

The Firey Family 1995

From
Ray & Diana Firey
Christopher & Tyler
Christmas - 1994

Calendar



PLUS: Memories of the "Growing Up" Years
By the children of John Kenneth & Sylvia Firey
Written by Bill - David - Linda - Steve - John - Ray

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Written by the Children of John Kenneth & Sylvia Evelyn Firey

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Everyone was sent a questionnaire, each being asked identical questions about childhood memories. Below are the written answers listed in the order from oldest to youngest. Thanks for everyone's help in completing the questionnaire that made this compilation possible.

1. Which sibling did you fight with the most and how were these fights carried out?

(Bill) I don't recall ever fighting with any of my brothers or sister.

(David) John and Steve, ususally by throwing stuff - dirt clods, cow piles or corb cobs, etc. Once they were running in the back door and I threw a corncob and it broke the storm door glass.

(Linda) I remember wrestling and seeing who was the strongest - but I don't remember actually fighting. I always loved my brothers. I do remember they would tickle me till I pee-peed in my pants.

(Steve) Believe it or not, I was more of a peacemaker than a fighter, probably due to my tiny stature. I do remember trying to keep peace with John and Ray on a regular basis. John enjoyed tantalizing Ray. I may have had a few fights with John, but I certainly didn't fight too hard or long.

(John) Mostly with brother Ray -

pushing - shoving, just your basic knock-down drag outs. We used to play around like "pet coons".

(Ray) John. (We fought on the beaches, we fought on the main...) No really, we wrestled a lot on the floor and beds - amid stern warnings from Dad not to break the bed (which usually happened sooner or later). Also we hurled black berries, dirt clods, potatoes (while digging them), tomatoes, rocks, etc. I maintain that John was usually the instigator.

2. Describe one of the funniest incidents involving you and/or a sibling (though it may not have seemed funny at the time).

(Bill) Going to sunday school one morning, Dad and Mother were in the front seat while David and I were in the back seat of Dad's four door Desoto. The back doors were hinged on the back so when David pulled on the door handle, the wind caught the door and flung it open. Since this was

before seat belts, David was sent flying out of the car. I was so afraid that Dad would get me for not watching David more closely that I jumped out of the open door too. Fortunately, neither of us was hurt.

(David) The time Bill and I got sprayed by a skunk we caught in a rabbit trap. We knew to just open the door and leave but we weren't that patient. We helped it out. We bathed and perfumed with everything we could find. We thought we smelled pretty good until Mama came home. She knew we had been with a skunk.

(Linda) This was *not* funny! I was 5 or so and was helping Steve out of Uncle Earl's pick-up and dropped him and he broke his leg. I felt awful!

(Steve) The number one humorous experience had to be the "now famous" Jeanne Goatknobber story. Another one was when Linda and David allegedly ate human excrement. A third incident involves the time

when Mom brought home some dogfood for us kids.

(John) The time me and Ray and Uncle Gus was heading out across Momma Murray's clearing to go fishing. She caught me and Gus red handed, while Ray hid in the woods. We had to work real hard for her and drink some of her hot "spavina" water while Ray was fishing.

(Ray) The time Mom brought us home attractively packaged samples of dogfood which she thought was candy. The time we finished our gardening chores early by putting several pounds of corn into one hole - a sin that was brought to light when a large clump of corn came up there. The elaborate "Jeannie Goatknobber" hoax that we brothers participated in. The time that we encouraged "Big John" McCord to take John with him to ride on a tire behind his pickup truck to drag the "tall weeds" down in the middle of the road. (There wasn't a weed one in the road, Big John was on one of his spells). Also, the time I bet John a quarter that he couldn't hit my favorite cat (who was perched a top the well house) with his beanie flip. John took aim and with one shot hit my cat square on the head. The cat rolled down off of the well house and hit the ground, graveyard dead. As if being grief stricken over losing my pet wasn't bad enough, John also made me pay him the quarter.

3. What were your favorite pets when growing up (dog, cat, cow, etc.) and their names (if you remember).

(Bill) I don't remember having a pet of my own.

(David) My red shaggy dog named Mollie (obviously a female). Mamah had one of her puppies (Brownie. Also Laddie, our big collie which lived to about 13 years old and drowned in the pond (apparently had gone to get a drink and fell in). I also remember my first horse, Lady, which was a white filly that spent the summer in Dad's pasture. When the owner found her, Dad asked if he'd sell her. I bought her for \$60. I broke her, built a cart and taught her to pull it. I had many accidents - got thrown into trees and drug off. We raised two or three colts (one was John's). I finally sold Lady to Clyde Applegate for \$100 when she was about 15 years old.

(Linda) I remember Nellie, the horse, and Laddie, one of our dogs.

