew medical treatment in New Orleans was much better than in Crowley, she chose to go there, and took Amelia with her. They lived with a good friend whom we, respectfully, called *Sitty Mantoora*, even though she was not a relative. Her house was near the hospital where Sitty received her medical treatment.

As a child I was an early riser. I recall standing at the east window facing the street and responding to the crowing of a neighborhood rooster with my own crowing, "*min ah-book-roe*"! I think that translates into "at the daybreak" or something like that. I would do my "crowing" as a response to each of the rooster's crowing. I don't imagine the rest of my family was too pleased with my early morning antics.

Another recollection I have of this place is that Papa strung a piece of wire across the southwest corner of the store upon which Mamma draped a bed sheet. In this

corner, we children were given our baths in a large galvanized wash tub while our parents could "mind" the store, too. In winter, a hibachi-like heater made of clay was filled with charcoal and lighted to keep us warm. We called that "appliance" a *ka-noon*. It was also used by Mamma to roast chicken fryers and baseball-size *kibbies (a-ross)* when she prepared those kinds of meals for us.

I also remember that later on, Papa had the bottom of a large galvanized wash tub fitted with a kind of drain-pipe in its bottom center. He then had a hole cut in the floor of the smaller room at the rear of the living area and the drain pipe was lowered into that hole in the floor. This was our new bathroom! No more behind the curtain baths in the store! Since there were no sewer lines there then, the drain water was allowed to flow under the house and out to the ditch.

One vivid recollection I have is of Papa and Mamma taking us out for evening rides in the wagon. These enjoyable excursions must have been done on Sundays because I'm sure the store was open until eight o'clock in the evening, or later, every other day. Mamma usually placed a quilt and a couple pillows in the rear of the wagon where we children rode while she and Papa sat up front on the wooden bench seat. No seat belts were needed for that slow ride!

Since the roads were covered with loose gravel and the wagon wheels had steel outer-bands around their perimeters, the slow turning wheels made a crunching sound as they rolled around and around. With that rhythmic sound and the bumpy ride, I never stayed awake long. The "music" of it all regularly put me to sleep before too long. In fact, I never remember getting home from any of those rides. I'm sure Papa had to carry me in to bed before unhitching his horse(s).

At about this point in time, I'm not sure exactly when, Papa began a regular route of peddling canned goods, oil-cloth for table tops, wash tubs, yard-goods for sewing denim shirts and overalls, etc. in the Lyons Point area south of

town. He went from house to house in his horse-drawn wagon selling his wares. I have good recollections of going with him sometimes and being especially pampered by his good and kind customers. I was treated to homemade layer cake with crispy, crunchy white icing (unlike the soft, gooey kind of today), pralines and homegrown satsumas. We made lifelong friends of many of those good people of Lyons Point.

I should tell you of one story which was later told about Papa by one of his customers. In attempting to sell a large galvanized wash tub for ninety-five cents to his customer who spoke only French, Papa, who didn't know how to say ninety-five cents in French, did the best he could! He told the customer, in his halting French, "You give me one dollar, I'll give you a nickel." And he made the sale! God bless him, he was some kind of guy.

In 1924, shortly before we moved to a new location on Second Street, Papa bought a brand new Model-T Ford sedan, and this brought an end to the "horse-and-wagon" days for our family. We had moved out of the age of "horsing around" which had served mankind some twenty-five hundred years! I have very few memories of going with Papa in the car to peddle in the country. Maybe he quit making the country route about this time.

Later that year we moved to a better location on U.S. Highway 90, 702 West Second Street (at Avenue A), into another store building with house attached.

Here is where I have my first memories of Aunt Lateefie, of whom I wrote earlier. She had married Joe Olley and with their only child, Aline, lived in Lafayette. I think they settled there because Aunt Lateefie had family members in Lafayette.

Uncle Joe operated a grocery store on Scott Road, which was next door to their home, and he also had a bit of a "route" where he sold rice in one-hundred pound sacks to several small grocers. He came to Crowley frequently to pick-up rice from the local mills and always stopped to visit

with my parents. On some trips, he would bring Aunt Lateefie with him. They were like family to us.

Quiet often I drove back to Lafayette with Uncle Joe and stayed there for a visit of a few days, until he needed to return to Crowley for more sacked rice for his customers. I always enjoyed being in Lafayette with them. I suppose they must have spoiled me a lot, and I must have enjoyed it.

Aunt Lateefie used to tell the story about me asking her, "Are you my aunt on Papa's side or on Mamma's side?" When she replied, "On both sides", I would tell her, "Then that's why I love you so much." My parents always spoke of them as Brother Joe or Sister Lateefie while they called my parents Brother Fred and Sister Vick. Through all the years of her life, Aunt Lateefie would regularly take out a small shirt of mine she kept as a souvenir of my early childhood visits and show it to everyone around as though it were a precious relic of a saint, or something. But she was only manifesting her deep love for me, as she loved all our family. Such adulation was embarrassing, but cherished!

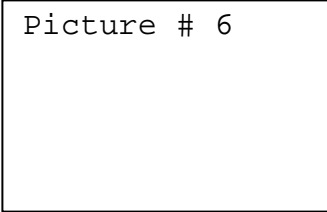
On one of my visits with them, Uncle Joe took me to a department store and attempted to buy a pair of pants for me, but I objected to that because I remembered how we were trained at home to never accept anything from anyone. When I made enough objections to trying-on the pants, he said, "These are not for you. They are for your cousin, Alphonse, and I just want you to try them on so I can see if they will fit him." And that's how I got my first pair of long pants! All of us have so many happy memories of Uncle Joe, Aunt Lateefie and Aline. They were always very dear to us.

On July 19, 1926 our baby brother, Edmond Michael Reggie, was born in this house. Like the other births before, Mamma was assisted by a mid-wife during delivery at home. I think the lady's name was Mrs. "Grandma" Meaux. She did this work on a regular, professional basis. And Uncle Joe Olley was chosen to be his godfather.

Besides Edmund being born at this place I cannot remember too many other outstanding events here.

We stayed at this location until 1929 when an even better and larger place two blocks away became available, and it was for sale. It was located at the northwest corner of Second Street and Avenue C, 502 West Second Street. Up until then, my parents were renting, but now they would begin owning some real estate of their own.

The store portion of the building faced south onto Second Street, and the living area, on the west and north sides of the



Picture # 6

Our First Family Portrait.
Victoria and Fred Reggie
Samuel, Yvonne, Emile, Edmund. Ca.1932

building, consisted of a kitchen and dinette which opened onto the store at the clerk's and cashier's position. Adjoining the kitchen on one side was a bathroom with no toilet; that was outdoors about fifty feet away. On the other

side of the kitchen was a nice, large dining room, something we never had before, and where we did our homework every evening after school under a beautiful light and glass shade.

Connecting through an archway was the living room. All I recall about its furnishings was a pot-bellied coal burning heater and a hand cranked Victrola for playing musical records, which were flat plastic discs with grooves going around and around under a needle which gave off musical sounds.

On very cold nights Mamma would heat a couple of bricks on top of that heater shortly before bedtime. When it was time for us children to go to bed, she or Papa would wrap a brick in a towel and place it in our bed to warm our feet while we slept.

Next to the living room and the dining room were two large bedrooms with at least two double beds in each of them. And beyond the bedrooms was a very nice-sized screened-in porch, which faced the back yard, and where Emile and I usually slept, after I got a bit older.

In the kitchen, in addition to a table with chairs where we had our every-day meals, was a stove and ice-box. The stove was fueled by kerosene (coal oil) which was kept in a side tank attached to the stove. And I recall it having only two burners, side by side, and it had an oven above the burner area attached to the stove by a back panel. I guess it was "up to date" for its time.

The ice-box was factory built of wood and was finished with clear varnish to show-off the pretty, natural grain of the wood. It stood about four feet tall and had a door in the top through which a block of ice about 12x12x12 inches would be lowered onto an un-painted galvanized metal shelf. There was a drain pipe attached to the shelf to drain water as the ice melted. That water was collected in a bucket which needed to be emptied regularly or it would over-flow. The front of the ice-box, which was about three feet wide, consisted of two double doors, which when opened exposed the contents of the ice box on two wire-framed shelves.

When we needed ice to make cold water or for other use, we opened the top door and chipped with an ice pick whatever we needed from the block.

Ice was replenished everyday when the ice man came house-to-house selling ice from his wagon. The ice blocks he hauled were very larger and were covered by a tarpaulin to protect them from the elements. The ice man would expertly cut with his ice pick a neat square piece from one of the large blocks for sale to his customers. The piece we bought always had to be rinsed by us with fresh water before placing it in the ice-box.

Because my family came from Lebanon where lamb meat was widely used and beef meat not too popular, Papa and Mamma had a natural taste for lamb. Mamma cooked most meat meals with lamb until she detected the children's lukewarm appetite for it. Gradually, we began seeing more and more beef meat used in our meals.

However, Papa would periodically buy a live lamb somewhere and bring it home to butcher. He set-up a scaffold of some kind in the back yard upon which he lifted the animal for skinning and dividing. Emile helped him hold an air pump hose to a slit in the dead sheep's skin. Papa then pumped air in to caused the skin to separate from the flesh.

Papa seemed to know what he was doing because in addition to bringing the meat to table, the hide was well cleaned and stretched-out to dry and cure. That always made a good throw-rug next to our beds, and it felt very comfortable on cold mornings.

Since refrigeration was minimal, Mamma had to find as many ways to cook the lamb as quickly as possible in order not to waste any of it. For that reason only a "small" lamb was usually bought for butchering. Most times the lamb was shared with others. I guess they reciprocated when they, too, butchered a lamb.

I can see, as I write this, Papa, after finishing all his work with the lamb, sitting at the kitchen table with us all

around him as he cut the fresh liver into small cubes. We ate the raw liver with salt and black pepper, wrapped in a piece of bread. That was delicious!

Mamma cooked all kinds of dishes with the lamb, but a few dishes stand out in my memory. Most prominent are three: *Dilaah*, *kirush* and *je-aught*. She made a rice dressing which she stuffed into the “pocket” of the rib rack before baking it in the oven. We called that dish, “*dilaah*”. That dish was always a favorite of Emile’s, but I never really relished it too much.

Now lets recall a couple dishes I *really* loved. Mamma spent hours upon hours cleaning the tripe and small intestines of the lamb after which she filled with a special Lebanese rice dressing and cooked in big pots on the stove or the *ka-noon*. That dressing was distinct and was used only for these dishes, and it was delectable. The stuffed tripe, *kirush*, was first class food, and the delicious and tasty stuffed intestines, *je-aught*, could be eaten by the yards and even then, I never really got enough. Even though this was lamb, eating *je-aught* could be called “eating high on the hog”.

That is a delicacy we have not eaten since Mamma began to get sick during her last days with us. No one is willing to take on the difficult and tedious task of cleaning and preparing the intestines the way she did. It’s now almost a lost art!

Mamma did not do all her cooking on the stove, nor indoors. Like almost every other Lebanese family, we had a handy, reliable and hot *ka-noon*, a clay lined “bucket” hibachi, on which Mamma roasted young, olive-oil-and-garlic seasoned chickens, or *kibby* which was shaped round, about baseball size, hollow, and with a bit of butter inside, or shish-ka-bob on a skewer. These things were regularly roasted as Sunday treats for dinner, and were cooked outdoors.

The *ka-noon* was also used for cooking figs, peaches and pears during season for preserving them. Not only did the

ka-noon provide more heat than the kerosene stove, but because the *ka-noon* was only used outdoors, all that heat stayed outdoors. Inside, the house was hot enough, especially in the summertime, without adding all that heat generated by cooking.

To make *kibby* in the early days before we had a meat grinder, we used a “transplant” from Lebanon called a *ji-run*: a block of marble with a round hole in its top measuring about six inches in diameter and six inches deep (a mortar?). A piece of raw, well cleaned and veined round steak meat would be placed in the hole and pulverized by slamming down on it with a wooden “pestle”. Instead of grinding the meat it was pounded into a smooth paste.

Later we used a hand grinder, which we children took turns cranking. Mamma made us turn the crank with our arm outstretched as far as we could reach so our head would not be over nor too near the grinder. For cleanliness sake! We enjoyed eating *kibby* right off the grinder, then, as much as we do today when Babs makes it!

Writing about Mamma’s *kibby*-making reminds me of her habit of making a cross in the top of the platter of *kibby* to bless it before it was served to us. She did that with her right hand held forward with the thumb up. Then, with downward pressure of her hand, the little finger would imprint the tree of the cross. Turning her fingers at right angle to the palm, she would once again press her little finger into the *kibby* to form the rest of the cross. She always blessed everything before she brought it to table. Everything which could receive an imprint of the cross got it, and other things received a blessings with the same hand movements, but without touching the surface of the food. Whenever we left home after a visit, and as we drove away, she made the same hand movements in our direction asking for blessings and safety for us. Babs has adopted the practice of blessing the food she prepares in the very same way. I hope our children learn from her.

Mamma’s every-day vocabulary was filled with blessings

or prayerful ejaculations of one kind or another. I remember so well the faith-filled idioms she regularly used: Whenever she had to do something gingerly, automatically she'd pray before beginning the project, "*Iss mu saleeb*", "In the name of the cross". Whenever something was accidentally broken, "*Iksur il shetone*", "break the strength of Satan": or "*Kasir il sharr*", "Hardfeelings are broken." Whenever someone did a favor for her, "*Salem da-yat-ak*", "May God bless your hands." To one she loved very much she'd say, "*Ya Deenie*", "You are as precious as my Faith". When one told her some good news, "*Allah yesmah*," "May God hear and make it so". If she became frightened about something she'd say, "*Ya Satyr*", "All you Saints, help us". If she heard of someone being ill, "*Allah yishfee*", God make him well". And the last one I'll tell you, whenever she reprimanded us as children, "*Allah een-ek*", "God help you (if you don't do as you are told)." Mamma didn't restrict her praying to special times. She prayed in all her speech.

In those days, one didn't just pick-up a jar of mayonnaise off the grocer's shelf to use in the kitchen. Mayonnaise was made at home, and for that, Mamma had a special mayonnaise-making apparatus. This thing was made of glass, cylindrical in shape, measuring about five inches in diameter, about twelve inches tall and was open at its top. On the outside, near the top were spiral threads onto which an aluminum concave lid was screwed. The lid had a small hole in its center through which a bent rod was inserted. The rod had a ninety degree bend near one end to form a handle, and at the other end was affixed a flat round disk which had many holes.

The ingredients used to make mayonnaise were placed in the jar, the lid was screwed on, and salad oil was slowly added through the hole in the lid while one swiftly raised and lowered the handle to blend the ingredients together. If done properly, good, smooth mayonnaise was had! Yvonne was the expert and official mayonnaise maker in our family.

Emile was always a tinkerer and good with his hands. Among the many things he built by hand was a radio. He and a friend built what was known as a crystal-set radio, powered by dry cell batteries, and it had earphones for listening. The radio required an antenna, so he stretched a special wire across the back porch, which ended next to our bed, connected to the radio. He would relax in bed and listen, on good nights, to the one station it received. I think that station was WWL, the clear channel station in New Orleans which had strong kilowatt power. When he wasn't around I'd try to get in a little listening time, too. Then I'd "catch-it" for draining the batteries.

Emile, at one time had his own car which we called a "flivver". Somehow, he removed all its top and door posts so nothing was protruding above the height of the seats. He painted the sides of the car using bright yellow and red paint. He covered the standard black paint with daubs of yellow and red by dipping a sponge in each color paint and touching the sponge to the car here and there. What a "loud" car that was! But I guess it was sporty for those days.

With this house we had a larger back yard than any other where we lived. Here we had plenty play area and space where Papa regularly planted a small garden which contained things like tomatoes, squash (yellow and white), long black eggplants, cucumbers, parsley, etc. Every year it was always laid out like an architect had designed it: everything was so neat and straight! And he designed an irrigation system that required very little time and had hardly any loss of water. He just knew how to do things! He was the greatest!

The store, by standards of that time, was large and roomy. At one time or another, in addition to groceries, we sold men's and ladies' shoes, men's suits, socks, underwear, overalls, khaki pants, etc. We also had a fresh fish market and a meat market. Homemade sausage was made weekly, and on the days when the sausage was smoked (in a special little building outdoors), I usually ate no supper. Hot

sausage in white sliced bread was a treat to end all treats. The days when the butcher cooked hog crackling were tough on me, too!

On Saturdays the "left-over" fish from Friday was cleaned, cut into chunks, deep fried and sold to the customers for a snack or to take home for supper. Cigarettes were sold by the pack and sometimes one at a time for one cent each. And we always provided a match for lighting-up.

Picture # 7

Papa's Store

Every child who came in as a customer or with a parent was always given a small treat called "lagniappe". Sometimes the adults too, asked for lagniappe and were never refused. Papa wanted it that way. We also had a delivery boy who rode a bicycle with a basket on the handle bars to deliver meats to customers who phoned in their orders.

As we outgrew our childhood each of us was expected to work in the store every Saturday, the day of the week when our business was at its best. In those days customers had to be "waited on" because the self service concept of today was not yet in vogue. Many items came to us from the wholesalers in bulk containers and required us to weigh or measure out these items in amounts to satisfy our customers. There are so many good memories of that place.

Really, this is where we "grew up", where we learned basic, moral business practices. For example, if we weighed out a half pound of sugar for a customer, Papa insisted the pointer on the scale *had* to be at eight ounces, or more. This could require going several times, back and forth, from the scale to the sugar bin to get it right. But Papa insisted that's the only way it could be done. He was a trustworthy and honest man! We learned to appreciate our customers more and more because of Papa's example. He told me many times, "Remember, life owes us nothing. It's because of the goodness of others, we are here, and we need to always be honest with them". He was such a good teacher!

Sometimes Yvonne and I had contests to see how accurately we could hit the correct ounce or pound mark in weighing commodities for our customers. She most often didn't need to add-to, nor subtract-from, the amount she put in the paper bag on her first try. We also tested ourselves with ladling cooking lard into a "boat" tray: four ounces for a nickel or eight ounces for a dime! While a whole pound sold for fifteen cents. She usually won those contests, too.

We had many customers come to our store from the

Lyons Point area where Papa peddled in past years. They now had automobiles and could come to town to shop. And they did not forget Mr. Fred, or "*Tee Marchand*" (Little Merchant), as the young and old affectionately called him. They shopped with us even though there were many other stores they could patronize. And Papa extended credit to them from one rice-crop to the next.

Quite a few of them bought what they needed throughout the year and "charged it" until they could sell their crop, or others, until the rice mills opened and they went back to work again in the fall and winter. In some years things didn't work out as planned.

During the depression years, prior to the Democrats' victory in 1932 which elected Franklin Roosevelt to his first term as president, there were many heartbreak years for so many! With massive bank failures many lost their meager savings, and when the crop was poor they couldn't pay for their year's purchases, and if the mills did not keep their employees working enough weeks, they earned too little to pay in full their charge account with us.

I remember seeing Papa many times tearing out their charge pages from the ledger and telling them to forget what they owed and could not pay. He would pat them on the back and tell them, " Don't worry. Just try again for another year. Your credit is still open to you at Fred Reggie's store". He was suffering from the depression as they were, but he felt sorry for them. This was charity at its highest and brotherly love at its best. This was the place where we all learned to not only be clerks, but caretakers too, of our customers. Papa taught us much just by his example! I can never recall regretting a day of it.

Before leaving the topic about Papa's generosity and charity I will relate one particular incident. One day, a woman who came to buy some food items she needed, told Papa what she wanted to buy. After he filled her order and tallied the total cost for the items, she discovered she didn't have enough money to pay for everything. She then asked

him to keep certain items until another day when she would return. He was aware that she needed those items she suddenly decided to leave behind, so he offered to give them to her without cost. The woman refused the free food items, telling him she knew he had a family of his own and should not give her the groceries.

Later, we learned, she heard a noise outside her home and upon going to the front door saw Papa get into his car and drive away. When she stepped outside, she found a box of groceries on the front porch. Papa had secretly put that box there and left!

I say without brag, Papa's generosity and charity has been a lifelong lesson for my siblings and myself. On many occasions he told us, "I will never leave you a large cash inheritance, but I promise you that I will leave you a "good name". And that, he really did! This was to be the store Papa would operate until his sudden death from a heart attack in June, 1943, when he was only 46 years of age. Oh, how we have missed him all these years.

Because Emile went to work at an early age, and because he seemed so much more mature than I, Edmond and I, with about five years difference in age, became close playmates. We had some wonderful times making and playing *without* store-bought toys: a wooden apple crate on two wheels with a handle became a pushcart, which could go as fast as you could run; or a crate with four wheels, two out front, guided by twine to go left or right became our car; or a couple of short two-by-four scraps nailed to form an "L" with discarded skate wheels underneath became a scooter; or we could get hours of fun from playing with an empty thread spool, with notches cut into each side rail and a rubber band twisted with a sucker-stick to make it plow through the mud like a tractor, and on and on.

Maybe that's why I still have "that special thing" for Edmund! In addition to being brothers and regular playmates, we were really close friends. (Ps 133:1) Except once, when he got mad enough with me to throw a hammer

at me which hit me on my head. (Please, no jokes allowed about being hit on my the head. That had no effect on me, whatsoever. That's not the reason I am the way I am!)

To make another point, let me tell you about our footwear. We certainly always had dress shoes, which were spit-and-polish shined before each wearing because that's what Papa insisted on, and taught us by his example. His shoes were always shined like a mirror.

Our everyday footwear was what was known as "tennis shoes". These were made of canvas and rubber, and were always "high-top" (covering the ankles) and came only in solid white or solid black (no Reeboks or Nike's here). There were no specialty shoes for walking, for running, or for basketball as there are today. One shoe did it all! We wore these to school when we were very young, except on cold or wet days, and we wore them to play. I do not remember the price of children's tennis shoes, but I do remember selling men's and women's for one dollar a pair.

Yvonne, when not helping in the store, was mostly with Mamma, learning how to properly set a table, or learning the many things that mammas teach daughters they love. She played with us too, but not in all that dirt and stuff. Very early on she became Papa's secretary in addition to being his "pet." She checked all the invoices in the store, made and paid out the checks, put the bank deposits in order and many such "office" things as were needed.

Yvonne was also good at calling Edmond and me in from play to uncrate the apples, oranges, lemons and canned items as they were delivered. All three of us were "stock boys." We learned at an early age how Papa wanted those things stacked on the shelves, and displayed in order to appeal to the customers, and Yvonne saw to us doing it, and doing it correctly.

It was while we lived at this place Mamma accidentally learned (because "they" thought it best to keep the news secret from her) that her brother, Boutrus, an officer in the French army, was killed in action against some Muslim

forces. Lebanon, uniquely Catholic and an "island" in the sea

Picture # 10 Young MammaVic

Victoria Andraous Reggie, 1930

of Muslim Arab kingdoms. autocracies or dictatorships, was ruled for many years by Muslim Turkey. After World War I and the defeat of Turkey by the Allies, Lebanon was happy to become a protectorate of Catholic France which guaranteed its religious freedom. It was during this period when Uncle Boutrus was killed.

Sitty Nazha in Lebanon, Mamma's mother, upon receiving the French Military Medal for Valor posthumously granted to Uncle Boutrus at a public military ceremony said, "I am saddened and grieved to lose my son, but for France I now offer my other son if he is needed." Lebanon remained a French protectorate until after World War II when it gained its total independence.

Realizing that Papa had wanted her not to know the bad news about Uncle Boutrus' death, Mamma never told anyone she knew of it, and she never spoke his name again until she and Yvonne went to visit in Lebanon in 1954. In addition to Boutrus, Mamma had another brother, Said, and three sisters, Maria, Frangeye and Josephine.

Here too, at 502 Second Street, Mamma learned another piece of very bad news: Of the death of her father, Khalil. The news came in a letter signed "Nazha, the widow of Khalil Andraous". I remember Papa being so shocked that he grabbed a meat cleaver that was at hand and struck it hard into the chopping block of the meat market. I think he must have felt some blame for overstaying their first one-year visa, thereby depriving Mamma of some valuable time with her family. How hard this news was for her and all of us. She had not seen either her father or her brother since she left Lebanon for a few months visit to bring Amelia to her mother. That was a costly few months for her!

I recall being told that Jiddy Khalil was a very mild mannered and genteel person who was deeply religious and was closely associated with the Church. Because he was the keeper of the keys for his Parish Church, he was regarded as being as much in charge of the church as was the pastor.

One night, someone knocked on the door of his home and Sitty Nazha asked who it might be. The reply was, "*Giryis*", the Christian name, George. When Jiddy opened the door, he was surprised to find a Muslim standing there with a gun in his hand. He cursed Jiddy's Messiah, and shot him to death. Had the man used his true Muslim

name when Sitty asked who was knocking, the door would not have been opened so freely. I have a problem at this time verifying all the details surrounding Jiddy Khalil's death...or even his life's work.

We all knew that he and Sitty were land owners of some distinction and had many olive trees from which olives were harvested and olive oil made. He could also be called a "silk farmer" because he owned an elaborate set-up of bins and trays wherein the silkworms did whatever they do to make silk. This silk enterprise was on the outskirts of Zghorta at a place known as "*il dwa-leeb*", the wheels. I think it was given that name because it was located on a stream of water which turned the wheels of the "mill" where the silk was spun or processed. Jiddy Khalil did not personally do the work of harvesting, etc., he had hired-hands to do all the required work. A skeleton crew worked year-round caring for the silkworms, and doing the plowing, fertilizing, etc. under and around the trees.

Migrants were hired at harvest time for picking the olives, and for the delivery of them to the olive-oil pressers and canners. Those people were known to us as "*Dirzey*" because they belong to a secretive sect of Muslims properly named Druses. Later in time, apple orchards were planted on Jiddy Khalil's unused land, and apples became another crop that was sold commercially as a source of revenue.

Sometime after receiving the news of Jiddy's death, Papa wrote to Mamma's mother, my other Sitty Nazha, offering to send her a ticket so she could come to America for a visit, or, as he preferred, to live with us in our home. Sitty wrote back to thank Papa and to explain that it was too late in life for her to come to America. She was occupied with her family responsibilities there and she was, ever since my grandfather's death, the "keeper of the Church keys" of her parish church, a responsibility she held solemnly and seriously.

Events happen in life that we can neither control nor explain, and each one reacts to these happenings in his own

way. Mamma never got over Jiddy Khalil's death, just as she never stopped mourning the death of Papa, which would happen later. I can understand her feelings now, better than ever before.

Even though Emile worked at an automobile repair garage for a Mr. George Robichaux, he had his duties in the store, also. That is, until he was in a position to own his own gasoline filling station across the street from Papa's store. In addition to selling Sinclair or Shell gasoline and oil, he had a car washing and greasing service. In those days all cars needed grease to be injected into joints and connectors in their underside. Now, both of them, Papa and Emile, had businesses on Highway 90, called "The Old Spanish Trail", which began at Jacksonville, Florida and ended at Los Angeles, California.

And I cannot leave out Mamma, who certainly did her share "waiting on" customers in addition to her child rearing and housekeeping chores. Mamma was quick to pick up the Cajun French language spoken by our customers and thereby earned their trust and love. The French language came easily to her since she had been taught in school by French nuns.

Diplomas in Mamma's time at school were printed in Arabic and French because French was the international language which all Lebanese children learned. Because she was so bright, it was not difficult for Mamma to learn to read the Crowley newspaper which was printed in English. And she was always abreast the latest news: local, regional and international. She loved politics and political news.

It was very natural for Mamma to participate in all the work and planning associated with our family business. She had a very good business sense, and she always worked hand-in-hand with Papa. What a team they were! Even though Papa had very little formal schooling in Lebanon he taught himself to read, and was a regular subscriber of two Arabic language newspapers, one published in Beirut and the other in New York.

Later in life, I learned that Mamma had a way of hiding a bit of money from Papa as savings for their future. Every now and then Papa would tell Mamma how he would like to buy a certain plot of land upon which to build rental houses. You guessed it! She almost always had enough saved for at least a good down payment.

After their combined considerations of Papa's idea, they frequently agree to do it. Then, between the bank, Acadia Lumber Yard, and a carpenter or two, he would get that project completed. That scenario was to repeat itself several times during their life together. When Papa died, Mamma had a good income from the rental properties they owned, which sustained her throughout her lifetime. God bless him...and her! They made quite a team. And I strongly believe, a team built upon a genuine love relationship.

If I ever wondered how our parents loved one another, I had to wait until later in life to more fully understand it. I always knew they loved us, their children, because they showed it by their care for us, and by the fair way they disciplined us. I now realize that my parents were each other's world, in a special way. In later life, as my own family grew, I better understood that, although children are loved dearly, they were not chosen like parents choose one another. Parents have a different kind of love for one another. But, no matter, there always was enough love to go around to all of us!

Even though Yvonne and I were born only about fourteen months apart, she was two years ahead of me in school because she was smart enough to pass, at one time, two grades in one year. She was a whiz with the books! She was a good all around student, an excellent basketball player who lettered all four years of high school, and the faculty and her classmates chose her to be the recipient of the prestigious American Legion Award. This was awarded only to the graduate who was an exceptionally good student, and whose personality personified the best Christian and civic principals.

Poor thing, she was also the one who the good Sisters always called to witness some trouble I got into at school, and she was often told to go home and report my misconduct to our parents. She was put in a bad bind many times because of my mischief!! I always figured "boys will be boys," but it was a shame that I brought so much anguish to my sister. She didn't deserve it!

Let's talk about me. Almost immediately after I began going to St. Michael school I had a bit of a hard time of it. Some of the boys in my grade wouldn't play with me because I was some kind of foreigner, or because we lived in West Crowley which, in those days, was called Coon Town or Promised Land. Some of the tougher boys would kick me or take my marbles, few as they were, and fling them as far as they could. They called me ugly names, one of which I had never heard before, "Dago." I didn't know what that meant, and when I asked my parents, they too, didn't know. Later I learned it to be a terrible name to call anyone. Emile, too, had a much similar experience when he first began going to school.

In Lebanon my people had suffered because of religious differences and hatreds, but I wondered why this need happen in a Catholic school, among Catholics. I received much support from my parents, who were very positive people. And they were not the type to dwell on ugly things. We did not have a lot of money, but our family life and our home were filled with self respect and an appreciation for family and for the things with which we had been blessed.

And if you think one language is good for explaining why one must overcome those hateful things, two are even better. For you see, we all spoke two languages at home and that made it "twice better" to sooth any insults we received. How fortunate it was for us to speak more than one language, and to have such a supportive family.

My brothers and my sister and I were of the understanding that we need not set our eyes on what we did not have, but to see and appreciate the good things we did

have. We accepted this creed because our parents were such good teachers, in word and example. (Because this is written mostly about myself and how I remember things and events, there is much to be said about the parts played by Emile, Yvonne and Edmund in our early years. Maybe they will put their stories and their views on paper someday.)

I did have some very good playmates at school at that time, however. My best and closest friend was Alexander O.

Sigur, who was later to be ordained a priest and be honored by the Holy Father with the title of Right Reverend Monsignor. Eventually, he would become the Rector of Notre Dame Seminary in New Orleans, and later become the Vicar General of the Diocese of Lafayette. There were also Louis Landry, Percy LaFosse, Henry Helo, Johnny Vondenstein and others.

Away from school I had a different set of friends. They were boys who lived near our house and whose parents traded at Papa's store. They were all Negroes, and they were wonderful playmates. None in my family knew about segregation of the races, so I had a good time playing with those boys.

One day while at play with some of my young black friends across the street from our store in the yard of St. Theresa's Church, the parish priest came out to tell the boys it was time for altar boy practice in church. Well, naturally I went too. I wanted to be an altar boy also. When we entered the church, Father told me I had to leave because this meeting was just for the boys of St. Theresa's Church. He told me, "You will have to go see your pastor at the white church if you want to serve". This was my first recollection of segregation. And it was in reverse.

Later in life I would glean from things I read that even God, in His infinite wisdom, (I do not mean to be sacrilegious when I write this) practiced a kind of racism when He picked the Jews to be His chosen people, at the expense and expulsion of the Canaanites from Palestine who were driven north into what is now Lebanon. So you

see, if God willed that, I guess I could accept that priest's sending me away. But, as evidenced by this writing I never forgot the incident!

When I was in the second grade I was chosen to be an Altar Boy at St. Michael Church and would be in the Holy Thursday procession in church. Was I happy! Mamma handmade my cassock of white linen cloth. She also sewed a red satin shoulder cape with gold fringes, and a wide red satin waist band for me. I really looked forward to wearing my altar boy outfit with great anticipation!

