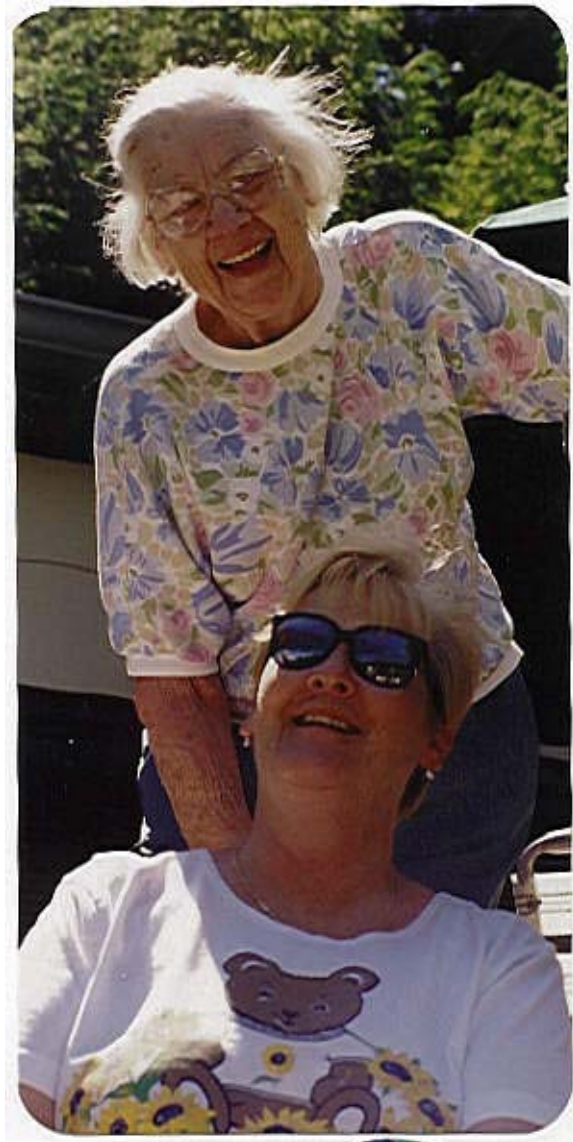


MARY ATKINSON'S STORY



Mary Elizabeth Atkinson Clark Terrill
as told to her son, Conrad Terrill



With my niece, Mary Ellen Brady Moured (bottom).

On the front cover: At a May Procession in 1922 or '23, wearing my First Communion outfit.
First printed by C. Terrill, June 2002. This is version 2.2, printed December 2007.

2007 PREFACE

I had been intending to write my mother's story for several years when it suddenly became clear to me that it was now the time to do it. This version of her story (which is actually Chapter 1 of a three chapter book in my grand scheme) was written hastily in June of 2002 when my mother was in a nursing home, in declining health. I wanted her to see that something was coming from all of my interviews of her, and I wanted her to have something to enjoy in the nursing home. I had interviewed her for a month in 1999, and at considerable length at various times before that. (Incidentally, I encourage you to interview your parents too, as soon as you can. There will come a day when you no longer can.) My mother received Chapters 2 and 3 of her story soon after Chapter 1, but those chapters were in preliminary form—just pictures with captions. Chapter 2 concerns her life with Harry Clark, her first husband; and Chapter 3 concerns her life with Ferrin Terrill, her second husband, my father. My mother enjoyed seeing her story in print. And other people at the nursing home enjoyed it as well—people who were visiting my mother, and members of the staff as well. Word had gotten around the nursing home that my mother's story was good reading!

If I hadn't written this story in such haste it would have included references and picture credits. The final version, when I have time to write it, will certainly include these. For now, though, I want to distribute this version to those who might be interested in hearing about the Atkinson family's life on Hollins Street, especially since we're planning an Atkinson family reunion some time within the next year, and since people are currently expressing interest in family stories. To give some credit where it is due, though, let me for now say simply that what stories here did not come from my mother generally came from my Aunt Margaret Atkinson Brady. And the pictures came from everywhere. The story told here is in my mother's own words for the most part, very much as she told it to me. What I have added to it is some organization.

The story ends abruptly, I admit. There's actually a lot more material that could go into it. And, of course, it should bring us up to the time when Mary meets Harry. But, for now, it is what it is.

My mother, Mary Elizabeth Atkinson Clark Terrill, died in October of 2004, in Connecticut, at age 90.

Conrad Terrill
December 2007

SOME PICTURES WHICH DIDN'T MAKE THE FIRST EDITION



May Day, about 1917. Ginny and Margaret in back, and Joe, Mary and Edward. [This is a picture which was provided to us by Carson Billingsley, a second cousin of these children.]



Myrtie Beasley, Frank Shaffrey, Nellie Beasley and Elizabeth Mathews in back; Mary, Dad and Ann in front, around 1921 at either Atlantic City or Bay Shore.



Not every day was sunny. About 1920.

