

## Our Life (Camping Out)

By George W. McCullough

Everyone has a story to tell; this is mine.

My father was a person you might say worked at many trades but was a master of none. Although not a famous artist he was an excellent landscape painter, especially mountain scenes; realistic mountains, trees, streams, and lakes. His few paintings had that

singular beauty of morning and evening lights and shadows with their delicate hues representing secret haunts for birds and animals that live in their natural worlds like the

first paradise of Adam and Eve.

My mother died when I was two years old. She was a victim of tuberculosis. It was during the early 20's when the science of medicine was in the Dark Ages. To replace

my mother I had an older sister that loved me very much and took care of me, soothing

my cries and tantrums. One of our family's stories is that I did bite her in the stomach. I

had red hair and perhaps I had the disposition attributed supposedly to red heads that

express themselves in an uncivilized manner. I have a photo of myself seated in a wicker

type of baby carriage at the early age of two. If I could have someone give me a ride I must of decided that it wasn't very practicable to learn to walk.

Growing up proved to be the usual task of trial and error and still continues today.

My first memories include a more enjoyable memory of my mother making me a new suit, and how I wanted to put it on and show it to my beautiful white kitten.

I remember when I was around three or four years old I was told to mind the cat while my father backed out the Model T Ford. The kitten had sharp claws that clawed me

after being frightened by the bangs of the Model T's motor. I let go of my kitty and I watched her as she was crushed under the car's wheels. Blood and bones were mixed in

her once beautiful white coat that I loved to pet and feel the softness of her lovely fur.

I also remember one of my uncles gave me a chocolate Easter bunny and the first thing I did was to bite its head off. I was told not to eat too much of my bunny. I didn't follow this good advice and I had to go outside because I became quite ill, having eaten more of the chocolate bunny than just the head. I loved the sweet taste of the

chocolate even though it had made me sick, so I solved this problem and buried the rest of my Easter gift in the garden.

The first days of kindergarten turned out better than I imagined. Grandmother took me to kindergarten and there I discovered that the little girls were very nice. One of them taught me how to tie my shoes and I thought becoming educated was fun. Grade school wasn't too bad either. We only went half days. Classes were held in tents because, the grade school building was demolished by a Southern California earthquake.

High school memories were varied. Since I had chipped my elbow bone in a basketball game, the chances of becoming a sports star was not to be. School dances became important and also learning how to drive a car with the driving skills necessary to qualify for a driver's license.

I had many enjoyable hours riding my bicycle, prior to driving a car. It was a second-hand bike I received as a Christmas gift. It took me a while to get over the feeling of disappointment when my step-brother received a Christmas gift of a brand new deluxe model bicycle. It had a headlight, taillight, and a horn that honked by squeezing a rubber ball attached to the horn. This bright and shining machine also had a bike rack, and tucked under the bike's frame was a toolbox. I was allowed to ride this bright red and cream colored bicycle but it never took away the hurt feelings I had that Christmas day.

I rode everywhere on my second-hand bike with my dog Bonzo running along side of me, tongue lolling and keeping an eye out for cats and other dogs.

Life was good. There were radio plays and movies to see and trips to the beach and the mountains. While others could remain at the beach all day and return to school in the fall with grand summer tans, having grown taller, I seemed to have remained about the same size and was always recovering from many painful sunburns. This didn't impress the girls.

Scholastically I didn't add much to my high school tenure. When I was a senior and met my high school advisor, I was told that my grade average wouldn't allow me admission into a university. It was a little too late to rectify my scholastic record.

Therefore, I enrolled as an art student at a junior college. I found a place to stay and work for my room and board as a waiter and dishwasher during the week, and a handy man on Saturday. Sunday I caught up on class assignments.

College life was more attractive than being in high school. In the life drawing art class there were female models to draw and living away from home one could stay up all night.

The second semester I made posters and signs in the campus sign shop and joined the college magazine staff, designing and laying out magazines articles, and drawing the magazine's cartoons.

Later that semester, I changed jobs, and worked in a parking garage for an apartment building. I had a cot in the garage to sleep on and a hot plate to cook my meals. In the evenings I parked the residents' cars.

During my second college year I worked weekends delivering milk. I was able to pay for my room, meals and my art supplies.

The next summer I worked at the Los Angeles shipyards and saved my money, allowing me to return to college without working part-time during the semester.

1941 brought an end to campus life. Misfortune and humiliating events were witnessed, seeing some of your college friends being marched off to concentration camps because of their Japanese heritage. ("That to believe that history is marching to an inevitable goal is to deny human responsibility and freedom").

Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, and Harry James were very popular Big Dance Bands, and I have good memories of taking girlfriends to dances.

I bid farewell to my 1928 Chevy sedan, art classes, and those very nice girlfriends and signed up for duty as an Aviation Cadet in the United States Air Corps.

I knew that the basic program as a private in the United States Army wasn't like being in the Boy Scouts of America and war was pure hell, so I joined the Air Force.

As an Aviation Cadet one wondered when you were going to even see an airplane, at least to learn how to fly one. The training program consisted of calisthenics, marching and parade maneuvers before a crowd of family and friends, so they could feel the patriotic sublime joy of a nation's youth ready to protect flag and country.

Then there was Ground School and the wonderful day did come and one suited up with flight cloths, helmet, goggles and parachute for the exciting moment for the first time to actually fly in an airplane, with the flying instructor seated in the rear cockpit.

The flight instructor showed you that Stearman Biplanes could actually fly by themselves because they were so wonderfully designed for flight. This reliable airplane could maintain to fly a steady course even when one took their hands off the airplane's controls.

My first attempt to solo ended up a failure. I "ground looped" (the airplane goes out of control when attempting to land). Fortunately I wasn't "washed out" from Flight Training and was given another chance. I was able to solo a brightly painted yellow airplane. I often wondered if they decided to use bright yellow to prevent Air Force Cadets from flying into each other.

My next flying exercise was to attempt a tail spin. I had to talk myself into doing this.