Picture # 14
2nd Grade Group Picture

Emile and I went to town after school for haircuts on the Wednesday before that Holy Thursday. Because he was an altar boy, too, we both needed to look clean and proper for Holy Thursday. On our way home, about three blocks up Second Street, I began to feel severe pain in my right side. It

became so bad Emile put me on his back and carried me home.

Early Thursday morning Dr. H.L. Gardiner performed an appendectomy, and discovered my appendix had ruptured! I'm told he had a tough time getting my insides all straightened out again.

I awoke Easter Sunday morning to see a genuine Easter basket hanging from the chandelier in my room. The "hospital" had been a family home for someone, located next to the present Rice Hotel on West Third Street, at Avenue F. The house still stands today. (And there's no monument there, either!)

I didn't go back to school that year because it took me a long time in getting fully recovered. Dr. Gardiner had left a part of the incision un-sutured, leaving an open, round hole about the size of a quarter in the skin of my stomach into which a few tablespoonfuls of Mercurochrome were poured twice daily. What great medical science we had then. Wow! Papa bought Mercurochrome in a gallon jug as needed. Remember, I wrote earlier about the primitive state of medical science of that time.

After a few weeks, when I was able to walk outdoors again, Mamma, in order to keep a promise she made when I was so very sick, took me to beg door-to-door several blocks in all direction from home as an act of thanksgiving for prayers answered. At each house we visited she begged for alms to give to the church, as she had promised to do during my surgery. She took the money people gave her to St. Theresa Church because she felt that was a poor Parish, and that was where money was most needed. Mamma had a special love for St. Theresa church all of her life.

Mentioning that hanging Easter basket reminds me that Mamma usually made our Easter baskets every year after we had gone to sleep on Holy Saturday night. She would take a cigarette carton and cut off the long flap which was its top. Then she partially filled it with green grass from the yard and carefully placed on top of the grass a couple of

dyed boiled eggs. The eggs were usually all the same color because they were boiled in water with onion skin, which gave all the eggs a tan color. Also in our basket we usually found a few candy-coated marshmallow eggs, many jelly beans, sometimes a Baby Ruth candy bar, and always the much cherished twenty-five-cent coin! We were so happy when we awoke on Easter morning and found our basket under the bed. It was alleluia time in more ways than one!

While we're talking about Easter, I should tell you about an annual springtime ritual in our home. The day after Easter, Mamma gave all of us castor oil to insure a good spring clean out! This was the best, or worse, cathartic agent known at that time. Mamma would stir a couple tablespoons full in a glass of orange juice to help us down it.

Later, castor oil gave way to Epsom salt which was drunk in warm water. Ugghh! And then it was chicken broth the rest of the morning. I promise you, we were ready to go back to school after that kind of holiday.

At a later time I was trained to be a "real," full fledged altar server, that is, to serve more often than only on special holy days. Whenever we were in procession or in the Sanctuary of the Church we were compelled to hold the palms of our hands together with our fingers pointed to the heavens. And we were supposed to place one thumb over the other to form a cross. It was that, or we could not serve! We were never allowed in the sanctuary if our hands were in any other position – during Mass or otherwise. We could never walk around with our hands just *clasped* together, and certainly never swinging at our sides. We were also taught to bow slowly and respectfully towards the altar anytime we came or went anywhere in the Sanctuary. And one never passed the tabernacle without genuflecting. Not just a bow, as some do today. Genuflecting meant touching the right knee to the floor.

In those days we learned to respond in Latin to the priest celebrant. Today the congregation responds to the celebrant. This meant learning several Latin prayers of

which a couple were real tongue twisters, but it was gladly done. I was so very happy to serve at the altar! In fact, I also served when I went to Scout camp, when I went to college and when I was in the Air Corps.

After my return from the service, and even after Barbara and I were married, Edmund and I had a regular assignment to serve at the early Mass on every Sunday at St. Michael Church. We did that for several years until the early Mass was discontinued.

Because of the precise way, the military way we moved about the sanctuary with sharp right or left turns, our profound bows to the altar, our articulate Latin responses, etc, Bishop Schexnayder, our pastor, often told Edmund and me, "I have not seen such altar serving since seeing monks in a monastery at Mass." We accepted his remarks as being very highly complimentary!

Serving at Mass was about the highest honor I ever received in my young life. I was always really happy when I served at Mass. I still feel honored even today when I serve at the altar at weekday noon Masses. I have joyful memories of many great occasions when I was chosen to serve. To name a couple: the dedication and blessing by Bishop Jeanmard of the "new" St. Joseph Church in Rayne, and the annual diocesan rally at Grand Coteau on the feast of Christ the King. These were celebrated with much pageantry and pomp for all the people of the diocese to attend, and they were great in our lives as altar servers.

At home Edmund and I regularly pretended to be priests celebrating Mass: usually with one of Mamma's large dish towels draped over our shoulders and pinned around the neck. We used the chest-o-drawers in our bedroom for an altar. Most times he was the priest and I the server. Being an altar server was a mighty big thing in my life, and it still is one of the biggest honors for me whenever I am fortunate enough to be at a Mass where there is no altar server.

As a very young altar boy I was fortunate enough to frequently and regularly serve for the 9:30 Sunday morning

Mass. I was glad because that was the Mass Papa usually attended. Mamma usually went earlier so she could get our Sunday dinner prepared for noontime.

Papa sat in the first pew, and it was easy for me to catch his eye whenever I didn't know my next move. Then, he would motion some directions to me to save the day! After Mass when I voiced some embarrassment he always made things easy for me. He consoled me with his encouraging compliments, "You're doing much better than before. You didn't make as many mistakes as last Sunday". He really knew how to "pump me up" when I felt so low!

All of us regularly went with Mamma to the Tuesday night Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and I almost always served for the Benediction and exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. First Friday Mass, too, was a must for all the Reggie children. Even when we completed our "nine first Fridays", Mamma encouraged us to begin anew another nine.

Let's go back to St. Michael School once more. The first school was a large, two story wooden building at the corner of Avenue F and Hutchinson. At one time the top floor had been the church for St. Michael Parish and the bottom floor, the St. Michael School, was divided into six rooms which were used for classes. By the time I started school in 1927, a new church was already built at the other corner of the block, where it stands today. The upper floor in the wooden building, which had been the church, was divided into three more classrooms. I would someday be in every one of those upstairs classrooms.

There was also a one-class-room building west of the school building in the playground area. (About where the cafeteria now stands.) I never went to class out there. I began first grade in the first room upstairs facing Avenue F. From there I was to go to a new room in the main building each year during the eight years of elementary education.

In between the school building and the new church was a large, three story building which was the home of the

Sisters of the Most Holy Sacrament, our teachers, and where they housed girls who boarded throughout the school year.

As the boarder census decreased, the Sisters allowed some rooms in their "convent" to be used for classes. Early in my ninth grade, my class was in a room in the sister's home, while the wooden school building was moved (yes, moved on six-inch wood rollers and pulled by cables wound on a "spool" by a team of horses going round and round around the spool) to the "neutral ground" (the median) in Hutchinson Avenue. It was moved there to make way for construction of a new brick building, which was completed in 1936. After Christmas of that year, my ninth grade class moved into the new school building in a large room upstairs, facing Avenue F, where I also completed the tenth and eleventh grades.

It's been said, "What goes around, comes around," and so it was with me. I began school at St. Michael's in a room upstairs facing Avenue F and finished in a room upstairs facing Avenue F. If you wonder about when I attend the twelfth grade, wonder no longer. In those days we were smart enough to finish in eleven years. If you believe that, I have a bridge over the Mermentau River I want to sell you. By the way, the only part of my graduation song I remember says, "When it looks like all is up, keep a'going, keep a'going." It may not rank up there with "The Impossible Dream," but it inspired me. For the rest of my life!

I cannot write about my life without including a little bit about those wonderful ladies who taught me academically in the class room, and who developed my faith-life through their example in and outside the classroom. They were the Sisters of The Most Holy Sacrament. They were strong helpers with my parents to attempt to mold us into "good" Catholic persons. Even though some of them were not overly astute in Theology, they "preached" a great sermon by the exemplary lives they lived. I can never express my gratitude for all they did for me.

From my first grade teacher, Sister Mary Elizabeth, right on through to all the Nuns in my life, I owe a debt a deep love and appreciation for Sister Mary Benigna, Sister Mary Consolata, Sister Mary Angelica, Sister Mary Bridget, Sister Mary Angelina, Sister Mary Teresita, Sister Mary Adelith, Sister Mary Laura, Sister Mary Louise, Sister Mary Loretta, Sister Mary Steven, Sister Mary Henrietta and Sister Mary Justina. I realize that my mind might not allow me to remember all of the sainted Nuns who were a big part of my life, but to those I could not remember, I beg forgiveness.

Throughout my life there were many wonderful Sisters who meant so much to me and who gave so much to me. I loved them all, but my true love had to be Sister Teresita. She was like “my other Mom” to me. My eyes tear as I recall that wonderful lady. There was a special “chemistry” between the two of us. And I’ll bet many people can say the same thing about their relationship with Sister Teresita.

She wrote letters to me on a regular basis for the more than three years I was away in the military service. She kept me abreast of things at school, or wherever she was. And she constantly encouraged me through her prayers for me, and through the pep talks she gave me when I felt down. She was the first person I visited after coming home on furlough. And we always had such good visits. Her students almost always were shocked to see her hug and kiss a grown fellow.

The saddest moment for me during our many, many years of friendship, and my proudest moment, I might add, was the afternoon I visited her when she was on her death bed. When I walked into her room, she weakly said, “I knew you wouldn’t forget me.” Then she took my hand in hers as we prayed together for a peaceful death for her. Slowly, she began slipping away. The following morning she had gone to her heavenly reward. I have a small crucifix she wore around her neck most of her life and I cherish it as a relic of a very special saint. I pray to her, as I do to Mamma, whenever I feel burdened. And you know, they both always

come through for me!

In 1931, Papa bought an empty lot on Avenue E between Fourth and Fifth streets, nearer to St. Michael Church and to St. Michael School. Here he had a house built and here we lived until, one by one, we married and moved on. Mr. Henry Iglinsky and his sons, very qualified carpenters, built the house with materials bought from the Dan Fruge Acadia Lumber Yard. This is the house where Mamma made a real home for all of us.

Later, it was to be the house where Yvonne and Tom LaHood made a home for themselves, and where Marie Therese (Te-rez) was reared. It must be noted here that ever since Tom married into the family, he was more than a son to Mamma and has been a genuine brother to each of us. We all, even to this day, know that house at 413 North Avenue E as "headquarters." And Yvonne and Tom have kept it open for all of us. They want us to regard it as our "real" home and as our headquarters. Tom and Yvonne always make us feel at home there.

Picture # 14a

Tom & Yvonne

Thomas and Yvonne R. LaHood, 1982

Tom has operated a successful insurance agency since his arrival in Crowley. He sold life, automobile, homeowners' and other kinds of insurance. He regularly was the lead agent for his companies and won all kinds of prizes: Trip to Europe for two, a large television set, a set of automobile tires, all sorts of golf equipment, and on and on. He could insure everything, even to giving us pleasure as another brother in the family. Tom's great recreational pleasures, for which he is well known, are golfing and playing dominoes...in addition to being a great follower of every televised sporting event in the United States!

Sitty Nazha Reggie, after Amelia married Antoine "Fatty" Mahtook, moved back to Crowley and rented a house on West Hutchinson Avenue, facing the playground of St. Michael School. We often "snuck" across the street to see her during recess time. I always enjoyed being with her.

Picture # 12

Sitty Nazha

My Paternal Grandmother,
Nazha Stephan Reggie
1873-1936

Sometime after that, Papa had a small house built for her on the west side of Avenue E, at 565, between Hutchinson and Sixth street. Almost exactly across the street from her earlier home, where Yvonne was born. She lived there less than a year when she suffered a stroke, and Papa and Mamma moved her into our home at 413.

The stroke left Sitty totally paralyzed on her right side, but eventually she was able to slowly move about the house dragging her right foot. Her speech was not badly impaired, thank God, and she could easily carry on a conversation as though she had no illness. I remember arm-wrestling against her left hand on many occasions. She would get a big laugh out of pinning my hand down, which she did often. She always was a strong woman and the stroke didn't weaken her good side!

I always teased Sitty about something or other, and she loved it. And she gave it right back, double! She could take it as well as dish it out! She often called me "*Baz-a-wank*," which I think translates into, "rascal." I know she loved me very much, as she did my siblings. She was a lot of fun for me, always. She lived with us until her death in 1936.

It was very sad in our house for a long time after her death. We all missed her, including Aunt Adele Zwan and her family who lived in the middle of the next block at 517 North Avenue E. That was an address where we regularly hung-out, with Aunt Adele's children, our first cousins.

The eldest child of Aunt Adele and Uncle Beshara was Beatrice, whom we all called Bea. She was only a few months younger than I and we went all through school in the same class. And we graduated together on the same night. Then there's Alphonse, whose nickname was Al, but sometimes we called him Ton-a-neesh. For the life of me, I don't know how that got started. He was a Boy Scout with me in Troop Five during the years I was involved in that troop. Then there's Evelyn, sweet, kind and gentle Evelyn. She eventually studied at Hotel Dieu Nursing Hospital in New Orleans and became one of the best nurses around.

The youngest boy was Edward, with whom we had great times. Even though he was several years younger didn't keep him out of any games we had. He was rough and sharp, and could take the best anyone could dish out. At one time in his youth, he even tried his luck at professional boxing. And lastly, there is tiny, gentle Shirley, who you just had to love. She was like a doll. And naturally, as the baby of the family, she was spoiled by everyone.

We were either playing there or they were at our house. This was our regular routine. We must have worn a groove in the sidewalk between Aunt Adele's house and ours. And we had fun being together at either house. Some of the best memories of my childhood were of events at 517 North Avenue E. Those cousins were more like sisters and brothers to all of us at 413.

Aunt Adele was a very good cook, as can be attested by all who were fortunate enough to eat whatever she prepared. But for me, one dish stands out more than any of the others. When Aunt Adele cooked spaghetti with meat balls and we were there to eat, that was truly heaven on earth.

It was not only her cooking that made us love her so dearly. She was just such a good sport about everything. It was always so comfortable and nice to be around her. There were times when she came to visit at our home and she and I had a few shots of whiskey together. Can you believe it! She was a good sport. God bless her.

In addition to having a lot of fun with Aunt Adele's children, who were more like brothers and sisters than cousins to us, we enjoyed many good times with the children of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Karre. They lived further up Avenue E, but we found time to swap visits and enjoyed being together very much. Alfred was the eldest, then Albert and their sister, Helen. I recall the good times we had putting on plays which we ourselves wrote.

The Karres had an empty car garage next to their home which we converted into a theatre. Across one end we

stretched a piece of wire and put a couple sheets onto it to separate the stage area from the seating area. For theatre seats we had all sorts of crates, boxes and other things. We took turns at having a part in the plays. There was something odd about the admission fee, but I cannot remember what that was. Did it have to do with safety pins? Maybe someone who reads this might have a better memory than I, and can supply that bit of information.

About four months after Sitty's death, Emile and Marguerite decided to marry. Because Papa was "still in mourning" for Sitty Nazha they had a relatively small wedding, but I do remember their coming to our home for a party after the church ceremony. I can see Papa in my mind's eye now, sitting on the piano stool with his head bowed as they came from the church. We all were happy to have Marguerite in our family, and she became a genuine sister to my siblings and me. She was always a big booster of mine, and I loved her very much.

Picture # 12a Emile and Marg

Marguerite and Emile Reggie
At an Alsac convention, 1989

Before I move on to other things I need to write about Aunt Amelia and Uncle Fatty's child. Robert was born later than the four of us were, so he automatically became our "little brother". For so long a time he was like a little plaything for all of us, and as he grew we all cherished having him as our "little brother." Throughout his life, we were always proud of his every accomplishment, and we truly enjoyed our times together. Bob was more Reggie than Mahtook, as far as we were concerned.

At one time I operated a Sudsy's Laundrymat next door to his store on University Avenue in Lafayette. This gave me the opportunity to be with Bob a lot. Frequently, we had lunch together and enjoyed many brotherly conversations about whatever was going on in our lives at that time. He was fun to be with, always.

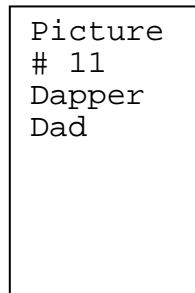
After a short illness, God called him home. He left a wonderful wife and some of the best children around. Even though he is no longer with us, his children have stepped up to take his place in the love of our family. May he rest in peace!

After I outgrew the first and second grades, the number of my friends at school increased, and I never again heard derogatory name-calling, except in jest. Among my best friends were Alexander O. Sigur, whom we called Junior, and Henry Helo. Sometimes, when I wanted to make Junior angry, I'd call him Oswald, a name he later came to like! Junior and I were almost inseparable. Mamma never allowed any of her children to sleep over at anyone's house, but Junior was pretty much a regular for Friday night stay-overs at our house. And that was fine with me. I could go over and play during the daytime, but never stay over night.

At about this time, we at home began seeing Papa wearing a necktie everyday, even at work in the store. When asked about this acquired habit he said, "I do not want your young friends to think your Dad is anything less than a gentleman." What thoughtfulness. What dignity. We

were

so proud of him and his judgement. His lessons and examples have lasted us a lifetime, I hope!



Dapper Dad,
Fred Reggie, ca. 1929

Junior Sigur and I had our normal boyish fights but nothing serious until about the sixth grade when I called him "four eyes" after he came to school wearing glasses.

Well, I guess he was growing bigger and stronger faster than I, and he not only beat me good during recess time for calling him that, but he finished it with a black eye after school behind Judge Canan's "haunted house" across from the church rectory. From then on, he and I *never* fought again. I knew better!

When we graduated from elementary school in 1936, after completing the eighth grade, Junior decided he was going to the seminary to study for the priesthood. I visited with Father George Braquet, our assistant pastor, about me going, too, but he strongly discouraged me, and he made me understand "they are not looking for boys like you". I won't attempt to write how I felt after that interview. But I can tell you, at that moment, I thought his appraisal to be the most momentous injustice in the entire history of the human race! I was crushed! However, we stayed friends and he regularly chose me as an altar server whenever there was a funeral or wedding during school hours.

One day when I was about ten or eleven years old, Papa's and Mamma's friends from DeRidder, Mr. Joe Stoma and his wife, Lateefie, came for a visit and brought their son Joe B with them. A few of us were playing next to the driveway between our house and the Danum home next door, which Papa later bought and where he built two houses which contained two apartments in each.

Our game required us to make two holes in the ground about four inches in diameter and a couple inches deep and spaced about twelve or fourteen feet apart. The object of the game was for one to stand at one hole and pitch a disc into the other, or as near as possible.

By searching along the railroad tracks we usually found hardened waste lead which had spilled from the wheel bearings of the rail cars which became overheated (called hot box). We reheated the lead and poured the molten metal into a form which was about two inches in diameter. When cooled, the lead hardened into a nice smooth disc which we used try to pitch and slide into the holes dug in

the ground. When we played as teams, one player from each team usually stood at one hole and "lagged" for the opposite hole, while the two other players did the same from the opposite hole. We scored the game very much like a game of horseshoes.

Well, when that young whipper-snapper Joe B came, we included him in our game and he and I became partners. Little did I know this "partnership" would turn into a brotherhood which would last a lifetime. He and I have lived like brothers from then on, and it is still that way today. And it's been a first class relationship all my life!

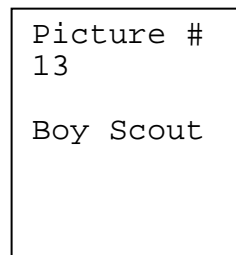
As a young kid I enjoyed going with Emile to his Boy Scout meetings upstairs over Gremillion's Drug Store at the corner of Parkerson and Fourth Street. He belonged to Troop 6, which was sponsored by the Knights of Columbus Council 1318. Somehow, a few members of the Council were able to get all the stock in that building and they took possession of the building. The K of C's left that building, and the scout troop disbanded.

In October, 1933, when I reached twelve years of age, I joined the newly formed Boy Scout Troop 5, which was sponsored at the time by the South Crowley Elementary School located at the end of South Parkerson Avenue. We met there until the school dropped its sponsorship. Then, the Knights of Columbus assumed sponsorship of Troop 5.

In the meantime, my good friend Alex Sigur, Junior, had joined the Methodist Church sponsored Troop 7, which was nearer to his home. He lived on East Second Street at Avenue K. Shortly after he joined the scouts, he transferred to Troop 5 where most of his school chums were members. And then began an even closer friendship between the two of us.

We made many camping trips together in the wooded areas around Crowley, but our real camping was done at Camp Thistlewait near Washington, just north of Opelousas. Today that camp is used only by Cub Scouts for day camping trips. The facilities for over-night stays are all

demolished. The new Scout Summer Camp is at Mountain Bayou near Ville Platte.



Sammie as Tenderfoot Boy Scout, 1933

In 1935, a wonderful thing happened to me and a few of my best friends. A man named Mr. Lawson donated one thousand dollars for a select number of Boy Scouts to make a trip through most of the western United States. There were eight boys from Troop 5 chosen to go, and I was one of

the lucky ones! Papa was called upon later to put up some money before we completed our trip to cover a cash shortfall. He paid my pro rata share, but I don't know how much. We traveled in a converted school bus which had one long seat along each side of the bus. Between those two long seats, right in the middle, was a box about three feet wide running the full length of the bus. In this "box" were stored canned food of all kinds which generous people in Crowley donated. On the rear of the bus, outside, was affixed a wood burning stove on which our breakfast and supper was prepared, wherever we camped out for the night.

We had a Scoutmaster, an Assistant and a driver/cook. The driver/cook was Lee Lafosse, the older brother of Percy, my good friend, who was also chosen. Also on the trip from Troop 5 was Junior Sigur, Louis Landry, Harry and Harris John, and Sahid and Henry Helo. Our trip took us to nine western States and a small part of old Mexico, and lasted thirty days. What an experience for a fourteen year old country boy! God has always been so good to me.

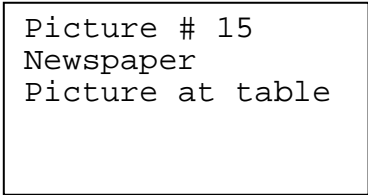
On our return to Louisiana we were surprised, during a pre-planned stop at a park in Alexandria, to find our parents awaiting our arrival. Was I glad to see Papa, Mamma and my siblings! We had a family picnic in that park before heading for home. Mamma brought some of her good cooking for which I was starved.

I remember one of the first things Mamma asked me after she looked me over and checked-out my health was, "Why didn't you mention your cousin, Alphonse, in any of your cards or letters"? God bless her, she was always worried about hurting other people's feelings. And I guess I must have hurt Al's feelings by not mentioning his name when I wrote home. I'm sorry, Al.

Eventually I advanced in Scout rank to Life Scout, and now I'm ashamed of myself for not pushing hard enough to earn the prestigious rank of Eagle. Edmund "climbed" all the way to Eagle when his turn came. He even went beyond

Eagle rank, and earned all three Palm Awards. That's the highest rank a Scout could earn. I've always been proud of him and still am.

I have always loved the Scouting program very much. As a young fellow, I found it to be my "social" activity beyond family, church and school. I love Scouting so much I am still actively engaged in it on the Acadia District level, the Evangeline Area Council level and presently serve as Vice-president of the Evangeline Area Council which covers eight parishes of Acadiana. At one time or other I served on the local level in several capacities: I was a Troop Committeeman, the District Chairman, a Merit Badge Counselor, Institutional Representative, a Scouting Coordinator, and Chairman of the Eagle Scout Court of Honor.



Picture # 15
Newspaper
Picture at table

District judging, Eagle Scout of the Year.

I am also a Board member and the former Chairman of the Catholic Committee on Scouting for the Diocese of Lafayette, and I am the inaugural Chairman and permanent

Legal Agent of the Monsignor A. O. Sigur Foundation which funds the activities of the Catholic Committee. I was honored by being awarded the Silver Beaver by the Boy Scouts of America, and awarded with the Bronze Pelican and the St. George Award by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, of which I am also an active member.

Recently, I was elected to membership on the Board of the National Boy Scout Council as well as the Council's International Representative. In that position I am responsible for keeping my Council informed of the opportunities for international programs involving exchanges

Picture # 16 Silver Beaver Award
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The Silver Beaver Award, 1988.

of Scouts between the United States and other countries for the enrichment of the Scouts of both countries. I coordinate an annual Jubilee-on-the-Air whereby local Scouts contact Scouts in foreign countries by short wave radio. This has led to pen-pal relationships between our Scouts and foreign boys. In addition to making new friends, this jubilee expands a Scouts knowledge of the customs and way of life of people outside the United States.

When I graduated from St. Michael High School I really had no firm plans for my future, nor did I know what I wanted to study at college. We didn't have school counselors to assist us in making plans for the future, and I didn't know what I wanted for myself. In September 1938, at the ripe old age of sixteen, and because I considered myself mechanically inclined, I enrolled in the College of Engineering at Southwestern Louisiana Institute, in Lafayette, now the University of Southwest Louisiana.

As my first year ended, I attended a career day session on campus. The engineering students visited with representatives of companies who might hire engineers: RCA, General Electric, Westinghouse, etc. After visiting with those company representatives, I realized I did not want to work for a company that large, and I thought maybe I just wanted to work for myself. So in my second year, I changed my major to Business Administration (jokingly called Lebanese Engineering).

After completing my sophomore year, I persuaded my parents to allow me to go to the trade school in Crowley where I could study to be an electrician. Through her tears, Mamma acquiesced. She and Papa really wanted me to continue my college education because they believed one never gets too much schooling. I guess that was a natural feeling for former Lebanese citizens. I attended classes at the trade school for a year where I was taught the basic principles of electricity and how to do motor rewinding and house wiring.

At about this time, 1941, the rumblings of war brought about the construction of three army camps near Alexandria. I was nineteen years old and hungry to begin earning money. Papa and Mamma gave me their blessings, and I went to work in Alexandria.

Uncle Fatty Mahtook, Aunt Amelia's husband, worked at Camp Claiborne as a plumber's helper while I got a job at Camp Livingston as an electrician's helper making eighty-five cents an hour. We rented a room in the home of a very nice old couple in Alexandria, and I would come home every other weekend.

I remember the difficulty I had once when I tried to get Mamma to accept twenty dollars from me just so I could feel good about sharing the money I was paid. But in her usual kind and calm way, she explained, "You earned that money and you should be saving any extra money you have." After her little speech, she took the twenty dollars. What I didn't know until later was that she put that money in a new savings account for *me*. Mamma was forever the considerate one!

When the work played out in Alexandria, I went with the electric company for whom I worked to Gulfport, Mississippi. There, I started at one dollar an hour, and before long I was reading blueprints and working indoors packing material for the workmen to take out to the job, and shortly began collecting one dollar and ten cents an hour.

Just when I was starting to get rich, I received a letter from the President of the United States in an official looking envelope with no postage stamp. I figured maybe the President couldn't afford the price of a stamp and he knew that I was getting rich. I hastened to tear open the envelope to read that the President of the United States and my neighbors were inviting me to join the military. I could accept the invitation or go to jail! I certainly would not turn down an invitation from the president.

I was now twenty years old. I returned home to get

things in order before leaving from the City Hall in Crowley by bus with a group of other invitees of the president to travel to Camp Beauregard in Alexandria for physical and mental testing. I was accepted!

The testing showed I would fit better in the Army Air Corps (pre-runner of the U.S. Air Force) than in any other branch of the military. After two weeks, on August 3, 1942, I was sworn-in, given an entirely new wardrobe, and put aboard a train for basic training at an Air Corps "hotel" in St. Petersburg, Florida. President Roosevelt was so nice to me!

The government had taken over several posh resort hotels there for training purposes, and my "barrack" was the Hotel Miramar. We lived in double deck bunks, four to a room. The pay was twenty-one dollars a month, but who needed money! Uncle Sam was paying for everything.

After a month of orientation about military life, gas mask drills, and a gang of shots in the arms and elsewhere, about twenty of us were sent to California where we were assigned to a school for specialized study. We were put in one railroad-coach car and attached to the tail end of one train or another as we made our way to the West coast. With the windows wide open, and with no air conditioning, we inhaled all the smoke and soot from the coal burning engines up front. What a gagging time we all had. I quickly began to not appreciate the president's invitation.

At New Orleans, as we changed trains, we were taken to a cafe near the train station for breakfast on a Sunday morning. I was able to call home, and I also notified the family that the train was scheduled to be in Crowley sometimes around two o'clock. The story about that day is being recounted so the reader can get a view of just one incident in the life of a sentimental family which has great love for one another. And it's a bit of sad comedy, too.

Aunt Amelia in Lafayette learned of our schedule, so she and Aunt Lateefie Olley, our family's dearest friend, drove to the railroad crossing at University Avenue (where

today's underpass is). As we passed that crossing I saw Aunt Lateefie next to the car waving a scarf, and Aunt Amelia rushing towards the train yelling "Sammie" before she fell head first into the large, deep ditch next to the rail roadway. Poor soul, she was so excited. I was so glad to see them! My heart was pounding, a mile-a-minute.

In the meantime, Papa and the family went to the station in Crowley in hopes of seeing me. Shortly after they arrived, a troop train pulled in and stopped. Thinking this was my train, they looked for me at window after window, until Papa and Emile boarded the train. Papa started at the front working his way back while Emile started at the rear working his way up front. They met without finding me aboard.

Disappointed, they left the train and decided to drive to Lafayette to visit with Aunt Amelia. While going East on Highway 90 they saw another train headed West with one car of soldiers in the rear. *That* was us! They u-turned and quickly drove back to the station but were too late because the train didn't even slow down, let alone stop.

As I hung out of a window looking for my family, I saw none, but I did see my friend and former classmate, Harris John, parked waiting for the train to pass. When he saw me hanging out the window of the train he threw his door open, and enthusiastically reached for me and the train. When the train crossed Parkerson Avenue and I saw no family members, I really felt sad. Now, my heart was broken!

Up until that time in my life, in addition to my Boy Scouts' trip, I had been to New Orleans a few times and Houston maybe twice, and always with some of the family. Now this country boy was going far from home and the safety and love of Papa and Mamma and my siblings.

Further along, though, near the west city limits of Crowley, I saw Aunt Adele's husband, Uncle Beshara, sweeping the walk in front of the cafe he operated a bit more than one hundred yards from the tracks. I called to him as

loudly as I could, but he couldn't hear me. By this time, my spirits were down to minus zero. And that's the end of that story.

At Glendale, California I attended classes at a "civilian" school, the American School of Engineering, where I was taught the art of becoming an electrical-instruments specialist so I could repair those particular parts in an airplane. Big deal! Some military life!

There, in downtown Glendale, I had living quarters in a converted automobile dealership building, took my meals in a local plate-lunch-type cafe the military had signed-up for us, and I attended classes about two blocks away in a converted office building. This was not what I imagined military life would be.

During my three months stay there, I frequently visited the "Hollywood Canteen", a recreation place where movie stars came to serve coffee and doughnuts, or for some, to dance with us. Military life for me was now getting better and better! My best dance was with the then young, beautiful and famous Lana Turner. At the end of our dance I planted a smack on her "that was heard around the world"!

Picture # 17

Soilder Sammie

“Soldiering” in Hollywood, 1942

After the completion of our studies, eight of us were sent to Ogden, Utah for assignment. Now my luck began to change. Going there was terrible, because no outfit wanted such green GIs as us with them as they completed their final phase of training before going overseas. All we did was K.P. (kitchen police: wash dishes, pots and pans and mop the floors), guard duty and picking up trash which littered the ground. That went on day after day without too much enthusiasm or happiness. To make matters worse, much snow fell every day.

Here again, I was blessed to be a regular altar server at Mass. That was the only good thing that happened to me there. I remember, once before leaving the barrack to go to the chapel for midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, someone had his radio turned on, and the music was of the Christmas season. Over the sound of the babble among the boys in the barrack, one could hear the announcer say, "And now, Evelyn and her magic violin". Well, Evelyn hardly got started playing "Home Sweet Home", when the whole place became absolutely silent! As she played, you could hear the soft snuffles of everyone as each GI buried his face in his pillow. That was a sad moment for me and for everyone else! Midnight Mass brought a few more tears, too.

We really weren't so tough, when the truth was known.

My next transfer was with only two buddies to the outskirts of San Francisco, a place which originally was Tanforan Race Track, but was converted into a detention center for west coast Americans of Japanese ancestry.

They were housed in horrible, narrow, long, tarpaper-covered shacks, with no partitions for each family's privacy. Everyone lived and slept in those wide open shacks.

Toilets were in separate buildings and were spaced about every two blocks, and accommodated about one hundred men at a time, seated back-to-back on long box-benches down the center of the building with a toilet hole cut every two feet.