GROWING UP ON HOLLINS STREET

Hollins Street is in Baltimore. That's where I'm from. My first memories are not of Hollins Street though, but of Fulton Avenue. These are vague memories. Fulton Avenue is where we lived until Ann was born, when I was four years old. And even this wasn't the first house I lived in. The house I came home to from the hospital where I was born was on Dolphin Street, and I have no memories of it whatsoever. We didn't live there long. On Fulton Avenue I remember that I had a friend, Elizabeth Rosendale, who lived across the street. I wasn't allowed to visit her alone, of course. I visited her when my mother visited her mother. Albert and Ann were born when we lived on Fulton Avenue. In fact, it was when my mother was in the hospital bearing Ann that Dad and his mother bought the house on Hollins Street. Mother had been telling Dad for some time that she wanted to live in a house that we owned ourselves. Not only was the house on Fulton Avenue too small for our growing family (in addition to Albert and me, and Ann who was soon to come, there were Margaret, Virginia, and the twins, Joseph and Edward), but Mother wanted to supplement Dad's income by taking in boarders. Dad had mentioned Mother's ideas to his own mother, and she persuaded Dad to surprise Mother. Dad and Grandmother Atkinson bought the house on Hollins Street sight unseen. They bought it because it had a sufficient number of rooms. When Dad broke the news to Mother he was hoping she would be delighted, but she was of course infuriated, both with him and with his mother.



Me (Mary), about 1915 in the backyard on Dolphin St.

Mother was of Irish blood, and impossible for Dad to handle when he'd got her Irish up. When Mother finally walked through the house her heart sank. The Murphys, St. Martin's finest, lived in the house before us, and they always looked as though they'd just stepped out of a bandbox, so my sister Margaret says. But the house they lived in was filthy. We found bedbugs in the bedrooms. Mother suspected they were behind



Mother and Dad, Margaret Grindell and Conrad Aloysius Atkinson, when they were married in 1904.

the wainscoting. Rats in the basement ran up the cellar stairs as if they thought they owned the place. Mother hired Mr. Koppey, a bandy-legged bantam, an odd-job man of the neighborhood, to tear off the wainscoting. The sight of the bugs scurrying for cover was sickening. Mr. Koppey treated the stripped walls with coal oil, and mother caught and killed the rats and mice herself. For a while Mother applied coal oil to the sides of the bed mattresses too, and around the buttons on the top. For days afterwards the odor was overpowering, making it very difficult to get to sleep. But Mother



Joe, Virginia (in back), Mary and Edward, about 1916.

tamed the house, and she and Dad stayed there 30 years.

I was born full of the devil. I learned this very early in my life. Mother told me so, well before I entered school.

The House of Good Shepherd filled the block across the street from our house on Hollins Street. It was a place where orphan girls and bad girls, sent by the Court, stayed. It was run by nuns, and it was run somewhat like a prison.

Fourteen Holy Martyrs, a Catholic church, school and convent, was on the other side of the House of Good Shepherd. Like all of my sisters and brothers I went to Fourteen Holy Martyrs from first to eighth grade. We were taught by Notre Dame sisters, who were very strict. Margaret led the way, and none of the rest of us could come close to matching her high standard. We received a report card to take home each month, and each month Father Bede would tell me that my sister Margaret had maintained a general average of 100%, and he'd ask why I couldn't do that. Each month I told him I didn't know.

My second grade teacher was Sister Lucien. She was a devil. When I learned to write the alphabet and the numbers, I drew the characters starting at the opposite end from where everyone else started, probably out of sheer orneriness. This gave Sister Lucien fits. Often she would call on one of us to recite the alphabet—we never knew who she might pick. She liked to catch one of us unaware, and she was critical when that person stumbled halfway through. I decided to practice nightly, not only from A to Z, but from Z to A also. One day Sister Lucien called on me:

"Mary! Can you recite the alphabet today?"

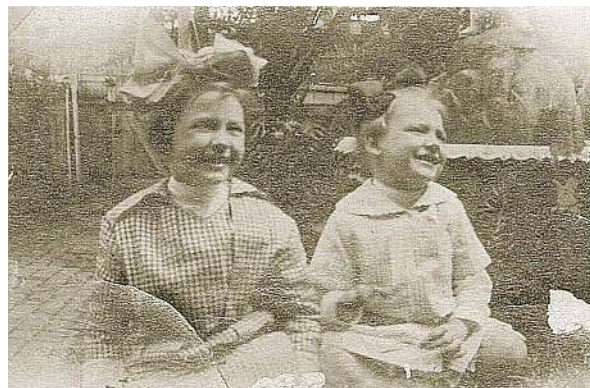
"Would you like it backward or forward?"

"Backward! Like you do everything else!"

I stood up and recited it perfectly, from Z to A, and sat down, as pleased with myself as Sister Lucien was annoyed with me.



Joe, Mary and Edward, about 1917.



Margaret and Virginia, around 1916.



