

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

CHAPTER 1

(Recorded May 1, 2009) (Recording #:)

Now, I was born in Pocomoke City, Maryland in 1911. My parents were both of Quaker stock, you might say. Their parents on both sides of the family were Quakers. And they went to Maryland. I guess because there was a farm that was for sale and I think my uncle Frank was probably the person who was responsible. But we were only there for two years. And it was during that time that I was born. And by the end of two years, it was really a bad year. The pigs died of Cholera, the crop was not good.

And so we came back to California – broke. And it was quite an ordeal on the train because here I was, eight months old, and you see my mother was pregnant with my sister at this time. And the poor lady was on that train with an eight-month-old wiggly baby and being pregnant. And she fed me Eagle brand milk which she warmed in the window of the train. And it took five days on the train to get from Saint Louis to Los Angeles. But my father had stopped in Saint Louis because he really needed to earn some money. He was with his brothers that lived there in Saint Louis. And they put my mother and me on the train with \$5 and a box of sandwiches. And my mother ate those sandwiches and they were quite stale by the time we got to California and to Los Angeles. So at Los Angeles we stayed with my father's mother, my grandmother Lloyd, until my father came and then we went up to Dinuba. And that's where I spent my early childhood, until I was in the first grade, in Dinuba.

CHAPTER 2:

(Recorded May 11, 2009 - Recording #: 001_A_002_090511_001_2009_05_11)

It seems that when people think of the past and their roots and how they began, it's something about knowing who your ancestors were and knowing about them. And so, with the Lloyd's, it all began in Wales, and our ancestral home was called Dolobran. Now our ancestor, Charles Lloyd, became converted to the Quaker faith. And in doing so he incurred the wrath of the government and was put in prison. And his wife, Elizabeth, chose to go with him. And for ten years they were in prison, and in that time, they had two children. But during that same period of time – now this is, I guess, in the 1600s – William Penn had also been in trouble with the government, but he was able to persuade the king to give him some land in the New World. And these troublesome Quakers could then be transported out of England. And so that is how a Thomas Lloyd (one of the relatives) came to the United States with William Penn.

And as we have traced back, we've gotten a chain of our Lloyd ancestors. And I could start now a little bit with – I think there was an Isaac, and then there was a Samuel. And Samuel, who was my great-grandfather, he had three sons. The oldest son was William, and so William was my grandfather. He married Alice Trueblood Overman, and they had eight children. The first was Aiden, then there was aunt Kay, uncle Frank, my dad - James Albert (Bert), and Clarence, and Alton. And Fred was in there too. And they then were in New York or wherever they came from Pennsylvania, and then eventually the family ended up in Kansas. And my dad used to tell about the farm that they had in Kansas. It was just so – everything was kind of complete as far as self-sustaining everything. And then, of course, eventually, my father met my mother.

Now then, we'll have to switch now to the Pierson's because all of these people were Quakers, and so the families knew each other quite well. And I think they really began in Iowa where they got acquainted. Now my father was born in Barclay, Kansas, and my mother was born in Osage City, Kansas. And the two little villages were quite close together, and they were both Quaker towns. But my

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

grandparents, my mother's people, were born in Iowa and somehow or other they got to know each other. So my mother's father was a son of George and Deborah Pierson. Now, Deborah was the daughter of Barak (pron: bare'ik) Smith, and Barak Smith was a very, very strong Quaker. They lived in New York - on the route of the Underground Railway (which helped southern slaves go north) and so their place was a station.

So then kind of reversing here a little bit -- oh, yeah, it was George Pierson then met Deborah Smith and they were married, and then somehow they got into Marshalltown in Iowa because that is where my grandfather Pierson was. And so when his father, George Pierson, somehow or other (it didn't seem to make sense to me because he was a Quaker) went off to the Civil War, that left Deborah, his wife, alone with four children: eight, four, six, and two, and my grandpa Pierson was four years old at that time. And so he didn't remember his father, but he talked about him and said that he had such a strong feeling against slavery that he felt that he had to go and do his part. Well, he died in the war -- I think perhaps in a hospital.

But anyway, my great grandmother was a widow and she eventually got \$8 per month as a pension. And so as time went on all these families lived in Kansas. My father was born in 1879 in Barclay and my mother was born in Osage City in 1884.

Well, now in 1886/1887 along there, the locusts were so bad and they just wiped them out. I remember Grandpa Pierson saying to me one time, he said, "Well, the locusts wiped us out." And so then that's when my grandparents, the Piersons, came to Pasadena when my mother was three. And some of the other Quakers had already arrived in Pasadena, and so they had people there.

When my mother was six, her parents decided to do a homestead in Antelope Valley. And by that time my uncle George, her brother, had died (he would have been three). And so with the two children -- they loaded up a wagon and went up into Antelope Valley. And they had 160 acres of the hillside way out to the west of the valley, about 20 miles from Lancaster. And so they homesteaded, and that is really another story of some of the hardships that they went through -- that is my grandmother -- went through.

And then after two years, they went back to Pasadena. And during that time, my mother was a very, very sick child. In other words, she couldn't stand. Her ankles were so weak that she had to wear braces. Her shoes had braces clear up to her knees. And she was quite along in years -- almost a teenager I imagine -- before she was really strong enough. And then she had a rash on her body and so she had to just drop out of school when she was in the eighth grade. She couldn't go beyond that. And then eventually she did get well enough. And she was able to enjoy her teens. She worked in Nash's department store. And she worked in the China department there. And she loved China and any extra money was always spent on China.

So as the time went on in Pasadena my grandfather was working for a Mr. Lockwood who was the executor of an estate. And it was the estate of a Doctor Lowe. He was a professor -- and I don't know if he was an astronomer or what, but the Lowe Observatory in Pasadena was named for him. And he had this big mansion on Orange Grove in Pasadena. And they had a telescope at the top. And he had passed away and the estate was in the hands of the bank. So they had to have somebody live there to kind of look after it and take care of it. And so Mr. Lockwood asked my grandfather to live there. And so my mother and her sister and her brother George, they lived there. And it was really a great place for teenagers to live because they used to play games in those empty rooms -- it was about 40 or so rooms to the place, -- but they only lived in a small part of it.

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

So it was during that time that my grandfather, Barack Pierson, and his older brother William, bought some land. It was an Orange Grove up in the San Joaquin Valley. And so about 1905 or 1906 or so, they (the Piersons) moved up to Santa Rosa. But my mother stayed in Pasadena because her brother, Uncle George, was attending law school. And so the two of them lived together and my mother was still working at Nash's and so she was the one that was the breadwinner at that time. The rent was \$16 a month but she made about \$18 a week. With that, she was able to buy groceries and help Uncle George with the car fare because he was going to law school in LA. And she also had some money to buy more China.

And so that is how it happened that she was in Pasadena when my father and his father (William) came to Los Angeles in 1905. And he came to Pasadena and visited the relatives, because Uncle Lou was my father's uncle and Ella was my mother's aunt, and so it was very easy for my parents to get acquainted.

Then my father went up to Santa Rosa where my grandparents, the Piersons lived and he was working for one of their neighbors as a rancher. And then it was in 1909 that my mother and father became engaged, and in 1910, they were married. And it was then that Uncle Frank, my father's brother had some property or had made arrangements for the little farm in Pocomoke, Maryland, and that's when they went back. And now we're kind of back to where we started [laughter]. And then we can go on from there.

CHAPTER 3 - Dinuba

(Recorded May 11, 2009 - Recording #: 001_A_003_090511_002_2009_05_11)

We lived in a little house on the edge of Dinuba until I was about six years old. During that time, I was trying to think what were my very, very first memories as a child. I think my father was carrying me and it was toward a train, and in the back of the train on the platform hung a big bell. There were lots of people all around, crowds clambering around the end of this train and fathers were carrying children. My father lifted me up and told me to touch the bell, and I did. That is very, very vague, but what it was, was the Liberty bell, and it was being transported throughout the United States to celebrate liberty bonds and to help finance the world war, World War One. That was about the very first thing that I can remember. It must have been in 1914.

Now, the second memory was at Grandma Lloyd's in Los Angeles on Maltman Avenue, which was a very, very steep, steep street at the top of a hill that was covered with pepper trees. I remember grandma, and I remember that it was a big house with one of these old fashioned wrap around porches. It went across and down around the side. I remember that across the street there was a little girl and my sister Edith and I had ... really, we lived out in the country and we were not very well acquainted with any other children and this little girl was so different because we had dark hair, dark eyes, but she had really golden yellow hair and blue eyes and she was so dainty and so sweet. She must have been just about the same age as my sister, about two and a half.

