

Closer to reality, Norton's ten thousand inhabitants endured extremes of heat and cold, tornadoes, hailstorms, floods, and infestations. The fortunes of the region's wheat farmers hung on every incoming breeze.

By 1896, the bright lights of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago had not yet reached Norton. Horses and buggies plied the town's one main street under a gas-lit glow, in a year when the thirteen gasoline-powered vehicles were built and sold by the Duryea Motor Wagon Company of Springfield, Massachusetts. Around that same time, Henry Ford was building his first automobile behind his Michigan home. But Norton, remote as it was, remained untouched by these developments for sometime to come.

On August 9, 1896, Mildred Boddy was born into the windblown prairie town of Norton to Della Sarvis Boddy, a twenty-year-old local beauty, and Bert Boddy, a clothing store clerk. Della's mother, Lucinda Biggs Sarvis, was born in Illinois, but her American roots went back to the seventeenth century when Richard Whitaker crossed the Atlantic from England in 1666 to join the Fenwick Colony, a Quaker settlement in New Jersey. In the Civil War, Lucinda's husband, Samuel, fought with the Iowa Volunteers for the Union. In the late 1870s, Samuel, Lucinda, and three of their children, including Della, traveled by wagon train to settle in Norton.



Mildred and Della Boddy, 1897

In 1899, Bert was elected Recorder of Deeds after winning a tied race, according to Mildred's memoirs, by flipping a nickel against Dave Bruner.² As the *Norton Courier* reported on November 16, 1899, "The official count discovered a tie between Bruner and Boddy for Register of Deeds and at the casting of lot for the place, Boddy won. It was a republican year, you see."³

Barely a month earlier, on July 18, 1896, Ollie William Reed was born to Orville and Mary Plusky Reed. Orville had come to the Norton area in 1878, as a homesteader, staking his claim in nearby Leota Township. He headed west after graduating from Upper Iowa University in Fayette, Iowa.⁴ He completed the business program at the college in 1875, known as Hurd's National Business College, offering

“all that is taught in the leading Business Colleges of this country at one-half the expense.” After completing the six-month business program with a Masters of Accounts certificate, Orville moved into the Normal Department the following year to train as a teacher,⁵ putting all of his education aside to seek new opportunities in the soil of a free homestead in Kansas. In 1880, he married Mary Plusky and the couple settled in Orville’s Leota, Kansas homestead, bringing a son, William, into the world. In 1886, while Mary was pregnant with another boy, Jesse, the Reed family moved into Norton where Orville took jobs as a mail carrier along Route 5 and a custodian in the courthouse. The growing family needed the more stable income the town could offer. Ollie would be the fifth of eight children in a family with five sons, two older and two younger than Ollie.

The births of Ollie and Mildred marked the humble beginnings of two people whose lives would be woven into the fabric of history, one deeply rooted in the Kansas soil, reaching both triumph and tragedy with quiet grace and humility. The future held unlimited possibilities and as they grew, Ollie and Mildred looked forward to a future together, discovering all that life could provide. Experiencing the world beyond the Kansas prairie was their dream, while family and friends remained at the heart of their lives. Ollie and Mildred dreamed big and lived their lives to the fullest, dedicated to God, country, and family.

As the new century unfolded, signs of the new world gradually began appearing in Norton. In 1902, telephone lines were installed, crisscrossing over the streets. The first telephone operator, known as a “Hello Girl,” Miss Clara Stine of Kansas City, was hired to operate the “hello board,” connecting Norton residents with one another and the town to the outside world. Upon her arrival, the *Norton County Centennial* noted that Miss Stine was “a bright young lady and experienced.” Three years later, new electric lights illuminated downtown Norton. It would be some time until electricity reached the farming communities outside of town.

Kansas was admitted to the Union in 1861 as a progressive, populist, and anti-slavery state. Slavery had been outlawed in the western territories under the Missouri Compromise of 1820, so-called as the exception to the rule was the proposed state of Missouri.

The 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act reversed this by allowing popularly-mandated slavery in the territories, inciting abolitionists to move west and take a stand. Pre-Civil War skirmishes between the abolitionist Jayhawkers of Kansas and the pro-slavery Bushwhackers from neighboring Missouri were commonplace. Abolitionist John Brown led his supporters against pro-slavery forces in the state, including the 1856 Battle of Black Jack, regarded as the first battle of the Civil War.

Norton County was incorporated soon after Kansas was admitted to the Union, but a tinge of the Old West remained alive in the region. The state song, "Home on the Range," romanticizes the time when buffalo roamed portions of the high plains, as they still did in the early 1870s.⁶ Wild Bill Hickok became marshal of Abilene, Kansas, in 1871, and chased outlaw John Wesley Hardin out of the state. In 1892, the Dalton Gang robbed two banks in Coffeyville, resulting in a shootout that killed numerous members of the gang and several townspeople.

A 1903 feud between Chauncey Dewey's Oak Ranch and the sod-busting farm family of Daniel Berry, and his three sons over five dollars owed for a feed tank sold at auction erupted into a gunfight where Daniel Berry and two of his sons were killed, and another wounded in the shootout. When Dewey and his cowboys were found not guilty, the jurors were hung in effigy outside the Norton County Courthouse.⁷

In 1896, a presidential election was underway. On the day Ollie was born, July 18, 1896, Democratic candidate William Jennings Bryan was greeted by ecstatic crowds in his hometown of Lincoln, Nebraska. Bryan was supported by the People's Party, better known as the Populists, and Kansas, a populist state, enthusiastically supported Bryan over his rival and eventual winner, William McKinley.

On August 15, 1896, *Emporia Gazette* editor William Allen White published an essay critical of populism, titled, "What's the Matter With Kansas?":

Go east and you hear them laugh at Kansas; go west and they sneer at her; go south and they cuss her; go north and they have forgotten her. Go into any crowd of intelligent people gathered anywhere on the globe, and you will find the Kansas man on the defensive. The newspaper columns and magazines once devoted to praise of her, to boastful facts and startling figures concerning

her resources, are now filled with cartoons, jibes and Pefferian speeches. Kansas just naturally isn't in it. She has traded places with Arkansas and Timbuctoo. What's the matter with Kansas?⁸

By this time, Bryan's Populism had lost steam and his Democratic Party was losing Kansas. In 1896, the state went for Bryan, but in 1900, Kansas helped re-elect McKinley and his vice president, Teddy Roosevelt, who made a whistle stop in Norton during the campaign. With the help of Bryan in the Midwest, Democratic candidate Woodrow Wilson won Kansas in both the 1912 and 1916 elections. During the 1912 campaign, Wilson stopped in Norton to deliver a speech from the back of his campaign train.

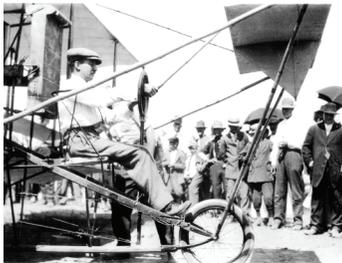
In 1913, President Wilson appointed Bryan his Secretary of State, but Bryan resigned in June 1915 to protest Wilson's inching toward war in the wake of the sinking of the RMS Lusitania. Despite stepping down, Bryan remained a Wilson supporter, under the campaign banner of "he kept us out of war."

