

CHAPTER 17

STUCK ON THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Colorado people don't go to Kansas. They go through Kansas. It Just So Happened that it took us longer--from 1950 to 1969--to do so.

Our first "Port of Call," on the Neosho River, was Emporia--the Market Place. We arrived in Emporia in the evening and stopped on the way in to eat at a little food emporium. It was there that our two sons were welcomed enthusiastically by two young ladies who were also dining there. The young ladies began a dramatic flirtation with William Michael age 5 and James Harold age 2, and it was not long before William Michael and James Harold were reciprocating. That first hour in Emporia became a wonderful giggling affair. Those two young ladies, we later learned, were sisters, and one of them was named Janet. Janet would, a few years later, marry the Buchanans' son Jim.

HAPPY TO HAVE YOU. The point is, we went into Emporia through a "door of welcome" and the door never closed. The place was full of friendly people--as was all of the rest of Kansas as far as we ever learned. Shortly after the welcome of Janet and her sister came the welcome of George and Mary Ann Crocker. The Crocker's were a young couple who lived on the second floor above us in our first residence--a big old house just off of main street. George was an artist and teacher at Olpe, Kansas. Mary Ann was a charmer and became one of Mike's special friends. It did not take long for the Crockers and Tremmels, including Michael and James, to become pretty involved in each other's lives.

I recall a couple of those involvements. The first was an incident that took place during our first Christmas season in Emporia. The incident started sometime earlier. Michael had a kitten. He liked that kitten very much, but the kitten got sick. Michael's father did everything he knew to do, but he failed. The kitten died. Shortly thereafter Michael began to question his father about God. Who was God? Where was God? What did God do? We were heading down a Freudian road that became more evident on Christmas day.

Michael and James had gone upstairs to show George and Mary Ann some of their toys. While they were there, Jim managed to break a little toy filling station that Santa had brought. He took the broken toy to George and said, "George, fix it." George looked the toy over and finally said, "Jim, this is too broken. I can't fix it." Jim then said, "Well, my Daddy can fix it" and went off downstairs. [George told me all of this later.] At that point Michael looked at George and said, "I used to think that Dad could fix everything too, but he can't."¹

Another involvement happened because of George's art talents and teaching responsibilities. He wanted to put on a play with his kids at Olpe High School, and he did not want just any old play. He wanted a special play, so he decided

¹What you need to fix some things is that Big Daddy upstairs, *a la* Sigmund F.

to write the play himself. Easier said than done. He was fussing around one evening, trying to get started. Trying to be helpful, I suggested that it ought to be about Kansas, but not just ordinary Kansas. And then I got a wonderful inspiration. I said, "Do Kansas backwards and call it Sasnak." He did. And it turned into a damned good script. I know. I was his editorial adviser.

A MAN FROM KANSAS. The City of the Market Place (Emporia) was a neat town; some 15,000 people, most of whom nodded and spoke to you as you walked along the street. It also had, we soon discovered, a William Allen White tradition: William Allen White (1868-1944). What can I say about him? He was just an editor of a little Kansas newspaper called the Emporia Gazette. But he was really a little more than that as David Hinshaw put it in his book titled *A Man From Kansas*:

The position William Allen White held in the nation for nearly five decades was unique because he almost perfectly blended provincialism and cosmopolitanism. Because of this blend, together with his wisdom, tolerance, neighborly kindness, keen sense of justice, and his remarkable ability to describe and interpret them, he became the most quoted editorial writer in the nation and then grew into a world figure.....

These qualities help to explain the paradox he was: the country-town editor...who became and remained primarily that, but who also became and remained the most famous, the most esteemed, and probably the most influential American editor of his day. His death was noted in newspapers throughout the world. The London Times commented on his passing with a long appreciative editorial. Although his newspaper never had a circulation of more than eight thousand copies a day, it nevertheless ranked in influence beside metropolitan dailies with circulations running into hundreds of thousands. He made Emporia, which never has reached a population of fifteen thousand, the most famous small, *modern* city in the English-speaking world...²

I include this extra display on William Allen White, who was dead before we got to Emporia, because he was not really dead when we got to Emporia. The W.A.W influence was all over the place. Example: in colleges and universities it is normal for professors to get together and read papers at each other, but have you ever heard of ordinary citizens, even business men, doing this? They did in Emporia. And one of the most cherished and serious of those organizations was The Moot Club (the William Allan White discussion club). I was invited to join. I did and, believe me, it was no casual social get together. Indeed, the only dimension of casual socializing was an apple. At each meeting the host furnished apples. As the members munched their apples,

²David Hinshaw, *A Man From Kansas* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1945), p.3.

