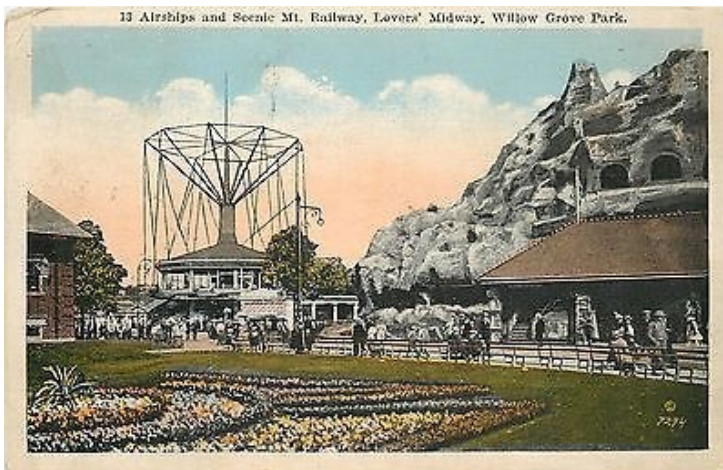


FOR THE LOVE OF THE “MIKE”



In a rough garage in Pittsburgh, in the year 1920, station KDKA began the first broadcasting of public entertainment. Just four years later in another part of Pennsylvania, a child was born to the Dawson family. The event took place in Abington Memorial Hospital, Abington, Pennsylvania – a suburb of Philadelphia. The date was

October 10, 1924, and the time was one o'clock in the afternoon.



Our family did not live in Abington, however, but in the neighboring town of Willow Grove. This small suburban town contained a park that was world famous and dear to the hearts of music lovers for the many concerts held there by the great Victor Herbert, John Philip Sousa, and many others. This was, however, the

only glittering feature of Willow Grove. Otherwise it was simply a quiet, secluded country town where everyone knew everyone else and their entire histories. The center of the village was a scene of continual activity. The farmers from nearby farms coming to buy their seed remained to chat about the fortune of their crops, Willie's bad cough, or the scandal of Mrs. Brown's having her hair bobbed. It doesn't seem possible that this town

was only fourteen miles north of the center of Philadelphia – one of the largest and busiest cities in the United States.

I started life in a little home on Grant Avenue in this same village. We remained at this residence for two years and then moved to our new home on Old York Road, the highway from Philadelphia to New York. My father built the garage apartment in the rear of the plot of ground and we moved in to await the completion of the colonial house, which was to be built next to the highway.

While we were living in this garage apartment, I was stricken with infantile paralysis and spinal meningitis. The treatment of this disease required intricate care and it was only through God's will, the treatment of a young German doctor, and the constant care of my mother, that I recovered without any ill effects. A daily column in the Philadelphia papers was written concerning my illness, and its daily developments. So strange was the event of having these two illnesses at the same time, the specialists from far and near visited me and studied my case. I remained in a coma for several days during which time our parish priest placed a relic of Saint Theresa the "Little Flower," on me and prayed for my recovery. Upon my awakening from my coma, I said to my mother, "See, mama, 'Little Flower' made me better." The only explanation that the priest had for this utterance was that the Saint appeared to me while I was unconscious. Ever since this time, in deep gratitude to Saint Theresa as well as to our Lord, the "Little Flower" has been my patron Saint.

Upon the completion of our colonial house, in 1929, we moved from the apartment into the house. The same year my grandmother, who was living with us, died. This was a great blow to me as I used to wait on her and tend to her minor wants. I missed the stories she used to tell me. The following June we took a trip to Canada as my mother was very tired from caring for my grandmother. This was one of the most delightful trips that I can remember. Our family has always been fond of traveling. The beauty of the New England country with its swift streams, rolling hills and good food has remained fast in my memory. I also believe that the beauty of Canada, and especially the cities of Montreal and Quebec, are unsurpassed.

Autumn came, and we returned from our Canadian trip. The autumn also brought my first year of school. I was only five years old but I was registered at St. Mary's Academy in Logan, Philadelphia. I enjoyed my first year of school very much and will always consider the teaching of the Sisters invaluable. The only sadness that I experienced during my first year, however, was the fact that I was so far away from home. I was very lonely and would take crying spells. I can remember how nice the students looked in their school uniforms. Navy blue serge pleated skirts and blouses trimmed with white comprised our winter uniforms, while for early fall and late spring



we wore navy blue silk uniforms trimmed in white. It was a very impressive sight to see us marching from one class to another.

I was promoted to second grade in June, and I still have my first grade final report card. Our class participated in the regular school pageant, which was held at the close of the year.

The following summer was comparatively uneventful only for an occasional visit to Atlantic City, New Jersey, for a short vacation.