Politicians were not the only newsmakers in Norton. Documenting the people and events in Norton during the early part of the twentieth century was photographer Charlie Reed, no relation to Ollie. In 1909, he captured the first photograph of a tornado.

Two years later, Reed documented the fatal crash of pioneering aviator John J. Frisbie at the Norton County Fairgrounds. News of the sensational crash made it to the front page of the *New York Times*:



1909 tornado over Norton, Kansas.



Photographs by Charles Reed, courtesy of the Norton County Historical Society.

September 2, 1911

CROWD GOADS AIRMAN TO FLIGHT AND DEATH

J.J. Frisbie Goes up in Crippled Machine

Kansas Spectators Call Him a Faker

Wife Denounces People Who Hooted Him

Amid the commotion and calamity, Mildred and Ollie lived simple childhoods. Ollie was Huck Finn loose, barefoot in the countryside, fishing in Prairie Dog Creek, and hiking through the hills. His future would be on a farm. Mildred was Becky Thatcher, a self-assured young woman who liked wearing pretty dresses with a bow in her hair. She was taught by her mother to be very much her own person.



Ollie Reed, center, in left photo; Mildred Boddy as a child on right.

The idyllic life in small-town America at the turn of the century could also be mixed with personal tragedy. The Reed family never quite recovered from the sudden death of twelve-year-old Hazel on February 6, 1904. She contracted both diphtheria and scarlet fever, and without the antibiotics available today, passed away on that cold winter's day.

Mildred's father, Bert, who had never taken a sick day in his life, fell ill with a fierce headache the day after Christmas in 1903. At the age of thirty-four, Bert suddenly died from a stroke. The morning after Bert's death, Della came into her daughter's bedroom, asking her to say her prayers, "Your Papa is with God this morning."

Mildred, just seven years old, immediately imagined the nice trip her father was on. "I hope he has a lovely time. When will he be home?"

Years later, eighty-three-year-old Charlie Kennedy, a Norton native, remembered Bert in a letter to Mildred:

In my mind's eye, I can picture him yet as we rested our horses on a hill top out on the prairies, singing one of his favorite songs at the top of his voice (and disturbing no one)... "Oh, Kansas land, sweet



THE BURLINGTON HOTEL

380 ROOMS FIREPROOF

VERMONT AVENUE AT THOMAS CIRCLE

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Tue. night.

Mother Dear;

Write me a letter, please. To Cadet
 Reed - Pleble Camp - Vast Military
 Academy - West Point - N.Y. - And
 that grand. I'm so happy, I could
 walk on air. And Mother more than ever
 before, I want to congratulate you. You
 married the grandest man on the
 world! If you could have only seen
 him these last 9 days. Walking,
 walking from desk to desk, office
 to office; talking, talking - every time
 with men who rank him! He

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Duty, Honor, Country - West Point



USMA Cadet Ollie W. Reed, Co. G,
October 1937

OLLIE AND BUD packed the car for the drive east to Highland Falls, New York and West Point, with a stop in Washington, DC where Major Reed would lobby army brass on behalf of his cadet-candidate. A physical exam at Fort Leavenworth threw a roadblock into his path – Bud was found to be colorblind. Ollie was not about to let this test deny his son the opportunity of a lifetime.

Arriving in Washington on Sunday, June 21, 1937, Ollie set to work early the next morning. Walking the halls of the State, War, and Navy Building,¹¹⁹ located next to the White House, Major Reed started at the top, demanding to see the Army Chief of Staff, General Malin Craig, West Point class of 1898, and the adjutant general, Major General Edgar T. Conley, a 1897 graduate of West Point whose son also graduated from the academy. Ollie was dogged in his determination. After some goading, General Conley finally acceded to forward the case to the Surgeon General with the general's resolution.

“Tell the Surgeon General's office to give this boy the yarn test and abide by it.”

The yarn test is one of three major color perception tests that

groups similarly shaded strands of different colored yarns, arranged by color group, hanging in equal lengths from a stick. The subject is handed a piece of yarn and asked to match it to the strand on the stick. Bud passed with flying colors, so to speak, only two days before he was to report to West Point.

Bud excitedly wrote home to his mother on his last night at the Burlington Hotel in the District.

If you could have only seen him these last 9 days. Walking, walking from desk to desk, office to office; talking, talking – every time with men who rank him! He bullied those Colonels and Generals around as if they belonged in his company. He practically forced them to give me an O.K. He did for me something he won't do for himself. He could easily talk himself into War College (and he does want to go!) if he worked that hard for himself. And I can't thank him! There's nothing I can say to thank him! What can I do? I helped him as much as I could, but half the time I was running to keep up with him. And you could just see, day by day, their attitude changing. He got everybody in Washington wanting me to pass; and as I took my final test, all the doctors and nurses were there rooting for me. It's simply marvelous. I only hope I'm half the man my Dad is! And someday I'll try to do for my kid what he has done for me. That's the only way I can thank him. That and pass the Point with honor!

Incidentally, I guess the grandest man in the world got the best girl in the world for his wife.

After stopping in Merchantville, New Jersey, to visit the “tucco” house (“It is still home,” Ollie wrote to Mildred), and old friends Captain Andrew “Mac” McCully and his wife, Catherine, they spent the night in Morristown before driving the final sixty five miles to Highland Falls, New York, arriving at West Point in the morning of July 1, 1937.

“At 9:01 AM an M.P. told Ollie, “This is as far as YOU can go,” as wrote to Mildred later that day. “Bud & I shook hands said Good-bye and I haven't seen him since. It was the most sudden and complete severance of ties that you can imagine.”

Ollie was invited to lunch at the West Point Army Mess, where he

reunited with First Lieutenant Ralph Woods, who was fresh out of the academy and the class of 1929 when he joined the 29th Regiment at Fort Benning when Major Reed was commanding Company H.

At West Point, Woods was a drawing instructor who later would be assigned to the same regiment as Bud. They were joined by another young officer, First Lieutenant Thomas Wells, son of General Briant Wells, superintendent of the Infantry School during Ollie's stint there. Wells was an assistant instructor in tactics and a company commander of cadets, a "tac" who would keep an eye on young Cadet Reed.

Ollie decided to stick around until the parade and the swearing-in of the "new boys" afterward.

"Hope I can recognize Bud but will feel better at any rate...I'm lost – but guess I'll recover," he closed his letter to Mildred. "Of one thing I am now satisfied, 'Bud wanted to come.'"

His father may have been able to lobby for his admission, but now, inside the gray walls of West Point, Bud was on his own.

Bud was directed to walk through the campus to Thayer Hall. This was the beginning of Cadet Basic Training, or Beast Barracks, the six-week indoctrination of cadet candidates hoping to gain the honorary title of Plebe, from their lowly initial anointment as an Animal or Beast. A rigorous introduction to academy life, the physically and mentally challenging period was divided into two portions – the first three weeks were on campus learning the basics of discipline and military drills, followed by three additional weeks living in tents on the edge of campus overlooking the Hudson River where Plebes would practice marksmanship and other military basics. Throughout, they lived a Spartan existence while their second-year bosses, known as Yearlings, enjoyed visits from girlfriends (known as "femmes") and limited freedoms. Academic classes began at the conclusion of Beast Barracks.

