



A Few Early Memories of Kathryn Huldah Shroyer Mayclin

Based on an interview given in Oden, Michigan, September 2007
Created by Susan Mayclin Stephenson

WHAT IS YOUR FIRST MEMORY?

I have two. The first was of my grandpa, Fred Mutschler, sitting in a large leather rocking chair and holding me. Aunt Ella Mutschler, his daughter, was into the Unity religion then and had all these tiny little books that I played with. I sat on his lap and Grandpa Mutschler and I made pretend sandwiches out of the books together, then we made up a make believe trip, a picnic, all in the chair.

The other early memory is of Christmas eve, at the Zion Reformed Church in Decatur. Mamaw was playing the organ, and I was three year old and I stood next to the organ, and everyone had candles and I sang my first solo. It was Silent Night. I wasn't nervous as it was just like being at home and singing. I did what I was told because, remember, Mamaw was a Leo the lion and boss.

Music was very important. I have an article from a newspaper, dated April 20, 1924. "*Cantata to be Given Sunday*," which was all family members: *tenor and alto duet: Ella Mutschler and Leo Kirsch; tenor solo: Leo Kirsch; soprano solo: Mrs. Ben Shroyer; alto recitative: Ella Mutschler; baritone: Ben F. Shroyer*. It was the tradition from Europe, music every day.

WHAT ARE THE FAMILY BIRTH DATES?

My mother, Huldah Sophia Mutschler, was born on August 4, 1893, in Decatur. My father, Benjamin Franklin Shroyer, was born on September 17, 1888, in Ohio.

They married on May 27, 1914.

My brother, Frederick Benjamin Shroyer, was born on October 18, 1916, in Decatur, Indiana.

I, Kathryn Huldah Shroyer, was born on July 2, 1923, in Decatur, Indiana.

MY MOTHER

I called Mamaw *Mama* and later *Mother* when I was taking harp lessons. I might have also called her *Mom*. Susan named her *Mamaw*. Mamaw was a musician and sang on the radio in Fort Wayne. Mrs. Weidler took care of the house. Often when I would come home from school Mrs. Weidler would meet me at the door and say "Be quiet your mother is resting." Everyone loved my parents.

The Weidlers were our friends. Henry and Mary Wilder came from Germany, I think with my grandparents. Their son, Henry Wilder, worked for The Detroit Free Press. Their grandson is a leading psychiatrist there. And she was our laundress and

housekeeper. They just took care of us. That was what it was like when people first came to this country sometimes.

Mamaw played the piano, the harp, played the organ at church, sang different places, and worked in the garden with Henry Weilder who was our gardener.

When I was about eight years old, I also started studying the harp along with Mamaw. Later, when I could drive I drove to Van Wert, Ohio for my lessons, on my own.

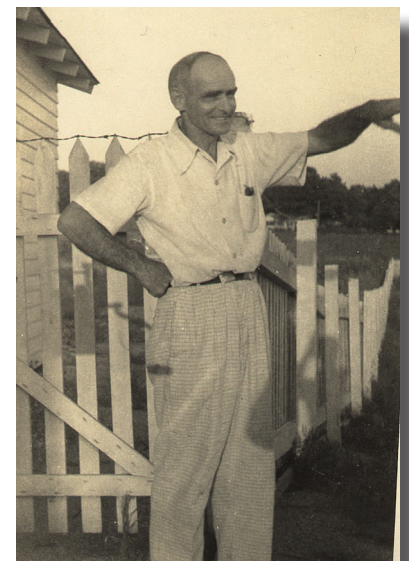
Mamaw had a platform built to hold the harp in the garden for concerts. She had garden parties with tables, tablecloths, refreshments, probably dessert and a punch bowl. Henry and Bampaw set up everything up and Mary helped Mamaw make it beautiful. The guests were usually members of The Young Matrons Club, or the music department of The Women's Club. I sang and played the harp at these parties sometimes.

I was very busy as I had to be on the honor roll every time, sing in the church choir, practice voice, piano, harp, go to youth fellowship, teach Sunday school (from age 13). I also rode my pony and played tennis.

MY DAD

My dad is your *Bampaw*. I called him *Daddy*.

His name was Benjamin Franklin Shroyer, There is a picture of him with the other workers building the sugar beet factory that later became the Central Soya Company in



Decatur, Indiana. He was the engineer for the job even though his formal education only went through 3rd grade.

Mamaw was engaged to the superintendent of schools but she lived near where the factory was going up and she used to sit on the bank of a canal and watch Bampaw operate the crane. That's how they met. He was so handsome and I have a picture of him kissing her and she is dropping her handkerchief as they are in the romantic clinch. You can see it being dropped in the picture.

Bampaw was very affectionate. He had his arms around mamaw a lot and called her *boo.jee.gee*.

He was born someplace in Ohio and was the next to the youngest of a large family. After his mother died and his father remarried his stepmother put him out barefoot in the snow and he walked a mile to his Uncle Aaron's house. He worked for a year on Uncle Aaron's farm. He made a hundred dollars that year and bought a diamond tie pin with it. I don't know if he had a suit. Later he only drove Cadillacs.

His dad's name was John Shroyer and his mother Sarah Anne. He had a little sister Rosalee who died and he used to talk about her a lot. His other siblings were (Aunt) Myrtle, and the brothers Emery (Bogg) who married Aunt Rena, and Samuel (Sam) who married Aunt Katie. Also Uncle Aaron, Uncle Alonzo, and Uncle Dick whom he never talked about.

His dad, John Shroyer, was German, and his mother, Sarah Anne, I don't remember her last name, was French and Dutch.

