The Nemoires of Melvin NELSON

a short family history

A great-grandfather's handwritten notes

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A short family history by Melvin Nelson

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This is the start of a series of notes by Mel Nelson which will attempt to convey family history to my children and grandchildren. Hopefully the gradual change of lifestyle will be evident as well.

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Swedish Keritage

The story begins back in Sweden in the early 1800s. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars at the Peace Treaty of 1812, some major changes were made in the politics of Europe. The major changes for Sweden were the loss of Finland to Russia and the annexation of Norway to the Swedish crown. It should be noted that after the annexation, Norway had its own parliament, its own currency and even its own army. The Swedish king became their king and that did rankle though.

The king of Sweden, Carl XIII, was old and childless. At the peace settlement, Jean Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's marshals was adopted by the king in 1814. At the king's death in 1818 the adopted son

became King Carl Johan XIV and the royal house since then has been House of Bernadotte. After his coronation he really took over and became an out and out Swede.

King Karl Johan is primarily responsible for the expansion of the industrial revolution in Sweden. Before that only a small steel industry was in place. It was big enough to supply the arms and cannon for the Swedish army. Any history book will describe the 30 Years War and the march of the Swedish army through Munich.



One of the actions taken by the new king that is germane to the discussion was the invitation to industrial workers to migrate to Sweden and become an important element in this industrial expansion. An important element in the movement were several thousands of people who came from south, or French-speaking parts of Belgium. These people were known as the Walloons. They intermarried with the local population and to this day their descendants are known in Sweden as "Walloon slektingar" or Walloon relatives. Of such an origin is part of the Forslund family of Vasteras. This can be seen in your mother Anna Marie's brown hair and eyes.

The Nilsson Family (later' Nelson')

I now start in another direction with the Nilsson family where the first identifiable member of our family is Karl Werner Nilsson. He was of a sea-faring family of Göteborg, Sweden and had at least 4 brothers and probably as many sisters. Family tradition tells us that he went to sea as a boy, rose to the rank of captain and at the height of his career took shiploads of prospective gold miners from the east coast of the United States down around South America, probably through the straits of Magellan and up the west coast to San Francisco. We know nothing more about him except that he had a pair of gold earrings (sailors wore them in those days) and a gold stick pin from California Gold. I still have the earrings. I suppose one of my cousins has the pin.

After a time, Karl Werner returned to Göteborg, took a job as a harbor pilot, married Anna Sigerlin (the name means "victory dance") and settled down at #9 Nya Warfs Vagen. Karl Werner had several younger brothers. Joseph and Frank served with the Union navy during the Civil War.

Joseph was actually an apprentice to the inventor, builder, and in effect, commander of the Monitor in the historic battle with the Merrimack. Joseph was wounded in the eye and retired from the sea. He settled in Brooklyn, New York, got married and had one daughter. The daughter married a man named Silk. My father and grandfather visited him around 1910.

Frank settled in Rutherford, New Jersey, became mayor of the town in the 1880's and a grandson was also mayor many years later. One of the brothers went to Australia probably due to a silver rush and was never heard from again. The fourth brother disappeared in South America. No doubt they married into sea-faring families which also dispersed. This accounts for the wide distribution of the Nilsson nose.

Mel's Grandparents

I can now get a bit more specific with the birth of my grandparents in the 1860s. To continue with the Nilssons, my grandfather Werner

Nilsson was baptized in Karl Johan Kyrka in Göteborg. Each of the

children finished the equivalent of eighth grade, which was pretty good for the times. Grandpa began working after school at the age of 9 as a coopers apprentice at Carnegie Brewery (the Brewery is still there after about 160 years in business. Finally, he and two brothers, Carl Mauritz and Robert



emigrated to the United States about 1885. They worked their passage on a cattle boat. When they got to New York they were processed at Castle Gardens (this was before Ellis Island was built) and began their life work as carpenters.

My paternal grandmother, Ida, was born on the island of Öland which is about 10 miles out in the Baltic Sea. Her father Peter Nilsson (yes, the same last name) was a tailor. Three daughters and a baby half brother immigrated to the USA also about 1885. The girls became servants for rich people in New York City, working themselves up to "cook." The expression at the time was that they "lived out." These women were very religious Baptists and would not even go to a dance. In addition to Grandma Ida and Uncle Gus, there was also Aunt Helga, Aunt Marie, and Aunt Hedvig. They all ended up marrying Swedish men, settled in Montclair, New Jersey and went to the Swedish Baptist church.

On my mother's side of the family the information is a bit sparse



but still pretty reliable. My maternal grandfather, Axel Ludwig Frisk, was one of three boys and at least one girl born in Östergötland. All I know about the family is that the father was Peter Frisk and that the sons went to cabinet-making school in Stockholm. They also served in the Swedish army. Four summer sessions of 3 months for a total of 12 months. Incidentally, Frisk is a "soldat nam" or soldier's name. It means frisky or maybe fresh.

My grandfather and his brothers John and Carl came to the USA around 1888. Their ship landed in Philadelphia and they went by train to New York City. At some point, they married and moved to

Arlington, NJ. The three brothers went into carpentry and lived near each other and went to the same Swedish Baptist church and stayed close.

My Mormor, Albertina, was born in Kopparbergs Län (southern Dalarna) in the neighborhood of Grängesberg and Ludvika. Her father,

Peter Johnsson Hult was a blacksmith in the copper mines during the week and a Baptist preacher on Sunday. Since the state church was Lutheran, worship by dissenters was only allowed in private homes or barns. Public meetings were illegal and the penalty could be some time in the local jail. It was not, of course, anything like the Spanish Inquisition, but the story was told of my great-grandfather being interrupted in his



preaching. He went out through a back window and rode off on a horse. The name Hult refers to a grove of trees where he grew up. Hult was married twice with 7 children in each marriage, for a total of 14.

Again, the family came over in a fairly short time period, say, a year or two. My grandmother traveled alone at the age of 14 in 1882. There were three sisters and three brothers. They went first to New York City. The girls were maids and the men were steam fitters. After a few years they all married, moved to Arlington, NJ and joined the same Baptist church as the Frisks.

The Johansson Family (Ann Narie's Side)

We now go back to Sweden and consider the Johansson family of Hjo, Västergötland. Your uncle Lennart has some information that there was some nobility way back in the family.

The earliest that I have any information on was Ernst Johansson who was the manager of a woolen mill in Hjo. He was married to Amalia and they had 4 boys and 2 girls. Ernst died of pneumonia at the age of 42 leaving the family in tough straits. The house they lived in was a company building and they had to leave soon after his death.

Their mother operated a beauty parlor in a small house and town and raised her children.

She did a very good job. The oldest son, Yngve became a postmaster.

Next, Sven, your Morfar, put himself through engineering school and became and engineering manager. Nils Eric founded a plumbing and appliance business with stores in two towns. Gunnar became an optometrist, watch maker, and had a jewelry shop in Göteborg. Sister Evy was a secretary for many years but had to quit earl to care for their mother. The other sister had epilepsy and died young.



Your Mormor came from Västerås which is in Västmanland about 70 miles northwest of Stockholm. The Forslund family were Walloons but by the 1860s they were thoroughly integrated into the community. Among the Forslunds, only your grandmother, Gunhild, and her sister Karen came to America; the rest stayed in Västerås. From what I hear, the family had an electric appliance store about 1900 and lived in a pretty nice house.

Mel's Parent's Generation

I t can be noted that both families in the USA—both Arlington and Montclair—had their own houses. There were outhouses in the backyard. Kitchen water was supplied from a cistern with a hand pump. Heat was supplied by the kitchen stove. Sometimes burning wood, sometimes coal, they cooked on the stove and heated their pressing irons. There was a small coal stove in the parlor. This was lit only for company for Sunday dinner. The family spent most of the time in the kitchen in winter.

My father, Carl Werner Nelson (note, not Nilsson in this country), was born in Montclair, NJ in 1901 and had two younger sisters, Alice and Marie.

My mother, Helga Mildred Frisk was born in Arlington, NJ in 1902. She had two older brothers:

Anselm, who died of dropsy at the age of 14, and Harold, who died as a 6 month old baby. My mother was raised as an only child although that was not the intention. While discussing the childhoods of my parents, there are a couple of asides that seem pertinent.

My paternal grandfather's brother, Carl Mauritz Nelson met a girl, Anna, from South Dakota at a Swedish Lutheran Young People's conference. The girl's family were Swedish, but she was born here. Uncle Morris, as he was called, married Aunt Anna and they lived in Montclair. Their children, of course, were cousins to my father and his sisters. The two families were close. The brothers usually worked on the same house. My father and his boyhood cousins—Ivan, Alf, Gerard and Erland—became the Five Nelsons. They played basketball and had a five piece band. Granda played the piano. There was a sister, Florence, who was close to Alice and Marie, and died before she was 60.

Although my mother was raised as an only child, she too had plenty of uncles, aunts and cousins in the neighborhood. The men worked together a lot, the women visited for coffee and they saw each other every Sunday in church. Usually there were two services, morning and afternoon. Sometimes there was an evening service as well. Between services there was a huge smörgåsbord that was authentic, believe me.

My father and mother grew up in the North Jersey Swedish Baptist community between 1902 and 1920. There were churches in at least 8 towns. At the time buses and trolleys were just starting. There were still a few horse-cabs around. Most big shopping was done in Newark which was reachable by the early buses. Radios were just crystal sets and you listened with ear phones. House lights were candles and later gas lights. Ironing was done by irons heated on the stove. Food was kept in an ice box in the summer and in a window box in the winter. Food did not keep well, so you had to go to the butcher at least twice a week. Stores were nearby, within 2 blocks of the house my mother grew up in. This was the same neighborhood I grew up in too.