Along the two side walls in the toilet building were cold water faucets about every three feet, but no sink. This setup was for washing, tooth brushing and urination! The water ran into a trough in the floor. At one end of the building there were about six or seven shower heads spaced on the wall about every three feet, with no partitions or doors. I suppose the women had similar toilets. We lived in those shacks and used those toilets after the internees were moved further inland to "camps" in Oklahoma.

We were GIs and could expect something like that, but no American non-military citizen should have ever been subjected to such incarceration and humiliation! And they were American citizens as good as any European American citizens, or any one else. They were rounded-up and incarcerated because some people in Washington decided they might be in sympathy with any Japanese forces which might attempt an invasion along our west coast. No American of German or Italian extraction was treated this way, even though Germany (Adolph Hitler) and Italy (Benito Mussolini) were also at war with our Country. Knowing that those people were treated that way made me feel very sad for them.

This camp was some kind of holding place for GIs like me who were not permanently assigned, so nothing

worthwhile was accomplished by its population. I do not recall how long I was stationed there. I do remember that the former World Champion Heavyweight Boxer, Max Baer, and his boxing brother, Buddy Baer, were also stationed there and they and I became friends. The only times I went into San Francisco were when Max would take me and three or four other GIs with him in his car.

Because of his celebrity status, Max could drive through the main gates without showing any identification. And since none of us had properly signed passes to leave the base, we stayed out of sight of the MPs while in town. We also had to be careful of where we went. Risky, yes, but you know the old saying about young guys, “ten feet tall and bulletproof!”

My next assignment was at Santa Maria (Calif.) Air Force Base. There I joined a mechanical and electrical maintenance unit which was attached to the 476th Wing of the 8th Air Force, and was in second phase training preparing to go overseas. We were scheduled to be located somewhere in England whenever we were fully trained. Since I was an electrical instruments specialist, I worked in the hangar area making repeated inspections of the electrical instruments in all the planes assigned to our outfit.

Because all positions of the upper ranks were already filled when I joined the 476th, I did not see much future nor hope for advancement in rank for me with this unit. I didn't like the idea of being in this “dead end” position, and as soon as I could, I began checking out the requirements for officers' training.

With Yvonne doing the actual leg work at home assembling the required papers, I was eligible for application to Officers' Candidate School. She obtained all the letters of recommendation I needed from our Congressman, our pastor, Judge Canan and the Sheriff. God bless Yvonne, she was able to put together a very nice dossier of all the information that was required of me for Officers' School, and

have it to me in plenty of time to make my formal application right away.

After the packet of information and my military record were checked, I was approved for officers' training, and it appeared like I was eventually headed for the Quartermaster Corps or somewhere in the Armored (Tank) Corps. My choice was the Quartermaster Corps because of my experience in Papa's store, but I would accept either assignment in order to make some advancement in rank. At that time I was only a Private First Class, which was next to nothing.

It was in Santa Maria that I received a telegram via the Red Cross telling me of Papa's sudden death and requesting I hurry home. Even now I cannot express the feelings I had then. I became sick to my stomach and really needed to hug and hold onto Mamma. At that moment I really needed her. I put my head against a tree in an obscure location and cried very hard until I realized that Mamma must be having it worse than all of us. Poor Mamma!

As soon as the news of Papa's death was learned in my barrack, and while I was at the base commissary attempting to get a flight from Los Angeles to Houston, the guys passed-a-hat and raised more than four hundred dollars to help me with my plane fare. I hitch-hiked to Los Angeles and flew to Houston where Uncle Fatty Mahtook, Herbert Naomi and Sidney Constantine were waiting to drive me home by car.

I learned that Papa had been feeling very well as he and the family attended the graduation exercise of St. Michael School a couple days before his death. I was told that he was so very proud of the many accolades and prestigious awards won by Edmund that night. Edmund, like Yvonne before him, had been awarded the American Legion Medal, the highest award a graduating senior could receive. Papa showed no signs of ill health even at noontime the day of his death, when he had lunch with his Rotary Club. At about five o'clock that afternoon, he began feeling badly at the store, and continued suffering pains so severely that he

closed the store and went home.

Because Mamma had gone to Lafayette to help Emile and Marguerite shop for furniture, Papa phoned Aunt Adele who lived in the next block, to tell her of his condition, and she immediately phoned the doctor who arrived shortly.

I was told that upon seeing Papa's condition, Doctor Gardiner saw no hope for him, but gave him some kind of shot directly into his heart, hoping to revive it. Papa never responded to the shot and was pronounced dead shortly thereafter.

What a shock it was for all of us, especially Mamma. So often thereafter, she reproached herself for not being present when he really "needed" her. There was nothing she could have done, but that's how love is! Poor, poor Mamma, how she grieved his loss.

Picture 18

Papa

Fred Reggie 1940
December 25, 1896 - June 1, 1943

I cannot express the feelings I had when I entered our house to meet Mamma, my brothers, Yvonne and all the other people there. In the living room, Papa's body was laid out after the undertakers had prepared it and placed it in a coffin. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Tough! His body remained at home until time to go to church and to the cemetery.

I vividly remember Father Mollo's sermon at the funeral Mass when he spoke about Papa as, "a good man, in the same manner St. Joseph was a good man." A comparison I believe he truly deserved. Father told of the time when Papa's charity was extended to a man whose house and personal belongings burned. He told how Papa outfitted the poor man with underclothes, shirt, pants, socks, shoes and a hat, so he could go to his job to earn a living for his family.

Even though the man protested, Papa insisted that there was no charge for those items. Papa's reputation for doing charitable things for people during the many years he was in business was told to Father Mollo by many of those people who benefited from Papa's kindness. Father recounted many of Papa's charitable deeds, and he exalted Papa's cheerful and hospitable personality. Father showed him to be the good friend of all who knew him. Father also praised Papa for the way he lived his family life: Good husband, good father. He's been missed so much all these years. May he rest in peace!

On June 2, 1943, the day after Papa died, the front page of the Crowley Signal had the following news item:

“CITY MERCHANT DIES SUDDENLY”

Fred Reggie Succumbs To Heart Attack At Home, Rites Are Not Set Yet

Fred Reggie, 46 year old prominent Crowley merchant, died suddenly at his home on Avenue E between five and six o'clock Tuesday evening from a sudden heart attack.

Mr. Reggie had been in perfect health but became ill during the late evening, left his business and went to his home. There he died suddenly from the attack.

Funeral services are being delayed pending word from a brother, who lives in Springfield, Massachusetts and his son, Samuel, who is at the Santa Maria Air Base in California.

The whole city was startled at the sudden death of Mr. Reggie, a native of Lebanon, who has earned an enviable place for himself in the business section of Crowley during his nearly quarter of a century of residence in this city. Mr. Reggie had conducted mercantile business in West Crowley ever since he came here in 1920. Three weeks ago he became a member of the Crowley Rotary club and attended the regular luncheon of that body Tuesday noon.

He was born in Zghorta, Mount Lebanon, on December 25, 1897, and was 46 years of age at the time of his death. In 1915 he married Victoria Abboud Andraous of Zghorta, who survives him. Four children were born to this union, three boys, Emile Reggie of Crowley; Samuel Reggie who is now in the armed forces; Edmond Reggie, who graduated in St. Michael's commencement class on Sunday, and one daughter, Miss Yvonne Reggie. He is also survived by two sisters, Adele Zwan of Crowley, Mrs.

Emily Mahtook of Lafayette; and two brothers, John Reggie of Springfield, Mass. and Asaad Reggie of Zghorta, Lebanon.

Mr. Reggie became an American citizen in 1926

when his naturalization papers were completed. He has been a consistent supporter of American principles since his residence here and he was a charter member of the "War Dads" club organized here a few months ago in support of the boys at the front. He has been a member of the Knights of Columbus for many years and was identified with many of the civic projects that promoted progress for the city of Crowley. While conducting a general merchandise business he found many ways to do helpful things for the underprivileged and poor that was never publicized.

A life long member of the Catholic church he was consistent in his church life and will be buried by its service. Funeral arrangements will be made public as soon as word can be received from his son, Samuel Reggie, who is presently located at the Santa Maria Air Base in California and his brother in Springfield, Mass. It is known that his funeral will be conducted from St. Michael Catholic Church and burial will follow in the Catholic cemetery."

Because a dear friend of the family, Myrtle McBride, was in charge of the Red Cross in our area, I was able to get a two-weeks extension to my two weeks emergency furlough. This meant I could stay with the family a little while longer, affording us the opportunity to better console one another because of our great loss.

While at home, I was able to convince Mamma to give her consent and to sign the necessary papers for me to apply for pilot's training school when I would returned to my base. After she agreed, I was anxious to get back to Santa Maria to make formal application for flight training school. I really preferred that over either of the other two choices I had for Officers school.

Three ladies from Crowley and Rayne were planning to drive to California to visit a Captain Chappuis and his family who were natives of Rayne. His being stationed about a hundred miles from Santa Maria, would make for a

perfect situation, for the ladies and me.

They knew that I was in Crowley, and they had heard that I was returning to my base about the time they planned to start out. One of them called and asked if I would go with them and help with the driving. I gladly agreed, I did most of the driving, and I saved the price of the return plane fare. Of course I agreed to go with them!

One of the ladies was driving when they came for me, and she continued driving until we reached Lake Charles. When passing through that city, she became blinded by the setting sun and rammed into the rear of a car stopped at a traffic light. What a horrible way to begin a trip to California! Somehow we were able to drive the car to the home of Lawrence and Dora Dumesnil from where I phoned Emile in Crowley to ask for his help. He brought spare headlights and other items to get us going again. He did a great job of patching-up the front of that car, and he did it in a very short time. He was especially good at figuring out how to get things working.

While we were at the Dumesnil home, their daughter, Barbara showed-up and I got a glimpse of her, and maybe a word or two passed between us. Little did I realize then, that later, she was going to play the biggest role in my adult life. The ladies and I completed the trip to California without further incident. Could it have been because I drove the rest of the way?

Before I left home, Mamma had given me enough money to repay my barrack-mates for their monetary help. But they were no longer there. I arrived at the base to learn that my outfit received surprise orders to move out and had already left the base. I once again had to report to a personnel "pool" because I no longer had an outfit of my own. It was back to KP for me.

I withdrew the application which I had earlier submitted for Officer's Candidate School and made application for airplane pilot's training. By coincidence, two days later, I was on a train to Spokane Air Base in Washington where I

was assigned to an aircraft maintenance company. This assignment had nothing to do with my application for flight school, and I was not too pleased to be assigned there. I did whatever I was told to do, but no more, because I knew I would be going to flight training before long. I was just disheartened.

At this base there were many airplanes flying in and out all day. Most of those planes were B-17 bombers which flew over the Pacific Ocean making practice bombing runs. I was lucky one day, to be allowed go on one of those training missions with the crew. Wow! Was that fun. The most exciting time was when I was allowed to go forward and below to the position of the bombardier. There I sat with nothing between me and the ocean but glass. It was most exciting, especially when we flew so low the ocean spray splashed all over the glass "floor". Wow!

My official schedule as an instrument specialist required me to be on duty twelve hours and off duty twenty-four hours. That meant I had four full days off each week, because some of my shifts were at night. The last plane had to be on base by ten o'clock at night, and if there were no problems with its electrical instruments I was free to relax all night. Because there was a bunk in the ready room, I could get a full night's rest even while on night duty.

With so much free time on my hands, I went into town to find a part time job and was hired during my first interview. Because I was trained as an instrument specialist, I thought I might be able to repair watches which were somewhat similar. I applied for a watchmaker's job at a very large, top-notch jewelry store (Dotson's) and was hired to work on the fourth floor in the clock repair department under a Mr. Moon, who was the manager and who was wonderful to me. Because this was wartime, alarm clocks were no longer manufactured, and there was a big need for clock repairing. Even Big Ben and Baby Ben clocks were brought in for repair. In normal times, many clocks which we repaired would have been discarded.

During the war, however, every clock was worth repairing.

Mr. Moon was well pleased with my ability to make the necessary repairs and reported that to his superiors. They, too, expressed their pleasure with my expertise and my willingness to get the job done quickly and accurately. After being on the job a couple weeks and learning what was expected of me, I was given a key to the clock department so I could come and go as my military schedule permitted.

Let me give you an example of how things worked out. When I worked at the base during the 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. shift, I usually I had time to bathe and dress before the end of my shift. With much daylight in the summer months, I would catch a bus into town, go to the clock shop and put in a couple or three hours work. What I mostly did at this time was dis-assemble twenty to thirty clocks, while clean as many as I could in the cleaning machine, and place them in neat "piles" on a sheet of lint free fabric and cover them with more of the same.

I would lock-up the shop, catch a bus back to my base, sleep until morning and then catch a bus for downtown again in time to be back at work for 8:30 a.m. or so. I could do this because my next shift at the base didn't begin until seven o'clock that evening.

In the morning I would make the necessary repairs to each clock I had disassembled the evening before, lubricate and polish them, and set them up for a twenty-four hour test run. If my repairs were good, the clocks would be sent to the front counter for its owner to pick it up.

Since the pay I received was based on a percentage of the charges for repair, it was advantageous for me to get as many clocks repaired and running correctly as I possibly could. During my employment at Dotson's I was able to *save* more than \$2600 of my earnings from them. So you see, I did not mind putting in the extra hours to get as many clocks repaired and ready as I could.

On many Sundays, after attending Mass at a downtown church, I easily and willingly worked at my bench in the

clock shop for several hours and prepared, cleaned, and repaired many, many clocks at a sitting. It was more than a way for me to make some extra money, as important as that was: I really enjoyed what I was doing. The challenge of getting everything right the first time made it fun!

The most memorable experience I had at this job was when Mr. Moon took me with him to repair a three-story-tall, four-faced clock in a tower at the downtown railway station. That was very new for me, and certainly different from my daily work.

We climbed inside the tower to make our repairs and adjustments with full sized tools. This was a novel job because we usually worked only with jewelers' small tools and a magnifying glass.

This clock was powered by heavy weights hanging from cables and pulleys. I was concerned about our ability to get it repaired, but Mr. Moon assured me when he said something like "It didn't matter if one was an ironworker or a fireman, a musician or a poet, if one accepted the task at hand and did his very best, things would work out, if it was God's will." I was proud when we fixed it, and it ran properly!

I recently learned that the City of Spokane, during a modernization program sometime ago, razed many of the buildings in that area of town. The train station was destroyed with the rest, but the clock tower, being some kind of landmark, still stands. If you ever get a chance to visit Spokane, please go by the tower. While you view it, think of me and say a prayer for me, and Mr. Moon, that wonderful gentleman.

Due to some unknown reason, at about this time, my right ear began bleeding, off and on. After many examinations during the next two months, the doctors decided my condition required a mastoidectomy. That surgery was performed on the large bone behind my right ear lobe. That required the surgeon to make a hole about one inch in diameter in the bone, and the cavity reached

down to the brain. Oh boy!

The surgery to correct the problem was done at Baxter General Hospital in Spokane by a Colonel Doctor Lacey, who had been an ear, nose and throat surgeon at Mayo Brothers Clinic in Rochester, Minn. Later, I would learn that he and Brian Dunlevy, a Hollywood movie actor, were close friends, and they rendezvoused in San Francisco regularly. Whatever that meant! This country boy never thought of their relationship as suspect in any way.

Immediately after the surgery, I phoned home and told Mamma about the operation. I was surprised a few days later, even though I should not have been, to see her walking towards my hospital bed. I couldn't believe Mamma was there with me! But I must confess, I was more than happy and relieved to have her sitting next to my bed day after day. I knew I was now in good hands. Just her presence made me begin to get well quicker.

After my call, she was so worried about me that she came to Spokane via the next scheduled train. She was always there for us, but especially so after Papa's death. She became both father and mother to us.

I remember once when a young mother asked Mamma if she ever felt more love for one of her children than the others, without hesitation Mamma said, "I love the one who is sick or needs my love the most at that time." And I really needed her then.

Because of her quick friendship with the head nurses, he was allowed to stay with me all day, and she acted as my "private nurse." She also ministered to the other soldiers who were on that ward. All came to respect and like her. She made me feel wonderful in so many ways. I love her very much for all she meant to me and for all she did for me *all* my life.

Mamma rented a room in a private home near the hospital after the Red Cross or Traveler's Aid made the arrangements for her. She stayed with me in Spokane about two weeks until I was much better and ambulatory.

Several days after Mamma left to return home, I was granted a thirty day medical furlough so I could recuperate at home. I wished I could have traveled home with Mamma, but her departure was too soon for my condition. I was so happy to go home for that month's leave.

I must break in here to tell you that while on furlough, one of the most important events of my life took place. My parents and the Nami John family (*Nahum Moroun* from Beje, Lebanon) had been friends for many years, and that friendship grew even stronger after Emile married Marguerite, one of Mr. Nami and Mrs. Georgie's daughters.

Well, as fate or good fortune would have it, one Sunday afternoon after I had been out of the house for sometime, I came home to find Marguerite's sister, Dora, her husband Lawrence Dumesnil, and their daughter, Barbara, visiting with Mamma. There, sitting on an armrest of the sofa, next to her mother, was Barbara.

I remembered Barbara as a little girl being about six or seven years old, and I remembered seeing her in Lake Charles at her home for just a few minutes when I was involved in an auto accident a couple years before. Well, seeing her at Mamma's that day was like seeing this beauty for the first time in my life! Her honey-blond hair framed her soft features and smooth skin. Her wide smile was beguiling, her eyes were elusive, I was lightheaded with emotions at seeing her, and must admit that I was smitten by her charm, right then and there! In all my friendships with girls during my lifetime, I never, ever had such a feeling. I knew this was going to go all the way, somehow! In the Broadway stage production, "South Pacific", Emile LeBeque, the lead male singer said it best when he sang, "Once you have found her, never let her go...." Right then and there, I made a commitment to myself. I'll continue this later.

After several months stay in Spokane, either at the hospital or at the air base, I received orders to go to Wright-Patterson Air Force base in Dayton, Ohio. Because of the

condition of my ear, I was allowed to hand-carry my medical records for delivery to the doctors there. My ear never stopped draining and required almost daily attention by a medical team.

After I arrived at my new base, I was informed that I would have no military duties at all. Instead, I was assigned to a laboratory which was staffed by civilians. In the lab, testing was done on experimental electrical parts for new kinds of combat airplanes which were still on the drawing boards of some airplane builders. We were just learning about jet aircraft in military use, and I was being trained to run specialized tests on electrical controls which would make jet flight safer and easier.

When I realized how essential and critical these parts were, and how important in the lives of the aviators my work was, I began to take greater pride and care in the work assigned to me than ever before. For the first time in my military life, I was fully committed to do only the best I could with every experiment which I conducted. I must admit that I was not too excited about any other military duties before, but I was really excited doing this work! I felt like I finally was making a necessary contribution to my country's well being. And I was proud and happy to do it.

I had by now missed my chance to go to Officers' Candidate School, to receive my pilot's wings or to go overseas as did so many of my friends. I suppose I felt like I had to make an extra effort for the cause, and do whatever I could to help it end soon. The least I could do was to give every experiment I performed my very best effort. I felt I had something of real value to do, and I was enthusiastically happy to do this meaningful work.

The war was really going our way on every front by now and was not to last much longer. During the few months I was at that laboratory, I truly enjoyed doing the experiments and testing I was assigned to perform. The war was really going our way on every front by now and was not to last much longer.

After victory was declared in Europe, and because I had been on limited duty status since the problem with my ear began, I was eventually sent to Baxter General Hospital in Chickasaw, Oklahoma to receive more treatment for my ear, and to prepare me for discharge from the Air Corps.

In addition to receiving medical treatment, I attended classes where I was trained to do lip reading. I was also schooled in speech insurance, a system of assuring that the spoken words were completely sounded, without the dropping of some sounds even if those sounds were no longer heard by the deaf ear. Because I had some kind of nerve deafness, I was fitted with a hearing aid which I wore for several years. It was suppose to correct my hearing deficiency, but that didn't really happen.

The hearing aid issued to me consisted of a big black button, a bit larger than a twenty-five-cent piece, and about a fourth of an inch thick, which snapped onto a plastic earpiece which was molded to fit inside my ear lobe. The button was connected by two black wires to a rectangular electronic box which measured about three inches wide by six inches tall and one inch thick. This box, through which sound entered the system, rested on my chest and was hung from a chain around my neck. It usually was worn under my clothing. Another pair of wires went from the box to two batteries which were about the same size as the electronic box, and were usually carried in a vest-like garment.

One day, while on leave from the hospital with a couple buddies to enjoy a good meal in downtown Chickasaw, I felt the urge to clown around a bit. I purposefully moved the electronic "hearing" box from my chest area and placed it in my hip pocket. Then I stood at a wall mounted telephone which had its speaker firmly fixed in its front, while the separate receiver was attached to the side of the phone box by a cord. I pretended to speak into the telephone mouthpiece while holding the receiver over my rear-end where I had put the box. Well, the people in the restaurant

went wild! Several men came over to check if I was really doing what they thought they saw: listening through my rear-end!

The civilians there had seen or heard about crippled and disfigured soldiers, but this was more than they could imagine. A few had to touch me here and there to assure themselves that they were still sane. When I exposed the joke, the whole place broke into a roar. I couldn't pay for a drink, nor for my meal, after that!

Every limited-service rated GI was being discharged from all branches of the military by now. After three months of treatment and schooling at that military hospital in Chickasaw, Oklahoma, I received my honorable discharge. In addition to *that* piece of paper, I was given a Good Conduct Medal and a lapel button on October 5, 1945: three years, two months, three days and three hours after I was sworn-in at Camp Beauregard near Alexandria. I was supposed to wear that lapel button as an outward sign to show that I had served to save mankind from that monster, Adolph Hitler.

I'm glad I went, it was a great experience for this country boy, and even though I saw no overseas duty, I wish none of my grandchildren ever have to go, unless they volunteer to serve their country in this way.

I returned home by train to Mamma and my family, and was met at the train station by all my family and many friends. One could think a war hero had arrived! I met for the first time, Mamma's aunts from Troy, N.Y. and two of their sons: Aunt Selma Deeb and Albert, and Aunt Jamilie Ziter and Kerry, who were visiting in Crowley at the time. Albert and Kerry had been recently discharged from an Army medical unit which had seen very much hard fighting in the Pacific. Albert had been wounded twice, but had no visible scars, unless he pulled down his trousers.

Many people thought that Albert and I looked very much alike, which was very flattering to me. He was really a handsome young man! A couple days before I returned

home, Albert was driving Mamma's Buick automobile in town (the car I usually drove) when some young lady called to him to stop, and being the friendly Albert that he was, he did. She was so happy to see "me" back home and questioned Albert about several things...never realizing it was someone other than me with whom she spoke.

Because of that first visit to Crowley by the Troy family, there began a renewed relationship between Mamma and her aunts. For the rest of us, a real love and closeness joyfully developed with all of the family in Troy. We've cherished our times together ever since! An old adage falsely states that God gave us our relatives, but He also gave us the right to choose our friends. In the case of those wonderful relatives in and around Troy, New York, we could never be happier than to consider them our best friends...in addition to being our God given relatives. I believe God secretly meant for them to be our choicest friends while being our cousins!

After having been trained in the repair of aircraft instruments and enjoying my work in Spokane for the jewelry company, my natural feeling was to want to train as a watchmaker and open a jewelry store in Crowley. I researched a number of watchmaker's schools in several states to determine which one would be right for me to attend. Just as I was ready to send in my registration application to a school in Memphis, a dear friend, Albert Karre, with whom we grew up, opened a jewelry store in town. After that, there was no way I would consider competing with this good friend. This surprise left me with no solid plan to follow for my future.

In the meantime, I made a few visits to see Barbara in Lake Charles, but without much success. She had a steady boyfriend her own age, while I was seven years older and wore a hearing aid, something rarely seen except on very old folks. That certainly was not her only reason for being so aloof to my overtures. But I was not ready to give up. I hadn't forgotten Emile LeBeque's words in South Pacific,

“Once you have found her, never let her go.” I was determined to persevere until I would win her.

My friend from childhood, Joe B. Stoma, was back from the service also, and was looking for something to do. He and I had a brainstorm! We figured that since Fort Polk near Leesville was being made a permanent training camp, and since so many young recruits stationed there were going into town on pass, we could make a fortune if we opened a business near the Army bus station which brought them in from the Fort. We located an empty place across the street from the military bus station and there we opened our business.

The main attractions we had were a ten-minute photo booth, a shoe-shine stand, a magazine and newspaper department, a souvenir department which included some religious items, costume jewelry and cheap wedding rings...and an amusement arcade of many kinds of coin operated pin-ball machines, and other games of chance.

We lived at Joe B’s parents house in DeRidder, and made the daily twenty-mile commute to and from our business place in Joe B’s car. We were on our way to becoming real millionaires when catastrophe struck!

During our third week of commuting, a heavy fog engulfed the area one night as we made our way to DeRidder. About midway home, we struck a truck which had stalled in the center of the highway and had no lights shining.

Joe B’s car was very heavily damaged. He sustained no injuries, but I must have hit the right side of my face on something solid. The side of my face was bashed inward and appeared to be concave. Somehow, we made it to the Stoma residence, and with a few aspirins I was able to “make it” through the night.

I managed to get home for medical attention while Joe B went about closing down our gold mine. He paid whatever bills we owed and he arranged to have our lease voided. Our landlord treated us decently, thank God. That was the

end of our brainstorm.

Our local family doctor, after examining my damaged face, suggested I go to New Orleans for more qualified attention. Edmund, who was at school in New Orleans, helped Mamma and me make the arrangements for the doctors' visits and for the hospital. A team of doctors restructured my face with the use of pins screwed into my cheek bone and elsewhere, all connected to a steel frame over my face. Their efforts were to save me from looking like a freak. I sometimes wish the doctors would or could have done better.

I need to insert here a thought which has just come to me concerning my brother Edmund's name. I do not know exactly when, nor how, but sometimes during his matriculation at U.S.L., the pronunciation of his name changed to EdmUnd instead of the EdmOnd we always knew. I cannot recall ever seeing his birth certificate, but I think Father Daigle, who Baptized him, wrote the name EdmUnd on his birth certificate, even though Papa and Mamma wanted him to be named EdmOnd, because that was the name of a friend of theirs, Edmond Champagne. Now I find myself absent-mindedly referring to him both ways.

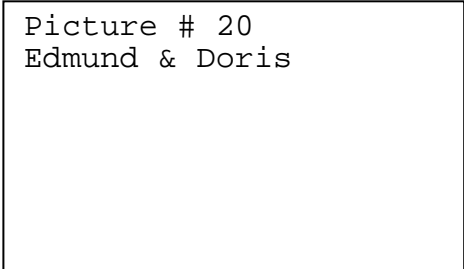
While I was building my gold mine and bashing my face, Edmund completed his law degree at Tulane University and passed the Louisiana bar examination. He joined Judge Denis T. Canan in the practice of law in Crowley. After Judge Canan's death, Edmund purchased a piece of property on the Court Circle, right across the street from the Parish court house. He would go on to build what I consider the most beautiful and functional law office in the State of Louisiana.

Yvonne was Judge Canan's secretary for several years before Edmund joined Judge Canan in the practice of law. She became so knowledgeable in the law that she was encouraged to take the Louisiana Bar exam to be admitted to the bar as a full fledged lawyer. But she never pursued

that avenue.

Yvonne's presence in that office was a nice bonus for Edmund, the young and not so experienced attorney fresh out of law school. Being together made it nice for both of them. Judge Canan treated the two of them as though he was their father. He was truly a good man, and we all are still grateful to him. Edmund was to follow Judge Canan as judge and became the youngest judge in the USA. He would soon marry Doris Boustany of Lafayette and bring another sister into our family. And a wonderful sister she has been to all of us. Doris had been awarded the title of Miss Personality by the student body of the University of Southwestern where she matriculated and obtained her Bachelor of Science degree.

Edmund was appointed by the Governor of the State of Louisiana to complete the un-expired portion of Judge Canan's term upon his death. But before he could really get settled in as judge, a political opponent of the Governor contested the appointment. The State Supreme Court ruled that Edmund could continue to serve as judge until a new judge would be elected.



Picture # 20
Edmund & Doris

In time, Edmund faced two opponents in an election for that position. He beat both of them put together, in the first primary, and carried every precinct in the Sixth Ward for which he was elected. Once more during his thirty plus years as judge, he drew an opponent for re-election and Edmund creamed him, also. In all his years, he never failed to carry every precinct. The Lyons Point people never forgot Mr. Fred nor Mrs. Fred, and voted almost unanimously for Edmund.

Even today some old timers still wonder who were the four people who voted against him. Of the 290 registered voters in that precinct, 287 of them voted in that election. Edmund received 283; the other two candidates together received 4 votes. Edmund has always been a hero to me and to all those who know him best.

Edmund, who is also an active Fourth Degree Knight of Columbus, never really got overly involved in the workings of that order. He is a member in good standing, but he directed his charity work in other avenues: As an adviser to the Archbishop of our archdiocese of New Orleans; as an adviser to our own bishops; as a volunteer attorney in the diocesan marriage tribunal; as a member of the Board of Regents of Catholic University in Washington, DC; as a leading member of the Board of Governors of Tulane University; as a lay member of the Catholic Church's Common Ground in the United States, as confidant and adviser to several governors of the State of Louisiana, and other like endeavors. He was the originator of the "soup kitchen" idea for the poor and hungry in our diocese and single-handedly put together a plan which was so successful that it was adopted by the diocese as its biggest day-to-day charity. The St. Joseph diner in Lafayette is patterned after Edmund's plan for the first kitchen. Edmund, like Papa and Mamma before him, has always

been in the forefront of doing charity for the needy. Because of his generosity to the church and his many other good works he has been invested as a member of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. Doris, because of her own good works is a Lady in that Order.

Now that I broke in to tell you about Edmund, I should return to what I was writing. Since my return home from the service I had spoken with Emile about a kind of construction building block made of concrete I had seen in use on the west coast. Coincidentally, he had been thinking about beginning a ready-mix concrete service in Crowley.

If the two ideas were combined, we thought a good business could be established. To advance our plans we both went to Alpina, Michigan to visit a factory which manufactured machines to make concrete blocks. We learned it would be a long time before we could get one of those machines, so that business-idea was shelved.

Since the jewelry business was no longer an option for me, and the concrete block machine was not available, I needed to start somewhere. I applied for a job at Republic Wholesale Company. I was hired by Mr. Jack Hobgood, C.E.O., and part owner of this company which sold automobile parts, paints and supplies. Later I would look back on my training and experience working with Mr. Hobgood as one of the best things in my adult life.

Between Papa and Mamma, the good religious Sisters who taught me, and my Faith and Scouting, I felt like I had a good moral compass heading. After working for Mr. Hobgood as long as I did, I realized that he was the one who would hone my morality to its finest and highest. He was a most honorable businessman in every way: In his treatment of our customers or in the respectful manner he treated those who worked for him. He exemplified a Christian attitude in all his dealings. He was a big influence upon my outlook on life for the rest of my days.

I spent a couple weeks taking inventory to learn the stock before I was furnished a car to travel as a salesman.

My route included Lake Arthur, Jennings, Lake Charles, DeRidder and Oakdale. I was paid \$140.00 per month, plus a commission on my sales. I usually earned an additional \$150, but many times my commission amounted to an extra \$200-\$300. Living at home with no expenses, and Mamma not accepting any money from me, I had it made! I was really rolling along well and was able to save money in the bank.

On my first day out on the route, I called on prospects in Lake Arthur and Jennings. The last customer I visited in Jennings gave me a very substantial order, and I was excited! Much more excited, perhaps, than I fully realized at the time. When I called on my first customer in Lake Charles, I discovered that I had forgotten my catalogue and my order pad at that last stop in Jennings. Yes, the excitement was too much for me, and I felt very foolish!

After I worked for the parts house for some time, Emile, who had not forgotten about the concrete business, decided he wanted me as a partner in a new concrete and block business which he wanted us to get started. So, I left Republic Wholesale after a four-weeks notice, and I invested almost all of my savings in the partnership which we began operating.

With the help of a welder we built racks from second hand steel to hold the fresh concrete building blocks until they were cured. We also bought a used half-yard concrete mixer which we mounted on an elevated platform. This put the mixer at the right height for us to dump the mixed concrete into the delivery trucks.

The delivery trucks were two very old Chevys which Uncle Fatty helped us buy from a grocery wholesale with whom he did business. We bought two war-surplus truck flat-beds which had one-foot high sides all around, and a hinged back-end gate. The flat-beds were mounted on the trucks. Emile engineered the lifting system, and then had the trucks fitted with a hydraulic system and piston which raised and lowered the front end of the flat-bed.