There wasn't a flight instructor behind me telling me what to do through a Gesper tube. I had to fly the airplane straight up, throttle back until the airplane stalled out, and then give the plane a hard rudder allowing the plane to begin its downward spinning dive with the joystick pushed forward. Before the aircraft began its downward flight, the pilot needed to locate a point on the horizon so he could count the number of spins. After the third spin the pilot reversed the planes controls to

continue its flight. Of course the necessary altitude was attained before beginning to put the airplane into a dive of three spins.

To take part in civilian life we were given special passes from the flight academy. Wearing an army dress uniform and a cadet military cap with a small propeller insignia on it, made the girls take notice.

The dream came to an end when I was washed out from Basic Flight Training. I went before the board of officers that told me I was dismissed from the Air Corps Pilot Training program. I was asked if I had any questions. I asked them if I could have another chance to pass my check out flight in order to continuing my pilot training. No such luck. It was goodbye to earning my wings and becoming a commissioned officer. I was now a private in the United States Air Corps. Perhaps I couldn't ever sing again, with gusto, "Nothing will stop the United States Air Corps." I enlisted in the United States Air Corps in 1942 and was discharged in 1945 with sergeant strips serving in the Pacific Theatre of War receiving the Air Medal for duties as a Flight Clerk. I earned my wings as an aircrew member and not those silver wings as a pilot.

In 1950, I was presented with a pair of wings, Angels Wings, that were created by my girlfriend in the beach sands of the Ligurian Sea, Italy. Angels Wings in the sand are made by lying on ones back in the sand and moving your arms and legs to create an angel with wings. My girlfriend helped me with my Italian language lessons at the University of Iowa and I was fortunate to receive a Bachelor of Fine Art Degree and later a Master of Fine Art Degree. Also I had the good fortune to receive a Fulbright Scholarship to study art in Florence, Italy, from 1950 to 1951. My girlfriend joined me in Italy and in the fall of 1951 we went to Paris, France. I had received enough money from my grant that I could continue my art studies in Paris. At the end of summer my girlfriend returned to the United States to continue her university studies.

Working in Paris was wonderful and I became interested in painting with enamel paint used to paint automobiles. This fast drying paint gave the artist very expressive lines and shapes. Also it enabled one to create the illusion of space using old master's glazing techniques. Unfortunately these enamel paintings found their way floating down the New York's East River. I learned the fate of these paintings in 1952, a girlfriend got rid of my panels from her apartment by dumping them into the East River. I imagine it was quite a spectacle to see theses paintings, painted on Masonite, afloat upon the East River. Perhaps it was the first of many "Happenings" exhibitions that occurred in many prestigious New York City art galleries. Perhaps it was just a good story.

I moved to New York City in 1951. For a short time I lived in a third story loft, on the lower east side of Manhattan, with a leaky roof. It provided a great deal of studio space with many windows that made it a good studio for painting. One day I

returned to my studio and everything was soaked by a mighty downpour of rain water and many of my paintings suffered water damage. I worked an uninspiring job as a elevator operator such luck. It was goodbye to earning my wings and becoming a commissioned officer. I was now a private in the United States Air Corps. Perhaps I couldn't ever sing again, with gusto, "Nothing will stop the United States Air Corps." I enlisted in the United States Air Corps in 1942 and was discharged in 1945 with sergeant strips serving in the Pacific Theatre of War receiving the Air Medal for duties as a Flight Clerk. I earned my wings as an aircrew member and not those silver wings as a pilot.

In 1950, I was presented with a pair of wings, Angels Wings, that were created by my girlfriend in the beach sands of the Ligurian Sea, Italy. Angels Wings in the sand are made by lying on ones back in the sand and moving your arms and legs to create an angel with wings. My girlfriend helped me with my Italian language lessons at the University of Iowa and I was fortunate to receive a Bachelor of Fine Art Degree and later a Master of Fine Art Degree. Also I had the good fortune to receive a Fulbright Scholarship to study art in Florence, Italy, from 1950 to 1951. My girlfriend joined me in Italy and in the fall of 1951 we went to Paris, France. I had received enough money from my grant that I could continue my art studies in Paris. At the end of summer my girlfriend returned to the United States to continue her university studies.

Working in Paris was wonderful and I became interested in painting with enamel paint used to paint automobiles. This fast drying paint gave the artist very expressive lines and shapes. Also it enabled one to create the illusion of space using old master's glazing techniques. Unfortunately these enamel paintings found their way floating down the New York's East River. I learned the fate of these paintings in 1952, a girlfriend got rid of my panels from her apartment by dumping them into the East River. I imagine it was quite a spectacle to see these paintings, painted on Masonite, afloat upon the East River. Perhaps it was the first of many "Happenings" exhibitions that occurred in many prestigious New York City art galleries. Perhaps it was just a good story.

I moved to New York City in 1951. For a short time I lived in a third story loft, on the lower east side of Manhattan, with a leaky roof. It provided a great deal of studio space with many windows that made it a good studio for painting. One day I returned to my studio and everything was soaked by a mighty downpour of rain water and many of my paintings suffered water damage. I worked an uninspiring job as a elevator operator in a Madison Avenue apartment building. I felt that I needed a change of environment, with mountains, beautiful clear streams, and big skies. I quickly left New York after five months to go to Montana. No doubt my sudden departure by bus was the justification that some of my artwork was thrown into the East River.

Montana is a beautiful country and the sensation of a Big Sky is true. The change of altitude from New York City makes one feel light headed and giddy like having your breath taken away, or like descending from the highest peak of a roller coaster ride. There were very few apartment buildings in Montana, therefore finding a job as an elevator operator was very limited. I found a job in a bowling alley setting bowling pins. If I remember correctly, it was named the "Big Sky Bowling Pin Alley". I was later to learn that the bars and taverns in Montana did have names like "The Big Sky Bar and Grill", but my favorite name was the "Buffalo Wallow Bar".

The pay for a "Pin Boy" was very meager. Also the bowlers always complained that the bowling pins were not set up fast enough so that the bowlers could continue bowling. Lowering and raising the gates for the pins to be re-set required certain agility to escape flying pins and bowling balls. A teenager had an advantage for this job over a thirty year old man.

