



INTRODUCTION

Storytelling goes back in time to when early humans lived in caves, sat around fires and told stories after a big Mastodon steak dinner, or family gathering about things that happened that day or in the past and stories their parents and Grandparents told. All these stories are passed on to those to come in the future. It seems humans want to know about their ancestors, where they came from, what they did and how they lived.

For the same reasons, I have written about the Salt River Valley, including a brief history of the Hohokam, a prehistoric Indian civilization. Also stories of my ancestors, their history and the reason for the Joy and Young family to move to the Salt River Valley; early rural farm life and farm practices before, during and after the Great Depression. How World War Two changed the Salt River Valley from a sleepy farm community, turning its pool of farm labor, because of the modernization of farm equipment, into a labor force needed for the fast growing manufacture and electronic industries. How evaporation cooling and later refrigeration changed lifestyles in the Salt River Valley, which was starting to be referred to as “The Valley of the Sun” to promoting an ideal year-round place for working, playing and retiring. Retirees became referred to as “Snow Birds.”

The stories told in this book more generally cover the life and times of the first half of the 1900’s in the Salt River Valley. In the telling of these stories, I tried to show the living and working conditions and how the heat of the summer was tolerated. Also included are hours worked and wages earned, the personalities of the people, their relationship with their mate, kids, friends, neighbors, pets and other animals. There are stories about hunting deer, elk, bear, lion and doves, which was a popular pastime. Animals were a big part of rural life.

Some stories that deal with animals may seem a little inhumane, but that treatment was acceptable at the time. Horses, cats and dogs were treated better than most. We were



taught that we were responsible for their care and they were not to ever be intentionally harmed or abused...

The hunting stories may be upsetting to some. Not just the hunting but the camping, sitting around a camp fire, telling stories and the comradeship was what we looked forward to. One has to remember that we were just coming out of the frontier day a hundred to a hundred and fifty years ago, when hunting was less of a sport and more a case of survival. Even the language and phrases used to tell the stories, not always proper, are how we communicated at the time. The intention of every story told is to “tell it like it was.”

A special thanks to my three sisters, Martha, Mariam and Helen, and her husband Wayne Darby, for their stories, and to all the kind family and friends that contributed their anecdotes and helped with the spelling and structure of them. A big thanks to Sylvia Hilligardt for her memories about the Dendora Ranch. Lelia Schlabach for her stories about Lee Heckle, one of Dad’s cowboys, and my nephew Carlos Gottfried in helping to bring these stories to a published form.

All photographs are from family albums or frames taken from a 16 mm home movie camera in the 1940’s, unless otherwise indicated. The condition of the film has lost much of their quality over the past 60 to 100 years, but the subject in the picture still tells its story.

As you read these stories, imagine yourself sitting on a hill side, during a lunch break, from building a fence or sitting around a fire in the evening, or even resting on a dirt ditch bank under an old cottonwood tree, listening to stories old-timers would be telling about their life before coming to or growing up in the Salt River Valley in Arizona.

1929 TO 1933

Helen and Sam's third child, Helen, was born on April 10, 1929. A healthy little girl who was kind and thoughtful of others, it seems from birth. Her two older sisters liked to tease their little sister, sometimes trying to convince her she was adopted. That sounds familiar.

That year, Sam had grown another good crop of cotton and made \$500.00, which he put in the bank. On October 29th, the stock market crashed, called Black Friday. The Great Depression had begun. The bank closed their doors and Sam lost that money. He put \$25.00 in another bank and that money was also lost. Hard financial times had arrived. No one had any money. The price of everything went to rock bottom. Jobs were almost nonexistent. The unemployment eventually rose to 25%. Bartering was the common medium of exchange. Sam would butcher a steer and trade the meat to the merchants, friends and neighbors for all kinds of services and things.