Cadet candidates started arriving at 8:30 a.m., first reporting to the entrance to the Gothic-styled Administration Building (today, Taylor Hall) where their credentials were examined. Next, they were directed across a campus street to the West Academic Building where they surrendered all of their money and any "contraband," including such

items as alcohol, playing cards, and weapons. In the same building, they were directed to a side room with benches, adjacent to another room filled with large examination lamps. Told to strip down to their underpants, the cadet candidates were given a brief physical exam for signs of infectious or contagious diseases, dressed, and sent outside to the Area, a central courtyard surrounded by the gray stone buildings of the Central Barracks. There, cadet candidates were ordered to their company area and immediately surrounded by a small, barking army of second-year cadets dressed in gray and white.¹²⁰



R-Day 1937 (Courtesy of Anne Allen)

The Beasts were mockingly addressed in shouts. “Shoulders back! Chest up! Get some more wrinkles in there, Mister Dumbjohn. Stomach in!” a Yearling screamed into a Plebe’s face as he was surrounded by three other barking upperclassmen. This was R-Day, or Reception Day, a time when new cadets would receive a one-day crash course in Beast Barracks.

“Eyes to the front, Mr. Ducrot! Get in step, Mr. Dumbguard! Don’t fall down in ranks, Mr. Duficket! Bounce that chest up, Mr. Fluzfoot!” Yearlings ordered each of their charges to remove their jackets and ties, and sometimes had them roll up their pants to their knees.

The young men were put into groups according to height. As many as five Yearlings surrounded one Beast, ordering him to pick up his suitcase, put it down, pick it up again, and so on. Repeating this and other motions, Mr. Phlogg would otherwise have to stand at attention in a position known as “finning out” – shoulders back in the “position of a soldier” with his arms clamped close to his body and his chin driven into his raised chest. During hazing in years past this posture was known as “bracing;” a Plebe would throw his shoulders back until the blades met, draw in his chin, suck in his stomach, and walk so his toes touched the ground before his heels for long periods of time.

The goals of this training were twofold: one, that rank has its privileges, and two, that no matter how impossible the order, it could be accomplished.¹²¹ It also served to strip away any vestige of ego and self-importance. The intended takeaway: an upperclassman never thinks of his rank and a subordinate never forgets it.

Cadet candidates were constantly reminded of the simple path to success: “Keep your mouth shut and your ears open,” and their station in life: “You’re in the Army now!”

Likewise, from the very beginning, the words of “Duty, Honor, Country” were instilled in the cadets as the guiding principles they would carry through the academy and life.

As they were grouped by height, the tallest were in A and B companies, while the likes of Bud, standing a little over five feet five inches (the minimum height requirement was five-feet four inches), were in Company G, a “runt” company. After that came late arrivals, returnees, athletes, and others, all the way to Company M. Cadets spent practically every waking hour over the next four years with members of their company and little time with any others.



Cadet Corporal Jay Beiser marches newcomers on R-Day 1937 (Courtesy of Anne Allen)

“Don’t say Company [sic] – say ‘Ko.’ ‘G’ Co. men or ‘H’ Co. men,” Bud later wrote home to his mother. “We in ‘G’ Co. are always called gnomies (pronounced Guh’-nomies by them) by ‘flankers’ and despised as such. The feeling is reciprocated. There is also a lot of rivalry between the Cos. And Battalions. There are 3 battalions 1(A,B,C,D) 2(E,F,G,H) and 3(I,K,L,M) No ‘J’ Co. as usual in the Army.”¹²²

Each group reported to the cadet first sergeant and then double-timed to the Cadet Store where they picked up white shirts and gray pants with the distinctive black stripe down the side, as well as their full-dress grays and new “skins” – gray trousers and gray shirt, a feather-duster hat (known as a “tar buckets”), and a fifteen-pound full-dress overcoat with forty-four brass buttons, with a wool cape draping the cadet’s shoulders.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Laura



Laura Sloman and Cadet Bud Reed, West Point, February 1941.

WITH BUD LIVING over twelve-hundred miles away at West Point, Nancy Campbell and her West Point beau remained the subject of gossip at William Jewell College. She and Bud continued to be very low-key about their relationship, so rumors continued to circulate in the campus newspaper.

The whispers about Nancy and her West Point flame started in 1938 and continued into the next year when the gossip column in *The Student* newspaper at William Jewell noted, among a list of engagements taking place over the Christmas holidays, “Nancy Campbell started wearing that Army pin!” And, in another column, “About Most Anyone,” noted: “Nancy Campbell is wearing the most interesting West Point ‘Miniature Ring.’” A West Point cadet giving his girl a miniature ring was generally taken as a gesture of engagement.

As the star of the college debate team and a fixture on the honor roll, Nancy stayed busy at college, but by the spring of 1940, she was feeling a distinct chill from Bud. As noted in the May 13, 1940, *The Student*, Nancy began finding her own way: “The tall, handsome Harold Poynter seems to be getting along with Nancy Campbell right well.”

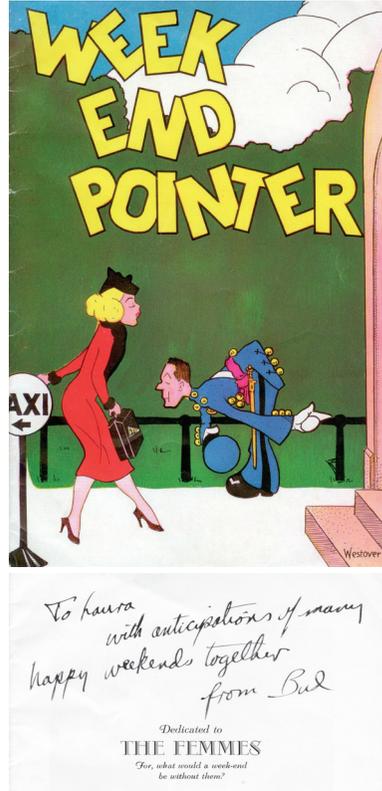
One week later, there appeared to have been closure: “Nancy Campbell rates the No. 1 story of the week. She got a long distance call from her West Point swain and guess where they found her – under the water-tower and not alone.”

With their relationship icing over, Bud fell head over heels for sixteen-year-old Laura Sloman who had accompanied her older sister Margaret on a trip to the academy from their home in East Orange, New Jersey. Soon after meeting Laura in the spring of 1940, Bud sent her a copy of the *Week End Pointer*, a guide for young ladies, or “femmes,” visiting West Point cadets.

Bud wrote on the opening page: “To Laura with anticipation of many happy weekends together from Bud.” Below this was the printed dedication: “Dedicated to THE FEMMES. For what would a weekend be without them?”

The *Pointer* covered everything Laura needed to know about visiting her cadet - from train schedules along the West Shore Line between Weehawken, New Jersey and West Point, as well as accommodations, recommending the Thayer-West Point Inn, a hotel still in operation. Since the Thayer is located on the West Point campus, cadets were allowed to visit their femmes at the hotel without leaving the campus. The Thayer even set aside a wing for the special purpose of housing young women in a dormitory-like setting. The booklet also introduced visitors to Flirtation Walk, where cadets and their female visitors could “walk and talk intimately.”