Fortunately, I was later hired as an art teacher at the Archie Bray brickyards, that started a pottery workshop and school. I was to teach painting but the ceramic skilled potters working there considered themselves a cut above a painter. I came to the brickyards to do some teaching but ended up with the brickyard workers making bricks. I would sit above the conveyer belt that carried the bricks. The bricks were made of soft clay, and my job was to reach down and remove them without destroying the brick's shape. The bricks just kept coming and I had to keep up with the moving belt loaded with the bricks. It was like being in the famous movie called "Modern Times" starring Charlie Chaplin. I stayed there during the summer and was invited by an artist friend to go with him to New York City in 1953. I hoped returning to New York City might help me get rid of my back pains that I had working in the brickyards.

I left Montana with no regrets. I witnessed scenes like those seen in the movies, the western movie of a bar room fight at the local bar. Most important of all was meeting this charming woman ceramic potter that worked in the pottery shop. She invited me to spend a weekend with her in the beautiful Yellowstone National Park and we watched the famous Yellowstone geyser spout.

My return to New York City felt like I had never left it. This wonderful town with its never-ending amazement of a community of people, like ants hurrying and scurrying to go wherever they had to go to. The very atmosphere was charged with the hustle and bustle of humanity, like a cosmic blast gathered in a world of architectural achievements of stone, steel, and glass.

First things first, things that needed to be taken care of: I recovered my studio painting easel along with a few paintings that hadn't been pitched into the East River, and I found another elevator operator job at the impressive Riverside Church, located on the Westside of Upper Manhattan.

I was fortunate to find a three-room apartment on the sixth floor, in the Towers East Side of Manhattan. It cost me fifty dollars to "buy into" this place. The great advantage was the nineteen dollars and eighty cents a month for the rent. It so happened there were still available apartments that were under a rent control policy enacted during the times of World War II. It didn't have an elevator because a building with six floors or less, by code, didn't have to have a passenger elevator. My new home was a type of a tenement apartment that had the bathtub in the kitchen with an enameled removable top to serve as a space for a wire dish holder. It was really a natural convenience because upon removal of the enamel top to take one's bath, the bather could keep an eye on the kitchen stove while the dinner was cooking.

The toilet was down the hall. It was one of those unique toilets that had the water tank overhead and during the warm summer months the water pipes attached to the tank seem to take pleasure dripping on one's head when "sitting on the pot". The bathroom, although down the hall, belonged to the apartment renter, therefore it was my private toilet with a key. So, I painted hands on the toilet seat.

The sixth floor steps had very high risers. High ceilings gave the apartment's small rooms the feeling of a great deal of space. Climbing the stairs not only kept one in good physical condition, but also helped the memory. Only once my memory failed me. It was for tickets to a Broadway play that I had to climb the stairs again. Also the sixth floor made it possible to climb one more floor up to the building's roof. Here the sight of Manhattan was grand. The view of the skyscrapers of upper Manhattan was in sharp contrast to the sites of the East River, scenes of the bridges and the river traffic of tug boats and scows. It also provided the cooling breezes during the summer to take a few steps to the tar papered roof and cool off. It was located near Tompkins Square on East 10th Street just around the corner from Avenue C.

In 1953, I left my job as an elevator operator and found a job in a printing company that printed menus for the various New York City restaurants. My job was to proof-read the copy of the menu that had come from the linotype machine, before they went to press. I worked the swing shift hours which gave me time to paint during the day.

One weekend I took part in having some of my paintings in the Annual Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibition and Sale. I didn't appreciate having art lovers with their pet dogs admiring one's canvases. I actually sold a painting of mine for ten dollars. One of the artists showing his work invited me to go with him to paint in Central Park. He wanted to teach me how I could paint in a style that might help me to sell my art, at least to get a price high enough to pay for the cost of paint, canvas and brushes. I still have my painting I did with him of New York City's Central Park. During my seven years living in Manhattan I sold two paintings and an etching of my cat Phoebe.

A resident of the city should own a cat. My cat Phoebe was a real lady. She was white with grey, black, and orange markings. These random strips of color mixed with her coat of white gave her a face a very appealing look.

Another excellent New York City cat was named Sleepy. Her home was in a loft owned by Ida. Ida was a true New Yorker with her Italian accent mixed with Brooklynese. Her doctor advised her to take allergy shots that would help her so that she wouldn't keep weeping when she pet Sleepy. Alas, the shots would help somewhat but Ida couldn't help but bury her face in the fur of Sleepy, which would make her tears flow. She just couldn't help but to bury her face in Sleepy's soft and luxuriant fur.

Ida had her towel embroidering business on West 14th Street and she embroidered by machine. Things like Mr. and Mrs, towels and washcloths. She had me design some monograms for her.

I met Ida through my new employer who owned a monogram business that embroidered owner's names on linings of their fur coats. This change of jobs from the printing house gave me more time to work on my paintings. The monogram work was seasonal and the major part of this business was just before the Christmas rush when the new fur coat linings were in demand.

I designed a monogram for Victoria d' Los Angeles and the Princess of Monaco, Grace Kelly. For these not unlike many others, I did by copying their signatures that were given me by the furrier. I used a white leaded pencil to draw the names on the silk lining and then the women embroiders embroidered the names either by machine, but usually to do justice to the owners signature the monogram was done by hand. For Grace Kelly the embroidered lining was for a shoe box. Liberace's design choice was a piano with a candelabra. One the more quixotic monogram I did was to make a design for a famous athlete coach to be monogrammed on a fur lined jockstrap to read, "Lucky Bucky".

Not unlike many major cities, New York City could provide jobs for those who were inclined to pursue their creative vocation through a vocational means, such as tourists guides; tour guides upon tour boats making their trips around Manhattan Island, waiters and waitresses working in the many restaurants in the city, guides and lecturers in museums, taxi drivers, bus drivers, subway operators, dishwashers and elevator operators. What an exciting and never ending source of adventure to be part of a great multitude of dreamers pursuing their creative needs.