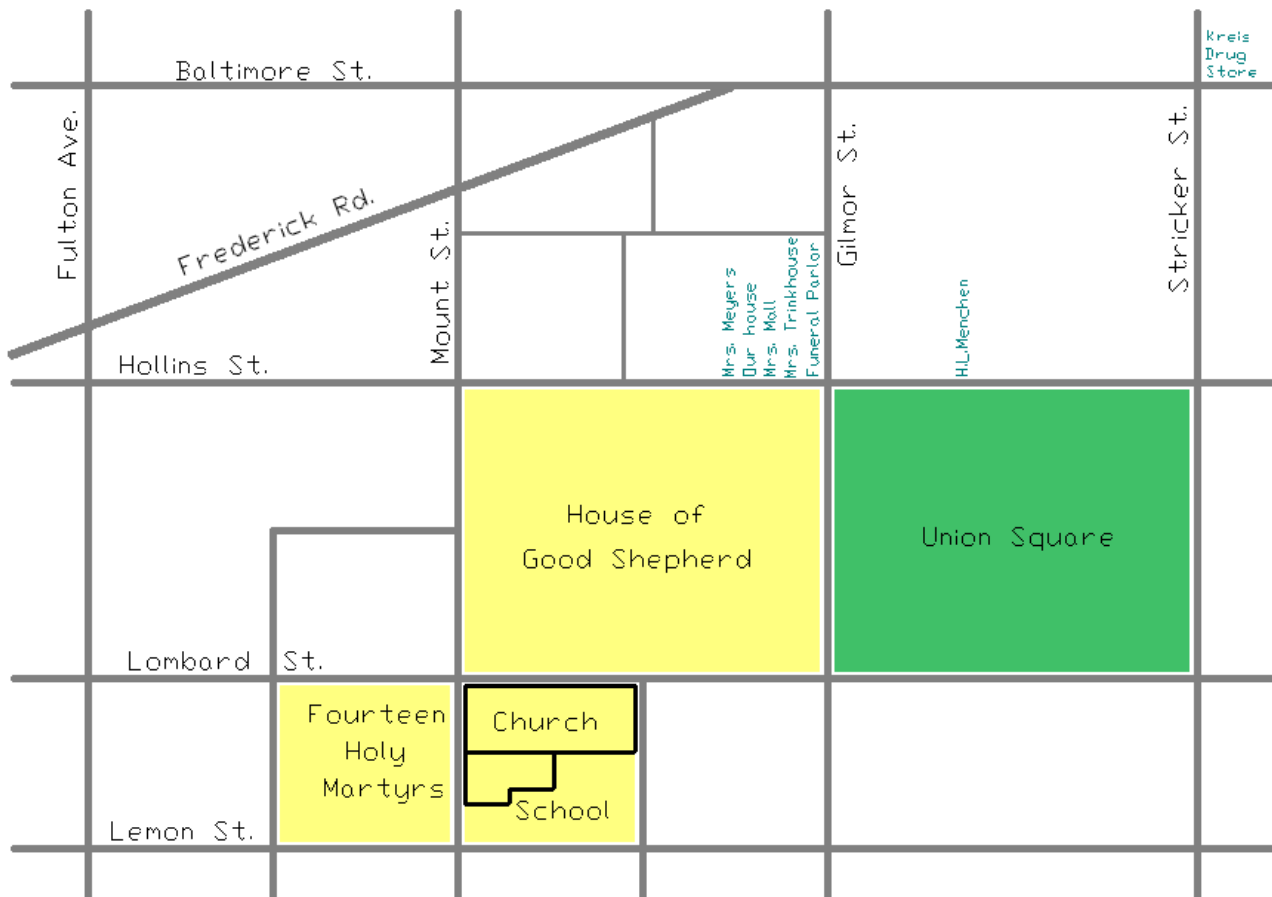
Margaret was the scholar in our family. Here she is around 1916.



Mary and Albert with Dad, about 1919.



Halloween, around 1921. Margaret and Ginny in back; Joe, Ann, and Bailey Meuse (a friend) in front; and Mary in the center.



My recollection of our neighborhood.

Any time Sister Lucien wanted to scare me she would say, "I'm going to see your father!" One time Daddy and I, out for a walk, were passing the convent. I told Daddy that Sister Lucien had been telling me that she would like to see him. We walked up to the door, knocked, and waited. Someone came to the door and ushered us to a bannister where we waited for Sister Lucien. When Sister Lucien came I told her, "You wanted to see my father? Here he is." Sister Lucien was nonplussed, and my father, suddenly realizing what was happening, was embarrassed. But Sister Lucien recovered quickly, and led us to a room where she told my father how unruly I was in class. Daddy listened attentively, and when Sister Lucien was finished, he promised her that he would see to the matter. Sister Lucien was delighted to hear it. And Daddy was happy to get out of there, but he said nothing to me about it afterwards.

Daddy was a pussycat.

Sister Lucien once sent me home from school because I was scratching my head so much. She'd inspected my head and told me to tell my mother that I had head lice. Mother couldn't understand how that could have happened, but she scrubbed my scalp with something and killed the lice after repeated treatments. Then she

sent me back to school. Soon Sister Lucien sent me back home again for the same reason. The third time this happened my Mother was hopping

mad, and she took me back to school herself, and brought me to the classroom. It didn't take her long to locate the problem. She pointed at the girl who shared my double-desk and told Sister Lucien, "Here's the source of the problem! You should be sending this girl home to her mother! Mary is not catching lice at home! She's catching them here!"