Whenever we had an order for ready mixed concrete, we would start the putt-putt gasoline engine which turned the mixer. We then shoveled in the right amount of sand, gravel, and cement, and added the necessary amount of water by bucket. When we thought the ingredients were properly mixed, we dumped the mixture into the flat bed of one of the trucks. With another laborer, I hastened to the delivery point before the concrete would hardened in the flat-bed. The laborer came with me because we often had to scrape the mixture from the truck. Often, the concrete didn't arrive in total liquid form. It didn't always work out as planned. Talk about primitive!

We survived until we could buy an old one-yard mixer which had been a highway-paving machine which was propelled, in its better days, by caterpillar-tracks. We mounted that mixer, too, on a platform close to the railway tracks.

Sand and gravel came by rail car and had to be unloaded by hand using wide scoop shovels. We hired a couple fellows who manually unloaded those rail cars by using big, wide scoops. They pitched the material next to the rail car and it formed a mound of sand or gravel next to the mixer. When needed, the material had to be loaded into the mixer the same way, by hand, until we bought a tractor with a front loader. The tractor was the first piece of new equipment we owned. Now we were on our way!

My pay at work was partially paid by the Veterans Administration because I signed-up for an eighteen-months on-the-job-training program. Other, smarter veterans, went back to college for a degree and were subsidized by the VA under a program called the GI Bill of Rights. I was under that plan, but in the labor field instead of the academic/educational field. How stupid could I have been! If regret could be a teacher, I would have used the GI Bill to complete my education.

At first, the company (Reggie Ready-Mix) paid me fifteen dollars a week, and because the wage set under the GI Bill

for this type of work was \$200.00 per month, I received a \$140.00 monthly training allowance from the Veterans Administration. As time passed, the VA training check became smaller because the company's share was to grow to one hundred percent of the targeted salary (\$200.00) by the end of the eighteen month training period.

As we neared the end of the eighteen months, I was surprised one day when Emile told me he felt there was not enough need for two of us in this business. I suppose I just never learned enough about the concrete business or didn't accomplish as much as I should. He gave me a check which represented my one-half share in the business.

Once again I was without work and on my way to start out anew. I was heart broken to "be put out" that way, but for harmony's sake, only Mamma and I ever discussed it, and only once. That's the way it was.

I do not mean to preach, but sometimes things happen in our lives which we cannot control, nor explain. This experience was one of them for me. Emile was my brother, and my older brother at that, so there was no way to really object to his plan for the business. I'm sure he had it figured out to be the best for both of us. That's how it was.

Some people never get over their unhappy experiences, and their wounds never heal. I have always remembered the good people who did help me, and whatever scars I may have had, healed long ago. I believe it's always best to just let it go. I have not forgotten, but I enjoy total freedom from that unhappiness. An old proverb says, " We cannot direct the wind, but we can adjust the sails."

Stephen Arterburn, in his *The Power Book*, writes, "It is much easier to walk away from a hurtful past than to confront the issues. But we cannot remove the past from our hearts – it is there to stay. And the only hope for true peace with the past is to face it at its worst, to seek to forgive, to be forgiven, to make amends and be reconciled". And to let it go!

I went back to Mr. Hobgood again to ask for a job. He

hired me immediately to open a new, undeveloped route, and I happily accepted. He was such a good man and a square shooter that I was glad to be with him again.

I explained to Mr. Hobgood that my ambition was to someday have my own business. I knew I was too entrepreneurial to work for someone else all my life, and I wanted him to know my feelings as we started out together again. I told him I was glad to work for him until I found "my place" in life, and he accepted my employment again under that condition. In his kind and understanding way, he told me that he was happy to have me with him as long as I was satisfied. When the time would come to leave, there would be no ill feelings. We'd remain friends, always. He was a good man!

Once again, I was furnished a company car and a small salary, with additional commission based upon the amount of sales I made. I built that route principally of large car dealerships where I had to gamble: if I got an order it would be a big one or if I couldn't convince the buyer to order from me, I got zero. I gambled and won everywhere I went, except in Church Point at Horecky Motors.

Their auto parts and supplies buyer was Owen Guidry, who was a close friend of mine at SLI (USL), and who regularly slept in my off-campus room with me on football or dance week-ends. But authority at the auto dealership must have gone to his head at this job, and I suppose he forgot his old friend. I was never able to sell him even one item out of a fourteen inches thick catalogue. There was nothing, even in that big book, that he needed in all the times I called on him for business. But God was good! I did extremely well everywhere else, including three dealerships in Lake Charles, one in Welsh, one in DeRidder, one in Jennings and another in Oakdale.

By this time, I was making frequent trips to Lake Charles for business purposes, and to see Barbara. Things had gotten better for me with Barbara and I was seeing her regularly. I now tease her, "There was no way for things

between you and me not to have worked out, considering all the novenas your dear mother made hoping *you* would catch *me* for a husband". Really, it was more the other way.

Our favorite song then was, and still is today, "To Each His Own," and I truly felt in my head and in my heart that Babs was to be my own. And I happily admit that I was love-sick over her. Some folks today might call that condition, "ga-ga".

Marguerite, Emile's wife, as well as being Barbara's aunt, used every opportunity to encouraged her to go out with me. Marguerite was not only my other sister, she was my salesman. Whenever things didn't go too smoothly between Barbara and me, I would go see Marguerite to ask for her intercession. Little by little things became more favorable for Barbara to accept me.

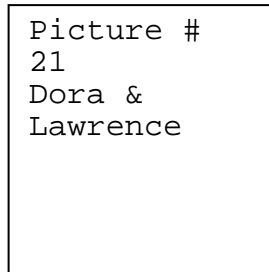
I suppose Barbara began to sense my real love for her, but more than that, our comfortable and easy compatibility played a big part in our attraction for one another. I not only loved her, I really liked her...and that condition has never changed through all our years together.

I regularly drove Mamma's Buick to get to Lake Charles because I had no car of my own and would not use the company car for such trips. After working all day, I would drive to Lake Charles for dinner and maybe dancing or a movie. When eleven o'clock came it was time for me to head home.

The main route home was via the two-lane Highway 90, and that was not the safest road in the world. In spite of that, I usually made the trip from Barbara's house to ours, a distance of about fifty-five miles, in less than an hour. At my age then, I felt invincible! Some nights I'd get home and did not remember passing over the Mermentau River bridge because I slept through it, I guess!

When I had enough money in my savings account to buy an engagement ring, a good new suit of clothes for myself, and allowance for a decent honeymoon trip, I asked

Barbara if she would marry me if her father gave his approval. Barbara accepted my proposal, and she then made the arrangements for me to see her parents on a set evening.



Dora and Lawrence Dumesnil, 1939

Being the kind and charitable people they were, they gave us their blessings, and we picked the first weekend in July for our wedding. I was on “cloud nine’ and overcome with joy when I told them goodnight. I was going to marry the girl of my life, the only girl I ever loved!

On my way home, I began thinking about the first weekend in July when I hurriedly made a u-turn in the road and drove back to Barbara’s home. They were all alarmed when they heard me knock at their door only about an hour after I had left. After their anxiety settled a bit, I informed them that I could not get married on the first weekend in July because that would be the Fourth of July weekend. When I told them, “I just can’t find it in myself to agree to give up my independence on July fourth!”, they all had a big laugh. After taking a bit of scolding from Barbara’s Mother, I was happy to hear them laughingly agree to change the wedding day to the following weekend. And so it was, July 11, 1948 would be our wedding day. And I guess all that

nonsense is what kept me from ever forgetting our wedding anniversary date.

Uncle Fatty later took me to a jeweler friend of his in New Orleans where I would buy Barbara's engagement and wedding rings at "wholesale" price. I was able to get what I considered a decent ring-set for the money I had available for that purchase. Good old Uncle Fatty, he came through again! He would never hesitate to help any of us in every way he could. He always volunteered to do anything he thought we ever needed. He was like a big brother to all of us in our family, and we loved him very much.

My Babs and I were married in her parish church in Lake Charles, the Church of the Immaculate Conception, by my lifelong friend, Father Junior Sigur. Unknown to all of us then, Father Sigur was to eventually become the uncle of Michael Fruge who would someday marry our daughter, Donna Marie. The altar boy was Emile, Jr., my nephew, and Barbara's cousin.

In keeping with a Lebanese tradition, my elder brother Emile was my best man. However, my close friend, Joe B Stoma was one of my groomsmen, as was my younger brother Edmund. Barbara chose her aunt, Antoinette, to be her maid of honor, and my sister Yvonne as one of her bridesmaids. In addition to Babs and myself, there were twenty-two persons in our wedding party, including bridesmaids, groomsmen, flower girls, and ring-bearer. Wow! Were we married!

Picture # 22

Sammie &
Barb
Wedding Pic

Church of the Immaculate Conception, Lake Charles, LA
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Reggie, July 11, 1948

After our religious vows were exchanged, it was necessary for the bridal party to move to the sacristy of the church where we and the registered witnesses of the marriage signed whatever legal papers there were. During this activity, Father Sigur asked me, "Well, Simhon (as he frequently called me), how are you feeling now"? My first thought was that my head was whirling around and around with excitement and joy, but I answered him, "I don't know a thing that's going on. You'll have to tell me all about it another day." He's teased me about that, off and on, for the rest of our lives. I have heard him tell the story of that incident at other marriages he performed.

After the very beautiful wedding ceremony, Barbara's parents hosted a first class reception in the Knights of Columbus hall across the street from the church. The hall was lavishly decorated with flowers, shrubs and other finery to make the place most inviting for such a happy occasion. A cornucopia of delicious food and drink was spread for all

to partake. A rhythm quartet furnished pleasant music for all to enjoy. Many relatives and friends from all around Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and my great aunt, Rose Stevens, from Massachusetts, and a cousin, Alicia Arelle from Mexico City, all honored us with their presence.

Mamma, who loved Barbara like her own child, was more than pleased and happy having Barbara come into our family. But in spite of all the happiness, she was still a bit sad because Papa was no longer with us to witness this joyful day. She was correct in her feelings, because I missed him, too. Many years in the past, he once told Barbara's mother that he would be proud and happy if their daughter, Barbara, married one of his sons. I think he was talking more about Edmund than me. I was much older than Barbara.

In planning for our honeymoon in Miami, Florida, but not fully comprehending how far that is from Crowley, I had Mamma's Buick put in tip top shape for the trip. After having it inspected to be sure of its mechanical fitness, I gave it a sparkling new wax job, and it was a "fit carriage" for me to take my bride on our honeymoon. However, during the wedding reception, Aunt Amelia and Uncle Fatty took my car keys from me, and he put the keys to his brand new Roadmaster Buick in my pocket. No amount of refusal would work. They would have it no other way. So, after our wonderful and elegant wedding and reception, we proudly drove away in Uncle Fatty's new car. And it was an air conditioned car! A first for those times.

After Babs said, "I'm embarrassed for people to see us in this car with all those signs written all over it", our first stop was in Elton on Highway 190 to get all kinds of just-married signs cleaned from the car. Then we stopped at "The Village Restaurant" in Baton Rouge for supper where Barbara ordered fried shrimp. That was her favorite dish. I'll never forget it. If it matters, I ate chicken cacciatore, a house specialty.

Our next stop was the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans

where we found a bottle of champagne awaiting us in our room: compliments of my brother, Edmund. What thoughtfulness! Barbara had a sip just to be a good sport and to make a toast to ourselves. You see, she never drank anything stronger than a "Shirley Temple" in all our courting days.

We never did get to Miami as we had planned. We went only as far as Jacksonville. Naturally, we were happy with each other, we enjoyed the Atlantic surf, dined on conch and other strange ocean fare, did some nightclubbing and dancing, but we were not really impressed with the course sand beaches. Babs and I have been back there since, and stayed in a new hotel on the beach built right where "our hotel" used to be.

While traveling back to Crowley, we noticed how beautiful the white sand beaches in the vicinity of Panama City were and decided to stop for a dip. Since the highway, in those days, passed immediately next to the beaches, we took turns using the car to get changed into our swim wear. We had great fun building sand castles and dipping in the fresh Gulf surf. I'm afraid we enjoyed it all too much, and we forgot how long we were in the mid-day sun.

That night, which was Saturday, and the last day of our trip, we stopped in Biloxi at a very fine hotel and planned to dine in their gourmet restaurant and dance to the music of a famous big band. We found it difficult to get dressed because our backs were burned! But we managed to do so and kept our reservation for the evening.

I couldn't touch Babs' back when we danced, and we both felt feverish from too much sun, to the point of not being able to eat our dinners. Our only relief came from Noxzema cream which we used lavishly upon our backs. What a terrible way to end a honeymoon trip!

The next day, Sunday, we returned home in the afternoon to learn that Mamma had a reception planned for that night at our family home. It was all so wonderful to be with all those people at such a fine party, but on Monday

morning I had to get back to my route and to making money to support my young bride. I say young bride, because she was that, but also because she was seven years younger than me.

Our first home as a married couple was one of Mamma's apartments, number three, at 419 North Avenue E. Prior to our wedding I had Curley Latiolais, our favorite carpenter, remodel it a little to make it more suitable to our wishes. We happily lived in that one bedroom apartment, where the living room eventually became a nighttime bedroom after we had three children, and the place began to get crowded.

Babs "ran the house" on the \$10.00 a week allowance we could afford. She did not, however, pay utilities, insurance, doctors, drugs, etc. with that money. She used that money for groceries, baby formula and other such things for the house.

For me, living with those three little girls and Babs in that tiny, cozy apartment was grand! The closeness was wonderful, and some of my best memories of my daughters were of things they did while we lived there. Well, not everything, if we recall Mary Beth falling off the bed and breaking a color bone, or Donna taking a swig of bleach from the pantry. In spite of those kinds of things, God was good to me. It all worked out beautifully, and I was enjoying it!

In grateful remembrance of Dora's generosity, I must tell you about our very well dressed daughters. Dora worked for a while in a children's clothing store in Lake Charles, and regularly used her entire salary to buy some of the fanciest, frilliest, laciest and most beautiful outfits for our daughters. To see them dressed, one would imagine that their father was a very rich man!

Even with the special discounts Mr. Lloyd allowed his employees, Dora (Mommie as we came to call her following the birth of our children) couldn't make enough money to keep up with her purchases for the children. She was most generous about all things, but especially so when it came to

furnishing the children with the latest fashions. God bless Mommie for all her generosity and her love.

God bless Lawrence, too. He never once showed anything but pleasure with Mommie's extravagance towards the children. (In time he, too, got a new name from the children, PawPaw, which we all lovingly called him from then on.)

Mommie turned out to be a great admirer and advocate of mine. She always made me feel like I was exactly what she wanted in a son-in-law. And I cannot describe properly how good a man PawPaw was. He was kind, gentle and most charitable. He and I never had a disagreement about any serious matters during all his life with us. In all our years together I never heard him use a swear word, nor ever heard him say anything derogatory about anyone. He was one who never tolerated gossip. We now know that we have our own St. Lawrence in heaven!

I need to cut-in here to tell you that Barbara was a very good dancer of ballet and tap, and she was the greatest at adagio and acrobatics since childhood. She was so flexible in her acrobatic routines she was nicknamed "Miss No-bones". She grew in her dance career to become an assistant teacher at Miss Sue Farrier's School of Dance in Lake Charles. She directed and taught dancing at two satellite schools, as well as teaching at the main school. She also attended dance schools and workshops in Houston, Dallas, New Orleans, Chicago and New York where she perfected her skills.

Picture # 19
No-Bones
Babs

Babs as "Miss No-Bones", 1935

After finishing high school, she and two of her dance mates had gone to New York for further study. Those two young ladies, Dorothy Barnes and Gene Larson, were very good dancers, too, but in my estimation, they were not as proficient as Barbara. Her mother went along as chaperone and lived with them while they were away from home. Dora was not about to allow Barbara to go to the big city of New York without being there to watch over her. Leaving Lawrence was not easy for her, but, as usual, Barbara's safety came first. By this time, Babs and I were seeing one another regularly, and I really didn't want to see her go.

Barbara and her two friends hired an agent in New York City for night bookings while they studied during the day at the Barbizon School of Modeling. Shortly thereafter, they were hired to stage dancing floor shows in night clubs across the Hudson River, in New Jersey. Naturally, Barbara's mother went with them to make sure of their safety. The three ladies danced as a trio under the name of "The Dubarson Sisters"; Du for Dumesnil, bar for Barnes and son for Larson the name of the third dancer.

Shortly before completing her studies at Barbizon's, Barbara was accepted for an audition with the then-famous Rockettes of Rockefeller Center. The Rockettes were fifty leggy, well shaped females who were recognized as being the best dancers in the USA, and Barbara was to be one of the fifty.

However, when her modeling training was completed, and she was ready to begin dancing in the line-up with the Rockettes, a girlfriend contemporary of Barbara's who lived in Crowley, was abducted and nearly raped. This friend was returning with another girl friend from a theatre near her home when a strange man accosted them. One escaped, while the other could not get away. As soon as the news of this incident was out, Barbara's father became alarmed and worried about Barbara's safety in New York and requested that she and Dora return home. PawPaw was teased for many years after that for wanting Barbara to return from that big "sin city of New York" to the safety of a small town, where one of her friends was nearly raped. Good old PawPaw took in all in stride.

Shortly after Barbara's return home, she opened dance schools of her own in DeRidder, Oakdale and in Crowley. Greyhound bus was her regular means of going to and from each town to conduct her classes. She successfully operated those schools until we were married.

After our marriage, Mamma had a large one room dance studio built behind #3 and #4 apartments where Babs operated her one dance school. Eventually she would add a school in Church Point. Her schools were named, "The Barbara Dumesnil School of Dance", whether we were married or not. Many of her very young students often referred to me as "Mr. Barbara".

The annual recitals she staged got bigger and better with each year. The people in Crowley enthusiastically awaited those well-presented and entertaining recitals. The students were well taught and practiced, and the theme of each recital was always interesting and drew much

attention.

The attendance grew so much that Babs began presenting the recitals in the upstairs auditorium of the City Hall where the stage was large and the seating capacity adequate enough to accommodate the large crowds who came to see those spectacular dance shows.

One recital I particularly remember was entitled, "Alice in Danceland". I was pressed into service to paint a backdrop for the stage. Barbara wanted a park scene with lawns, trees, flowers, shrubs and a walking trail. I painted that on a canvass which measured about ten feet high and thirty feet wide. Large enough to cover the entire back of the stage. And I worked on that every evening for several days after putting in a full day at my job. But how could I ever tell her no!

At the front center of the stage we placed a large "book" which I made of four feet by eight feet plywood sheets. All the sheets were hinged at one side so the cover and the pages could be turned to reveal the story of "Alice in Danceland". The last page of the "book" had a rectangular cut-out measuring about two feet wide by four feet tall, which was framed like a mirror, through which Alice stepped into "Danceland." For special effects, while the "pages" were turned we had electric fans blowing air over dry-ice for an eerie fog effect. We also had bags of white confetti which were suspended overhead and shaken by long, attached cords which caused a "snowfall" during the "fog" while Alice stepped through the "mirror". Wow! Were we ever proud of that! And the audience loved it!

Picture #
24

EA on
Stage

Emile Reggie, Jr., 1950
Hand-painted stage background

Barbara continued operating her dance school where she personally taught and danced with her students until it was time for delivery of our first child, Mary Elizabeth. In fact, the dance recital scheduled for the end of the school year, was advanced a month because Mary Beth was expected in mid-May.

With the arrival of our babies, Babs closed her schools and became a full time mother. Through the years, she has been frequently asked to judge beauty and dance contests around the area. Eventually she would get back to dancing again, but I'll get to that later.

Picture # 23
Babs cooking
Rice

Babs cooking rice, 1952

We were blessed with our first child, a beautiful little girl, on May 14, 1949, with the birth of Mary Elizabeth. She was given that name because we have a great love for Jesus' mother, Mary, and because Babs had an aunt she loved dearly, whose name was Mary Lou. The middle name was given to honor both my grandmothers, Nazha or Elizabeth.

Life began to change for Babs and me as we became parents, but she got right into the swing of things. She learned from books and from other mothers all about taking care of a baby, but it seemed she had a natural feeling for that role. She did such a great job one would think she was born to become a mother. Little did we know at that time that she was to *really* become a true mother. Eight times!

A little more than a year later, on November 19, 1950, the "stork from heaven" brought us our second beautiful daughter, Donna Marie. She was given that name in honor

of Jesus' mother, under the title of Lady Mary. And I truly believe that Lady Mary has protected her, and all our children, always.

God bless Babs for her adjustment to this kind of life: endless diaper changing, constant formula making and filling bottles, washing dirty dishes, learning to cook and keeping a clean and orderly home...with hardly enough cash to make it from week to week. For being an only child and somewhat "spoiled" by her parents, she handled it all without complaint.

On one Valentine's Day Babs gave me a card which means so much to me, even to this day. So you can know how we still feel about our life together I write the verse:

On special days like this one,
I look back over the years we've spent together.
I see us when we met and fell in love,
When everything was so new, so exciting,
And we couldn't get enough of each other.
I remember some of the difficult times,
When we wondered what we'd gotten ourselves
into.
I smile when I think about how far we've come
And where we are today - partners in a
marriage
That's strong and secure as ever,
Because we continue to nurture it.
Our marriage works because we work at it,
And because we've never allowed ourselves
to forget
Why we married each other in the first place...
For love.. forever!

With all the hardships Babs endured adjusting to being a mother of eight very active children, she always remained positive and up-beat. She always made me feel that whatever I was providing for the family was just right. In

this family too, the wife is the heart while she made me feel like I am its head. I love her for it!

Our third “gift from heaven”, another beautiful girl, was born on February 7, 1953, and we named her Yvonne Marguerite. She was given the name Yvonne to honor my sister who has the same name, and her middle name, Marguerite, to honor Babs’ aunt, Marguerite. We liked the name Marguerite because it is a derivative of Mary, the name of Jesus’ mother.

With three children under her feet, Babs really had to be a full time mother. And that she truly was. Even today, I cannot understand how she was able to handle all her tasks so readily, and with never a complaint. Never! God blessed me with a good wife and a good mother for our children. What more can I say?

As the children were growing older, and more numerous, Babs reared them to be part of the over-all family scene. Each one knew that he or she was expected to be a part of “the solution”, rather than a “problem”, in our day to day lives. They all understood why each one should pitch-in to do his or her part of making the family run smoothly. I don’t mean that everything ran smoothly always, but Babs’ patient teaching methods encouraged them to make their best effort to doing the “right” thing.

As a small example of that harmony, Babs insisted that they all remove their school clothes and get into play clothes as soon as they returned home. Whatever they took off, was properly put in its place. And before going to bed after they had their baths, each one of them laid-out the things, from head to toe, he or she would wear to school the next day. I really can’t remember a day when our children left things hang around or their rooms messy. And they did that without any signs of displeasure or discontent on their parts. Barbara was a loving, caring mother who reared her children to be neat and fastidious about their bodies and about their environment.

Since our one-bedroom apartment was getting to small

for my family, I began thinking of building a house for us. Eventually, I bought an old abandoned house near Jennings and had it dismantled and hauled to a lot at the corner of Eight Street and Avenue D, 326 Eight Street, where I had a new house built. Because we salvaged so much good material from that old house there wasn't too much to buy locally except for doors, windows, trim, plumbing and wiring. To finance this project, I borrowed, with the help of Edmund, six thousand dollars from Mr. Frank Adam, one of his clients and good friend from Lyons Point.

The house had three bedrooms, a bath, a living/dining room and a large kitchen which had a table for daily dining. It also had a central heating system! We were really comfortable in this "large" house.

There was a nice side yard for the children to play, and I had a privacy trellis erected to shield the view from the street. My cousins, Bea and Berman Shieldes, sent us some choice climbing roses of the famous Tyler, Texas variety which we planted along the base of the trellis. In time, those climbers grew to be very beautiful, and they completely covered the entire trellis. This was an uplifting and pretty site during the season when those dark-red roses were in full bloom. After living so many years in that little apartment on Avenue E, we felt like we were living on a ranch, with plenty space in and out of doors.

After moving into our new home, Babs' grocery allowance grew to fifteen dollars each week. Now and then when we had a dinner or *sahria* for family and/or friends, the allowance grew to include those expenses. I must say, without Babs' vigilance and smart shopping we could never have met our payment obligations to Mr. Adam for the house and to the bank while we were growing our business. We really needed every dollar I could earn to retire our debt.

In the meantime my good friend, Joe B. Stoma, had met and married a beautiful young lady from Houston, Marie Gani. I am still proud and happy he chose me to be a groomsman in their wedding in Houston. They moved to

Crowley where they started their family, too. He worked in an ice cream store on South Parkerson Avenue owned by his brother Charles, who also owned a laundry and dry-cleaning business in Crowley.

Picture # 25
Joe B & Marie

Joe B and Marie Stoma, 1997

Because of Charles' ownership experience in the dry cleaning business in San Antonio, his brother-in-law joined him in a partnership to build this laundry and dry cleaning business. They named it Whiteway Laundry and Cleaners. It was my understanding that Charles' initial capital came as a loan from his father in DeRidder.

As time passed Charles became ill and was troubled with kidney stones which prevented him from operating his business properly. His brother-in-law had no desire to learn more about operating the business, nor did he wish to stay in Crowley. He and his family moved to Mississippi, leaving Charles alone.

Charles closed the ice cream store, and Mr. Stoma forgave his debt if he would take Joe B in as a new partner.

Charles gladly did as his father wished because he really needed someone reliable to be with him in the business. This worked well until Charles suffered a stroke which left him greatly disabled. Joe B. then tried to operate Whiteway alone.

Because of my longtime and genuine friendship with Joe B, as soon as I could complete my regular work each day, I would go to the laundry to help him in any way he saw fit. I usually spent two or more hours every evening there. On Saturdays and Sundays, because I was more mechanically inclined than he, I usually made repairs to the equipment which Joe B could not fix during the week. Little by little I learned more and more about that business until Joe B spoke with his father and Charles about me buying into the business with him. I discussed this whole matter for days with Barbara before we agreed that we should buy one-half interest in the Laundry, if I could arrange to finance such a deal.

When the terms of the purchase were finalized, I went to Mamma and my siblings for their help. Because Babs and I had very little money, Mamma suggested to my siblings that we should borrow the money for the down payment from a bank, and offer her apartment house for collateral for the loan. That was willingly approved by Emile, Yvonne and Edmund. They've always been right there when needed. The balance of the money owed to purchase our one-half interest in the business would be financed by Charles. Just as I agreed to make monthly payments to the bank, Charles allowed me to do the same with the amount I still owed him for his one-half interest. Two pretty big monthly notes were a scary thought, but with God's help, I knew we could do it.

And so it was. My friend from childhood, Joe B, and I began another partnership, this time in October 1950. We prayed this venture would be successful. And through hard work and long hours, it was.

It was good to be in the laundry business for a totally

other reason: there was an old delivery truck owned by the laundry which was kept in fair running condition to use as a substitute in the event one of the regular trucks broke down. Because I had no vehicle of my own and used Mamma's car only for special events, that old truck was exactly what I needed. I could go back and forth to work without "hitching" a ride with someone. WOW!

In order to present a fairly good image of that truck, I'll tell you a story about it. On one cold winter afternoon while I served as Grand Knight of the local council of the Knights of Columbus, Bishop Schexnayder, our pastor and dear friend, phoned to ask me to give him a ride to the council meeting that night. I explained about having only an old jalopy, but that was okay with him.

When I picked him up I opened the passenger door for him to enter and away we went. The window on his side could be raised only so far, and it left a gap of about four inches from the top. That gap allowed very cold air to blow in on his bald head. Being the kind gentleman he was, he said nothing, but he did slump in the seat to avoid as much cold air as possible. At that point I told him, "Bishop, I apologize for the jalopy and the broken window lift, but it's all I have". To which he replied, "Don't worry, I can take it".

When we arrived at the K of C home he attempted to let himself out, but there was no door handle. I hurriedly went around to open the door from the outside and when I did, he said, "My, my, it really is a jalopy, isn't it!" And he never let me forget that incident during our many years of friendship.

The principal work we performed for our customers was to launder, press or fold any and all their household linens and their personal clothing. We dry cleaned and pressed their dress clothing. We also did laundering for commercial customers such as motels, restaurants and hospitals.

In addition to having many customers bring in their garments and household linens for laundering and/or dry cleaning, we operated three regular routes for pick-up and

delivery service: one for west of Parkerson Avenue and a second for the east side of town. The third route covered towns outside of Crowley: Kaplan, Gueydan, Mermentau, Estherwood, Egan, Iota and Lafayette. In addition to making household calls, that driver picked up linens from a few motels and restaurants.

The biggest account we had when I became a partner with Joe B was a Louisiana State owned hospital in Lafayette which was part of Charity Hospital, and was for after-care of patients who had overcome tuberculosis. We enjoyed the good and much needed profit from that account until the State directed that facility to begin sending its linens to a State laundry in Baton Rouge. That was a tough blow to us! Especially to me because of the “heavy” monthly payments I was obligated to make to the bank and Charles.

Joe B and I had a fantastic business relationship as well as a great friendship, as great and good as anyone could hope for. Several times after losing that hospital account, there wasn't enough cash for both of us to get our regular weekly “draw”. If I had a payment due at one of those times, Joe B would forgo taking his share and lend it to me so I could have enough money to make my payment on time. Can anyone wonder why I love him so much – and as a brother?

Neither of us was the “boss”, but both of us, singularly or together, were in charge. We always worked hand-in-hand with one another. Whatever he did complimented my efforts, and whatever I did, I think, complimented his work. We were a wonderful team!

Because of the fine harmony between us we were able to develop a loyalty in our employees which led to better work habits. These features led to us gain a good reputation in Crowley for turning out quality work. I am proud to write that we were recognized by many people as producing the whitest white shirt and the best pressed women's dresses, blouses and nurses uniforms. The finished quality of our commercial work was so good our customers began telling

others of our work. And day by day, our business grew and our profit margin was enhanced. God really looked down on us with favor!

God's favor was again shown to Babs and me in a special way on August 2, 1955, when our fourth beautiful baby girl was born into our family. We named her Barbara Anne to honor her own mother Barbara, who was a fabulous mother, and Anne to honor Jesus' grandmother, who was a model mother, also. We thought that if Barbara Anne had those models for her lifetime she couldn't go wrong, either.

After about eight years into my partnership with Joe B in the laundry business, my brother Edmund, informed me that Mr. Frem Boustany, Doris' father who owned the Evangeline Bread bakery in Lafayette, wanted me to go see him. I imagined that he might have some business lead he wish to pass on to me. He was a very astute business man who was widely respected for his business acumen and his honorable way of doing business. I was happy when he "sent" for me.

Naturally, I went to visit with him because I, too, respected him very much. Our visit turned out to be an interview for a position for me in the bakery. I was a bit shocked and pleasantly surprised when I heard what he had to say.

He offered me the great opportunity of joining him in the bakery business. An offer like I could never have imagined. He wanted me to be somewhat of an alter ego for him. I was to learn everything he did, and then I was to try to do as much of that as I could...plus other responsibilities. Mr. Frem gave me a very comprehensive overview of the bakery business and how I would fit in it.

The bakery was a growing and wonderful business with a great future, and Mr. Frem wanted me to help him direct it to that future. He spoke to me and treated me as a son, and I have never stopped being grateful for his confidence in me. I was flattered by his confidence, and I was, and still

am, deeply grateful for his generosity to me. He even offered to relocate my family to Lafayette in a home of my choice in whatever subdivision Barbara and I wished.

Mr. Frem's attitude towards me made it very difficult for me not to fully and carefully consider his offer for an excellent future for me. This fabulous offer was discussed at length for several days with Babs, Mamma, and my siblings. I was having a hard time deciding what to do. Even though Mr. Frem would give me almost total free reign over business matters at the bakery, somewhere deep inside of me I knew I wanted "to be my own boss". My entrepreneurial spirit made me think long and hard about that wonderful offer.

Before accepting or refusing Mr. Frem's offer I spoke with Joe B at length about the whole idea of leaving the laundry and going into the bakery business. After he and I discussed this offer at length over several days, he came up with a new twist. He concluded that he was able to run the laundry's business end without me. But he was not completely comfortable about his ability to keep the machinery running properly without me. The business affairs were no problem for him, it was only the mechanical part which he doubted. He further concluded that I could easily handle the machinery repair while doing a good enough job with the administration part. Our discussion then turned to the idea of one of us buying out the other, instead of my leaving the laundry.

After several such discussions, he offered to sell his one-half interest in the laundry to me, and suggested I refuse Mr. Frem's fine offer. Joe B felt that he could make more than a good living if he opened a store which sold close-out clothing for men, women and children at greatly reduced prices. He had at least two or three cousins who were in that kind of business, and he knew they would help him get plenty merchandise to sell. We then agreed that I would buy his interest, provided I could get the necessary finances from the bank.