(Steve) The death of our collie, Laddie, was indeed a traumatic experience. If we'd have had a flag, we'd have flown it at half-mast. We performed an elaborate and sobering funeral for the finest dog a little boy or girl could have had. We sang songs, had a eulogy and preached a sermon for our friend, found drowned in the pond.

(John) Old collie dog, Laddie. He

died in the pond. We gave him a proper burial - it was a moving service. Rootie - a german shepherd. Came along when "Roots" was first on TV.

(Ray) The cat on the well house I wrote of earlier, a black furry collie named Pharoah who helped ward off a well deserved spanking when I was acting up at a birthday party (about my 8th). My guernsey milkcow named Taffy whom the Lord healed after special prayer at Rock Creek Church. And, Daddy's cat "Tremendous" - so named because a neighbor (Howard Griffith) had mispronounced the word as "Tremendjus" and we got the cat about the time we were repeating that word. (It became "Tremendo" when a hispanic friend named Juanita Sosa visited us.) Also the family dog, Roots, who was a special guest at our wedding in 1983.

4. What were the first two automobiles you owned?

(Bill) I didn't go get my license until 6 or 7 months after I turned 16. I don't think I got a car until the next summer - I never felt a great urgency to have a car. My first car was given to me by Dad. It was a 1953 four door Ford. I drove it until David got his license then passed it on to him. I bought a 1960 Plymouth Valiant from Hankins Dodge in Sand Springs for my second car.

(David) First - 1953 Ford (white four door) that Dad and Mom had given to Bill and Bill gave to me. Second - 1959 Chevy - I put a cheap \$39 blue and white paint job. Rolled it on 41st totaling it.

(Linda) Corvair

(Steve) My first two vehicles were GMC trucks, purchased at Bolin Ford in Bristow. Interestingly, those are the only two trucks I've ever purchased.

(John) 1964 Chevy - a partnership car between me and Steve. I sold my half when Steve went off to college. 1969 Ford Fairlane and a 1975 Ford Maverick I paid cash for (\$2800 plus trade-in) with money I made selling bibles.

(Ray) A light green 1961 American Rambler bought from Mamah for about \$350 in about 1975 (with very few original miles) and a (circa) 1971 blue GMC pickup bought from brother Steve in 1977 for \$1000. (I drove both of them for a while and sold them for a profit.)

5. Can you name a phrase that was used around our house that has stuck in your mind through the years?

(Bill) "Pickin' in tall cotton" (This meant that times were prosperous and living was "easy".)

(David) Dad would say to prospective guests, "Come stay a week or until you get weak - whichever comes

first." Dad also would tell people "We've got so many ways, you're bound to like some of them."

(Linda) "A tie in every bundle" and "You're as good as the best and better than the rest."

(Steve) "Huntsy-Buntsy" - Daddy used to call Mom that quite frequently.

"Let's go to work." Daddy was one of the hardest workers I've ever known...and he taught us to work as well.

(John) "Boys, the secret to building fence is get them wires tight." "When we work, we work hard and when we play, we play hard."

(Ray) Dad - using reverse psychology.. "You'll never amount to a hill of beans." (To Mom) "You bet little Sis". (Around the dinner table) "We've been waiting on you...like one hog waits on another." "Excuse my boarding house reach." "Them cathead biscuits are larapin." "And while you're up Honey..." (Concerning Elvis) "I wouldn't walk across the street to see him eat a bail or hay." (To a lady relative or neighbor who had prepared food for us) "If that husband of yours ever runs off, you can come straight to our house." (As a token of his appreciation) "Until you are better paid, thanks a million!" Mom - while we were serenading "Okay, sing a good one now." (To us kids when we were embarrassed about our clothes or

worried what the kids at school might think of us) "Remember, you're as good as the best and better than the rest."

6. Describe a time that you were punished for something that you thought was undeserved.

(Bill) I began school at Pleasant Valley at the age of 5. There was no school bus so I walked about 1 ¼ miles of country road. One afternoon an older boy jumped on me and bloodied my nose and tore my shirt. The shirt was probably made out of a feed sack by mother on the treddle sewing machine. Mother was quite upset and Dad lectured me on the art of self defense. He told me firmly that if anyone ever jumped on me again, I had better fight back or he'd get me. The very next day one of the others jumped on me and I fairly well defended myself. Everything was going fine until the other kid's dad came to our house and told Dad what I had done. That's when Dad got mad at me and forcefully instructed me that I should never again beat up a girl.