We just thought she was wonderful. We were so careful with her. There was a swing in the pepper trees on this little hill that right next to my grandmother's house and we would very carefully swing her. Just so gently, just barely. I remember that there were rabbits in her backyard in rabbit hutches, in cages. So I don't remember going home from Los Angeles. I do remember that I didn't get along with Uncle Clarence. Uncle Clarence was my father's youngest brother. He and his wife lived there with

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

grandma and he was a photographer. So I can remember him taking a picture, but I don't remember what happened, except that I think I must have gotten very upset with him. So the picture is a darling picture of just my sister with a cute little hat and standing on the top step and she had the cutest little grin on her face. So that picture tells a lot because it tells that something happened that I wasn't in it.

I don't remember coming home and so that memory kind of faded. But one day at UCLA, I was talking to my roommate. It was a friend that I had. She was also a zoology major and we had become great friends and we decided to room together so that we can live near the campus because I had been living at the Helen Matheson club and then I had been there four years and it was time for me to move. So one day, when she was getting ready to go home, I said, "My grandmother used to live on Maltman Avenue and Mrs. Lloyd lived across the street from us." Then I said, "Why, Dorothy, then you were that little girl, and were there rabbits?" And she said, "Yes, we had rabbits then." So once she went home, she told her mother and her mother says, "Oh yeah, she remembers the little Lloyd girls that used to play with Dorothy". So that was really quite a fun thing.

Now, the next thing that I remember was after we got back from grandma's that time, but I remember my mother sitting on the edge of the bed and crying, and then she wasn't there anymore. There was a younger lady who came and took care of us and I think that she was some relative of grandma's, but all I remember about it was she was very nice, we liked her very much, and she had blue roses on the top of a big, big, broad rimmed hat. That's about all I can remember of her. Then I remember Daddy taking us to Fresno to see my mother and she was in bed, and then after a while, I don't remember just how long, but that she was back home again. But she had had a very, very serious operation and why we had gone down to see Grandma Lloyd was to see Grandma Lloyd's doctor who was very sure that my mother, with all her pains and so forth, that they didn't know what was the matter, that he could help her. But he didn't. He didn't help her and so she had this very, very serious operation and so happened that in her uterus was a tumor and the tumor was bigger than the child that she was carrying. So it was a stillborn baby and she was in very, very serious health. So that was another memory that I can remember, but I wasn't very old.

My mother was a very, very sweet, sweet dear lady and she was very gentle, but she could be very strict and stern, but in a way that we understood what she meant and in a way that we didn't ever want to displease her. We did try to always do what our mother would have wanted us to do. I think that she really was a true child psychologist, much better than some of these real psychologists that study books, because she could say, "My girls, my daughters would never do anything wrong."

So we tried not to do anything wrong. Of course, and there is an example, one time when my Grandmother Pierson, who lived in Orosi, about 10 miles from Dinuba, came to see us, and she would hitch up the horse to a little buggy and trot over. We were always so glad to see grandma and we could always hear the horses hooves hitting on the pavement of the big highway that was quite a ways away from our house, but we could hear it. So this particular day, she brought her friend Mrs. Graves and Mrs. Graves's son Van. Van was the same age as I was. Now, we were still not in school. We were pretty little, but my sister and I were always very friendly to the people who went by our house, which was on just a little dirt lane back from the main highway.

So there were houses that were on further up the lane and interspersed with the vineyards. So our little house was next to maybe few acres of grapes and then there was another little house with grapes and so forth and so on, on up to the end. How much farther, I never knew because I never went there. But there was a delivery boy who delivered groceries to some of the people who lived on further up and he really was always irritated seeing us because I guess he realized that we were kind of little and

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

shouldn't be quite so close to the road and we'd stand out there and wave at him and he'd growl and scowl at us. So we decided we just didn't like him.

So this particular day when Van was there, and I think I was the one that said, "Let's drag this can ..." There was a big barrel full of empty cans and bottles and stuff and it was there behind the garage. So we got the idea of dragging the barrel of cans over to the edge of the road and spilling it out over the road. So here was a nice pile of cans and all sorts of stuff spread across this little dusty lane. Now, we had seen him, and he was a kind of a big fat boy, and we had seen him go up to deliver groceries, and we figured that we could get all those cans and everything spread across the lane before he came back, and sure enough, we were all set for him and we hid behind some bushes along the side of the road. He came barreling down the lane and he was going pretty fast, he always did go pretty fast, and when he saw those cans, he just didn't have time to stop too much and so he plowed through them and the cans just went all over. Just up in the air and just every which way, and we thought that was so much fun. Then we jumped out from behind the bushes and we jumped up and down in yelled, "Fatty, fatty, fatty," and we thought it was great.

So then when Van and his mother and Grandma had gone home, we told our mother. We said, "You know what we did?" And as we were gleefully telling the story, she sat there and kind of got a stern look on her face and she said, "Well, that wasn't very nice, was it?" And you know? All of a sudden it wasn't funny at all. So that was the kind of the mother that we had.

I just don't ever remember being spanked. I was scolded sometimes, and usually I deserved it. But as a rule, she didn't have to be really cross with us. I think we were pretty good kids. The only time that we weren't good kids, at least the only time I wasn't a good kid, was when a relative, somebody like Uncle Clarence or some relative that didn't understand children, would be trying to try to correct me.

Now, my father had all these relatives. I mean, he had the two sisters, Aunt Aida, the oldest, Aunt Kate, the next, and then the brothers on down the line, and Aunt Aida and her husband was Uncle Lou Buback. He was a German and he always spoke with quite an accent, but he had fought in the Spanish American war. They lived not too far away, but we didn't see them very often. He was a farmer. But this particular day, for some reason, my parents went someplace and Aunt Aida stayed to take care of us and she did try to do a good job. She made some candy, some chocolates, and it was chocolate candy that she made, and it was very good. But I don't know what it was that I did and she corrected me and I absolutely ... As I say, I don't remember what it was, but she got tough with me for whatever it was. So we clashed and so she ordered me to bed. So that's where I was when my mother and father came home. I also had some problems with uncle Clarence, but other than that, if people were ... Grandma could be okay and Grandpa would be okay if they were trying to tell me something to do or not to do, and my mom and my father, but I really didn't take it from anybody else. So maybe I was a brat, I don't know.

But the other experience that I remember, we were never sick because I don't ever remember a doctor. I really don't, until this particular occasion. When we had a tummy ache, we had a peppermint tea and it was always different things. If we had a sore throat, you put a flannel around your neck and then you could gargle with salt and sometimes vinegar and salt and all those little things that could be done to keep us well. Then there were salves and poultices and things of that sort. But this particular day I was asleep. My sister was asleep with my mom and I woke up and whatever prompted me, I don't know, but I got up, got my shoes and stockings on, and went out to the kitchen and took down the basin, the washbasin that hung on a nail in the wall, and went out into the vineyard. The grapes were just perfect beautiful bunches of Thompson seed grapes, and I picked a whole basinful, a heap of grapes. I walked

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

back to the house, sat down on the porch and just ate each grape one by one until there was nothing left but the stems. Then I took the stems and put them in the trash, took the basin into the house, washed it, hung it up on its right nail and sat on the porch. While I was, I guess meditating there, I began to have these strange pains and pretty soon they got quite severe. I began to ... I guess I was kind of making a noise and my mother and sis came out, and just about the time that I was just rolling and writhing in pain, Aunt Edna, who was my mother's sister and lived right next to Grandma over there at Orosi, came over to see us.

Fortunately, they had a car. I don't know whether we had a car then or not, but anyway, she drove in just at that time and here I was to screaming and in such pain. So immediately I was hustled into the car and she drove me to the doctor and that was in Dinuba. So this was the first doctor I had ever seen that I could remember and the first doctor's office I'd ever been in. He was a very, very nice man. He seemed like he was an old man, but I'm sure he wasn't more than forty. He might have given me something to settle my stomach, but anyway, he stripped me to the waist and he said, "Now, I'm just going to put some tape around your tummy and that will stop your pain, I'm sure." And that's what happened.

It was this wide band of adhesive tape and he put it tightly, very tightly, around my whole tummy, all around my front and back. He just taped me up and he said, "That's all right. You just have a little pleurisy. You'll be okay." It seemed to me that I didn't have any more pains and everything was okay. I never told anybody, no one ever, just what I did. So that's an untold secret.

So there were lots of other little experiences like that. I wanted to read and we were used to having books around, picture books, but I wanted to read them. So each night before bed time, my sister and I were, after we picked up our toys and put them all away and got into our night gowns, and then my mother would read a story and that was a nightly procedure. So then we could go to bed. So that was really nice, but my mother was doing the reading and I would like to read too.