The next September I enrolled in the Academy and remained there until December when I withdrew and our family made our first visit to St. Petersburg. On



arriving in St. Petersburg I entered Roser Park School. I made many friends at this time and some of these same schoolmates are in the graduating class this year. A few of them are Marjorie Danker, Bert Benton, Barbara Bassett, Corrine Silverman and others. In the spring our family returned to Willow Grove. We did not go south the next winter but stayed at home where I enrolled in our parish

school, St. David's, for third grade. I

did miss the sunshine but I also love winter sports and had a good deal of fun with my northern friends. The next year, however, we returned to St. Petersburg. I suppose we had gotten "sand in our shoes." I attended Roser Park School again and had the same teacher and most of the same classmates. This was fourth grade.

In April of this year I contracted whooping cough and was forced to stay home from school. As I would probably have to stay home for quite a time, my mother and father decided that it would be just as well for us to go back home. My whooping cough made the trip very slow and I can't remember when I have ever eaten so many lollipops. (To soothe the cough.) This summer was very important, however, as it was then that I made my first radio appearance. Here is the story of this most important event in my life.

It was announced that there would be a new series of children's programs to be held in the amusement park that was located near my home. The program was to be broadcast over WIBG, a radio station of a nearby town, and all children up to the age of sixteen



years were asked to participate.

The various children that I played with were very much excited about this event and all decided to appear for an audition the following week. Some of them were going to tap dance, some sing, and some just couldn't decide what to do. They all urged me to join them in their invasion of the program manager, but I declined at first, as I was always the most bashful of the crowd. Constant urging finally made me give in, and with perspiring hands and shaking knees I went to the program manager and mistress of ceremonies and asked her to let me sing.

The audition was successful, and I was signed up for the program to be heard the following week. I was overjoyed at my success, but I looked forward to that program with as much fear as one looks forward to a dentist's appointment.

The dreaded day arrived, however, and there was I, a skinny freckle-faced, frightened little girl in a green taffeta dress. My turn at the "mike" finally came and I managed to get through my song. I don't know whether it was the funny expression on my face, or that my song was really good, but somehow I was a "hit." Other programs followed and I continued my success. That was the starting of my radio work with WIBG and from there WIP in Philadelphia. I have been on the radio ever since, and the mistress of ceremonies is now one of my closest adult friends. I never dreamed that that first children's program would start me on my life's work.

We came to St. Petersburg the next September. I entered fifth grade at Glenoak School where I met many friends who are in the graduating class this year also. I sang in class and school programs frequently. This year was comparatively uneventful and we returned home in the spring.

That summer Mrs. King, the directress of the children's program on which I first appeared, introduced me to "Uncle Jim" Nassau, owner and manager of station WIBG in Glenside, Pennsylvania. She asked him to help me in every way he could. I liked him from the very moment I saw him. He was very nice to me and was a great help to me. He placed me on his "Children's Hour" which featured juvenile talent from the states of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. This grew to be a very popular program and I appeared on every broadcast. This was practically my sole occupation all summer as the preparation for these broadcasts took a great deal of time. We came to St. Petersburg the next September where I attended sixth grade at South Side Junior High School.



Mrs. Olive Roush, my fifth grade teacher, urged me to join a new program that was being organized on Station WSUN. It was called the “Kiddie’s Cabaret” and was sponsored by Webb’s Drug Store. The directress of this program was Mrs. Edith Kirtland



and the announcer was Carl Fritz Sr. I followed her advice and entered the contest on the program. I sang the song “When Irish Eyes Are Smiling” and won first prize. As a result, Mrs. Kirtland asked me to sing with her dancing school in the entertainments, which they

staged at various hotels, etc. around town. This began a very interesting series of events, and constituted most of my activity that winter. We returned home in the spring of that year. That summer I resumed my singing work with “Uncle Jim” and gave my first radio talk over Station WIBG. The subject of my talk was “How Christmas Is Celebrated in Florida.” This talk opened a new field of interest to me – radio speaking. This summer was filled with radio work and much activity in this line. The next September we came to St. Petersburg and brought along my father’s cousin.

This year did not bring much activity, as my health was not very good. I missed a great deal of schoolwork this year but I did make some appearances with Mrs. Kirtland, however. In March of this year my father’s cousin died very suddenly. This broke up our stay in St. Petersburg and we returned home earlier than usual. I did not feel very well that summer, so I did not enter into a good many of my former activities.

The following autumn we returned to St. Petersburg. The principal of the South Side made me go back to seventh grade as I had missed so much time the previous year. I stayed with the seventh grade work about three weeks. At the end of this time all my teachers recommended that I go onto eighth grade, as they knew that I could do the work. I went on to eighth grade and was soon in step with the work and back with my old schoolmates.