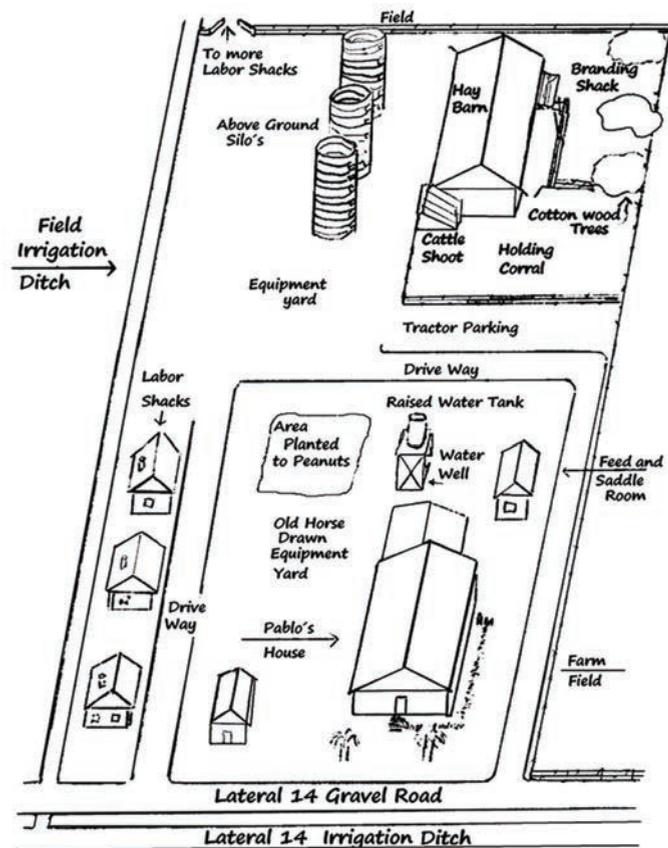
In the year 1930, while the nation was still recovering from the Depression, the family was moved to a 360 acre farm along Lateral 14, 27th Avenue, leased from the Boise family out of Flagstaff, Arizona. The house, one half mile north of Northern, was later referred to as "Pablo's house." Sam had a cesspool dug and a back porch was made into a bathroom. Helen did her usual job of fixing up the house, making it warm and inviting.

Sam had acquired two old tractors for pulling trailers and farm implements; they had iron wheels with steel cleats. The tractors made plowing, disking, cultivating row crops and other operations easier and in turn, making it possible to farm more acreage with less labor.

Mules and workhorses were becoming a thing of the past. Workhorses were still used to pull farm equipment until 1920 and some into the 1930's. Then, the horse drawn equipment was used; all the lifting, dropping or guiding had to be done



Dad, Mariam, Helen and Martha with Mom's little Airedale dog.



Pablo's House on Lateral 14, one half mile north of Northern Avenue.



F 20 Farmall tractor. Courtesy of cousin Lulu.

manually. When cultivating row crops with horses, there were two foot pedals to move the cultivator, left or right, to center the cultivator over the plants. The equipment yard at Pablo's house was littered with a lot of horse drawn cultivators, planters, etcetera.

The six or seven Mexican families, that worked for Dad, lived in small thin wood walled drafty houses, some with dirt floors. They cooked and heated with a cast iron wood burning stove. Everyone worked, except the very little kids and the very old or the ones that went to school. Some of the wives or old folks prepared the food; tortillas were made fresh every morning. They chopped wood, cleaned and did all the general chores while everyone else went to work. The laborer worked ten hours a day, Monday thru Friday and half a day Saturday. Sunday was the day of rest. Only feeding animals, milking, irrigating or other necessary chores were done on that day.

A couple of times a year, the Mexican families would celebrate a special event, usually a wedding.

The women would make tamales for a couple of days, and the dirt road in front of the labor houses was wet down and swept with brooms again and again to make a smooth hard dance floor. The men strung lights from tree limbs to poles, then back to another tree limb. Saturday afternoon, the wedding would take place with the neighborhood families and friends arriving to join the families on the farm. Then, the feast would begin with tamales, tortilla, bean and all kind of sweets. Dozens of kids were playing games, grown-ups sitting around talking and the newlyweds getting a lot of attention. At dusk, the lights were turned on and the dancing began with the local musicians providing the loud and lively music. Grown-ups, as well as kids, were dancing with uncles, aunts and grandparents. Soon, the old timers and kids were retiring, leaving the newlyweds and their friends dancing and partying into the night. They did know how to party.

Anytime anyone that worked on the farm got sick or needed any help, Mom would drop what she was doing and do what she could to help. She was their "Florence Nightingale."