When I was five years old I wanted to go to school, and my mother and sis walked to the elementary school, and when they found out that I wouldn't be six until October the next year, they said, "Nope, no way." I was absolutely too young to go to school. I could remember crying about that. I looked around and I saw all these children in the different rooms and all these desks and so sadly, sadly, we walked home. But my mother said that I really pestered the life out of her. I would take a book and I would carry it in my hand and follow her around him and say, "Mama, what's this word? What's this word? What's this word?" So by the time I could go to school, I was doing pretty good at reading, but I was so happy that first day of school to be given a book.

It was a book of phonics and this I can remember very, very clearly. I remember coming home and standing there at the kitchen table and putting down my book, and my father and mother were standing there and I said, "Look, this tells me how to read. There's A," and I think it was a picture of an apple and B was a picture of a baby, and I was so excited. I can remember looking up and seeing my father and mother standing there with such a smile on their faces. They were so pleased and tickled at my pleasure and my excitement.

So we were in Dinuba until in the first grade, and then my sis could start to kindergarten. Now, see, they didn't have a kindergarten when I was five and then for some reason, we moved to Orosi and I was with Grandma and Grandpa in Orosi. All of us, but not my father. Just my mother. I went to school in Orosi. And then we moved back to Dinuba, to the same little house, and I was in the second grade. I remember my second grade teacher was Ms. Butler and every morning we had exercises up and down

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

and breathing and so forth before we started. She was a really sweet lady. Now, my first grade teacher was very, very nice too and she was Ms. Boone. One thing, I want to be real sure that I've always appreciated of my mother. I was left-handed and the first thing that they did in those days was to be sure that you could write right-handed.

But my mother knew the struggle her own father, who was left-handed, had had, and that my grandfather and grandmother Pierson were both left-handed, but it didn't bother Grandma. She was ambidextrous and she crocheted left-handed, but she wrote right-handed. But Grandpa was always very, very hesitant and slow and my mother felt that that was one of the reasons because he was forced to do everything right-handed. She said that since I had been doing so much before I went to school, then to say, "No, you are supposed to do things with your right hand," and she said that I was kind of getting a stutter and I don't know whether I was or not, but anyway, she went to school and she told the teacher that she did not want me bothered about being left handed.

So the teacher was really, really nice. When all the rest of the children had the little line drawn diagonally across the table ... well, with chalk across the desk, she drew mine diagonally above the left so that I could write left-handed. That is one of the reasons why I don't have to bend, round my elbow, turn my hand clear around like some left-handed people have to do, because I can just write with my left hand, just the way people do with their right hand. Then the second time that we had to move back to Orosi, we never went back to the little house in Dinuba, and then later years we did it.

CHAPTER 4 - Early Days in Dinuba

(Recorded May 13, 2009 - Recording #: 001_A_004_090513_001_2009_05_13)

Recalling those early days in Dinuba, it seemed that my parents were just so busy, always busy. It was a time too when the economy was very bad. The farmers had borrowed money from the Bank of Italy, and this was a great growing community. And it seemed that it was not a good year for grapes, or raisins is what usually was the reason for growing the grapes. And the Bank of Italy, they foreclosed on just hundreds it seemed to be, according to what I heard then of these farmers. And then, the bank would resell them. My father was just furious. And he said, "Those darn Italians. Those darn Italians," because it was the Bank of Italy. And I guess maybe that's the reason why it became later the Bank of America. And so, I've never been very kindly towards the Bank of America.

And so, but my dad, he just did so many, many things to make a living for his little family. I don't know what he did part of the time when he would leave early in the morning, and then he'd be back home at night. And he'd sit and read the paper and fuss about the economy and about the country, because he was quite politically interested. And another thing, I think he always wanted to be a rich man, but he didn't have... He was a good manager and he was certainly not a good judge of character. And he never listened to anybody, especially my mother, who really could size up people pretty well. But that didn't help, or it didn't help our family.

My dad was a carpenter, and he was also a butcher. And one time, he was butchering hogs and then our kitchen became a preparation for a butcher shop, because my mother was taking the fat and rendering it into lard. She was making headcheese and sausage and so, we didn't eat much pork in those days. Something had to happen to all this activity. Well then, while he was evidently working for a butcher, on Fridays, he drove a fish wagon, and delivered fish to the country women all over the area. And what we, my sis and I, liked about the little fish wagon, it was such a cute little thing. It was a small little delivery truck and you open the back doors and here it was all ice and fish. But the nice and fun

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

thing about it was the horn. It had the most unusual kind of a horn, and it could be heard just for miles away it seemed, because it had a very penetrating sound.

And on Friday nights, when my father was on his way home, oh, when he was way out on the main highway, why he would start the horn. And he would honk the horn all the way down the highway, and then when he turned into our little lane, why here he would come driving up the lane. And, of course, my sis and I were standing out there jumping up and down and very gleefully waiting for our dad. And so, that was one of the things.

And now another thing that he did, one summer he ran a theater, and it was an open-air theater. Because you see, in those days, with no ventilation, except maybe... No, there was very little electricity. Of course, in the cities there would be some electricity, but this was an open-air theater. On the outside, it looked like a respectable theater with the box office and then the signs and posters showing what the movies would be about. But inside, it was just an empty, no roof place. And my mother was the ticket lady, and my dad took the tickets at the door and was the usher and so forth and so on.

And they had - at the far back was where the screen was - there was a young man who took care of projecting the pictures, and there was a piano. And there was a young lady who played the piano because these were silent films and in black and white. And, of course, in the summertime, why, because up in the San Joaquin Valley, it didn't get dark until quite late and you couldn't start this movies until late. And so, by the time the second film was over, it was pretty late at night. I think it must have just been a Saturday night movie. My mother put blankets down on the floor or of the ticket office. And so, that bedtime, why, we got ready for bed and we slept until time to go home.

We had a shiny new car. Now, cars in those days, there weren't sedans until... There might have been a few, but not too many. And so, there again, they were pretty uncomfortable in the hot weather and very, very uncomfortable in the cold weather, because no heaters. And to keep out some of the cold, there were heavy oil cloth. Yeah, I guess it wouldn't be called oil cloth, black curtains that were snapped on to the sides of the car. And the only way you could see out, there was the little places that were little windows made of Isinglass.

And so, when you're all bundled up in one of those cars, you're still cold. Traveling in those days in the winter was not as pleasant as it is today. I do remember, that another thing my father was always doing was trading. And somehow or other, this must have been just before we left Dinuba and didn't return, that he had some connection with a vineyard and a apartment house near Fresno, but it wasn't Fresno, it was another little town. And we had a car that was a sedan. It was called a Kissel, K-I-S-E-L, and I don't think it was a car that lasted in the market too long. But we could go 40 miles an hour. And we'd be in the car, it was an enclosed car with windows, and you could drive along and look out and here, it would be cold as the dickens outside and did we feel important. But we didn't have the Kissel very long. And so, that was one of the things that were - Just kind of faded memories.

And then, another thing that my father had is one - There were two different winters. And by this time, I think I was in the first grade and he had rented a theater that was an indoor theater. And so, it would be a very comfortable place. I don't know whether there would be any heat in it, but at least, the elements were not quite so severe. But that burned in the night. The building burned in the night. And likewise, the following winter, the theater that he had rented burned in the night. And whether it was arson, what it was... That was one of the things that as a child, kind of young, I just really didn't know what that reason was. Now, my father, I thought, and I think people would agree, he was really a very handsome man. He had a real, real, dark, almost black hair that was just kind of a little bit wave, just a suggestion

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

of a wave, and real dark brown eyes. And he was a nicely built man, and he didn't smoke. He didn't drink. He was just really a very, very... I would say we were a nice family and he didn't swear. But as I've already mentioned, he had some of these other qualities that seemed like that was one of the reasons why he was always hard up, even though he was such a hard worker, and really a very good honest man. But life was never, never very, very good to him.

Now, on the other hand, as I said, my parents did work very, very hard and my mother too. The thing that I can remember so vividly was the wash days. We just had in the kitchen, a wood stove. And regardless of whether it was winter or summer, the washing had to be done. And we had a big oval tub that could fit on the top of the stove. And that's where all the clothes, the white clothes especially, were put in and were put on the stove and boiled, and with soap and all that. And then, my mother had this big, strong stick that she could lift those clothes. And she was not a real strong lady but anyway she lifted those heavy sheets. Well, they would be heavy with all wet sheets and underwear, things like that, that we had to wear in the winter up there. And she would lift them into a round wash tub that had put... But before, as you know, before that, that was where they were rinsed.