Making painting trips outside of Manhattan were important; such as: Coney Island, Stated Island and Long Island Sound, East Marion. A group of friends and I had talked about buying some property near a place called Rocky Point and to build a beach cabin. It was a grand idea. The outcome of this dream was doing a painting along the beach. I treasure this painting very much; the day spent there, swimming, eating, enjoying painting, the warmth of the day and the sense of sea breezes and

the warm friendship of one's friends. My painting I made this romantic day is dated 1954.

1954 was a significant year for me. I had a letter from the woman potter girlfriend I had met in Helena, Montana. She told me that she coming with her girlfriend to New York City. I thought she wanted to see me and collect the five dollars I had borrowed from her when I had left Montana to go to New York City.

Our romance was brief. I proposed to Sue at a famous speakeasy that existed during the days of prohibition. It was located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan called Chumlee. She agreed to marry me. She wanted a chauffeur and I wanted a car. She owned a wonderful 1951 Chevy business coupe.

After Sue had returned to Montana and many phone calls to each other the date was set for our marriage. After a few beers with some New York City friends they took me to the airport and I arrived in Helena, Montana for our wedding. I met Sue's family and learned at this time that her real name was Henrietta, and that her father, an ordained Episcopal Minister, was to perform our marriage ceremony. Sue's brother participated in the wedding along with his wife, who was the Matron of Honor. The wedding ceremony had a feeling of dignity mixed with the sensation of being a watcher and not a participant in this important consecrated union.

After the wedding there was the wedding breakfast with friends and family. I had not only a wonderful wife, but a new mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law.

Our honeymoon was spent aboard the train going from Montana to New York. I was told that we had sleeper reservations on the train. I had suggested in order to save money, going by coach was less expensive. At that very moment I realized I was going to learn about matrimonial bliss.

We returned to New York by way of a stop over in Saginaw, Michigan to see a painting exhibit of mine in the Saginaw museum. The curator of the museum had arranged an exhibition of my work.

Upon sorting out our things in a hotel near the museum, I realized I had a tear in my pants. Sue was equipped with needle and thread and sewed my pants' leg as good as new. This emergency provided me a second lesson of marriage. I knew I was married to someone that could, on a moments notice, take care of me and any other emergencies that would come up.

We arrived in New York City's Grand Central Station and took a cab to our home on East Tenth Street. With the determination, which one learns to have in order to climb six flights of stairs, we entered our love nest.

Our three room apartment with its bathtub in the kitchen, which was covered so that it could be used as a table top and then removed to use the bathtub. As I believe I had mentioned before, but now things would be quite different. While bathing Sue

could tell me what needed to be done for the progress of fixing dinner. Also this unique arrangement was very convenient to keep iced beer in for a party.

Earlier this apartment had the type of icebox made of wood and metal with the cooling device being a block of ice. The tenement dwellers iceman had to possess real stamina to climb stairs while holding ice tongs around some thirty or more pounds of ice.

The view from our apartment rooftop was all anyone would want, as I have already stated. But to share it with Sue, made it so very, very special. With the climb of a flight of stairs from the sixth floor to the roof, one could have a grand view of New York City: West, East, South, North and especially the view of the East River with the small river crafts applying their trade. Also there was a unique and different view while looking down from the roof to the building's courtyard and the surrealistic pattern of wash lines with their clothes attached, swinging bravely in the winds. Sue traded all this along with the odors, the rumbling noises of the city, buses, subways, the tenements and its occupants, bridges and skyscrapers for the vast beauty of Western Mountains, buttes and turquoise colored skies. Here there were neither sheep, cattle or horses, but bed bugs, cockroaches and cats.

Shortly after Sue arrived my cat Phoebe left home, but later was found by the neighbor's boy in the grocery store. She left because she wouldn't stand having another female in the same household.

Phoebe could jump from one apartment building to the next, jumping from one roof top to the next. She would jump up on the roofs parapet in which was about a foot in width and then jump and land upon the next building's roof parapet.

A few months later we went to Montana to pick up Sue's 1951 Chevy business coupe. We used it to make various trips out of the city. We learned to be quite skillful in parking a car in small parking spaces. We also had to remember where the car was parked, and be sure to notice if the parking space was marked with a sign informing you to expect the street cleaning truck to clean the street where you were parked. It was known as the Alternate Day and Time Parking System. It worked well to stimulate one's memory and for the city to collect some money for no parking violations. The police had no qualms to call for a tow truck and haul an illegally parked car away.

There were many pluses in having a car, like taking trips outside of the city. Phoebe, the cat, didn't share our enthusiasm to travel, especially when she traveled with us. A trip to Montana proved this to be so. We started our trip via the Holland Tunnel and it took several miles of our journey West before she settled down. Later we stopped for lunch. I had my window down and Phoebe made her escape out the car's window. She was gone and we decided to get our lunch in hopes she would return. We left the window open and upon our return there she was inside the car.

The 50's were a good time to be living in New York City even though having your work shown in an art gallery was difficult. My work wasn't of the abstract expressionist mode such as the New York school artists from the Stable Gallery. The Stable Gallery had just opened up town in February of 1954, exhibiting the 35 East State group of artists, David Hare, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Ad Reinhardt and Franz Kline.

Franz Kline had his studio near East Tenth Street and exhibited one of his early works, a small painting of a chair. This painting was part of an exhibition sponsored by Saint Marks of the Bowery, an Episcopal Church located in the Lower East Side. A group of artist, including myself, formed a group of Lower East Side artists and were able to arrange an exhibition of our work in this very famous church. At one time Martha Graham gave a dance recital in this church.

We rented a loft on Avenue A near Houston Street for a studio. Later below Houston Street was known as the Soho district where the rental cost of living and working in this area provided artist space to work in for less than studio space northward of Houston Street. 13 Avenue A was a great place to work. It was the usual size of a loft, about 30' by 60'. It was over a pants factory called Better Made Pants. The owner told us that he would go to Harlem and get ideas to design pants that would have a good market value.

There was a studio above ours that had a skylight and was used by another artist and had been a old photographer's studio. We had a fireplace in ours, and it was just dandy to grill steaks for our dinner.