There was a little two room storage building next to Pablo's House. One room, without doors, was a tack room for saddles, saddle blanks and bridles. The other room called the feed room, with doors, was used to store processed barley to feed the horses. A horse got into the storage room thru an open door, ate so much barley, foundered and died. Sam used the feed room to

store provisions, flour, sugar, coffee, salt, beans, and even tobacco, which was not approved of. Because of the shortness of money due to the depression, the workers would be given a little piece of paper, giving them credit for the work they had done. With the credits, they were given provisions.

Sam had given them a little plot to grow their vegetables. At the end of the growing season, if the workers had credit coming, they were paid money in exchange for their credits when Sam received money for his crops.

There were a lot of vegetables being grown year-round and fruit producing trees. Helen bought a canning machine and a large pressure cooker to heat up and kill any bacteria in the cans. Helen taught the Mexican women, that worked on the farm, how to do the canning while she furnished the material and they shared the products of their labor. They canned all the peaches, plums, pears and other fruit that was about. Vegetables of all kinds, peas, carrots, corn and beans were also canned.

Several acres of peas were planted, which Sam couldn't sell because the cost of picking was more than anyone would pay for the peas at the time. He told Helen he would have to plow the peas under. She asked Sam to wait because there were so many hungry people that needed something to eat. She would "can some of them and give the rest away." Helen got all the women on the farm as well as all the neighbors that could come and help pick, shell and can all the peas they wanted. After several days picking, shelling and canning, she told Sam he could plow under the peas whenever he was ready.

In back, and south of "Pablo's house," there was an area of about 40 x 50 feet that was very sandy. Sam, always one to experiment, heard that peanuts grew well in sandy soil and planted the area with peanuts. Martha watched the peanuts grow with interest because when she went to the Fox, or Orpheum Movie Theater in town, there was a choice of popcorn or roasted peanuts. Martha always chose the roasted peanuts. The peanuts grew lush and green and in time for harvest produced a bumper crop. When Sam pulled the plants out of the ground, there were peanuts hanging from the plants roots everywhere. Helen roasted and served the peanuts to Martha's delight.

Chicken feed was sold in cotton woven sacks that came with different designs, colors and patterns. After the sacks were empty, they were washed and the material was used to make aprons, curtains, dresses called "feed sack



Dad and Mom standing in a field of young cotton plants.

dresses,” and other things. Care was taken to get enough sacks with the same design and color to finish sewing the things being made. Sewing was right up Grandma Young’s alley and she made many of the things mentioned above.

Just before Christmas, Sam and Helen would spend hours making caramel covered popcorn balls, meant for kids on the farm, to go with the candy canes that were placed into the many sacks of food containing flour, sugar or coffee. The sacks were taken to the families that lived and worked on the farm. A couple of days before Christmas, the back of the pickup would be loaded with sacks of food, including the popcorn balls and candy canes. As Sam drove up to each labor shack, the kids would run out and cheer as if Dad was a real live Santa. As the sacks were being delivered to the workers family, they would give Sam a small package of tamales in gratitude. Then, on to the next, family with kids running up to the pickup, hoping they too would get a caramel-covered popcorn ball and candy canes, then more welcomed tamales in return.

Helen was driving the family car to the Methodist Church, on 1st Avenue in Phoenix, with Martha and Mariam to attend their Sunday school class. They had a perfect attendance record and Helen wanted to make sure the record continued. They were going South on Lateral 14, almost to Grand Avenue, when the right front wheel came off the axle and rolled past the car, jumped a ditch and rolled into an open field beside the road. The car rolled down the road, doing a precarious 3 wheel balancing act. Helen told everyone, “Hang on, there’s going to be a bump.” The car had low front doors and seat belts were a thing of the future. The car rolled to a stop and tipped over on the axle. A man, who was driving by, saw what happened and stopped to help. Martha and Mariam said they remember watching Mom and the man far off in the field, retrieving the tire and rolling it back to the car. With some time and effort, Mom and the Good Samaritan got the wheel back on the axle. Helen got Martha and Mariam to their Sunday school class late, but they were able to continue their perfect attendance record.