My daddy was real strict. One time my uncle Bogg (Emery Shroyer, we called him *Uncle Bogg*) and aunt Rena were there and she put nail polish on my finger nails and Bampaw saw it and exploded. He took a razor blade and scraped it off. It was terrible! He said that only whores wore nail polish. Aunt Rena really told him off. "Now Ben, it won't hurt for her to have colorless nail polish on her nails."

Their daughter was my cousin Helen. They lived in Troy, Ohio, and had a grocery store in their basement with an outside entrance. People were coming and going all day long. There was a trap door to it in the dining room. We just went to visit a few times a year.

Helen married a Shapiro in Hollywood. Helen was the most beautiful woman I have ever met. Aunt Rena was very attractive too, but not as beautiful as Helen. They had a son named Virgil who was the bowling champion of Ohio. He was a nice guy.

AT HOME

I was born in our house on third street, 710 North 3rd, in Decatur, one week before the hospital opened. I weighed 8 pounds. My



brother Frederick was six years old.

Grandpa Mutschler lived with us, and every Sunday at 3 o'clock Aunt Sophie Mutschler Kirsch and Uncle Peter Kirsch (Sophie was Grandpa Mutschler's sister) came over, and they left at 7.

Mamaw would serve a light supper and they would visit. They mostly spoke English so Bampaw would understand them. Uncle Edgar also came for dinner at noon on Sundays. He was Mamaw's brother.

Mamaw did all the cooking. She probably learned from her mother. Her mother died when Frederick was six months old. Mamaw cooked fried chicken, steaks, sour kidneys, (*hasenpfeffer*, which means sweet and sour rabbit, but made with kidneys, not rabbit) oyster stew, home made noodles, dumplings, lots of apples and popcorn, orange juice.

I always had to dry the dishes probably from age 2-3. Desserts, oh! Well latter in life she bought cakes from a woman, but she made *mamaw cookies*, butterscotch pie, lemon pie, cottage pie with raisins. She was a very good cook and baker!

DID YOU EVER LEARN GERMAN? AND WHY DID THE FAMILY COME FROM EUROPE?

Aunt Sophie and Uncle Peter Kirsch, Grandpa Mutschler, and Mamaw all spoke German in their homes.

This is what Mamaw wrote in my baby book:

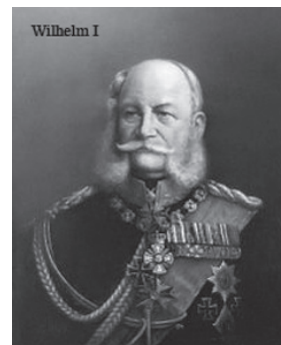
Baby sings almost all the time she is playing. She plays the piano now - Ha! 10 1/2 months.

First Words: *papa, mama, batcha kuche* (German for "patty cake"), *horche!* (German, "listen!"); *goch goch* ("egg"), and *she folds her hands and prays in German.*

As I grew older I didn't pay any attention to them when they spoke German, pretending that I didn't understand so they would speak English. Bampaw didn't speak German so our immediate family spoke English.

Mamaw, Bampaw, my older brother Frederick, and I spoke English when we were together. I have a **big regret** that I didn't learn German.

Mamaw's family came here from Germany because of Kaiser Wilhelm (William the First), the bad



guy. A lot of people left at that time. I have Grandpa Mutschler's papers about why they left, in the buffet.

Our family was wealthy and my grandpa owned more farm land than any other person in the state of Indiana, about 18 large farms. The "cane" upstairs in the cottage is the one he used to point to the cattle he wanted to buy for the Mutschler Packing Company. He would go out to the farms and buy the cows and furnish all the meat for the northern half of the state of Indiana. They called a meat processing place a *packing company* back then. It was like a big factory with a very large brass decorated machine that ran all the power for the factory. (Generator?)

They also had an ice-making division. They sold ice because people didn't have refrigerators but had ice boxes. The factory delivered ice to homes in a big wagon pulled by horses, and later by trucks. We always had an icebox at home.

Once when Aunt Ella was visiting from California or New York, she ordered a refrigerator as a gift for the family. For "Sis", that is Huldah, your Mamaw. She always pitied Mamaw because she was married and had kids! So a few days after she left, a truck pulled up with her gift, the refrigerator, as a surprise, and we got rid of the icebox.

Now you are picturing a truck like today. They weren't like that. They had smaller wheels and fenders, little tin fenders, and they were real boxes made out of wood, with a little squared tall cab in the front.

It was a nice surprise and that was the end of the ice delivery and I didn't miss that.

MY BROTHER

Frederick was always writing. He took care of me when I was young but we were a bit jealous of each other because he was Mamaw's favorite and I was Bampaw's favorite.

He was pretty wild too and one time Mamaw and Bampaw had a little house (called *The Shack*) built for him on one of the farms they owned so he could entertain his friends. They must have been crazy because I know a lot of wild things went on in that house. I think that was the reason they were glad that I married young and didn't have time to go wild.

MY PONY

I would ride *Sonny Boy*, my pony, into town from what we later called *Hilltop Home*. It wasn't called Hilltop Home back then, but it was one of the tenant farms where Sonny Boy lived. I rode in with a girlfriend, Peggy Duke. We were the two children who rode our ponies, called Western Style Pony Horses, in town.

My cousin Bobby Mutschler had a Shetland pony named Helen that was kept at one of their farms but he didn't ride in town.

CHRISTMAS

Fairy May was a doll I got one Christmas. With a light green wicker baby carriage. She lives at the cottage but I don't know where the carriage is.

On Christmas we always sat in the sun room, the room where *Fritzi Redbird*, a cardinal, came to eat outside the window in the snow. That is also where I studied. We would hear Santa singing "Ho ho!" outside in the alley and then he would come in the front door. Bobby Mutschler, my cousin, and his parents would always be there. Santa would question us to see if we had been good. He said he didn't know if he should bring in a bundle of sticks or toys. Then he would go back out and bring in toys. I never found out who that was. Christmas was also when we got our ponies.