By this time I had a good record of repayment and a good reputation at the bank. It was easy for me to get a loan to finance the purchase of Joe B's interest. After getting approval from the bank for the loan I needed, I went to Mr. Frem to tell him my decision, and to explain how I was going to buy Joe B's half interest in the laundry. He was happy for me to do what I thought best, but he had hoped I would be with him in the bakery. He then offered to help me with money to buy out Joe B, if I needed any help. He was a true friend and gentleman!

So, in October of 1958, almost eight years after buying into the laundry, I was on my own, its sole owner. Joe B and I dissolved our business partnership, but not our brotherly one. Being there without my old sidekick and best friend was a new and disturbing experience for me. Joe B was really a big part of my life, and a really happy part of it. In some way, I felt sadness all over.

When I had arrived home from the service in 1945, Emile, who was the Louisiana State Deputy of the Knights of Columbus saw to it that I become a member of that fine organization. I liked being in that fraternal order and eventually was accepted into the Fourth Degree rank. Because I was very active in the work of the Order I was readily elected to serve in several positions in my Council. I became Grand Knight of the Crowley Council and served in that position for 1954 and 1955. Later I was selected to be a District Deputy, and was also elected to be the Membership Chairman for the State Council. Now, I enjoy a lifetime membership in the Order. Emile has been a lifelong worker in the Knights of Columbus. Later he would be installed as a Knight of St. Gregory, a very high honor for a Catholic layman.

Because we had four daughters, I was taking much ribbing from my friends about not knowing how to "make" a boy. Well, it seemed like someone learned something because on March 1, 1957 our first son was born, and we named him Samuel J. Reggie, Junior, but we called him

S.J. or Sammy, except whenever we were emphatic about correcting him about something. That's when his entire name was used. He, like the girls, was a source of much happiness...and sleepless nights for Barbara. But I had it made: I could turn my deaf ear to the crying and sleep soundly through it all.

Exactly two years later, on March 1, 1959 our second son was born and we named him after his maternal grandfather, Lawrence Louis, and I prayed he would grow to be as kind and mild mannered as his gentlemanly grandfather. Larry was one of our quietest children. He would "entertain" himself with anything in his crib rather than cry or scream for attention when Barbara was busy with other matters. He was always happy and smiley!

Now for a little historical background about the birth of our next son: At 3 p.m. on May 29, 1917, Rose Kennedy gave birth to her second son at her home on Beals Street in the Boston suburb of Brookline, Massachusetts. She and her husband Joseph named the child John Fitzgerald Kennedy, after her beloved father. Young John went on to live one of the most storied lives in US history, serving as the country's thirty-fifth president until his tragic assassination in November 1963.

On September 2, 1960, shortly after Senator John Fitzgerald Kennedy visited in the home of Edmund and Doris while he campaigned for President of the United States, our third son was born and we named him, as we had promised the Senator: John Fitzgerald Reggie. Edmund gave the President the news of John's birth on one of his visits to Washington, shortly after he was elected to the highest office in the land. Since the President had not yet had a son, he was moved to eyes full of tears upon hearing that we named our son in honor of him, and sent with Edmund his signed portrait and handwritten greetings to our son, John. What a keepsake from such a great man! John, and all of us, treasure that portrait very much.

Picture # 27
Kennedy and Reggie
Family

Listening to a band concert in Crowley,
Sammie, Mamma Vic, Babs, Doris, Ms. Jackie,
President John Kennedy and Judge Edmund Reggie

Later on, Edmund obtained from the President's secretary, Miss Lincoln, the name and address of the man who hand-made a rocking chair for the President. That chair was specially built for the President because he suffered from back pains caused by injuries he received while he was the commander of a naval vessel, "PT 109", in the South Pacific during World War II.

Edmund also received authorization from the President for that man to make a duplicate chair for our son, John. Barbara and I gave the chair to John on his birthday when he was really yet too young to understand what that chair meant. It came with brass plaques attached, authenticating and identifying it as a true copy of the President's chair, and that it was especially made for John Fitzgerald Reggie.

After Babs became pregnant with our eighth child we

agreed, after Mamma embarrassed me into admitting it, that the house at Eighth Street and Avenue D would be too small for all of us. Barbara and I began making plans to build another house which would be large enough and would become our permanent home where all our children would be reared and would call home.

Babs delivered our fourth son Paul Peter on July 16, 1963, about six weeks before our new house was ready. This son was named for the Patriarch of the Maronite Church, Paul Peter Maouchi, a man of peace and genuine love for God. His Beatitude had visited in Edmund and Doris' home shortly before our baby was born. We were truly impressed with his genteel persona, and felt it an honor to give his name to our next child, if that child be a son.

Emile, on one of his trips to Lebanon, visited with Patriarch Maouchi and told him about our new son being named for him. Then and there, His Beatitude reached for a portrait of himself, wrote a prayer and greetings to our Paul Peter and signed it. We're all very grateful to Emile for bringing that keepsake to us.

When we finally had eight children, I very often reconsidered my ability to bring them up "correctly." My real concern was for their personality development and for their spiritual attitudes. I felt that I could always earn a living for them if God continued to bless me with good physical health. I only worried about my ability to guide them well enough for them to grow in the true meaning of "love of God and service to neighbor." Papa and Mamma had taught us that love, but I worried if I could properly teach it to my children. My forebears were known for their religious qualities, and for their care and kindness to others, and I prayed for my children to grow up in that "mold."

I want to pass on to you a prayer made by Douglas MacArthur which I paraphrased, and repeated often. I think it fits very well here.

His prayer:

Build me a family, O God, that will be strong enough to know when they are weak and brave enough to face themselves when they are afraid; one that will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, but humble and gentle in victory. Build me a family whose wishes will not replace their actions – a family that will know Thee, and know that to know themselves is the foundation-stone of knowledge. Send them, I pray, not in the path of ease or comfort but in the stress of difficulties and challenge; here let them learn to stand in the storm, here let them learn compassion for those who fall. Give them humility so that they may always remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, the meekness of true strength; then I, their father, will dare to whisper, “I have not lived in vain.” And you know, I think God really answered my prayer!

Our new home was built by Acadia Lumber Yard at 660 Seventeenth Street and we moved in during September 1963. The house was mostly furnished with things from our Eighth Street home. Our new master bed room suite, though, came from Gerami Furniture Store in Lafayette as a gift from Edmund and Doris; a hide-a-bed sofa for the den was given by Uncle Fatty and Aunt Amelia, and other items from here and there rounded out the furnishings. The living room and dining room had no furniture because there just was not enough money to buy those items. But that did not bother us at all because Babs used her good ideas and taste, plus her love, to turn the house into a real home.

Eventually, Bishop Maurice Schexnayder, whom we loved very much and who loved us and our children to a great degree, officiated at the blessing of our new home. At the house blessing and dinner which followed was another good friend priest, Reverend Monsignor Rudolph Arlanti, who came to this diocese from Italy.

Barbara regularly prepared meals of the Bishop's choice for him whenever we had him over for supper and "a romp" with the children, and a visit with us. God rest his soul, he was stern on the outside but was like a kitten on the inside.

He taught us so much about how to rear our children. He made us understand that the children were really God's children, and they were, for only a short while, in our custody for rearing in the best way we knew. And he always emphasized "best way we knew." He had a very special influence upon me which I liked very much. As it was, we became exceptionally good friends.

Father Arlanti had been a classmate of Father Sigur's while they studied at the Angelicum University in Rome in 1949 and 1950. Father Sigur encouraged him and another priest from the Alessandria Diocese in Italy, Father Alberto Bovone, to come to the United States for service in the Lafayette Diocese. Eventually, after their studies were complete, Father Arlanti came to the Diocese at Bishop Jeanmard's invitation.

His first assignment was as an Assistant Pastor in our Church Parish of St. Michael the Archangel. He, too, became a dear friend of our family. He was a good priest serving wherever the bishop needed him, until his death from cancer in 1989, because he smoked too much. Barbara and I enjoyed several visits with his family in his simple and holy home in Castelazza Bormida near Alessandria during our frequent trips to Italy.

Since I just mentioned the Angelicum University in Rome I should tell you about the another classmate of Father Sigur whom we came to know and love very much. Father Alberto Bovone was his name when we first met him, but before too many years he was ordained a bishop while serving in the Sacred Congregation for Faith and Morals in Rome. He eventually rose to become the second highest man in that congregation, and he regularly assisted Pope John Paul II in writing Papal Letters and talks His Holiness delivered around the world. Three years ago he was made the Pro-prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints. In that position he should be elevated to the rank of Cardinal, and we look for that to happen soon.

When I wrote to congratulate Archbishop Bovone on

being made the head of the Sacred Congregation for the Causes of Saints I also spelled out in full Babs' name and mine, to be sure he had the correct spelling when it came time to name us saints. Well, he wrote back to thank me for Babs' full name, but he said he saw no need for mine! I still haven't figured out what he meant by that.

Whenever Father Bovone came to the USA to visit Father Sigur he usually stayed with us in our home. Eventually he would vacation with Edmund and Doris at their summer home, Ehden, in Nantucket, also.

Babs and I always had visits with him every time we went to Italy. While at dinner with him in Rome years many ago, I toasted to the day when we all assemble in Rome for the "Red Hat" ceremony when the Holy Father elevates him to the rank of cardinal and make him a Prince of the Church. That toast has been repeated every year since, and because of his knowledge, his ability, and his piousness it appears that he will receive his red hat before long. He is a dear friend of all the Reggies.

After we were in our new home a couple years, we had an arborist, Mr. Henderson, from Lafayette transplant into our yard eight live-oak trees whose trunk diameter measured two to three inches: the four in front of our house were named for the four girls beginning with Mary Beth for the one nearest the driveway, to Barbara Anne for the most easterly one; the four in the back yard were given names of the four boys beginning with Sammy, Junior for the most westerly one. Mr. Henderson generously gave us a magnolia tree which he planted at the front corner of our house. Eventually, we would name that tree for my cousin Mary Carmen Issa (Nina), from Mexico City, who came to live with us as one of our own, while she attended classes at St. Michael High School. Nina is like a loving daughter to Babs and me.

Picture # 28
Our Home and
Flowers

Our Home, Babs' flowers, every year

Babs did much work in beautifying the outside of our house as she did the inside. She planted some of the most beautiful flowers each season, and she pampered them to perfection. Our home was always a real showplace of flowers and plants. Because of Babs' efforts, our home earned "Garden of the Month" awards several times each year, year after year. She has the will and the "green thumb" to go with it. I suppose she gets that blessing from her mother who always planted a splendid flower garden.

At about this time I joined the Rotary Club of Crowley and became an active member in every way. Eventually I held every office in the club including president-elect. But because of some underhanded activity by a member of the club, Mr. Barton Freeland, Sr., among the Rotarians whom he employed, I was denied the presidency on the first ballot, when the president-elect should have been elected. The president-elect always received one-hundred percent of the votes cast, but I wound up in a three way tie for fifth place.

I withdrew my name from the second ballot and eventually resigned from the club. I'm not sure if he disapproved of my heritage, my Catholicity or looks, but he didn't act like a Rotarian, nor like a Christian. I was really hurt.

Rotary is an organization of high ideals, but in this case, it had a member whose character was low enough to pull such a deal. Rotary's "Four Way Test" of the way we think, speak or do, is: Is it the TRUTH?; is it FAIR to all concerned?; Will it build GOOD WILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?; will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?" This was but a slogan to Mr. Freeland.

Before that incident, I really enjoyed being an active Rotarian. Papa had been in the Rotary Club before me, and he attended his final weekly meeting the day of his death.

At the laundry, after I became the sole owner, I made very few changes at first in the way Joe B and I operated the business. Shortly, though, I began going out for six or eight hours about once a month to call on prospective commercial customers. Those prospects were hospitals, clinics, motels, and large restaurants within fifty miles of Crowley. I called on prospects in Gueydan, Kaplan, Abbeville, New Iberia, Lafayette, Opelousas, Eunice, Mamou and everywhere in between where there might be a "live one." Whatever problems developed in the business while I was away, I tried to correct upon my return or on Saturday afternoon or Sunday.

On one such Sunday, when we needed to work on the steamboiler, I had my "team" assembled for five-thirty in the morning when we made our first repairs before lighting the boiler to make a test run. Just as we lighted the fire, I heard the church bell ring for 6:30 Mass at St. Theresa Church, which was only two blocks away.

Knowing it would require about an hour for the boiler pressure to reach the point where we could continue making repairs, I decided to attend Mass at St. Theresa's.

When I returned from church, things were in good order for continued repairs and adjustments. We successfully

completed the job a few minutes before nine o'clock.

On my way home that Sunday, I passed Mamma's home at 413 and saw Babs' car there. I knew the children would be with her, because they usually attended the nine-thirty Mass at St. Michael's. So, I stopped to visit with them and Mamma. This was exactly what Mamma needed! She told me, "Your visit is an answer to my prayers."

After we exchanged greetings, hugs and a kiss, Mamma began telling me, "I worry about your health and about how necessary it is that you do all you can to live healthy. You need good health to continue supporting your family which depends so much on you." Then she continued, "You can't imagine how badly I felt to hear you coughing in church this morning." She then asked me if I would try to quit smoking for a week to improve my health. You know, in our family when Mamma asks, we *never* say no. So, naturally, I promised not to smoke for a week as she had requested.

Mamma went to her bedroom and returned with a handful of Chiclets chewing gum and put it in my shirt pocket. I could now chew gum instead of smoking a cigarette whenever the urge came to me.

Next, Mamma told my children, "Notice how your forty year old father respects his mother's request". Then, she told me, "This is a great lesson you are teaching your children," and she promised God would bless me if I quit smoking *forever*. She said this would be easy since I had just said I would quit for a week. "When one quits for a week," she said, "it's easy to quit forever."

What a number she did on me! She knew she had me, so I *had* to say yes. I quit for life. (My eyes are full of tears as I recall that morning. Mamma was the greatest, and I love her for it! Now I wish I could have done more for her.)

On that same Sunday, about four in the afternoon, Babs and I drove to Mamma's for a little visit. The first words out of her mouth were, "He didn't smoke, Barbara, did he?". I assured her that I had not, and would never smoke again..., but I explained that I did not do it for her nor for my

children to see how I honored my mother. "Mamma", I said, "I did it only for myself because I became really worried that I might die! If you went to St. Michael's for Mass, and could hear me cough while I was at Mass at St. Theresa's, about six blocks away, I was quitting only for myself!" She had a hard time believing that we were not at Mass in the same church. We've had many laughs about that incident ever since.

I did not smoke another cigarette, or anything else, from that Sunday morning forward. And I have never regretted the decision I made that day: To respect Mamma's request, and for my own health.

The next evening, I received three phone calls from the good Sisters who were the teachers of our children. They all told me that their classes were praying for me after our children told about my obedience to my mother's request. The Sisters said my action was a lesson for the whole class in addition to my own children. Those dear Sisters didn't know it, but *they* were doing a number on me, too! I have had only great respect for all Nuns all my life. With all that notoriety, and all those prayers, there was no way I would ever back-slide: Even if I ever wanted to!

Now I pray that the two or three children of ours who do smoke will get the strength to quit, and I pray *their* children will heed all the medical warnings about tobacco smoking and never start. But if they do smoke, may they show honor to their parents' request for them to stop the bad habit...as I did.

While operating the laundry, I had a small side-line venture for a while. Now and then, I would buy a used car at what I thought was a good price, then have one of my employees, Leroy Sonnier, my Negro side-kick, "scrub it

Picture # 26
Whiteway
Laundry

THEN AND NOW
Reminiscing time.
Larry with Dad and Mom and Donna,
Yvonne, Sammy, John, Mary Beth, Paul and Barbara Anne.

down" and give it a good polish and wax job. If need be, I would replace the floor mat with a new one, install seat covers over worn seats and do some paint touch-ups. I also used rubber paint to give the tires a shiny new look. Everyone of those used cars turned out to be the "spiffiest used car in town!"

I then parked the car near the street next to the laundry with big "for sale" signs on it. It didn't take long before I had the made-over car sold for a down payment, which almost always equaled the price I paid, plus weekly payments to make a nice profit. I really needed the extra bucks for my fast growing family. I may have done this about a dozen times before getting too busy with other things.

Just before Joe B sold his interest to me we were concerned about a new type of laundry business that was sweeping the country: self service coin laundries, usually called washaterias. We made inquiries into this new operation and thought we might need to open one in Crowley as a protection for our own laundry business.

I put that plan on a back burner for a couple months before leasing a store-front location on Parkerson Avenue and Tenth Street. I purchased Westinghouse washers and dryers and used Westinghouse's name, Laundromat.

We held a successful and big grand opening with celebrities, politicians, family members and friends at the ribbon cutting. I hired radio station KSIG to broadcast from the Laundromat all day, and to interview anyone who came to wash or just visit, and we gave away door prizes. We even put the front door key in a prepared hole in the parking area, and ceremoniously covered it with fresh concrete. This was to make a dramatic statement that the Laundromat would be opened 24 hours a day. People were welcomed to come wash day and night. *That was new for Crowley!*

The opening of this business was a huge success, but I ran into a problem on the third day of operation, when a customer became enraged because a black person came in

to do some laundry. The white man tried to "throw" the Negro out, but with no success. When he went home for his gun, the Negro left.

The following day a delegation of Negro preachers and others of the Negro community, whom I knew well, called on me at the Whiteway Laundry to ask me to open a coin laundry in West Crowley for the Negroes. Because I knew them to be honorable people, I agreed to consider opening another Laundrymat.

In a few days, one of my boyhood friends, Joe George, persuaded his grandmother to lease the southeast corner of Hutchinson and Ross Avenues to me for me to construct a building suitable for a Laundromat. This place was one block from Papa's second store of some thirty-five years before. Nostalgic, no?

In about three months time I had the second Laundromat opened with as much fanfare as the earlier one on Parkerson Avenue. Only this time I hired a three-piece Negro band to play music all day instead of hiring the radio station. What a hit that made!

In addition to operating Whiteway Laundry and Drycleaners, I now had two Laundromats to keep in good repair and sanitary. With those new businesses I had to learn to repair washing machines, too. I already knew how to work on the dryers since they were the same type, generally, as I had at Whiteway. I felt so energized by the success of the whole operation I didn't mind expending the extra effort.

Both Laundromats were in operation by April, 1959. So I looked in South Crowley for a third location, and I entered into a lease in October 1959 with one of the Joe John daughters, Helen, who was married to Sam Bailey. She and Mommie were first cousins. Her family owned an empty store building on South Parkerson at Spruce Street.

This Laundromat was not as large as the others, but it served the needs and convenience of the people of that area of town. I was happy I opened it there. And now there were

three!

In order to keep the record straight, anytime I write about my business ventures, one should understand that every idea was fully discussed between Babs and myself. She had many good ideas which I attempted to put in place, and I am happy that she boosted me to success in whatever I did. She could sometimes see problems before I did, but she never embarrassed me nor humiliated me because of them. She had a way of gently showing me what I didn't see, and she always complimented me over and over for whatever good I did. She was always my best "cheering section."

As time passed, Babs would take the children to school and then come to the laundry to help me with some office work. Naturally, that led to many other chores from waiting on customers to folding towels, to receiving phone calls, to checking-out laundry bundles for return to our customers. She became the all-around helper I needed, and I depended upon her more and more. After school she would get the girls to come help with some of the easier jobs.

Barbara Anne, being still so young and not yet tall enough, stood on Coca-Cola wooden crates to be able to reach the folding table. Yvonne, Donna and Mary Beth took on jobs more suited to their taller size and ability. They all were tremendous workers, even if only to set the example for all the thirty, or so, employees who worked in the laundry. They didn't even complain about the heat, even when the summer temperature inside would reach a hundred degrees. They learned that they had to set the example!

God bless them, they were wonderful...from Babs, my wife, on down! In addition to being good workers, their personalities and conduct won over the employees, and they were loved by all who worked for us. Our employees demonstrated their respect for us and for their jobs by turning out exceptionally fine work. Because of the high quality and standards that were set for all service at Whiteway, I was awarded the coveted Jolly Belin Award by

the Laundry and Dry Cleaners Association of America. In truth, Babs, our girls and our employees really earned the award.

In the meantime, my trips to solicit commercial customers was beginning, little by little, to pay-off. I opened a new pick-up and delivery route for hospitals, motels and hotels which included Kaplan, Abbeville and New Iberia. A second route which handled Lafayette, was eventually expanded to include Opelousas and Eunice. Later, another route included Jennings, Welsh, Lake Charles and Oakdale. The Oakdale route was not profitable and was discontinued after a few months. We also began furnishing uniforms to mechanics who worked at several automobile dealerships in Crowley and Lafayette.

So that no one gets the idea that our lives were filled only with work, we did arrange to get away with the children now and then for play and rest. Even though that didn't happen very often, it was a fairly regular practice.

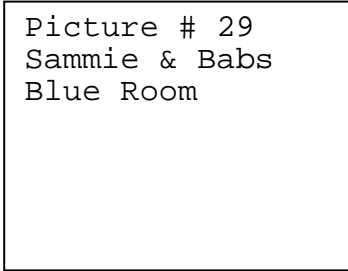
On Fridays during warm weather, Babs would shop for sandwich material and snacks, fill an ice chest with drinks, and pack swimming clothes and other things for all of us before picking-up the children from school. After coming to the laundry for me, we'd all drive to the Mississippi Gulf coast. We usually made it there in plenty of time for us to get to the beach for a couple hours of fun before dark. Then, we had all day Saturday for beach-bumming, taking naps and playing games.

On Sunday morning we dressed better, attended Mass at a church down the highway from our beachfront motel, then usually went to Angelo's for an Italian dinner before heading back home. Why Angelo's? Angelo's had a large children's plate of spaghetti and two baseball-size meatballs, with trimmings, for seventy-five cents! Our sons were in hog's heaven with those meatballs! And I didn't mind the price.

On some days when things were in good order at my work, I prearranged with Babs to drop the kids at school

and come pick me up for a quick trip to New Orleans. We could be there in time to have a delicious bar-b-qued shrimp lunch at Manale's Restaurant and return in time to beat the bell at St. Michael School when the children were to be picked-up.

These round trips gave Babs and me much needed quality time together. The two of us made this trip to New Orleans quite frequently. And I do mean "quiet", because we thought of this as being so "far out", we never told anyone about making those trips until much, much later. Eventually, we told Joe B and Marie, and then the four of us began making the trip.



Picture # 29
Sammie & Babs
Blue Room

Sammie and Babs in the Blue Room, 1952

We frequently took the kids to the "beach" in Lake Charles for an afternoon's play in the sand while the habachi was fired-up to cook hamburgers, which we

devoured.

We went to Galveston a couple times for a few days recreation, and we stayed at the old, famous Galvez Hotel. Once in a while we drove to Houston to enjoy the rides at Astro World, to attend the Barnum and Bailey circus, take in an Astro's baseball game, or try to ice skate in the Galleria. We never had time for an extended vacation together until I sold the laundry business in 1968, but we did make more than a few three-day excursions here and there.

After selling the laundry, Babs and I took all the children on a full blown vacation. Mary Beth and Donna did not accompany us because they were at college. We visited sites from here to the Northeast. We toured Washington, DC, New York City, several cities in Canada and many other points in between. The real highlight of our trip was our visit with the Deebes, Ziters and Yamins in Troy, NY. We enjoyed having our children meet their "Yankee" cousins, and we were all spoiled by their hospitality and love. Our love of those family members has never waned.

One truly relaxing thing I did since my return from my military service was to attend a week-end retreat, once or twice a year, at Our Lady of the Oaks Jesuit Retreat House in Grand Coteau. In addition to the great spiritual nourishment and uplift that gave me, the peace and quiet was very "medicinal" for my body, too. The rule of keeping silent from Thursday through Sunday in itself is great "medicine". It's a wonderful time during the hub-bub of life, to step back, "retreat", from the world to examine one's self and to attempt to correct the faults and shortcomings one finds. And it's a great time to plan to do some positive things to make life better.

Babs and I have been to Grand Coteau for married-couples retreats, which did very much good for each of us, and for both of us. I suppose one can never get too much good, spiritual education.

From time to time, I have been very fortunate to have

had one or two of my sons accompany me for the week-end retreat at the Jesuits' Retreat house, but the most outstanding experience was when all four of my sons could arrange their schedules so we could all make a retreat together. WOW! Was that a great experience! God has been so good to me in so many ways. Now, the boys make a retreat even when I am not able to go. I'm so proud of them and very happy that they recognize their own need for the spiritual exercise offered in a retreat. What more can a father ask!

Picture # 50
Boys at Retreat

Once in a while, Babs and I have enjoyed visits to New York City for sightseeing, but mostly to go to the Broadway shows. Naturally, the musicals were our first choice. On one six night trip we attended five plays and had a formal outing for dinner on one night. Our love was for the shows.

During all the years of operating the laundry I could find some time to indulge myself in a couple sports I really enjoyed: hunting and fishing. I was never a marksman shooter, but, somehow, I managed to do fairly well sometimes.

I did a bit of dove hunting whenever the chance presented itself, but most of my hunting was for wild ducks

Picture # 55

Babs at Broadway

Babs at a 1993 Broadway Show.

and geese. I enjoyed sitting in a blind anticipating the ducks' flyover, and then the increased heartbeat when they came into range. Pow, pow, pow! It was a great feeling when I saw them hit the water. I hunted ducks until the legal limit for a day's hunt became too small to make it worth while anymore.

I was fortunate to be able to regularly do some saltwater fishing in the Gulf of Mexico, and I had some very wonderful experiences out there. Fishing at the oil rigs almost regularly produced good catches of speckled trout. And when the specks were not interested in taking the bait, we could usually get enough spade fish or sand trout to keep us from returning home empty handed.

In later years, because saltwater fishing was more physically demanding, I began increasing the number of freshwater trips to the local rivers, lakes and bayous. Bream, white perch, or sac-a-lait, and bass are to be found in abundance all around our region. Don't let me mislead you, that doesn't mean that I always brought back a full stringer from every trip. Many times I scored zero catch! On those days, I went out only to eat my lunch, as the saying goes. Just going out on the tranquil water on a nice day was reward enough for whatever effort was expended.

I had two very special fishing experiences in my life that really stand out for me. Once, Babs and I went to Alaska for a visit, and I had the opportunity of scheduling a boat trip to the icy waters where salmon abounded. I was able to make several good catches, which included a thirty-eight inch long king salmon. That was a mighty big day in this old fisherman's lifetime.

As good as the fishing was, the thing which filled me with awe was the way the bald eagles tagged along waiting for us to release any non-keepers. Wow! To see those huge birds swoop down to the water was breadth taking. With their wings spread about six or seven feet wide and their talons in a fierce, attack mode, they plunged into the water and grabbed whatever fish we released! Just to see them in

action was enough to make the outing worthwhile.

On that same trip, Babs and I took a small plane and flew beyond the Arctic Circle and spent a night in a tiny village near the North Pole. We did that because we wanted to get a close-up view of that area, and because we had crossed the Arctic Circle once before. That time we were in Norway, and while visiting in Lapland we crossed the Arctic Circle from the other side of the world. In Alaska, we did it on this side. Both experiences were great, and we had about twenty-three hours of daylight in both places.

Picture # 30
Sammie
Fishing

With my St. Peter's fish at the Sea of Galilee, 1987

The other great fishing experience I record as one of my finest, if not *the* finest, took place in the Holy Land. Before going on a wonderful one-month visit to the holy shrines there, I bought a telescoping fishing rod which I could easily

pack with my clothes. I also took along a reel with fishing line, some hooks, and other essentials for fishing.

One day, I took my fishing gear with me when we went to the Sea of Galilee, and, dressed in shorts, I waded into the water of that holy sea. I had gotten some bread from our hotel during breakfast, which I used for bait, and began casting for fish. All the while, I prayed to St. Peter to help me hook at least one fish from that place where he had fished.

Before too long, my prayers were answered! I reeled-in about a nine inch long St. Peter fish, which was certainly a legal keeper. I was more excited about that catch than can be imagined. After Babs took snapshots of me with my prized catch, I wrapped it in plastic and used it later as a prop with a coin in its mouth when we visited the ruins of the temple in Capernaum (*Kfar Nahum*). I used it again the next morning when I built a fire of twigs on the shore of the sea at daybreak, and roasted it as Jesus did when He prepared “breakfast” for Peter and the other fishermen.

It should be easy to see why I consider that fishing experience the greatest of my life. Not only was the catch good, but where I caught the fish and how we used it, made that such a wonderful event. I’m still thanking God for the opportunity to go there, and St. Peter for helping me make my catch.

Since basketball was the only varsity sport at school during my days, and I was not good enough to make the team, my only “official” experience was playing baseball during my years in the military service. I usually played second baseman, or center fielder. Even though I was never known as a homerun slugger, I think I got my share of hits, and wasn’t too shabby as a base stealer.

While we are in the sports arena, I’ll conclude by recalling my enthusiasm with bowling. That, too, I learned while I was in the service. I bowled with friends as often as possible, and I managed to score in the 200 range on a regular basis. There were many times when I never

“smelled” 200, and very, very few times when I bested 250!

At one time, we, at Whiteway Laundry, were doing laundry and dry-cleaning for the seminarians at the Diocesan seminary in Lafayette at a greatly reduced price (as an act of charity, I humbly admit). The father of one of the seminarians contacted me and asked me to service his forty employees in Lafayette with work uniforms. He told me that he was happy to learn what I was doing for the seminary, and he felt that he should transfer his business to me. This volume of added uniform business opened the door for me to solicit more customers for uniform rental service, and with the added volume I could buy the uniforms at a cheaper price, making my profit grow even more. I had heard my parents say so many times, “Do good and it will be repaid tenfold.” God was so good to me! Always! I am eternally grateful for His generosity to us.

During the course of doing business in Lafayette I met the manager of National Linen Rental Co., Mr. Hank Ruth, and he and I got along very well. We worked together sometimes, servicing a few accounts, and he began to understand that I was trustworthy in my business and in what I said. There were times when he had equipment failure in his plant, as does happen often, and I always offered to do his work in our plant. That type of cooperative help, and my solicitous attitude, impressed him very much. He was not accustomed to having “competitors” helping one another.

Eventually, he approached me to talk about his wish to leave his employer to start a new linen rental business for me. After some meetings and study, I agreed to start the new business. I agreed, only if he made a small investment of his own to insure his commitment. I couldn't take the risk without some assurance that he would not leave after I made the necessary, and large, investment in this new venture.

It was not long before the amount of work we did in our plant was doubled. God saw that Babs and I needed the

increased revenue for our growing family, and He provided the means for us to earn what we needed.

At this point in time, we had the laundry and dry-cleaning business, (which was doing much commercial work), the three Laundromats, the uniform rental company, and the linen rental company. Money is not everything, but we were finally beginning to do well, and I was very enthusiastic about my work. I was a happy business man. Maybe I was too happy.

Things kept going well in all our endeavors until certain Federal programs came into being. Those were programs which tempted many workers of the type I needed in the business, not to work. If they qualified, they could receive a check from the government in Baton Rouge or Washington. More than just a few accepted the offer from our government to stay home and still collect a "paycheck." I suppose they figured, "Why work if a check would come in the mail for not working."

Good employees were getting scarcer each day causing our production and quality to diminish to unsatisfactory levels. Conditions deteriorated so much, that the time came when I had to refuse more business. Now that's certainly not like me! That's not how I thought a business should be operated. I was determined to continue to turn out first class, quality work, and do it on time or bust!

In time, I began setting my alarm clock for five in the morning so I could get to the business before six o'clock to do the things my employees did not do the day before. Or, I had to correct some botched job that was done to a customer's clothes. I began putting in fourteen to sixteen hour days on a fairly regular basis just to keep quality at a minimum. Little by little, my spirits were sinking, and I was losing my enthusiasm for this daily up-hill battle.

I, who loved my business and my work, would sit on the edge of the bed with my head drooped over, after the alarm clock sounded in the morning. I began dreading to go face the new day. This was not my way, but I could think of no

way to get those employees to turn out the quality I wanted. This awful situation continued for about two years.

One afternoon in October 1968, Edmund phoned me and asked me to go to his office. I was too busy to go, and I told him so, but he insisted that he had to see me right away for an important matter. Because I could never refuse any request Edmund made, I went.

When I arrived at his office I found him accompanied by three men to whom I was introduced before being seated, as Edmund "dictated" I should do. He then politely, and with a flourish, handed me a legal document to sign while he told me that these men were buying Whiteway Laundry from me! What! I never before heard anything about those people. Naturally, I balked, but he insisted that I sign.

How could I sign and sell the business I worked so hard to build! I had no time to think. My mind was in a swirl. At that moment I knew how the Confederate General James Longstreet must have felt at the battle of Gettysburg: Overruled and overwhelmed!

