

November, 1969

To Our Four Sons:

Dad, Samuel Daniel Calhoun, was born in a little community close to Yorktown, Little Chicago. He was the second son of James Clayton Calhoun and Nancy Clark Calhoun. One older son, Powell Thompson, and a younger son, Levis (William Levis) plus two younger sisters, Alda Mae and Bessie Clark made up the family. When Dad was 2 or 3 years old Grand-daddy Calhoun bought 1000 acres of land, cleared it and built a big rambling ranch house on it to bring the family to. The house was rebuilt after all the children were gone. On this ranch or farm the family lived until all the children grew up and had families of their own. Dad was born on November 15, 1900.

I, Ruth Lydia, was born November 5th, 1902, in Davie, Texas (this was a little community near Yorktown and Cuero [not far from where Dad was born]) to Robert Lee Boykin and Lydia Ellen Utz Boykin. My father was the schoolmaster at the time. I was the youngest of six children: Robert Owen, William Andrew, Alma Lee, Millard Nolan, and Nora Jane. Papa died at the age of 38 in 1905 in Burns Hospital. He was Deputy Sheriff at that time in Cuero. Robert or Bob was in Professor Nash's Academy in Cuero and Alma was a boarding student at Saint Mary's Hall in San Antonio at the time of his death. Mama decided to move to San Antonio where she had two brothers in 1906 or 1907 when she could see that Papa's insurance was giving out. I went to kindergarten with Alma at Saint Mary's Hall until I was old enough to go to public school as Mama had to go to work. She worked as a practical nurse for awhile; then in the alteration department at Wolff & Marx. The next year Alma went to work as a clerk along with Mama and the boys had already gotten paper routes. They had two wheeled gigs and one of them would have to make the trip clear down to the Express Building to get the papers. They got up at 3 A.M. We lived near Woodlawn Lake.

The years went by more or less smoothly for me until I graduated from Main Avenue High School in 1919 at the age of 16. The next September I enrolled at C.I.A. (now Texas Woman's University) and June of 1920 found me with a 4 year teaching certificate. I began teaching the fall of 1920 in Yorktown under Mr. Peterson, a girl friend's father at \$80 a month. The summer of 1920 I met your dad and we switched dates while on a double date and I think both of us knew more or less from the beginning that something lasting would come of the chance meeting and just think, we have had nearly 50 years of happiness - it will be 50 years in 1972. Dad was in A&M the year I taught in Yorktown and he came home after Christmas and he told me (to keep

me from fussing about his quitting) that his Dad could not afford to keep him in school any longer so we became engaged. We didn't marry until over a year later as I wanted to pay off some money I had borrowed to go to college on. Dad went to farming and we married January 16, 1922. We moved to a little house that Grand-daddy Calhoun's overseer had lived in. He let each of the children have 150 acres of the original 1,000 but we had to assume the indebtedness of the entire 1,000 leaving 250 acres free to debt for him and Manaw to live on. During the depression we lost our 150. Mama Boykin came to live with us soon after we married and there Dan Clayton, Darden Lee and Jack were born. When Jack was about 7 months old, we moved to Uncle Charlie's place. We loved the big roomy house with 3 fireplaces but somehow things didn't go well there. Dan Clayton had a ruptured appendix; he got sick while we were in Rockport. Dr. Gore didn't know what was wrong and kept giving him calomel - finally the druggist suggested to me that Dan might have appendicitis - I called Dad that evening at Charco and as soon as he got in we drove through the night to get Dan to Burns Hospital. No one but Dad and me thought that he would live with no modern drugs to combat the infection which was general after the appendix ruptured and we drove so far with him over country roads. It took him a long time to get over it.

It was there, too, that Jack was hurt. After a trip to see Aunt Mae in Austin, Bud was a baby so we took Rosa with us (Dad decided I needed her worse than he did) and Bess and I drove to Austin with 4 little boys! When we got home the boys wanted old Prince, the pony. Dad had let a neighborhood boy have him to ride while we were gone. He took Dan, Darden and Jack with him to get the pony and Dan was to ride him home. Prince ran away with Dan and Dad had to outrun him to get him before he made the turn into the gate and raked Dan off. He parked the car and jumped out and caught the pony but the car picked up speed and ran into a tree throwing Jack into the windshield. His throat was cut badly and we had to rush him to Cuero to get it sewed up. And you know, he thought Dad had let him get hurt saving Dan and he wouldn't have a thing to do with him - he wouldn't even drink the water that Dad handed me through the door - I couldn't leave his side as he was only 3 and might raise his head and tear out the stitches. You know how that made Dad feel.

Buddy was born there at Uncle Charlie's place, but when Bud was about six months old, Uncle Charlie lost the place and we had to move to the Cocreham place which Dad worked for about 2 years. I surely hated to move.