There were within 2 blocks a small A&P (and I mean small), 2 butcher shops, 2 delicatessens, 2 candy stores, 1 dry goods store, 2 barber shops and even a hat store. Beer and liquor were sold in the delicatessens. What you did was walk to the store and carry the stuff home in a paper bag.

Railroads were pretty good. My father commuted from Montclair, NJ to Jersey City by train and then across the Hudson River by ferryboat. All of the trains were coal-fired and gave off a lot of smoke but they got you there. Since they were used so much, schedules were kept on a high frequency level.

Back then education was less than today. After graduating from the 8th grade, most people went to work at say 14 years old. My father had some jobs in a store and caddied for a while but got a job in a bank at the age of 16. He went to Montclair Evening High School but that only took him through 9th grade. Incidentally, all of the Nelson boys and girls, children of carpenters got office jobs.

My mother took a secretarial course for one year past grade school. That doesn't sound like much but she could take dictation and type letters very rapidly.

Now let's talk about how Grandma and Grandpa met. It was the custom in those days and indeed in my day for young people to go to young people's church meetings on Sunday night. It was a good way for boys and girls to meet in a respectable place. Grandpa and his buddy Oscar Moberg used to move around from church meeting to church meeting, meeting a lot of people. One Sunday night they took the train to Arlington and went to the young people's meeting at the Swedish Baptist Church where he met my mother. The rest was history.

I recall doing the same myself. My buddy Red Rogers and I (Gail's godfather) went the rounds of Protestant churches on Sunday evenings. Not to be too prejudiced, we did go to a couple of CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) dances.

I would like to imagine that things were simpler in Sweden, but maybe not. We do know that Morfar went to an engineering school, "Örebro Tekniska." He then came to the USA. Mormor was sent to Stockholm to a school where she learned to be a baby nurse. It was known that the princesses of the royal house went to the same school, but not in the same class, of course.

Melvin's Childhood

Now for the story of my childhood in Arlington, NJ. I was born on March 1,1927 in the West Hudson hospital. Incidentally, Bobby Albers was born in the same hospital many years later. The man who drove my parents to the hospital was a fellow of Swedish descent by the name of Carlson. They were Salvation Army (Frälsningsarmén) and their son David was in my high school class. He played a great trumpet but only in the Salvation Army band and the high school. Many of us thought he could have become famous, but he chose not to go in "gin mills" (bars).

My folks were living in a brand new house. My Morfar had been the carpenter. My Morfar and Mormor only lived 2 doors away. The neighborhood was a middle class one. There were no rich. Every man went to work. Although I was an only child there was not shortage of kids to play with. Within 2 blocks there were at least 20 boys my age to play and fight with. There were as many girls, but we ignored them. All they did was jump rope and play jacks. One thing we learned—only a sissy would hit a girl.

Life had changed a bit from my parent's childhood days, but we were different from modern life in many ways. In the 1930's all boys shoes had laces. Boys wore knickers until about 13 years of age and then they got their first long pants. Girls always wore dresses. We always walked to school—2 blocks for grammar school, 1/2 mile for junior high and 1 mile for high school.

In junior high the play yard had a fence down the middle. Boys played on the North side, girls on the South side. Even in high school, the boys entrance and exit were on the North side of the school, the girls on the south side.

Most of our play was on the street. There was little car traffic. We played stick ball a lot—all you needed was a broom stick and an old rubber ball. Then there was Beat the Beater. It was like Hide and Seek except the guy who was it had a stick and was entitled to whack the other boys until they got back to the start pole. We also had sling shots, elastic guns and pea shooters.

Heat was supplied by a coal furnace. At night it had to be banked to prevent it from going out. In the summer you opened the windows and sweat. We had an ice box until I was near grown. The ice man delivered as well as the coal man and the bread man (Dugan's).

When I was little my mother scrubbed the clothes on a washboard. Later we got a wringer-type washing machine. My father's shirts still had to be boiled and starched. The clothes were dried on a clothes line in the backyard. In the winter we had clothes lines in the cellar. All lawn mowers were push mowers. That was a lot of work. I got 10 cents for my effort.

When clothes were very worn or torn they were patched and used as play clothes. Usually the patches were a different color. You always changed to your play clothes when you got home from school. Socks used to get lots of holes in them back then and had to be darned. On rainy days we wore overshoes called rubbers.

We had AM radios by then and there were a lot of interesting programs. In the afternoon there were soap operas for the ladies. From 4:30-6 were programs for boys—"Jack Armstrong the All-American Boy" or "Sergeant King of the Royal Mounted Police." In the evenings were family programs like Amos and Andy, The Lone Ranger, and Fibber McGee and Molly. We all sat around and listened. My homework had to have been done first, of course.

Schools were a little different. First of all, everyone had to dress well. Boys wore regular shirts. In high school, neckties were required. Promotion was by semesters. This meant that a kid who is failing could be kept back for a half year. It was less obvious that he had been help back. On the other hand, kids that did well were skipped a half year. This happened to me twice. With this system you always had to keep up—no being bored with the easy stuff.

In my day police walked their beats and were visible. They didn't bother with the kids stealing a few apples, but otherwise we had to behave. Also the cops lived in town like everyone else and usually they knew your parents. It should be noted that only one boy in our neighborhood ever went to jail. I believe it was for breaking into a car. In the town of 40,000 there was only one murder. A cop caught

his wife cheating. I don't remember whether he shot his wife or the boyfriend.

Ann Marie's Family

Life at your mothers house was quite similar. When they first came over–1926 I think–Mormor lived with her sister Karen and her new husband John Wahlberg who was also from Västerås. In the meantime, Morfar took a job in Pittsburgh. Although he was a graduate electrical engineer, he could not get an engineering job until he could speak English properly. In Pittsburgh he worked as a common labor in a steel mill. After about six months or so, he got an engineering job at Western Electric in Kearny, New Jersey. He worked at western until he retired.

Mormor and Morfar had met on the ship coming over from Sweden and kept in touch. When he got a job, he proposed and they were married in a Swedish Lutheran Church in New York City. They moved to an apartment in Jersey City with almost no furniture at first. Your mother was born in Jersey City in 1930.

The great recession had struck and Morfar's job was cut back to only two days per week. This forced Mormor to go back to Västerås with her 1 year old to live with her father for about a year and a half. The economy picked up more first sent for his family. They rented a house in Cranford, New Jersey and later bought a house a couple of blocks away. Unkie was born there. They lived there for about 15 years until Morfar was transferred to Allentown, Pennsylvania.

Cranford was a little nicer than Kearny because it was newer. There were very few rich people though. Your mother had to walk about 2 miles to high school. Another block or two and she could've taken the school bus—no such luck.

Vasa Club

Just before Christmas 1942, my Morfar's brother Alfred Holt—Uncle Al—stopped by to visit his sister. He told me there was going to be a Swedish Christmas party and dance at Vasa Temple and that I might enjoy it. I had no idea that there was a Swedish club called Vasa. I guess our family frowned on drinking and dancing. I went up, probably a Sunday afternoon and evening, with my buddy "Red" Rogers. Red was of English descent which makes him part Danish.

They had an accordion player who played Swedish dance music which we tried. There were a lot of young girls there. We were just barely 16 years old so we danced and were invited to join the Swedish folk club. We then went to the dance every Sunday afternoon and we got to meet and dance with about a dozen girls. We still had other friends and went to other dances and roller skating on Saturday nights, but they filled out our social schedule.

After Graduation

f A fter graduating high school in June 1943, I went to work as a lab assistant for Baker platinum in Newark. I learned to do gravimetric

analysis for precious metals, and of course, to wash beakers. In September 1943, I enrolled at Newark College of Engineering night school. We went from 7 to 10 PM four nights a week. At first I wanted to be a regular chemist but NCE was a convenient commute and only \$67 dollars per semester.

I got my driver's license at 17 years old in March 1944 and shortly after my first car. My car was \$125 and my salary was only about \$25



per week. There were lots of mechanical problems. The tires needed air every morning. Luckily, I lived close to a gas station. This was during World War II and gas was rationed to 3 gallons a week. The speed limit was 35 mph, but it was fun.

US Navy 13

USNavy

In the fall of 1943, while still 16, I took a test to become a Navy officer. This was the V-12 program. Grandpa signed the enlistment papers. You could not join the Navy, Coast Guard or Marine Corps when you were still 17 years old without your father's written permission. Of course, he figured I would be safely in college for at least two years. I passed the exam and my essay was well received. When I took the physical everything was great except that I had albumin in my urine. That was because I wanted to be an officer. The following year when I applied for service as an enlisted man I was accepted even though I still had the albumin. The medics took a microscopic view and passed me.

I went to boot camp in January 1945 at Sampson, New York. At that time, World War II was still going. Germany was retreating, but Japan was still strong. The battles for Iwo Jima and Okinawa took place in the spring of 1945. I was slated to go to Fleet Marine School in September '45, but the war ended in August. At the time I was disappointed but later thanked the Lord, for saving me and Harry Truman for dropping the bombs. The rest of my Navy career was spent at Brunswick-Topsham Naval Aid station in Portland, Maine. Luckily there were no crashes so there was not much to do. I was discharged in June 1946 at Lido Beach on Long Island. On my way home a fiddler at Grand Central Station played "Blonde sailor"—I was touched.