I protested that this matter is too big for me to decide alone, and required discussion between Babs and myself before I could make the decision to sign. He smiled and said, "Barbara already knows about the transaction, I have discussed it fully with her. She is waiting for you at Mamma's house." He had been meeting with those men for sometime, putting together the details of the sale of my business. I signed the sale for the laundry, and was assured they were not purchasing the rental companies nor the Laundromats.

When I arrived at Mamma's house I found Babs, Doris, Yvonne, Tom, Emile, Marguerite and Mamma awaiting me. Edmund followed a few minutes later. We "celebrated" the sale of the laundry, but I was unsure about everything else yet to be faced by me in the days and weeks ahead. I couldn't believe what I had just done. But I still thank God for such a wonderful family and such a good friend and brother as Edmund. He assumed the entire burden of

finding a buyer and obtaining a good and fair price for the sale of my laundry business.

After concluding the sale of the laundry business, my plan was to continue the linen and uniform rental businesses and pay the new owners of the laundry for processing the work. At the time of the sale, they agreed to handle all the work I had, but as time passed, I noticed they preferred not to do it because it caused one of the partners, the manager, to work overtime. Can you believe it!

I could sense that the new owners were not going to make it in the laundry business because of their idea of not wanting to work too hard. I began putting out feelers to other rental companies in order to sell my rental businesses before I might be cut off, and left with no processor of the work.

Before too long, I had everything sold except the three Laundromats. Once again, God was extremely good to me. Not only did I unload those business before I became trapped in a bad situation, but the buyers paid me very good prices for everything.

It must be noted here that at this time in my life I was a very uneasy husband and father of a large family. I was almost fifty years old and owned only three Laundromats from which to earn a living for my growing family. Babs gave me very much encouragement and I prayed much. I often recalled the words of our friend, Bishop Schexnayder, "Do the best you can."

I also remembered that my sister, Yvonne, had, during her loyal and regular correspondence with me while I was away in the Air Corps, sent me many poems and other writings. She sent them to keep up my spirits, and to encourage me to understand more about life and about the love my family had for me.

One poem in particular helped me then, and it was what I felt I needed to read again during this time of uncertainty. I knew what my next move would be. I went searching for that poem which once helped me so much.

I dug into my "archives" until I found and read it, again and again, on a regular basis. It gave me the strength I needed just then. It was such good "medicine" for me.

It was also a favorite poem of Papa's. He always had an expression of deep pleasure when he heard it recited. About the poem and us, he said, "If you listen well to its words, they will help to make you not just grow up, but grow up well!"

I print it for you now with the hope that if you ever find things a bit tough for you to handle, you might remember it being here for your reading.

I F

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you
But make allowances for their doubting too:
If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream - and not make dreams your
master;
If you can think, and not make thoughts your aim,
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;

If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop to build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings

And never breathe a word about your loss;

If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the will which says to them: "Hold on!

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings.. nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;

If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth, and everything that's in it,
And.. which is more.. you'll be a Man, my son!

Rudyard Kipling.

With all the encouragement I received from Babs and my the family, and the Faith I had, I "knew" what I had to do. And to be totally honest, I must confess that I am eternally grateful to Edmund for engineering the sale of the Whiteway Laundry business.

When I got my feet back on the ground, I began visiting almost all the towns within fifty miles of Crowley looking for additional locations for more Laundromats.

I made my own surveys of every neighborhood which I considered might be appropriate for opening a coin laundry. With a clipboard in hand I walked block by block, counting the number of houses which had clotheslines, which had visible dryer-vents sticking out of their walls, houses where many children played outdoors, houses with several tri-cycles and other toys in the yard, etc. I was gathering information about houses which had large families and no dryers, which almost certainly meant there was no washer, either. All this would help me decide if a coin laundry might

be successful in that particular area of that town.

While making my survey of neighborhoods, I learned there were some dinky washaterias around, here and there, but they were dirty, dark and run down. My concept was to build places with shiny terrazzo floors, celotex ceilings, paneled walls and plenty fluorescent lights.

Eventually, I opened new Laundromats, or bought worn out locations and dressed them up and upgraded the machines with new ones. I owned two in Lake Charles, one in Jennings, four in Crowley plus Northgate Apartments, one in Rayne, six in Lafayette plus four apartment complexes, and two apartment complexes in Houma.

In the apartment complexes I supplied all the equipment and maintenance, while the owners furnished the utilities and janitorial services. My rent was based on a percentage of the business done there.

I experienced some vandalism here and there, but generally, my concept for the business was too good to attract vandals. In some locations I also had air conditioning for customer comfort. People forgot about those dingy washaterias they had used, and began coming to my clean, well operated Laundrymats in large numbers.

After I had all the locations up and running, I was driving about a thousand miles a week in order to check them for needed machinery repairs and maintenance. I hired people in each town to keep the locations clean and sparkling inside and out. My real work was to keep every machine running well. That included washers, dryers, detergent dispensers, change makers, snack machines, cold drink dispensers, room cooling systems, fluorescent lighting, and anything else needed to keep the business operating in a first class condition.

One evening while we were having supper together, I asked my children to come up with a name for our business. They were the ones who would chose a trade name for our chain of coin laundries. After some hits and misses, some good and some corny, we all agreed upon a

name one of them offered: Sudsy's Laundrymats. I don't remember who offered that name, but we had fun as a family picking a name for our business.

After we owned several coin laundries, I founded Sudsy's Equipment Company through which I was able to purchase machines in carload lots at greatly reduced prices. Because of the buying power we enjoyed, I was sometimes able to resell machines to other operators at a lower price than they usually paid, and make a profit for ourselves on those sales. The equipment company offered us a wonderful opportunity to improve our "bottom line."

To keep this "conversation" complete, I must tell you about the silver "shortage" which developed in the country. The federal government decided to stop minting silver coins in 1965, and some very wealthy speculators began cornering the silver market in the USA. The price of silver made a steady climb from about four dollars an ounce to nearly fifty dollars an ounce.

The only coins that were still made with a content of ninety-five percent silver when the government made its decision, were dimes and twenty-five cent pieces. All other coins were of other metals or alloys. That meant my quarters were increasing in value day by day. Eventually, a quarter became worth as much as three dollars each, on the silver market.

Because I was dealing in large quantities of twenty-five cent pieces, I became interested in "trading" in the silver market. I located three reliable silver traders: one in Shreveport, one in New Orleans, and another in Houston. I stayed in touch with them weekly to learn what the buy and sell prices of each trader was for that day.

Whenever I received a satisfactory sell price from one, I'd contact the others to see if they had a good buy price. When that condition existed, I drove, with Babs with me sometimes, to the low seller where I bought four or five bags of a thousand dollar face value worth of quarters, returned home, added several bags of my own, and then drove to the

high buyer who had a decent buying price where I sold all the bags I had. All three of the dealers knew me only by my *nom de plume*, "Tex", and I always went to buy or sell, dressed in western clothes and a western hat. I had some fun doing all that dealing!

When I felt that I had the business end of my life going well again, I volunteered to teach Catechism classes in the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine program at St. Michael's for public school children. I enjoyed helping those children learn more about themselves, about God, and how the two worked together.

Eventually, I was assigned a class made up of eighth grade boys only, which I truly enjoyed. They were old enough not to need baby-sitting, and young enough to absorb much about the Faith. I happily taught CCD classes for more than twenty-five years. I refused to continue only after it became fashionable to teach about love, but never about obligations and sin. I simply couldn't teach that "feel good" theology that became popular at the time, and was being foisted upon us. I'm still sorry I quit, but I just couldn't get myself to teach those young people about those "fuzzy" concepts which replaced the more traditional teachings of the Church. I pray that God doesn't judge me harshly for quitting.

When a nice piece of property on Parkerson Avenue at Eighth Street was put up for sale, I bought it to build a new coin laundry which would replace the one I was renting nearby. The property contained more square footage than I needed for the Laundrymat, so I developed the extra space into a car wash.

With invaluable help from Joe B's son-in-law, Rod Stevens of Kansas, I was able to get started in the carwash business. He owned several of those businesses of his own. He was a top notch operator and a first class business man. He took me by the hand and taught me about the carwash business. God bless Rod, he walked me through it, step by step.

In time, I learned how to assemble, install and repair my carwash equipment. With that new knowledge, I built a first class Laundrymat and carwash business at that location, and both businesses were very successful, thank God. In a matter of a few months, my competitor came to me asking that I buy his two carwashes in Crowley, which I did. Those were upgraded to my standards, and now there were three!

I was surprised one day, to be invited to be in the welcoming committee of the AFL/CIO convention being held in Baton Rouge one year. I couldn't figure out how I got

such an invitation, until I learned that Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy would be the principal speaker of the convention. Someone must have known of the longtime association between the Kennedys and Reggies. Then, I was really happy to be included, and Babs suggested that I should take Mary Beth with me instead of herself. Mary Beth was as thrilled as I was. Ted is such a likable fellow, and his sainted mother trained him well in the Corporal Works of Mercy and the Social Principals as taught by the Catholic Church. His whole career as a senator has been spent in introducing legislation which would aid the worker, the needy, the infirm, the aged, etc. Some smarty persons object to his legislation, but Ted is working for the very things all of us should be working for as good Christians. Or we're not good Christians.

In 1971, I decided I wanted more education about certain business areas in which I had become involved during the past few years, so I went to school! Not school school. This time, it was for a one-week course in real estate sales training which I wanted for my own knowledge, and as a back-up in the event I needed it. I considered it wise to have a real estate sales license, so I attended a Louisiana State approved Real Estate School in New Orleans.

Everyday in my motel room near the school, I awoke at five a.m., dressed and studied while I had coffee and a donut. I was in one class or another from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m., after which I would stop at a grocery store and buy some prepared items for supper.

When I returned to my room, I would study until news time on the television set, when I would stop to eat my meal. From news time till bed time, I reviewed the day's lesson until I was sure I knew it well. Everyday was the same for the whole week.

I write all these details so you will know that I was

scared to death of not passing the course. Could my fifty-something year old mind retain everything being taught me? How could I ever go home and tell my children that I failed! With the help of the Holy Spirit I satisfactorily completed the course of study and earned my certificate of completion.

About a month later, I took the Louisiana State test for licensing, along with another seventy-two candidates, at the University of Southwestern in Lafayette. I was one of the forty-eight who passed that exam and received a license as a Real Estate Salesman. I was pretty pleased with myself!

Next, with Edmund's help, I attended a school in Lafayette to learn about insurance: life, health and casualty insurance. After receiving my certificate of completion, I took and passed the State of Louisiana exam in Baton Rouge. Then I became a licensed insurance agent certified to sell all areas of insurance, except marine insurance.

Since I then had my license to be a real estate salesman and my license to be an insurance agent, I decided I also wanted to be a Notary Public. After completing the required studies I was give a written examination by a judge of the court. After receiving a passing grade he swore me in as a Notary Public for Louisiana.

I still have my licenses, which I renew each year, and I complete the annual continuing education requirements for the real estate and insurance licenses even though I do not engage in either of those businesses as a salesman or agent. I do it just to keep-up with things, and to keep my mind from getting "rusty."

Starting in 1972, wedding bells began ringing for our children beginning with Donna Marie who married her high-school boy friend, Michael Fruge, that year. The following year, 1973 saw Mary Elizabeth marrying Robert Ferris. In 1975, Yvonne Marguerite married a young lawyer, Charles Kelly, whom she met while at LSU, and 1978 was the year Samuel, Junior married Cindy Guidry. Barbara Anne married Aaron Hornsby, and Lawrence married Gwen

Gossen in the same year, 1980. 1989 found John taking his high school sweetheart, Susan Zaunbrecher for his wife; and finally, Paul married Antoinette Kadlubar, from a very fine family in Lake Charles, in 1993. Our children and their spouses have been very prolific, and so far, they have blessed us, so far, with twenty-three wonderful and beautiful grandchildren.

Picture # 31
Family Photo

Our family. October, 1996
Kneeling: Antoinette, Paul, John, Susan, Gwen, Larry;
Seated: Barbara Anne, Barbara, Samuel, Sr., Yvonne;
Standing: Aaron, Michael, Donna Marie, Samuel, Jr.,
Mary Beth, Charles.

I would like to tell you about my grand children, about how radiantly beautiful each one was at birth, how the doctors and nurses raved about how wonderful they were, how intelligent each one is, how respectful and polite each one is, how smart each one is, how the teachers vie with one another to get them as their students, how each one makes

such good grades in school, how each one is loved by everyone and looked-up-to by their peers, how popular they are everywhere, how honorable they all are in their relationship with their parents, how they just lovingly dote over Babs and me...but I think you don't really want to hear about that at this time. So, I'll restrain myself and move on to other matters.

After the first grandchild was born, Babs requested that she be called Sitty, just as she had called her grandmother. Lebanese children of long ago called their grandmothers Sitty, which means, "my grandmother." All the grandchildren grew up lovingly and respectfully calling her Sitty. I was treated the same way and named "Jiddy", meaning "my grandfather". At first I was not too happy with that name because I recalled it being used only for *old* men, and I felt too young for that. But, as time passed, and I heard my grandchildren call me Jiddy, my heart melted. Today I love to hear them refer to me that way. That name really sounds lovingly respectful! And I thank Babs for starting the custom in our family.

With things running smoothly at home and at our businesses, Babs and I looked into doing something that would be recreational and at the same time, beneficial to us.

One summer, she and I decided to enroll in classes held at the Biloxi, Mississippi campus of the University of Southern Mississippi. We thought it would be nice to enjoy the coast while trying to grow our knowledge. Of the many subjects available, we chose to undertake a couple of "crip" courses, "Poetry Writing and Appreciation, 101" and "Art for Beginners." We found our schooling to be an enlightening and most invigorating experience. To be back in class again was a real challenge for both of us, but we enjoyed it very much. We enjoyed the class work as well as the friendships we developed. We still have good memories of that experience.

Upon returning home, Babs and I tried our skills at art. We took painting lessons from a couple instructors, but our

best teacher was Mrs. Gail Stickley. She taught us how to use oil paints as a medium and we enjoyed that more than water colors or acrylic.

Babs became a much better painter than I. So what else is new! She seemed to have a natural talent and flair for the brush and oils. We both have some paintings which were considered fairly good enough to display, and they hang in the homes of our children. My favorite of those I painted is the one I titled "Sitty and Boolus", and hangs over the fireplace in the home of Michael and Donna. Babs has several real good ones hanging everywhere. All our children are happy and proud to display her paintings.

At about this time, in 1978, all of the children were on their own or did not need their mother's attention on a day-to-day basis, so Babs decided to get back into dancing. She

Picture # 32

Dancing Babs

Babs at age 62, tap dancing on stage, 1990

enrolled in the Glenda Moss School of Dancing in Lake Charles which is owned by one of her former students who teaches dance classes. Glenda has the premier dance school in Lake Charles.

Babs was able to quickly hone her former abilities in tap dancing and ballet, and gave a try to the new craze, jazz dancing. It was not long before she was the versatile hooper that she had always been, even though she had grown older. On recital nights each year, when the stage production of "The Follies" takes place at the Lake Charles Civic Center, Babs is usually on stage with six to twelve young ladies between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five, but it is almost impossible to locate her among those young dancers.

All of our children, and as many of our grandchildren old enough to go, always had front-and-center reserved seats for her recitals. And we sort of bet among ourselves to learn who could find her first. Believe me, it was not easy to tell her from those young women.

Babs, Sitty, as the grandchildren call her, is as good a dancer, if not better than, any of those younger dancers. And when she is in costume on stage, it's very difficult to tell her from the others. Her physique is still better than most of those years younger than she.

She continued to do very well, hardly ever missing a dance class throughout the years until she suffered a slight heart attack in 1991. Shortly thereafter, however, she was back at doing what seems to come naturally to her: dancing. She held her own, week after week, year after year, until she was stricken again in the summer of 1996, and needed heart by-pass surgery.

Everyone who knew Babs' exercise and eating habits

were shocked to hear of her heart surgery. The doctors told us there must be a genetic reason for the blockages in her heart. As this is written, she's back in class once again, as well as doing her regular exercise walk of about two miles a day. She also is on an aerobic exercise regimen, scheduled in between the dance classes and her walking, either at a gym or at home.

In between being mother and wife, and attending her dance classes, Babs made time to hold religion instruction classes in our home for children who were physically or mentally challenged. These children needed help in order to make their First Holy Communion or to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. Those classes were held for many years on a weekly basis, and with great results. Babs was very patient and loving to those "children of God", and they were able to learn enough to receive the sacraments.

When some first began coming to her, they could not even recite The Lord's Prayer, but before Babs was through teaching them they were rattling off many prayers, even if sometimes is sounded like so much gibberish. God bless them! That work gave Babs tremendous happiness, and she still lovingly speaks of her "children." Later, because of this and other charity work she did, Babs was inducted into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

PawPaw, who had been retired from business for sometime, enjoyed being "around the house" with Mommie and taking things easy when he became ill because of a cancer in one lung. Too much smoking! After successful surgery, he fared very well for more than a year until he began having circulation problems in his legs which required surgery on both calves to remove plaque from his veins. We were all shocked a few days later, on March 5, 1973, when he suffered a fatal heart attack because of blood clotting and "flaking off" inside the surgery area.

Even though Lawrence's home was in Lake Charles his funeral Mass was at St. Michael Church, and he was buried in the Crowley Mausoleum where all of his and

Mommie's family are entombed. It was a sad time for all of us to lose such a kind, gentle and mild-mannered person as PawPaw. All of us lost a good part of our lives when we lost him. He had the respect and love of everyone who knew him. May he rest in peace! St. Lawrence, pray for us.

All four of our sons, at one time or another, worked part time and summers with me in the Laundrymat business. When I bought the Parkerson Avenue location for the new coin laundry and carwash, it was my sons, small and young as they were, who did much of the work in preparing the location for professionals who would construct the buildings. And they did all of the clean-up work, too. They learned early that there was no task too menial for us to do.

Each, in his own way, was a big help to me, somehow. Maybe they were not always too happy with some of their working conditions, but they never protested. Not to me, that is. And I truly enjoyed all the time we shared together. God bless them all!

Because the Laundrymat business was so spread out, Larry eventually joined me full time in the business, and he was the one out of the four brothers who decided to make it his life's work. He was a natural for it. He was mechanically inclined, had good business sense, and was liked by all who knew him, in and out of the Laundrymat. He made hundreds of loyal friends everywhere.

Paul became bored with high school at Notre Dame and asked to go to another school where he would be challenged more. After much research, and visiting a few college preparatory schools with Babs and me, he decided to attend The Williston Northhampton School in Easthampton, Massachusetts. We were happy he made that choice because we saw how good that school was for his cousins, Ed Michael and Raymond Reggie who had attended that school earlier. He enjoyed his two years there where he distinguished himself, was recognized for his good works, and received a first class education. His cousins before him had a great reputation there, and left a legacy of which we

are all proud.

Paul made up his mind to become a professional person, studied law at Tulane University Law School, and after graduation from the law school, clerked for a Supreme Court Judge before becoming a prosecutor in the Calcasieu District Attorney's office.

John quickly learned how to erect metal buildings when he worked for Doyle Hoffpauir in Crowley. He was later employed by a home improvement company in Lafayette where he became proficient in carpentry and home repairs. These experiences led him to start his own metal buildings erection business and hydraulic equipment sales and repair establishment. He started out on a "shoestring", but in time, grew his business into one of the best in the area. His office and plant occupy half a square city block in Crowley. He utilizes the latest computer assistance in designing and cost estimating the buildings he constructs. He has erected some very large and attractive buildings in the area, and has been a real success at his work.

Sammy started out doing home construction work for Emile in a subdivision development in Lafayette which Emile named for our Dear Mother: Victoria Village. The experience and training he received in the home building business has been a good thing for him ever since. He left Emile's employ to join an oilfield chemical transport company. He was with that company twelve years.

While working for the chemical company he studied for and successfully passed stringent Louisiana State commercial licensing requirements. He also had a one hundred percent safety record with his company all the years he worked there.

Eventually, he and John teamed-up to operate a company which sells and installs gutters and downspouts, patio covers, awnings and storm windows, along with the erection of metal buildings. When he is not with John erecting steel buildings, he is busy with the patio and other phases of their business.

Mary Beth became a very capable and respected school teacher and has been in that profession, either in a public school system or a private school for all the years she was not being a house mom. At last report, she's studying for her master's degree in education administration by attending night classes a couple times a week at a university about fifty miles from her home. That takes courage, especially after putting in a full day teaching a group of sixth graders. She hopes, someday, to leave the classroom for an administrative position.

Donna has been in the school system all of her adult life. After teaching in the local public school system for a few years, she decided to give back something of herself to the parochial school where she was educated. To make such a move she sacrificed such benefits as tenure, a good retirement plan, and a higher pay scale. But, she felt like she needed to make that contribution to our Catholic schools. Babs and I are really very proud of her unselfishness. She has been teaching at St, Michael's School more years than I can remember. She, too, attended night classes at LSU in Baton Rouge, while teaching in the daytime, in order to get a masters degree in Library Science. She now has her masters degree and is the librarian at Notre Dame High School.

Yvonne, many years ago was employed as a secretary at the LSU Medical School in Shreveport, but had to stop in order to raise her family. When her two children reached an age where they could take care of themselves, she passed her name around in the right places at the medical school, and before too long she was interviewed and hired again. This time, she's an assistant director of the development office of the medical school. She did such a wonderful job of successfully masterminding Bill's political campaigns for municipal judge that she became very well known in Shreveport for her unique ability of organizing, directing, financing and bringing to a successful close every campaign Bill had. She is doing such a good job in her present

position, it appears like she might become the full time director of her office before too long.

And Barbara Anne has worked as a secretary for my brother, Emile, and for John, and as a clerk in an insurance office in Lafayette before joining her Uncle Tom LaHood in his insurance agency. She is a clerk there in addition to being a sales person. She has really taken to the insurance business as though she was born for it. Possibly, when Tom retires she will purchase the business for herself. I hope that happens because she is so well received by the public and would be very successful in that business.

A little more than three months after PawPaw's death, Mamma became sick and her condition deteriorated quickly. On May 30, 1973, Mamma died from heart failure: Her heart was overwhelmed with fluid which could not be processed. We all suffered broken hearts at the loss of our "anchor", the "chairman of the board", the matriarch of the Reggie family in the USA. Just writing about her death drains me, even today.

At the time of her death, St. Michael Church was undergoing major renovations so we, her children, decided she should be buried from St. Theresa Church, thirty years to the day after Papa's death. It was only fitting that her funeral Mass would be in St. Theresa's because Mamma always had a special "thing" for that church.

Mamma had provided the altar cloths and linens for that Church through the years. Mamma was an expert at making lace tatting which she added to the altar cloths and other things she handmade for St. Theresa's. This was the Church for which she begged alms with me, and to which she made other contributions through the years. It was the Church which we all visited on a regular basis when we lived next door, on Second Street, and where we frequently go today to pray or worship. It was only fitting that her funeral Mass and final prayers were in St. Theresa Church. God's hand was readily seen in this event.

Father Junior Sigur, who celebrated Mamma's funeral

Mass, said during his homily that it was most fitting that she should be buried from St. Theresa's because of Mamma's great love for "The Little Flower", and, he continued, "because she lived her life in the imitation of that "Little Flower" in love, care and concern, and for her hope and confidence that were only of God and of her great, great, great Faith in Him. We have learned much from her, and she was proud of all of us, her blood children and this adopted son of hers. She lived Faith to the last moment, she did her death with dignity and peace, swift as an angel, peaceful as a child, carried in God's arms".

Mamma is buried with Papa in the Crowley cemetery mausoleum, next to my Sitty Nazha, Elizabeth Stephen

Reggie.

On the day of Mamma's funeral the American flags which flew over the U.S. Post Office, the Acadia Parish Court House and the Crowley City Hall were flown at half staff. Her extraordinary service of many years to all the community, especially the needy, was recognized by all, and was the reason for this tribute by the civic leaders. At no time before, nor since, has that ever been done for any citizen of Crowley, let alone a housewife immigrant-citizen of this Country. Mamma was well known for her unselfish and untiring volunteer and charity work. She made us all so proud of her in the manner in which she "gave back" to the community. She was an excellent role model for all of us.

Picture # 33

Mamma Vic

Mamma's 75th Birthday Party, April 1973.
Victoria Andraous Reggie
April 16, 1898 – May 30, 1973

She was a longtime active supporter and Founder of St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee. She enjoyed cooking and selling Lebanese suppers at her home to raise funds for the children's hospital. For many years she single-handedly managed and operated the St. Vincent de Paul charity clothing center at St. Michael's Church. She was a lifetime member of the American Legion Hospital Volunteer Pink Ladies organization. She was happiest when she would be helping people, one way or another.

Along with the various accolades Mamma received during her lifetime, she was awarded a Papal Medal by Pope Paul VI, "*Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*", "For Church and the Pontiff", in recognition of her good works for the Church and others. She always made us so proud of her. May she rest in peace!

On May 31, 1973, the Crowley-Post Signal carried the following front page news article:

LONG TIME CROWLEY WOMAN LEADER DIES

Yesterday, death claimed Mrs. Victoria Andraous Reggie, long time Crowley resident. She was 76 years of age and in poor health for the past two months. She was the widow of Fred Reggie.

Funeral services are scheduled for 10:30 a.m. Friday from St. Theresa Catholic Church. Geesey-Ferguson Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Reggie was active in church and other community affairs and was a member of St. Michael Catholic parish since coming to Crowley from Lebanon in 1920, as well as being an active participant in various fund raising and civic

functions.

“MammaVic”, as she was popularly known in the community participated in religious activities, including membership in the St. Michael Court of the Catholic Daughters of America. She was a Charter Member of the St. Michael Study Club and continued active membership until her death. She also belonged to the Altar Society.

Among her favorite works was that of custodian of the St. Vincent de Paul clothing center for the poor. She operated this function single-handed for many years until her health no longer permitted it. In 1970, Pope Paul IV conferred upon Mrs. Reggie the special Blessing and Conferral of the Cross for Service to the Church and to the Pope, “Pro Ecclesia e Pontifice”. This is the highest honor conferred on a woman.

Last year the Pink Ladies awarded Mrs. Reggie Lifetime Membership at a special luncheon for the countless hours of work with the sick and their families at the American Legion Hospital. She was a charter member of that group following an active membership in the American Red Cross program for bandage making all during World War II.

Among her community undertakings were various fund raising functions, including Polio Drive, Red Cross, Cancer and Heart Funds, Fund Drives for St. Michael School and for the construction of the roadside grotto to Our Lady of Lourdes on Highway 90 West of Crowley, as well as the ALSAC Drive for Leukemia research at St. Jude’s Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee.

Crowley Mayor Joe Gielen today ordered all flags flown at half staff in the city until her funeral “as a tribute of our respect and mourning for this extraordinary citizen whom we shall miss”.

She is survived by three sons, Emile, Sammie and Judge Edmund Reggie and one daughter Yvonne (Mrs. Thomas) LaHood, all of Crowley and a brother, Said Andraous and three sisters,

Frangiye A. Saroufin, Maria A. Marawie and Josephine A. Saroufin, all of Lebanon. She is also survived by a maternal aunt, Mrs. S.K. Deeb of Troy New York, and cousins in Troy, Philadelphia and Mexico City. She is survived by seventeen grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

It was Mrs. Reggie's wish that, in lieu of flowers, persons wishing to remember her do so by contributing to the St. Michael Society of Vincent de Paul which serves the poor and needy of this city.

After Mamma's death we settled her estate in a gentle and easy manner. One thing my brothers, sister and I did, however, was to leave intact one bank account which she had. That was an interest bearing account which we renamed the Victoria Fund.

Several times during the year, when enough interest has been earned in the account, we, her children and our spouses, go to a nice restaurant for dinner which is paid for by that account. Our first salute of the evening is always a toast to Mamma, who is feeding us again. We always enjoy a happy time together just as we did when we had our regular meals with our Matriarch. We, her children, always anxiously look forward to our next Victoria supper so we can enjoy one another's company, as she would want.

Picture # 51

4 Sibs in
Nantucket

Sammie, Emile, Yvonne and Edmund at Ehen in Nantucket

Picture # 34

Dinner in
Nantucket

“Victoria Supper” in Nantucket
Sammie, Tom, Yvonne, Emile, Doris, Edmund and Babs

About fifteen years ago Edmund and Doris purchased a fine, large house on Nantucket Island which lies about thirty miles out into the Atlantic Ocean off the Massachusetts coast. The climate is fantastic and the summer times are comfortable beyond belief. So close to the cool comfort of our ancestral home, Ehden, at the foot of the cedars in Lebanon, that Edmund and Doris named their summer home “Ehden”. And they daily fly the Lebanese flag under Old Glory in their front yard.

All my siblings and spouses try to go there together for a week of reunion and good time together every year. In addition to having a great time while at our comfortable “home” on the island, we usually manage to dine at least once at a luxury restaurant and charge it to Mamma’s bank account. I know Mamma would be happy with us having those reunions and charging our dinners to the Victoria Fund. Babs and I always happily look forward to our next visit to “Ehden” to enjoy the wonderful climate and the grand hospitality of Doris and Edmund.

Let’s move on to June 1980, when the State built a railroad overpass on Eastern Avenue in front of one of my carwashes. That construction just about killed the carwash business at that location, so I began building self storage mini-warehouses for rent on part of the property. God blessed me again with good results in this new business so that I built more warehouses on property we owned behind another carwash location off North Parkerson. I’ve just gotta say it again, God has really been good to me.

After PawPaw’s death, Mommie continued living in Lake

Charles alone in her home. And a nice home she did have. It was a house that she and PawPaw had built several years earlier in a beautiful subdivision very near McNeese University. They furnished it beautifully, and Mommie had a place for everything, and everything was always in its place. She loved to plant and cultivate flowers and shrubs, and the lawn and landscaping around her home were always perfectly manicured. She really had a “green thumb.”

She drove back and forth to Crowley for regular visits with us and with her few siblings who were still living, until she became ill and could not properly care for all her needs in Lake Charles. After much persuading on our part, she moved to Crowley where she lived until her death on June 16, 1983.

In ten very short years we lost all the people who nurtured us, taught us, protected us, educated us, provided for us and loved us very much throughout our lives: PawPaw, Mamma and Mommie. Even though we were grown-ups, we were like orphans, like lost sheep.

Picture # 35
Lawrence &
Dora

“Paw Paw” and “Mommie”, 1971
Lawrence Louis Dunesnil, October 4, 1902 – March 5, 1973
Dora Ethel John Dumesnil, October 6, 1902 – June 16, 1983

All of us, especially our children who grew up with Mommie around them most of their lives, were grieved at her death. She was very, very good to all of us, but with her death I lost my most loyal advocate. As far as she was concerned I could do no wrong, and in most discussions she always sided with me instead of with Barbara. And I know I did not truly deserve all her faith, confidence and love. She and I had the same birthday anniversary, October 6. She has been sadly missed ever since. May she rest in peace!

In 1988 I decided to retire from the nine-to-five business world and set about preparing my Laundrymats for sale.

Eventually, I sold all our operating businesses except three in Crowley and three large apartment complex Laundrymats in Lafayette. I sold those to Larry, along with the three carwashes we owned in town. Then he was on his own with enough business to make a living for his family. He could begin expanding as he saw fit, which he has already done.

In addition to his Laundrymat and carwash business, Larry is a dealer in commercial washers and dryers which he sells and installs in motels, hotels, hospitals, nursing homes, etc. He also performs repair work on commercial and residential washing and drying appliances. This part of his business, even though a side-line thing for him, has provided him with good income.

Besides watching the stock market a bit and trading the proceeds of the sale of our businesses, which yield a living for Babs and me, I still have the mini-warehouse business which I "look after." Sometimes I purchase a used house, restore it, dress it up a bit and then resell it for a profit. This has been a very good way for me to stay active, physically and mentally. I can still make a square cut, and I can hammer a nail in straight, almost every time. Not too bad for an old workhorse! It has been fun, too.

Babs and I have been very fortunate to have been able to make several trips to Europe for vacations: the first of

which was with my sister, Yvonne, and her husband, Tom. Since then, Babs and I have been in Rome nearly a dozed times as we traveled throughout Europe and North Africa. We have also been to Lourdes, France a number of times for a pilgrimage which we make annually with the Order of Malta. We were blessed twice to be with the Holy Father under very close conditions, and were able to greet him and receive his blessings. While I was the chairman of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, Babs and I were selected by our bishop to be in a group of one hundred persons from Louisiana and Mississippi who received Holy Communion from the hands Pope John Paul II when he visited in New Orleans. That was really a great moment in the life of this old "country boy!"