This is one of two books on W.A.W. found and bought by Mike a few years back in a flea market in Brooksville, Florida. She might let you borrow them--carefully.

one of the members read a paper on a serious topic all the way from "The Bill of Rights Revisited" to "Picasso and Modern Cubism."

Another example: right around the corner from where we lived when we first arrived in Emporia was a little men's shoe store where you could buy a pair of shoes if you wanted to. But where you could also get involved in a discussion concerning Socrates or Thomas Aquinas, if you wanted to--because the back room of that store was the unofficial headquarters of the local men's philosophy emporium.

OFF TO SCHOOL - ALL OF US. Considering a town named Market Street,³ whose main street was called Commercial, it was not surprising to discover not only the state teachers college there, but also an excellent private liberal arts college there.⁴ Not surprising, that is, because this Market Place was not just a market place. Emporia was an extraordinary town.

Only one of those colleges really interested me: Kansas State Teachers College.⁵ It was there that I first discovered what it means to be a *new* faculty member: ungodly preparations, ungodly hours per week, and not enough experience really to know when enough is enough and say, "Enough!"⁶

Michael, who was five years old, immediately joined me on campus. He enrolled in kindergarten at the Laboratory School of Emporia State Teachers College (called the Lab School) where teachers-in-training gained experience. The Lab School was also designed to experiment with new teaching techniques. Three years later, having attained kindergarten maturity, James joined us on campus. Michael and James had things under control from day one. It took me longer.

A REAL BRICK ROAD. By the time I got "enough is enough" under control, we had moved to a new location in Emporia: to 1518 Berkeley Road.⁷ Berkeley Road was not just a street, it was a special place where people who knew what living was all about lived that way--all five families of us. Across the street, on the corner south of us, lived Scotty MacFarlene and his wife Mildred. Scotty was President of the teachers college. Next to MacFarlenes, north, lived a family named Hubbard which included little twin daughters and a small son (names not remembered). In one more house north lived Delmos and Dorothy Goldsberry and their four kids: Sally, Connie, Jim and Steve. Jim

³Which is, of course, what Emporia means.

⁴A Presbyterian College.

⁵Now called Emporia State University.

⁶I taught classes in philosophy and in what would one day be called "religious studies". Religious studies was something yet to be born in the consciousness of American public education. I helped in its birthing.

⁷Berkeley Road really was a brick road--red brick.

Goldsberry and Jim Tremmel were about the same age and became great friends. On the south corner on our side of the street: Mrs. Soden and her grown up daughter Peggy and grown up son Billy; then The Tremmels; a vacant lot; John and Irene Morgan and their three kids: Chris, Lynn, Betsy. That was it. But what an *it*.

Scotty MacFarlene was not only President, he was a proud Scot who on the slightest provocation dressed up in kilts and paraded about blowing his bag pipe. After I had been at Kansas State Teachers a sufficient time, I was granted tenure. Shortly after that I was out in the front yard cutting the lawn. Scotty was also out in his front yard. He crooked his finger for me to come over. I was young enough then to "jump how high" at an administrator's crooking finger. He looked at me frowning and asked, "Did you get tenure? Did I sign your tenure papers?"

I said, "Yes."

He pursed his lips, frowned, then asked, "Do you know what that means?"

I said, "Yes. I think so."

He asked, "It means that I can't fire you, doesn't it?"

Beginning to feel the undercurrent of amusement, I said, "Yes."

He then said, "I can't fire you. You have tenure. But remember I can make you the janitor."

That was Scotty MacFarlene. He was actually congratulating me, with his rather typical kind of humor.

Two houses north of MacFarlenes lived The Goldsberrys--Delmos and Dorothy. Delmos was a stubby built, successful building contractor. Dorothy was also stubby and, in addition, was chubby and full of zip. Besides building contractor, Delmos was also a story teller. Often on a summer evening you could look across the street and see Delmos sitting on the front yard steps with a half-dozen kids sprawled on the grass around him. He was telling stories. I never heard any of the stories, but they must have been fascinating because those kids were fascinated.