VACATIONS

Every summer since I was about 10, we went to California. Uncle Pete Kirsch and Leo, his son (later the postmaster) had the Hudson Oldsmobile Agency in Decatur. Aunt Ella, who had moved to California when I was young, got a new car every year. Aunt Ella lived with different girlfriend roommates at different times (just off of Wilshire Blvd). Someone would drive her old car back to Indiana from California, and Mamaw and I would drive the new car from Decatur to Los Angeles.

One summer when I was walking through Barker Brothers furniture on Wilshire Blvd., and was in the elevator, a man told me he could arrange for me to have a screen test. I told him I wasn't interested. He said if I changed my mind to call him and he gave me his card. It was the actor Gilbert Roland. I guess I was pretty.

Here is a website about him:

<http://www.briansdriveintheater.com/gilbertroland.html>

And some movies he was in:

Camille (1927), *The Sea Hawk* (1940), *The Gay Cavalier* (1946), *Beauty and the Bandit* (1946), *Thunder Bay* (1953), *The Racers* (1955), *That Lady* (1955), *The Treasure of Pancho Villa* (1955), *Underwater!* (1955), *Zorro* (1958-1960 TV Series), *Guns of the Timberland* (1960), *Samar* (1962), *Any Gun Can Play* (1967)

We went to California every different way that we could drive, to see as much of the country as we could. I remember buying



sandwiches along the way and, as there was no air conditioning then, sometimes it got so hot that by the time we opened the sandwiches they were green and we couldn't eat them.

One time Frederick went along and I remember that he dunked me in the Salt Lake and we went into the Mormon temple in Salt Lake City and it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop.

I looked forward to those trips, we would probably be gone a month. Los Angeles was a safe city and I was free to walk around, to wander around, wherever I wanted. I liked to see interior decorating stores, and get books about the inside of beautiful homes, not the outside, the furniture, lamps etc. I wanted to be an interior decorator.

Mamaw and Bampaw went to Michigan together, fishing, for a month every fall, and someone took care of me—daddy's cousin Mabel from Ohio, or I would stay with Uncle Pete Kirsch and Aunt Sophie, because I was in school. They would stop in Oden and visit Uncle Edgar and then go to Munuscong, Michigan in the UP (Upper Peninsula), fishing.

At home my dad was always fishing and Mamaw cooking fish. It made me hate fish to this day

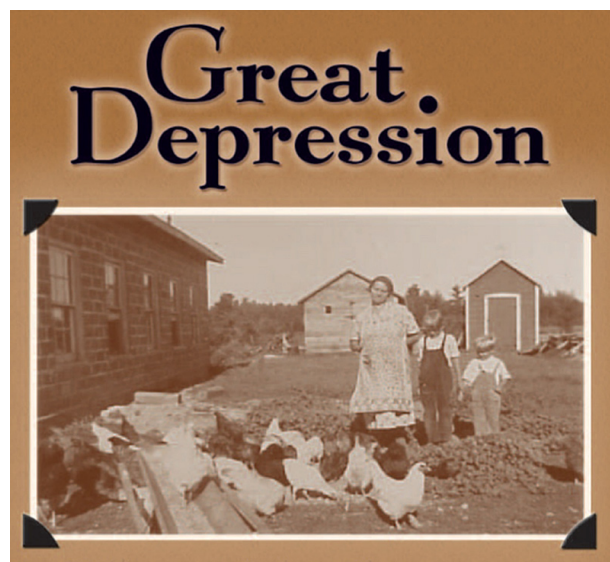
SNEAKING

Mamaw read the Bible regularly, and she left our old church because people drank alcohol, and probably for other reasons. She believed that playing cards were a tool of the devil.

There was a deck of card in the cupboard in the sun room and every Sunday, when Mamaw and Bampaw went for a drive to the cemetery I stayed home. I would get the deck of cards out and just hold it, and then put it back in the cupboard and close the door. Then I would sit on the sofa in the living room and cry because I was lonely, and maybe feeling guilty.

At age about eleven I started sneaking and driving Bampaw's car around the block. I went out and lined up little pebbles at the front and back tires, then drove the car around the block, and then parked it exactly in the right place and removed the pebble, kind of kicked them away.

I told them all this before they died. They just laughed—they were in their 80's. If you told me something horrible that you did, I'd laugh. But don't tell me!



THE GREAT DEPRESSION OF 1929-1940

I graduated from high school in 1941 so I was in school at this time. But we did not suffer.

We would go to uncle Edgar's meat market and the Mutschler Packing Company, and fill the back of the car with bags of groceries and take them to poor people all over. We did this a couple of times a week. My mom and I would do that. Probably Frederick too.

Three years ago I went to a luncheon in Decatur and a man was there whom I didn't recognize. It was a class reunion planning meeting. After it was as over this man came up to me and said "You don't remember me but my name is Walter Summers and I just want you to know that we all thank you for keeping us from starving during the depression."

They slept in boxes and had several kids. The oldest was one of Frederick's best friends and ended up being the sheriff in Ft. Wayne. Of course they weren't really clean because they didn't have a bath tub or anything.

The girl my age was Mary. One day when I was walking to school with two of my friends, Mamaw was standing in the doorway watching us, Mary came along on the sidewalk behind us girls. We all had our arms around each other and Mary was behind us. Mamaw called me back to the door and said "You walk with Mary and put your arms around her." So I did that even though she smelled bad.

One time at Thanksgiving, when I was in high school, little Jimmy Summers who had a disease where his chest caved in, was outside trying to look in at our dinner. Frederick went outside and brought him in and he ate with us.

The Summers slept in boxes in a little house on Walnut street. There was also Krick street, of the Krick Tile Mill in Decatur. There were many poor families in that part of town. We would go looking for them with our trunk full of food.