Picture # 36

Babs & Pope

Barbara and Pope John Paul II, 1991

Our earlier trips overseas were made without too much worry about the children, who were all young at the time,

because Mommie and PawPaw usually moved in with the children. We felt that the children were safer with them than with us. They watched over them as well or even better than we normally did. And they helped spoil the children, too. God bless them!

We have always been "lucky" to get some good, enjoyable and really unexpected bonus events wherever we traveled in the Holy Land or in Europe. Because we were accidentally in a certain restaurant at a particular time, we met people who helped us visit or see places and things of artistic or religious value which the "ordinary" tourist could not normally enjoy. The manager of our hotel in Jerusalem, whom I befriended, obtained a letter of introduction for us from the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church which permitted us to enter several holy shrines closed to tourists.

Babs and I made two trips to a small town in Yugoslavia, Medjugorje, where Our Blessed Mother was appearing daily since 1981 to four teen agers and a child. We went in the late eighties, not expecting any miracles, but just looking for a sign within ourselves that the "apparition" sees us! I suppose our miracle was our not ever despairing of God during our lifetime. We never lost Faith, no matter what!

Picture # 52

Five Girls in
Medj.

Resting on the hilltop at Medjogorje,
Babs, Yvonne, Mary Beth, Barbara Anne and Donna

We were blessed to be chosen by Father Jozo Zovko, the Franciscan pastor of St. James Church where the apparition were taking place, to accompany those young people into the small room where they saw and spoke with Our Blessed Lady. What an awesome experience! Babs returned there for a third time taking our four daughters and her Aunt Marguerite with her. Our sons, John and Paul, also made a pilgrimage there with our dear friend, Father Keith DeRouen.

Picture # 37

Pope with
group

Pope John Paul II greeting us.
Samuel and Barbara, far right, 1989

This next story is told to show you how good God has been to us and how He blessed us in a special way. Once, while Babs and I were in Rome and on our way to the large hall with ten thousand other people for a Papal audience, our driver stopped to chat with a friend who was somewhat of an important person in the Vatican. That chat led to us being allowed to enter St. Peter's Basilica by a side door where we joined about twenty aids who were caring for their handicapped patients. When the Holy Father arrived, he spoke with us and blessed us as he did the patients. We have many wonderful memories of the good things we experienced on those trips abroad.

One of the most outstanding trips I ever made came about in a strange way. In 1961, Edmund was sent by President John Kennedy to be his special Emissary to several countries in the Middle East. Doris, Mamma, and Doris' father, Mr. Frem Boustany, went with him, and he "headquartered" in Lebanon. He then went back and forth for his official visit to one head of state after another as scheduled.

Picture # 39

EMR & Sitty in
Lebanon

Edmund, Emissary for President Kennedy, greeted by Sitty Nazha Andraous. Uncle Asaad Araigi and Mr. Frem Boustany looking on, 1961.

He phoned me after his arrival in Ehden to tell me how elated he was to meet Sitty Nazha and all the family there. His pleasure was so great he felt like I should join him there and enjoy being with her, too. He told me, "Everyone of Mamma's children have met Sitty at one time or another except you. Make plans to come to Lebanon now". I could sense his enthusiasm through the phone. It didn't take much to coaxing for me to agree to go for a week. I really wanted to be with Sitty if I could arrange it.

Babs made my going to Lebanon seem so easy. She quickly laid out a plan for everything while I would be away. I would have loved to have her go with me, and also to meet Sitty. But Babs stayed behind to run the house and the laundry business. That was the only way I could leave things and go, and at Babs' insistence I did go.

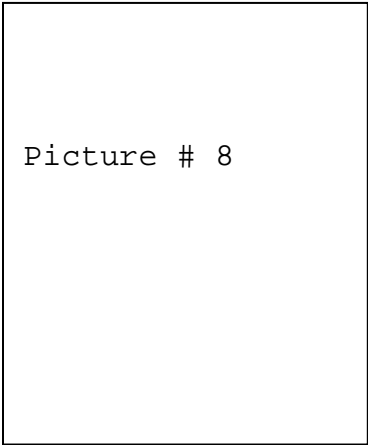
Seeing Sitty and the rest of the family was the greatest gift Babs could have given me. I enjoyed being with Sitty, even for that short time. I was really blessed to have had the opportunity to know that saintly woman, to hear her stories, to marvel at her wisdom, to clown around with her, to pray with her, *and to hug her*. She was a doll!

She almost always had her rosary and a prayer book in her hands. Whenever she was not in conversation, she prayed the rosary or opened her prayer book and read her prayers. She never her time to be wasted. Incidentally, God

blessed her so she could do all that reading without eye glasses.

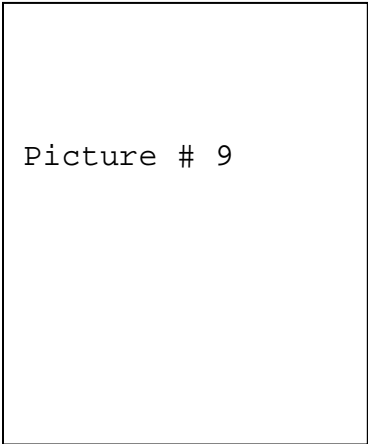
Sitty had gone to school in Bethlehem as a girl where she was taught by, and lived with, the French Nuns, the Sisters of Charity. In Lebanon at the time, she could not be taught by the French order of nuns. No one now knows how many years she studied in Jerusalem. Her father, like a true Lebanese, believed in a good education for everyone, even for girls, and in two languages. That was not too popular a notion in those days, but Jiddy Khalil wanted her to be as well educated as anyone. Mamma would be taught by that same order of nuns in Lebanon when she was old enough to attend school.

While at Sitty's home, as well as the homes of the others of the family, I noticed a dark stain on the door post of the



Picture # 8

My Great Grandmother, age 90
Frangeye Maawud Andraous
Buried in Troy, N.Y. ca.1930



Picture # 9

My Maternal Grandmother
Nazha Maawud Andraous
Ca. 1875 - September 3, 1966

house and remembered the Bible story of the Passover. When I asked about it, Sitty sat me down and told me how she painted the door post with lamb's blood every Holy Thursday of her life, as her parents before her had done. She explained that this annual custom was an outward sign of the residents' reverence for God as they prayed that all who live within and those who come as visitors be shielded from harm and evil. She spoke ever so softly and with a kind of reverence that made me feel awed just hearing the story. If I have any idea of saintliness, she personified it!

One more thing should be written about Sitty before I move on. In a quiet moment one day, I asked Sitty what advice would she give me that I could take home with me for the rest of my life. Without hesitation, her gentle reply was, "You must do all you can to keep your body strong, do all you can to keep learning so your mind will continue to improve, but more than those together, you must do all you can to grow your spirituality." She emphasized her words by saying, "if you are strong here", as she patted her forearm, "and strong here", as she patted her temple, "it all means nothing, unless you are strong here". Then, she reached

over and touched my chest, over my heart. She concluded by saying, "This is all that counts." What a lesson! God bless her, she was the greatest! Now, I think of her in a special way every time I see and hear Mother Teresa of Calcutta on television. Both of them seem so gentle and holy.

I thank God for being able to visit with Sitty then, to hear her speak about so many worthwhile things, and to learn so much from her. Within a few years she was called to her heavenly reward. From where, I'm sure, she intercedes for all of us today. *Allah yir-hamma.* (May God save her.)

On their way home, Mamma, Edmund and Doris were invited to a private audience with Pope John XXIII and his interpreter. What a blessing that was. The Holy Father reached for Mamma's elbows to lift her as she attempted to genuflect in order to kiss his ring, saying, "No, No, Mamma." After their few minutes of conversation was over, he asked, "Would you mind if we took a picture together?" None of them have ever forgotten that gentle and holy man, nor that day.

Picture # 40

Mamma Vic & EMR et
ux with Pope

In private audience with Pope John XXIII.
Mamma Vic, Doris and Edmund Reggie. 1961.

In 1988, Babs and I were honored to be invested into the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, an organization which financially maintains the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and supports the few remaining Catholic schools in the Holy Land.

Since then, we made a thirty-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land to visit the shrines and holy places connected to the life of Jesus. We were able to meet and become friends with the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, His Beatitude Michel Sabah, and have been with him in the United States on several occasions since.

On that visit we received from His Excellency, Bishop Kaldany, Bishop of Nazareth and Episcopal Chaplain to the Order of the Holy Sepulchre, the Pilgrim's Shell. That is a coveted insignia which designates one as a pilgrim to the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Picture # 41

Bishop pins Babs
medal.

Bishop Kaldany pins Pilgrim's Shell on Babs
as Sammie proudly watched. 1987

We were also blessed to be able to visit with our cousin, Sister Jeanne Gabrielle Araigi, the superior of her order of nuns who staff a hospital in Jerusalem and an orphanage in Bethlehem. Her convent is part of the Vicariate of the Maronite Patriarchate building on Mar Maroun Street in the Old Christian section in Jerusalem.

During that one month pilgrimage in the Holy Land, we drove a compact car which gave us great mobility, and the convenience of going where we wished and at our own pace.

Before leaving home I had researched all the principal places of Jesus' life and made a catalogue of scripture readings which coincide with each place or event. That served us well. As we visited a holy place, Babs would read the scripture relating to that place, then we slowly and quietly prayed for whatever petition we had for each of our family and friends. Each visit was a "moment" of being with Jesus, Mary or some other holy and important person right at that special spot!

Picture # 42

Babs at Holy
Sep.

Babs prays at the slab inside the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus. 1987.

In addition to praying inside the tomb of Jesus and visiting many other holy places, we visited every place which is recalled in the meditations for the mysteries of the Rosary: everyplace but one. We began at Nazareth with the Annunciation, then to Ein Karem for the Visitation, and on through the Passion and Death of Jesus, and every other mystery until we visited and prayed at the site of the Assumption. We'll have to wait to visit and pray at the fifteenth mystery, the Coronation of Our Blessed Mother Queen of Heaven, until the time when we are able to be with Her there. Oh, happy day!

In 1994, our bishop, His Excellency, Harry Flynn, called me to his office to tell me of his recommendation that Barbara and I be received in the Sovereign Military Order St. John of Jerusalem, Rhodes and Malta. This is an organization of hospitallers dedicated to doing good works for the sick throughout the world.

Because Bishop Flynn knew of Barbara's many years of service to the sick and handicapped, through her many years of service with the Pink Ladies Volunteers at the American Legion Hospital, her longtime care for and teaching of handicapped children to prepare them for reception of the Sacraments, and for her many other good works, he wished us to accept membership in that Order.

In the course of our conversation he told me that he had already nominated us for membership in the Order, and we would be receiving more information from its leaders. As it turned out, Babs refused membership, and I was made a Knight of Magistral Grace in the Order of Malta. I received the honor based upon *her* reputation for good works to the

sick, I guess!

Babs accompanies me as we participate in the Order's annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, France where we assist the sick and handicapped. We take them from a hotel or hospital to make their visits to the Shrine of Our Lady and Bernadette.

Babs is assigned, just as the members are, to assist the "Malades" in making the trip to Mass and confession, bathing in the miraculous spring water, making the Way of the Cross, and participating in the candlelight procession every evening. She also wears a "nurse's" white head piece and is cloaked in a ladies cape, typical of all the ladies of the Order who are on duty.

The Malades ride in two-wheeled carriages which we pull or push from one place to another. We are generally assigned to assist a particular Malade from morning until night. And we are usually ready for bed and sleep at the end of each day. The following day we assist a different person.

Picture # L1

Lourdes Malta

Going to Mass and the Baths.

With our Malade

Order Of Malta, Lourdes, France

Picture L2

Lourdes
Malta

Waiting in line for Confession.

We had, in previous years, been to Lourdes a couple times making our own private pilgrimage and thought it was wonderful. But being there with my confreres of the Order of Malta to assist those handicapped and sick pilgrims is the most heart-touching and satisfying way to make the pilgrimage to Lourdes. This is a most rewarding experience.

We also attend a once a year retreat for members of the Order of Malta, usually held in Palm Beach, Florida. I am really proud to be a member of that Order because its members are expected to do more than just make monetary gifts to a cause. This is real hands-on apostolate, and both of us love it.

Picture # 36a

Sammy meets Pope

Samuel, Sr. presenting Samuel, Jr. to Pope John Paul II.

After being accepted into the Order of hospitallers, I offered myself for service at the American Legion Hospital in town, but it seems as though they had no need of me. I then went to Our Lady of Lourdes Medical Center in Lafayette, where I knew two Sisters who were in charge. I was readily accepted and placed in a two week training and indoctrination course.

This past year I was awarded my two-thousand-hour pin for volunteer service to the patients of Our Lady of Lourdes in Lafayette. I have truly enjoyed my regular visits with stroke victims, and with patients who have had serious surgery and need positive, up-lifting visits to boost their morale and speed their recovery. One year, I received a Certificate of Appreciation “for loyal and valuable services voluntarily given”, and someone added to the certificate, “and for bringing smiles, cheer and sunshine to the patients” before presenting it to me. I was a bit embarrassed, but happy if I could mean that much to the sick and needy. I did the best I could.

None of my duties require any hands-on help. I am only allowed to do what I think I do best: Talk. Most of my talking is usually an attempt to encourage the patient to believe he can get well. It might be hard to imagine, but many patients get depressed and just don't have the will to survive!

A few times I have written letters for those who were not able to do so, and had no family with them to help. Volunteering at the hospital has given me very much pleasure. Most days, I enjoy my work so much that I'm afraid I will earn no points for getting into heaven. I thank God for giving me the opportunity to serve Him through those needy patients.

In 1996, after two and a half years of formation, Babs and I made our final promises (not vows), and became Professed Lay Carmelites in the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, in the Community of St. Joseph. Lay members are sometimes known as Third Order Carmelites. Even though we are not expected to live contemplative lives, by our profession we are called to a greater prayer life. I hope we can always fulfill that obligation properly.

One good assignment I was given by our bishop back in 1983 was to work with a committee for building a new monastery for the Carmelite Sisters who were to move from downtown Lafayette to a new location on the old Breaux Bridge highway. I was honored to serve on that committee and was happy to serve with Mr. Fred Yazbeck of Lafayette, its chairman. He was a very devoted and respected gentleman in the area, a dear friend of my parents, and I think Papa was his best man when he married. It gave me much happiness to help get those wonderful Nuns a new home and chapel. They deserve so much for all the prayers they offer up for all of us in the diocese.

Picture # 53

Happy Babs

A happy day for Babs, Thanksgiving, 1994.

On the evening of my seventy-fifth birthday, Babs hosted a wonderful party for me at home. The festivities began with a Mass which was celebrated by my lifelong friend, Monsignor Sigur, and con-celebrated by Father Jay Voorhies, our pastor.

All our children, many "grown-up" grandchildren, my brothers and sister, my nieces, nephews, Joe B and Cousin Bea, their spouses, and a few "adopted" children of ours were all present. It was the greatest birthday party of my life.

Babs, who didn't know how to boil water without scorching it when we married, has turned out to be the best cook and hostess around. She really knows how to make a house a home, and to host a wonderful party where

everyone is relaxed and enjoys all the fine preparations she makes.

She does the same on a regular basis for our children and grandchildren, and puts on a real scrumptious spread with refinement and class every Christmas for all of us. She is most happy and pleased when she can have all the children and their children over for "Sunday dinner." And she tries to have some of them over every week-end, if possible.

In a paragraph above I mentioned "adopted" children. Maybe that needs some explanation. I was referring to two young men and their families who have really 'adopted' Barbara and me as their parents. Let me tell you a little bit about them.

One of them is Stan Keyes. I first met Stan when he came to Crowley as a stock broker, and we hit it off pretty well. Stan was raised a Baptist by his Baptist preacher father and mother, but that did not curb our conversations about many things, including religion. Little by little, Stan became more interested in what I had to say about my Catholic Faith, and eventually, asked me to make arrangements for his conversion to Catholicism. When the right time arrived, he chose Barbara for his god-mother and me for his god-father. Then he and his wife , Jackie, "adopted" us as their 'parents'.

A quick story is in order about another "adoptee." Stan and Jackie had gone to Romania to adopt a baby when they met Alassander and Florica Boti and their eight year old daughter, Andreae. That couple assisted Stan and Jackie in working their way through, and around, the Romanian bureaucracy to complete the adoption process. The Botis even chauffeured them around in their own tiny, "lawnmower-engine" powered automobile.

Andreae was badly crippled since infancy, and had no hope of ever walking. The Romanian medical establishment had given up on helping her and could do no more for her. She had to be physically carried from one place to another.

The Keyes' felt much pain at seeing her condition, and upon their return to the States, asked for my help.

Through the efforts of persons I know in the diocesan offices, we were able to have Alessander, whom we call Sandu, come to the United States on a six-months visa. Because he was a mechanical engineer I was able to locate a job for him with an engineering firm in Lake Charles. While he was here I made contacts with Shriner hospitals in Shreveport and Houston to get their okay for surgery for Andreae if we could get the Romanian government to allow her to come here. Both hospitals were most willing to help.

We were able, through the valuable assistance of Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, to get Florica and Andreae into the United States, in spite of the restrictions on travel that was placed on them by their government.

Andreae was admitted to the Shriners Hospital in Houston for the first of three or four orthopedic surgeries she would need. Since then, she has had two more surgeries, and the next one will be performed when she reaches the age of fifteen.

As of this writing, about five years after Sandu arrived, he is a part owner of an engineering company headquartered in Sulphur, Florica completed her studies for a Masters Degree and teaches in a Sulphur school, and Andreae is "mainstreamed" at her school and walks on her own. She wobbles a bit when she walks, but she walks! Thank God! Maybe, God willing, she will walk even better after the next scheduled surgery. I pray for the chance to see her that way. They, too, are our "adopted" children.

For some reason or other, I have had the good fortune to be chosen god-father for twelve Baptized persons: four of whom were my own converts to Catholicism. Most of those are like family, too.

A few years ago I tried to convince Babs that we should put our house up for sale because it's too large for us since the children have "left the nest." I had plans for a smaller, more efficient house which we could build around the

corner on property we already owned. She became so sick at the thought of doing this she was forced to stay in bed four days

due to severe pain from a migraine headache. The reason she did not want to leave our home: She has too many good memories of our lives in this house. Then she clinched the situation when she said, "And where will the children stay when they are all with us as they are regularly?" I had no answer, and we never sold our home.

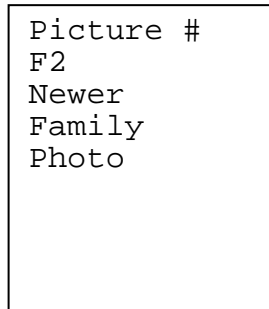
If you read between the lines, I'm sure you can detect my love for my Babs, and my gratitude for having her by my side all these years. Earlier I wrote about our honeymoon trip to Florida right after our wedding. Well, I honestly feel like our honeymoon never really ended. Sure, we had our ups and downs, but that never overshadowed our happiness together nor our love and respect for one another. I thank God for giving her to me as I do for my children, my siblings and my friends. I thank God for blessing me and giving me what I needed to support my family, physically and spiritually.

Babs has made a good and love-filled home for our children and me. I am grateful for the loving, intact family she designed and developed through her patience, sharing, maturity and understanding. I hope that Babs and I have lived a life which gives the right example to our own children, and to those who know us.

Photo # F1
Older Family
Photo

1970

First Row: Paul, John, Lawrence
Second Row: Barbara Anne, Barbara, Samuel, Yvonne
Third Row: Donna, Samuel, Jr., Mary Beth



1996

There is no way to express my feelings of good fortune for having eight wonderful children. As each one was born all I could do was to look at her or his beautiful face, feel my heart melt, and swell with pride. At first, they always looked too frail for me to handle, and it was usually a few weeks before I would dare to hold them, hug them, cuddle them and love them. Later, though, I roughed them up pretty good!

Certainly, like all children, as they were growing up they were not perfect in all their behavior, but thanks be to God, each in his or her own way has made my life worth living.

Now, in the twilight of my life, they and theirs are a source of genuine pride and a blessing for me. Physically, some of them are as much as a day's journey away from me, but in spirit and in love, everyone of our children lives right in the middle of my heart. I am eternally grateful for their closeness to Babs and me, and their sincere interest in being a real part of our daily lives. God has rewarded His son, Samuel, with much blessings. And now it's our children's turn to carry on.

The quote of our son, Paul, when he was very young is applicable today. Whenever he didn't want help with getting some things done, he'd say, "I'll do it *“my byself.”* And that's what our children are doing today. They're on their own and are all doing a grand job of rearing and educating their own children. My prayers are for my children to be able to enjoy their lives as I have, and for my grandchildren to love and respect their parents as my children love Barbara and me. And I know my prayers will be answered because the Psalmist tells us, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want.." That's reward enough on earth.

It is with humility and gratitude that I look back on all the good things I experienced in my lifetime: My family, my friends, and my life's work. It is the past, and the memory of the past, which has been a big teacher and support for me. I suppose it was only through my desire to do the best that I could, that God chose to bless me with so much good fortune and happiness. I remember reading somewhere that "The Measure of a Man" is not "How did he die"?, but "How did he live"?; not "What did he gain"?, but "What did he give"?

At this stage in my life I do not agonize much about the mistakes I have made. I don't stay awake worrying about the stupid things I did. The things I *didn't* do are what haunt me: the words I never spoke, and the little kindnesses I omitted because I didn't notice. I mostly regret the good fatherly things I didn't do with my children because I had my eyes on a goal, and I was running with all my might to

get there. These are my deepest regrets.

The noted author Beau Bauman, even though his writing doesn't *exactly* fit my situation, had it just about right when he wrote, "It is a good idea to be ambitious, to have goals, to want to be good at what you do, but it is a terrible mistake to let drive and ambition get in the way of treating people with kindness and decency. The point is not that they will then be nice to you. It is that you will feel better about yourself".

To be a father was the scariest thing of my life. There was neither a road map nor a blue print to tell me how to do it, but I still felt I could be a father. Being a *dad*, however, was what slipped away from me. Being a good dad required more relaxed time with my children than I usually thought I could afford. Being a father meant my being more serious, more self-assured and more dedicated to providing for their physical and spiritual needs. Stupidly macho, don't you think?

Looking back I now realize that if one is to be a good father, one also should be a dad. If I could have known that then, maybe I would be more deserving of the respect and admiration my children show me. I just did the best I knew. Should someone decide to put an epitaph on my grave I hope it only says, "He did his best". In addition to the words of Bishop Maurice Schexnayder to me, "Do the best you can", I recall the words of His Holiness, Pope John XXIII , "Lord, I've done the best I could, it's Your church, so I put it in Your hands." I've tried that formula in my own circumstance.

Let me pass-on to you a prayer which has meant much to me through the years:

Dear God, as I begin this day, let me turn my
thoughts to You;
And ask your help in every thing I do.
Give me the patience I need to keep peace of mind,
And I hope Dear God, some happiness to find.
Let me live but for today, not worrying what's

ahead;
For I trust You will see, that I get my needed daily
bread.
Give me courage to face life's trials, and not from
trouble run;
Let me keep this thought in mind, Thy will, not
mine be done.
If some wish I do not get, though I have prayed to
Thee;
Help me to believe and understand, you know
what's best for me.
I've failed you many times, but tonight before I rest,
I hope that I can kneel and say, "Dear God, I've
done my best".

Now, at this point in life, maybe it's time this "role model" business is put in perspective, for it's from my children that I learned the most about child rearing. While I tried to teach my children all about life, my children taught me what life is all about. I'll continue to pray that my children, and my children's children, can find greater rewards in their lives, even greater than I enjoy today. They deserve it because of their loving closeness to their own families and to Babs and myself.

By now, I hope you can see that, at age seventy-five, standing five-foot ten, weighing 155 pounds, and with very thinned gray hair, I can never claim to have made it alone. Behind me and beside me was a host of support: My Guardian Angel, Papa and Mamma, my siblings, my church, school and Scouting, and finally, and mostly, all wrapped in one: my friend, my partner, my wife, my Dear Babs. Certainly, my children are included in this litany in a big measure, too, because it was from them I learned so very many meaningful and important things about life, and who till this day still teach me, and give me so much joy.

Picture # 56

Dancing the
night away.

“Dancing the night away.” Babs and Sammie.

The American author, John Barth wrote, “Everyone is necessarily the hero of his own life story”, but at this point in my life story, I hope you realize that I am not at all the hero in this story. Everyone who has been a part of my existence and being, beginning with my ancestors right through to my grandchildren, and whomever has been part of me in my day-to-day life, is the real hero in my story. Without them I would be nothing.

In addition to feeling fortunate and happy to have been born into this particular family, I consider myself blessed to have Babs and our children live with me in this great land of ours. I am very proud to be an American, and I am

extremely happy my parents emigrated from Lebanon to make a life here for all of us. This Country has given my parents, and us, their children, the opportunity to go as far, climb as high, and do as much as each of us wills.

For all the open doors the United States afforded us since Papa and Mamma passed through those "Golden Doors" at Ellis Island, I am forever grateful. And I hope I shall never forget to always say, from the bottom of my heart, "God Bless America".

This "chronicle" has taken me farther and wider than I ever dreamed when I began to write it. Some of us just don't know when it's time to stop. Adlai Stevenson, an honorable Senator from Illinois, once asked, and answered his own question about Vice-president Hubert Humphrey, who was known for long oratory, "What happens after a Saturday night speech by Hubert Humphrey?..... Sunday!"

And I guess, so it is with me.

With love and gratitude,

Samuel, Sammie, Daddy, Jiddy

"A PSALM OF LIFE"

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest'
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each tomorrow
finds us farther than today.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Lives of great men remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
*And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time.*

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

PART THREE

OUR FAMILY ROOTS

INTRODUCTION

What follows is the verbatim translation of Bishop Hayek's *Prologue* and his accompanying *The Family's Origins*. It was originally handwritten in Arabic by him in Lebanon. He is an ancestor of the Hayek family of Ohio, and therefore a relative or ours. He made extensive and time consuming searches over a number of years, in church and civil records in the Holy Land, Jordan and Lebanon. Here are the results of Bishop Hayek's research and investigation, in his own words. You will see that I have added a few notes for clarification in the body of the transcript.

BISHOP HAYEK'S TRANSCRIPT

PROLOGUE

In order to preserve the knowledge of the origins and traditions of the Hayek family, our ancestors and those who have gone before using other names, this document will help serve to explain the long heritage of this family to those descendants who became of this parentage, and who have moved on to many areas of the world, especially to the United States. Lest our valuable traditions, family pride and honored name and heritage be lost in this large sea of population, this document will be continued by those who will follow our generation.

THE FAMILY'S ORIGINS

During the 11th and 13th centuries the Crusades brought the noblest men of Europe to liberate their great Christian heritage in the Holy Land. Because of their love of the faith and love of this great land many of them remained in this area for approximately 175 years.

In 1270 the 8th Crusade was led by King Louis IX of France. However, his armies eventually were overpowered by the Moslems, and as the towns of Palestine fell to the stronger Arab powers, Louis' armies fell in front of Tunis. The Crusader families who had been living in peace in Palestine for sometime were forced to convert to Mohammedanism or die. Instead, many of them fled and took refuge in Lebanon. One of these families who resettled in Lebanon was called Beit-El-Sahyouny, after the region in Palestine from whence they came. They then settled in northern Lebanon near Tripoli, (not to be confused with the city of Tripoli in North Africa), changing their name to Daher (a word which translates into "a knoll" or "a small hill", upon which they probably resided. [Note: It is well to remember that people in those days bore no "family name", as is practiced today. A person was known by his given name followed by a word describing his occupation, as Louis Cook; or which described his (ancestral) place of origin, Keith DeRouen; or which stated his father's given name, John Fitzgerald, that is, John, son of Gerald. Ed.]

In 1570, during the occupation of Lebanon by the Saracens of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire, Abd El-Rehman Basha, Moslem governor of Tripoli, decreed a punishment of death on a certain person known as Kannan Daher, of the

Christian faith, because of his refusal to profess the Moslem faith. Kannan's cousin, Nemer Daher, fearing the same punishment of death, fled Tripoli. His flight led him to Sidon in the south of Lebanon where other Christians dwelled.

Changing his name to Namour, he married a girl from this area and his family flourished. One of Namour's grandsons (whose father's name is not certain) settled near a town named Beit Chabab, (sometimes written, Bet Shebab, Ed.) in a region called P'herdok (see Thoughts on Bishop Hayek's Transcript, below. para. 2). This place is still marked by the ruins of a chapel named Saint George of P'herdok; it is located at the entrance to Beit Chabab. After settling here he took up the trade of weaving. In Arabic the word weaver is stated as "hayek." The result was the adoption of the family name El-Hayek, meaning "the weaver."

The means of making a living in this town (Beit Chabab, Ed.) depended mainly upon small industries: trades such as weaving, pottery and a bell foundry offered work for the inhabitants. Because of the success of those persons working in these industries, the seemingly small town was able to develop a large but dense population. The people of Beit Chabab demonstrated an ability to work hard, be thrifty and had much ambition. Their industrious ways brought them a great deal of financial success in life.

Due to their ambitious nature, and their desire to expand and grow, the confinement of the village became unsuitable for many. The result was a wide distribution of the members of this village throughout Lebanon, and eventually, throughout the world.

At the beginning of the 19th (Transcriber uncertain if 18th or 19th, Ed.) century two brothers of the Hayek family, both of them stone cutters, moved to the village of Bejje in central Lebanon. Their names were Michele Hayek and Joseph Hayek. Using their trade as masons they constructed the largest and proudest house in this village. In the village of Bejje the brothers were not always called by their family (name, Ed.), Hayek, but were given the (family, Ed.) name

REFLECTIONS ON BISHOP HAYEK'S TRANSCRIPT

In addition to the information as written by Bishop Hayek, I present the following information for your consideration:

1. It appears that NEMER DAHER, who later changed his name to NAMOUR DAHER, is the grandfather of HANNA (See GENESIS OF THE REGGIE FAMILY Chart in PART FOUR, below). The family name, DAHER, most probably came from their place of residence atop a knoll or small hill, which translates into *daher* or *dahr*. HANNA is recorded as being the father of JOSEPH EL-HAYEK and MICHELE HAYEK. We know that this JOSEPH, the son of HANNA, carried the family name of EL-HAYEK, as did his brother, MICHELE.
2. Of the two HAYEK brothers, JOSEPH and MICHELE, who lived in Beje for a while, only JOSEPH is recorded as having sons: SLEIMAN HAYEK and GABRIEL HAYEK. JOSEPH lived in the mid-1600's. He served as the Governor of the province of Bcharre', Lebanon, after returning to Ehden from a residency in Beit Chabab, where the family name alternated between EL-HAYEK and BEIT CHABAB. Because of his position of leadership, JOSEPH was called SHIAH, ABU GABRIEL, meaning "Ruler, Father of Gabriel". Because of his prominence as a resident of Ehden, he was sometimes

called, "YOUSEF EL-EHDENIE", meaning "Joseph of Ehden". A priest, Father *Jerjis*, wrote that the SHIAH ABU GABRIEL (JOSEPH) received the last sacrament of the Church and died on December 15, 1680. He was buried from the Church of St. George in Bahardek (see P'herdok in *The Family's Origins*, above).

3. In one place, it is recorded that JOSEPH, called SHIAH ABU GABRIEL, had a son named SHIAH BEFODEL HASHEM, a title which means "Leader, Because of the gift of the Respected One". This could indicate he received his title because he was the son of a titled leader. Titles such as SHIAH were customarily passed on from father to son. One record shows SHIAH ABU GABRIEL to have a nephew named GABRIEL. (This is confusing since his name, *Abu Gabriel*, indicates he is the *father* of Gabriel, not an *uncle*.) Knowing that JOSEPH had two sons, SLEIMAN and GABRIEL, it is surmised that GABRIEL must have been the son who was also known as SHIAH BEFODEL HASHEM.
4. SLEIMAN EL-HAYEK, the son of JOSEPH (#1), had two sons, ANTONIOS and JOSEPH (#2). This JOSEPH (#2) was named after his grandfather, as is the Lebanese custom. During SLEIMAN's lifetime, he was often called ARAJI because he owned a pack mule which limped because it had a crippled leg. Hence, the name ARAJI, meaning "a bit crippled". It was at that time when the family name for SLEIMAN, and his descendants, changed from EL-HAYEK to ARAIGI (later to be erroneously translated into REGGIE). It is known that SLEIMAN'S brother, GABRIEL continued to be called EL-HAYEK. He was the father of a son, DEEB, EL-EHDENIE, who resided in Beit Chabab before moving to Ehden. The descendants of GABRIEL have the family name of EL-HAYEK, or possibly Haik.