Sister Lucien is the only one of my teachers at Fourteen Holy Martyrs whose name I still remember. Years after I graduated from Fourteen Holy Martyrs I went back to call on her, having not seen her for years. But she remembered me very well, and she was very glad to see me. She told me that I was the most unforgettable pupil in my class. I was amazed she even remembered me!



Our whole family, in 1922, in the backyard at Hollins Street. Mother and Dad, Margaret and Virginia, Joe and me, and Anna and Albert in front.



Another shot, just us kids. Margaret was distracted.



The twins, and their godparents, 1912.
Left: Joseph, Aunt Annie Mathews and Uncle Joe Atkinson; right: Edward, Grandmother Atkinson and Uncle Ed Grindell.

Edward had a birth defect, a hole in his side, and some of our pictures of him show him holding his side. The doctor would pour iodine in the hole and Edward would scream. We have a picture of the twins in matching coats, and on the day that Mother was sewing them, Dad came in bright and cheery with a rose he had just picked in the garden. "Look at it, Dearie, the last rose of Summer!" Mother unexpectedly burst into tears. Dad was dumbfounded. It was some time before Mother could explain, wailing, "I'm making his shroud!" Edward died of the flu, in the 1917 influenza epidemic. He was buried on "flu hill" in Bonnie Brae Cemetery.



Joseph and Edward, about 1917.

Daddy was the floor manager for the fourth floor at the Vindex factory, and his brother Joe was the manager of the factory. Daddy had a desk at one end of the floor, and about 30 or 40 women were lined up at sewing machines in rows down the floor. They made union suits (long johns), formerly buttoned, and then with the flap. Daddy napped in a leather lounge chair near his desk, and his workers would warn him whenever anyone was coming. Dad was always very popular with his workers. Mother called them "Dad's girls," and

wouldn't have anything to do with them. Daddy could wake up and instantly look like he hadn't been napping.



Out for a ride. That's Adelle Trainor (a neighbor), Ann, and Mother sitting on the running board, and Dad in the car holding Sparky, our bulldog, about 1926.



Mary, Ann, Mother, Dad and Albert, about 1926.



Mary, in front, and Ann behind, at Bay Shore, about 1926.



Out at Carlin's Park, Mary and Mother, about 1926.

Albert was sick with pneumonia once. He was lying unconscious in his bed. The doctor was worried, since this was the third time Albert had come down with pneumonia, and he didn't really believe that Albert was going to pull through. One night a woman knocked at the door. Mother looked out the window of her bedroom, where she'd been sewing, and told Dad, "Allie, it's one of your girls. See what she wants." Dad went to the door and was surprised to find that the woman had a bag of onions, and she was very concerned about Albert and wanted to try an old time remedy on him. She wanted to fry the onions in the kitchen. Dad went back to Mother and told her about this, and Mother, busy and not really wanting to be bothered with such nonsense, said, "Let her do whatever she wants!" The woman cooked the onions and asked Dad for a pair of socks—his, not Albert's, since they had to be big enough for the onions—and she put the onions in the socks. Dad led her to Albert's room and they put the socks on Albert's feet, and waited. After a long while Albert finally stirred, and said, "I . . . smell . . . onions." Mother, who, now interested, had come in to join the watch, snapped, "And you'd better thank God you do!"

Mother, an excellent seamstress, sewed to make extra money for the family. She made custom-made shirts for a place in Baltimore. Margaret, when she was old enough, took the shirts to the man and brought home the new orders. Mother also made clothes for our family. Dad's brother-in-law, Uncle Albert Mathews made men's suits, and with the tag ends left over he would cut out material for suits for my brother Albert, when he was little. He'd give the material to Mother, and she'd sew it up. When Albert was in second grade, a little while after he had left for school wearing one of these suits, Mother noticed a boy walking back and forth in front of the house. "Isn't that Albert," she asked a friend there. She went out and asked Albert why he was walking back and forth, and he said, "I don't want to go to school." Albert was embarrassed wearing his new suit because it was different from what he ordinarily wore. Mother



Anna and cousin Thelma Grindell, Uncle Tom's daughter, in outfits that Mother made alike for them, about 1922.

wasn't mad. In fact she was amused. But Albert was sent to school. And he soon got over his embarrassment.

Grandmother Grindell used to spend the winters with us. She slept in my room. She'd spend summers with her daughter Nan on a farm in Kilbuck Hollow, Sewickley, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh. We never knew when Grandmother Grindell was coming to visit us. One day, when we came home from school, we'd see her black satchel by the door, and we'd go running through the house, yelling, "Where's Grandma? Where's Grandma?" She would be in



Grandmother Grindell and Uncle Tom Grindell, in the 1920's.



Dad and Aunt Nan Grindell Skiles, around 1920.