“Many, many people,” the guide noted, “have found consolation and relaxation there, and in the present day, it is perhaps the only place



Week End Pointer Bud sent to Laura, Spring 1940

where cadets may truly ‘fall out.’”

Even today, cadets are not permitted to hold hands with their visitors while on the campus, and Flirtation Walk remains a hideaway, closed to outsiders.

Bud fell instantly in love with the shy teenager, five years his junior. They were kindred spirits who shared more than a physical attraction to one another.



Laura and Bud at West Point, February 22, 1941

In the first sixteen years of her life, Laura moved multiple times, with her mother and father, Mike and Catherine Sloman, along with her three older siblings, Christopher, Margaret and James. They alternated between luxury and poverty, owing to the Great Depression and Mike’s business fortunes. One relative looked back speculating that Mike Sloman always stayed one step ahead of the law.



Morris and Richard Sloman, 1906

Born in 1894, Morris Sloman, later known as Michael, grew up in an advertising family in Dayton, Ohio. He briefly worked in the family business assisting with major corporate accounts but moved to Columbus to strike out on his own. There, in 1912, he married Blanche Griffith, and in 1919 Blanche gave birth to a son, James. They had lost one son in childbirth two years earlier. Young Morris quickly became an esteemed ad man who was recruited to join George Creel’s U.S. Committee on Public Information, promoting the causes of World War I to the American people through marketing and advertising, what would become known as a propaganda campaign. He built upon his accomplishments in communications and became a principal in James M. Cox’s 1916 campaign for governor of Ohio. In 1920, Morris’s name came up in U.S. Senate hearings into campaign financing from his activities with the Forward Looking Association and their “Let’s Redeem Ohio” campaign

on behalf of Cox. A U.S. Senate investigation looked into charges that \$37,000 raised in 1916 presumably for a Dayton, Ohio flood control fund had been laundered into the Cox campaign. Dayton businessman Adam Schantz contributed \$7,000 to the fund and raised an additional \$32,000 from five other wealthy Dayton businessmen. Schantz was reported to have deposited the money into his personal account and then dispersed the funds to Morris Sloman and two others.

“I would say I made, if not all, about all of the payments to Mr. Hays and Mr. Sloman and Mr. Burba,” Schantz told the subcommittee.

“Who told you to give such large sums as these to an association you knew absolutely nothing about? Senator Walter Edge, a Republican from New Jersey, asked Schantz.

“Oh, I had confidence in Mr. Hays, and had more confidence in Mr. Sloman, and I had confidence in Mr. Burba.”

Morris did not appear before the committee and nothing became of their investigation, in spite of the subcommittee chairman, Iowa Republican Senator William S. Kenyon, barnstorming the hearings through several Midwestern states to discredit the Democratic candidate in the 1920 Presidential election - Governor Cox and his vice-presidential partner, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Republican Warren G. Harding prevailed.¹⁵⁸

By the time of the hearings, Morris, Blanche, and infant James had left Ohio, and were living in a crowded boarding house outside of Pittsburgh. Morris was working in advertising sales for local newspapers, but this failed to satisfy Blanche. She left him in 1923 and moved to Cleveland, where she remarried British-born ad man,

William Young. James was placed in the care of Morris's sister, Helen Sloman Pryor.



Laura Gillmore

Morris married Laura Gillmore, a teacher and education pioneer, on September 20, 1923, in Erie, Pennsylvania. Laura was born in Moravia, New York, educated at Columbia University Teachers College, and taught at the innovative Moraine Park School in Dayton before becoming supervisor of Cleveland elementary schools in

1921. Morris was listed on the marriage license as a “publisher” from Pittsburgh.

After the Erie wedding in a Unitarian church, the couple moved into Morris’s Pittsburgh home at 4181 Centre Avenue. Laura stopped full-time work in schools devoting her time to writing a book about education principles. On December 30, 1924, Laura gave birth to a daughter, Laura Gillmore Sloman.



Laura Gillmore



Infant Laura Sloman with Aunt Helen Pryor.

Four days later, Morris’s wife died of complications from a pre-existing kidney condition known as Bright’s Disease. She was buried in an unmarked pauper’s grave in Pittsburgh’s Allegheny Cemetery. Infant Laura joined her older step-brother James in the care of their aunt, Helen, for the next eighteen months.

Posthumously published in 1925, the first edition of Laura Gillmore Sloman’s *Some Primary Methods*, was regarded for many years as an important guide for young women approaching a career in elementary education.

Now You Can Reduce 2 to 4 Lbs. in a Night

Eat what you please
 Drink what you please
 Take no risky medicine

Just follow the plan in these few days

Thousands of smart women have found the way to a trimmer figure. It is a simple one. It is possible to lose weight without any special diet, without any special exercise, without any special medicine. It is a simple one. It is possible to lose weight without any special diet, without any special exercise, without any special medicine.

The Hot Springs are the source of this

Exhausting analysis of the scientific principles of hot springs from the waters of 22 hot springs of America, England and Continental Europe.

Special Hot Springs Home Bath Treatment

Results Are Immediate

Hot Springs Home Bath Treatment

Eye Fears at Our Risk

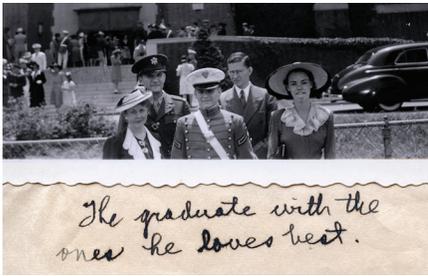
Hot Springs Home Bath Treatment

FAYRO

Hot Springs Home Bath Treatment

Photoplay, June 1928 (Media History Digital Library)

With Laura’s death, Morris went into a tailspin while continuing to live at the address he shared with her. He moved on from newspaper advertising to president of Fayro Laboratories in Pittsburgh. Fayro offered the “Fayro Hot Springs Home Bath Treatment,” a seemingly amazing weight loss method achieved through soaking in natural mineral bath salts drawn from “the waters of 22 hot springs of America, England and Continental Europe.” Fayro targeted celebrity magazine readers. A 1928 ad in *Photoplay* magazine read: “Fayro, by opening your pores and stimulating perspiration, forces lazy body



had other things on their minds, for many it was getting married. The cadet chapel had been booked since March for graduation day weddings that would take place every fifteen minutes, lasting until 10:30 that night, with more the next day

and in other locations. Jay Hewitt, a native of Grand Forks, North Dakota, was the first to wed, at 12:30 p.m. His marriage to Aulene C. Cunningham, West Point's hospital dietitian, was featured in *Life* magazine. On that day, 114 weddings took place. Companies I and L each had thirteen walk to the altar, while ten from Bud's Company F stepped through the chapel door under the canopy of crossed sabers.

Bud and Laura opted for a small family wedding at the Sloman's farm in Beverly, New Jersey. After graduation, they hopped into Bud's blue 1941 Plymouth coupe, given to him as a graduation gift by his parents.