The good part of all of this was the G.I. Bill. Something like 3 million men went to college with tuition and books paid for. We got \$70 a month to live on. It doesn't sound like much but Grandma and Grandpa only charged me for the increase in the food bill when I came home—\$40 a month.

College

Of the 250 or so men in my class, almost all of us were the first ones in our families to go to college. I found college tough. The competition was fierce. 4500 applications went in. 1500 of us were invited to take the GRE pre-engineering inventory. It was like SAT

with a section on spatial relationships. 100 of us were admitted to a freshman year that ran from January 4 to September 12 with only one week off between semesters. We went to school six days a week. 40 of us survived to enter the sophomore class. I believe everyone in this group graduated three years later with no further flunkings. You can see why I am not ashamed to be a B student; not more than two or three in any class got A.

Neeting Jan Marie Johansson at Vasa Park

In the meantime, the Johansson's had an active life in Cranford. Morfar worked at Western Electric in Kearny and took the train into work. It took a while, but eventually he became an engineering manager with 30 engineers and 20 clerical workers working for him. The family went to Salem Lutheran Church where your mother was confirmed. They were also very active in the Swedish organization called Vasa Order. The lodge met in Elizabeth and they were very involved. Morfar became head of the New Jersey lodges—about 20 of them. I think the title was District Master. New Jersey was District # 6.

Your mother and Unkie were in the Swedish folk dance club called

Blakloken that met in Elizabeth. It was similar to Nya Sverige to which I belonged. We probably went to some of the same performances, but there was three and a half years difference in our ages so we never met. The dances, of course, were the same. In August 1946 I went up to Vasa Park for my first visit. I had many friends from the dance club who went there, so it was only natural to feel at home. I met Ann Marie there. No introductions



were necessary since we had a number of mutual friends. That night we danced and discovered that we were a couple right from the start.

Vasa Park was an exciting place that summer. All of the young men were just out of the service after several years of a rather restricted life. The young women had somebody to dance with for the first time in years. There was a study undertaken and a list made up of the people

who "met my mate through Vasa." At one point there were more than 70 couples on the list including your mother and I.

The dances were pretty wild. They went from 9 PM Saturday to 2 AM Sunday. Sometimes we passed the hat to pay the band and danced until 3 AM. The Sunday dances were calmer because more parents and kids were there. The Sunday dance ran from 4 PM p.m. till 10 PM.

There were two bars. But most of the young people drank beer with only an occasional "syp." The culture was American-Swedish. Everyone knew a few words of Swedish which they used to kid around with—sort of in-group stuff—but very few actually spoke Swedish, even those born on the other side.

During the period between January 1947 and July 1950, I went to

NCE and was pretty busy. Even so, you find time to do some of the things you want to do. Both the Nelsons and the Johansson's built summer homes up at Vasa Park during the summers of 1948 and 1949. The Johansson house was wellbuilt and designed. Being a being a summerhouse it was not huge, but it was pretty nice.



My father bought a kit house from a company in Brooklyn for \$400. This house was just 16' x 20' and of minimum design. For example, the studs were on 24 inch centers instead of the standard 16 inch. Also the studs were only 2 x 3 instead of the standard 2 x 4. I did most of the work with grandpa, mostly doing the sawing using only hand tools. The house is still standing and lived in 56 years later. Of course there was no skimping on nails. I take credit for that.

Wedding Dells

e planned for a wedding. This was on October 7, 1950. We were married in the Johansson family Church, Rosemont Lutheran Church. Pastor Tucson presided and in the wedding party on my side were Red Rogers, as best man, and Lennart Johansson, Donald Holmes

and Joseph Tichansky were ushers. On the bride's side was the maid of honor, Jean Louise Lundgren, who lived next store in Cranford. Jean Hill, Jean Densmore, and Joyce Heller were the bridesmaids. They are all went to Bethlehem Business College together. The reception was at the Johansson house. It was a big house. Between the living room, dining room and enclosed porch there must have been 50 people for a catered sit-down dinner.

Annmarie and I left about 9 PM to go on our honeymoon. Our first stop was the John Bartrom Hotel in Philadelphia. Parking was in an enclosed concrete garage. My friends had put stones in the hubcaps and they made an awful racket in the garage. Our trip was about 5 or 6 days and we went to Natural Bridge, VA and Virginia Beach.

young Married Life

ur first place to live was in a brand-new apartment in Allwood (Clifton, New Jersey). It was only a one-bedroom but it was

nice. Your mother got a job as a secretary/typist at the same company that I worked for, Congoleum Nairn, so we could ride together. On Wednesday night we usually had dinner with the Nelsons in Kearny. We would also go up to Bethlehem, Pennsylvania of a weekend to visit the Johansssons.



Life did change a bit with the birth of our daughter Gail Marie (Pumpkin) Nelson in December 1951. Mommy had some health problems and, of course, there was now only one salary. But we managed. Because of the health problem, Mormor and Morfar took Gail up to Pennsylvania for a couple of months—her third and fourth months I would say. This worked out pretty good because Gail had a problem keeping her formula down and the doctor up in Bethlehem solved that right away. Thanks, Mormor and Morfar.

Soon the apartment became too confining and we decided to get a house. The G.I. Bill was a big help. Also my Mormor lent us \$1000 dollars for a down payment. The house we bought was in Nutley, New Jersey and was pretty beat in many ways. There were sagging floors, but

at least it was ours. We lived in the house for about three years. The garage had to be rebuilt, the living room floor jacked up, and the whole house painted inside and out. This was my first exposure to latex paint, which had just come out—what a difference! With oil base paint, you took at least a day to dry and probably two coats to cover. With latex paint you could paint the whole room in one Saturday.

Our car was getting a bit old and even though we got one dirt cheap from Grandpa, we had to start the car on a roll. Fortunately, the drive was tipped down and Raymond Avenue was steep. I worked in Kearny and parked on Bergen Avenue which was also very steep. During this season we got a second car for Ann Marie. It was also a bomb, but I guess we were the first two-car family in our circle of friends.

I still remember one instance about Gail. She had been around the corner playing with some other kids and was coming home wearing shorts and a Davy Crockett hat with a Coon Tail on it. It was getting dark and the lightning bugs came out and swarmed around her. She, of course, did a dance to avoid the bugs which was cute or funny or whatever. I still remember it after about 48 years.

After a few years we had Eddie. He was born in a hospital in Montclair in May 1955. He was okay except that his feet had gotten crowded in the womb. Without treatment he would have grown up very pigeon-toed. He had to wear a device that held his feet out at an angle for most of the day. It worked and in about three months he was okay. During this period George and Doris Pearson were our best friends. We played pinochle and drank beer. They had two kids—David and Donna. They are Eddie's godparents and we are Donna's.

Moving to Wayne, NJ

Not long after Ed was born we started looking for a new house to replace the house in Nutley. We did decide to buy a house in Preakness (Wayne.) We put the money down, signed the contract and sold our house in Nutley. Unfortunately the builder had financial problems and could not finish the houses at that time. To make a long story short, it took 18 months before we got our house.

In the meantime, for about three months we lived in Mountainside and then 15 months at Morfar's summerhouse in Vasa Park by Budd Lake, New Jersey. The house was barely large enough, but we managed. I drove 40 miles each way to work in Paterson. It was 5 miles down to Hackettstown to the market and laundry. The furnace was designed to take the chill off the summerhouse in spring and fall. Since it was not enough, we burned about four cords of wood there one winter. Many stories could be told about snowstorms and shotguns, etc.

In due time the house in Preakness was finished and we moved in. After what we had been through, this was quite a pleasant experience.

All the houses on the street were brandnew. The neighbors were all young. The oldest were perhaps 45 when we were about 30. There were lots of kids for Gail and Eddy to play with. Most of the neighbors were about our age and at least half were engineers of one kind or another,



so things were pretty congenial. We lived in the neighborhood for about nine years and they were good years.

Career as a Chemical Engineer

This would be a good time to discuss my career. After graduating from NCE as mentioned before, I worked in the laboratories of Congoleum Nairn for about two years. On one Black Friday, the research and engineering department was cut from 100 to 50 people. (I had not been there very long). One man with 25 years experience was let go with 25 weeks pay. After that I started looking around and went to work for Flintcote in Whippany. They were largely a manufacturer of roofing shingles, but were also getting into asphalt and vinyl flooring which is why they hired me. This lasted for about six months when I got a call from a fellow that I had worked closely with at Congoleum Nairn in Paterson, New Jersey. The fellow was Dave Hess. He and I have a patent together.

The job involved designing a pilot plant to make nylon dispersion. Nylon and an alcohol solution was what you was used to bond nylon thread. Because of the alcohol, everything had to be built explosion-proof. A water dispersion of nylon would do the same thing using much lower-cost drying equipment. I was able to go from a 500 ml flask to a 100 gallon plant kettle and then a 1000 gallon plant kettle. Sales, though, never got to more than about 500 gallons a week. I also worked on etching Teflon with the solution of sodium in liquid ammonia. This was another technical success with minimal profit.

The owner, Bob Goldsmith, bought an old factory in Bloomfield that used to make fire engines. It was my job to get the plant cleaned up and ready for a move of all equipment down from Paterson. It was pretty successful and no production was lost. At a side job, I worked with people from Dupont on laminating copper sheets to a Teflon glass backing. It was a high-pressure, high-temperature situation. As I recall it was 650 Fahrenheit 200 PSI. The laminates for the first materials used in the beginning stages of printed circuit board development. By 1959, I could see that there was no real future at General Plastics—it was a one owner company, so how high could you go?