In the meantime, my health had returned to normal and I felt like myself again. I continued my entertaining work with Mrs. Kirtland and made some very good friends and acquaintances among the pupils of her dancing school. They were all very interesting and talented, and we were like one big family. In the spring we returned home, with the intention of selling our northern property. We placed our house for sale and attracted a buyer from Florida, of all places. It seemed strange to see a Florida license on a car again.

The sale was completed in July and we started our trip to St. Petersburg. On arrival at St. Petersburg we rented an apartment at the “Heart’s Delight” apartments on Fifth avenue and Third Street South. We had a very nice place overlooking a beautiful yard and flower garden. I used to go into the landlord’s house and play her piano. I got acquainted with the boy who was the helper for the landlord. He helped her with the lawn and with general repair work. His name was John Falconnier. I naturally talked of my radio ambitions and, as a result, he told me that his brother Arnold was a radio announcer.

He used to talk for hours about Arnold and how much he could help me if I only knew him.

In August I sang on another program on WSUN. It was called the "Candid Camera Hour," and featured Joe Nichols' orchestra. The program was designed especially for candid camera fans and equipment such as lights, ladders, and scenery was furnished for their convenience. The object was for the fans to take pictures of the artists while they were performing on the program. You cannot imagine the queer sights to be seen or the conditions we had to work under. For instance, while you were performing, there might be two or three photographers, one photographer on his back on the floor, and many photographers standing on all sides of you snapping your picture while you were in action. The effect was humorous, as you can imagine. The master of ceremonies of this program was Bob Wilbur, who is now manager of station WTSP. Edie Ginn was accompanist, and she is now musical director of station WSUN.

The following September I entered ninth grade at South Side. The subjects I selected were: English, Latin, Algebra, and Home Economics. In October we bought a house at 1916-10th Street South, which is our present address. After I had been going to school about three weeks, the principal informed me that I would have to make up my time and examinations from the last half of the eighth grade. I had left school before June the previous year. Therefore he suggested that I stay after school every day until I had made up both the time and examinations. This was one of the hardest things that I have ever had to do. Another girl was in my same position, so she had to stay also. We stayed from three to four every day until we had our work completed. This was certainly hard at times. At the end of four months we were finished with this work. We were repaid for our labor, however, as we had a feeling of personal triumph along with a great feeling of relief. I continued my ninth grade work and graduated in the graduating class of 1939.



Our family went north after graduation in order to prepare our stored furniture for shipment to St. Petersburg. During our visit in Willow Grove, we stayed with my godmother, Mrs. Uhlein, and her family. They have always been very good friends of ours and her son and daughter have taken the place of a brother and sister to me, as I am an only child. We had a very nice time during our stay and certainly regretted leaving. We returned to St. Petersburg in July and stayed close to home for the rest of the summer.

In August I joined the American Legion Auxiliary Juniors. I was appointed secretary to complete another girl's term. At a meeting of the group late in August, there was an announcement of the formation of a

Sons of the Legion drum and bugle corps, and it was stated that “Juniors” were eligible to join. The girls immediately thought that it meant to play instruments, and they were not interested. The advisor of the group suggested that I go to their first drill and offer my services. I did as she suggested, out of mere curiosity. I never dreamed that I was entering

a very interesting adventure. I visited the first drill, which was held on a Sunday afternoon. Everything was complete confusion and someone handed me a baton. It all happened so quickly that I didn't quite know what happened. The idea of being a majorette never entered my head, and I confess that I didn't know one end of the baton from the other.

The corps gradually grew more organized, however, and we began to learn something. My first and only teacher was the late “Mike” Miller, former drum major for Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey's Circus. He was a wonderful drum major and a very patient teacher. The drum major for the corps was Jess Tucker, who was also very fine in this work. In the meantime, I entered my sophomore year in high school, with many of the same feelings that most sophomores experience. I chose as my



subjects, Home Economics I, Music II, English II, World History, and Physical Education. All during the months of September and October the corps drilled and we entered our first parade on Armistice Day. The corps entered with inadequate uniforms and equipment, I entered with a skinned knee, and we all entered with a case of stage or, shall I say, street fright.

We were very successful and appeared in every parade all season. In April our drum major, on account of business and his wife's health, was forced to leave us. As a result, I was appointed drum major in complete charge of the corps, and anyone who has not been a drum major does not realize what a big job that is. June came, school was out, and I was passed to



eleventh grade. This was the first summer that we remained in St. Petersburg. In August, James Yates, the organizer of the "Veteran's Corner of the Air" asked me to appear on his program. In September I entered my junior year in Senior High. I chose as my subjects, English III, Business Arithmetic, Music II, and American History. The corps, after a full summer's drilling, was better able to meet the new season.

In the meantime, I had mastered the numerous signals and commands of a drum major and felt a little more self-confident. I did not twirl as a majorette, so that helped me as a drum major as it did not confuse me.