(David) When I'd forget to shut chickens up at night and Dad would ask me if I did. I'd have to run up there quick and do it. I'd promise to never forget again. Dad gave me a spanking to help me remember. Another - Once I was working in the garden "buggin' potatoes" and Dad

rode up on "Old Nellie", his horse, from the west pasture and just sat there and watched me a while. He gave me a whippin' for the "hit and miss" method I was using - I didn't know he was watching. My biggest mistake was when we were pulling peanuts of the vines which we had stacked up by a 300 bale stack of hay. There was tin along the sides and tied over the stack. It was cold and I was in charge. John, Steve and Ray were helping and we decided to build a fire to keep warm. I knew it would be okay because after all, there was tin between our fire and the hay. The neighbors came and watched it burn but there was nothing they could do. I expected the biggest whippin' ever but Dad didn't say much about it because he saw how sorry I was and that I had learned a valuable lesson.

(Linda) The last time I got a spanking (whipping) from Daddy was when John was accused of something and I informed Daddy "He didn't do that." Maybe it was my tone - but I got it good for taking up for him.

(Steve) Once the Kirkland boys came over. We decided to get in a fight. It was me and a Kirkland boy against John or Ray and a Kirkland boy. I don't recall who won, but when Daddy found out about it he was furious. He tanned our hides good and told us that we brothers should stick together. I thought Daddy was out of line at the time, but now I see

his wisdom.

(John) One time we were picking blackberries over on the old Berryhill place. I was throwing green berries at Ray - and Uncle Gus saw what was going on and said "Now Ray, you quit pickin on John." Ray's futile efforts to try to explain to Uncle Gus that I was the one who was picking on him made the situation even funnier.

(Ray) I was a teenager and Daddy came home from work one day and didn't feel that we boys had made enough progress on mopping the living room floor. I felt I had been working diligently on it and didn't scramble when Daddy came storming into the room. (I guess John and Steve had taken cover which left me as an easy target.) I remember Daddy tearing into me with his belt while I continued at my work. I think he whipped me harder because I didn't cry or try to get away. I think Dad sensed a maturity in my response, because it was the last whipping I got.

7. What was your favorite outdoor recreation?

(Bill) Strolling over the hills and through the woods and along the creeks looking at the beauty of creation and talking to the the Creator.

(David) Fishing in Murrays' Pond or in Rock Creek or in our pond. I once told someone "I caught a Prince Albert can (the flat pocket size) full of big ones - and I don't know how many

little ones I let go back." Dad enjoyed relating that story to others.

(Linda) Swimming in the creek (Crystal Pool). Also playing softball, and throwing the football to the boys, playing horseshoes, also basketball.

(Steve) Though we lived in the woods surrounded by a creek, I never cared much for hunting or fishing. Every spare moment was spent playing basketball - I loved it! The hollowed out basketball court is silent tribute to the number of hours my brothers and I spent there.

(John) Without doubt, fishin'. We knew every fishin' hole this side of the Mississippi.

(Ray) Basketball, fishing, and later, treasure hunting with my metal detector.

8. Reflect on an experience or two in the cellar while we were waiting out a storm or a potential tornado.

(Bill) Before we had a cellar, we used the cellar at Uncle Bill's (where David now lives). The cellar there was an old hole in the ground with logs and sheet iron and dirt for a roof. It was damp and snakey and inhabited by rats. I wondered which would be worse - getting blown away by a storm or bitten by a rat or snake in the cellar.

(David) That cellar took 10 years to build. It served as a place of protection during threatening weather,

storage for canned goods, watermelons and a brewery where crocks of elderberry wine were made. I remember having to bail out water and listen to the radio until the weatherman gave the "all clear" signal.

(Linda) I remember how Mama was always the last one to come down. I would worry about her being blown away and when it got really bad, we'd hear a knock on the door. Of course, Steve calling Bingo O66.

(Steve) Of course I'll never forget the bingo games. I felt quite honored that a tongue-tied little tike like myself could call off the numbers. It was a thrill to me. But I never discovered until much later what fun it was for the older generation also.

(John) The famous bingo games - especially when brother Steve called the numbers (O-tickty-tix). Uncle Bill would pretend he didn't hear and ask him to repeat it.

(Ray) The night the girl scouts came down with Deloris Hill and we sang songs and played games until late. I remember having sore fingers from playing my old Harmony guitar with high strings. Howard suggested I put bandaids or gloves on - not thinking that then I couldn't play. Also, years before when Mom finally got worried enough about the storm to join us in the cellar. I remember her banging on the door in the rain asking us to let her in.

9. What was one of your most memorable family vacations?

(Bill) It would be a toss-up between the trip we took to Old Mexico where the sights and sounds were so foreign; and the trip to New Mexico where the sights of Carlsbad Caverns were so fabulous.

(David) Going to Jim & Peggy's in Kansas the first time.

(Linda) The trips to Mexico were so much fun - haggling over prices. Also, when Daddy would play and sing with the Mexicans. The ones were going to Jim & Peg's - riding horses and singing at Peg's.

(Steve) Wow, there were so many! The first time I laid eyes on the Grand Canyon I was awestruck. That has to rank very high. But some of my fondest memories were our trips to Jim & Peg's house. Oh, how we enjoyed riding the horses and romping around their huge spread!