So of course our family didn't suffer in the depression financially, because we had the packing house and owned a lot of farms, with tenant farmers. I didn't even know there was a

depression other than taking food to people. I guess I was too young to understand except about the Summer family.

Later, when I was married to your daddy we would buy half beefs to put in the freezer, cut up. Ray Walther, the minister of the Presbyterian Church, and I would take the packages of beef to different families who needed it. It was just family policy.

HOW WAS DEATH TREATED?

Back then there were no funeral homes. I was in the 3rd grade when my grandpa, Grandpa Mutschler, who lived with us, died. When a person died, they put suits and ties, or other nice clothes on them, and had them laid out in a casket in the living room with flowers all around for 1-2 days. We could go down in the night and look at them, like people do now, in a funeral home.

I know there was a nurse, who lived across the street, who came to take care of grandpa every day for a year. Grandpa Mutschler would read the paper and I would sit on the top step outside his door and she would bring the comics out to me. He called me his *little sweetheart* and had always been my baby-sitter.

When he died I was very sad, but there was going to be an Orphan Annie (the comic strip) movie in town for three days and I didn't get to go see it. I think I remember being more upset by that because I had been waiting for a long time for it to come. It would have been sacrilegious to go to a movie then.

There was then a funeral in the German Reformed Church where we went so they took the body there for the service. I don't remember anything else.

HOW WAS THE FAMILY'S HEALTH?

Uncle Frederick took a medicine called *synthroid* beginning after the air force. I gained 15 pounds my first year of college and they checked my thyroid and it wasn't functioning right so I began taking synthroid in college and have been taking it all my life.

Mamaw had a tubular pregnancy when I was about 10. They took her away in an ambulance. It was cold and I sat out on the front porch, waiting and crying. She also had a gall bladder operation and shingles.

All his life Bampaw had been very healthy. He kept going to our family friend, Dr. Bixler, an ophthalmologist, trying to get him to cure the white circle around his iris that signified high cholesterol. Dr. Bixler said it didn't effect vision and he couldn't do anything. Uncle Frederick had the white and high cholesterol too. They both died of heart problems.

Mamaw eventually moved to a nursing home. She went there because she had been in the hospital for a month, from a stroke I guess. She had fallen a lot in the house before moving out. Bampaw couldn't pick her up and would call the police to do it. They said daddy couldn't take care of her so they took her to the nursing home in an ambulance. She was really mad. She said "My mama told me that if you are put in a place like this you are going to die."

Bampaw missed her terribly but was worn out. Very shortly after she moved out he died of a heart attack. When he was in the hospital, my brother Frederick came from California. Frederick was at the bank getting money out to bring all of you children home so all of you could see Bampaw, but he died while Frederick was at the bank. This was 1994.

Everyone came for the funeral. It was a formal Masonic funeral complete with evergreen twigs dropped onto Bampaw's body. That is when you, Susan, and Missy, cracked up laughing. You couldn't help it.

The Masonic guys who came in wearing suits to do the Masonic ceremony were the people we saw every day around town, pumping gas, sweeping, etc. It was hard to recognize them in these outfits, very strange. We must have each had a piece of evergreen to drop on the casket. Mamaw was there.

When she was in a nursing home I drove 80 miles to Decatur every day for almost three years to see her. I took her to the beauty shop often from there to have her hair highlighted.

Once, when Mamaw was first living in the nursing home and we all, including Bampaw, went to visit her, we went out to lunch after the visit. We took Bampaw to the Fairway Restaurant (uncle Edgar owned it) because he said he had never been there. He and mamaw would never go to a place where they served liquor. He didn't have a drink but he liked getting to go the Fairway, but we couldn't tell Mamaw.

Mamaw died of a stroke at age 84. They called me three times, three days in a row, and said she had died. The first two nights, when I arrived at the nursing home after driving from Ft. Wayne to Decatur, she was alive again, (or still?)

COLLEGE

I went to Stephens College because it had the best harp department in the country, a whole harp ensemble. Also I could ride horses, and I think my parents thought a girls' college would be the safest.

When I was at school in my first year, in the winter right after Christmas, mom and daddy were coming back from Florida and had friends in Columbia so they stopped to visit me.

We had little "blue rooms" where we could go to smoke and play bridge and I did both. I had white bunny fur mittens that I wore and during the visit Bampaw noticed that they smelled like cigarettes so he was suspicious. His face would get all red when



he talked about stuff like that.

Bampaw had taken me out of college because he caught me smoking on the back porch, with a girlfriend, that first summer home. He said “Only whores smoke.” He called somebody at General Electric and said he wanted his daughter to have a job. This was my only job. I typed on a *hectograph*, a kind of duplicator, and got purple stuff all over me. I had my job for 2 months—I was gonna show my dad!

I don’t know why he was so upset about whores, but he hated them and people who smoked. My brother Frederick smoked, and was pretty wild, we won’t go into that, but it made them very strict with me and I think happy when I was soon going to be married.

Getting taken out of college because of smoking changed my whole life, kept me from going further with my music, and getting a good education, but I have had a very good life and



wouldn’t change anything.

In fact later, being married I thought was like being on vacation compared to all the things I had to do before that—teaching, music practice, organizations, study, etc. It was really like being on vacation because I didn’t have to reach all these goals.

HOW DID YOU MEET MAC, OUR DADDY?

He winked at me across the office. He was “on test” at the General Electric Company in Decatur. He was living at the YMCA in Fort Wayne, and boarding in Decatur, and didn’t have a car. “On test” means that he was an engineer being exposed to all the motors made in all the different plants, like Fort Wayne, and Decatur, Schenectady, New York, etc.