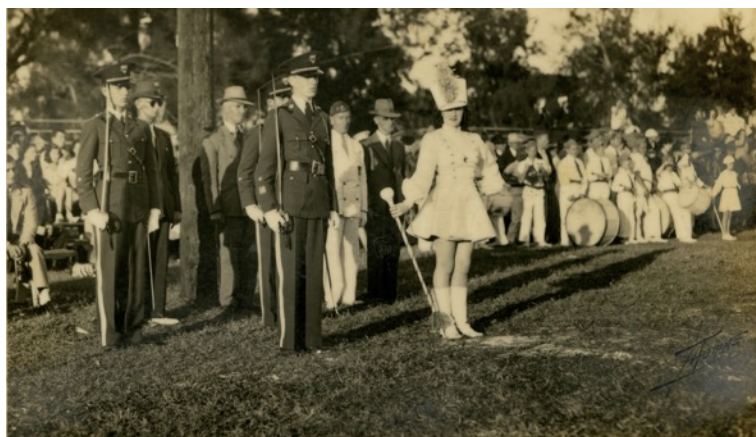
In September I was asked to be vocalist with the Bay Pines orchestra. I appeared with them every Sunday morning and Thursday night on Station WTSP. I did not consider this enterprise a real advancement, but I was gaining experience. The master of ceremonies and announcer for these programs was none other than Arnold Falconnier, whom I had heard so much about. I told him of my acquaintance with his brother and he was very pleasantly surprised. Believe me, this certainly was a coincidence. Between the time that I met John and the time that I met Arnold, John was killed in an automobile accident. This was a very sad event and Arnold was badly shaken, as he and John were very close.

Arnold has proven to be a great help and encouragement to me in my radio work, and I have found his advice invaluable. In my opinion Arnold is the best announcer and radio man that I have ever heard. He also has a very lovely wife and the sweetest little girl.

In the meantime, the corps was appearing at various events and parades. Two other girls and I appeared in a flag pageant at the Kiwanis state convention banquet, which was held at the Tramor Cafeteria. I represented Canada, wore kilts, and carried the Canadian flag. The other girls represented the United States and the state of Florida and carried their respective flags.

On November 17, 1940, I received a very nice honor. I reviewed the troops at Florida Military Academy, the first girl that had ever been allowed to do this and receive such an honor. Special permission from the War Department had to be secured before I could be allowed to stand in

review. In April I attended the state convention of the American Legion in Key West. I marched in the convention parade with the American Legion Auxiliary vocal chorus, acting as their drum major. The corps did not attend the convention on account of insufficient funds. I sang several vocal solos at the various convention banquets and



REVIEWING TROOPS AT FLORIDA MILITARY ACADEMY-
DRESS PARADE, NOVEMBER 17, 1940.

sessions and in general had a very nice time. Key West is a beautiful, historic old city and repaid us for our trip with many lovely and interesting sights. The enchanting turquoise-blue color of the water along the "Overseas Highway" remained in my memory as a very lovely scene. After my return from Key West, I resigned as drum major of the corps. The season was over and I did not want to spend another summer drilling, as it was too much work.

We stayed around St. Petersburg all summer. I sang every Sunday morning on the "Veteran's Hour," as the program was now called. The Bay Pines orchestra had meanwhile broken up as many of the members were going on vacation and being sent to other places. In August I resigned from the "Veteran's Hour" and also gave up my office as secretary while in my third term. I realize that these activities would be too much for me when I went back to school.



I started my senior [year] in Senior High school in September. The subjects I chose were: English IV, Speech I, Clothing I, and Music III. Outside of minor jobs at the radio stations and a few public appearances, I have curtailed my outside work until after graduation, as I have plenty of work to do with my school subjects.

Seventeen years seems like a very short time, but when I look back on my experiences, I realize that I have accomplished and learned much in that period of time. I have many faults like all humans, and I suppose that I have some virtues, too. I realize that my worse faults are tactlessness and indecision. I don't believe that I am the one to say about my virtues. I only know what kind of person I try to be, not the kind of a person I really am. My likes and dislikes are far-reaching and varied, but I believe that my pet hate is a conceited, self-centered person. In relation to my appearances, I'd better leave well enough alone.

Now, at the age of seventeen, I am looking forward to a career in radio. Anyone who has not been connected with radio does not realize its magic. The wonderful feeling of suspense as the second hand slowly creeps toward the time for the program to start, the feeling of anxiety which comes when you try to finish the program "on the nose," or the inexplicable thrill which comes when you speak into a metal cylinder on disk and realize that hundreds, thousands, and maybe millions of people are listening to you; none of these emotions can be realized by a person who does not know radio.