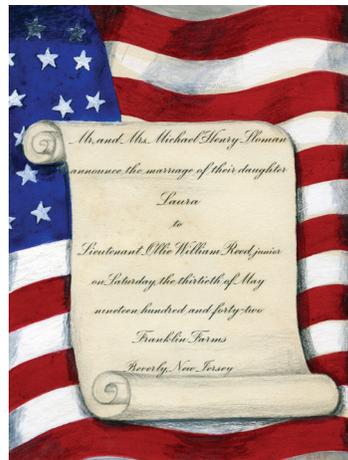
Bud christened the car, "Bluebird of Happiness," and in it, the happy couple drove south to New Jersey with Bud's parents and brother close behind for the wedding the next day.

"I shall never forget the night before the wedding the boys and Pop and I knelt by our bed and Bud's fervent prayer was that we all might be together again after the war - if it was God's will," recalled Mildred.

At 11:00 a.m. the next day, Laura, tightly clutching a handkerchief in her right hand and her father's hand in her left, walked down the stairs to the living



Laura's January 22, 1942 diary entry.



Laura and Bud's wedding announcement.



Catherine Sloman, Lenora Velie, Laura, Bud, and Ted.
Below, boarding the Bluebird of Happiness.



room where Bud, sharply dressed in his new U.S. Army uniform with single gold bars on his shoulders, stood next to the Reverend Roy Williams, pastor of the Rancocas Methodist Church, with his best man, brother Ted, and Lenora Velie, Laura's best friend and maid of honor.

Everyone was beaming as the bride walked toward her groom across the room. In spite of darkness enveloping the globe, all in attendance shared in the happiness of this moment.

After a wedding luncheon, the bride and groom climbed into the Bluebird for their

Florida honeymoon. It would be a quick trip. Bud and sixty other West Point graduates had only two weeks before they were to report to the Infantry School at Fort Benning on June 14, 1942.



Newlyweds with their parents



Fathers, groom, Jim Sloman, and Louise



Ted, Laura, Bud, and Lenora Velie



Laura and Catherine; Bud and Laura; Margaret and daughter Louise; Aunt Mabel Reed and McCullys.



1st Lt. Chetlain Sigmen and Company K, 3rd Battalion, 363rd Regiment, 91st Division
aboard HR-103 before sailing overseas. (The Mariners' Museum, Newport News, VA)

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Departures



Atlantic convoy (Library of Congress)

BUD'S CONVOY, DESIGNATED UGS-40, started with eighty merchant ships, and was escorted by four destroyers, eight escort destroyers, one anti-aircraft cruiser, a patrol boat, two minesweepers, a Coast Guard cutter, and one tugboat. By the time they crossed the Atlantic, the convoy had grown to 101 merchant ships plus escorts. Bud was one of 500 men crammed into the hull of the SS *William B. Giles*, already packed full with supplies and equipment. The merchant ships, known as Liberty Ships, had originally been built as cargo vessels but were quickly converted to troop carriers to meet the growing personnel transport needs. The galley and mess facilities were inadequate to serve the hundreds of men on board, as were the sanitary installations. Food storage was under capacity and fresh water in short supply. Men had little to do other than sun themselves on the deck, read books, play cards, and hold sporting events, such as boxing and wrestling matches, while spending much time writing letters home.

"I spend a lot of time on deck in the sunlight and fresh air. The sea is a beautiful deep blue, and the wind is very strong. Whenever I look out at the convoy I think of you and wish you could see these things too," Bud wrote to Laura. "Boxing matches and wrestling matches and

skits or little plays. Also music and songs. We have some good banjo and ukulele players on board as well as harmonica players. The officers all chip in and buy prizes for the winners of the boxing and wrestling matches.”

Bud didn't smoke or drink alcohol, and while he was an avid game-player, he enjoyed board games, such as Monopoly and chess, not gambling. He was thrilled to play what he called “real poker – no cards wild and only 5 card stud or 5 card draw.” Starting with forty dollars, he played until four a.m. and excitedly wrote to Laura that he was “as hot as a pistol,” winning \$140.

“I will put \$100 away and not touch it again for the rest of the trip. I will try.”

Then he lost \$20 and then another \$20.

“I will not play any more poker so I will have \$100 to send you at the end of the trip.”

Bud was true to his word and as soon as he landed he mailed the \$100 “anniversary present” to Laura.

One game Bud did excel at was chess. He started teaching the men on board to play the game, and pretty soon there were ten games underway. He organized a tournament in which the winner had to play the West Point lieutenant, since he was the best. Bud won.

As the converted cargo ship had no security staff or guards, the army had to supply their own. Bud was named adjutant, placing him in charge of guard assignments. The absence of crew to adequately serve and police the passengers aboard the hastily converted ships constantly posed problems for the Coast Guard, Navy and Army throughout the fleet. The cargo ships, manned by Merchant Marines, were staffed at their cargo-hauling levels, so the men working the ships were adept at moving crates and equipment, but not suited to transporting people, or to keeping order among bored and sometimes agitated soldiers heading to war. So, the army had to police their own aboard the Liberty ships.

In the midst of the wide Atlantic, the men had no idea what their destination would be. Back in Oregon, everyone was certain they'd be joining the fight in the Pacific. Crossing the country and now at sea,

the bets ranged widely – England? Naples? Palermo? Greece? Their original orders had called for them landing at Augusta, Sicily, but that had changed while they were at sea. After nearly three weeks on the Atlantic, the convoy passed through the Strait of Gibraltar on May 9th, and entered the Mediterranean Sea. Six of the ships carrying the 363rd Regiment, including the *Giles*, began moving south, away from the Spanish coast and to a landing at the port of Oran, Algeria, while the rest of the convoy continued east.

As the main part of the convoy sailed past Algiers, suddenly, out of the setting sun, a German aerial attack descended upon the ships. Although the Allies controlled North Africa and Sicily since Axis forces surrendered the territories in 1943, a convoy the size of UGS-40 did not pass unnoticed by the Germans. Sixty-two Junkers 88s, Dornier 217s, Heinkel 111s, and an FW Kondor reconnaissance plane were launched from southern France to attack the convoy. The British RAF scrambled fighter planes from their North African bases to help fend off the attack. The battle lasted forty minutes, during which the Germans launched ninety-two torpedoes and numerous bombs from their aircraft. None hit their target. Seventeen German planes were shot down and the British lost two aircraft in the fight.¹⁶⁶

The men of the 363rd Regiment, climbing down sisal rope ladders alongside the *Giles*, fortunately were not among those attacked. At that moment, they were too busy hanging on for dear life, weighed down by their pack and rifle, at what felt like a skyscraper's height above the awaiting DUKW, or "ducks," essentially, amphibious trucks, bobbing in the waves to take them ashore. Well, not quite ashore – rather, the men were dispatched from the landing craft into the warm Mediterranean waters to wade ashore with their rifles held high overhead. Once on dry land, the men were intrigued with the sights, sounds, and smells of this new land, including the onrush of Algerian boys wielding boxes and brushes, barking "shine, Joe?"

From offshore, the buildings of Oran shone like white beacons. Close up, the soldiers were disappointed by the dinginess and extremely poor living conditions.

Almost as soon as the Second Battalion hit the ground, Bud was transferred from Company G to Company F, led by Captain Eugene E.

Crowden, the officer in charge of security on the *Giles*.