On our side of the street, across a vacant lot, north of us lived the Morgans. John was a physician, who after a medical education at the University of Chicago and Mayo Clinic, returned to Emporia where he had been born. He had sense enough to know he could not do better. Irene was a match for him on any day. She was also a person willing, even delighted, to share her little Lynn with Mike, who at that time had no daughter of her own. Lynn apparently decided she could use two mothers and adopted Mike. Indeed, there were some days when we could not be sure where Lynn really lived--at our house or the Morgan house.

One day Mike was going out so she got dressed and then told Lynn she would have to go home now. Lynn went home and told Irene that "Mrs. Tremmel had to go somewhere because she had her big shoes [high heels] on".

When we first moved to Berkeley Road, John Morgan was in a sanitarium in Topeka, Kansas. He had contracted tuberculosis. Eventually the T.B. was

arrested and he came home. We, of course, knew all about him because of our close neighborhood contacts with Irene and company.

I knew he had been an avid fisherman. So when he got home, I bought a stubby-length fishing pole, reel and line, as a coming home gift. I set up the rig with a lead weight on the end of the line. All it needed was hook, bait and water. I went next door with this treasure. John was upstairs, on the bed, resting. That was part of his continuing therapy. He took the pole in hand and with a flip of his wrist sent that lead weight, with a smile, flying right over the end of his bed. I then proposed that we make plans to go fishing in a nearby lake. He was all for that. So on the scheduled day, we went. We got out our fishing equipment: poles, reels, lines, hooks. Then I observed something peculiar. John had cast his line into the water, but he had put no bait on the hook.

I said, "Hey, you didn't bait that hook."

He said, "I know. This time I am not fishing for fish. I am fishing for the joy of it."

I knew what he meant, and still do: sometimes you do things not for the fun of it, but for the joy of it: not as a recreation, but as a thanksgiving.⁸

A BIG FISH BOWL. John and I became very good, quiet friends; i.e., we never talked substantial, professional talk; rather we smiled together at what was going on around us, and took with amused seriousness our responsibilities at Country Club Lake.

Just a few blocks north of 1518 was that Emporia Country Club--mostly for golf, of course, but also there was a lake there. Neither John nor I gave a damn about golf, but lake was a different matter. First, John had to get me involved, so he nominated me for membership in the Emporia Country Club. I was shocked at the idea. But he argued that he could get me a special rate (being a professor) and that there were fish in that lake. So Mike and I became members of a country club. But more than that, John and I soon became The Lake Committee. We were "lake responsible," which involved, of course, keeping the lake stocked with plenty of fish. This turned out to be pretty much a private affair. Nobody except Tremmels and Morgans seemed to know the lake (with fish) was there, and we were perfectly willing to let it remain that way.

Besides fish, we discovered, to James Tremmel's delight, the lake also had a supply of little turtles. So often while I fished, Jim turtle hunted.

ODD SAFETY DEVICES. Even before the Tremmels went country clubbing,

⁸John Morgan was also the author of one of my forever sayings. Each time I can't find some tool that I laid down but don't remember where, which is regularly, I remember John's astute observation: "A person really needs two of everything--one to use, and one to lose."

they had succumbed to the fishing craze.⁹ We fished along the banks of the Neosho River. But there was a problem. The Neosho was a muddy, muddy river. You simply could not see six inches under the surface, and the banks were steep. So if a kid fell in you would be involved in a dangerous situation trying to get him out. Mike and I solved this problem by taking two ropes with us when we went fishing. One end of each rope we tied to a kid, the other end to a tree. So while we fished William Michael and James Harold played safely on the end of their ropes.

A BIRD IN THE HAND. Turtles were not the only wild things in our lives. Another wild thing was Wilbur. Mike and the boys were driving down the street past Morgan's house. They spotted a baby robin on the Morgan's parking. They stopped to rescue it and brought it home. For some reason we called that baby robin Wilbur. And partly because John Morgan had given Jim a book on pets,¹⁰ we were able to feed Wilbur properly and he survived, grew up, and became a marvelous nuisance around the house, especially when Wilbur would fly through the house with Parson chasing from one room to the next. Wilbur also liked to perch on the cornices above the windows in the front room and breakfast room. He would sit there and pull threads from the drapery material practicing worm digging. Wilbur also liked watermelon and bathing. He would splash around so much and get so wet that he could not fly.