But then, she did have a kind of a washing machine instead of a washboard, it was kind of a round washboard, and kind of a cradle like thing, and you could take it and you had to push this back and forth. And that was a washboard that washed the clothes, the hot clothes that came off the stove. And then, when they were all clean, then they were... I think she did have a little wringer and they could wring them out into the wash tub that had been... And that was a first wash. And they were rinsed twice. And then after all of that, and then there was bluing that would be put in, and be real sure that you didn't get too much in or it would make it so the clothes got streaked. So that had to be done.

And then, of course, shirts and dresses and things like that had to be starched. And so, there was a starching process and then hung on the line. Then, when they were dry, they're taken off the line and sprinkled and rolled up and put back into this round wash tub. And then that was what happened on Monday. And on Tuesday all this stuff had to be ironed. And my mother felt that everything had to be ironed. Sheets had to be ironed, even dish towels had to be ironed, and pillow slips and all the things. Well, of course, today with perma-press and all we can do is just take things out of the dryer and smooth them out and fold them up. And so, it's just terrible how hard people had to work.

And then, the ironing, they were flat irons and flat irons are not... They're heavy. And so, these flat irons, which were just flat pieces of iron and made into the shape of... So that they can be smoothed, pushed across, something could be ironed. And then, there were handles that fitted into little grooves on the top of these pieces of flat iron. And so, they could be removed in a certain way, the handle slipped down into the little grooves. Well, you lifted the iron and put it over the stove, and then you could remove the handles while the iron was heating from the heat from the stove. And then when you went to iron, why then you just slipped the handles into these little grooves and lifted it off the stove. And then, pressed it, smoothed it over the things that were to be ironed on an ironing board. And you had to be very sure that the iron was not too hot, or you would scorch the clothes. And, of course, if it wasn't hot enough, why then you could iron out the wrinkles. And my mother had a very weak back and I think all her life that back pained her. And so, it was quite a refrain, "Oh, my aching back. Oh, my back hurts. My back hurts." But that had to be done. She made all of our clothes. She dressed my sister and me alike, so people thought we were twins until we began to grow differently. In other words, I grew up and she kind of grew out a little bit. But we had the same clothes but just different sizes. But she made everything, our little petticoats, our little panties...

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

CHAPTER 5 - 1st Grade – Dinuba

(Recorded May 19, 2009 - Recording #: 001_A_005_090519_001_2009_05_19)

I never was really sure why I started first grade in Dinuba and then ended at Grandma's and was still the first grade in Orosi. Then when I was in the second grade, we were back in our home in Dinuba. But before I finished the second grade, well, hardly started, when here I was back at Grandma's and in the second grade in Orosi. So I'm not sure just why we were at Grandma's that period of time. Things were happening because then when we left, I was still in the second grade when we got to Woodlake.

But this is a good time to start and sort of trace a little bit of the moves of the Piersons, my mother's parents. Now, I guess I've said before that it was in 18 ... Oh, let me see. When was that? When the locusts drove them out of Kansas and they came to Pasadena, so that would have been in 1887. Then in 1888, Grandpa Pierson was helping Delos Arnold. He was a relative of Grandma's, and I'm not sure whether he was a uncle or what, but quite close, not a distant relative. And Uncle, I'll call him Uncle Delos, was building a house in Pasadena and Grandpa helped him. Now, that was in 1888.

But by 1890, why, they'd planned to do some more homesteading, and so there was land up in the Antelope Valley. They went to Antelope Valley, and by this time they had Uncle George. Now, he must've been about five. My mother would be almost eight. So, with the two children, they load up a wagon with all their household goods. This homestead, this way to the west part of Antelope Valley, we got to visit where the place had been. As far as the buildings and so forth, they were all gone, but there was an indication that there had been land cleared there. It was quite a lonely, desolate place. Grandma never spoke about the hardships in Kansas, but she did tell some stories of what happened in Antelope Valley. But now, that didn't work out too well either.

And so, by the end of two years, why, they were back in Pasadena again. There Grandpa was working for an estate. It had been Professor Lowe's estate, and it was just under the management of the bank. They needed someone to take care of the gardens and so forth and so on, so Grandpa started working there as a gardener. And a little later then, why, the family all moved in. That would be Grandma and my mother and Uncle George, her brother, and Aunt Edna. They all then lived in this big mansion they called The Lowe Place because it had been owned by Professor Lowe. It was located on Orange Grove, a big 40-room mansion, so they only lived in part of it. That was, I guess, when my mother was a teenager. So, they had a lot of fun playing through those empty room and played hide and seek and having parties and so forth.

Then they moved back to their home on Kenwood. It was during this time that Grandma Mercer, that would be my great-grandmother Mercer, my grandmother Pierson's mother, passed away. I guess about this time, and this would be now in 1906, Grandfather Pierson's brother Will loaned him money to buy an orange grove up in Orosi. That is where when my mother married my father, that was where my mother was living, and my father, of course, was working for a neighbor of Grandpa's. So that's where we'll start now because that's kind of the background of the journey of the Piersons from Kansas to Orosi and some of the dates. Because my mother, when her folks moved up to Orosi, she still stayed in Pasadena because now she was working for the Nash Department Store and Uncle George was going to law school. So I guess I told you about how economical it was in those days. Then, of course, my father had arrived from Kansas and met his relatives, and my mother's relatives were the same as his relatives. So then in 1909, they were engaged. In 1910, they got married and then moved to Maryland.

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

Now I'm back in San Joaquin Valley. Here we are and I'm at Grandmas. I loved being at Grandma's because she was a fun grandmother. She played with us. That is, she was working during the day with her garden and with all the things that she did. But at night, well, we would play cards, all kinds of ... Oh, there's Flinch and Old Maid and Authors and all of these. Even during the day when she was working, why, it was fun. Because we would love when she fixed a chicken and the chicken had been dunked in hot water so that it was hot enough so that the feathers came off easily. Then she would spread papers out on the kitchen table, and then she would dissect the chicken. And we watched. That was fun. When Grandma was a girl in Marshalltown, Iowa, she attended the Friends Academy. That's the Quaker academy, and she took elocution lessons. It seemed that, well, even when we knew her, she had still retained this quite extensive repertoire of 'pieces', as she called them. She was quite in demand in Orosi for anything entertainment: "Get Mrs. Pierson to entertain." And she would give a reading of some of her pieces, which covered oh so much of the life of the pioneer women and what they did. Then she also was quite ... she loved to just play parts, be somebody else. And when they would have, say, a fundraiser for the church and then have some big entertainment, especially a carnival or something like that, she would take some character. Now, with a carnival and a fundraiser, why, one good fundraiser is to play the part of a gypsy and tell fortunes, then the people have to pay for the fortunes. So, Grandma would let her hair all down, smother her face with cocoa, put on a shawl, hunch herself all up and then she would have a big pot, big kettle. Then she would stir that up and that would help with the fortune. Then she could read a person's hand and tell their fortune. Well, she loved doing that. She also loved to take other character parts, such as dressing up as Aunt Jemima and becoming a Black lady and looking like Aunt Jemima on the pancake box. Then, of course, with her Southern accent, dah dah dah. So that was a fun time. She also taught all of her grandchildren to speak pieces.

Now, Aunt Edna and Uncle Winton lived just on the other side of the ... I say of the pump house because the ten acres of oranges and the pump house, and then on that other side was the land that was Aunt Edna's and Uncle Winton's. Then to the south where there were the grape vineyard and the fig orchard, then there was the orange orchard. So Grandpa had quite a diversified little farm. It was fun. It was really fun being there. One of the interesting things about Grandma's place was her house because from the street it just looked like it was maybe a small cottage with roses all over the front porch roof. It looked like it was very close to the barn because it was. The back side of the house was really the front side of the carriage shed. Then beyond that was the hayloft, and then beyond that was the stable. So, it was a big barn, and then this house that goes up against it had five rooms. There were two bedrooms and a large living room and a large kitchen. Of course, there was no plumbing and no electricity, but it was very comfortable and especially the kitchen. The kitchen was really quite large. It was a long narrow room, so at one end, the east end, there was enough of a space there for the secretary ... that's the bookcase with the glass doors above the desk part ... that is in my apartment right now. Then there was also Grandpa's rocking chair, and that was at one end. Then there was a big round oak table that comes in the middle against the back wall, the wall that was between the kitchen and the living room.