I found an ad in the Newark Evening News for an assistant plant engineer. I had gotten my Professional Engineer's license in January 1957. That made an impression and I got the job.

The job paid better, and Nopco Chemical was a reasonably well known Corporation with stock traded on the stock market. The plants made urethane foam for a growing market. Although there were problems with profitability, it was very interesting technically and I fit right in. The hours were a bit long—it was hard to leave before 6 PM, but otherwise it was a good job. Without going into a lot of detail, I was successful in making improvements in the process and in 1961 I was promoted to the position of production manager. This was quite a step up. I now had 45 people working for me, some on the night shift. My office was shared only by my department foreman and my clerk. It was quite exciting, of course, and also a bit nerve-racking. At normal rates of production, we made urethane foam at the rate of \$150 worth of materials per minute. The other side of the coin was that if you produced scrap that was also \$150 per minute. In 10 minutes you

could produce unusable foam, fit only for grinding for \$1500—that was more than a whole month's salary for me.

About the same time, the company decided to buy a new larger plant in Plainfield, New Jersey. It is really hard to believe now, but I also had to handle the move and buy and oversee installation of a new foaming machine. The good thing about this, though, was that I was able to get a trip to Europe to inspect some foaming and foam cutting equipment. Mom and Eddie and I went to Europe for three weeks. My expenses were paid for by the company but Annmarie and Ed we had to pay for. Gail had been to Sweden earlier in the year with Mormor and Morfar.

We went to Sweden and stayed with Karen and John after about 10 days. I left for about 10 days and went to Denmark, Germany, England, Norway and back to Denmark. This was quite a trip and involved for the first time in my life traveling in Europe and trying to understand several languages. At the end of our trip, Ann Marie and Eddy took a train from Linköping to Malmö and a ferry across to Copenhagen. I met them at the ferry terminal and we flew back home.

Raising Kids in Nayne

A fter 9 years or so we decided to move out of Wayne. It might be interesting to review this. Eddy was about two and Gail was 5 1/2 when we moved to Wayne. They were both pretty small and grew a lot in the next nine years. Preakness was an active growing town with a lot of young people. Almost everyone bought their house on the G.I. Bill. The lots were pretty good size, with even a brook at the rear property line. The kids had a lot of activities. Gail did cheer leading in both junior high and high school. Eddie was the drummer boy in PAL. He went into Patterson on Saturday morning and learned to swim at a YMCA pool. Eddie was also hit by a car on the way to school and was hospitalized for a couple of days. Fortunately, it was not serious.

We were quite active in Saint Timothy Lutheran Church. I was on the church council for a couple of years. Ann Marie served on the altar guild for several years and Gail was confirmed. She actually made the speech to the congregation for the kids being confirmed.

We will never know all the things that Eddie and his buddies did. That is the way with young boys. They go out in the woods, make fires, hitchhike to the next town, throw rocks at streetlights and like that. Sometimes it is best not to ask.

During these years we were very friendly with Roy and Norma Albers, who lived nearby at Lions Head Lake. We played bridge once a week and went camping up at Lake George, New York in the summer. The Viking bowling league was still a part of our life. The guys went bowling on Tuesday nights and once or twice a month a lodge on Friday night. This ended with poker and some boilermakers. Sometimes Saturday morning were a lost cause. In payment we took the ladies to the big bowling banquet. Also they had their gossip parties—they called it "club." The husbands took their turn babysitting every couple of weeks or so.

Openel is Born

Getting back to the job, the operation was successfully moved from North Arlington to Plainfield and the machinery, some of it brand-new, worked quite well. We were able to double production rates, but also we were able to make the foam blocks about 50% higher—from 2 feet high to 3 feet high. The new plant was much bigger and allowed much longer production runs. Just about then my boss quit. This was a heady experience since I now had 110 people working for me; about eight were foreman. I was able to get through some changes to improve the financial situation a bit, but even so we were still in a losing situation. The major reason was that we were getting a huge bill from corporate overhead. It did very little good to complain about it since the top management were emotionally involved with the Harrison plant.

The next problem was with fires. Because of competition the formulas were changed to make a lower-cost, raw material formula. This was also more exothermic—internal heat from the reaction. At

the same time the larger blocks (we called them "buns") had a lower surface to volume ratio and therefore cooled slower. The final result was higher internal temperatures that sometimes resulted in fires. Once a fire started it would run away. In short, we had a major fire with the roof burnt off the curing area—about 2 acres. Flames could be seen in the night sky more than a mile away. In pretty quick order—not more than three days—we were back in full production. More hard labor was required at first and all other operations were squeezed a bit, but we were able to operate the two months or so before we built a new roof and installed new conveyors.

Not long after this, Nopco was bought out by a larger corporation, Diamond Shamrock. My plant was now one of about 40 in the company instead of our five at Nopco. The president of Nopco was bought off and my boss Lou Owens the divisional Manager was let go as well as was our divisional sales manager Stu Keeler.

Lou began looking around and convinced me and Stu to go in to a smaller but competing foaming operation. In 1971 we organized "The Okenel Corporation." People were talked into investing and we did get around \$250,000 to get set up.

I, of course, quit my job and we began looking around. Lou was president. He had a PhD in chemistry. Stu was vice president in charge of sales and I was vice president in charge of engineering and production. Within a very few weeks-maybe four-we had a rental plant, had cleaned it up, made drawings of the equipment, and had equipment arriving. Most of our stuff was secondhand but it was usable. In the next few weeks we all wore work clothes and assembled a plant. With the exception of some masonry on our saw pit, we did most of the work ourselves. We had added Jean Tylenda to the staff to run the foam machine and Dick Pearson as maintenance mechanic. During these few weeks a lot got done. Certainly not more than four months from our start we made our first run of foam. Although it needed some improvement, the first run of about hundred and 50 feet was sold to a cushion manufacturer. This give us a much needed lift. We begin production gradually, adding improvements and in September 1969, we had our first profitable month. For the next eight years, although

there were some problems, we made money every month. We paid off the investors and build a second plant in Newark.

Moving to Berkeley Heights

B ecause of my promotion and transfer to Plainfield, it became impractical to commute so far, so we sold the place in Preakness and bought a house in Berkeley Heights. This town was pretty nice. We were 500 feet above sea level and only a few miles from the country. The neighborhood was built about the same time as Preakness. The house was about 11 years old. The development was a little upscale and a little less friendly, although I guess we fit in okay. There was an impact on the kids. Gail had been the captain of the cheerleader squad at Wayne Valley high school. Now she had to compete just to get on the squad, which she was able to do. There were quite a few changes as well for Eddie. There were of course fights with the other boys. You have to know where the new guy fits in. He soon had a lot of friends, played freshman football, not sophomore as the other guys had gotten much bigger in that one year. He also met Janice and that straightened him out. I was pleased to see he had an interest in chemistry and had planned his school studies around it. In the meantime Gail had expressed an interest in psychology.

The next few years were busy ones. Gail went up to the University of Connecticut. Ed was in high school. He did odd jobs—cut grass, caddied and like that. Money was tight with Gail in college and the business still new, so Ann Marie went to work at Allstate, first as typist, then receptionist, then private secretary.

Life at the new businesses were pretty exciting for with fumes, fires and explosions. A big one at the Newark plant came close to tragedy. Felipe, the foreman, and Carlos who was about 70 years old had been cut off by the explosion and had to go to the backyard, climb a fence armed with barbed wire and run up the railroad siding. It was okay though. It was decided to rebuild. The insurance company helped a lot (we had business interruption insurance) and we were back into production in 14 weeks.

Some note should be taken of recreation during the years 1957 through 1966. While living in Wayne we got into boating. We got a boat and so did Roy and Norma. We started spending our vacation camping up at Lake George. We camped on an island in the middle of the lake and really had to use boats to get around. This included going to town for food, fishing, or water-skiing. This started off as towing a surfboard behind the boat and eventually we got a fairly good. We caught a lot of little fish.

I continued as manager of the Newark Plant. At the end of four years, the market collapsed because we could not compete with prices from Japan. Our arrangement with DuPont was such that we could not lose. As agreed, they paid for all our losses of machinery. We got back what we had been paid and Dupont took the loss. In retrospect considering the dangers involved, Dupont paid Okenel Chemical Company for risks that they did not want to take in a "Dupont Plant." In other words, we were well paid for the risks—the risks that Uncle Mel had to take. I guess that was my real reason for wanting to get out —enough was enough. After the plant shutdown we were taken over by Diamond Shamrock.

This was a large company. I had the job of "plant engineer"—a wind-down job. I left to go down the shore and start work on the marina. I worked three days a week and spent the other four days in North Beach Haven.

One night they had a foam fire. This was the worst that I had seen. I was called up from North Beach Haven to help with the engineering side of the recovery. The damage was so great that the new owners got about \$10 million from the insurance company and shut down. After that I went down to North Beach Haven and started the marina. My final paycheck was \$2000—that was 1978.

Nelson's Landing

The next two to three years were financially unacceptable but we had the time of our lives. Although some of it sounds gross: boats coming in late, ice lifting docs, long hours—in retrospect it was quite

an experience which few people have, and a lot of fun. We could tell a lot of stories.