The family spent Sunday morning getting dressed to go to the Methodist Church on 1st Avenue in Phoenix and later the Methodist Church in Glendale. Dad would put on a rarely worn suit and tie and Mom always dressed up looking her best in a stylish hat and took care that all of us kids were always properly dressed.

After church, on a nice day, Mom would ask Dad to stop by the Sing Market, in the Mexican district in Glendale, to pick up food for a picnic. Sometimes in the spring, we would go out with friends to the desert north of the Arizona Canal, passing over on one of two bridges that crossed the canal to where the desert floor would be covered with all kinds of wild flowers which Mom loved to pick. Many times, the family would visit with friends or relatives, or they would come to visit with us at our house. Either way, it was always great fun playing games with the other kids.

Ben Joy, Sam's brother, was in the prospecting and mining business. While prospecting, he had come across a vein, southwest of Prescott, Arizona, that could produce tungsten, a mineral to harden steel, which brought a hefty price. He needed money and got Sam, Uncle Fred, Uncle Guy and other people interested to raise enough money to start a mining operation. The economy from the depression was recovering and there was a little money for investments. He stated the investment would "make everyone wealthy." Sam, Uncle Guy, Uncle Fred and his wife Gladys drove up to the mine to check on the progress. Roads in the rural and mountain areas were narrow, very rough and the going was slow. After their visit to the mine, they decided to bring home a couple of boxes of apples from the area. It had been raining most of that day and some of the washes were running water. They came to a wide wash, running a small stream, and Uncle Guy thought it best not to try a crossing. Sam was driving and figured the touring car could make it across, but about halfway thru the wash the motor stalled out. Sam and Uncle Fred were doing their best trying to get the car started again, when they soon heard a low rumble like a big truck coming at them in the distance. The rumble kept getting louder. This was a sure sign that a flash flood was on its way and around a bend above, coming down on them, was a three to four foot high wall of water.

They dropped everything and headed for the bank with their option of ending up alive running out. If they didn't reach the bank, they would have been swept away to their death with a roar. Aunt Gladys lost one of her shoes,



Pulling Jenny out of the wash.

so Fred and Sam grabbed her by an arm and they reached the bank just as the wall of foaming water came churning by. The touring car was swept away and started rolling and tumbling down the wash. Gladys remembered apples bobbing alongside the car as it was swept down the wash along with tree trunks, limbs and other debris the flood water had picked up. They walked some distance to a service station to call for help. By then, it was getting into evening and they sat, cold and hungry, on the front steps of the service station with a lone dim light shining. They watched a frog hop up and it started to catch bugs attracted by the light. Gladys commented how lucky that frog was, "It was at home for the evening and having its dinner."

The family was still living at "Pablo's house" when I was born on June 2nd, 1931, at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Phoenix, Arizona. I was brought home to "Pablo's house" to meet my three older sisters: Martha 6 years, Mariam 4, and Helen 2. When I was a little older, just starting to walk, Mom was looking out the window into a field nearby and saw some steers in a circle acting nervous, looking at something. She went out to see what was going on and, as she got closer, she could see me in the center of the steers, laughing, waving my arms and enjoying the attention I was getting from the cattle.

A rabid dog had come into the area and had bit several dogs before it was shot. The only remedy in those days was to shoot all the dogs. If a person was bit by a rabid dog, there was no cure and the person died a very painful death. Mom had a young Airedale she dearly loved, that followed her around the house. Mom asked Dad not to have the dog shot, but Dad said, "All the other dogs have been shot and I can't take the chance on someone being bit." It was the first time Martha saw Mom show any emotion by going into the bedroom to cry.

Mom and Dad wanted their little girls, Martha and Mariam, to dress properly, including wearing their shoes to Washington Grammar School on Northern Avenue and Lateral 14. Martha and Mariam both wanted to go barefooted like many of the kids who attended school in those days. They would leave for school in the morning and about ¼ mile from school, they would take off their shoes and put them in a hollowed out cottonwood tree alongside the road. After school, on their way home, they would put their shoes back on and walk on to the house. This worked well until Mom was at the school, working on a Parent Teacher Association project, and seeing Martha and Mariam, asked them, "Where are your shoes?" That was the end of going barefooted at school.