I believe that in the future, radio will be as necessary to a person as bread. Radio will entertain them, comfort them, and aid them in their work. Oh, yes, radio is just in its infancy and still having its "growing pains." The unimaginable field of television is unfolding before our eyes, frequency modulation is being perfected, and facsimile is emerging from the experimental stage.

If you take time to read articles and listen to programs concerning radio's possibilities, you will find that you may, in the future, expect to find your newspaper printed for you and coming out of a small machine in your living room, or carry portable sets with you so that you may talk to anyone at any time by simply signaling them. You may hear a program or not hear it by stepping in or out of an electric beam coming from the radio. This comes in handy when you don't like the family's choice of radio programs.

These "inventions" that I have just mentioned seem fantastic and, you might say downright impossible. But they are not impossible and may be common everyday occurrences in the very near future.

This great and growing industry has always been a subject for complete interest and fascination to me ever since I can remember.

I am looking forward to the time when I shall be a part of this great field of entertainment, service, and comfort for humanity.

Radio – one of the most democratic industries in the most democratic country in the world – America. This is my goal.

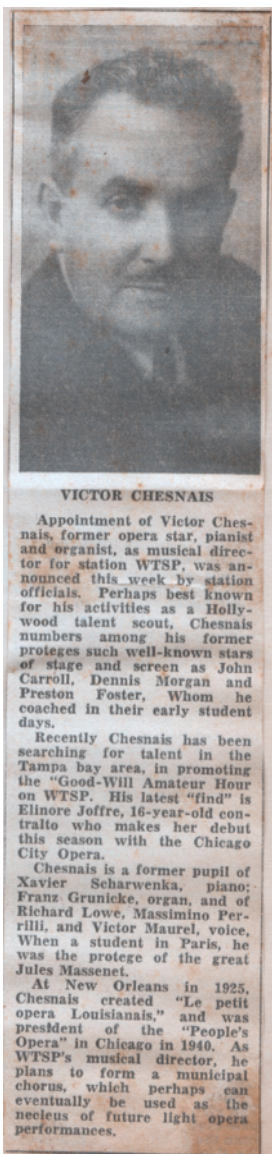
[Here ends the autobiography of Marian Frances Dawson for her Senior paper for which she earned an "E—a very excellent and interesting piece of work." In the summer, after graduating from high school, she continued her account of events.]



It is now the middle of August. I have graduated from high school and now that part of my life is far behind. I hope that my future life may be as exciting as my past life, if not more exciting. A new chapter is opening and I am anxiously waiting to get started on that chapter.

Mr. Victor Chesnais has just left for Tucson, Arizona. I was blessed in meeting this person as his vocal teachings and encouragements have been invaluable. I met Mr. Chesnais at the Maritime Training Station here in St. Petersburg toward the last of December, 1941. The event was a weekly quiz program, which was given at the training station by W.T.S.P. Every week, a guest artist would appear and I happened to be the guest artist this particular week. I

phoned Sally U. Nelson, who was in charge, that I did not have an accompanist as I had broken relations with Mrs. Jones, my former accompanist. Sally said that she would have



an accompanist for me. Meanwhile, in the Sunday "St. Petersburg Times" an article appeared announcing the arrival in the city of Mr. Victor Chesnais, world-renowned musician, singer, talent scout, and vocal teacher, and the article also stated that Mr. Chesnais would start an Amateur Hour over W.T.S.P. in order to discover talent in the Tampa Bay Area. I read the article carefully and wondered how in the world a person like this could ever come here. I never dreamed that I would ever meet him, let alone know him. You can imagine my surprise when I recognized the accompanist that Sally brought for me as the Mr. Chesnais whose picture I had seen in the paper. He accompanied me that night and I heard no more of him until I was summoned to appear on a street program which was called "a preview of the Amateur Hour." After this appearance, I surmised that I would appear on the amateur hour, but that never happened. Mr. Chesnais became discouraged and discontinued the programs, as he could not find any real talent. Time went on and presently I was called for an interview with Mr. Chesnais. I sang for him and he took my name and address. On January nineteenth, I received a letter stating that Mr. Chesnais was settled and we could begin our lessons. I had casually mentioned to Sally that I would like Mr. Chesnais to coach me, but I didn't believe that he would. I went up to the studio two nights a week at 6:30 P.M. for about a month. Then Mr. Chesnais advised that I try to get an old piano so that I could practice. I did this and then he decided that it would be better to come to the house to teach me. As I was going to school, we picked Saturday as the day for our lessons. I repeat, it is now the middle of August and Mr. Chesnais has been teaching me all these months, never missing a Saturday. I am very flattered to be the protégé of such a great

person as he. I know that he has improved my voice a great deal, and he has taught me many things. I will be eternally grateful to him and shall never forget him. Before he left, he made me promise that I would come to Arizona soon so that he may help me in Hollywood. This is a great opportunity and if it is for the best, I intend to take advantage of it.