The bulk of the 91st Division made the best of a desert encampment in Port aux Poules on the outskirts of Oran. Sea air rusted gun barrels and fine sand from the Sahara made its way into everything. In spite of round-the-clock sentries guarding the army encampment, local scavengers still managed to sneak in and steal practically anything that wasn't nailed down. Added to the joys of their desert outpost was a plague of locusts.¹⁶⁷

Soon, the 91st Division would start amphibious training for a full-scale mock invasion of Arzew Beach, about twenty-five miles to the east. The training exercises would be quite aggressive, and in open daylight, easily seen by German surveillance headquartered across the Mediterranean in southern France. Unbeknownst to the 91st, this was a goal of their training – a diversion to convince the Germans that the coming invasion of France would be aimed at the Mediterranean coast, not the Normandy shoreline. The amphibious mock invasion of Arzew was part of a subterfuge called Operation Vendetta, pointed directly at the port of Marseilles. Just as the American First Army stood poised at Dover, England, within easy striking distance of the port of Calais, as part of Operation Bodyguard, Vendetta was designed to lead the Germans to believe the invasion plans pointed directly at southern France.

☆☆☆☆



Ollie was promoted to full colonel in November 1942 and given command of the 309th Infantry Regiment of the 78th Division. The rank of colonel fit Ollie to a T. Administratively, he knew how to delegate by instilling confidence into every rank of officer, NCO, enlisted man, and draftee under his command of their responsibilities and role. He led by example, upholding the

lessons he'd learned in the army since 1916, and he knew how to impart those lessons to others. Colonel Reed was a beloved commander, a father figure to many. His full, jolly face exuded friendliness, even

sweeping over the rapidly constructed Mulberry harbors put into place immediately after D-Day. The temporary harbors provided anchorage for delivery of men and material to fuel the ongoing invasion of the European continent. The massive structures of concrete and steel, weighing thousands of tons, lay shredded along the beachfront.

The next day, Ollie continued:

This is Tuesday and know but whether it is the 19th or 20th I don't know.¹⁷³ The wind and the waves have held us here for 36 hours and no telling when we will move. I get impatient but remember your belief the "Everything – good, etc," and passes away with faith and patience. Am sitting up on the topmost bridge enjoying the keen wind making music in the rigging. The whitecaps are running their endless race and the cloud shadows come and go dappling the water and changing the color of the balloons. Balloons are everywhere – close by peaceful and serene and quite dignified, for off they group and look like a flock of big seagulls balanced in the sky. It is hard to believe that such a peaceful scene is actually the product of war. The soldiers have started singing so we have quite a combination of sounds up here on top. The wind in the rigging and just this instant "Annie Laurie" on a radio, a platoon exercising and other men rattling their mess kits as the line forms for early chow. Regular ship board life reduced to a very small ship.

Upon landing in France, Ollie was immediately driven to his new assignment as commanding officer of the 175th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Division.



Major General Charles H. Gerhardt

The 29th Division was commanded by General Charles H. Gerhardt, the man who initially led Bud's 91st Division and Ollie's classmate from the Command and General Staff School. In the battlefield, Gerhardt had the same hard-nosed reputation he had with the 91st in training. His "March, Shoot and Obey!" motto was always in his back pocket, but he tailored the motto of 29th, "29, Let's Go!" to his own style, distinctly pronouncing each portion: "Two-Nine, Let's Go!" As

pictured in *Time* magazine - a shirtless General Gerhardt atop his steed - Gerhardt was ever the cavalryman. He lived and commanded by the hard charge, “*Toujours attaque*” (always attack), was how General Charles L. Bolte described Gerhardt’s methods years later. Perhaps this was exactly what was needed when Gerhardt was given command of a division about to fight its way from the landing crafts at Omaha Beach up the sandy bluffs in the face of heavy fire, but many questioned his command style in the hedgerows of the French *bocage* (the Normandy landscape blending woodland and pastures). The men on the ground, as well as corps commanders, had a somber saying about “Uncle Charlie,” that he had three divisions – “one on the line, one in the hospital and one in the cemetery.”¹⁷⁴ Men feared the approach of his Jeep, nicknamed “Vixen Tor” after a granite outcropping in Devon, England where a legendary witch lived in a cave by that name. Accompanied by his dog, D-Day, riding at his side, Gerhardt was known to come to a screeching halt to upbraid battle-weary men for not properly buckling the chinstrap of their helmet, or officers for not wearing their rank insignias. He was an aggressive commander for whom “Let’s go!” had real meaning. He believed in always moving forward and never back, no matter what the cost.

Ollie reported to the headquarters of the 29th Division in the tiny hamlet of Vessie, France, northeast of the crossroads town of Saint-Lô. Gerhardt tersely greeted Ollie upon his arrival: “Welcome aboard Colonel Reed.” With formalities over, Ollie was driven directly to his regimental command post, where he took charge on June 23, 1944.

He wrote to Mildred upon his arrival, greatly underplaying what he was seeing, “except for some stuff along the shore and some badly knocked about houses, everything looks fairly nice. Right now I am sitting in a folding wooden theater chair in a quiet orchard



hilltop and a nice little breeze is ruffling my few remaining hairs.”

In a short time, Ollie was feeling the weight of the command responsibilities he had been assigned, as he wrote home:

Monday the 26th

Dearest

This is my third day in command. I have learned what real prayer is – prayer for my men and myself.

Join me – please.

By his side was the book Mildred had given the entire family, *Strength for Service to God and Country*, four-by-five-inch hardcover pocket book. First published in 1942, *Strength for Service* was a compilation of scripture readings for each day of the year, underscored by with a lesson about the passage.¹⁷⁵ The booklet remains in print today. In each of their copies, Mildred had circled her birthday, along with those of Ollie, Bud, Ted, Laura, and Ollie III to add special meaning to that particular day’s reading.

Ollie’s new position was among the toughest he had ever faced, and could be quite isolating. “I have the feeling that ‘family’ feeling or friendship means little here,” Ollie wrote.

As Ollie would also learn, a replacement officer was no different from a replacement private on the line. In Normandy, he was replacing his old friend from the 29th Regiment, Colonel Paul R. “Pop” Goode who had been captured by the Germans.

Colonel Goode, a 1917 West Point graduate, landed at Omaha Beach in command of the 175th Regiment, was taken prisoner on June 13 while leading a company on an assignment from General Gerhardt to capture a bridge and round up stragglers from an earlier unsuccessful attempt.¹⁷⁶ Goode was certain the general was ordering a suicide mission and refused the stay behind after ordering his men to march into certain peril and refused to not accompany them. Goode told Captain Kernan Slingluff, commanding officer of Company K, “Captain, I wouldn’t order anybody to go into a thing like this unless I went myself, so I am just along for the buggy ride. Just consider that I am not here, and I will go along.”

Slingluff led his men deeper behind German lines where they engaged the enemy at the bridge over the Vire River. They were badly out-gunned and out of range of artillery support. The platoon to his left started with forty-two men and one officer, but was already reduced to five and a wounded officer. Slingluff suffered shrapnel wounds from a German mortar to his knee and hip, “but it wasn’t bad,” he told his father in 1945. Finally, a rifle bullet pierced his right hip, making it impossible to move. As Slingluff faded in and out of consciousness, his company risked encirclement. He ordered his second in command to gather the men and fight their way through the right side, leaving behind anyone who could not walk on their own – and that included him. His first sergeant threw him a half bottle of cognac, saying: “Captain, you always said you wanted to die drunk.”