Eventually Wilbur got big enough to go back to the wild. We made a ceremony of it. Mother, father, William Michael, James Harold took Wilbur outside, wished Wilbur well, and turned Wilbur loose. Wilbur flew away. Next day we read in the Emporia Gazette that, not far from our house, a lady had reported that while hanging out her washing on the clothes line, a robin landed on that line and hopped down the line to visit with her. No doubt about it, that was Wilbur.¹¹

RED NOSE IN THE SKY. We almost had another pet but Jim failed to catch him. It happened on Christmas Eve. Jim was lying on his bed looking out the window. Suddenly he called us excitedly, "Come here. Come here. Rudolph is out there, up there!" Sure enough, out there, up there was Rudolph's red nose flying by. There were airplanes in those days, but not many flying over Emporia, so it was not a bad bet that a red blinking light flying over Emporia on Christmas Eve was Rudolph. Whatever, that Rudolph made a memory that

⁹In fact, Mike and I went fishing the day we got married, and we caught fish that day. But for some reason, after getting home from fishing that day, we got distracted and forgot to cook those fish.

¹⁰Barbara Bates, *The Real Book About Pets*, (Garden City, New York: Garden City Books, 1952) pp. 166-170.

¹¹As Wilbur grew to maturity, we discovered that Wilbur should really have been named Wilhelmina.

Mike and I never forgot, or wanted to.

FUN FOR ALL. The Berkeley coterie was not the only source of fun in Emporia. There were fun possibilities all over the place: there was a real live Santa Fe railroad station, and quite often in the evening we would go down there to see the passenger train come in (and go out). Yes, even waving to people in the train as they waved to us. Almost always on those occasions we would stop in a little nearby cafe and have dinner.

And we were picnic people, picnicking at the drop of a hat. We also liked vacations, going especially to Colorado regularly. On the way we would visit with Mike's family in Eastern Colorado, my parents in Englewood, the Foxes in Boulder. We also visited the Worrells in Raton, New Mexico, and later, after they moved there, in Keosauqua, Iowa.

Also, as traditional people, the Tremmels celebrated special days--birthdays, Fourth of July, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Easter. We also celebrated Children's Day--a sort of private invention. One day a year should be just for kids. It is a good thing to do. And if you have kids young enough, one way to celebrate the day is by building them a big sandbox out in the back yard. We did that one year and it became a major attraction for kids all up and down Berkeley Road.

We parents were not the only ones who remembered to celebrate special days. Michael and James remembered, too. For example, on one June 22 anniversary,¹² each boy contributed from his weekly allowance a sufficient amount. Michael at 8 years of age rode down town on his bicycle and bought an anniversary gift: a set of aluminum kitchen ware--a container pot for bacon grease, and salt and pepper shakers; on other anniversaries: catsup and mustard squeeze bottles, and a wall pencil sharpener. Those gifts are still with us, and still used regularly.

And sometimes we cheated a little to have fun, as, for example, the Republican parade. When Michael was four years old, instead of a teddy bear, his mother and I constructed a cuddly, stuffed elephant for him--about fifteen inches tall, big ears, big nose, pants, shirt. Mike sewed the parts. I did the stuffing. When Jim was four years old he got a twin elephant. When we got to Emporia they were shaping up for the Eisenhower-Stevenson race.¹³ They were having a parade. We decided that Michael and James might have fun in a parade. So we decorated their two tricycles with red, white, blue streamers, tied those elephants on the handlebars, and headed for the starting line without a smudge of our Democratic Party affiliations showing.

There was nothing illegal or immoral about what our boys were doing. The Republicans invited anybody and everybody to march. It was not illegal or immoral, but it was amusing when two little unidentified Democrats won the first place prize.

¹²That day when years earlier Mike forgot to cook the fish.

¹³Remember, Dwight D. Eisenhower was a Kansas boy.

NO EGG IN HIS BASKET. And in Emporia, for kids especially, there was Peter Pan Park. A few years ago, a student asked me what was the most beautiful thing I ever saw, and immediately I could answer his question. It happened in Peter Pan Park the day before Easter. We took the boys for an Easter egg hunt. Michael was old enough to understand what was really going on--you run around looking for colored eggs. But Jim was not yet quite that sophisticated. He was just there with a basket and a bunch of kids. The kids lined up. Somebody said, "Go." And they all went. Jim happily chasing after them. He just ran for fun of it. Very quickly, as is the case in Easter egg hunting, the eggs were all found. But kids continued milling around just in case. Then I saw it. A little girl ran up to Jim and said something to him. I saw them look into his basket. I saw a little flash of distress on that little girl's face. No eggs. Then I saw her take an egg out of her basket and put it in Jim's basket. She turned and ran off. The most beautiful thing I ever saw, no doubt about it.