Since we rented out boat slips we had at least 20 families that we saw a lot of during that time. We met many people. A partial list would include: Charlie and Betty Konzelman, Dave and Claire Nichol, Michael and Terry Livesey, Bob and Mary Hess, Bob and Debbie Wilson, JJ and Patty Jeffreys, May, the Fitzgerald's, Homer and Jane,

Peter and Ollie, Pastor and Joyce Trainer. Although there were early indications, it soon became clear that a dock with only 30 slips was not viable. By the third season it was obvious to me that the dock, "Nelsons Landing" could not be profitable. It's hard to believe how much this fact hurt.



I began selling real estate on LBI. It soon became clear that although I could sell some real estate, it was not enough to keep us solvent. We did get a few bucks from both sides of the family. It became clear that I had to go back to work as an engineer. That sounds pretty easy, "Go back to work." The problem was that engineering jobs meant either to cross the state two hours and work for Dupont or go about two hours north to the very industrialized part of North Jersey. With luck, from the advice of Lynn Conover, one of our dock renters, I heard that the state of New Jersey was looking for an engineer in Toms River which is only 45 minutes north of North Beach Haven. I applied and was accepted for a job as a civil engineer. My P. E. License was critical since that was what the boss, Bernie Moore, needed. The job lasted seven years and my salary went from 18,500 to 42,000+ car. At least we could pay our bills and eat regularly. The job itself was pretty interesting. In the seven years on the job I handled 21 dredging jobs, two bulkheads and a large seawall—720 feet long, stone—weighing 20,000 tons. The final job was analyzing the Sea Bright seawall. I took a few months and came up with a new design with the foundation stones 6 feet deeper to prevent undermining. The job was done after I retired. I estimated the cost at least \$10 million, the actual contract was within 5% of that number.

Retirement

only a few days after retiring we headed out with our camping gear we had: an 18-foot long, high-top van and a 22-foot camping trailer. The unit had a stove, refrigerator, toilet and shower. We slept in a fairly comfortable double bed. Our trip went down to Florida, dropping Mormor off in North Carolina on the way down. We visited Cape Canaveral, saw a lift-off at night and visited the Berntsens. From there we headed west and visited Carl Fredrick Gustavsson and his wife Joyce near Mobile, Alabama. The trip across was interesting. We saw the prairies and deserts of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

We then arrived at Gail and Jeff's house in Lakeside, California and set the camper on their side lot. This worked out well since we did not have to hang all over the Bones. We did see a lot of each other but in such a way that everybody had their privacy. I recall rebuilding their back steps. The trip back was on a more northerly route since winter was over by July. Over the next few years we were able to go up to Newburgh to see the Nelsons and go to California a few more times—twice by car/trailer, once by train, and two or three times by air.

Moving to Glorida

 ${f B}$ y now we are into the '90s and we begin the process of selling our property in North Beach Haven and moving to Florida. This process was stage-wise. But by 1994 at we are Florida residents at Philippi Gardens.

It is true that we were no longer bay front, but our Florida property was on a canal. One time Dave and Claire Nichol came down and we went out to the Scottish games. I met some Shriners and decided to join Sahib Temple. This was a great move. The temple is only 15 minutes away and has something going on most of the time. The guys are, of course, Masonic brothers. We are now up to about 1997 or so and things are going pretty well. We can swim in our pool or go out to Siesta Key Beach which is about 15 minutes by car. We have joined the Swedish club and even visited Sons of Norway. We did enjoy Lucia

Fest. We have some visitors from the North: Dave Nichols, the Albers, Peter and Ollie, but mostly we are by ourselves.

Mormor had some problems about 1997. We took both her and Helen Patterson down for a visit. Claude and Jean Rogers stopped by just then. About 1997 we took Mormor down to stay in a nursing home near us. It was probably a little better than the place in Greensboro but not actually great. She had a fall with a broken hip and had to be fed for a while with a stomach tube. We thought it was a bad situation but at least she got four more months of life. Who knows whether it was worth it or not? In any event she passed on to her reward. Butch and I were the only ones at her viewing. We took her ashes up to Bricktown, New Jersey where we had a church funeral service at the Lutheran Church she attended. Her ashes were buried about 5 feet away from Morfar's. At the funeral service were Len and Nancy, Roy and Tootie Lindquist and a couple more Swedes.

Crnising with the Shriners

During the latter period we went on a couple of cruises with the Shriners—one to the Caribbean and Panama Canal. We met Bill and Elise Chapman on the trip. We became good friends until they passed in 2002. We also went on the Baltic cruise: England, Kiev Canal, North Germany, St. Petersburg, Helsingborg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Oslo and back to England. This was a great cruise which I will never forget. Unfortunately, we only had eight hours in Stockholm, but we did see quite a few relatives at that time.

Our life since then was for about three years centered on Sahib Temple. There is something to do every week. We also had a lot to do at the Elks Lodge which we joined because the Chapmans.

Plans for the Future

uring this period we did a bit of thinking about the future. Our children and grandchildren were so far away that I figured that we had to look elsewhere. Len and Nancy had moved from Greensboro down to the shore. This was about three hours east and took them down only a couple of miles from the ocean in Wilmington. After some thought I figured that there could be some advantages to living near relatives—brother/sister is pretty close. We then went up to Wilmington, NC and looked at houses in the same development as Len and Nancy. In 2000 we moved up. We could not sell the place in Florida for what we thought it was worth so we decided to hold on for a while. We moved up to Wilmington. We joined St. Paul's Lutheran Church and also the Port City Swedes. Life in Wilmington was interesting—we did get involved with Swedish folk dancing and Lucias and May Dance, etc. There were quite a few parades with model Viking ships. Some were up in Raleigh, some were down in Carolina Beach. In some ways the life in Wilmington was interesting although less so than Sarasota. We still go back and forth and I'm not really sure what we want to do next.

End of Pop's writing

Received by Gail 7/12/03 (Pop started writing it 4/13/03).

Mom and Pop eventually moved back to Florida and then to Katy, Texas to live near Ed and Janis Nelson. Since 2010, they have been enjoying life at Heritage Grand, where they have attended dances and jitterbugged all night long. Mom was in an accordion trio (The Bumblebees) that played a sold-out show. Pop plays pool regularly, walks, and swims, and Mom attends a Bible study at the clubhouse.

Recollections
STORIES and Tributes

Contributions from the children and grandchilderen

Other family members have contributed their tributes, stories and recollections to this family history:



EDWARD CARL NELSON

Pop, I Remember When...

y first memory of you was riding on your shoulders. This is something I think we did a lot of until I got too big. With my little legs straddled around your neck and holding on to what seemed a watermelon-sized head, I held fast to your forehead. My view of the world was adult-height from here. Before me and emblazoned in your receding hair line was an M, or W, depending how you looked at it, as you used to point out to me until one day I got the joke.

We did lots of backpacking: "men only." Off we would go on a Friday night after work. You would pack freeze-dried something and hot dogs and canned beans that we would cook on a campfire in a canteen cup. Hot dogs would be roasted on sticks cut from nearby bushes with my first knife. I remember my first knife. You had the guys at work (by this I knew you were the boss) grind off the point and probably dull the blade a little so I wouldn't hurt myself with it, at least not greater than what a band-aid could fix.

On one of these occasions we left without a flashlight or candle. By the time we reached the lean-to along the Appalachian trail it was already twilight. Hastily you built a campfire and made dinner, but by then it was full on dark. OK with a blazing fire, but when that died it got pretty dark. You found a can of Crisco in the rafters that a previous backpacker had left behind, sank a piece of rope in the middle and made a candle. I was very impressed with this bit of ingenuity. I have made many similar rescues in my life, employing that "we can make a way" skill I saw there, and saw many other times as well.

You built me a work bench "just like Dad's" on the far side of the basement in Wayne. This was partially to keep me out of your shop. However, even when you put a screen door on your shop, locked it and hid the key, Richard and I found the key and entertained ourselves while you were at work. And when you took the key, we were able

to squeeze in-between the furnace pipes to sneak in. There was lots of mischief to be had in there and we got into a lot of it. But, I don't remember being disciplined for this. You must have thought it was cute since piles of sawdust and bent nails were always left in our wake.

In my short-wave radio days, you did not interfere with my attempts to reach the far corners of the globe with boy-enhanced antennae technology. I wrapped yards of your copper wire around many vertical objects in and out of the house to pull in these signals. You always encouraged this with tales of your own crystal radio adventures and neighborhood telegraph setups with Red Rogers.

You spent a lot of your time bringing the kids here and there: to the YMCA at 6:30 am Saturday morning, to PAL band practices after work and parades on Saturdays, Confirmation class on Friday's and then 1 hour later to Teen Night...and then 1 hour later to pick me up, dropping off and picking me up for dances and parties during the girlfriend years. You especially spent a lot of time driving me to Janis' house, every night I think, and cautioned me "Ed, you don't want this to get too serious." Looks like you were right about the getting serious part—but it sure was what I wanted! Anyway, I could see your servant's heart in all of this and have tried to follow it closely.

We built our first boat together. I found the plans for a sailboard in Popular Science and convinced you I could make it (I must have been about 11 at the time). We did not bother to buy the plans but just did our best from the Popular Science magazine summary. We used epoxy glue, copper nails, pine boards plywood and clothes poles for the mast and boom. We bought muslin and Mom sewed up sails. Morfar expertly made the brass fittings. But we used a lot of odds and ends from around the shop whenever we could. This is still my preferred method of making things: use what you've got first, then buy. I named it "Boo-Bee" after a term Soupy Sales coined for "friend." Everyone in the family got the joke except me until much later in life. I had a fun time sailing it around the waters of Gravely Island at Lake George.