Colonel Goode had not been hit, but he refused to leave, saying that he had come to see the operation through. Exhausting all of their machine gun and mortar ammunition, and with little rifle and carbine ammunition remaining, Goode made the decision to stop the fight.¹⁷⁷

“Captain, they have killed enough of your men now. I am going to surrender you.”

Slingluff ordered his men to cease fire, and Colonel Goode stepped out and surrendered the remains of Company K.¹⁷⁸

Thirty-five men managed to escape capture and eighteen were taken prisoner, meaning that only fifty-three survived out of the 225 who started the mission.¹⁷⁹

Goode was taken prisoner and held in Stalag 7a in Moosberg, Germany until the camp’s liberation in April 1945. Slingluff was held in Poland and walked away from the camp when the Germans abandoned it in the face of oncoming Russian forces.

Goode was succeeded by his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander George, a 1920 graduate of West Point, who, in turn, was severely wounded on June 17 in the advance on Hill 108. George suffered severe wounds from a German grenade blast as he was leading a First Battalion patrol against an enemy machine gun position. George had already earned a reputation for recklessness. Following D-Day, George found a discarded bicycle and, as GIs watched in stunned

amazement, he rode along the front lines yelling, "Give 'em hell, boys!"

"He sure as hell didn't look the part of an executive officer, let alone a West Pointer," recalled one infantryman. George also took charge of a rifle squad in a successful attack against a troublesome German "88," The feared German artillery weapon being used against tanks and infantry.

The report of his wounding reached General Gerhardt.

"He was leading a patrol against a machine gun nest and someone lobbed a grenade, and it got him full in the face," Major Leslie Harness, the 175th's S-3 officer, reported to Gerhardt over the telephone.

"He shouldn't have been up there," Gerhardt snapped.

"He was hit above the eyes and his nose is half gone and he has holes in his back," Harness replied. "He'll be a casualty for some time."

George survived but was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel William Purnell, a Maryland National Guardsman and longtime member of the regiment, who would eventually rise to the rank of major general. Purnell's command was only temporary as Gerhardt demanded a professional soldier from the Regular Army to take over the 175th, and that would be Colonel Ollie Reed.¹⁸⁰

The 175th Regiment was in the fight for Hill 108, named "Purple Heart Hill," for the number of casualties suffered in the fight for the strategic high ground. Colonel Reed was given command of the 175th Regiment in the midst of the battle to control the hill and move forward. Purnell stayed on as Reed's executive assistant.

When Ollie took command, the 175th had been in non-stop combat since landing on Omaha Beach more than two weeks earlier. The regiment successfully opened the advance on the first major goal, the crossroads town of Saint-Lô, on June 16-17, pushing the 29th Division well ahead of the 30th Division. Elements of the First Battalion advanced within two miles of Saint-Lô, making it appear the regiment could take the German-held town on its own. General Gerhardt was delighted, reporting to General Charles H. "Cowboy Pete" Corlett, commander of XIX Corps, "I feel we'll be getting to Saint-Lô before long."

Instead, the advance was bogged down in the thick hedgerows of the Normandy countryside, which provided cover for German infantry, tanks, and mortars. The 29th was forced into a more defensive posture, against General Gerhardt's instincts. Some feared the situation could quickly evolve into a stalemate along the lines of trench warfare of World War I. In Normandy, the fighting would be from hedgerow to hedgerow. Ollie wrote in the gallows humor of life on the front lines:



Hedgerow fighting, Normandy. (National Archives)

Before I forget I want to tell you of the chuckle I get three times a day at least. We (American soldiers) move around with a great deal of respect for the German shell fire – our own guns shoot over us and frequently we'll dodge first and then realize that that shell is going out – not coming in. A sudden dive is normal and quite uncalled for. As I went to breakfast the other a.m. I took such an uncalled for dive and twenty yards later turned a wall corner to see an old 80 year old grandmother calmly plodding across the barnyard with a chamber mug in one hand and her staff in the other hand. There are two French families within 400 yards of my CP calmly going about their normal business in life. There is also a little grey jackass in the field (the fields are about 200x200 yards) next to mine who has gone through the shelling with never a duck or a scratch and gives his triumphant bray morning and evening. If he loses his rabbit foot I will miss him a lot...Am mainly concerned now with rejuvenating, refitting and raising the morale of this outfit.

Had a pleasant surprise today. A big grin and 'aren't you Colonel Reed?' One of the 309th boys – have been disappointed not seeing more of them.

Frontline replacements were often shocked by the sight of combat veterans. A young lieutenant from the 35th Division recalled his rifle company replacing one from the 29th.



Members of the 175th rest in a Tussy sur Vire taproom.
(Maryland Military Museum / National Archives)

We had little idea what the 29th had been through. We found all the men wearing their field jackets reversed. It reflected a lot of light. They had [them] turned inside out because on the inside was a kind of dull lining and they were trying to get the effect of camouflage. Officers didn't carry anything that would mark them as officers. Their bars were all

concealed. They discarded a lot of their equipment. They were a pretty badly beat up outfit. We hadn't expected anything like that, and our first reaction was that this is not a very good outfit.¹⁸¹

By late June, when Ollie took command of the 175th, an "old" soldier was one who had survived at least three days on the line. Battle fatigue was setting in. Some men aimlessly staggered around the front like wide-eyed drunks, while others adopted the hardened one thousand-yard stare. Medics dispensed blue tranquilizers that jokingly became known as "Blue 88s," as powerful as the German 88-millimeter gun.

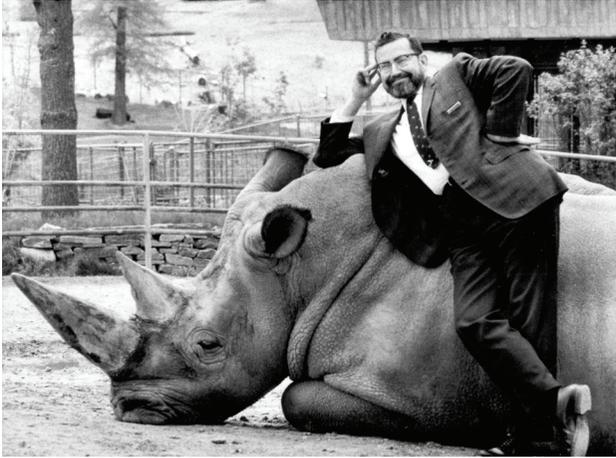
Casualties steeply mounted. The 5,211 members of the 29th Division rifle companies, thirty-seven percent of the division's total manpower, suffered over ninety percent of the division's casualties. Most 29th Division rifle companies that landed on D-Day had a near-complete turnover in personnel by mid-July.

By the time a replacement arrived, his morale was already shaky. He had been dislocated from his training unit and suddenly dropped into a holding area on the edge of a war zone filled with the sights, sounds, and smells of combat, seeing the dead and wounded coming back from the front. The replacement was something of an orphan. He knew no one and no one wanted to be his friend. Combat veterans had already lost enough friends and they did not need any new ones. "I have seen men killed or captured when even their squad leaders didn't know their names," one infantryman said.