(John) The many trips to Texas - family reunion - BBQ goat. Swimming at Cristoval - staying with the Bakers - Ernest & Louise.

(Ray) Family vacations were always important and special to us kids. We looked forward to them all year long - and took a vacation every year. Probably my most memorable is when the Bakers joined us in San Angelo and we all went to Del Rio and Acuna Mexico. I can still taste the

hamburger with the greased toasted bun, smell the leather from the shops, and see Daddy on the street with the mariachi band entertaining them. I remember the exact shirt I wore and the ride in the pickup camper down across the border. I remember the Mexican boys swarming our pickup trying to sell us Chicklets for 5¢ per pack and guiding us into a parking place to watch our vehicle for a tip.

10. Can you think of a funny or unusual incident that happened on an outing or vacation?

(Bill) Dad was working for A.W. Swift in the oil field. A.W. had a boat on Tenkiller Lake. He invited us there to camp out and ride the boat. We took a lot of week-old bread which had begun to turn green by the time we had the picnic. Mrs. Swift was kind - she said, "That's okay, it's just penicillan". However, I noticed that before she at the bread she removed the mold.

(David) When we went through Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico, I was probably 7 or 8 years old and I tripped, fell and scratched my hand or elbow. The whole tour was stopped and a report was filed. Dad told me to quit gawking around and pay attention where I was going.

(Linda) When Dave dived in the water at Turner Falls and skinned himself up. When we were in a camper at Red Rock (I think) and

Daddy began snoring loudly and John says, "Here we go again." We started laughing 'till we woke him up. The pop machine in Anson, Texas that kep giving us "free" pop.

(Steve) The time we left Johnny behind, although we discovered our oversight less than a mile from home. The time Mom and Dad argued vehemently over the Texas highway sign. And the time we left Jimmy Firey at the balcony of the Hugoton Assembly of God church. Oh, and how about our gas stealing escapade in Medford, Oklahoma.

(John) One time Mom and Dad left me home alone and took off for Texas.

They got as far as Mamah's and Pampah's and realized I was missing. I had already decided I could survive 10 days on my own, when they came back to get me.

(Ray) Leaving David at a roadside rest stop, taking a picture of a sign on a west Texas highway to prove to Mom which way it was pointing and going with Mom and Dad as grown kids to a Bella Vista, Arkansas, resort under the guise of a couple with their three small boys. Daddy dubbed the crew "Ma Barker and her 3 Hinchmen" and we acted out antics to reinforce that theme.

11. What was your favorite place (on or around the homeplace) to go (to play, hide out, relax, etc.)

(Bill) Same answer as Question 7.

(David) In the chicken yard I'd build tunnels through the tall Johnson Grass.

(Linda) I loved the big rocks - I made houses out of them. Also, up by where the first cattle guard was (by the blackberry patch) I loved to clear the ground and lay limbs to divide off the rooms and made me a house up there.

I loved it up at cousin Diana's - there was a big tree by the cellar with low limbs and we would climb it and read.

(Steve) I loved going swimming at Crystal Pool. What glorious times we all had splashing, laughing, and enjoying a warm summer evening. I also liked going to our hideout in a large hollow sycamore tree down by Ray's house (now).

(John) The woods, creek and our treehouses.

(Ray) There were several special spots around the place - our tree cave (just south of my present home), tree houses, the old streetcar, the pond and several choice holes along the creek. It was a haven for us boys. I can't imagine any child getting bored growing up in the country.

12. Describe a part you had to play in the construction of additions to our house.

(Bill) Dad had a way of coaxing the best out of me when it came to working on the house. He would usually put me in charge or at least make me think that I was in charge.

(David) Helped with rocks - hauling and concrete mixing. Also roofing, which eventually became my occupation.

(Linda) I was about 10 when we built the kitchen. I remember helping pour the cement.

(Steve) I can remember John and I helping to mix the concrete. Armed with our shovels and hoes, our cement trough, sand and water, we became concrete specialists at a tender age.

(John) I helped to sift the sand for the cement work in the Rock Room. It was with great pride I would point to the smoothness of the mortar joints.

(Ray) I helped sift the creek sand to make masonry cement for Bill to use on the finished joints between rocks on the east addition and the Rock Room.

13. Recall a business enterprise you had as a youngster and the type of income you received from it?

(Bill) My first enterprise was trapping cottontail rabbits in a log trap that was called a "rabbit gum". I would see rabbits to Gus Taylor at the Farmers Market in Sapulpa for 25¢ each. Then in the summer I would pick blackberries for 5¢ per quart.

(David) Besides blackberry picking which we all did (I picked 31 qts. one day at 10¢ each - now that's really money!) I also had a bait and tackle business. Larry Shope and I seined crawdads and shiners and sold them in

town. We also bought lures and assembled some and made up cards - prepriced and sold to a few bait shops.