I ordered a loom to be delivered to our studio. One morning the Better Made Pants people called Sue to tell her the loom had been delivered and was on the sidewalk. There were many pluses in having a car, like taking trips outside of the city. Phoebe, the cat, didn't share our enthusiasm to travel, especially when she traveled with us. A trip to Montana proved this to be so. We started our trip via the Holland Tunnel and it took several miles of our journey West before she settled down. Later we stopped for lunch. I had my window down and Phoebe made her escape out the car's window. She was gone and we decided to get our lunch in hopes she would return. We left the window open and upon our return there she was inside the car.

The 50's were a good time to be living in New York City even though having your work shown in an art gallery was difficult. My work wasn't of the abstract expressionist mode such as the New York school artists from the Stable Gallery. The Stable Gallery had just opened up town in February of 1954, exhibiting the 35 East State group of artists, David Hare, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Ad Reinhardt and Franz Kline.

Franz Kline had his studio near East Tenth Street and exhibited one of his early works, a small painting of a chair. This painting was part of an exhibition sponsored by Saint Marks of the Bowery, an Episcopal Church located in the Lower East Side.

A group of artist, including myself, formed a group of Lower East Side artists and were able to arrange an exhibition of our work in this very famous church. At one time Martha Graham gave a dance recital in this church.

We rented a loft on Avenue A near Houston Street for a studio. Later below Houston Street was known as the Soho district where the rental cost of living and working in this area provided artist space to work in for less than studio space northward of Houston Street. 13 Avenue A was a great place to work. It was the usual size of a loft, about 30' by 60'. It was over a pants factory called Better Made Pants. The owner told us that he would go to Harlem and get ideas to design pants that would have a good market value.

There was a studio above ours that had a skylight and was used by another artist and had been a old photographer's studio. We had a fireplace in ours, and it was just dandy to grill steaks for our dinner.

I ordered a loom to be delivered to our studio. One morning the Better Made Pants people called Sue to tell her the loom had been delivered and was on the sidewalk Our Life (Camping Out)

By George W. McCullough

Everyone has a story to tell; this is mine.

My father was a person you might say worked at many trades but was a master of none. Although not a famous artist he was an excellent landscape painter, especially mountain scenes; realistic mountains, trees, streams, and lakes. His few paintings had that

singular beauty of morning and evening lights and shadows with their delicate hues representing secret haunts for birds and animals that live in their natural worlds like the

first paradise of Adam and Eve.

My mother died when I was two years old. She was a victim of tuberculosis. It was during the early 20's when the science of medicine was in the Dark Ages. To replace

my mother I had an older sister that loved me very much and took care of me, soothing

my cries and tantrums. One of our family's stories is that I did bite her in the stomach. I

had red hair and perhaps I had the disposition attributed supposedly to red heads that

express themselves in an uncivilized manner. I have a photo of myself seated in a wicker

type of baby carriage at the early age of two. I must have decided that it wasn't very practicable to learn to walk.

Growing up proved to be the usual task of trial and error and still continues today.

My first memories include a more enjoyable memory of my mother making me a new suit, and how I wanted to put it on and show it to my beautiful white kitten.

I remember when I was around three or four years old I was told to mind the cat while my father backed out the Model T Ford. The kitten had sharp claws that clawed me

after being frightened by the bangs of the Model T's motor. I let go of my kitty and I watched her as she was crushed under the car's wheels. Blood and bones were mixed in

her once beautiful white coat that I loved to pet and feel the softness of her lovely fur.

I also remember one of my uncles gave me a chocolate Easter bunny and the first thing I did was to bite its head off. I was told not to eat too much of my bunny. I didn't follow this good advice and I had to go outside because I became quite ill, having eaten more of the chocolate bunny than just the head. I loved the sweet taste of the chocolate even though it had made me sick, so I solved this problem and buried the rest of my Easter gift in the garden.

The first days of kindergarten turned out better than I imagined. Grandmother took me to kindergarten and there I discovered that the little girls were very nice. One of them taught me how to tie my shoes and I thought becoming educated was fun.

Grade school wasn't too bad either. We only went half days. Classes were held in tents because, the grade school building was demolished by a Southern California earthquake.

High school memories were varied. Since I had chipped my elbow bone in a basketball game, the chances of becoming a sports star was not to be. School dances became important and also learning how to drive a car with the driving skills necessary to

qualify for a driver's license.

I had many enjoyable hours riding my bicycle, prior to driving a car. It was a second-hand bike I received as a Christmas gift. It took me a while to get over the feeling

of disappointment when my step-brother received a Christmas gift of a brand new deluxe

model bicycle. It had a headlight, taillight, and a horn that honked by squeezing a rubber ball attached to the horn. This bright and shining machine also had a bike rack, and tucked under the bike's frame was a toolbox. I was allowed to ride this bright red and cream colored bicycle but it never took away the hurt feelings I had that Christmas day.

I rode everywhere on my second-hand bike with my dog Bonzo running along side of me, tongue lolling and keeping an eye out for cats and other dogs.

Life was good. There were radio plays and movies to see and trips to the beach and the mountains. While others could remain at the beach all day and return to school in

the fall with grand summer tans, having grown taller, I seemed to have remained about the same size and was always recovering from many painful sunburns. This didn't impress the girls.

Scholastically I didn't add much to my high school tenure. When I was a senior and met my high school advisor, I was told that my grade average wouldn't allow me admission into a university. It was a little too late to rectify my scholastic record.

Therefore, I enrolled as an art student at a junior college. I found a place to stay and work

for my room and board as a waiter and dishwasher during the week, and a handy man on

Saturday. Sunday I caught up on class assignments.

College life was more attractive than being in high school. In the life drawing art class there were female models to draw and living away from home one could stay up all

night.

The second semester I made posters and signs in the campus sign shop and joined the college magazine staff, designing and laying out magazines articles, and drawing the

magazine's cartoons.

Later that semester, I changed jobs, and worked in a parking garage for an apartment building. I had a cot in the garage to sleep on and a hot plate to cook my meals.

In the evenings I parked the residents' cars.

During my second college year I worked weekends delivering milk. I was able to pay for my room, meals and my art supplies.