Easter Sunday, about 1915. Uncle Will's family, mainly. From the left, Eleanor, Loretta, Mrs. Toel (his mother-in-law), Marion, Bill, Grandmother Grindell, our Virginia and Aunt Annie (Uncle Will's wife). Son Jack was not yet born.

Grandmother's chair. She'd talk to the bird, and I thought that was nutty. "What's the use of talking to a bird?" I'd ask. Grandmother wouldn't reply. Grandmother always sat in Mother's room, a front room, during the day, where she could look out the window down on the street, and across the street into the yards of the House of Good Shepherd. She watched the girls in their uniforms, being paraded out one building down a long walk to the dining room, and later back. She also watched the nuns tending their rose garden, and a vegetable garden further away. The wall around the convent was topped with broken glass which played with the light shining on it. The glass was to keep the girls from escaping. In all the time we were on Hollins Street only three girls escaped over that wall.

Grandmother always left her bird with us when she went back to Pittsburgh. The bird stayed in Mother's room, and we had a cat, and we were told to always keep both of Mother's doors closed. But one time we forgot, and left one open. The cat got the bird. When Daddy came home he was very upset, and bawled us out,

Mother's room upstairs, tending to her parrakeet, but Mother would never tell us. Mother would say, "I don't know. Go find her!" I don't know why we never knew where she'd be—we always found her in the same place. Grandmother loved being found.

I loved going to Grandmother Grindell whenever I got hurt. She'd rub the hurt and make it feel better. But one time I went to her hurting and she said, "Ah Mary, Mary. Ever an ass or an elbow aching!" I was crushed. After that I stopped going to her with my hurts.

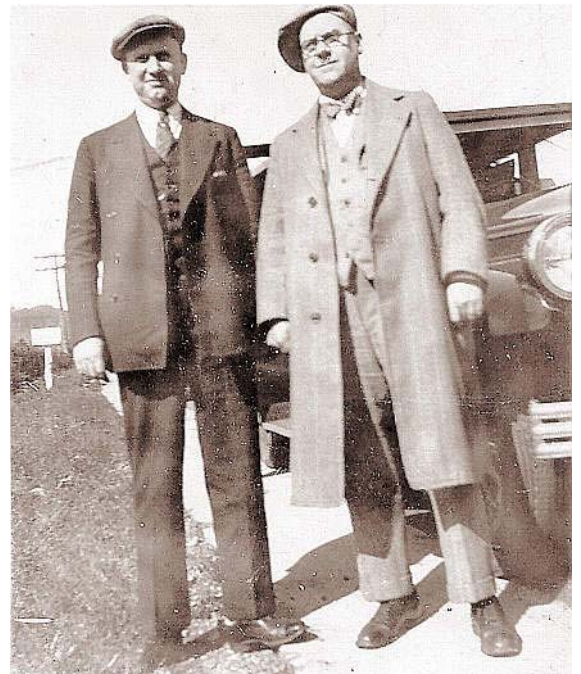
Grandmother Grindell had that bird, which always stayed in Mother's room, next to



Albert, about 1921.



Grandmother Grindell and Uncle Joe Grindell, in the early 1930's.



Uncle Al Grindell and Uncle Ed Grindell, in the 1920's.



Dad's younger brother, Uncle Bill Atkinson. He was in World War I.

telling us we must be sure never to leave one of the doors open. He went out and bought Grandmother another bird. When Grandmother next came back to Baltimore everyone was very anxious. We were hoping she wouldn't notice that it wasn't the same bird. She knew immediately, though. "The cat got my bird, didn't it?" Daddy was very apologetic, and told her it would never happen again. Grandmother was very gracious, and told him he needn't have bought her a replacement. The new bird just wasn't her bird. She grew to love it, but not as much as she loved the first bird. We children were always careful after that, and never left a door open again.

Mother used to send me to Pittsburgh in the summers to stay with Aunt Nan and Uncle Bob Skiles at their farm. The farm was a summer place for Aunt Nan and Uncle Bob—they spent winters in their house in Pittsburgh. For many years I was the only one of us whom Mother sent to the farm. Sometimes I went with Grandmother Grindell when she went back, and sometimes with Uncle Ed or Uncle Joe Grindell, both of whom were Pullman conductors. Mother was happy to get rid of me because the colored kitchen help refused to take me over to the park across the street. I would rather not say what I said and did to offend them. Mother would hear, "I'll take the rest of the children over there, Mrs. Atkinson, but I won't take that Mary."

I loved being on the farm. Grandmother Grindell used to heckle me. I would tell her to knock it off, or I'd take her to the killing gardens. She would quake with fear, and ask me what "the killing gardens" were. I'd tell her that that's where little girls can take their grandmothers, and get them killed. Grandmother would be real good for a while. Then Aunt Nan would start heckling me and I'd tell her to knock it off or I'd take her to the killing gardens too. Aunt Nan would tremble with fear and ask Grandmother Grindell to protect her. I don't know how they put up with me.