Our bad luck seemed to keep right on or was it because we had five active little boys? Bud was kicked twice, Jack had diphtheria and Dan had inflammatory rheumatism until we had his tonsils out and Darden's too.

Rufus was born there or rather while we were living there as I went to Burns Hospital since I had had trouble after Bud was born. Mama asked Dad if she could name him and she gave him the Rufus Levis that I'm afraid he didn't like very much. Mama wanted him to have Papa's initials.

The boys played together (one thing sure - they didn't lack playmates) and roamed the pasture, and Dan started to Charco School and we let Darden go as if it were kindergarten because Bess was teaching there and came by to get them and all three rode horseback. They had many experiences on their horses. In 1931 I had an operation and went to Dr. Tom Pressley, who had moved from Runge to San Antonio, to have it done. Cousin Bill Sumners came to help out and Rosa helped Mama so they all managed OK. We all seemed to move out of the sickly stage and were quite well until a few years later when Darden had pneumonia.

We moved to the Victor Albrecht place and tried dairying. It seemed to be a good deal but the depression was setting in and our cash trade went down so that we had to let the place go. We moved to the big rock house where Colonel Marsh lives now (they tried to renovate the old house and took out a steel support and the whole wall fell in so they had to rebuild it completely). After a year or so we moved to the Allen place where we lived until we moved to the place we live now. I had studied while we were at the Allen place and took the State Teacher's Exam and got a 3 year certificate. Then after we moved and got settled I applied for and got the Kilgore school. We moved on our wedding anniversary January 16, in 1937 and I loved the place from the start - there was room for everybody and everything and the huge oak tree in the yard for the boys to play under. There each boy finished school, did their dating and the three oldest went into the service. There Dan brought Rowena when they married - there we lost our Jack (a piece of our hearts forever gone), there Darden brought Galen when he got out of the service. There I started back to teaching first at Kilgore then in 1942 in Goliad. During my Kilgore teaching I drove back and forth 11 miles each way but Estelle Albrecht took her car every other week. I was principal and got \$85 - Estelle got \$75.

There we lived and worried through World War II. Many things happened in all these years - some amusing, some happy, a few sad. Each of you will have your own private memories of these years, and of our trips to Rockport each summer. How wonderful it

would have been if we'd had this house here at Rockport then. I never dreamed I'd be working here.

In the summer of 1943 I started back to college, taking with me Jack, Bud, and Rufus and the Roadmaster full of all the things we'd need for a whole summer. I really didn't plan on taking the cow and the washing machine, etc., but was almost forced to after seeing how scarce milk was and the laundry situation. We really had a nice summer; the boys enjoyed the swimming, skating, etc. Jack got his final two graduation credits and Bud got off a couple of courses. Rufus went to the Academy and had a review course (just to keep him occupied while the rest of us were in school) and I got 14 hours. Later Bud and I had government and adolescent psychology together and later got our Bachelor's together in 1950.

All this time Dad was buying cattle and getting up to see us every week-end and footing the bills. It was hard on him, I know. In 1952 Dan Clayton and I got our Masters on the same night - he at Huntsville and I at San Marcos. Not many women have had these experiences.

We remodeled the house in 1954 and in 1955 when Aunt Nora died, Mama Boykin came to live with us. She was a pleasure but it involved much trouble getting things settled and then in keeping a practical nurse as she was unable to help herself and blind. She died in 1959. My sweet sons gave me a trip that summer after Mama died out to see my brother, William's family in Tucson, Bob and his wife in Los Angeles, (they worked - Bob at Osborne Laboratory at 70 years of age so I took in the sights during the day on Grayline Tours) then on to Salt Lake City where I saw the Mormon Temple and heard the choir and on to Denver to see Aunt Bess before coming home. I really enjoyed it more than I can say.

In 1950 Rufus went into the Navy and on returning from Guam went to Trinity and San Marcos and finished in 1956 in January. In 1960 I went to the University of Texas to a Guidance Institute and that was the summer we nearly lost Dan with peritonitis - it was about 3 years before he was really well. Dan finally recovered and I feel that along with all the guidance given me in making decisions all along the way is due to God's gracious care for us.

In 1962 I went to Texas Tech for another institute and it was that summer that Dad moved the house onto our lots here in Rockport (I never dreamed that I would be

counseling here then). I had to retire in Goliad in 1968 I applied for this job here during the Christmas vacation. It is both interesting and easy, but I plan to retire in 1971.

The years have been wonderful and rewarding - seeing you boys mature, have your own families, and get settled in your own homes. Though it sounds as if we had a lot of illness and accidents, the good time have far outweighed the bad. Each of you have had your ups and downs but how many families have been as fortunate as ours?

Dad and I are happy - contented with what we have succeeded in doing in life, proud of our sons and their families, the grandchildren, and now great-grandchildren! Who could ask for more than that! We look forward now or at least after 1971, to a quiet, independent life.

Mother