Mamaw and Bampaw liked your dad. When I would hear him coming to the house, I would run to the harp and start playing romantic stuff like “I’ll Never Smile Again Till I Smile at You.” That song was popular then.

Mac had been at the Decatur General Electric Company for about a month. There



was an office where about 20 people worked, your daddy and I were in the same room. He kept winking at me. He would come by my desk and talk to me.

We had a first date with the couple he was staying with when he was at the Decatur plant. We were “Katie and Mac” the big romance! My mom would give him her car for dates and we would go out by the poor farm where it was isolated and park. We just necked! I never had sex before we were married. One time a boy touched my left breast and I almost fainted.

When he asked me to marry him, after a couple of months, I told him he had to ask my dad because my dad had had to ask Mamaw’s dad, my grandpa. Bampaw had followed Grandpa Mutschler all over a farm to ask.

WHAT WAS THE ATTITUDE TOWARD SEX?

When I was going to get married Mamaw took me to her woman doctor in Ft. Wayne to see if I was a virgin. I don’t know why. The doctor gave me stuff in a tube for birth control, white cream put in a tube and then a diaphragm. I didn’t use it often enough.

I didn’t know how one got pregnant. When I was a senior in high school, whenever someone had a car we would drive around, three boys in front, three girls in back. One time was saw a cow and bull mating. I yelled for everyone to look but I had no idea what they were doing.



When I asked Mamaw about sex, she ordered a pamphlet from the Kotex company to explain it to me. It didn’t explain anything.

I found out from my roommate from Stephens. She and I didn’t return second year. She went on to nursing school. I went to visit her in Indianapolis to buy my trousseau and while I was there she explained it to me.

Then the honeymoon. We were married Christmas day in the afternoon and took a train to Cleveland and checked into the hotel. Mac took a shower. Then I took a long, long bath and came out with my nightgown and a big heavy robe buttoned up to my neck. Mac had on ugly yellow checkered pajamas. I got in bed with my robe on and I don't remember the rest. Then we went to Niagara Falls, in Canada

MAC'S EARLY LIFE

He was born in Plankinton, South Dakota. I don't know why they were living there instead of Iowa, but we continued to visit relatives there.

Grandpa Mayclin's family came from Limerick, Ireland, and their name was sometimes spelled *Macklin*.

His mama, Olive (pictured here), and her sister Gertrude, whom I loved, were both pregnant the same time. They both named their babies *Clark* after the explorer they were descended from Mac had a dog, a little fox terrier, and that is why for years we also had a little fox terrier named *Duchess*.

Mac's mother was a Twamley from England and very proud of being descended from some important families there. She was also active in the DAR, daughters of the American Revolution. After the children, Mac and his sisters, grew up, they always had college students living in the house and different ones would be there whenever we went to visit.

Mac had worked all through high school to save money to go to junior college in Fort Dodge, Iowa where they lived, and then to Iowa State University to become an engineer. When he was ready for junior college his daddy told him he had to work another year to earn money to pay for his younger sisters, Joyce and Edith, to go to college. So he put school off for a year. He worked at Iowa Gas and Electric, his dad was the manager. His parents had money and belonged to all kinds of clubs, but this was during the depression and they were buying properties.

He was in ROTC, wearing a uniform and marching. All the guys were in back then during the war.

GETTING MARRIED, LIVING IN NEW YORK, THEN PHILADELPHIA, AND TENNESSEE

Mac was being transferred to New York. We were married in Decatur, Indiana on Christmas day in 1942. We went to Niagara falls for our honeymoon. We didn't have a car so we got off the train in Schenectady and got on a street car to our new little apartment. My momma and daddy had shipped all our wedding gifts. Mac's job was again *on test*, in New York. They were getting ready to send him to Oakridge to head a lab at the

Manhattan Project but he didn't know it.

We were in New York from Christmas till June, 1943. I was already pregnant with you Susan by then. You were born at the end of October. Something else, the famous obstetrician in Schenectady would come to my apartment, on the first floor, in his limo and check on me once a week. I guess I was naive, thinking this was standard service.

All at once we had to go to Philadelphia, and lived in the Benjamin Franklin hotel for two months. I was alone all day and we went to Bookbinders Restaurant every night for lobster. I just thought it was more General Electric business, but this time it was an assignment with the F.B.I. They had daddy all day every day and he couldn't talk about it to me at all.

A funny story: Our apartment at the hotel was nice, a big room with a nice bathroom and two double beds. When we were packing to check out of the hotel, I noticed there was a door that I hadn't opened yet. I said "I wonder what this door is for." and opened it. It was the rest of our suite! With a grand piano, fireplace, a bigger room than the one we had been in. We had had a large *suite* all the time and didn't know it!

We went by train to Knoxville, Tennessee and lived in the Andrew Jackson Hotel. They had a piano and we were there till we found an apartment. It was hard to find an apartment. We heard of a career woman who was moving to California and we took over her lease and bought her furniture. This sofa and the wing chair in that living room we still have, at the cottage.

Now I was 20, and Mac was 27.

SUSAN'S BIRTH

Back then everyone was in bed for 2 weeks—in the hospital—after having a baby, and then for 2 weeks at home. I had a hired practical nurse to help me from the time I came home, in the ambulance, carried up the stairs on a stretcher.

After the practical nurse left Mamaw and Lola Gould, and her little son Jay Gould, came. We had only one bedroom so God knows where everyone slept.

After they left Grandma Mayclin came down. Mamaw never liked Grandma Mayclin. I got off to a bad start with her too. When you were born, and I hadn't taken you to see my friends



at



yet, Grandma Mayclin said “Why don’t you take a nap sweetie.” And while I was sleeping *she* took you out for a walk in the baby carriage and *showed* you to all the neighbors in Sequoiah Village where we lived. I never forgot that!