5. SLEIMAN HAYEK, also known as ARAIGI (meaning one who limps), named his first son, JOSEPH, after his grandfather, as noted above. This JOSEPH is the progenitor of the family branch which resides in Mexico and the United States. In Mexico the family name is usually Arelle, but sometimes as Araigi. In the United States the family name is mostly Reggie, except for an Arizi or an Arajji here and there.

PART FOUR

This part contains charts that attempt to compile all of the information I have available to construct our “family tree.” It includes information contained in Bishop Hayek’s Manuscript. Other information was gathered by Yvonne Reggie LaHood, Edmund Michael Reggie, Sr., this writer, other members of the family and books containing the history of Lebanon which identify members of the Reggie family by the various names used over time. I hope it helps to show the order of the descendants through several generations. The charts in PART FOUR represent my best efforts to list the names of our forebears in their proper order according to generations

Also included in PART FOUR is a recordation of what is known about the Andraous and Maawud families, beginning with Libian Kuriakos Andraous and Khoury Yousef Maawud until the present. Much of that information has been provided by many interested members of the family, to whom the writer is most grateful. The information presented is limited to my knowledge and that furnished to me by generous family members, to whom I am grateful. The names of the latest generation of the family can be added by those interested in doing so, as our family continues to grow. With humble sincerity, this writer apologizes to anyone who might differ with any information presented in this book.

Prayer of Pope Clement XI

Lord, I believe in you: increase my faith.
I trust in you: strengthen my trust.
I love you: let me love you more and more.
I am sorry for my sins: deepen my sorrow.

I want to do what you ask of me;
In the way you ask,
For as long as you ask,
Because you ask it.

Help me to repent of my past sins
And to resist temptation in the future.
Help me to rise above my human weaknesses
And to grow stronger as a Christian.

Let me love you, my Lord and my God,
And see myself as I really am:
A pilgrim in this world,
A Christian called to respect and love
all those whose lives I touch,
those in authority over me
or those under my authority,
my friends and my enemies.

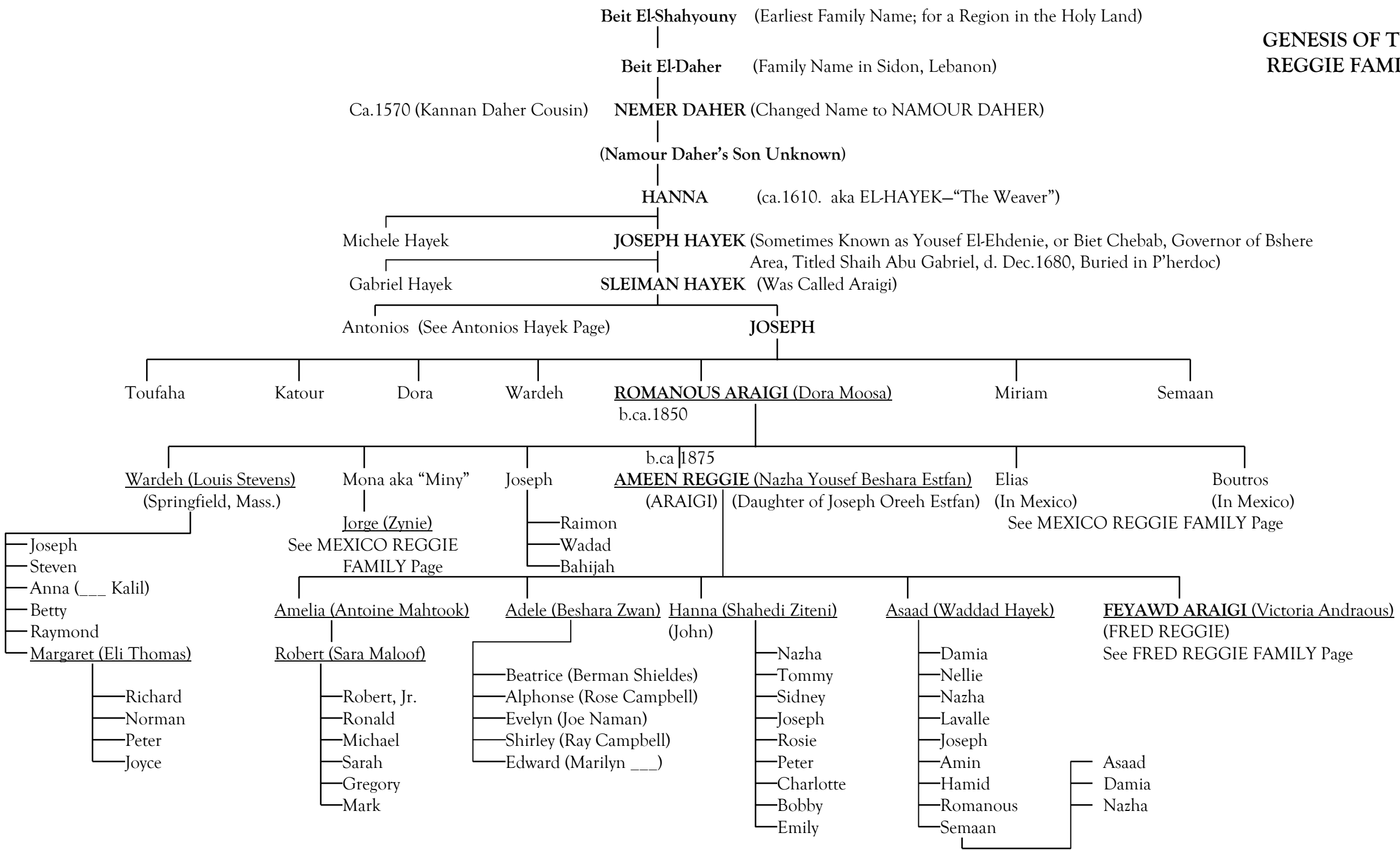
Help me conquer anger with gentleness,
greed by generosity,
apathy by fervor,
Help me to forget myself
and reach out to others.

Teach me to realize this world is passing,
that my true future is the happiness of heaven,
that life on earth is short,
and the life to come, eternal.

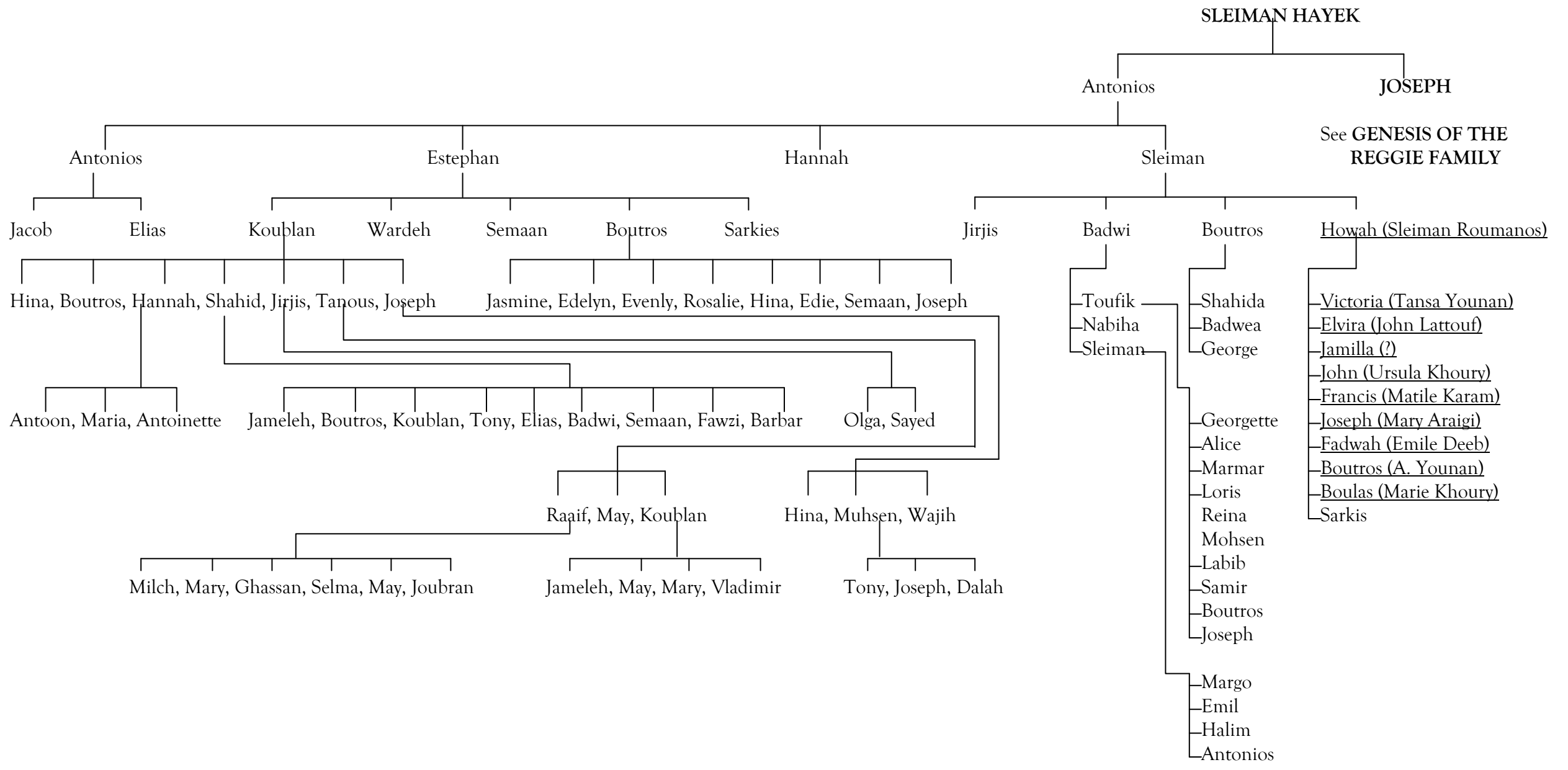
Help me to prepare for death
with a proper fear of judgement,
but a greater trust in your goodness.
Lead me safely through death
to the endless joy of heaven.

+ *From the new Sacramentary*

**GENESIS OF THE
REGGIE FAMILY**



THE ANTONIOS HAYEK FAMILY



LIBIAN KURIAKOS ANDRAOUS
(El-Mir, Abu El-Hayet, El-Foch)

GENESIS OF THE
ANDRAOUS FAMILY

MICHAEL

ESTFAN, Abu El-Foch

YUSEF ANDRAOUS (SOUS)

Antonious

Romanous

ABBOUD ANDRAOUS (FRANGEYE SEMAAN MAAWUD)

KHALIL ANDRAOUS (NAZHA MAAWUD)

(d.1929)

(d.1966)

Hawa (Yousef Antor)

Joseph

Katrine (Sarkis Abshe)

VICTORIA (FEYAWD ARAIGI)

(d.1973)

(d.1943)

Jamilie

died age 1

Boutrus

Killed in French Army, 1927

Boulus

died age 15

Frangeye

died 1976 (Yousef Saroufin)

Juade

died age 1 ½

Maria

(Hana Marawie)

Howa

died age 1

Josephine

(Resek Saroufin)

Said

(Josephine Yousef Sarkis Maawud)

(Philomen Helou)

To continue, see FRED REGGIE FAMILY and
KHALIL ANDRAOUS FAMILY

Adele (Yousef Nader) died 1983

Zahie (Rafoul Karam) died 1978

Aziz (Isabell Karam) died 1984

Boulus (Nazha Douriny)

Jamilie (Antone Frangie)

Adel (Fouad Ajjie)

Amroos (Boutros Andraous)

Shahedi (Mehsim Karam)

Esperenze (Fuad Issa)

Maruca (Salim Perez)

Sarquis

Jennie

Nasim

Naim died age 1

Ramon

Catita

Julietta

Howa (Elias Sayeen)

Mona (Antoine Frangie)

Nafez (Yola Fakhoury)

Kathy born 1966

Anthony born 1967

Myrna born 1970

Raymond

Rita

Lena

Maya

Nada

Odette

Norma

Maggy

Sylvana

Tony

Evelyn (Kenneth Small)

John (Kathleen Kane)

Alfred (Nancy Galbraith)

David (Ashley Young)

Michael

Jeffrey

Jeanine (Todd Litnin)

Alice

Anthony

Hamid

Halim

George

Antoine

Hasna

Violette

Hanna

Joseph

Tony

Ghandi

Marie Rose

Antoinette

Jeanne

Paola

Karla (Pedro Ecceveria Lica)

Catilina

Christiana

Lupita (__Nizor)

Tony died 1986

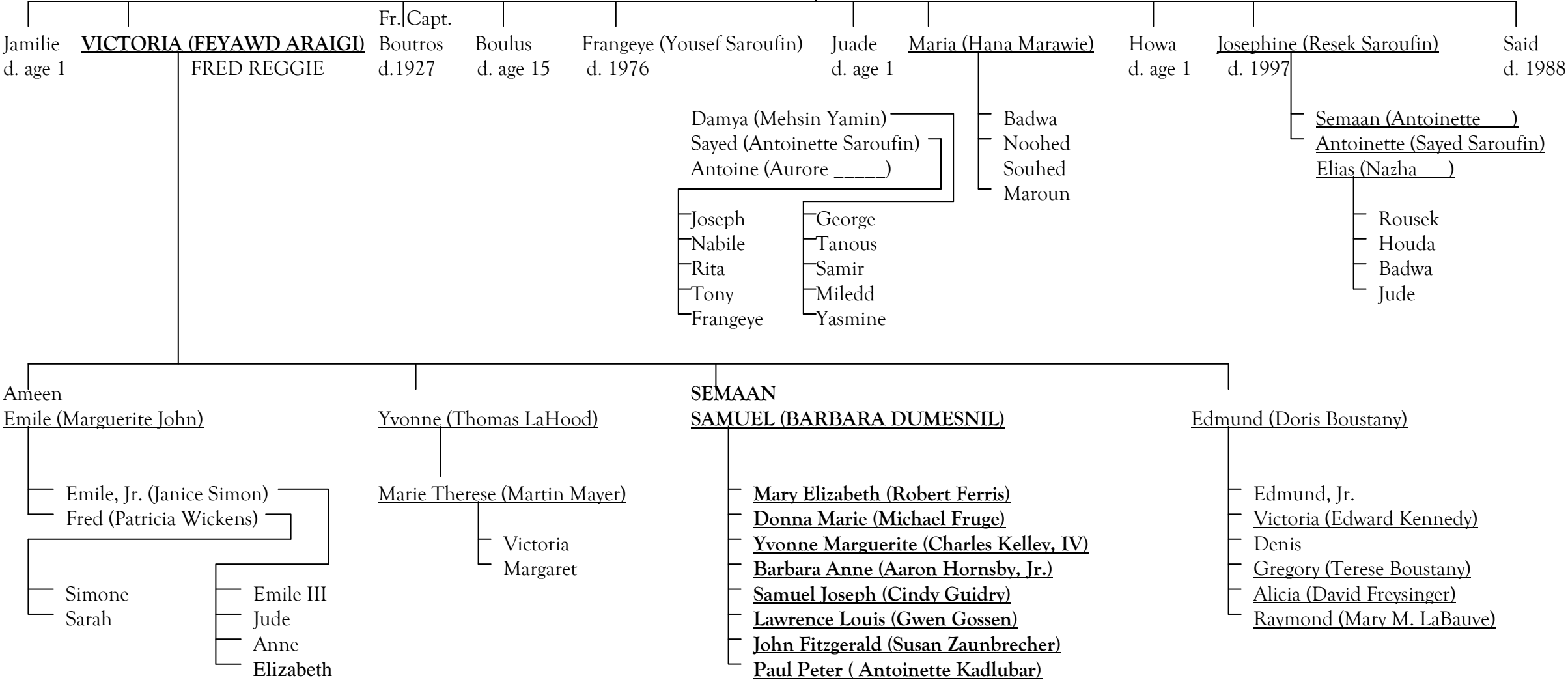
Michell

Mary Carmen (Jose Mir)

THE KHALIL ANDRAOUS FAMILY

K AHLIL ANDRAOUS (NAZHA MAAWUD)

1870-1929 1875-1966



To continue, see FRED REGGIE FAMILY

THE MAAWUD FAMILY

KHOURY YOUSEF MAAWUD (Wife Unknown)

SLIMAN MAAWUD (Wife Unknow) Hana SEMAAN (FRANGEYE) Sobeth Francis

KHOURY YOUSEF MAAWUD II (HANIE BESEEM) Boutros Michael

FRANGEYE MAAWUD (ABBOUD ANDRAOUS)

KHALIL ANDRAOUS (NAZHA MAAWUD)

VICTORIA (FEYAWD ARAIGI) To Continue, see THE FRED REGGIE FAMILY

ANTONIOUS MAAWUD(MERIAM Nehmi Bessem) Bishop Sliman Khoury Boulus Sarkis Monk Boutrus Meriam (John McCary)

Joseph

Josephine (Said Andraous)

NAZHA MAAWUD (KHALIL ANDRAOUS)

Yousef

Selma (Sarkis Deeb)

Jamilie (K.M. Ziter)

1875-1966

1870-1929

- VICTORIA ANDRAOUS (FEYAWD ARAIGI)
- Jamilie died age 1
- Boutrus killed in French Army
- Boulas died age 1
- Frangeye died 1976 (Yousef Saroufin)
- Juade died age 1 ½
- Maria (Hana Marawie)
- Josephine (Resek Saroufin)
- Said (Josephine Maawud)
(Philomene Helou)

- Fouad
- Angelle
- Marie

- Emily (Michael Yamin)
- Alfred (Lillian Khoury)
- Alma
- Helen (Joe Solomon)
- Albert (Helen Ziter)
- Theodore (Ellen Pusatare)

- Camille
- Karam (Kerry)
- Norman
- Joseph
- Helen (Albert Deeb)

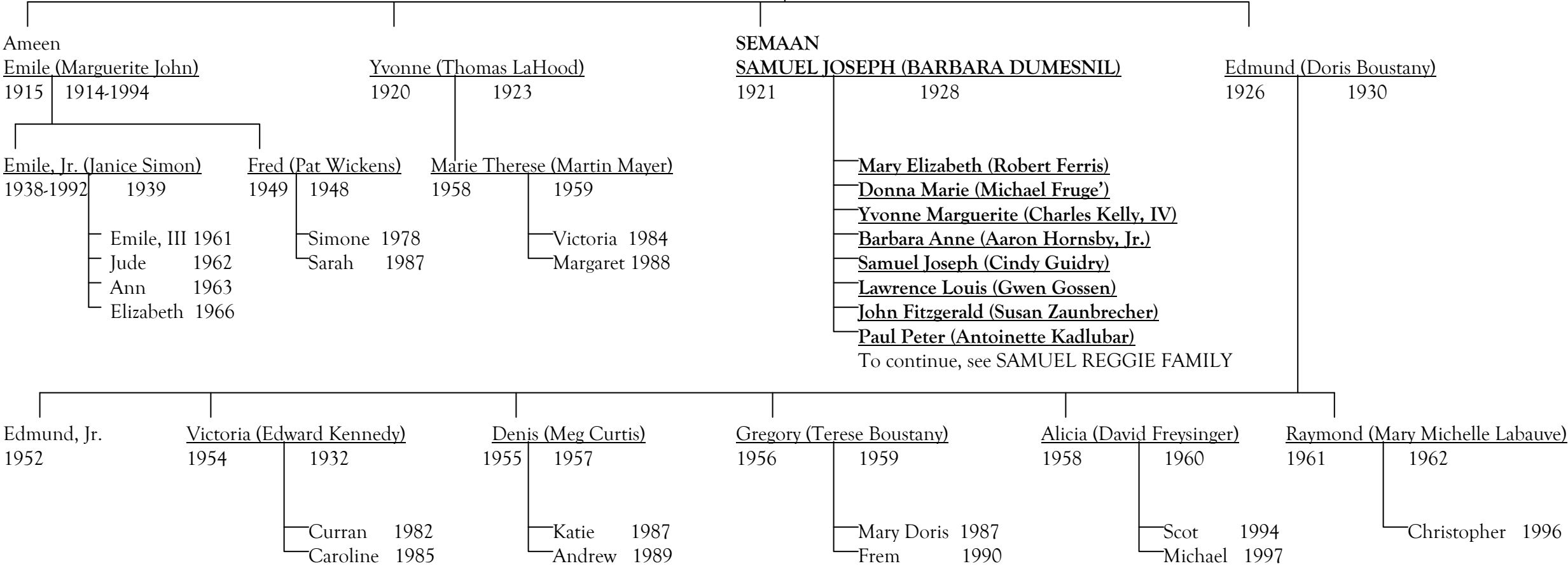
To continue, see THE DEEB, ZITER AND YAMIN FAMILIES

To continue, see GENESIS OF THE ANDRAOUS FAMILY

THE FRED REGGIE FAMILY

FEYAWD ARAIGI - VICTORIA ANDRAOUS

FRED REGGIE
December 25, 1896 - June 1, 1943 April 16, 1898 - May 30, 1973

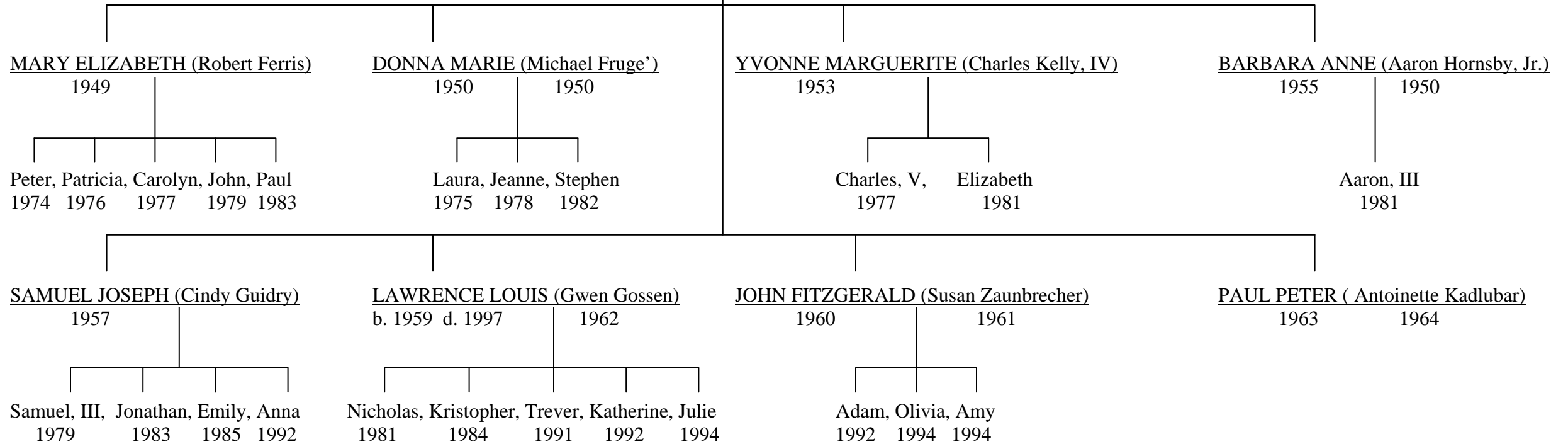


THE SAMUEL REGGIE FAMILY

SEMAAN
SAMUEL JOSEPH (BARBARA JOYCE DUMESNIL)

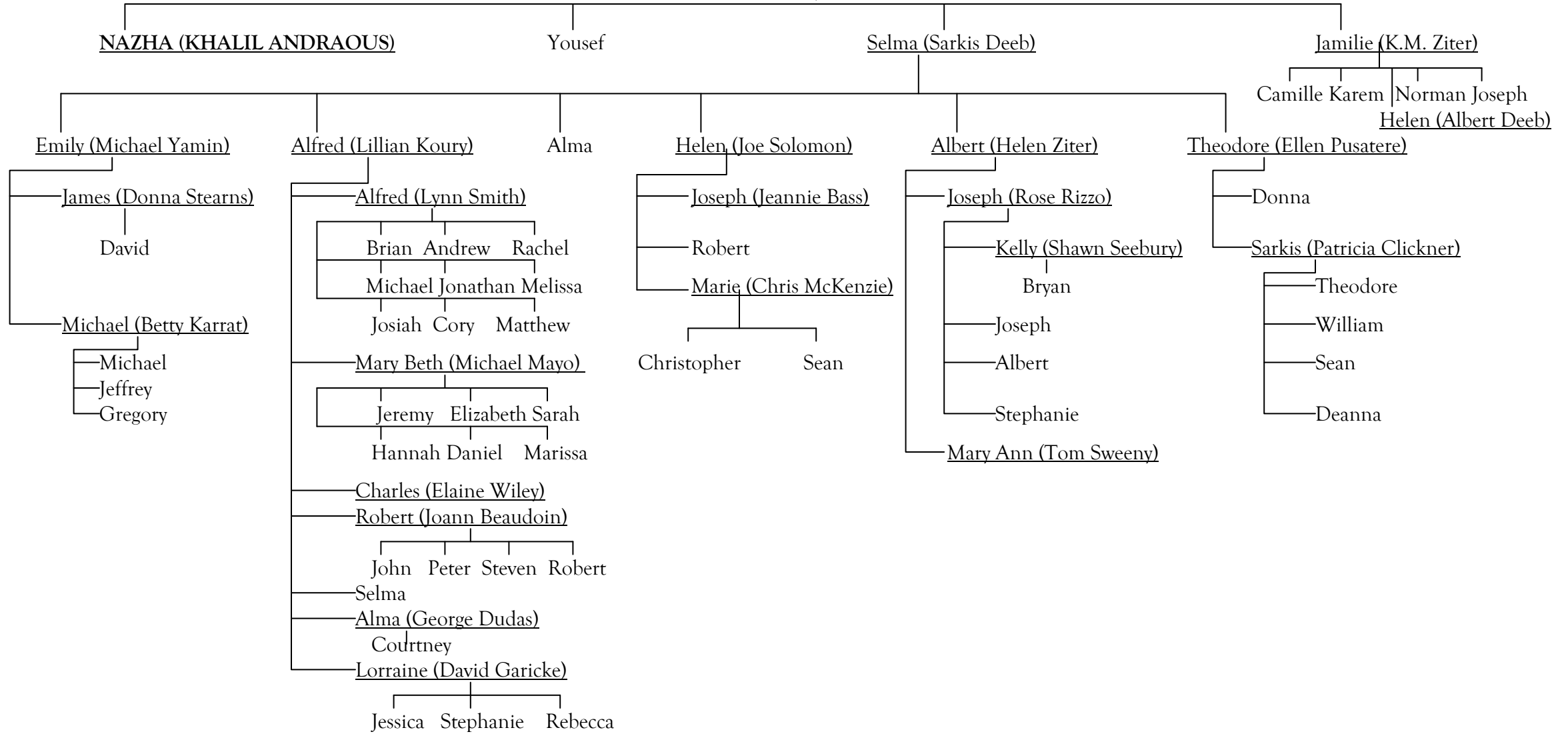
October 6, 1921

February 7, 1928



ANTONIUS MAAWUD (MIRIAM BESEEM)

**THE DEEB, ZITER
AND YAMIN FAMILIES**



**THE MEXICO REGGIE
FAMILY**

ROMANOUS ARAIGI (DORA MOOSA)

AMEEN ARAIGI (NAZHA ESTFAN)
In Lebanon and USA

Wardeh Rose (Louis Stevens)
In Springfield, MA

Mona aka "Miny"

Elias Arelle

Boutrus "Pedro" Arelle

Jorge (Zynie)

Anthony

Jorge (Laura)

Laura Natalia Jorge

Monsour

David

George

Rosita

Alicia

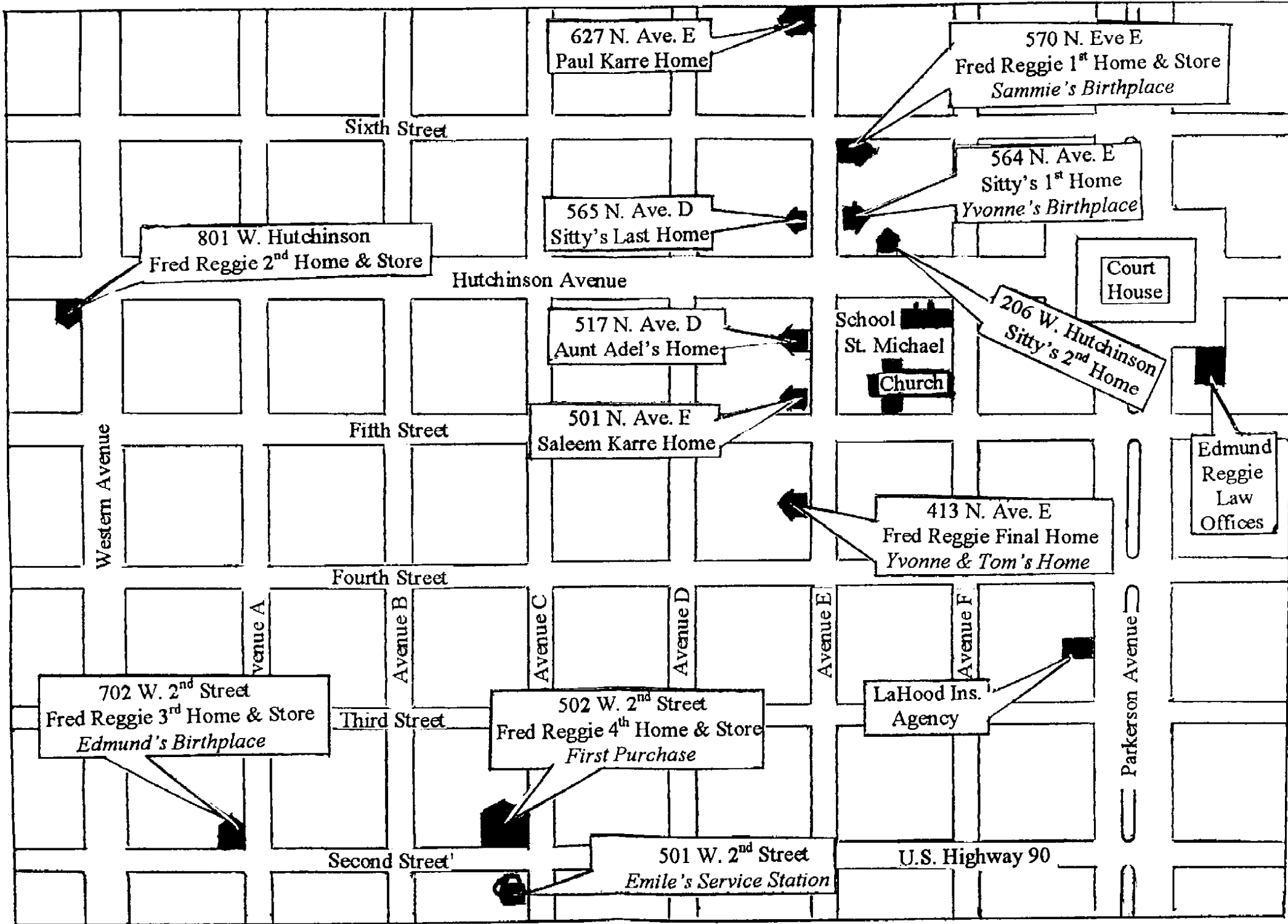
Adolfo

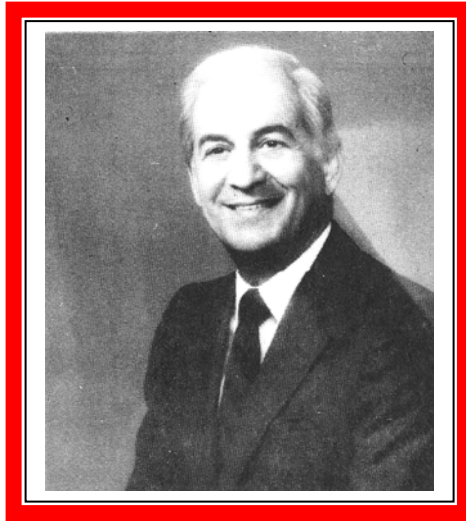
Lupita

David

Alberto

Lourie





Samuel J. Reggie

Sammie Reggie wrote this book at home over a two year period, beginning in 1996. Just after his 75th birthday, wishing to convey the story of his life in his own words and from his own perspective, he embarked upon the task of setting his story to print. He chronicles the emigration of his ancestors from Lebanon to Acadiana, their assimilation into American life, his growing up in a close and loving family and raising one of his own.

In passing on these real-life stories to his children and grandchildren, he helps all generations that follow him gain a deeper appreciation of his, and their, rich family history. If, as he has often said, the goal of one generation is to lift onto its shoulders those who follow, this book shows that we are, indeed, standing on broad and sturdy shoulders, rooted in faith, steadied by love and exemplified by Sammie Reggie.

—Gregory F. Reggie