Also many summer afternoons were spent at Peter Pan Park swimming pool where, among other things, I saw to it that two boys learned to swim.

WATER WITH SALT IN IT. In the spring of 1951, The Tremmels packed the car and drove to Los Angeles where father enrolled for the summer term at the University of Southern California.

I just now asked Mike what we remember about that summer. She said, "Well, there was Gorgeous George."

"Gorgeous George?"

"Yes, the wrestler. Remember, we didn't have television in Emporia. We did in California, and about the first thing we saw on television was a wrestling match with that big, bulky, Gorgeous George in it. He had bushy long hair. The first long haired male we had ever seen."

Fortunately I have ability to forget such things. Rather I remember such things as that day at the beach when Mike was in the water just as a big wave hit shore. She survived but her bra was gone, and for a few seconds she was so water shocked that she did not notice her condition. We rescued the bra and she "got decent" again. And I remembered.

There were those piers and fishermen and sandy beaches (which the kids defined as big sandboxes) where if you dropped a coin the sand literally swallowed it. And, of course, that fantastic ocean. I also enjoyed the university classes, although I don't remember learning anything I did not already know.

NO DOGS IN ARIZONA. On the way to California, we traveled the southern route through New Mexico and Arizona. Some place not far from the Arizona line, Mike, reading from a travel guide book, announced, "I think we are about to have some trouble." She had discovered that to enter Arizona dogs must have certificates affirming certain vaccinations. Poochy was no problem, because Poochy was boarding back in Emporia. But Parson was a problem. He was sitting in the back seat with the kids. What to do? I declared that we

would try deception. As we approached the border inspection station, Parson was to be on the floor with a light blanket covering him. The kids were to pat the blanket, if necessary to keep him quiet. Fortunately, at the station the inspector was hard of hearing, as evidenced by the hearing aid in his ear, otherwise he might have heard a panting dog. It was hot in Arizona.

We made it through. A way down the road Michael asked, "Daddy, why don't they like dogs in Arizona?" Unlike with the moon question, I had no wisdom answer this time. I don't know what I said, but I must have mumbled something.

It was not the dog incident that caused Mike to declare Arizona a-place-of-no-gracefulness, it was the desert in the middle of the day. Even without dog problem, that would have been enough to send us home by way of Nevada and Utah, not Arizona and New Mexico.

And we went that other way. And on our way we stopped in a little town somewhere in Nevada. It was lunch time, so we stopped into a little place to eat. Once through the front door, we could turn right into a restaurant area or turn left into a gambling parlor--a fascinating place of slot machines and roulette wheels and other exciting paraphernalia. In the foyer of the building, there was the statue of a gold miner. Over the doorway of the room to the left there was a sign that read, "No minors allowed." We looked at the statue. I read the sign out loud. Little Jim, excited by what he could see and hear through the open door, asked, "Daddy, is I a miner?" I said, "No, you're not a miner." Like a flash he was into that room. He was obviously so fascinated by it all that we were in no real hurry to retrieve him.

A NICE STORMY DAY THAT WAS. Back in Emporia we settled in for a couple of years. And then another major event--November 28, 1953: Susan Beth!¹⁴ This time we ordered a girl. And this time it was to be done up in special style: mamma and daughter were to have a private hospital room, with flowers, and cards, and love, and celebration--even, it turned out, a celebration I could not have logically anticipated.

In the good old days when a baby was born, father stood in the hall and admired the new addition through a viewing window. But It Just So Happened that this father had a professor colleague who had a nurse wife--Charles and Ellen Masten.¹⁵ Ellen happened to be on duty that important day. I was in the room with Mike when the door opened and in walked Ellen Masten with a bundle in her arms. She walked to me and said, "Here, it's yours." And there she was in my arms, that little bundle of daughter, and I said, I remember it exactly, "Susie, Susie, I love you already."

The Susie name (Susan) was a second choice name. I wanted to name her Stormy, but Alice Fox talked us out of that. She suggested strongly that "Stormy" might be all right for a little girl, but when little girls grow up they

¹⁴Born in Newman Memorial Hospital.