When it came time to buy my first car you told me to save up and you'd help me find one. You schooled me in the cheating ways of used car salesman. I remember you discovered one guy had used aluminum foil to keep a spark plug in place in a stripped spark plug hole. You

threw in with me so my \$400 became \$600 and was able to by my 1966 VW Fastback. I added a bicycle horn, called her "Sweetie" and spent a lot of time driving back and forth from Janis' house.

You gave me a lot of guidance on how to repair my car, but seemed to avoid stepping in when you probably could have done it better. I made a lot of mistakes on that car and learned a lot from them. Stepping away is a skill I have still not mastered as a Father, but I am getting better at it.

When I went off to college at Syracuse University you encouraged me all the way with a "full-ride," that is a Parental Scholarship. At this point your career and Mom's made this possible. I lacked for nothing and did not need to work during the summers except for spending money. This is a luxury many of my friends did not enjoy and I am grateful for it and have tried to follow this pattern with my own kids.

In my junior year I started independent research in Dr. Dittmer's lab. I think you liked this and sent me my first lab coat in a package labeled "Ed Nelson, Senior Sulfur Sublimator." I considered graduate school at the end of my time at Syracuse and you reasoned with me that this was a good move, you saw this as "icing on the cake" and I should go for it. That is, I'd already achieved something valuable with my BS in Chemistry, and this could only make my career choices better. You were right about that. Getting a Ph.D. provided me with a (mostly) enjoyable and financially rewarding career, help me provide for my family and contribute to the Lord's work and give me the free time to follow your lead in training my kids.

Looking back now, I see that a lot of my creative drive, my interest in science, my need to make things better, my desire to serve others, to provide for my family and guide (not rule) my kids, came in good part from the life lessons I learned from my Pop. And I'm pretty sure they all did not start with you but have been carried over the generations from your Dad, and he from his Dad, and so on from Dad to Dad to Dad.

Love, Eddy



JANIS NELSON

My most vivid memories with Pop...

As an outsider to the family (and not even Swedish) you certainly accepted me into the Nelson clan as one of your own. I did try to play the part by willingly eating Swedish food, learning to make Swedish coffee bread, enjoying the traditions and even coloring my hair to keep up with the "blonde facade". You always made me feel accepted and part of things!

My most vivid memories seem to be of the Beach Haven years since as a young family we were able to visit a few times a year. There you were, Pop, proudly strutting around your nautical domain like a sea captain in charge of his ship, Greek fisherman's hat carefully cocked to the side. You sure seemed in your element there—hard work, sea, salt and sunshine. There was much to do and you were busily at it. I think we all miss those days, but what fine memories they have made!

You grew up during a time when men were not supposed to show their emotions, but every once in a while your sensitivity and warmth broke through. Now that you are older, I see those moments more and more frequently and I am grateful for each and every one.

Thanks for treating me with love and warmth all these years. Love, Janis



IAN NELSON

A day at the shore with my grandparents...

I than their years in Beach Haven. I still shake the weathered thick hand of my grandfather, hands that once tied wet rope to cleat, patched swollen planks, and guided piers back down into the silt. And still see

my grandmother's hair, tousled from wind swells now streaked with gray. Some of my most vivid memories as a boy took place at that bayside retreat. Rather than write a collection of single moments I remember most, I've attempted to capture what a day at the shore with my grandparents was like for me then.

Sitting across the kitchen table from my grandfather, I hurried through my day's selection from the multi-pack of vacation-only sugar cereals. I watched him shovel spoonfuls of Manhattan clam chowder in quick precise movements from bowl to mouth and then wipe the crumbs from the table cloth. In those days he sometimes took his chowder with a square of jalapeño cornbread. I tried it once and immediately threw up. The spice was too intense for my morning constitution. Then it was down the spiral staircase to the tackle shop. He disappeared into the back, selected a few rods and headed out to the bulkhead, gravel crunching underfoot, to collect minnows from the trap. My dad would pack the cooler with squid strips for bait, root beers, cream sodas and some domestics, maybe stuffing a few granola bars into his pockets.

I manned the bow and crouched at the ready to untether our lines. Farfar fired up the 150 HP outboard motor and we rough idled to the channel. We took a left and made our way south through the no wake zone. Past the private docks and marinas he opened the throttle of the Robalo and I watched as the bow rose up suddenly and then dipped back down as the boat came up on plane. We found our spot among the other weekend fishers along the edge of the channel, letting the current direct our course. I rigged my line hooking the minnow through its lips and topped it with a slice of squid hoping the flounder down below would find this particularly pleasing. I remember quite a few fishing trips. And very few caught fish.

We got back just for lunch and found Granny had prepared a serving tray with an assortment of rolled cold cuts. After we ate, Granny and Farfar stayed back while the rest of us walked the five blocks to the beach. We played in the surf, walked the wet sand as the tide went out and napped under the hot sun. The day grew late and we walked back over the boiling asphalt, across the boulevard, past the arcade and through the gravel yard to wash off our sand covered feet.

Granny was upstairs in the kitchen preparing the crabs. She had collected a pail of blue claws from the traps tied to the dock and was boiling the water. Once removed, the cooked crabs were laid out on newspaper spread over the dining room table. The shell was peeled back from the flesh by separating the fold lines of the exoskeletal joints. With plates of deviled clams and fresh crab, we sat around the blue and yellow picnic tables in the backyard and watched the boats slip past the end of the dock with bows lit red and green.

When it was time for bed, I crawled into my fold-out cot behind the marina store counter and opened the back windows to let in the night sea breeze. I stared up at the painted plaque that hung next to the empty cash register: "uno más cervezas, por favor."



CORRIE NELSON HULL

The first and last on the dance floor...

When I think about Mel & AnnaMarie, or as I know them, Granny and Farfar, I think of their ability to make any occasion a party. They are always up for providing the live music. Granny on the organ or accordion and Farfar on the harmonica or providing the rhythm with a strong hand clap. And if the music is already provided you can bet they'll be bouncing their knees and swinging those hips in step with the beat!

My family members were not always the first to the dance floor, but you can bet Granny & Farfar would be the first and the last! I remember Farfar "getting low" at Ian & Courtney's wedding. I'm fairly certain most 20 somethings couldn't keep up with his agility and strength! And of course who could forget Granny's cruise ship hip-hop dance debut? At 80 years old she was still "keeping step".



These memories make me want to take myself so much less seriously. It reminds me to drop what I'm doing every once in a while,

pick up an instrument or turn up some music and dance. Life may not always give you a reason to sing and dance but Granny & Farfar remind me to just do it anyway.



ADAM HULL

They never lose count...

When Corrie and I lost our first daughter, Brooklyn, after only 118 days of life, we feared that she would eventually be

forgotten. Every time I'm with Farfar he always tells me his age, the number of walks he took the previous day, and how many children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren they have. Over the years I've observed Farfar (Mel) and Granny (AnnaMarie) have a difficult time



remembering certain things about life, but their head count of greatgrandchildren is always accurate and includes Brooklyn. These experiences with Granny and Farfar remind me that the people, especially family, in our lives have an undeniable impact on our hearts and minds.



TREVOR NELSON

The "Nelson Shrine"...

O ne of my favorite memories of you, FarFar, was actually a fairly recent one. I had brought Tina over to you and Granny's house in Katy, most likely to make a quick grocery delivery from Target at Mom's request. You and Granny had met Tina previously, but it was her first time spending time at your home.

After being offered various cakes and sweets by Granny, we found ourselves in the hall, in front of the "Nelson Shrine" (the collection of framed pictures chronicling the Nelson family tree). Looking up at a faded image on the wall of a dapper blue eyed, blonde 20-something and his beautiful wife, Tina asked "FarFar – is that you and Granny?!". Your eyes lit up from the opportunity to tell Tina all about the family you're so proud of. You introduced Tina to the extended family via the "Nelson Shrine", sharing Nelson family folklore with more zeal than I'd ever seen from you. I learned just how proud you were to be a Nelson, and how you were even more proud of the family that you and Granny have built.

After you both had made your way through all of the picture frames on the wall, you paused and nodded once as you looked up at the wall and said to Tina "you know, someday you'll be up on the wall". Tina and I weren't engaged yet, and you didn't know that I had started saving up for an engagement ring, but you couldn't wait to introduce her to the family and make sure she felt welcome in it.



EMILY BONES WEEKS

All things pertaining to sand and sea...

There are those who enjoy the water, who stand on the beach or dock, admire it for a short while and then move on without a thought as to when they will certainly see it again.

And there are those who truly love the sea, who have looked upon crashing waves and glimmering bays with a sense that when they leave that saltwater and sea air they will be missing something that makes up an essential part of who they are. They know that they will and must return, for it's almost as if the sea runs in their very veins.

For these ocean lovers, the heart quickens at the first sight of distant blue, or the first seagull sounds and dense salty air that trigger both memories and anticipation. They have studied the rhythm of the tides, the exact sounds of the sea moving in and out, whether it pulls gently on the smooth shoreline or tugs happily on reluctant pebbles with a click and a clack and a swirl. They know the whipped salty foam that fringes the sand, that rides in on the shallow waters that hang back until that one sneaky surge soaks your ankles and warns those on towels that they've been unknowingly living on the edge. They know the sparkle of the sea: the thousands of diamonds when the sun shines directly on it, and the colors and reflections that vary at sunrise and sunset.