(Linda) Just the blackberries. Also, we had that firecracker stand one year.

Also, we'd help Pampah at the park selling pop, candy and gum. I would wash Grandfather Huff's hair and clean his house and get money and candy.

(Steve) Most of my excitement came from watching Dave, John, and Ray in their enterprises. You name it, they tried it. I probably was most involved in their rabbit business. I helped feed, water and slay rabbits until I looked like a rabbit.

(John) Ray and I were partners in three non-profit ventures: (1) The rabbit business. 200 rabbits ate lots of feed. Made no profit. (2) The catfish business - we were doing great until they all got loose in the pond. (3) Christmas Trees - We planted 1300 after the first year - Only 100 survived. You figure the profit!

(Ray) John and I had a great number of enterprises - trapping rabbits in the woods, raising rabbits, picking blackberries for 10¢ (and eventually a lot more) per quart, planting 1300 seedling evergreens and trying to raise 500 fingerling catfish in a 3'x5' cage. And eventually becoming the CEO of the "National Stamp Company" at about the age of 14 using the alias of "Jeff Ragsdale".

14. Name some of the chores that you did while living at home.

(Bill) Before we had an electric water pump I had to draw water out of the well by hand with a rope and a bucket and keep the water bucket full. Also had to draw water for the chickens and hogs. Other chores included carrying in firewood, carrying out ashes, polishing the lamp globes, picking up nails and trash, planting, hoeing, and harvesting the garden, picking blackberries, herding cattle, fixing fence, shooting sparrows, etc.

(David) Milked cows, helped with garden, pruned blackberries, fixed fences and fed cows. We branded, castrated, vaccinated, de-horned, rounded up and hauled cattle to sale. Cleaning chicken house, gathering eggs and clipping the chickens' wings.

(Linda) Dishes, swept floors, waxed and mopped, helped wash clothes, tons of ironing, cleaned house, polished shoes, washed cars, dusted, helped pick and plant the garden, can-preserve-pickle and freeze. Helped butcher chickens, fed turkeys and rabbits - milked a little. Fed chickens and cleaned out the chicken house and troughs. Helped cook. Cleaned out garage, burned trash, swept sidewalks and cleaned Grandfather Huff's house and washed his hair.

(Steve) Caring for chickens, banties, turkeys, pigs, cows, horses, rabbits,

peacocks. I vividly remember how scared I was of those big turkeys that would gobble and run toward me. I enjoyed getting up on a snowy morning, cutting ice on the pond and help hay and feed the cows.

(John) Milkin' the cows, feeding and haying cows, bustin' ice on pond, working in the gardens, fixing fence (especially water gaps), hauling rocks, cutting wood....

(Ray) We always had chores to do, morning and night. I would get up early and build a fire in the fireplace, then go milk the cow(s) and help with the other chores - breaking ice out of the pond, haying and feeding the cows, gathering eggs, feeding chickens, slopping hogs and taking care of the rabbit operation - feeding the caged rabbits, running the trap lines, etc.

15. Name the chore you disliked the most?

(Bill) Slopping those filthy, ungrateful hogs.

(David) Pruning blackberries.

(Linda) Cleaning out the chicken house - it was so nasty and smelly.

(Steve) When I was 6 or 7 my job was to go find the milkcow and bring her to the barn where Dave or Bill would milk her. Sometimes on dark nights and deep in the forest, I'd get pretty scared until I finally found her standing motionless in the trees.

(John) Fixin' them water gaps got

pretty old after about the fourteenth flood of the season.

(Ray) Cleaning out the chicken house.

16. Describe a work situation or two around the house or on the place about which you wish to comment.

(Bill) I always felt badly about having accidentally hit Mother in the mouth with a hoe and chipping one of her front teeth. It happened when we were planting sweet corn. I would dig a hole, mother would place the seed, then I would cover and pack it. On one hole I hit a clod and needed to take a second lick about the time Mother stooped down to place the seed.

(David) I was in charge of building the concrete and rock loading chute at the Hay Barn - Corral, and John and Steve wouldn't help me. All they wanted to do was play so I put them each under a 55 gallon drum and put a sack of cement on top. I told them they could come out when they decided to work and help me. They finally agreed when air started to get thin.

(Linda) I remember on Saturdays, I'd clean all day and finally get the house clean. The kitchen floor would still be wet when here would come 3 sets of dirty little shoes tracking up the floor. Naturally, I had to lock them out occasionally.

(Steve) This might have gone under

the category of "Undeserved Spankings". I maintain to this day that when Daddy showed me what a weed was and what a peanut plant was, he showed me the wrong one. I couldn't sit down for a week after I pulled up every last peanut plant. And how about the time we planted all that corn in a deep hole - unfortunately, it wasn't deep enough.