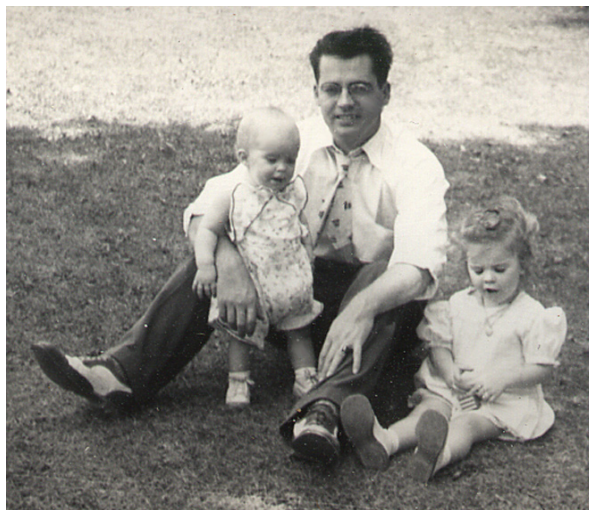
Grandma Mayclin played cards, bridge (You know what that meant to our family!) and was Presbyterian and believed that if you were not Presbyterian you went to hell. She was a DAR (Daughter of the American Revolution), traced her family way back in England and from William Clark of the Lewis and Clark expedition. Clark married an Indian girl and they are our ancestors. That is why your dad, and his cousin, were both named Clark.

THE BOMB

Mac was in charge of one of the labs at the Manhattan Project in Oakridge (inventing the atomic bomb). He had a company car, a station wagon with wood panels, to get to the Oakridge plant every day. I had to take you places on the bus. I had to even advertise in the paper to find a used baby carriage because during the war it was hard to buy anything. Finally I found one. Mamaw and Bampaw finally bought a used car for “us” (they always said things were for “us” not “me”).

In the night, when he was sleeping, I would ask Mac what he was doing at the *factory*. He would say “making ice cream” because he wasn’t allowed to talk about it. In fact some of the engineers were not sure what they were working on. I remember daddy’s mixed emotions about this time all of his life. George Thaggard and his wife Lucille were good friends. He later wrote a book about this time and the bomb being dropped. It said *Kathryn Mayclin was 9+ months pregnant and playing badminton in the back yard*. Many of us, the engineers and wives, kept track of each other over the years.

The night of the day that the bomb was dropped, August 6, 1945, everyone met at this house in Fountain City—all of us in shock. There were mixed emotions because of all of the people killed, but thinking about all of the people who would have been killed without the bomb. There was no alcohol available in the



state of Tennessee during the war, so people had gone to other states to buy some, everyone brought the alcohol they had. This was two days before Missy was born so I was very pregnant. Mac had been drinking a lot but drove me home. I remember that every time a car came toward us Mac slowly got over to the right into the ditch.

Three days later another bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. And Japan surrendered.

MISSY’S BIRTH

Missy was also born in Knoxville.

Shortly after that everyone scattered, being sent to different places. Mac was transferred to St. Louis, but I went to Decatur to stay with Mamaw and Bampaw in Decatur.

Then Mac was sent to Danville, Illinois to build a GE plant there and we lived in the Wolford hotel in Danville for a year. Missy learned to walk in the hotel ballroom, while I played the grand piano, and you rode your tricycle in the ballroom. We ate in the hotel three times a day.



PATRICIA NEAL

I called her *Patsy* and she was a brief friend during this time. Margaret Ann, her sister, married George van de Noord who was working with daddy. We were at their wedding.



Patricia was making a movie with Gary Cooper, *The Fountainhead*. Once when we were visiting Aunt Ella in California, Margaret Ann Cones took me, with you and Missy, to Hollywood to the set to watch. Later something happened to one of Patricia’s babies, killed in an accident in England or something, and after that her marriage with they guy who wrote *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, oh yes it was Roald Dahl, broke up. I think Patsy Neal is still alive and lives in Atlanta.

MOVING TO INDIANA

Then Mac was transferred to Fort Wayne, a General Electric plant there. At that time Mamaw and Bampaw had sold their home at 710 North Third, where I were born, and moved to the country. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) had a project

to build a lake on one of their farms, which became Shroyer Lake. This created post-war jobs and entertainment.

There was an old brick school house in Roanoke, halfway between Fort Wayne and Decatur. We bought it and lived there all of three months. It was terrible and full of mice. My brother Frederick came to visit us and there was a pregnant mouse whose water had broken and who was giving birth. I wanted to sweep her out of the house but Fred said I couldn't do that to that poor mother so I didn't and soon we were overrun with mice and moved out.

I would go from the bedroom to the kitchen walking on chairs because I was afraid of the mice.



SETTLING IN DECATUR

Uncle Edgar, Mamaw's brother, built a building in Decatur with the second floor as an apartment for us. Two large bedrooms, a very nice apartment and I picked out all the wall paper and drapes, etc. I remember the wall paper in each room in detail.

We lived there for quite awhile. Grandma and Grandpa Mayclin came from Iowa to visit us there.



Because I smoked Mamaw was never in that apartment. Bampaw would come to the bottom of the steps but never into the apartment. But you spent a lot of time at their lake house, at Shroyer Lake, and then at Hilltop Home.



(Shroyer Lake)



(Hilltop Home)

PETER'S BIRTH



Peter was born in the Decatur hospital in 1949. And he and Missy and Susan shared a bedroom. It was a large bedroom and we lived there for about 4 years.



TIM'S BIRTH

Then Tim was born in 1955, prematurely. And I almost died because of *placenta previa* and hemorrhaging.

He was due in January and was born in November. He was in the hospital for a month. Daddy took a picture of him in the incubator at the hospital and brought it home. When Peter saw it he said "That's not my brother, that is a raccoon!" And was sobbing.

