

Life & Times of Alex E. Willette

by

Alex E. Willette

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Introduction

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Table of Contents

The Great Depression 3

Life in Rochester 11

Life in the Mountains..... 13

Life in the Navy 15

Index 18

Chapter 1

Life in the Beginning and the Great Depression

1928: Born April 8, 1928: Easter Sunday. This was the big day for this little fellow. BORN in Hilton, NY By the way, it was such a shock to Easter Bunny that my birthday never fell on it since. POOR Easter Bunny

1929: 1yr old The Great Depression: This same year my mother and father presented me with a baby sister named Berenice. We grew up together and had many good times. I could write a book about my sister and me on the farm. We will get to it later on in this book.

(Grandma, Sis and Me)

At this time of my life I believe we lived in a little house on the Hoofer Road out side of Hilton down near the lake (Lake Ontario). We had no running water and no lights. I think that I remember that at night we would go to bed when the sun went down and my father and mother would sit in the kitchen with a kerosene lamp burning to see with.

1930: 2yrs old. My brother Robert was born in Hilton, N.Y.

1931: 3yrs old. Robert died this year in his carriage out on my grandmother's front porch. It was a very nice day so grandma put him out there to sleep. I think that my mother and father were gone shopping and when they got back grandma had to tell them the bad news. He is buried in a little cemetery near Parma Corners out side of town. If I remember his stone is on the right side of the cemetery under a big tree. There use to be a big red barn on the other side of the fence.

1934: 6yrs old. On January 8, my brother Bruce was born in Hilton, NY

(This is a picture of him when he had grown up)

Note: A lot of people think that I am a lot of fun but this guy takes the cake. The last time we were together we had some beer and a hell of a good time. He can beat me when it comes to BS

1935: 7yrs old. School: As well as I remember this was the year that I started school. I think that my sister and I started at the same time, being only 11 months difference in age. Although when we got into higher grades she was a grade behind. I don't remember her staying back a grade. We would walk down the road to school 1 mile away. No school buses? Got to school and it was a one room deal with "a" teacher that ruled the roost. You toed the mark or you got it and the worst thing was she would tell dad and it ended up with a trip to the wood shed behind the house. Speaking about the back of the house, there was also a little house there called the outhouse, with a half moon in the door and if you were lucky there were 3 holes in it. Never could figure out why 3 holes. The smell was bad enough for one. Oh yes that little pot that was slipped under the bed at night, so you could pee and just that too. Oh the good old days. I could remember a lot of early

mornings you would lay in bed waiting for it to get light so you could make that trip to that little house in the back. In the winter that was a trip that no body wanted to take. That was the first path that was shoveled in the winter. Dad did that he was always up first.

Behind the school there was a big outhouse. One side was for the boys and the other side for the girls. Inside the one room school was a wood stove that kept us warm in the winter. It was nothing for the teacher to tell you to get up and put some wood in the stove.

This is a picture of one of the one room school houses that were around at that time of my life. If I remember, I think that the stove was on the other side of the room. Other then that it looks just like the one we went to school to.

In those times the recreation department consisted of a small ball a little smaller than a soccer ball and a ball and bat that some kid brought to school. So if you didn't play baseball you played a game called Ernie Anne over. This consisted of two sides, one on each side of the schoolhouse. You would throw the ball over the schoolhouse and some one caught the ball and they would run around and try to hit some one on the other side. Even the teacher would play. Always remembered on May first the teacher would have us bring a picnic lunch and we would take a walk back in the woods to look for spring flowers and have a little picnic out in the woods. That would be our big outing for the year.