The next summer I worked at the Los Angeles shipyards and saved my money, allowing me to return to college without working part-time during the semester.

1941 brought an end to campus life. Misfortune and humiliating events were witnessed, seeing some of your college friends being marched off to concentration camps

because of their Japanese heritage. ("That to believe that history is marching to an inevitable goal is to deny human responsibility and freedom"). 1

Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman, and Harry James were very popular Big Dance Bands, and I have good memories of taking girlfriends to dances.

I bid farewell to my 1928 Chevy sedan, art classes, and those very nice girlfriends and signed up for duty as an Aviation Cadet in the United States Air Corps.

I knew that the basic program as a private in the United States Army wasn't like being in the Boy Scouts of America and war was pure hell, so I joined the Air Force. As an Aviation Cadet one wondered when you were going to even see an airplane, at least to

learn how to fly one. The training program consisted of calisthenics, marching and parade

maneuvers before a crowd of family and friends, so they could feel the patriotic sublime joy of a nation's youth ready to protect flag and country.

1. Fyodor Dostoevsky's Diary

Then there was Ground School and the wonderful day did come and one suited up with flight cloths, helmet, goggles and parachute for the exciting moment for the first time to actually fly in an airplane, with the flying instructor seated in the rear cockpit.

The flight instructor showed you that Stearman Biplanes could actually fly by themselves

because they were so wonderfully designed for flight. This reliable airplane could maintain to fly a steady course even when one took their hands off the airplane's controls.

My first attempt to solo ended up a failure. I "ground looped" (the airplane goes out of control when attempting to land). Fortunately I wasn't "washed out" from Flight Training and was given another chance. I was able to solo a brightly painted yellow airplane. I often wondered if they decided to use bright yellow to prevent Air Force Cadets from flying into each other.

My next flying exercise was to attempt a tail spin. I had to talk myself into doing this. There wasn't a flight instructor behind me telling me what to do through a Gesper tube. I had to fly the airplane straight up, throttle back until the airplane stalled out, and then give the plane a hard rudder allowing the plane to begin its downward spinning dive

with the joystick pushed forward. Before the aircraft began its downward flight, the pilot needed to locate a point on the horizon so he could count the number of spins. After the third spin the pilot reversed the planes controls to continue its flight. Of course the necessary altitude was attained before beginning to put the airplane into a dive of three spins.

To take part in civilian life we were given special passes from the flight academy. Wearing an army dress uniform and a cadet military cap with a small propeller insignia on it, made the girls take notice.

The dream came to an end when I was washed out from Basic Flight Training. I went before the board of officers that told me I was dismissed from the Air Corps Pilot Training program. I was asked if I had any questions. I asked them if I could have another chance to pass my check out flight in order to continuing my pilot training. No such luck. It was goodbye to earning my wings and becoming a commissioned officer. I was now a private in the United States Air Corps. Perhaps I couldn't ever sing again, with

gusto, "Nothing will stop the United States Air Corps."

I enlisted in the United States Air Corps in 1942 and was discharged in 1945 with sergeant strips serving in the Pacific Theatre of War receiving the Air Medal for duties as

a Flight Clerk. I earned my wings as an aircrew member and not those silver wings as a pilot.

In 1950, I was presented with a pair of wings, Angels Wings, that were created by my girlfriend in the beach sands of the Ligurian Sea, Italy. Angels Wings in the sand are made by lying on ones back in the sand and moving your arms and legs to create an angel

with wings. My girlfriend helped me with my Italian language lessons at the University of Iowa and I was fortunate to receive a Bachelor of Fine Art Degree and later a Master of Fine Art Degree. Also I had the good fortune to receive a Fulbright Scholarship to study art in Florence, Italy, from 1950 to 1951. My girlfriend joined me in Italy and in the fall of 1951 we went to Paris, France. I had received enough money from my grant that I

could continue my art studies in Paris. At the end of summer my girlfriend returned to the

United States to continue her university studies.

Working in Paris was wonderful and I became interested in painting with enamel paint used to paint automobiles. This fast drying paint gave the artist very expressive lines and shapes. Also it enabled one to create the illusion of space using old master's glazing techniques. Unfortunately these enamel paintings found their way floating down the New York's East River. I learned the fate of these paintings in 1952, a girlfriend got rid of my panels from her apartment by dumping them into the East River. I imagine it was quite a spectacle to see these paintings, painted on Masonite, afloat upon the East

River. Perhaps it was the first of many "Happenings" exhibitions that occurred in many prestigious New York City art galleries. Perhaps it was just a good story.

I moved to New York City in 1951. For a short time I lived in a third story loft, on the lower east side of Manhattan, with a leaky roof. It provided a great deal of studio space with many windows that made it a good studio for painting. One day I returned to my studio and everything was soaked by a mighty downpour of rain water and many of my paintings suffered water damage. I worked an uninspiring job as a elevator operator in a Madison Avenue apartment building. I felt that I needed a change of environment, with mountains, beautiful clear streams, and big skies. I quickly left New York after five months to go to Montana. No doubt my sudden departure by bus was the justification that

some of my artwork was thrown into the East River.

Montana is a beautiful country and the sensation of a Big Sky is true. The change of altitude from New York City makes one feel light headed and giddy like having your breath taken away, or like descending from the highest peak of a roller coaster ride.

There were very few apartment buildings in Montana, therefore finding a job as an elevator operator was very limited. I found a job in a bowling alley setting bowling pins. If I remember correctly, it was named the "Big Sky Bowling Pin Alley". I was later to learn that the bars and taverns in Montana did have names like "The Big Sky Bar and Grill", but my favorite name was the "Buffalo Wallow Bar".

The pay for a "Pin Boy" was very meager. Also the bowlers always complained that the bowling pins were not set up fast enough so that the bowlers could continue bowling. Lowering and raising the gates for the pins to be re-set required certain agility to

escape flying pins and bowling balls. A teenager had an advantage for this job over a thirty year old man.

Fortunately, I was later hired as an art teacher at the Archie Bray brickyards, that started a pottery workshop and school. I was to teach painting but the ceramic skilled potters working there considered themselves a cut above a painter. I came to the brickyards to do some teaching but ended up with the brickyard workers making bricks.