On Hollins Street Mother rented rooms on the third floor to boarders. There was one bathroom in the house and we knew that it had to be free in the morning for those



Uncle Will Grindell, Aunt Nan, and Joe, in 1928.



Myrtie Beasley, Ella Johnson and Nellie Beasley, in the 1920's. The Beasleys boarded with us.

who had to go to work. There were Mr. Sneeringer, and Myrtie, Hilda and Nellie Beasley. Mr. Sneeringer's family lived in Cumberland, and he worked for the B&O Railroad and went home weekends. As the Beasley girls married and left, Mr. Sneeringer asked Mother for the vacant rooms, and he brought his daughters June, then Julie, and then Josephine, as they entered high school, so that they could go to school in Baltimore where the schools were better than in Cumberland. There were two tables in the big dining room, with eight at the first table and five or six at the second. The first was mainly for the boarders, and Dad, and perhaps Margaret and Virginia, and the second was for the family and Grandmother Grindell.

Uncle Will Grindell was another boarder. He left his family in Pittsburgh around 1925, after 23 years of marriage. His mother-in-law, Mrs. Tooel, "ruled the roost" at his home in Pittsburgh, and Will told of the time she encouraged his children to spit on him from the upper porch as he walked in, coming home from work. When he came to Baltimore he brought his ten-year-old son Jack with him. Arriving at Mother's door he announced his intention to stay. Mother was incredulous.

"Will! That's Ann's little boy. You had no right to take him!"

"Well, I'm here! Are you going to let me stay?" he asked.

Uncle Will stayed for eight years or so, and he operated a Linotype machine for the Baltimore Sun during those years, and he worked odd hours, starting work at four or five in the afternoon and working til two in the morning or so. Jack went to school with us, but within a year Aunt Annie and her brother Jack came to Baltimore and snatched Jack on his way home from school, and took him back to Pittsburgh. Jack was following behind me and my girl friends. I was responsible for him, but I



Ginny with June Sneeringer, at the bottom, then Margaret, and Julia Sneeringer, and Joe at top.

wasn't really paying much attention to him. I noticed the woman standing beside the taxi, but I didn't know who she was. When I got home Mother asked where Jack was. I was surprised he wasn't right behind me. Mother went and talked to people who had seen what had happened. Some had said that they saw a man talking to the boy. Mother called the police, and for a while there was considerable commotion. When the dust settled, and Will learned what had



Margaret, around 1925.



Ginny, around 1926.

actually happened, he was determined to go to Pittsburgh and bring Jack back. But Mother told him that Jack was with his mother now, and that was where he belonged. Uncle Will calmed down and gave it up after that.

After work Uncle Will was an usher for the “printers’ Mass” at 2:30 A.M. He had trouble with the Calvert Hall high school boys, who would go to Mass after partying. One night when he got home from work he found Margaret and her boyfriend Ellis Brady, and my cousin Elizabeth (Lizzie) Mathews and her boyfriend Neil McGinn in the parlor. He offered Margaret's boyfriend a taste of some dandelion wine that Mother had made (horrid stuff), but not Elizabeth's boyfriend, since he was a Calvert Hall boy. Actually, Margaret's boyfriend was one too, but he neglected to mention it.

Mother made dandelion wine and port, and she prided herself on the clarity of her dandelion wine. She never drank any herself. I don't recall Mother drinking alcoholic beverages much—just an occasional small glass of beer.

Elizabeth Mathews mother, my Aunt Annie, died when Elizabeth was still young. She had tripped over a step once, and hit her breast on another step, and developed cancer. When she died Mother took Elizabeth for a while. Grandmother Atkinson soon moved in at Uncle Al Mathews house though, and then Elizabeth went back there to stay.



My friend Margaret Webb and I, at Graduation from the Commercial Class at Fourteen Holy Martyrs, ~1928.



Potato chip makers, Joe and Mother, about 1923.

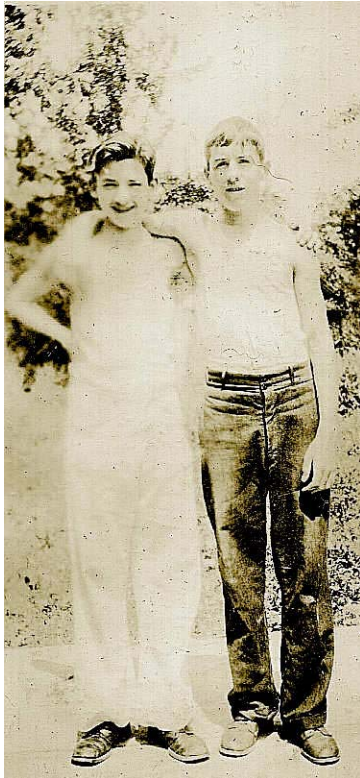
Mother was always bawling me out. One time, after she finished with me I went down the hall to Margaret and Virginia's room, mad as a hornet, and told Margaret about it, and finished just as Mother was coming by in the hallway, "I think I belong someplace else," I said. "I don't think I belong here. I don't even think I'm Mother's daughter." Hearing this Mother came down the three steps into the bedroom, collapsed on the steps, and laughed til the tears rolled down her face.