¹⁵The Mastens were two of our good Emporia friends who did not live on Berkeley Road.

should have something more dignified than the title of a strip-tease entertainer. So Stormy was changed to Susan, but I was right. This I know today because when Susie grew up she declared that Stormy was the name she would have chosen for herself no matter what the implications. And every now and then, guess what, a letter will come from Susan Beth signed Stormy. Sorry kid. I just got voted down.

So first we celebrated in the hospital room the morning of Stormy's birth and, second, we celebrated at the Morgan house. Irene cooked supper for father and brothers. Young James complimented her on the meal. He said, "I really like baked steak." Baked steak, you know: roast beef. He still does like it. Also, John Morgan kept pouring champagne for the new father who had never had champagne before, and before long that father found himself attempting to discipline himself so what was happening would not show.

Later that night, at home, after the boys were in bed, two college colleagues came over to congratulate me. One was Greene Wyrick, an English professor, the other was Charles Masten, husband of my favorite nurse. They, too, provided celebration liquid. By then I had mostly recovered from the John Morgan bout and planned to be more careful this time around. And I was. But evidence would indicate not completely careful, because before the end of the night I was standing on the sofa reading the balcony scene from Romeo and Juliet, while Greene Wyrick stood across the room reading the Romeo part, and Charles Masten cheered us on.

It was a great day and night, Susie, but I wouldn't want to repeat it.

CHICAGO! CHICAGO! TV TIME! In August a year later (1954), I really did a dumb thing. I packed up the family (all except Poochy who stayed with a church family) and carted them all to the University of Chicago. This was a pure ego trip. I had never gone to a really famous university. I did very well at the University of Denver, at Iliff School of Theology, at the University of Colorado, at Southern California, but what would happen on a top-class level? I arranged a year's leave from Emporia State Teachers, got some scholarship assistance from Chicago, and a year's contract to act as the Methodist Chaplain at the University. Top-class, it turned out, was really not any more demanding than ordinary class. At the end of the year I passed the comprehensive examinations and was established in another doctoral program, which I did not really intend to pursue further.

Throughout that year in horrible Chicago, the family was patient with me. Although I think that much of the time Mike thought seriously about being otherwise. Michael finally forgave me when I lived up to my "half-promise". The half-promise began as a bribe. While still in Emporia, I told Michael that they had television in Chicago and we could get a television set and watch it. Wouldn't it be fun to see T.V.? When we got to Chicago, it turned out that our finances were not as good as planned. At the University, I changed my mind about what I wanted to study. I shifted from the Divinity School to The Committee On Social Thought. In the shift I lost that scholarship money. Perhaps that was why I did not run right out and buy that T.V. I stalled, until sometime just before Christmas. William Michael sat his father down and said, "I know we don't have much money, but you did say that if we came to

Chicago we would get a television set?" Christmas morning that T.V. showed up among the Christmas presents. I found it in a second-hand store and bought it for \$40. And when we left Chicago, it went with us back to Emporia and became part of the boys' room where once a week all of us boys would gather. Michael and James would supply me with a cap-gun and we would watch Gun Smoke.¹⁶

A SLEEPY SHEPHERD. Don't ask Mike about Chicago, but it wasn't really all bad. I remember a Christmas Eve at the University of Chicago. Our two sons, 9 years old and 6 years old, were both shepherds in the Christmas story portrayed that night in the University's magnificent Rockefeller Chapel. James led the procession down the aisle to the manger, then off to one side where he and his fellow shepherds settled down for the rest of the story. He had an additional responsibility. At the proper time, he was to lead both shepherds and Wise Men back up the aisle and out of the story. My wife and I watched *our boys* with pride and joy. The story continued. Then I caught a clue that something unplanned was happening. James was sitting staring into the simulated campfire around which the shepherds were grouped, some sitting, some standing. From Luke's shepherds the story advanced to Matthew's Wise Men. They presented their gifts and were ready to return to their homeland somewhere in the near East. It was time. But Jim was lost in a world of dreamy firelight. Things came to a halt until brother Michael, using his shepherd's crook, gently poked his brother back into the almost real world.

Of all the Christmas Eves I have ever experienced, that is the one that on each Christmas Eve I never forget to remember.