In the fall of the year was good walking to school because we could stop off on the side of the road and pick my sister and me an apple or peach or anything else that was in season. Of course in the fall was bad! Very bad! for my sister and me. In those days no body had anything and if it were not for the farmers around we probably would starve to death. Bless them all. The most of them had to drive their horse and wagon by our house to go to the canning factory, which was about 3 miles down the road. Sometimes the farmers would let us ride down and back. That was a big deal. They would always drop off 2 or 3 baskets of what they had. The only bad part about this was ma would make my sister and me help in the canning. Day after day this would go on till the seasons were over. In those days everything was canned, all but the dirt and don't break any of the jars or you were in hot water again. You couldn't afford to get new ones. By the first snow fall the cellar was full and I mean full. We even gathered nuts from a tree that was back in the woods. At this time in the fall ma would get a pig head from one of the farmers that was killing a pig and she would cook it and make head cheese out of it. Well let me tell you about this little item. The old people know about this but a lot of young people don't. Head cheese was cooked and pick clean of the bones and put in pans to set up like Jell-O. Well when it got cool their was always was a layer of lard on the top of it. I can't say too much about this at the time because dad loved it and that was it. It wasn't to bad to take out of the ice box and put between two slices of bread BUT we use to take to school for our lunch. WELL by the time it go to lunch the head cheese was a little sloppy. Sloppy enough that when you went to eat it , it would run out the bottom of your sandwich like snot. Well you get the picture. BUT I had a friend that his grandmother use to put up his lunch for him. She would always make him banana sandwiches. Low and be hole he didn't like them BUT he loved my head cheese. Well you guess it we ate each other lunch each day and no body knew the difference at home. In our house a banana was rich people food. I don't believe I ever seen a banana in our house.

I also remember my mother and I would pick cherries on a near by farm for ½ cents a pound. We would pack our lunch and ma and I would pick 8 boxes a day. I can remember that she wouldn't quit for lunch till we had 4 boxes picked then we would stop and eat our lunch under a tree, and as soon as we were done she would say let's go and we went at it till we got our other 4 done. Some times it would be late but we always got them. I think that a box full would weigh about 60 pounds. So that would be 30 cents a box times 8 is \$2.40 for the both of us for a one long day. That was a good days pay.

Oh yes, those beans days. Green and yellow ones. After school my sister and I had to get home and pick those beans. Every night pick those beans and do it right. If you picked them too soon or too late you were in trouble. This went on it seems like a month, but it really wasn't. Same with the cucumbers. Pick them at the right time. Dad would always find one under the leaves that was going to seed, and we would catch hell for not seeing it.

I also can remember wash day. At that time, we didn't have running water in the house. On wash day ma would heat the water on the kitchen stove and take it out to the washing machine, which had a stick on the side of it that some one had to work. You guessed it, my sister and I had to do it and no noise about it either, but we did anyway cranking that stick back and forth. Ha the good old days.

This is a picture of the one just like the one we had. You see the come see come saw. That was the end that sis and I would be on.

Speaking of the good old days, my sister and I would play in the summer on the farm. We had more fun and got into more trouble. I can remember the day that sis and I sat on a wagon load of cabbage next to the barn where the cows were and threw cabbage at them. Well they ate them. We didn't think much about it at the time till we got caught. Then we were in more trouble. The farmer came a couple days later and told dad and ma that the cabbage soured his milk and he couldn't ship the milk till it cleared.

Then there was the day that my sister and I got caught swimming. Sounds innocent well we thought it was too. BUT it was in the water trough for the cattle. The cows were nice about it. They stood back and waited for us to get out. Well the farmer saw the cows waiting and came to see what was wrong. You guessed it in trouble again. Got sent home again.

When I got a little older I would get up in the morning and throw down hay for the cows before I went to school and then again at night. For that I got a quart of milk for the family. Known as raw milk no pasteurized milk at that time. Wasn't heard of. Even the rich people didn't have it. But in the winter the milkman would bring milk to my grandfather's house early in the morning and by the time they got up the milk and the cream had expanded and there would be about six inches of cream sticking out of the top of the bottle. That was cream for coffee, just like the rich guys, also good for ice cream for all of us little guys.

I can also remember when you pulled into a gas station you would hear that little Plink, Plink as

you drove over the hose that they had so the people in side would know that some one wanted some gas. You know they would come out a running to pump your gas wipe your windshield check your radiator and even your air in your tires if you asked. Not like to day, you pull into a gas station and if you can't worked the pumps you were SH__ out of luck. Don't asked them inside because they mite tell you that it is not their job, get your gas and get the hell out of here. Well it is not that bad BUT dammed close.

Remember any of these things. These are some of the old pumps that were around when I was a little boy. The No. 1 pump had a little glass in the top that use to keep us kids happy while Dad or Grandpa were filling their tanks. You remember it had a little propeller in it that moved when you pump gas. No. 2 pump you could see for a country mile. The dome on top of it was all lit up at night. No.3 pumps I only seen one in my life, but that one was they would pump up to the top of the glass the amount of gas that you needed and then they would put the pump handle in the tank and let it drain down into your tank. No. 4 Was the way you got your oil in those days. The engines back then was that you would gas up and get a quart of oil at the same time. They all used oil then. The gas stations would get a drum of oil and keep the bottles full.