These lessons and my vocal practice and study has taken up practically the entire summer, but I believe that it was well worth my time.

On August 6, my father decided to go to Bay Pines hospital for treatment. He had been suffering with a rupture for a long time and had been putting off going to the hospital. After two weeks of examinations and tests, the doctors have decided that he is terribly run down and that his lung ailment needs more immediate attention. Consequently, they

have decided to transfer him to the veteran's hospital at Oteen, North Carolina, as the climate is better for his ailment.



During the entire summer, we have been planning to go to Philadelphia in the Fall so that I may go on with my career. Since my father has gone to the hospital my mother and I have been carrying on the planning and preparation for this trip. We have partially renovated both the inside and outside of the house so that we may rent it in the Fall. Our

car must be sold along with a few more of our possessions. When all of these things are taken care of, we will be free to make the trip.

The time seemed endless as Mama and I were waiting to make our journey north. The day finally came, however, and we were on our way. Of all months in the year to pick to head northward we picked January. A normal person would of course come south. We travelled by Greyhound bus (that was the most economical) and planned a stop over in Asheville, North Carolina, to visit my father at the hospital at Oteen. The trip to Asheville was uneventful and the weather proceeded to get cooler as we got further north. It was a very raw and chilly day that we arrived in Asheville and my father was at the bus terminal to meet us. He of course was very pleased to see us once more; it had been such

a long time. We found rooms in a private house near the hospital (Oteen is outside Asheville), which was very comfortable and warm. It belonged to a Mrs. Beazley whose husband worked in the hospital. He has since gone into the Army for the second time as he was in the First World War and her son has also been drafted. Her son was



leaving while we were there and he felt very badly about going. During our three day stay the weather was cold and raw and it snowed on and off the entire time. The hospital was bleak and dreary and the weather didn't help any. We went into Asheville and looked around, and I happened to think of John Rhodes whom I have mentioned earlier in this autobiography, and thought of looking him up. I remembered the name of the hotel at which he used to work so went there and inquired about him and where he was at the present time. The clerk was a very good friend of the family and said that John had been in the Army but had an appendicitis operation and was sent home to recuperate and was now working at the "Bon Marche" in Asheville.

I promptly went to the "Bon Marche" and asked for John. (We had corresponded for so long but had never seen one another.) He of course didn't know me and when I introduced myself he was so surprised. I told him I was on my way north and gave him my godmother's address. He promised to write which he did later. Had a nice little chat then said good-bye.



Also visited the Radio Station (cannot remember the call letters) and had a nice chat with the announcers and the girl control engineer. (I had no technical knowledge at that time.) Told them I was going to try at WIP in Philadelphia. They wished me luck and a nice trip.

Left Asheville on Monday morning and it was still bleak and cold. Had a very nice crowd on the bus they were always cracking jokes. The trip was beautiful from there up as we went through the Shenandoah valley. The mountains were ablaze with all the fall and winter colors, and peaked with snow. Were wishing we could stop at Harrisonburg, Virginia, at friends the Argenbright's but it would mean an extra stop-over and extra money which we had very limited amount of. An amusing incident happened around Harrisonburg. It was early morning and every one had been sleeping on and off throughout the night (except Mama who slept on and off day and night) and were rather groggy. We were nearing a bus station and the bus gave a swerve around a corner. Mama always carried a brown "carry-all" bag with everything imaginable in it and had it on the floor beside her. She was sitting across the aisle from me, as we couldn't find two seats together at that time. The man next to her (next to the aisle) was asleep and had his shoes off, so when the bus swerved Mama's Carry-all bag swerved too and spilled out on the floor. Spoons bottle openers and atomizers were thrown on the floor and in her haste to pick them up she put (in the very bottom of the bag) the man's shoes. It was rather embarrassing trying to explain how she did that!

Cold and tired and decidedly dirty we arrived at Philadelphia. Went to Broad Street Station and phoned the Uhlein's. There was no one home as it was early in the afternoon and they had not arrived home from work yet. So, we sat and sat some more. Finally called and they were home. Boarded an Easton bus and went out to Willow Grove.