BACK ON THE RED BRICK ROAD. When we got back to Emporia, a change had taken place on Berkeley Road: the Goldsberrys had moved to a different part of town, and a family named VanderVelde had moved in. The major effect of this move was, first, a major shock to James. His friend was no longer just across the street. On the other hand the VanderVeldes had a son Michael's age. Michael and Jay VanderVelde became good friends, and remain so today.¹⁷

Back on Berkeley Road another change was about to occur. Someone was about to build a new house on the vacant lot next door. That would be interesting to watch. The basement was dug. The concrete basement floor was laid. And there I observed in the new cement the name JIM printed. I checked it out and, of course, it was our Jim. He was ordered to get over there and smooth out that floor, and never again to print his name in fresh cement. He did so while I stood supervising. Some time later concrete back steps were laid. Again I discovered printing in the cement. This time MIKE. I asked

¹⁶Before long Susie joined us, on my lap.

¹⁷An interesting point: It Just So Happens that Jay VanderVelde and his wife and kids now live in the Scotty MacFarlene house, so there is still a living connection between Tremmels and Berkeley Road.

Michael about this and he told me that he had not done it. I believed him. So I questioned Jim.

"Did you put Mike's name in that cement?"

"Yes."

"I thought I told you never to do that again."

"You told me not to put my name."

And that was our Jim. A literalist whenever necessary. At other times? Well, who knows?

HE SUNK THE BOAT I ALMOST HAD. Back on Berkeley Road we settled in for things as usual. But I was never ever quite satisfied with things as usual--especially in my professional ambitions. I taught in the Division of Social Sciences at the College. I taught courses in philosophy, religion, history. But what I really wanted to see was the study of religion as a major dimension in the history, culture, understanding of people and societies. James Buchanan and Scotty MacFarlene seemed to concur with my ambitions, so I started pursuing grant money to get a real program in religious studies started.

Along the way we were all shocked when Scotty suddenly died. That meant a search for a new President. Scotty's Vice President was a man named John Jacobs and he targeted himself for that presidency. I had no objection to this until I was presented with a petition for faculty approval and was given to understand that not to sign could, *perhaps*, have some effect on my future career at Kansas State Teachers College. I took the petition under advisement, stalling. And then something happened.

It Just So Happened that there was another physician in Emporia whom I had come to know very well. His name was Tom Butcher.¹⁸ He was a top-notch surgeon.¹⁹ He was also the son of a former President of the College, and member of the search committee for a new president. Tom stopped by to talk to me about Scotty's death and the search. He said that he had heard that practically all of the College faculty were petitioning to have John Jacobs get the job. Suddenly I knew where to move in. I told him the real story about that petition. The new President's name turned out to be not John Jacobs, but John King. John King proved a good president--except.

Danforth Foundation, agreeing with Tremmel that religious studies (not teaching religion, but teaching about religion) was a promising proposal for curriculum improvement in higher public education, approved a grant to launch the project. We were on our way. Except, John King, the new President panicked. He had to think this through. He had to test the waters. After all, this was an innovation not widely suggested or employed in state funded higher education back in those days. With Jim Buchanan and me sitting in his office, John King called the administrator of the Danforth Foundation Funds and tried to stall on the grant: put it off for a year. In other

¹⁸Unlike with Dr. Morgan, Dr. Butcher and Dr. Tremmel talked serious talk, about life, death, God, the works.

¹⁹He had to be top-notch just to live down that name--Butcher.

words, this new President was hesitating. Danforth does not approve of putting out money for hesitations. They withdrew the grant offer. I left King's office in fury. I stormed down the hall literally swearing. I would be damned if I would go on working at this place run by an idiot!

A few days later, at a meeting of Methodist preachers at First Methodist Church, I learned that a dean at the university 75 miles north of Emporia was talking about hiring a person to take charge of religious activities, including teaching religion courses in the philosophy department, at Kansas State University. Two days later I was in the car heading for KSU to talk to a dean named Herbert Wunderlich.

The die was cast. Our second Kansas "Port of Call," on the Big Blue River this time, would be a place called Manhattan, where not William C. would become famous, but Opal L. would become famous. It proved to be Mike's town.

THEY REMEMBERED US. Several years ago we took a nostalgia trip back to the state of the Yellow Brick Road. We found the Berkeley Road people mostly scattered all over town, but scattered or not the old days were still alive. Irene Morgan inadvertently put it all in focus. She told us that in a recent letter to her daughter she had reported that she had observed, while driving up Berkeley Road, that Tremmel's house was being repainted. Thirty years later--still the Tremmel's house, even though it never really was our house. We only rented it.