When I first learned to milk a cow, the hired man taught me how to hit a cat at ten feet with a squirt of milk. You had to be careful that old John didn't catch you. I got so I could do it pretty good. The barn had all kinds of cats around and they knew things like that happen. So they all hung around. They stand up on their hind legs and waited for it.

My job at night just before supper was to clean out the ashes in the kitchen stove, fill the wood box and get a fresh bucket of water and put it on the drain board. Then I could sit down and eat, and dad would check too. No excuses, if there was no wood split, split it and get it in the wood box. My sister had her jobs too. She was in the same boat that I was, do it and no noise about it or that little trip to the wood shed.

My mother and father weren't mean, just in those days kids had to do things around the house whether you wanted to or not. That was just the way it was. If dad or ma said that the moon was made out of green cheese, it was. Nobody in his or her right mind would ever question it. I survived it like all the rest of them. By the way in later life I found out it was orange cheese. Ha Ha but I never told them.

And then in the late fall, grandpa would have a half barrel of sauerkraut in the back of the kitchen stove and I'm telling you, you could smell that a mile away. STINK Wow. My sister and I would go down in his cellar and get us a dill pickle. He had a crock of them too. Can't beat a good dill pickle, home made that is.

I can remember one time that my father took me hunting for squirrels in the fall. Now squirrels are damned good eating, believe it or not but they are. Anyway he would set out some corn on a log and get down on the end of it, back a ways. Well we sat there for a while and here comes the squirrels. Well hell I saw 2 squirrels eating side by side and I wondered why dad didn't shoot and get the two with one shot. In a couple of minuets I saw the third one come up along side of the other two and Bang went the gun. He had the whole three of them in one shot. In later years I tried

a lot but only could get two at a time. You had to get as many as possible because, it was a single shot 22. When that went off the squirrels took off.

1936: 8yrs old. My brother Stanley was born on December 6, in Hilton, N.Y. I can remember in the spring of the year I would follow old John while he was plowing and I could pick up enough worms to go us all summer. My sister and I would go fishing a lot and bring home the supper. Believe it or not. Some times we would catch sunfish that weren't 3" long but ma would get something out of them. In the spring we would find some bullheads that were very little about ½ long. They would be all in a bunch and we would scoop up a lot of them and bring them home and put in to a jar. The same way with pollywogs "baby frogs". We would watch them grow. It kept us out of trouble for a while. (I think)

(This is a Picture of Stanley)

(What year ???)

Just about this time of my life I can remember that my father was working for the W P A running a grader. Sun up to sun down 1 dollar a day. He didn't complain because there were ten men to take your place. But any way he went back and forth on a bike. At that time you couldn't buy tires, so I remember him taking the tires apart and filling them up with sand and putting them back on. There was enough tape on the tire to float a battle ship. Just couldn't get anything like that.

(This is a picture of Sis in 1937)

(I know this year Because that's what the plate on the car says, you don't have to be too smart to figure that out)

Just about this time of my life was when dad got us a pair of white rabbits for Easter. Well that went over great. Sis and I had our own rabbit. Every thing went great till one day one of ours had a couple of little ones. Well it went on and I can remember when we had a lot of them probably 20 or more all penned in. They weren't pets any more we had to keep them clean and fed. Dad got the idea that we should kill some and eat them. Now rabbit is damn good eating but not those, they were our pets and you know how that went over. Like a lead bullet, no way were we going to eat our pets. Well we finally got rid of them, it was costing too much to feed and nobody wanted to eat them after they got big. Bad deal.

While I'm on the rabbit subject, we had one in Childwold, before I went in to the Navy. Big Chinchilla rabbit. Must of weighed about 10 lb. That thing was potty trained. If he had to go he would go to the door and wait there till some one let him out, and the same way to get back in. Just like a dog. The only trouble with this deal was, he was two color and some of the wild rabbits around were getting different colors too. I think he was going out to do more then go to the toilet. You could set out on the lawn in the evening and be real quite and you could see the wild rabbits starting to come up on the lawn to see our big rabbit. hell he had it made. They were coming to him, he was big man on the corner. Some guys have all the luck. SUPER JOCK.