I

would sit above the conveyer belt that carried the bricks. The bricks were made of soft clay, and my job was to reach down and remove them without destroying the brick's shape. The bricks just kept coming and I had to keep up with the moving belt loaded with

the bricks. It was like being in the famous movie called "Modern Times" starring Charlie Chaplin. I stayed there during the summer and was invited by an artist friend to go with him to New York City in 1953. I hoped returning to New York City might help me get rid of my back pains that I had working in the brickyards.

I left Montana with no regrets. I witnessed scenes like those seen in the movies, the western movie of a bar room fight at the local bar. Most important of all was meeting this charming woman ceramic potter that worked in the pottery shop. She invited me to spend a weekend with her in the beautiful Yellowstone National Park and we watched the

famous Yellowstone geyser spout.

My return to New York City felt like I had never left it. This wonderful town with its never-ending amazement of a community of people, like ants hurrying and scurrying to go wherever they had to go to. The very atmosphere was charged with the hustle and bustle of humanity, like a cosmic blast gathered in a world of architectural achievements of stone, steel, and glass.

First things first, things that needed to be taken care of: I recovered my studio painting easel along with a few paintings that hadn't been pitched into the East River, and

I found another elevator operator job at the impressive Riverside Church, located on the Westside of Upper Manhattan.

I was fortunate to find a three-room apartment on the sixth floor, in the Towers East Side of Manhattan. It cost me fifty dollars to "buy into" this place. The great advantage was the nineteen dollars and eighty cents a month for the rent. It so happened

there were still available apartments that were under a rent control policy enacted during

the times of World War II. It didn't have an elevator because a building with six floors or less, by code, didn't have to have a passenger elevator.

My new home was a type of a tenement apartment that had the bathtub in the kitchen with an enameled removable top to serve as a space for a wire dish holder. It was

really a natural convenience because upon removal of the enamel top to take one's bath,

the bather could keep an eye on the kitchen stove while the dinner was cooking.

The toilet was down the hall. It was one of those unique toilets that had the water tank overhead and during the warm summer months the water pipes attached to the tank

seem to take pleasure dripping on one's head when "sitting on the pot". The bathroom, although down the hall, belonged to the apartment renter, therefore it was my private toilet with a key. So, I painted hands on the toilet seat.

The sixth floor steps had very high risers. High ceilings gave the apartment's small rooms the feeling of a great deal of space. Climbing the stairs not only kept one in good physical condition, but also helped the memory. Only once my memory failed me. It was for tickets to a Broadway play that I had to climb the stairs again. Also the sixth floor made it possible to climb one more floor up to the building's roof. Here the sight of Manhattan was grand. The view of the skyscrapers of upper Manhattan was in sharp

contrast to the sites of the East River, scenes of the bridges and the river traffic of tug boats and scows. It also provided the cooling breezes during the summer to take a few steps to the tar papered roof and cool off. It was located near Tompkins Square on East 10

<sup>th</sup>

Street just around the corner from Avenue C.

In 1953, I left my job as an elevator operator and found a job in a printing company that printed menus for the various New York City restaurants. My job was to proof-read the copy of the menu that had come from the linotype machine, before they went to press. I worked the swing shift hours which gave me time to paint during the day.

One weekend I took part in having some of my paintings in the Annual Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibition and Sale. I didn't appreciate having art lovers

with their pet dogs admiring on one's canvases. I actually sold a painting of mine for ten dollars. One of artist showing his work invited me to go with him to paint in Central Park. He wanted to teach me how I could paint in a style that might help me to sell my art, at least to get a price high enough to pay for the cost of paint, canvas and brushes. I still have my painting I did with him of New York City's Central Park. During my seven years living in Manhattan I sold two paintings and an etching of my cat Phoebe. A resident of the city should own a cat. My cat Phoebe was a real lady. She was white with grey, black, and orange markings. These random strips of color mixed with her coat of white gave her a face a very appealing look.

Another excellent New York City cat was named Sleepy. Her home was in a loft owned by Ida. Ida was a true New Yorker with her Italian accent mixed with Brooklynese. Her doctor advised her to take allergy shots that would help her so that she wouldn't keep weeping when she pet Sleepy. Alas, the shots would help somewhat but Ida couldn't help but bury her face in the fur of Sleepy, which would make her tears flow. She just couldn't help but to bury her face in Sleepy's soft and luxuriant fur.

Ida had her towel embroidering business on West 14

<sup>th</sup>

Street and she embroidered

by machine. Things like Mr. and Mrs, towels and washcloths. She had me design some monograms for her.

I met Ida through my new employer who owned a monogram business that embroidered owner's names on linings of their fur coats. This change of jobs from the printing house gave me more time to work on my paintings. The monogram work was seasonal and the major part of this business was just before the Christmas rush when the

new fur coat linings were in demand.

I designed a monogram for Victoria d' Los Angeles and the Princess of Monaco, Grace Kelly. For these not unlike many others, I did by copying their signatures that were

given me by the furrier. I used a white leaded pencil to draw the names on the silk lining

and then the women embroiders embroidered the names either by machine, but usually to

do justice to the owners signature the monogram was done by hand. For Grace Kelly the

embroidered lining was for a shoe box. Liberace's design choice was a piano with a candelabra. One the more quixotic monogram I did was to make a design for a famous athlete coach to be monogrammed on a fur lined jockstrap to read, "Lucky Bucky".

Not unlike many major cities, New York City could provide jobs for those who were inclined to pursue their creative vocation through a vocational means, such as tourists guides; tour guides upon tour boats making their trips around Manhattan Island, waiters and waitresses working in the many restaurants in the city, guides and lecturers in

museums, taxi drivers, bus drivers, subway operators, dishwashers and elevator operators. What an exciting and never ending source of adventure to be part of a great multitude of dreamers pursuing their creative needs.