Because I was sick in bed for long after that, and you were 11 years old, you did a lot to take care of Tim, Peter, and Missy. You always said you raised Tim.

We were already building the house on Limberlost Trail in Stratton Place (named after Gene Stratton Porter, the naturalist who wrote about the Limberlost Swamp in Indiana—*Freckles*, etc.) and moved there when Tim was just a tiny baby, 6 months old.

There were fields of corn behind the house and the river beyond that where you children played. And from the other direction we could see a train going past off in the distance. Mac loved the gardening and had a race with all the other gardeners he knew to see who could get the first ripe tomato. You planted Castor Bean plants because they looked like a jungle, and Peter loved to pretend that he was in exotic places in the garden, fields, and woods.



You and Missy shared a room, and Tim and Peter shared a room. It was a large house that Mac and I designed. It had a *dumb waiter* on a pulley to send food downstairs from the kitchen to the family room, a 3-part horizontal GE refrigerator that looked like kitchen cupboards, all the latest electrical devices, and I guess it was decorated well because it was written up in *House Beautiful*. Finally I was able to do some interior decorating. Well, I was always doing that anyway.

I guess we didn't smoke or drink by then because Mamaw and Bampaw came to visit us there.

OUR FOUR CHILDREN



SUSAN

Susan, you were sweet and loving, but very, very determined. “I will not do that” or “I will do that.” You played the piano a lot, very well. You were a lot like Mac, even the Irish dark hair and blue eyes.

I remember when you were in seventh or eighth grade. You had a cat named *Faith* that you had brought home and then she ran away (because your dad hit her!).

And then you brought another cat home and Mac said you couldn’t keep it. And when it disappeared (Mac probably took it out in the country.) Mac said that he had thrown it over the bridge into to the river. You cried, and cried and swallowed a lot of aspirin, *dying of grief*, you said.

You had slumber parties. For one party you invited Isabelle Costelo and Trinidad Vagera, two friends whose families had been migrant tomato pickers and lived in the poor part of town. Two of your *upper class* (they thought) friends said they were not allowed to come if the Mexicans came. I told you to invite Trinidad and Isabel. You agreed.



MISSY

Melissa Ann was a blond German beauty. When she was at Butler University she was voted Mrs. Butler University.

When we lived in the first apartment, and she was 9 she poured all Mac’s alcohol down the sink.

When she was in high school she would unload the dish washer and once I walked in and saw that she had a vodka and tonic. I threw it down the sink and we again got rid of all of the alcohol. Alcohol is a problem for everyone in our family. I think Mamaw understood that. (Generational: Mutschler, Shroyer, Mayclin, and Twamley)



PETER

Peter was a nice little boy. He used to play the ukulele and we called him *One Gun Joe* because he was always making up cowboy songs and walking around singing them as he played the ukulele.



One time Bampaw took him hunting with a gun, a “thirty ought six” and Peter hit a squirrel. Peter looked at the squirrel, threw down the gun, and ran into the house crying. He was the city champion of diving and went to Indiana University because of their diving team, even though he was accepted at Brown University where Michael went years later.

Missy and Peter hit each other every time they would pass each other in the hallway.

TIM

Tim was a peppy little boy with a great sense of humor. Once he put training pants on the fox terrier Duchess and they chased each other around the house.

When he was little and I needed a nap I told him he had to take a nap at the same time—and I held on to his little wrist. When he tried to get out of bed I told him there was an alligator under the bed. That worked. Isn’t that awful!

After we moved to Ft. Wayne when he was in 3rd grade he started playing drums, and then was in bands, once on tour to Hawaii.

One day Mac and I came home from an evening out and you had all had a fight, and someone had thrown a coke bottle and broken the large plate glass window in the living room. You had pulled the draperies closed to hide the broken window and had gone to bed, but Peter, age 11 or so, was on a stepladder leaning against the wall behind the sofa washing the coke off the wall when we came home. He said “It’s about time someone washed this wall.” and we didn’t know the window was broken until the next day.



MAC'S WORK

After the war, when your daddy worked for the General Electric Company, he was first the plant engineer for three GE plants in Indiana: Decatur, Linton, and Shelbyville. He was in charge of all of the physical plants, and the engines they produced. He understood how everything worked and could fix anything.

Later he was transferred to Ft. Wayne to be plant engineer for the largest GE plant there, so we moved to Ft. Wayne.

Finally he resigned from the company, before retirement, because he was angry. It was something to do with a strike, he being the only one to cross the picket line to keep the plant from collapsing, and the way he was treated by the unions after that.

He started R & C (Robert and Clark) Engineering Company with his friend Bob Yost and they had several successful years, several building projects over the next few years until his friend left the area to move out west.

KATHRYN AND MAC

We began to visit friends in Florida and loved it. After Mac retired we moved there, to a condominium in Sarasota.

Eventually Tim and Peter moved there too. And soon Missy and her family will all live there.

Mac preferred cooler weather, the changing seasons and the gardening and space in Indiana and Michigan, and his building/inventing projects, so eventually we sold the house in Indiana and split the year in Michigan and Florida.

We lived in Oden, Michigan in the summers, and Sarasota, Florida in the winter, and for a time in spring and fall Mac was in Michigan and I was in Florida.

MAC'S DEATH

Dad, Mac, died exactly 7 years ago today. We were all here with him. Today, as you interview me, is September 1, 2007.

About four years earlier we had been in an accident in Sarasota



and he had hit his head. We were hit twice in the car, from two cars that were behind us. He had a subdural hematoma. He then had brain surgery in Sarasota. Then he fell again in Sarasota and had more surgery. He was beginning to lose tools and forget what he was doing in certain projects. It was very frustrating for him not to be able to work all the time.