Before I leave this time in my life I must tell you about those good old days in the winter. Us old guys know what I going to tell you about. Those damned long johns that we wore. Did you ever have a pair that had all two buttons on in the trap door. If you did you were lucky I never did. If I

did the damned button hole was too big and it would come off. Well hell when you are out doors and it is cold you could feel that cold chill on the cheek of your butt. No body else knew BUT you did. And another thing was those knickers we use to wear. In the winter when they fell down, everything went with them long johns, socks and the damned knickers. One good thing you could grab the knickers and pull them up and it would get it all at the same time. Long johns socks and the pants the whole nine yards. In those days you wore long sleeves in the winter, not to keep warm with but to wipe your nose with. It worked out good. Another thing that we as grown up don't talk about, but we have all been there. You will find that the ones that say that they didn't are the biggest liars that are going. Those knitted stocking not socks, stocking that came up to your knees. You needed them for those damned knickers. Well you would get a hole in them and ma would darn them up again. Good to go again, but after 4 or 5 times, you would feel like you were walking and marbles in yours shoes. Your heel would be half way out of your shoe. O yes we use to get the old can rubbers and use them for rubber bands to keep up the stocking. It is a wonder that we didn't cut off our legs with those things, but they worked.

I can remember one time when my sister and I were still little, my grand father had an old sheepskin coat that he wore all the time in the winter. Well when that got old my mother took the lining from that coat and made us both a pair of mittens out of it. Boy that was the big thing in school. All the kids were envy of us. They were the warmest things going. You couldn't do any thing with them on but they were warm, and that's what counts in the cold. I think we had them for 2 or 3 years.

While I'm still in the winter months let me tell you what my dad use to do for us in the winter. This little house that we lived in on the Curtis Road, out in the back you could slide way down in the field. The beginning of the winter when it would start to snow Dad would start piling the snow up for a big slide. Well in a couple for weeks he would have that thing about 10 foot high. Well with that and the rest of the back yard slanted back, we could go a long way. Later on when he had it all done he would go out in the cold nights and water it . Well after a few of those deals that was ready to go. Well we would play on that all winter. Some nights I remember laying in bed and you could hear dad and ma out there sliding down the slide. So it worked out for all of us. Maybe that's where my wife Marie and my self got the idea that it was a good thing to stop and play with your kids. I can remember when we were in Star Lake we had a little hill across the road and in the winter we would go out there after supper and slide with the kids. One Christmas we got the kids a big toboggan. Well hell we all had a good time with that thing. We could eat up the hills with that thing. Best toy that we got that year. Then there was the year that the flying saucers came out. Well we got one for each of the kids. Well hell they were the nuts. Even ma and I had a good time with them. Had a street light that worked out real good. After a while we had other kids that would come out to play too. So again a good time was had by the Willette.

Do you remember the old days when you had to take a bath. Yelp right in the middle of the kitchen. Everything was done in the kitchen, even to take a bath. Well ma would break out the copper tub. Same thing she would can in only it became a wash tub a least once a week. You didn't take a shower every day like you do now. Once a week and the rest was tune ups. A little here and a little there. Tune ups you could call them. Well any way ma would fill up the tub and in the water some one would go for their bath. Ma would scrub us down and out you would go and a

little more hot water and in goes the next one, all the way down the line. Some big families by the time you got to the end the water was a little on the dark side. Grandma would be on the drying end and when you got dried off she would give you a spoon full of Milk of Magnesia. She would always say a bath on the out side and a bath on the inside and you were good to go for another week.

Then there was the SEARS & ROEBUCK Catalog, O we don't want to forget the MONTGOMERY WARD Catalog either. Now they came out once a year, and every body got one. Everybody did most all there shopping from them. At that time you could buy just about everything from them. I think old John got a new set of harnesses for one of his horses. Come to think of it I think he also got his new milking machine from there. Back then if those two catalogs didn't have it in, it wasn't made yet.

Now after every body got done looking at them they had a more important job. They would head out to that little house in the back and used for toilet paper. That's right toilet paper. You would set their wrinkling the page that you tore off to get it ready to wipe your butt with. Give you something to do. (I guess). Well anyway that's where it ended up. Dad would take a big nail and nail it to the wall. You went from there. You always knew when the new catalogs were about to come out again because all you would have left would be those color pages. Now they were not good for that kind of work. If you went easy on the pages you could make them last till the next one came out. REAL toilet paper ??? what was that. I can remember that at that time us little boys use to like to sneak out to the out house and look in the ladies part of the catalog. Back then the woman wore pant a loons. I guess, HELL I never looked. REMEMBER I was too young. Good thing it isn't today. Its a waste band with a string going from the front to the back. If they had things like that to day we would of never left the out house. BUT I think dad was wise to it because those were the first pages to go. WELL you can't win them all. Ha the good old days.