(John) We spent a lot of long, hot hours working in the garden. One time Daddy gave us about 10 pounds of corn to plant. After we had planted 20 or 30 rows we got tired and dug a big hole and dumped all the rest in there. We said "Yes, Daddy, we planted all the corn." We was alright until a big clump of corn came up and then we had some explaining to do.

(Ray) At the time working hard most of the time didn't seem quite fair. Now I wouldn't trade that experience for anything. I remember a particular New Year's Day which we spent hauling in and busting up rocks on our driveway. I had thought this was supposed to be a holiday, but Daddy decided it would be a great day to get rid of some mud holes.

17. Recall, if you can, a birthday or Christmas gift that was especially meaningful.

(Bill) I graduated from high school at the age of 17 and was preparing to go to college in Stillwater. Dad gave me a 1953 Ford car to drive. He also

provided me with all the drip gas that I could use.

(David) When I got my first pellet gun for Christmas. I thought I could hunt *anything*!

(Linda) I remember a Betsy-Wetsy doll that I loved because she actually wet and I could change her little diaper. I also got a little red wooden handled beater. I loved that little beater.

(Steve) Between the ages of 4 and 10 it seems that every Christmas brought me toys and games that overjoyed me. But it was my first bike somewhere around 6 years old that brought the most joy to my life.

(John) I remember when we got new bicycles. They were Otasco "Flying O's".

(Ray) I remember a little wooden stool I got for my 3rd or 4th birthday. (I recall sitting on it at Grandfather Huff's in their house on Travis Street when Grandmother was still alive.) Another memorable gift I received about a year later was a red tricycle which I loved so much that Daddy took it with us on a bus trip that we took together to San Angelo in about 1960. (I was so worried that it didn't get loaded on the bus that Daddy had the bus driver open the cargo bay on his next stop to prove that it was still there.)

18. Describe a birthday or Christmas that sticks out in your

memory.

(Bill) I can't recall any particular birthday or Christmas. Mother made everyone of them special thanks to their good credit at Oklahoma Tire and Supply.

(David) After dinner we went rabbit hunting in the snow and I took my new pellet pistol I got for Christmas. I thought I posed a real threat to the rabbit population! We didn't get any.

(Linda) I just remember how magical Christmas was until I learned there was no Santa. I found out by recognizing that Mama's and Santa's handwriting was the same.

(Steve) The earlier birthday parties when Pampah Firey would entertain for us kids were not to be forgotten experiences. I was enthralled by his wondrous store of talent and ability. He even let me assist him on some tricks. Boy, was that a thrill!

(John) The best ones were when we were all together. Especially enjoyed Ray's poems - he would write these in lieu of a gift. He sure saved a lot of money that way.

(Ray) I have a snapshot in my memory of an early birthday (about my 6th) when Momma baked a little cake just for me and served it to me on a little table outside the front door (where the TV sits now in the Rock Room).

19. What was something about Mom or Dad of which you were

most proud as a child?

(Bill) In retrospect I am very happy for Dad and Mother's conversion to Christ and for Dad's discipline.

(David) I knew they loved me and were committed to their children with all they could do for us.

(Linda) I was proud that Daddy was on the school board. I was proud when Mama sold encyclopedias and how brave Mama was when she had her breast surgery.

(Steve) My mom was the prettiest of all moms. My dad was the strongest of all dad's. But the thing that stands out most to me was the way they loved each other. As Paul Overstreet put it in a song, "they were sowing love" all the time.

(John) Mom and Dad were both hard workers. They instilled the work ethic in all of us.

(Ray) Mom-That she would help us write contest winning essays and type our reports. I always considered her very smart, pretty, and industrious. I was always proud of Dad's school board membership and his sacrificial hard work. I always thought he was brave, strong and heroic. I remember feeling jubilant when the Keystone school bus would get stuck in the ditch along the muddy Rock Creek roads - because I knew we could go get my Dad and he would bring the tractor and pull us out.

20. Name a routine of going

somewhere with Mom and/or Dad that is a special memory.

(Bill) When Dad married Mother, he promised to take her to see her parents in San Angelo once a year. Although money was always scarce and at times the old car was not in good condition, to my knowledge, Dad never failed to keep that promise. Grandmother Huff never liked Dad because he had taken Mother so far away, so the trips were unrewarding to Dad. Dad would always do something for Grandfather and Grandmother Huff or take them some place. Even though the annual pilgrimages became monotonous, Dad would spice them up by taking different routes or stopping to see different sights along the way.

(David) When we went to the movies "Old Yeller" and "Gone with the Wind". Especially "Old Yeller" at the drive-in movie - we all cried.

(Linda) About once a month I remember going to Sapulpa with Mama and sometimes we'd eat at a cafe. I remember going with Daddy to Sand Springs and he'd buy me a butter pecan ice cream cone.