There was this huge, big stove. It was a big woodstove with a big oven. Then it had above it a place where you could put things, a warming shelf that had a lid to it that came down so you could put things in there and keep them warm. In the wintertime, that was a really cozy place. That was, of course, the only heat in the house. Oh, and then, let's see, at the other end of the kitchen was where the cupboards were and where Grandma could fix her cakes and bowl of dough for the pies. It was a work room. That was the kitchen part. So you could see there, that was our living room. It was kitchen, it was living room and also a place for the books, so that was a very, very well-planned room. In the summer as you would step on out of the kitchen, that was the screen porch but it was also the summer kitchen. So they

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

had a coal oil stove there so we didn't need to use the heavy big cookstove in the summertime. Then in that screen porch is where they covered that. It was covered with burlap, and you could drip water over the top of it because it was hung on the outside of the porch. As the breeze would go through the wet burlap, that could keep the milk from souring. Even sometimes when it was terribly hot and not much breeze, the milk did sour anyway. Let's see. There was also Grandma's furniture because it was the kind of furniture that today is antique furniture with kind of carves and really what is expensive furniture today. But it was just what, I guess, most everybody had that kind of furniture then. I loved it, especially the bedroom with the dressers that had the tall mirror.

Then another thing that was nice about Grandma's home what were the flowers. She always had a garden of flowers, and the roof of the porch was covered with a climbing rose vine that in the spring and summer, it was absolutely covered, those vines there. The whole porch was yellow roses. It was so prolific. I mean, it was solid roses. I think I have some pictures that show that porch when it was all covered with roses. It was so much fun to be at Grandma's and play in the hayloft.

Now, my Aunt Edna and uncle Winton, who lived to the north, as I said, on the other side of the pump house, they had two children. They had Walter and Dorothy. Now, Walter must've been about two years younger. Say, when I would be six, he would be four. So, as we grew up in that time with the four of us, of Walter, Dorothy, Edith and I, and it wasn't too far from Grandma's house and Aunt Edna's house. So we were back and forth, back and forth in those times when we were at Grandma's. I don't think that I can tell you too much more about Grandma. So, it's after that period of moving back and forth and so forth, we one day moved to Woodlake. I'm sure that this is why we were at Grandma's so much during those few years when I was starting school. Because we just moved into a real nice little house, and it was all furnished just like our house in Dinuba. It was very similar in a way, the plan and where the kitchen was and the living room and where the bedrooms were and so forth. Of course, it didn't have any electricity ... we had to have coal oil lamps and we had the water ... whether we had a faucet inside or whether there was a pump outside the back door, I'm not sure. But it was a very neat farm, and it was complete. There was the chicken house and the chickens in the pen. There were pigs in a pen. There was a cow and two horses and a barn. My father had planted potatoes.

So we were there ... Well, I was still in the second grade. But the teacher put me up into the third grade because I could read third grade books. But this was a one-room schoolhouse. My sis would've been in the first grade, and I think there was maybe one other little first-grader. I don't think there was anything in my age. Then there was maybe one boy or girl or fourth grade. We were in rows. The first grade with its little seats and then they just went on up. Then the eighth-graders were next to the window. They were some big boys and they seemed to be horribly big. Probably of a total of, in the whole school I don't think she had more than 15. But she was a very, very good teacher because with all the different grades that she was teaching, and she seemed to just have it so well organized, I don't remember of any discipline problems. So that would be that winter that we were there. That was the winter that Grandma Lloyd visited us. I hadn't seen Grandma Lloyd and, yeah, I didn't really truly when my mother and Edith and I went down to visit her in Los Angeles before she lost her baby and had her very, very serious illness. So I really had never remembered Grandma Lloyd very much. But now she visited us. Maybe she was there a week. We have pictures that show her and Uncle Clarence and Aunt Julia, and by this time Uncle Clarence, Aunt Julia had two children, Jeanette and Bud. Jeanette must be in the picture, maybe three or four, and Bud looks like he was not even two. But we are all at a picnic, that we went up to Three Rivers and up into the mountains or the foothills and had a picnic. Uncle Fred was in that picture too. Uncle Fred was my father's brother, as was Uncle Clarence my father's brother.

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

But Grandma Lloyd was so much different than Grandma Pierson. She was kind of tiny and very kind of a daintylike. She wore the cutest little hats, and she had gray hair that was tied back in a little knot. Quite dignified and quiet, and Grandma Pierson was never quiet. She was just really chattering away all the time and doing something crazy. And, of course, she crocheted; whenever she sat down, she was crocheting. So with Grandma Lloyd, she was a more of a reader and so ... She was really nice, but because I really didn't know her, I think we were probably a little bit shy and she was trying very hard to be our grandma. I know that she liked to have me sit on her lap and she would sing songs. There was one little song that was just a funny little nonsense-y rhyme thing that I just loved to have her sing that. As I say, she was with us just a few days. It could be that Uncle Clarence and our Uncle Fred were somewhere nearby, and then they took her back to Los Angeles because this time she was living in Los Angeles.

But that year was a very prosperous year. The potatoes were good and the crop was good. I don't know exactly what happened to the farm, whether that was what my father traded for the other land. But at any rate, we were able to buy, down payment, I suppose, because my father never really paid ... We were always having to pay on something. We never did own anything very long. But we moved to Exeter. And as I understood later when I was talking to somebody, I said, "We lived on C Street in Exeter." She said, "Oh. Oh, you lived on the right side of the tracks." Well, I didn't know that. I mean, it was really just a nice little bungalow, some like that we have around here and there on some of the streets in La Verne. But it was a five-room bungalow, but it had a bathroom and running water. That was the first time we'd had plumbing in a house. And we had a telephone and then we got some nice furniture. So, let's see ... the parsonage was across the street, and the, oh, next door was where the editor of the daily newspaper lived, the Klaussens. Then on the other side of us were the Steeles, and they were pretty well fixed as ranchers. And then the man who owned the best shoe store, the men's clothing store in Exeter lived on the other side. At then at the end of the block, the principal of the high school lived. He was a bachelor. Across the street was a Jewish family, and Mr. Hurwitz owned a men's clothing store in Exeter. It was for the workers. I mean that's where the farmers bought their clothes and their boots and all the different things that they would need in the way of clothing on the farm. So it was a nice street, and the school was just across the street at the end of the block. Then behind the school was the library. Yeah, I was really and truly in the third grade. Then we lived there in Exeter, and I was in the third and the fourth and the fifth.

Those were very, very pleasant days for Edith and me. But it was really a hard time for the parents because somehow or other my father bought quite a lot of land right near the Kaweah River and planted it to watermelons. It was a beautiful big crop of watermelons, except that there wasn't any water. In other words, the well didn't accommodate and so he spent a lot, well, he just spent everything to drill. I can remember the drilling rigs there, and they didn't get any water. The water was in the river. Whether he thought when he bought the place that he would have water rights to the river, and didn't, I don't know just what happened. But that was a nice three years for Edith and me, but it was pretty hard for my mother especially. Because when things went bad, then she would put an ad in the paper to take care a child in her home. It so happened that one of our neighbors in Dinuba saw the ad and her little grandchild's mother couldn't take care of her some way or other, and so my mother then took care of little Dorothy. She was three years old when she came. So the money that they paid my mother to take care of this little girl, that was what kept us in groceries during that time just before we lost everything. Because, I mean, when my mother, as I learned, when she started putting an ad in the paper to take care of children, well, I knew that something was wrong.

During that time we learned quite a bit about Jewish customs because Julia Hurwitz was my age ... or I thought Julia might've been a little older, yeah. But we became real good friends. Oftentimes on a

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

Saturday morning, the Hurwitzes would call us to do something that they couldn't do because of their religion. Such as striking a match to light the fire in the little round stove that was in the living room. Another thing was that if Mr. Hurwitz didn't kill the chicken or the duck just right ... Something about the blood and so forth. And if it didn't die as it should, why, then they couldn't eat it. So we got duck and once in a while we had chicken that the Jewish people couldn't eat. Also, Julia could not eat our homemade candy at Christmastime, but she could eat the hard candy that we bought in the store. She could eat that. Because, of course, it would've been made with our cooking utensils and they couldn't ... So they were quite strict, very Orthodox Jewish.

Then next to them was where the parsonage was for the minister and his family, so we also played with those children. And, of course, the library. I had, course, never been into a library before because we always were out in the country. So I got my own library card, and it was so easy. I could just walk around the block and then into the library, and I would take as many books as I could carry home. They were all, of course, all fairy tales and stories of, oh, adventures and things like that. But mostly the fairy tales. That's what I'd do. I'd just read and read and read. Then when I'd finished them all I'd take them back. Now, this was mostly what I did in the summertime. In the wintertime, I usually would have to spend on the homework at night and maybe have time to read one story, but not very much.