This reminds me of the guy that told me that he was so poor that his mother would cut the bottom out of his pants pockets out so he would have some thing to play with. Well I don't remember if we were that poor but we could have been. But you know if you can't remember where you came from, you have gone too far in life. You know most people in this old world don't want to know where they came from, well I would like to say here and now I came from a poor family BUT a good family. We didn't have anything but we were proud people. That's why it is very easy for me to tell every body how poor we were. If I were a modern kid I would have blamed my hard times on my mother and father for having me at that time in life. That's what a lot of kids do now. If something doesn't go their way they blame it on the mother or father, school, church or baby sitter, every body BUT them selves. You know you get out of this life what you put into it. If you don't give don't expect to receive. If you fall down get up and get going again. There are no promises in this old world.

While I'm here crying or laughing about the world. You know there is not really anything wrong with the world IT'S the people that live in it.

You know I have had the opportunity to be around people of all walks of life, in my life and it is strange to see some of them and how they try to get by in this old world of ours. Let me tell you about how people are in all walks of life. I was taught by the best of them. If you are in a crowd of

people and you can see all kinds of jewelry on the women and on the men and they are talking about all the places that they have been. Well they are the THINK THEY ARE RICH and want to impress you that they are, but the people that stand back and very quietly talk and very little about anything. Very conserve dress, not much jewelry on. Watch out for these guys because they got the money. The secret is they don't want any body to know how much they have. There are a lot of differences. The rich man knows it but the poor man doesn't.

At the time of this writing of this book and why I'm bitching about people. There was a time in my life that I was struggling to get by PS I wasn't the only one we were all in that boat at one time or another. Well any way I was living up in the north where it snowed most all the year. Didn't but it seemed like it did. Well any way I would hear of people going to Florida for the winter. Well to a young man with two kids just getting by I thought they were rich and really rich. Well in later years I'm on the other side of the stick. I live down here in Florida and I can see them come and go. A lot of them come down here and get a job so they can make it, of coarse they don't tell anybody that when they get back. They get back up north and everybody thinks boy they are rich they can live in Florida in the winter. A lot of them are old ladies that are living off their old man's money and hook up with some guy that's hanging around for the ride, or the other way around. Hell we have more old people shacked up then we have young kids. We got them that she's got her money and he has his. In my life and a lot of others everybody tossed their money in the same pot. Well that's life, I guess nothing stays the same.

Life in Rochester

1940: This is a picture of me at about 12 years old. Was in the Scouts and really enjoyed it. Always enjoyed the Scouts. I can remember at this time of my life you had a lot of requirements to learn to become a tenderfoot scout. You had to know how to tie 12 different knots. Start a fire with 2 matches. And a quite a few different things. The oath and law, all the meanings of the scout badge. I passed my fire building on a winter hike, boy the wind was blowing and it was cold but I wanted to try passing my fire building. So I got some birch bark and some twigs. The fuzz on the Birch bark is good to start a fire at any time. Well the wind was blowing so badly that I asked if I could build my fire under an evergreen tree. The Scoutmaster said that it would probably be a good idea. Well, the first match I broke when I tried to light it. When the Scoutmaster handed me that second match and said boy this one has got to do it. well I struck that match on a rock nearby, and it lit up and I stuck that match into the birch bark, and it took off. Boy was I glad, anyway I passed my fire building that day. I had many of good days in scouting. Right to this day I have a favorite spot in my heart for scouting. But back then it was a lot different. Your scoutmaster was like a father to you.

1941: 13yrs old. My brother Alfred Richard was born on September 8. In Hilton, New York.

Dec.7 World War II Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

Dec.8 U S declares war on Japan We went to war with Japan.

Dec.11th. Germany and Italy declared war on U.S.A.

It was a bad day for every body. Almost every one signed up to go to war. Young men were getting out of school to join the armed forces. Most of the big plants started to make items to fight the war. The women went to work making ships and war planes and other things for the war effort, and they were all proud of what they were doing. Even all the kids were buying war bonds to help out with the war. You could buy a .25 cent stamp and put it in your book and when you had enough you could get a war bond with it. I think it was \$18.75 worth of stamps and you turned it in for a \$25 Dollar war bond, if you kept them for 10 years but in those days that was a real good deal. We were all proud to show off our bonds that we had.