"If I had got you from someplace else I would have returned you long ago," she finally said.

I was crushed.

Daddy never sassed Mother back when she was bawling him out. In fact it was hard to tell if he was even really listening. Mother bawled him out one time in the kitchen as I was drying the dishes she'd just washed. Daddy sat at the table, apparently listening to every word. It was an epic tongue-lashing. She was laying him out in lavender. When Mother paused a moment to catch her breath, Daddy casually got up and began to stroll out. Mother exploded. "Where do you think you're going? Do you think you can just get up and walk away when I'm talking to you?" Daddy quickly sat back down. "I'm sorry, Dearie. I thought you were finished." I couldn't help but laugh. He took the

starch out of her.



Albert with Jack Grindell, about 1931.

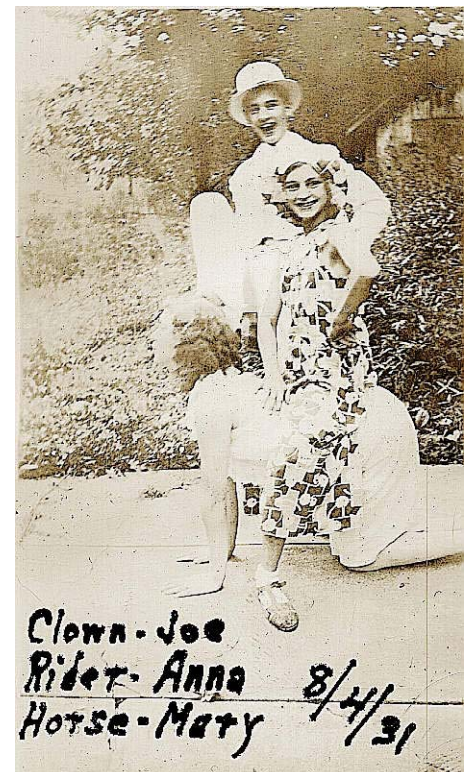
When Joe was still a boy Mother started a potato chip enterprise, and Joe was part of it. Mother was looking for a way to earn extra cash. She bought all the paraphernalia she needed, and she worked at it during the day, and Joe helped her when he came home from school. Daddy was the potato chip salesman. He decided that the best place to sell them was in bars. So in the evening he'd drive to one bar after another with his carload of potato chips. While he was there it seemed like the thing to do to have a small beer. When Mother got the profits there was significantly less than she expected. She knew what the problem was, but Daddy was a sociable person, and he had his way of going about being sociable, and he couldn't change his way. The potato chip enterprise didn't last very long.

Joe, and later Albert, worked at Kreis's Drug Store, delivering prescriptions for Mr. Kreis. They roller-skated all over the neighborhood, delivering prescriptions. Mr. Kreis and Joe were in the back of the store playing cards one day when a customer came in. Joe asked, "Shouldn't you go out and see what he wants?" Mr. Kreis answered, "Let him wait. Let's finish this hand." When they finished the hand Mr. Kreis went out and served the customer, eager to please, acting as if he'd been busy with something important in the back of the store all the time the customer had been waiting.

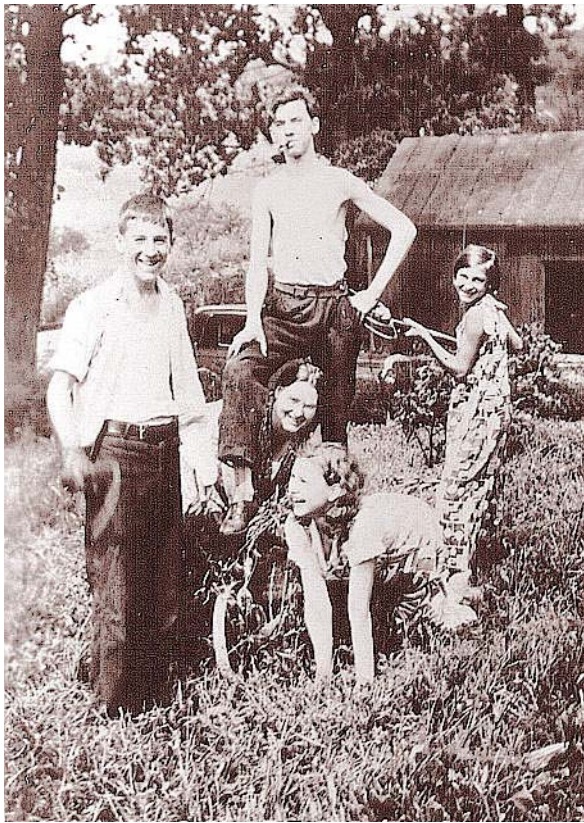
Joe and I used to fight. One time we were fighting and he grabbed a



Our cousins, Uncle Tom and Aunt Norma's children: Tom Jr., left, Albert and Thelma, and Zep the dog, about 1928.



On the farm in 1931.