One day, lying on the sofa in the living room at the cottage, he said he was going to go out and pick up some branches. He had been trimming a tree to let more sunlight on the greenhouse. He got a ladder, climbed on it 30 feet up into the tree, and fell.

I had a steak dinner ready and went out to call him and found him lying on the ground. Our phone was out of order so I got a neighbor who called for help. He was taken to the hospital, where he jumped on the bed and yelled for them to let him go home—and then he died three days later of a staph infection. He lost 22 pounds in those three days. All of you children and I were with him when he died. Right after he died, and was lying on the bed, with no expressions on his face, he looked just like the Native American part of himself. We all saw it.

Because we spent several weeks each year apart I am used to being alone. But it still seems that he might walk in the door any minute. At first when I dreamed about him I couldn't see him, but now I see him, he is there, and we interact and have conversations. It is really interesting.

CONCLUSION

My first memory, the one I can always remember, is when I sang Silent Night at Christmas. My mother was playing the organ at the church, the lights were dim with candles flickering. I stood by the organ and sang my first solo. My Aunt Ella said I had a gift of healing when I was three years old. I would pray for someone and they would get well. I was taught to pray for everyone.

I was not perfect. I was spoiled by being surrounded by people who gave to me. What one wouldn't give to me the other would. Mamma, Daddy, my brother, my grandpa who lived with us, and several aunts and uncles. One day when I was very young, and was on my way to school, I stopped to pick up a girlfriend. Her mother was just fixing her breakfast. She was giving Alice the last egg in the house and I said that I wanted it. Her mother said "No, this is for Alice." I was very angry and had a temper tantrum. I didn't know this until Alice told me when we were in our 80's, in 2007!

The most important thing I learned in my life is to treat everyone the same. The main gist of my parents' life and my life was to care about people less privileged and to do something to help them. My daddy was underprivileged, but my mamma's family always believed that this was the most important thing to do with one's life—to love everyone and to help them. My brother and I naturally learned that this was the way to be.

Our Family as of December, 2007

Kathryn Shroyer Mayclin, born on July 2, 1923, in Decatur, Indiana.

Daughter Susan Kathryn Mayclin Stephenson, born Oct. 29, 1943, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Her husband is James Michael Stephenson, married in 1983

Susan was married to Douglas Hecox Melvin from 1965-1978

Susan's Children:

Narda Melissa Sherman, born Oct. 30, 1965 in Bloomington Indiana. Her husband is Ulysses Sherman, and together they have two children, Zahra Sophia Sherman, born Oct. 30, 2001, and Tai Alexander Sherman, born Jan. 6, 2003. Both children were born in Portland, Oregon.

Ursula Melvin, born Aug. 8, 1969 in San Francisco, California. Her husband is Charles Ireland Carroll.

Michael Olaf Mayclin Stephenson, born Dec. 2, 1982, in Oakland, California.

Daughter Melissa Anne Mayclin Murphy, born Aug. 8, 1945, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Her husband is Michael Murphy. They married Dec. 6, 1986.

Missy was married to Jon Embler from 1967 to 1986.

Missy's Sons:

Jonathan Vess Embler, Jr., born Oct. 10, 1971, Charleston, South Carolina.

His wife is Joenid Feliciano Embler, born Oct. 28, 1974. They were married on Dec. 26, 2004.

Joanide's daughters: Laurie Anid Poritz Feliciano, born Jan. 19, 1996, and Grace Marie Pacheco-Feliciano, born Feb. 27, 1991

The daughter of Jonathan and Joanide, born December 18, 2007, is Sadie Kate Embler

Jason Clark Embler, born Oct. 29, 1974, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

His wife is Nicole Johanna Kauffman Embler.

Their son was born Mar. 7, 2006. His name is Killian Clark Embler.

Son James Peter Mayclin, born Sept. 2, 1949, in Decatur, Indiana.

His wife is Zoe Nan Fivecoat Mayclin. They married Oct. 12, 1996.

He was married to Jacqueline Kate Neubauer 1979-1993.

Peter's Daughter: Haley Grace Mayclin, born June 15th, 1980, in Petoskey, Michigan.

Son Timothy Clark Mayclin, born Nov. 21, 1954, in Decatur, Indiana.

He was married to Tamera Kimes 1990-1998.

Tim's Daughters:

Denise Lynne Parham was born Nov. 10 1987, in Key West, Florida. She is Tamera's daughter, adopted by Tim.

Her name was changed to **Denise Melissa Mayclin**

Josie Kathryn Mayclin was born Nov. 23, 1991, in Key West, Florida.

Niece Madeleine Gwyn Shroyer Christophiades, the daughter of my brother Frederick who died in 1981 and his wife Patricia Conner. Madeleine's husband George, and three children Frederick, Patricia, and Daniel.

Her mother is my sister-in-law Patricia Shroyer.

Mamaw's parents

Father: Frederick Henry Mutschler, born September 27, 1964, in Handshuchsheim, Baden, Germany

Mother: Katherine (Katie) Eva Kirsch Mutschler, February 22, 1967, in Dossenheim, Baden, Germany

Married September 29, 1885, in Magley, Indiana

Mamaw's Paternal grandparents: Fred Mutschler, born in Handschuchsheim, Baden, Germany; Susan Huber Mutschler, same

Mamaw's Maternal grandparents: Christopher Kirsch, 1828-1898, Dossenheim, Baden, Germany; Kathryn Stern Kirsch, 1833-1901, same

Mamaw's siblings: Emma Rose Mutschler, born in Monmouth, Indiana 12/1887; Ella Celia mutschler, Monmouth, 12/1887; Albert Frederick Mutschler, born in Magley, Indiana 1/12/1893; Edgar George mutschler, 1897



A Short but Colorful Biography of Kathryn Huldah Shroyer Mayclin

created by Susan Mayclin Stephenson
for her sister, brothers, and children
December, 2007