They are never content to just see the water from afar, they must get in, whether by boat, by surfing, by wading, or by complete and refreshing immersion. When it's the last swim or boat ride of the summer, they know such is the case. They thankfully and wistfully dry off in the late August sunshine, or take that last boat ride around the bay in September, knowing that their old friend will always there; it just may be several months until the sun, sea, and carefree days align in the season of summer.

It's obvious that my Grandma and Morfar played a very large role in my love for all things pertaining to sand and sea. The long summer days at the shore, getting tossed by the waves and then hosed off outside before coming back inside were some of the happiest of my childhood. What a special thing they gave us: the lasting memories spent with immediate and extended family, and a special golden retriever named Tyler.

They say one of the best indications of a life well lived is the legacy you create, through children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and beyond. Thank you, Morfar, for the things you've taught us to appreciate: hard work, God's creation, our Swedish heritage, music and dancing, and simply spending time with family: by the water, of course.



JONATHAN BONES

What a real patriach should look like...

I'm proud of my Morfar. These days, real men are a dying breed. My Morfar is 88 years old and still shows his family what a real

"patriarch" should look like. He has been faithful to Granny for their entire marriage. He has raised two successful children. He has worked hard, using his mind and body. He has travelled well. He respects God. He knows his heritage and passes it on to his offspring.

It's been said that the cure for anything is salt water, sweat, tears, or the sea. My sister Emily and I have a real passion for the Ocean. We inherited this love from our Morfar.

Tacksåmycket Morfar! Grattis!



IEFF BONES

Great memories of Mel Nelson – "Pop"

ail introduced me to Pop almost 35 years ago at a family dinner along the Jersey shore. Mel and Anna Marie were living in North Beach Haven, on Long Beach Island when I first got to know them.

I am truly blessed to have Pop as a father-in-law. He and I would engage in interesting and deep discussions on the subjects of coastal engineering, dock rebuilding, Swedish historical accounts and traditions, proven techniques of catching clams, the ups and downs of running a seasonal marina business, the Garvey (a boat known for its seaworthiness and practicality), what life was like growing up in Kearny, NJ, memorable family times at Bud Lake, NJ, the possible causes of the foam plant fires in Plainfield, NJ, passing the coastal engineering test to qualify him for a job as a State of New Jersey coastal engineer, the beloved beagles, Stena and Hilda, a corpsman with the US Navy, selling Jersey shore real estate, Pop's very own secret Claims Casino recipe, helping Gail purchase her first house, the ever present pile of books he was reading, the Nor'Easters and the Tackle Shop floods, writing monthly editions of the From the Gull's Nest, remodeling the Bay Terrace property and splitting the other lots upon which the white and green bungalows stood, demonstrating how to properly eat a clam on the half shell, and an occasional talk about Pastor Jeff's heart-felt ministry at the local Lutheran church...to name a few.

I see Pop as a man with a heart of gold. He remains faithful to his family, friends, generosity, work ethic, and the Lord.

Gail and I moved to San Diego, CA in 1984. When Mel and Anne Marie would come to visit, Pop would do a home improvement project during their stay, leaving a wonderful memory of his loving and giving nature. Pop always made me feel like I was accepted and part of the family. I am eternally grateful to him for all the wonderful memories that my father-in-law Mel Nelson has given me.

Thank you, Pop!



GAIL BONES

Music, dancing, and more stories of family history...

As I read over the contributions for this book from your children and grandchildren, I see that a gift for written expression seems to run in the family. I remember how good your writing was for *The Gull's Nest* (why didn't we save some of those?). For years I told you you should write a book, and I am happy that you took time out so many years ago to record some of our family history so we can pass it on to your great-grandchildren.

Added Members of the Nelson Clan

As I write this, on March 1, 2015, you are turning 88. Since you

sent your manuscript to me in 2003, many events have taken place in our family. The most memorable and important have been the added members of the Nelson clan. Your first greatgrandchild, Corrie and Adam's first-born, Brooklyn Olivia, will be remembered always



though she was with us but short while. Their second daughter, Lydia Irene, is a beautiful bundle at 8 months old. Emily married Caleb Weeks and their delightful daughter Summer is almost 2 years old. She will have a little brother or sister this coming July. Jon and Karen

welcomed their daughter Lua Julienne into the world in January of 2015. Trevor and Tina will be married this fall. Ian married Courtney and they both earned Ph.D.'s, so now 4 of your family members have earned doctorates.

You noted that you were the first in your family to go to college. All of your children and grandchildren have graduated from college and some have gone to graduate school. You have always valued education and beyond that, learning just for pleasure. You always had your nose in a book in the evenings when I was growing up and I have taken after you in that respect.

Music, Dancing, Sweden, Boats

Other influences that I appreciate and share, along with most of the rest of the family: love for music, dancing, Swedish culture, and boats. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree! We all have wonderful memories of the trip you and mom took us on to Sweden to meet our relatives and to see the old homeland.

You signed my autograph book when I was in elementary school: "Music soothes the savage beast-keep it up."

I have.

I have 2 specific memories of encouragement you gave me regarding music. When I was about 15 you took me on the train over to NYC to help me buy a folk guitar. Your love for country music and record collection (Peter, Paul and Mary, Joan Baez, Tommy Makem, and Pete Seeger) shaped my musical tastes—fifty years later I'm still a folksinger, always ready to sing a few stanzas of "The Banks of the Ohio" with you!

Another time was during a depressing time in my life, when I was in my late twenties and single. I was feeling particularly blue one early Saturday evening when you grabbed my guitar and put me in the car and took me over to the Voice of the Pines, where I ended up somehow singing Amazing Grace from the stage! You knew just want I needed to cheer me up.

One more memorable quote: I think it was mom's 50th birthday party, you said, "The best gift a man can give his children is to love their mother."

You have.

And you will always be my favorite dance partner.

Stories

As I writer, I have found my family to be a great source of inspiration for writing. My book, *Living CrossWise*, tells several of our family stories, including that of Mom and Pop's move to Texas after living many years in Florida. Some of the pieces I've written that follow fill in little bits and pieces of our family history.

AROUND THE WORLD IN FIVE GENERATIONS

For the LORD is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continue through all generations. - Psalm 100:5

A s an itinerant Baptist preacher in a Lutheran nation, Per Jonsson Hult, a Swedish blacksmith born in 1820, risked arrest in order to answer the call of God on his life. One Sunday morning as constables came in the front door to arrest him, he climbed out the kitchen window and escaped by riding off on his horse.

His daughter Albertina Hult found religious freedom in America, where she would read her Bible from cover to cover and then start over again.

Her daughter Mildred Frisk played the piano and sang at the Swedish Baptist church where her son Melvin was baptized at age 12. Her husband Carl Nelson went forward to receive Christ at a Billy Graham crusade.

Melvin Nelson was baptized as a young man at the Baptist church in Kearny, NJ. Later, he served as a deacon in the Lutheran church. Anna Marie Nelson was touched and responded to the Lord while watching the PTL club on television. She has become an avid student of the Bible now at Heritage Grand.

Gail Nelson Bones came to know the love of God for her personally at the funeral of her grandmother, Mildred Nelson. This happened after a number of months of Ed and Janis Nelson sharing the gospel with her and giving her Mere Christianity to read. Janis' mother, Irene Sterzinger also had asked her Bible study group to pray for Gail. She

married a fellow musician, Jeff Bones, and together they have written, recorded and performed gospel music for many years. Gail has been in full-time ministry as a teacher and professor in Christian schools.

Ed Nelson met Janis Sterzinger in high school and she shared the gospel with and prayed for him. It was after reading Chuck Colson's book Born Again that Ed himself became born again in Christ. He and Janis have served in their local church as Sunday School teachers for many years.

Five generations later, the descendants of Per Jonsson Hult, the children and grandchildren of Melvin Nelson, have taken the gospel message literally around the world. Ian, Emily, Corrie, Jonathan and Trevor have each spent summers during their high school and college years serving as short-term missionaries, serving the poor and sharing the love of Christ. Jon is an ordained minister in the Baptist church. At last count, the message of the love of Christ will been taken to 14 nations by members of this extended family. God has also used the children and grandchildren of Mel and Anna Marie Nelson to spread the gospel through music throughout the United States and in other nations, as far away as Australia, Israel, India and Greece—6 continents in all.

And this generation is just getting started....!

"... Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." - Mathew 28:19 and 20

FISHING FOR THE RIGHT WORDS

y grandfather, Sven Johansson, loved the sea. He'd built a sailboat, but what he enjoyed even more was the small cabin cruiser on which he spent the happiest days of his retirement fishing for flounder. An introvert and engineer, he was a patient, soft-spoken man. I imagine he liked fishing in large part because of the quiet it afforded him to think his thoughts in peace.

My father, Melvin Nelson also loved boats, but did not have the same high tolerance for passively waiting in solitude as did my grandfather. My grandmother was fond of repeating the old saying: "Patience is a virtue, have it if you can; seldom found in woman, never in a man." Although I didn't perceive it at the time, she was probably looking straight at her son when she said it.

After we kids were grown and gone, my parents sold their home and followed their dream. They bought a fixer-upper of a marina at the Jersey shore, where they sold bait and tackle and rented little fishing boats called Garvey skiffs to the summer tourists. Although Pop loved his long dock on the bay and his life revolved around fishing, I don't really believe he personally enjoyed the sport as much as some of his friends did. He'd occasionally go out in his Garvey for part of the day, but sooner rather than later his patience—and the beer—would run out and he'd head straight back to the dock without much to show for his investment of time.