Anyway, as I say, we lost everything. We had a piano. It was a player piano. I can remember them coming, a big truck coming, and putting the boards down against the steps of the front porch and rolling the piano in and down those boards and into the truck. So that was one of the first things that went. And it just gradually ... everything.

Then, I'm not sure how we got to the mountains, but Uncle Winton had, I don't know if he had a lease or what, but it was called Redwood Mountain, and it had been logged over in quite a number of spots. But there were still some redwood trees, and they were kind of scattered around over the hill. It had been a lumber camp where we stayed, and the lumber camp was deserted. It hadn't been in operation for quite a while. But there was kind of the platform where the building had been and where the saws had been set up. Then there was a great big sawdust pile that went down the hill. There was a cookhouse that was really, oh, quite a nice building with a large, large room, and this beautiful, beautiful big fireplace. So, the cookhouse had this big room and the kitchen, and then there was a bedroom or a room in the back.

So my mother and father and Edith and I, we lived in one of the small cabins that was close to the cookhouse, but we ate our meals in the cookhouse because that's where Aunt Edna and Uncle Winton and Walter and Dorothy stayed. But the women did the cooking, and we all ate together. In fact, I must've been about 10, so that would make Edith nine and Walter eight and Dorothy five. Our parents, our mothers would just really let us roam those mountains because there wasn't anybody there but us and also a few woodcutters. They were the ones who would buy a redwood tree and cut it down, and then they cut it into certain strips and those were just the length of the grape stakes. So, they would saw up the ... and really prepare grape stakes for the vineyards down in the San Joaquin Valley below. So, this summer Uncle Winton and my father took some of the scrap, what were just kind of big rounds of redwood that were too short and too small to make into grape stakes. But they could make them into redwood shingles. So, they had their own little individual, very small saw, and they set up their little mill, just the two of them, up above the camp.

It was just really a nice walk out of our camp. We took the road from our camp and just walked around the hill up the mountain, and it came around until the spot where the men had their little mill, what had been just up the mountain above the camp. But you had to take the curly, winding road up to it. The

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

men would go up early to work and the women would put up the lunches for them. Then when we were up and ready to play and so forth, then they would let us carry the lunches up to the men. So we would walk on the road up to the camp, up to their little operation. But then we would just slide down the hill from where they were to our camp, to our place where we lived. That was a trail that was very, very steep to go up, but it was very easy just to slide down, so that's what we did. Not every day but quite often that we would do that. But the rest of the time, we just roamed around and climbed on stumps and slid down the sawdust piles. And some of the fallen logs that maybe would never be used, but they were big enough that you could just run up and down on the top of them because they were about 10 feet in diameter. So that wasn't too far to jump off. We just did all sorts of things. I think I ought to stop right there, and that'll be continued.

CHAPTER 6 – Redwood Mountain

(Recorded May 24, 2009 - Recording #: 001_A_006_090524_001_2009_05_24)

One of the most exciting things for us kids on Redwood Mountain, and it was watching the felling of a redwood tree. And those big trees were quite, well, several diameters through. And it took two woodsmen with this long saw with a handle at each end. And then, so they would pull it back and forth, one this way and then the other way, until the tree was pretty much sawed through. And then, they took an ax and chopped the opposite side. Just so that the tree began to lose its balance and that was when they called out, "Timber." And we children were always watching from a very secure place, so that the tree wouldn't fall our way, sometimes it jumped the stump and jumped back, and that was a danger.

At first, the woodsmen were a little bit anxious watching us and saying, "Hey, you kids. Get out here, get out of here." But they learned that we were very careful. And so, it was exciting to see that tree quiver and then slowly, slowly, and then as fell toward the earth, it would be getting faster and faster, and then it would bang. Oh, a huge, big roar as it fell, crashed to the earth. And so, it was very exciting. We liked that and tried never to miss a tree falling.

And there was one night, one of the woodcutters decided to come in and visit us while we were sitting around the fireplace in the big... Well, it was a mess hall, as I said. But it was our living room and the two families, Aunt Edna and Uncle Winton and Walter, Dorothy, and my father and mother and I, we would just sit there for a while before we went to bed. Well, this particular man came in that night and he just wanted to talk about his life and about all his escapades that he had done. Well, we were all quite interested. This was something new. And his tales were really, I think, quite outlandish, but that was okay. And then he says, "I seen mountain lion tracks around the place." He says, "They were great big ones." And he held up his two big fists and show us how big this lion's feet must be. And he says, "You know, I heard one too. They sound kind of like a child or a cat or something and they just let off that awful howl." And so, my mother decided about that time we'd better go to bed.

The next morning was one of those mornings when the women put up the men's lunch and then a long time that we children were up and playing around. But then, it was time to take the lunch up to the little sawmill where the men were. And we always walked around the road which circled around, and it was always... The loop of the road was always above the camp. In other words, only going at a higher elevation. And then, when we came back, all we had to do was to just take the trail, which was very steep but, oh, very easy to slide down. And we would slide down and come right into camp. And that would be the men's little sawmill operation was just above that part of the camp.👉

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

Well, now this particular day, Walter and I, we had the coffee and the lunch and we were walking ahead and Edith and Dorothy were lagging along behind. And we got there and delivered the lunch and coffee and the other kids weren't anywhere around. And so, we didn't want to leave them because, after all, they were much younger than we were. And so, we started back around the road, still looking for them. And we came to this area where there was a log chute and it would go right straight down into the camp, but come in at the back of the camp. And that was quite a logged over area with brambles of blackberry bushes and stumps and timber broken and smashed and so forth.

It was way down along there, when we heard this awful cry. And Walter looked at me and said, "Mountain lions." And we, both of us, hit through that brambled overgrowth of second growth and over stumps and blackberry bushes and tore down and hit that where the log chute was. And we slid down the side of the log chute until it got to the bottom of the hill. And we looked back and there was my sister and Dorothy standing at the top up there on the road, looking down and laughing at us. And so, that was only our experience with mountain lions.

That summer passed. And, as I say, it was a very, very happy one. And then that year, we moved back to Dinuba. And I'm now in the sixth grade. I don't remember very much about that year. The little girl that had been our neighbor when we had lived in Dinuba before, when I was in the first and partly second grade, [Francis Dickie]. She was in the class, and that was about the only person that I remember. But also in the class was Van, the boy that we'd played with when those preschool days, when his grandmother and my grandmother came and visited us. And that was the time when we put the tin cans out in the middle of the road before the delivery boy. Van was in the class, but he was very, very shy and I was very, very shy. And so, all we would do would just be say, "Hello," and smile. That's it. And then, there was another boy in the class that I never spoke to. I never even smiled at him, but it so happened that that was the time when boys would put their initials on the back of their hand in ink, along with their girlfriends. Well, Van had his initial and my initial on the back of his hand.

And this other boy, whose name was Emmett, he also put his initial and plus my initial on the back of his hand. And there, I really didn't pay much attention to it, except that along toward the end of that year, along about... Oh, a minute, just about a minute before the final bell would ring. Emmett would quickly jump out of his seat and plunk a bag of candy, a very, very small sack of candy on my desk. And it got so that just before the bell was ready to ring, that room got deathly still, and everybody was waiting for Emmett to put the bag of candy on my desk. And well, we moved, so I didn't see him.

And we were up at the mountains again and in the same place but, this time, the sawmill had been reactivated. And all those little simple shanties, cabins, that had been empty all the time last year, the year before, were now occupied with the people who worked in the sawmills. And they were dragging in those... well, they weren't really cutting down any trees ... they were just taking the trees that had been felled and left and sawing them up different lengths and so forth and so no. And my dad was given a job. Well, I know a lot of it was he had to do at night because he could work better with carpenter work and building things for the owner of the sawmill, but he was working very, very hard.

He worked during the day, and he worked at night. And the owner or the fellow who was running the sawmill, or the head guy, was a man they called Old Whit. And his name could have been Whitney or Whitman or something like that. And he was quite a powerful man in Fresno and rather feared. That is, he had clout. Well, so it was busy, a busy, busy summer. But, of course, we kids didn't go wandering all over the hills anymore. We stayed pretty much in the camp and I know I did a lot of reading. And it was during that summer that, one day, I was feeling very listless and I fell asleep in the hammock that was out under the trees, and when I woke up, I had a fever and I had a rash.