On the farm in 1931—Jack Grindell on the left, Mother and Joe in back, Ann with pitchfork, and Mary in front.



Aunt Nan, Dad, Ann, Jack, Mary and Mother in Akron, Ohio, to see the Graf Zeppelin, about 1931.

pair of scissors, and said, "If you come any closer I'll stab you." I kicked at him and stabbed myself in the foot. This happened just after Joe got his driver's license. He drove me to the hospital where I got stitched and bandaged up, and he paid for it with his own money. We decided together not to tell mother, since I didn't come out of it looking any better than him. If mother ever noticed the bandages she didn't ask about them.

Joe had a friend from school who boarded with us for a while. He was Cuban, and had several girlfriends. A wall in his room was lined with their pictures. One time his girlfriend from Cuba surprised him with a visit. She wanted to go up and see his room, and he was clearly sweating. Mother made them a batch of cookies, and disappeared while they ate them. When she came back she encouraged the boy to take his girlfriend upstairs, and show her his room. He couldn't hold her back any longer, and led her upstairs with dread. To his surprise the pictures were gone. When he came down he told Mother, "Madam, you are a true diplomat!"

When Albert was older he always stopped whatever work he was doing when the Mt. Clare (B&O Railroad yard) whistle blew, at four in the afternoon. He then washed and dressed for the evening. One Saturday, Dad was going to repair the roof on the porch, tarring the leaks in the tin, and Albert was going to help him. But first Dad wanted to take a short nap. Every once in a while Albert would prod him and ask if he was ready, and Dad would respond, "Just give me a few minutes more, Albert." Finally Dad awoke, and he and Albert set out to do the roof. But very shortly the Mt. Clare whistle blew, and Albert put his brush in a jar of turpentine and announced that he was quitting for the day. Dad was amazed, and went to Mother. "Dearie, do you know what that boy's done?" Mother replied, "Well, you know, Allie, that Albert has been ready to help you all afternoon. When that Mt. Clare whistle blows, that's when he starts his evening."



Elizabeth Mathews, my cousin, around 1925.



Alice Dosh (top) and me,
at Western High, ~1930.



Joe, Mary, Uncle Will, Aunt Nan, Ann, Bill, Albert and Mother, out
on an excursion, around 1927.

We were the only house on Hollins Street with a bench on the sidewalk. Everyone else sat on their front steps, but Mother hated sitting on the steps. We had the bench against the front of the house, underneath one of the living room windows, near the steps. I hated sitting on the side away from the steps because of the spider webs.

Henry L. Mencken was a famous journalist for the Baltimore Sun who lived on the next block down the street from us on Hollins, across from Union Square. He wrote many books and was reknown for his fine use of language. Margaret Webb, my best friend at Fourteen Holy Martyrs, lived on Stricker Street on the other side of Union Square. I'd walk down, pick her up, and we'd walk back up Hollins Street singing at the top of our lungs. When we walked past Henry L. Mencken's house, his brother, August Mencken, would sometimes come out and ask us not to sing so loudly, because his brother was trying to work—and so we would comply. August was nice, and very polite, but Henry L. was not polite at all. When Henry L. would demand that we quiet down we'd show him that we weren't really singing as loud as we could. We could sing louder yet!

When Virginia was little, she and her friends were singing on our front step one time. Mrs. Mall, a neighbor, complained about the noise and told them to quiet down. When Virginia told Mother, Mother hotfooted it over there and told Mrs. Mall, "When the girls are sitting on your step and singing, you can tell them to stop and get off. But they have every right to sing on my step, and you have no right to tell them to stop!"

Mrs. Mall's nephew once came to stay with her, and he took June Sneeringer out. He drove her out to the country, and when she rejected his amorous advances he told her to get out, and he left her there. An elderly couple saw her crying by the side of the road, and picked her up and brought her home. Mother went over to Mrs. Mall and told her what had happened, calling her nephew a "dirty pup"—her stongest denunciation. She also called where he worked, and told them what had happened, and got him fired. The nephew left, and Mrs. Mall blamed Mother, and wouldn't speak to her for a while.

Later Mother made up to Mrs. Mall, and told her that if ever she needed our help she could knock on the wall between our rowhouses and we would come. Very late one night Mrs. Mall knocked on the wall. She had eaten a banana before going to bed, and now had acute indigestion. Mother went over to care for

her, but she died during the night.

Margaret Webb and I were sitting on the front steps at Hollins Street one day, soon after Joe got his driver's license, and Joe drove up with his friend Paul Kraft. Joe asked if we'd like to go for a ride, and we were thrilled. He drove us up one alley and down the next, hitting all the alleys there were. I asked, "Joe, how come we're driving in the alleys and not on the streets?" Joe said, "You don't think we want to be seen with you, do you?" Needless to say, I asked him to stop and let us out. We'd had enough.



Margaret, about 1926.



Ann and Albert, about 1936.



Mother, about 1926.



Joe (right) and his friend Frank, when they both went to Mount St. Joseph's College, about 1931.

TO BE CONTINUED . . .



With Betty, 1934.



With Richard, 1941.