(Steve) It was a special privilege to help Dad take hay and cubes over south to the cows. It grieved me to see my once strong and healthy Daddy unable to work as he used to. But I was proud of my Daddy. What a pleasure to brave the elements with him in the old work truck. Also, I'll never forget Mom, Dad's and my last

vacation out to Amarillo, Texas. I'll treasure that trip forever.

(John) I used to go with Daddy to run the leases. I rode "shotgun" and opened the gates.

(Ray) Going with Mom to Sapulpa for groceries and supplies. Riding home with Dad and Howard on Thursday (Town Day) and stopping at the feed store, grocery store, and sometimes Braums Ice Cream. Also, going with Dad to the leases.

21. Describe an incident from childhood that shows the unselfishness of Mom and Dad towards us children.

(Bill) Mother always made sure that Christmas was special even if it meant buying it all on credit at Oklahoma Tire and Supply.

(David) Dad was a board member for 20 years at Keystone School and was interested in our education. Mama worked and helped him all she could canning, cooking, sewing, cleaning, selling and loving.

(Linda) When I wanted to be a socialite so badly, they let me be in Pep Club one year and came and got me late at night from Sand Springs so I could go to the games. I remember Mama always took a wing or back and let us have the best pieces of chicken. Daddy always would give us his last dollar.

(Steve) Their whole life exemplified unselfishness. They spent time with

us. Their lives were centered around home and their kids. They never went off alone - they always took us kids with them. They always hurried home to us. Mom would say to Daddy as he drove off, "Hurry Home!", and he always did.

(John) The endless hours they both worked so we had food on the table. Though Dad occasionally mentioned we were going to the "poor house", he never really believed it.

(Ray) I remember being in town shopping and asking Daddy for money for candy or toys. More than once, I recall Daddy opening his billfold and taking out his last dollar and giving it to me.

22. Mom was, without question, a great cook. Name some of her dishes that were your favorites growing up.

(Bill) Fried squirrel with mashed potatoes, squirrel gravy, roasting ears, biscuits made from scratch served with hand churned butter and possum grape jelly.

(David) Blackberry jelly and cobbler.

(Linda) Mac-n-cheese, fried chicken, peanut butter pie, chocolate sheet cake, her pizza and creme pies.

(Steve) Fried potatoes, strawberry shortcake, cornbread, cat-head biscuits and gravy, blackberry cobbler, fried chicken

(John) My absolute all-time favorite was beans, cornbread, fried potatoes

with fresh sliced tomatoes and okra from the garden with ice cold cow's milk to drink and maybe blackberry cobbler for dessert.

(Ray) Fried chicken, fried potatoes, cream gravy, giblet gravy, pan fried steak, corn on the cob, pies (apple, lemon, chocolate and pecan), cake (pound, german chocolate, shortcake) and blackberry cobbler. Mom's specialty was taking whatever she had around the house and creating a delicious meal.

23. Name a skill that you learned from Dad and still find useful today.

(Bill) Dad taught me to build a rabbit trap and catch rabbits, to hunt squirrels, to back a two-wheeled trailer, to drive a tractor and to screw pipe together, etc.

(David) Dad taught me how to work and find a way to get those things done that must be done.

(Linda) He taught me how to cut hair and type. From Mama I learned how to sew, can, freeze, pickle, preserve, iron correctly, cook, and clean house really good. She also helped me with my 4H projects that went to the fair - from brownies to pickled peaches to aprons and dresses. I always won blue ribbons.

(Steve) Planting a raising a garden, driving vehicles and operating farm equipment, swimming, being friendly with others, a no-prejudice attitude;

acceptance of others, faithfulness toward your family.

(John) How to work cattle - knowing which way to move to make a cow go where you wanted her to go. Being able to separate the calves from the cows. "You got to think like a cow."

(Ray) How to build fence, work cattle, how to loosen rusted connections with vibration technology, how to air up a flat tubeless tire by putting a chain and boomer around the middle of it so it would hold air, how to work hard and stay with a job until it was finished. Oh yes, how to tune and chord a guitar.

24. List the pet names Mom and Dad had for you.

(Bill) "Number One Son"

(David) I can't remember any except "Fee Fee" which is a name I gave myself when I was about 3 or 4 years old when Uncle Bill took me to town and someone asked me my name. "Ramblin' Rose" was one of Dad's favorite names for Mom.

(Linda) "Sissy" "Sweet Sissy"

(Steve) "Teeb", "Skeet" "Skeeter" "Weeby-Teeb" (my favorite from Dad)

(John) "Tombstone Marshall John" "Gonnie Gone Gone"

(Ray) "Ray-Ray" and a number of variations of the following: "Bodine", "Boty", "Itebeat-Itebat and Itebote"

25. Recall a statement that Mom

or Dad made to you (advice, encouragement, etc.) that has stayed with you and helped you through the years.