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

And so, my mother and Aunt Edna decided that maybe I had scarlet fever so I'd have to be isolated from the kids. And so, there was a back room in this old cook house that was empty. It had been used kind of as a storage area. And during the winter, the trappers had used the building and they read a lot of magazines and they were mostly for adult people, though they really weren't objectionable. But, at least, because I was in this room isolated and getting kind of bored and after I got so that my fever was down, and then they could let a little light in the room. Why then, I went exploring and found all these magazines and so I kept myself busy reading some of these true story and true romance and lots of westerns. But there was a lot... I learned a lot about sex that I had... Some of the questions I had been wondering about. And so, I was quite of an education. And my mother really didn't know what I was reading.

Then, again, summer ended. We were back in Dinuba but in a different house than the house we'd been in before. And I guess my father then went down to Los Angeles. He was there for a while, but he just couldn't find any work. And so, he went down to Los Angeles and we were there alone and that was a really worrisome time because we were cold and the weather was getting cold, and we didn't have any firewood and we didn't have any money to buy any firewood. And so, it was a really... Yeah, I know it was after Halloween that we went to Los Angeles and we lived in an apartment on Harden Street. It was near Adams. And Grandma Lloyd lived just across the street in an apartment house.

And so, during that... We were only there a month, I think. But during that time, I did get a little bit better acquainted with Grandma Lloyd. I remember her apartment was so crowded with furniture and she had books, books, books, books, everywhere. And so, she really was quite sedentary. I don't think she ever did much, but just stay there in her apartment. But Edith and I would visit her once in a while, and it was nice to go over and visit Grandma and talk with her.

But I wasn't a bit happy there because I had always gone to elementary schools where we stayed in one room all day with one teacher and we knew the people. We knew the children. But this was junior high and bells would ring and we'd go through noisy crowded halls, and then to another room and with children you didn't know. And we had to eat at a cafeteria and I knew that my mother didn't and my father didn't have much money. But so, 15 cents would buy enough to keep me in food until I got home. And I had to cross streets that had street cars. And it was always kind of a fearsome thing to get across before a street car came, because I just would wait until the street car went by, but then they were going both ways.

But I was so miserable and so lonesome, and I know that I spent the whole study hall period at the end of the day crying. And yet, I knew that the study hall teacher, usually there were two of them in there for some reason or another. And I know she was looking at me but she never came near me. I know she felt sorry, but she didn't know what to do about it. And I know that my mother knew that I had been crying because my eyes were kind of blurry, I know. And I know that my mother never said anything, but she was concerned and worried. Well, Christmas time came, and it was time to pay the rent, but we didn't have any money to pay the rent. We moved out to south LA, which is now Watts.

It was 103rd Street, and there were little teensy shacks built there, and the streets were muddy. They weren't paved yet. The street was... It had curbs so that we knew where the street was, but it hadn't been paved. And it was at the end of the car line on Manchester. We could take the yellow... We could take the street car to Manchester and then we had to walk to 103rd Street. And it was just a very, very poor little house. It did have two bedrooms, a living room, kitchen, and bath.

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

And during that time, Grandpa and Grandma Pierson came to stay with us for a while. And so, we had to go out and buy some... Well, we just bought some very cheap springs. They were not inner springs. It was just kind of a springy type of material stretched over some boards. And at each corner they had what would be the post, but they were just little short things. And so, we set this springs on boxes to elevate it up, and that's where my sister and I slept. But then it began to... We didn't know what was happening because we'd wake up in the morning with red welts all over our body, and they itched. And we couldn't imagine what was happening. Well, Grandma happened to be noticing, and she saw a bedbug. I didn't know what bedbugs were, but now I know what they are. They're little teensy, little bugs, about the size of a little finger... Oh, no, about half a size of a little fingernail. And when we saw them in the morning, they were really, really red because they were full of blood from our bodies. Well, Grandma had known about bedbugs. I guess they used to be more prevalent than they are today. But what was happening was the wood and those springs at the end, they were pieces of wood that were hammered together to form the four corners of our springs, and they were full of bedbugs. And also, the mattress that we had bought was full of bedbugs. We got rid of the mattress and we got coal oil and soaked the corners of our bed. And so, that was the end of bedbugs.

Now, out there in south Los Angeles, we went to James Whitcomb Riley Elementary, and it was clear down about 118th Street. It was such a relief because it was an elementary school and I'm in the seventh grade now. It's just really nice. And in that particular class, which I don't remember anybody because, of course I didn't get ... I didn't really start until in January. But the children were friendly, I got to know them all, and especially two little boys. And one was named Sammy, Sammy Rankin, and he had red hair and freckles, and he was funny. He would say things and do things to make me laugh. And his friend was Theodore, or Teddy, and the two of them were pals. And they became my good friends. These were the very first boy friends and they were not... I didn't consider them boyfriends. I mean, they were just boys that were friends and friendly. And so, it was kind of a fun time.

And then when the time came to get a candidate for the May flower and the Maypole celebration, why Sammy jumps up and nominates me. I am the representative from the seventh grade, and there will be a final vote for which one in the school would be the Queen of the Maypole dance. Well, it so happened that just a little while before the vote, before just who was going to be the May Queen, I got the measles and the measles lasted until the end of school. I never got back to that school again because, again, we couldn't pay the rent and my dad could not find a job. And so, my mother had taken a job working in the laundry. And now, that was horrible, really, because she had to iron and her back was killing her. And she had to walk from 100, and we had moved because we couldn't pay the rent at the other place. And so, we had moved to 101st Street, so that meant that she was that much nearer to the street car, but it was still clear to Manchester that she had to walk, and then go on the street car into LA and work all day in a laundry, and then back on the street car and walk home.

And so, then on Sundays, she was home and that was the day that she washed and had to clean up and so forth and so on. It was really very hard. And so, we moved then up into Highland Park, up to... That's the northern part. It's up on York Boulevard, near Eagle Rock. And there, I was again in an elementary school. And that year, now I'm in the eighth grade, at Yorkdale Elementary. And then, that was a nice summer. There were nice girls in that area, in that school, and we were kind of a little gang. And we would all get together and, oh, just do things together. Again, that was fun.

Oh, let's see. I think it was the middle of the year that there were about four of us. The class had taken exams, or that is they were tests. And there were four of us that were moved up into high school, to B9 in the middle of the year because that's when they could do that. And so, I find myself at Franklin High School. And there again, we couldn't pay the rent. But in the meantime, my father had got to San

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

Bernardino with his brother, Fred. And Uncle Fred and he started to build houses. Well, what happened was that we moved San Bernardino and when school started, I am in the ninth grade at Sturges Junior High School, San Bernardino. And that's where I will stop for now.

CHAPTER (? TBD)

(Recorded Sept. 22, 2009) (Recording #: 001_A_001_Beth_090922_001_2009_09_22)

When we learned that the Geophysical company was going to send us to Louisiana, and with a small baby and the swamps and mosquitoes, so we said no. And then, it was no job and so we moved in with Mrs. Page in West LA. And I know it was probably fun for a while, but I imagine she was quite happy when Hollis finally landed a job with the metropolitan water district, and it was through UCLA's travel agency. But it was only \$5 a day, but we did move into LA and had a small apartment.

And for a while, he worked in the office there in LA. And then, he was out in the field just along the chain crew, but eventually to be a real surveyor. And, when we finally were assured that he was going to have a real job, a permanent job as a Chemist. when the Metropolitan Water District lab and the building, the Plant, was completed. Well then that's when we moved to Pomona, and we lived at first, in an upstairs apartment. And the upstairs apartment, it was the whole top floor of an older home and comfortable.

But we didn't realize that our little baby (Phil), who was just toddling around, was going to be - in what just seemed like in a month or so - he was running around, climbing down the stairs, pushing his highchair up against the back door, which was just a screen door that went out onto a porch. I mean, well, it was just a straight down stairway with only just a flimsy rail and nothing in between the rail and the steps. So, it was kind of a dangerous place and Phil was just running all over the place and into so much, and it was a shame that he couldn't have a yard and so forth. And so, I got a harness and put the leash along on the clothesline. And from the kitchen window, I had a very good view of the clothesline, which was kind of the community clothesline for the Bartlett's tenants, because they lived in a large house that had been made into apartments and, that was facing onto Pasadena street. And then the side of their house, which was the front of our house, was facing Eleanor street.

She was a teacher. I don't know whether she was retired yet, but he was a retired, I think, a principal. And so, they had pooled their resources and had purchased several of those large homes that were facing on the Pasadena and had made them into apartments. So that was their income along with their pensions. And so, it was that way that I met some of the tenants, including Dorothy Lynquist, who had a baby younger than Phil. So, he was not running around, but we did wheel our babies up and down, and go for walks, and got well acquainted and stayed acquainted through the years until she passed away.