Received a warm welcome from the Uhlein's and were certainly glad to get cleaned up after our long trip. Met Larue, Adrian's wife, for the first time and liked her immediately. After we settled ourselves I started my search for a place in radio or music. First of all took Arnold Falconnier's letter to WIP where it was treated as if it were just another piece of paper. Talked to a Mr. Harris, head of the FM activities of that station and discussed possibilities of acquiring a position such as record librarian or some other



small job that would place me in the studio where I could observe the procedure of studio work. He had a job in mind which dealt with correspondence and would mean contact with the sponsors, or so he said. I went home elated at the position, only to call the next day to find that he had changed his mind and the job was not open, after of course I had widely published my new job at at WIP. Next I went to "Uncle Jim Nassau" with whom I had been at WIBG in Glenside. He now has a record and music shop in Glenside. He was very nice and gave me a list of the various persons he knew at the different radio stations. They were announcers, program directors, etc. I could see the possibilities all over the place now, and thought it was just a matter of time. Things were no that easy however and the list was soon exhausted with not a good possibility in view yet. I was

most impressed with KYW, the best-equipped and modern studio I had ever seen. Talked with a Mr. Begley, the program director and he arranged an audition with Clarence Fuhrman, their musical director. I had the audition with Mr. Fuhrman singing "Gypsy Love Song" and he was duly impressed however could promise me nothing at the present. I suppose they just had to have a spot in which to place me. Anyhow it was unsuccessful.

The next few months were in short nothing but disappointment. They contained all the radio stations and then the theatrical agency of Eddie Suez. Through the Suez agency I went to the Melody Inn and tried out one night. The manager was pleased and told me to come back the next night. I again broadcast to all my good luck only to have it fall through the next day. I was so stunned and hurt that I never bothered to go back to that place again although I suppose I should have, for an explanation. These months also contained an offer from a choirmaster in Wyncote to sing in the protestant choir but that

of course did not appeal to me. My singing was a total flop and even to get in the studios with a small job seemed out of the question. My depression couldn't be any deeper. Several other small possibilities presented themselves only to fall through, so I won't mention them.

One Sunday I was looking through the paper and found an advertisement of a radio school. Of course that appealed to me being radio, and I sent in for the information. I received not the information but a representative from the school came to the house and I had even forgotten that I had written for the information. His offer sounded good and the course sounded interesting. Anyway, I had to do something I was getting nowhere fast the way I had been going. So, I signed up for the course, not even fully understanding what it included except that it had that magic word radio in the title.

I started school the following week and was surprised to find that it was a radio communications course and consisted of International Morse Code (I had never dreamed of learning this) and a small portion of technical radio. I was going to the school about six



weeks when I asked the theory teacher did he know of anywhere where I could work even part time in radio to gain experience. He said that he would inquire at Philco for me. He did this but said that as I was not yet 21 I could not work on the night shift (the factory) as that was the only shift vacancies. I really thought this was the end. A day or so afterward he told me that it might be well to visit a friend of his who was the director of personnel at Philco (a Miss

Timm now at Westinghouse). I did so and was surprised to find that she had a position in mind immediately. I told her my ideas and the small amount of technical knowledge with which I was equipped. Much to my surprise I was hired as a "Laboratory Assistant" in the lab of M.L. Thompson. In this lab there were only men engineers and nary a girl for a good city block, let alone a girl lab assistant, of which there were none others. A worm could never feel lower or more humble than I did my first few days and even weeks that I worked in that lab, as my smattering of knowledge was ridiculously small. The engineers with whom I worked were all college grads mostly from MIT in Boston brought to Philco for radar work, I was assigned to their unit and was pleased to find that they were very helpful and sympathetic. I learned a great deal and found the work very interesting, although it had its terrible moments when I realized just how little I knew. These boys were all so much fun and so nice to work with that that burden was lightened. I continued to go to school and would go there directly from work on Mondays, Tuesdays, and



Thursdays. This was rather hard as we still lived at Willow Grove (a fourteen mile ride from the center city and my school). So I had to ride fourteen miles after ten PM when school closed at nights, which meant that I climbed in bed at sometime like two AM. Then I would have to be up about six thirty so I could get to work at eight thirty. This didn't leave much time for sleep. I kept at this however for the remainder of my school and graduated with the best grades and highest proficiency in my class. I really liked the code now that I had learned it and

found I could get along very well with it.

I continued my work at Philco but found that there was very little chance for advancement unless I would go on studying, which I didn't care to do. I learned that I was not very well suited for engineering work besides I didn't like it enough to study the length of time that it would require. I couldn't see my staying at a job that I could not make any advancement, so one night went to see Mr. Harmon the head of the code school. Told him my problem, and he suggested that I try to do some code work as I had gotten along nicely with it. In the meantime we had moved from my godmother's place to our own apartment at 5901 Lawndale Street in Philadelphia. Toward the end of our stay in Willow Grove we seemed to be in the way at their house and I am sorry to say that we parted bad friends although we tried to pay back their hospitality and help them in every way that we could. It was such a pity as we had been friends so long. You can imagine therefore how glad we were to be in our own apartment and to ourselves.