Joining a new unit in the midst of battle was the worst. "I saw replacements headed for an infantry regiment brought in under the

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Epilogue



Ted Reed, as director of the National Zoo in Washington, DC, with a rhinoceros. Undated.

TED REED GRADUATED from Kansas State University and married his college sweetheart, Elizabeth Crandall, the editor of the college yearbook, soon after graduation. At the age of thirty-four, Ted became the director of the National Zoo in Washington, DC, and is credited with making it one of the world's leading zoological parks. When he took charge of the park in 1956, Ted described it as a "zoological slum."

As Ted was steadily making improvements to the zoo, tragedy struck two years after he had taken charge of the National Zoo.

On May 16, 1958, two-and-a-half-year-old Julia Ann Vogt from British Columbia was mauled by two lions, Pasha and Princess, after slipping through a guardrail. Questions abounded as to how the child could have gotten through the rails, but calls rang out for the lions to be killed. Director Reed refused to euthanize the lions, focusing instead upon the improvements to make the zoo safe and enjoyable for visitors.

Ted managed to turn the tragedy into a call to action for further improvements at the zoo, convening a commission to review safety issues. He pioneered the transformation of zoos into research facilities, developing the Conservation Biology Institute in Front Royal, Virginia,

also part of the Smithsonian Institution. He brought the first white tiger to the United States from India in 1960 and is probably best-known for bringing the giant pandas, Hsing-Hsing and Ling-Ling, to the National Zoo in 1972 as part of the opening of diplomatic relations between the United States and China. Ted ran the National Zoo as if it was his command, like his father – firm but fair. He demanded excellence and imagination, while relying on the knowledge and professionalism of each member of the staff to do the best job possible. He cared about his people and they, in turn, cared about him.



Elizabeth Crandall and Ted Reed wedding
April 20, 1945.

Ted and Elizabeth spent their honeymoon at the Kansas City Zoo. “We had a good time, no matter what she says,” Ted told the *Washington Post*. Elizabeth, besides raising two children, also was a surrogate mother to many of the zoo babies throughout the years. Their children were used to having exotic animals living in the house, turning their home into a very popular place to hang out for their friends. Ted may have managed the National Zoo in his father’s style of a colonel but he made a point of raising his children with love, affection, and fun, without military-style hierarchy.

Ted and Elizabeth’s son, Mark, followed in his father’s footsteps, graduating from Kansas State University in Zoology and is today the executive director of the Sedgwick County Zoo in Wichita, Kansas. Mark’s sister, Maryalyce, sought adventure in faraway places, inspired, no doubt, by her grandmother’s stories, and is now living in a remote region of New Zealand. Maryalyce’s daughter, hearing stories of the exciting zoo life her mother lived, spent part of her college years observing lowland gorillas in Africa.

Ted’s wife, Elizabeth, died of cancer in 1978 and, in 1980, Ted married Dr. Sandra Foote. Ted passed away in Milford, Delaware, on July 2, 2013.

Bill Vaughan, born Ollie W. Reed, III, looked back at the events of

his earliest years - the deaths of his father and grandfather, and the news of their deaths arriving the same day to his mother and grandmother - as the defining moments of his life. He felt driven toward public service as his calling and had planned to attend West Point, just like his father, but just as it almost knocked his father out of the academy, he was refused entry due to color blindness. Bill worked on Capitol Hill for 36 years and then for the Consumers Union, before retiring.



Bill Vaughan and Luther Davis, the artist who painted Colonel Reed's portrait in 1944, at the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. (Dennis Whitehead)

“All my life there has been a melancholy tune, where I often think, I've lived for X percent longer than my father, and am I really doing things that would make him proud?”

In 1980, at the age of eight-four, Mildred sat still long enough to gather her thoughts and old letters in her self-published memoirs, *Letters from Mit*, written for the benefit of her grandchildren. She closed the chapter about her beloved husband with a stanza from the poem “There is No Death,” by an anonymous author:

You call it death – this seeming endless sleep:
 We call it birth – the soul at last set free.
 Tis hampered not by time or space.
 You weep. Why weep at Death? Tis Immortality.

Another poem concluded the chapter about her son, possibly penned by Mildred herself:

Time cannot dim the cherished thoughts
 of loved ones who have gone,
 Nor age those brave and gallant souls
 whose memories linger on;
 They live enshrined within our hearts, forever young and gay,
 Their dreams are ours to cherish still,
 Their hopes will light our way.

Mildred never dwelled upon her grief and tragic losses. Rather, she always had faith that God would look out for her and that whatever had occurred in her life was God's will, and she abided by it.

Mildred's thoughts went out to the young men she and Ollie had known through the years who lost their lives in the war, particularly those from Wentworth and West Point, as well as members of the 309th Regiment, those left behind in the Philippines, and their families:



Hector Polla (USMA)

Hector Polla, the son of Italian immigrants from Higginsville, Missouri, whose Italian-immigrant parents worked very hard to send him to Wentworth and then West Point, entered the academy with Bud Reed and graduated in the class of 1941. He was captured by the Japanese in Bataan, survived the Bataan death march to the Cabanatuan POW camp, where he was transferred two days before its liberation to an unmarked ship that was sunk by Allied bombers, along with 1,600 others.

Kenneth Griffiths, a Kansas native and Wentworth graduate, and his Lexington wife, Mildred's old neighbor, Sarah Ann Aull, sailed to the Philippines with the Reeds on the *U.S. Grant*. Mildred and Ann were close friends throughout their time in Manila. Lieutenant Griffiths, stationed with the Philippine Scouts, remained behind to fight and was captured in the battle of Bataan. He died a prisoner in the Cabanatuan POW camp. He had contracted cerebral malaria but no drugs were available for treatment in captivity. A daughter, Ann Quarles Griffiths, was born on December 3, 1941. News about the birth of his daughter reached him in the Philippines a week after war had been declared.



Kenneth Griffiths (USMA)



Sandy Nininger (USMA)

Sandy Nininger entered West Point at the same time as Bud, graduating in the class of 1941, and was the first USMA graduate to die in World War II. He was killed in the fighting to defend Bataan. Wounded several times and out of ammunition, Nininger killed three Japanese soldiers in hand-to-hand combat before succumbing to the loss of blood.

CHAPTER ONE

Norton, Kansas



Mildred Boddy, age seven (Courtesy Patricia Tharp)

Youth sped past with the carefree abandon of “the good old days.” Hayrack rides, ice cream socials, box suppers, taffy pulls, slumber parties, run-sheep-run on summer evenings, ice skating on the creek in winter. There was a lot going on and I didn’t miss much.

—Mildred Boddy Reed

IN 1896, NORTON was a small northwest Kansas town born of hardscrabble pioneers struggling against harsh elements and fickle economic times. They made the best of what they could from what little was given and thanked the Lord for their blessings. The 576,000 acres in the thirty square miles of Norton County are situated about twenty miles south of Nebraska and fifty miles east of Colorado. A 1901 issue of *Western Resources Monthly* magazine described Norton in glowing terms:

The climate is all that could be asked. The county has an elevation of about 2,300 feet above sea level, and the air is dry and exhilarating, free from malaria of all kinds. The land is very fertile, easily tilled, free from stone, stumps and weeds and very productive.¹