Clamming, however, was a different story. Back when Barnegat Bay was teeming with hard shell clams, he'd found a way to acquire fresh seafood that was much more suited to his energetic personality. Rather than the tedium of waiting for fish to bite, clamming involves hopping out of the boat into shallow water and scraping the bay floor with a clam rake. When you hear a clunk, you begin vigorously scooping up the hard shells with giant tongs by the dozens. Pop could easily gather up the limit of 150 clams per day in just a few hours and return home with his baskets brimming.

It was perfect for him. No waiting around for the fish to decide to swim up one at a time and either bite your line or not. As a clammer, you were in control, not the fish. The clams, buried there in the sand, minding their own business, had no say in the matter. You showed up with your tongs and by the next morning they were clams casino. Unlike all the messy rigmarole of fish cleaning, all it takes to prepare them is to hose them off and heat them up. They open their shells, you give a little tug on the membrane and there's your dinner. No fish guts, no tiny little bones.

I have a picture I love of my father in a sea captain's hat and knee high rubber boots. In the picture, he proudly holds a rare trophy—a bluefish. That was one day when his patience was rewarded. But between waiting on the bay with his line stretched out and enjoying a delicious fresh fish dinner, there were quite a few steps, some more odious than others. Cleaning a fish involves cutting the head off, slitting the belly, using your fingers to sweep the guts out, scraping the scales off, and finally filleting away the bones. Time-consuming and unpleasant.

For me, writing is like fishing—very hard for someone fettered by the feeling that every moment must be productive. It is just as frustrating to me to spend hours throwing words up onto the screen and then deleting most of them as it is to sit in a bobbing boat with an empty hook. I just wish I could figure out how to make writing more like clamming than fishing. Wouldn't it be great to grab for a bunch of words with a pair of mighty tongs, bring them up to the surface, pile them into a basket, and head for the shore?

But as in the sport of angling, between the initial vision casting and the moment when you hold your finished book in your hands, there are a lot of long hours requiring patience and craft, and then quite a few odious steps to turn that draft into a final product.

At this point, I raise my glass to my critique group. They got in the boat with me, pointed out where I need to scrape off more scales, or slice out more entrails, and where to separate the flesh from the bones. If you are a writer, you need a critique group, one that isn't afraid to take the filleting knife to whatever fish you bring them.

Now that I am on the other side of my first book, I could tell you that writing isn't hard at all, and that I just love sitting at my desk and watching a torrent of elegant words flow effortlessly forth like the swiftly moving water in a trout stream. But that would be a fish tale.

MAKING YOUR MARK

This morning as I was combing through my bookshelves, I noticed on the top shelf a small bound volume, so old the writing was no longer visible on its spine.

Standing on a chair, I reached up and brushed the dust from the cover of an ancient Swedish New Testament I was surprised to find

I had. Back in the days when penmanship was an actual subject in school, my paternal great-grandfather had neatly printed his name on the inside cover—Axel Frisk, Arlington, NJ.

I knew little about him, only that he'd been a carpenter, an immigrant from Sweden who had died when my father was a boy. Tragically falling through a roof and landing on a beam, he'd crushed his groin and suffered massive injuries that eventually led to his death some months later from internal bleeding. When I called my father to ask for more details, he had few memories, other than that he'd been a quiet man who was a member of a Swedish Baptist church.

I remember very little Swedish, but as I flipped through the brittle yellowed pages of his New Testament, I noticed some pencil in the margins of what I could tell was the Epistle to the Romans. How exciting to find a passage marked by my great-grandfather nearly a century ago! I reached for one of my own marked-up Bibles to find the verses he'd found worthy of note:

"You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature, but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."

Romans 8:9

Wow! Today I discovered that my unknown ancestor, who evidently passed along to me my blonde hair, was encouraged enough by this Scripture verse to single it out. The same Spirit that lives in me lived in the great-grandfather I'd never known. We are the same distance apart in the timeline of lineage as Ruth and King David.

"The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if we indeed share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us."

Romans 8:16-17.

Although Axel Frisk suffered greatly and died tragically in middle age, his faith lived on in his daughter Mildred. And it was at her funeral that I came to faith in Christ. I am a co-heir with ancestors I never knew!

To "make your mark" is defined as "being successful, distinguishing oneself, prospering." Axel Frisk was a simple man who came to America to make his mark. He appreciated the freedom he found here to work hard at his trade, to build his own modest home, and to support his family. He enjoyed the freedom of religion America allowed, which was different from the state-mandated membership in the Lutheran church in Sweden. Although he never achieved the kind of material success or prosperity that would result in an inheritance to pass along to his ancestors, the little Bible he left behind shows me that he truly did make his mark in this world in the most important way possible. He left a godly heritage.

I hope that someday my children and grandchildren will one day find and perhaps pass along my well-loved Bibles, and that they will take the time to read my notes and underlinings. It is the markings in my Bibles that are the best indication of what I valued and how I have wanted to live and love in order to make my own mark on the world.

MOTHER WORE WHITE

My mother was a college beauty queen. As a little girl, I love to gaze at the glossy black and white photograph of her crowned and seated with her court gathered around her. The men, my father among them, wore white dinner jackets while the other girls wore brave, runner-up smiles. To this day I've never seen anything like her corsage. Designed to nestle inside the scooped ruffle of her neckline, red roses stretched from shoulder to shoulder while her long, dark hair waved luxuriantly against her white dress. Of all the girls her smile was the shyest. She was gentle and kind and my father had fallen in love with her the first day they met.

My father was only twenty but already a World War II veteran when he met my mother shortly after his return from active duty. He'd left his boyhood behind at the age of 17, signing on as a sailor eager to defend his country. The war was over before his ship saw action, but he finished his service and came home to a country that welcomed and honored their men in uniform.

My genteel mother was from a well-do-do family, her father a brilliant engineer—an immigrant who made his way steadily and quietly to the top of the corporate ladder. Hers was a household where no one made any loud noises, every one knew the correct silver fork to use at elegant dinners, and all circumstances were met with dignity and decorum. Her people were Swedish, as were my father's and it was at a Swedish-American summer community they met the year she was sixteen.

My father, just back from the war, had joined the crowd of young people around the swimming pool. His shock of white blond hair and boisterous manner caught my mother's eye and she wondered why she'd never met him before. Her experience with the opposite sex had been limited to the one mild-mannered boy from this group that her parents had allowed her to date. Their association had been lukewarm at best.

Before the shadows grew long that day, my father managed to talk my mother into a long walk down a country lane. They stopped at a bridge and he began to ask some probing questions: Can you cook? Can you sew? Do you know how to bake cakes? Apparently her answers satisfied him, for she tells us he grabbed her and kissed her soundly on the lips.

That evening they met again at the open-air pavilion for the regular Saturday night dance. All summer long, each weekend night the whole community, young and old, turned out to hear the accordion, sax and drums play the polkas and waltzes from the Old Country. Little girls learned to dance standing on their father's feet, old couples sat it out until the slow ones, and teen-agers learned to relate to one another under the watchful eyes of their parents.

My grandparents were definitely watching that night. My mother looked like an angel to them all as she spun around the floor in her white summer dress. Her parents were a little concerned about this man-of-the-world their daughter seemed so taken with. On the other hand, his parents were delighted to see their rowdy boy with a pretty girl from a good family.

My father and she danced every number until the band took a break. As their parents watched them walk off the dance floor hand-inhand, their mothers gasped from opposite sides of the room.

Having spent the afternoon working on his old jalopy, my mother's sweaty-palmed suitor had left the black print of his hand on the back of her white dress.

Her meticulous father bristled at the sight of his pristine princess sullied by a sailor.

Her mother hoped she'd brought a shawl.

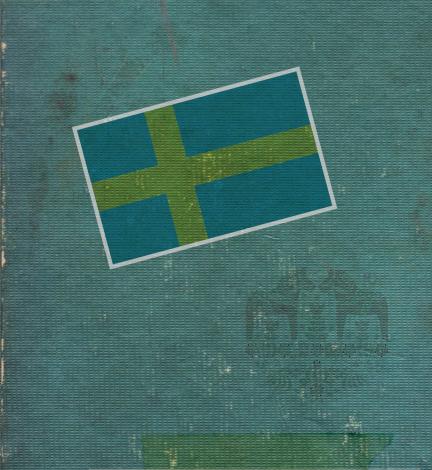
His mother wished she'd reminded him to wash his hands one more time.

His father chuckled and thought, "I think our boy has found himself a wife! "

And so he had. The drama of that evening would be repeated many times throughout the years. My father went on to distinguish himself at his first dinner with her parents by crunching his way through the shrimp cocktail. He was raised in a home of more modest means and his mother hadn't served such luxurious foods. He was simply unaware that the shell was considered inedible by most and insisted that that was the way they liked it at their home. My mother saw that what she had on her hands was a diamond in the rough.

Although the years, and my mother, have knocked a few of the rugged edges off the old salt, his hands are still dirty more often than not. But that is no shame in a man who has never been afraid of hard work.

My mother eventually lost some of her painful shyness, but the gentleness my father admired remains and has often smoothed their path. In his eyes, she is still a beauty, and in his way, he still treats her like a queen.



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Nel Solls Sanding

Bait Rental Broats

Tackle

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