On the clothesline, which most of the time there was enough of a space so that he could walk up and down and have plenty of space to play and it was a sunny place and really quite nice. Except that there was one tenant that I'm sure that she didn't have any children, and she was just really what you would call a stereotype of an old maid. And she would speak loudly so that I could hear. And she would say, "You poor little thing, being treated like an animal", and one day when I looked out after she had been talking to my poor child, why he was gone and the leash was hanging. And I dashed down the steps, and there he was out on the main sidewalk in front of the house, tearing toward Holt Avenue.

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

And I can't, I just cannot, accuse the lady. But because of her strong feelings, I'm sure she felt that poor little child should be free. And so, I kept close watch on her after that. But it was really a concern to keep my eye on the little guy, because I'd take him in his cart down to the store. And first thing I'd know he would be out of the cart and I wouldn't know where he was, and then he would be playing hide and go seek behind the counter. And he would peep out and grin and disappear, and then crawl back to the other end of the counter.

And so we decided, or I said, "We've got to have a house, we've got to have a yard". We were looking at a lot and we also were planning a house and had really been talking to a contractor. And then, another thing too, that was quite a concern was the smudge, of course, that didn't make any difference about a house. But this was something that I was not aware of it and not prepared for when one morning to wake up and couldn't see across the street because of a gray fog. And then, your nostrils were all black, because when you breathe it in, why then the smudge, the tar or whatever leaves it's deposit. So, the curtains hung damp and gray, and everything was greasy, and it was quite a shock that morning to wake up and find this happening.

But the, the biggest shock of course, was the day that Pearl Harbor was bombed. And although we'd been looking, why we speeded up our activities, and Mrs. Page sent her one of her real estate men that she'd worked with to buy some houses in West LA. And she said to him, "You go over there, and see if you can find a house for those kids". So he did have a friend in Pomona and he contacted him, and we found a house on Berkeley Avenue that was in a very new neighborhood. In fact, our house was in the middle of the block surrounded, with vacant lots and it was just being finished, they didn't have the gutters all on the eaves. And there was a little painting yet to be done inside, but it was all ready. It was built by a Mr. Nunley who had a very good reputation as a good builder, and he had built several houses in that area.

And so we purchased it. And here it was December 7th, and we were ready to move in by Christmas really, but we had to go through escrow. And I thought, "Oh, gee, here's this house waiting for us. We have to wait a whole month", and so I said, "Why couldn't we just pay rent for the month?", and because we knew that it was going to go through escrow and everything was settled except just the time. So that's what we did. We moved in January, 1942, and I guess escrow was probably finished by the end of that month. And so there we were, but there was still the smudge that we had to contend with.

And now Phil, by February 28th, he was two years old. And so we had a birthday party, but then of course we didn't know too many children by that time. But (Hollis's sister) Maxine made a cake that was all decorated with little rabbits, it was really very, very cute. And then we were getting used to the house, but we didn't have much furniture at first. But fortunately, when we've learned that refrigerators and stoves and things like that were going to be hard to buy, we had purchased some of these things, and they were stored in a room behind the Page's garage. And so that way with a card table and some chairs, the stove and a bed, we moved in and then gradually bought the furniture.

And so getting acquainted with the neighbors, really there weren't any on our street, but there were houses on the next street over at Westwood place. And so, it just so happened that there were children there. And they were about same ages as a Phil. And then down the block, and across of the road, there was Verna Dull, and she had one baby at that time, and he was just about the same age as Phil. So, there was people to get acquainted with. And I joined the Methodist church, and took Phil to

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

Sunday school, and I got him baptized. And then, I went to the Guild, the ladies Guild, and in a short time while I was vice-president. And then, I was president of the Women's Guild.

And then it so happened that across the street on Berkeley, there was some houses that have been built just a few months before ours. And there was a, one of the houses right across the street from us, was occupied by a nurse named Mrs. Hastings. And behind those houses was a pasture with horses. And one night just after we had put in our new lawn, the horses got out and tramped across our new lawn so there were a lot of little holes where a horse had sunk into our new lawn. Down the street was also a chicken farm, that's how rural our neighborhood was. And so that we could just walk down one block and get our eggs.

Then it was just, getting acquainted with some of the people who worked for the Metropolitan Water District. And they lived nearer into Pomona but they also were very upset about the smudge. And so there was a group of us that started complaining to the powers-that-be about the smudge, about the fact that the smudge pots could be effective, but not quite so dangerous or so messy – that there could be other ways of protecting their crops. But we were not very popular with the residents that depended upon the orange crops for their livelihood. And that was what just about everybody in Pomona did. They had orange groves and then of course they were merchants that depending upon the Orange crops. So it was a very orange oriented community. And they didn't exactly appreciate these outsiders that came in and protested.

Phil was just as bad running away as he had been in the apartment days. So, we built a fence and a gate and kept him in that way. One of the things I don't want to leave out was the part explaining how he could climb. He could climb into his crib. He learned that by taking a hold of the upright slats of the crib, and putting his toes and feet against the mattress And that would be a pretty high reach. He had to swing his foot up and then, he could throw himself up and kind of go up the slats and then balance on his tummy, and then do a flip and fall into his bed. And he could do it so fast, and it was so funny to watch him. And then he'd do the same thing getting out. He would grab a hold of the top of his crib and swing himself over, and swing around, and then, slide down and drop on the floor. And we took pictures of it, movies of it. And he thought it was so much fun to see us standing there, laughing at him that he would do it over and over again. And then after we moved into our house of course he could still do the same thing. But that was kind of old stuff and he was into other things.

And now there was one time when I thought he was asleep in his crib, and I peaked in but he was gone. And then I saw that the screen to the window was unlatched, unhooked, and he had climbed out the window. And this happened on a Saturday and Hollis was home. And part of the time he was on swing shift, part of the time he'd be a month of graveyard. And then there was a part of the time that he was just on a regular time. So whatever time this was, he was home. And I rushed out to tell him that Phillip was gone. And he was standing out there in the alley talking to one of the neighbors across the alley and holding Phil. Phil had seen his dad go out the back gate and so he decided he'd go with him because, he definitely didn't want to go sleep.

Another thing that Phil learned very early, was that he loved bird pictures. And I had a little bird book, and I would go through the book and tell him the names of the birds. And he learned the birds that were outside, he learned the Crow, he learned the Meadowlark. And there were lots of Meadowlarks because of course there were vacant lots of both sides of our house and it was good Meadowlark country. And so, one time he was taking a nap supposedly and I could hear the meadowlarks outside. Pretty soon I heard him calling, "Meadowark, Meadowark", cause it was kind of hard for him to say Meadowlark. So he got so he knew the names of the birds. At first he'd just say, "whatsat", it was a

Autobiography: The Story of My Life

Alice Elizabeth (Beth) Page (Oct. 24, 1911 - Mar. 11, 2015)

quick way of saying "what's that". He'd say "whatsat", and I'd tell him the name of the bird, and then eventually he learned the names of the birds.

And one time, when he was a little older, say three years or so later, there were houses that had been built. He came into the house, and he grabbed a hold of my hand and he didn't say anything. We just walked outside and we walked down and around and clear around on the other side of the block was a whole bush just loaded with Cedar Waxwings. I think it was a Cotoneaster bush and it had these red berries, and these birds were just gobbling them up. And that was all, he just took me clear around the block to show me and then we went back. He was really outdoorsy.

And now I'm getting kind of ahead of myself. Phil was three years old when I realized that I was pregnant with Elliot. And the time came when Elliot should be arriving, but he wasn't, I expected him in the first part of May and so I thought, well, the week or so before, I would take Phil up to my mother's, and she could take care of him while I was in the hospital. Well, it was May 20th before Elliott arrived and so my mother had to watch this little guy for about a month. And I really and truly think that was very, very hard for her. Because, I don't know why, I didn't realize and know that it was just awfully hard to keep him one place - but I didn't.

Philip came very, very fast. I woke in the night, and it was very lucky that I was at my mother's, when Phillip arrived, because when Dr. Matthias came to check on him and he said, "Oops, I'm taking her to the hospital right now", and so we barely got there. And it was sort of the same way with Elliot. I was walking with Verna Dull and she was pushing her baby in the carriage. And when we got to her house she said, "Would you like to come in for a while?", and I said, "I kind of feel I better go home", and when I got home, all of a sudden I knew. So I called my husband, and he was still at work and he got to the hospital just in the nick of time. So that was very easy. Having children was very easy for me.

And so now we have Phil, and now we have Elliot, and then that's all I will do for today.