Mr. Harmon suggested that I go to the Immigration and Naturalization Service [at] the Department of Justice as he had heard that they were looking for a radio operator. I did so and was employed as an Assistant Communications Operator. I went to my boss at Philco and asked for a release, which he gave to me although sorry to have me leave, and telling me that I had been listed for a raise in the near future. It could not have compared to the

Standard Form 53
March 1944
U. S. CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION
Dept. Civ. No. 474

(10/18/43 to 3/15/44--Caf-3)

Form 53 Revised,
Bufile Bureau No. 44-3014,
Approval expires March 30, 1945.

**NOTICE OF OFFICIAL
EFFICIENCY RATING**

REGULAR () SPECIAL ()
PROBATIONAL () VITAL PERIOD () 2nd

As of 8-18-44 based on performance during period from 3-15-44 to 8-18-44

DANSON, Marion F. Communications Operator Caf-4
(Name of employee)

Office of Administrative Services, Supplies & Services Section
(Organization—Indicate bureau, division, section, shift, etc., as applicable)

Efficiency rating: Very Good

Allen Fickerson
(Signature)
Chairman, Efficiency Rating Committee
(Title)

OCT 10 1944
(Date of notification)

Interpretation of Efficiency Rating
Excellent (E) means that performance in every important phase of the work was outstanding and there was no weakness in performance in any respect.
Very Good (VG) means that performance in at least half of the important phases of the work was outstanding and there was no weakness in performance in any respect.
Good (G) means that performance met requirements from an overall point of view.
Fair (F) means that performance did not quite measure up to requirements from an overall point of view.
Unsatisfactory (U) means that performance in a majority of important phases of the work did not meet job requirements.

Inspection and Appeals
If you have any questions regarding your efficiency rating, it is suggested that you discuss the matter with your immediate supervisor. Your will be made available to you for inspection. If you request it of your supervisor or the personnel office. Such a request is not considered an appeal. You are also entitled to see the final ratings (not the rating forms) of all employees in your office or station. Information on appeals may be secured from your supervisor or personnel office. There are time limits governing the filing of appeals.

Significance of Efficiency Ratings
The salary advancement schedule provides for successive salary advancements based on several factors, one of which is efficiency ratings. Ratings of "Good" merit periodic salary advancement by successive steps up to and including the middle rate for the grade (the fourth step in six rate grades) and ratings of "Very Good" and "Excellent" merit periodic salary advancement by successive steps above the middle rate of the grade.
The total compensation of an employee whose efficiency rating is "Fair" must be reduced one salary step if his rate of compensation is above the middle rate. If the rate of compensation is equal to or below the middle rate, it is not subject to reduction on that account.
An employee whose efficiency rating is "Unsatisfactory" is not permitted to remain in his position. He must be assigned to a position more nearly commensurate with his ability, either (1) in the same line of work, in which case the position must be in a lower classification grade and his rate of compensation must not be in excess of the middle rate for such grade, or (2) in some other line of work for which he is qualified, in which case he is considered as having received a new appointment to the sixth grade and he must begin a new probationary period, or if no suitable vacancy is available he must be separated from the service for inefficiency. A probationary employee, assigned to a position of lower classification grade, begins a new probationary period in the new position.

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salary of the new position however. Entered on duty at the Department of Justice on the eighteenth of October 1943.

There were many new things to learn, among them typing although I had a small amount of knowledge of typing. There was procedure, which was slightly different from that I had learned in school. There was the procedure of the office and general set-up of the organization. Things came one at a time, and smoothed themselves out finally.

After we got settled in our apartment my father came up from Oteen to stay with us for the summer. He was so tired of the coldness and loneliness of the hospital. (He came up in June and then left for Florida in November right after I received my first pay from my new position.)

The fall and winter of that year passed uneventfully. I was learning all the time at my new job and found my co-workers so nice to work with. The work was interesting and I became very enthralled with it. I am working at the Central office of this service and the key station of the Border Patrol network of 37 stations throughout the country. We contact these stations by CW or code. The office is a small one and for that reason more desirable as there are just a few people to work with. There is a "Radio Lab" upstairs from the station and I go there sometimes to put in a little work at which my Philco experience comes in handy.



My mother and I began to get letters from Florida friends saying that my father's health was bad and he looked as if he was not improving. He remained in Florida for the remainder of the winter however and in June came up to us again. We were both shocked to see him as he had failed so very much and was only a shadow of his former self. He was sick almost from the moment he landed here and about three weeks later became so sick that he was bedridden. The doctors couldn't help him and he was very miserable as we were in a second floor apartment and the heat was unbearable, even for a well person. His health kept failing and he was getting weaker seemingly by the minute, and on August 27th he passed away.

Now there is only Mama and I. The funeral is over and we are at present waiting for her compensation to come through and several things to straighten themselves out so we may be more settled. We are hoping to find a little apartment down in the city where it will be more convenient for my work and to get into the center city. We cannot make any move just now for all the money is tied up and will just have to wait until things start to come through on her compensation.