1942: 14yrs old. Rochester: Moved to the city. Moved into a house that was on Fernwood Ave., around 301-2 don't remember the exact street number. I went to school at Ben Franklin High School on Culver Road. This school was a big one at the time it had over 5,000 students. At that time I was starting my 8th year in school. I belonged to the high school marching band. I played snare drum and I was playing in their orchestra too.

Now you talk about a little boy being lost, It was me. Just think from a one room school house to this.

I would go out to the muck farms that were on the Ridge Road just out side of the city and work after school and on weekends. Back to weeding again. Just can't get away from it, BUT I got paid for it this time. I would weed celery, radishes and carrots. At harvest time I would help get them

ready for shipping them to stores. You aren't going to believe this but in those days celery was all white. Yes white. About a week before harvest time they would put white paper with tar in the middle of it standing up along side the rows. The sun would hit the white paper with the tar inside of it and it would bleach the green stalks to a nice white. Green celery was thought to be not ripe or some thing, but all celery was white.

My father and mother were working at Eastman Kodak making things for the war effort.

I can remember one time that my father took my sister and me to see the Ringling Brothers Circus. They set up a big tent in one of the parks in Rochester. Don't know which park it was, but we got there a little early to see them put up the big tent. That was something to see and there were a lot of people there to see the same thing. Back then this was the biggest circus there was. Ringling Brothers had the biggest one. I can remember that dad spent a extra dollar a piece for tickets so my sister and myself could see everything, but with 3 rings going at the same time it is hard to see it all. There were two kids that went home that night with big eyes. We had never seen any thing like that and to this day I still have never seen any thing that big. I believe the following year at Chicago it caught on fire and burned to the ground. Killing a lot of people that were in the tent at the time watching the show. Ringling Brothers never had a big tent again. From then on they would perform in a big building. I think that it was the end of the big tents.

I can remember at that time they had an arch over the main street of Rochester, with a bell hanging in the middle of it. They were selling war bonds there. If some one bought a war bond you could go up and ring the bell. Us kids in school would catch a bus down town and watch them buy bonds and ring the bell. Man that thing was ringing all the time. They even had things going on at night to draw the crowd and sell more bonds. All the cities would see who could sell the most bonds and the same way with the big plants. Every day you saw in the paper who sold the most bonds the day before. Every post office and just about every body was selling war bonds. Food and just about everything was hard to come by. You couldn't buy tires for the cars or gas. Needed stamps for different kinds of food, because everything was going for the war effort.

(War Rations Stamps)

(I would like to leave a note here. Got these pictures from Elizabeth, Marie's mothers old scrapbook) Food, Gas and others.

Things were getting better for the country. People were making money and were able to buy things that they needed.

This is about the time that I got my first and only bike. HOT DOG. It consisted of two wheels and a frame. Well between my sister and myself we ran the wheels off it. I bought it off the junk man that used to pick up junk from everybody. It cost me a whole \$0.50 cents. No fenders on it and when it rained you got that strip up your back. Catch hell again, but it was from ma and she was much easier then dad. She did the washing.

Life in the Mountains

1944:16yrs old. Childwold: Moved up in the mountains. Adirondack Mts. We moved into a little house on Floyd Carbarry's land. No running water and the little house was still out in the back. Can't seem get a way from that little house. At least we went to school on a bus. Maybe it was because it was 16 miles away in Tupper Lake, NY.

I also remember that my mother and I would walk to Tupper Lake. This was 16 miles away (one way) pulling a sled. We would get groceries and make that long trip back. Never forget that bridge at Piercefield. We had to go across it both ways and man that wind was something else. Cold, man it was cold, but we had to do it Dad was working at Jones & Laughlin and I really don't think that we had a car at the time. That was why we had to go into town to get food. Every once in a while we would get lucky and get a ride. Way back in those days ma was very careful whom we rode with.

If my memory is right my dad had a deal with the company, so he could ride the bus back and forth. The bus would pick him up and drop him off at the mines at about 10:00 in the morning and pick him up at 5 or 6 at night. This was the bus that used to go from Watertown to Lake Placid, NY every day.