(Bill) Dad often referred to Rudyard Kipling's poem "IF". I didn't realize how deeply it had imprinted my mind until I "saw the things I gave my life to broken". Numerous life situations have brought phrases of that poem to my memory (as if Dad were giving me council).

(David) Dad would say "Study all the angles and decide what your gut feeling is and go after it with all you've got." He also said that "A job worth doing was worth doing right."

(Linda) I don't remember actual advice - but they instilled in me that we were to work hard and make good grades and be honest. Mama taught me early to use creme on my face to keep those wrinkles down.

(Steve) Dad - "If it's worth doing, it's worth doing right the first time." When Dad did something, it was done well.

(John) Dad- "You can't holler 'Wo' in a horse race." Mom - "It's in the chair, stupid."

(Ray) At times when I was struggling with a difficult decision, Dad would say "Just remember, Ray, whatever you decide to do, there will always be at least one other person who believes you are doing the right thing." Knowing that Daddy was trusting my judgement caused me and still causes

me to make decisions that I hope would meet his approval.

26. Describe an incident or scene with Mom or Dad that remains a cherished snapshot of childhood.

(Bill) I was 5 years old when we moved into the original three room rock house. Dad and Mother were still newlyweds. I recall Mother's laughter coming from their room as they indulged themselves in love. I cherish the knowledge that in spite of the hardships and shortages, there was never a shortage of love between Dad and Mother.

(David) I went with Mom to a Stanley party. She would put a little bit of suntan lotion on the hand of her lady customers (mostly black that day) and I looked and saw it was suntan lotion that Mom was promoting. She said "Doesn't that feel *gooooood*?" They bought it!

(Linda) I remember Mama sewing and making me some beautiful dresses - especially a red dotted swiss one for Easter. I felt so pretty in that one. I remember camping at a lake one time and it was so cold and I was 11 or 12 or older and had to crawl in Mama & Daddy's cot because I was freezing to death and they kept me warm.

(Steve) Dad sitting at the kitchen table working on a watch or some small appliance with "Tremendo" the cat perched on his neck. Mom and Dad sitting at the table, playing dominoes

or cards. Dad would explosively accuse her of cheating. Mom thoroughly enjoyed it.

(John) Dad - When Shirley came home from the hospital with Scarlett. It had been a longer stay than we'd planned. Daddy got up early that morning and we tied 1800 ft. of scarlett ribbons to the trees coming down the hill to the house. When Shirley saw it she started crying. It was because of Daddy's diligence that morning that made that moment possible. Mom - When I sold bibles in the summer of 1975. Sometimes I wouldn't get home until 10:00 at night. Mom was always up and would have supper fixed. While I was adding up my sales on the old manual adding machine (with the big handle on the side), she would ask me how things went and would always offer encouragement. My success that summer was due largely because of her support. Of course, Daddy used reverse psychology. He'd say "I don't think you'll be able to see anything. People don't have any money to spend on stuff like that - You shoulda kept that job workin' for Bill." But deep inside he wanted me to do well and I knew that. I was able to make about \$10,000 that summer and buy a new car and pay for a year of college. Not bad for a door to door salesman.

(Ray) Dad - sitting on the edge of my bed when I was a little boy, playing

his guitar and singing "Cowboy Jack" (a scene I have repeated with my boys). Mom - giving her a goodnight hug in front of Cecil's tires (where we had stopped to pick up our van with new tires) after a church service at Fisher Church on September 7, 1991. It was the last time I saw her alive.

As you have reflected on your childhood, if there is something that has come to mind that is not in the above questions, please feel free to note it.

(David) One thing I remember that Dad said in the face of impending conflict was, "I'll try to get a sandwich while they're getting their dinner." This statement emphasized a part of his character and determination to succeed.

(Steve) I enjoyed taking in the drama of Mom and Dad playing dominoes or pitch or some other game. They became polished experts. If others came to visit, they'd have to split Mom and Dad up - usually men against women. Otherwise Mom and Dad would soundly trounce them. But Mom enjoyed going against Dad. Mom would constantly harp on Daddy's cheating. But it only inspired him to cheat more expertly. Dad and Paul Shope were the two most prolific cheaters in the world when playing pitch. Dad became a champion at dominoes. He knew from the backs of the well-worn pieces which domino

was which. He'd memorized every domino and win most of the games. Many nights, I'd be watching TV while Mom and Dad battled it out in dominoes. Usually their game was far more entertaining than the tube.

(Ray) If I could wish anything for a young person today, it would be to grow up out in the country in a big family with loving, sacrificial parents who taught us in their living and their dying the virtues of hard work and commitment to eternal values. This is my heritage and I could only wish that everyone was as blessed as I have been.