(This is a picture of my brother Bruce and my self)

When I was putting this picture into the book I happened to think of the time we went hunting up at Childwold. We were out in the woods and we decided to split up and still hunt. Well every once in a while I would be able to see him and we were walking along side by side. Well wouldn't you know I would have to stop and take a crap. So I caught site of Bruce and told him to set for a while so I could go to the john. Well I'm bent over doing what I had to do and I happened to look off in a distance and low and behold there was a deer moping along. Here I am pants down going and here comes a deer. Well, I watched him for a while and he was sneaking along. It looked like he was going to go right on by. Well I leaned over a bit and grabbed my rifle and with my pants still down, I took aim at that deer. Had to wait till it came into the opening so I could get a good shot at it. Didn't have time to pull up my pants of nothing. So when the deer came into the open I touched off the gun and down went the deer. Well I finished up the job that I was doing before the deer came into the picture. By that time Bruce came running over and wanted to know what I was doing with my pants down. I should have told him that ,That's the way I hunt ha ha ha. Well we got it all gutted out and got it home and went back to see if we could get one for him. No such luck. Left ma some meat and headed for home in Star Lake. I think that was the only time that we ever hunted together, because I had moved to Star Lake and was living there.

I think that this was the one we got that day.

Little devil BUT good eating. You know if you shoot a deer up in this neck of the woods and it don't dress out at least 125 Lb. You have shot a FAWN. You get laugh at. I think this one was a FAWN Ha Ha.

WELL it sure taste good and that's what it all about.

1945: Turn 17 on April 8. Joined the Navy on June 4, 1945, went to boot camp at Samson, NY for ten weeks and then went on to the Pacific. I was put on a liberty ship with a whole lot of men going over seas like me hoping to help out with the war. The ship's name was Fair isle I think. It was a made over cargo ship into a troop transport. We were 52 days on that thing. The first 3 days were the worst. Just about every body was seasick. I spent those 3 days up on deck. You couldn't stand the smell below. I remember the third day I tried to go through the chow line, got almost to the end and the guy in front of me barfed up in his tray. Well that took the cake I took off and one of the guys in Mess Hall gave me a couple of apples and a cup of coffee. Man I was gone from there as soon as I could. Right to this day I can't stand to see any one Barf up. I think we hit every island in the Pacific. We would drop anchor, and we would hear them say pack your sea bag because you were getting off. Then in a couple of hours you were on the go again. I don't remember how many times we did that. Pack and unpack. Finally we just slept on the empty bunk and left the sea bag packed. Was put on a Tincan or a destroyer named A.A.Cunningham DD 752. Picked it up at the mouth of the Yangtze River. By the time I got over there where the war was it was over. So we would spend most of our time at a place called Tsingtao, China in the Yellow Sea. We used to go down to Shanghai, China for the mail and other things. We would all pull liberty there and they were great. About like N.Y. City, good place to visit but not to live. We had a young captain and he didn't play around when it came to moving that ship. We had to go up the Yangtze River to the bridge, and the captain would put one screw in astern and the other in forward, he would spin that ship around like a top. Just room enough too. I can remember we used to buy our cigs at \$.50 cents a carton and we could get \$16.00 a carton over the side to the Chinks. Needless to say there were a lot of us guys that went easy on our smoking so we would have liberty money. With that kind of money you could have a hell of a good time.

(A.A.Cunningham D D 752)

While I was out there we got tangled up in 2 Typhoons. Well let me tell you right now the winds blew and blew. Makes a hurricane look like an afternoon breeze. Hurricanes are at about 75 to 100 or a little higher miles per hour but a typhoon starts at about 200 and up. BIG BIG BLOW. We had just pulled into a port in the Philippine Islands. Before we could tie up we got the word to get the hell out of there, that there was a typhoon just about ready to hit. We went out to sea for the next six days. To this day I have never been in such a windstorm. It would almost rip your buttons off your shirt. This went on for six days and six nights. During the time that we were out there in the water we were running about one-third ahead into the wind just to keep straight with the wind. I can remember that when we were out there in the water we had a tanker running a long side of us about 5 or 600 feet out, running into the wind a long side of us. All of a sudden she had lost one of her screws and swung out of the wind. You are not going to believe this but when she got sideways to the wind she rolled a complete 360 degrees in the water. When she came back up she was headed back. She called over to us and told us about a screw that she had lost. We got back and passed her a line. Some way or another they were able to grab onto the line and tied on to their ship. We kept her in tow for about two day's. When the storm was almost over she was able to get her other screw repaired and we got her loose so she could be on her own. Now this is hard to believe but I've seen that keel right up on top, and it kept right on going over till they got back right side up again. After we got back into port I had a chance to talk with

some of the guys on that tanker. They claimed the tanker didn't take on a drop of water. Of course when you are out in weather like that the ship is pretty well buttoned down.

I work with a fellow that was on the shore at the time of this big storm. His name was Don Ferguson. We had worked together for quite a few years before the typhoon storm came up. I was telling him and a bunch of the fellows about the big storm and how we picked up survivors for five or six days out in the water. Don said hell you probably got me. There was a lot of us who were washed out to sea in that storm how small the world is. When we pulled back into port, you couldn't believe the mess that the storm left in its wake. There were ships up on shore and stuff that should be on land was out in the water. Hard to believe what you're seeing. It made one hell of a mess.

This is an awful thing to bring up now but when I was out in the China Seas in the Navy, that was where I had my first BEER. Yep it was a can of Bud. 10 cents a can, can't beat the price. Back in those days it only took about 2 cans of beer before I was ready to have fun. Later on I got so I could drink 3, Ho Ho Ho. If I remember right the ships boat left you off at a dock in Tsingtao China, you walked up from the dock and you were on the main street of the town. I think there was a place that was half way up on a hill to the right of the street. All the guys use to go there, to tank up a bit. Some times we might even look for some girls. Yea Ho. Poon Tang.

One night 3 or 4 of us were on our way back to catch a boat over to the ship. Riding on these Rick A-Shaw's. Well no body had any pain, so we talked the guys into getting into their Rick-A-Shaw's and we would race back down to the boat. Well that job that they have is no easy job. It didn't take long before we were all tuckered out, but we did make it to the boat, if I remember right one of the guys couldn't stop in time and he ran right off the end of the dock. Well the Chink didn't like that very well, but I think we all helped him get it out of the water and gave him a little extra money and he left very happy. It didn't take much money to make them happy. We were only paying about 5 or 10 cents for a ride all over the town, so a couple of dollars put him in hog heaven.

I can remember one time when I didn't have too much money to go on liberty and there were a bunch of the guys from our ship who wanted to go to the Great Wall of China. Some where around Beijing China. We all got the train that took you close to the wall. We spent the day walking on it and looking it all over. It is quite a thing to see. The thing that I will never forget was when I was in school we were studying about it and I am sitting there saying to my self what in the hell do I care about the Great Wall Of China I will never see it or walk on it . Low and behold here I am walking on the dammed thing. funny things happen I guess.

This is some of the information that I gathered in the later years on my ship. Had a chance to join my ship's reunions and became a life member. This is some of the latest stuff that I got on my ship.

Commanding Officers
Floyd B.T.Myrrer.....Commander USN
Robert M.Brownlie.....Lieut. Comdr.USN

Executive Officers
Will P.Starnes.....Lieut. Comdr.USN
E.S.Hopkins.....Lieut. Comdr.USN
D.O.Van Orden.....Lieut. Comdr.USN

Some of the ports we hit

Honolulu, Wake, Leyte, Okinawa, Pt. Arther, Dairen, Jinese, Chinkai, Fusan, Tsingtao, Taku, Shanghai, Enewitok and home to San Francisco.

On that tour (first one) the ship went 69,398.6 Miles. When I got to the ship's reunion they called me a PLAN KER. That's is a sailor that sign on for the maiden voyage. The ship was commissioned 25 Nov 1944 in Brooklyn Navy Yard. Left for the war in the China seas the following summer. I picked it up at Shanghai, so they figured I was close enough to be a plunker, but I'm really not. At the Charleston Reunion there were only 14 of us guys that were on in the 40's. The rest of them were in the Korea War and later.

Like I said earlier we went to this Reunion not knowing any body and we left that way but we had a great time. My wife even enjoyed it All in all we are sure going to another one.

Note: April 12th. FDR dies

May 7th. Germany signed an unconditional surrender at Allied Headquarters in Rheims, France.

June 16th. the United States exploded its first experimental atomic bomb, in the desert of Alamogordo, New Mexico.

August 6th. Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan

August 9th. Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan

September 2nd. Japan surrenders.

(Medals from the War) & The Ruptured Duck

With these and a dollar you could get a cup of coffee

P S Good thing that they didn't have Medals for wild women. (I'd had a lot of them) but I guess the ruptured duck takes care of that.

Index of Individuals