Making painting trips outside of Manhattan were important; such as: Coney Island, Stated Island and Long Island Sound, East Marion. A group of friends and I had talked about buying some property near a place called Rocky Point and to build a beach cabin. It was a grand idea. The outcome of this dream was doing a painting along the beach. I treasure this painting very much; the day spent there, swimming, eating, enjoying painting, the warmth of the day and the sense of sea breezes and the warm friendship of one's friends. My painting I made this romantic day is dated 1954.

1954 was a significant year for me. I had a letter from the woman potter girlfriend I had met in Helena, Montana. She told me that she coming with her girlfriend to New York City. I thought she wanted to see me and collect the five dollars I had borrowed from her when I had left Montana to go to New York City.

Our romance was brief. I proposed to Sue at a famous speakeasy that existed during the days of prohibition. It was located on the Lower East Side of Manhattan called

Chumlee. She agreed to marry me. She wanted a chauffeur and I wanted a car. She owned a wonderful 1951 Chevy business coupe.

After Sue had returned to Montana and many phone calls to each other the date was set for our marriage. After a few beers with some New York City friends they took me to the airport and I arrived in Helena, Montana for our wedding. I met Sue's family and learned at this time that her real name was Henrietta, and that her father, an ordained

Episcopal Minister, was to perform our marriage ceremony. Sue's brother participated in the wedding along with his wife, who was the Matron of Honor. The wedding ceremony had a feeling of dignity mixed with the sensation of being a watcher and not a participant

in this important consecrated union.

After the wedding there was the wedding breakfast with friends and family. I had not only a wonderful wife, but a new mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law.

Our honeymoon was spent aboard the train going from Montana to New York. I was told that we had sleeper reservations on the train. I had suggested in order to save

money, going by coach was less expensive. At that very moment I realized I was going to learn about matrimonial bliss.

We returned to New York by way of a stop over in Saginaw, Michigan to see a painting exhibit of mine in the Saginaw museum. The curator of the museum had arranged an exhibition of my work.

Upon sorting out our things in a hotel near the museum, I realized I had a tear in my pants. Sue was equipped with needle and thread and sewed my pants' leg as good as

new. This emergency provided me a second lesson of marriage. I knew I was married to someone that could, on a moments notice, take care of me and any other emergencies that

would come up.

We arrived in New York City's Grand Central Station and took a cab to our home on East Tenth Street. With the determination, which one learns to have in order to climb six flights of stairs, we entered our love nest.

Our three room apartment with its bathtub in the kitchen, which was covered so that it could be used as a table top and then removed to use the bathtub. As I believe I had

mentioned before, but now things would be quite different. While bathing Sue could tell me what needed to be done for the progress of fixing dinner. Also this unique arrangement was very convenient to keep iced beer in for a party.

Earlier this apartment had the type of icebox made of wood and metal with the cooling device being a block of ice. The tenement dwellers iceman had to possess real stamina to climb stairs while holding ice tongs around some thirty or more pounds of ice.

The view from our apartment rooftop was all anyone would want, as I have already stated. But to share it with Sue, made it so very, very special. With the climb of a flight of stairs from the sixth floor to the roof, one could have a grand view of New York City: West, East, South, North and especially the view of the East River with the small river crafts applying their trade. Also there was a unique and different view while looking down from the roof to the building's courtyard and the surrealistic pattern of wash lines with their clothes attached, swinging bravely in the winds.

Sue traded all this along with the odors, the rumbling noises of the city, buses, subways, the tenements and its occupants, bridges and skyscrapers for the vast beauty of

Western Mountains, buttes and turquoise colored skies. Here there were neither sheep, cattle or horses, but bed bugs, cockroaches and cats.

Shortly after Sue arrived my cat Phoebe left home, but later was found by the neighbor's boy in the grocery store. She left because she wouldn't stand having another female in the same household.

Phoebe could jump from one apartment building to the next, jumping from one roof top to the next. She would jump up on the roofs parapet in which was about a foot in width and then jump and land upon the next building's roof parapet.

A few months later we went to Montana to pick up Sue's 1951 Chevy business coupe. We used it to make various trips out of the city. We learned to be quite skillful in

parking a car in small parking spaces. We also had to remember where the car was parked, and be sure to notice if the parking space was marked with a sign informing you to expect the street cleaning truck to clean the street where you were parked. It was known as the Alternate Day and Time Parking System. It worked well to stimulate one's memory and for the city to collect some money for no parking violations. The police had no qualms to call for a tow truck and haul an illegally parked car away.

There were many pluses in having a car, like taking trips outside of the city.

Phoebe, the cat, didn't share our enthusiasm to travel, especially when she traveled with

us. A trip to Montana proved this to be so. We started our trip via the Holland Tunnel and

it took several miles of our journey West before she settled down. Later we stopped for lunch. I had my window down and Phoebe made her escape out the car's window. She was gone and we decided to get our lunch in hopes she would return. We left the window

open and upon our return there she was inside the car.

The 50's were a good time to be living in New York City even though having your work shown in an art gallery was difficult. My work wasn't of the abstract expressionist mode such as the New York school artists from the Stable Gallery. The Stable Gallery had just opened up town in February of 1954, exhibiting the 35 East State

group of artists, David Hare, Robert Motherwell, Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko, Willem de Kooning, Ad Reinhardt and Franz Kline.

Franz Kline had his studio near East Tenth Street and exhibited one of his early works, a small painting of a chair. This painting was part of an exhibition sponsored by Saint Marks of the Bowery, an Episcopal Church located in the Lower East Side. A group

of artist, including myself, formed a group of Lower East Side artists and were able to arrange an exhibition of our work in this very famous church. At one time Martha Graham gave a dance recital in this church.

We rented a loft on Avenue A near Houston Street for a studio. Later below Houston Street was known as the Soho district where the rental cost of living and working in this area provided artist space to work in for less than studio space northward

of Houston Street. 13 Avenue A was a great place to work. It was the usual size of a loft,

about 30' by 60'. It was over a pants factory called Better Made Pants. The owner told us

that he would go to Harlem and get ideas to design pants that would have a good market value.

There was a studio above ours that had a skylight and was used by another artist and had been a old photographer's studio. We had a fireplace in ours, and it was just dandy to grill steaks for our dinner.

I ordered a loom to be delivered to our studio. One morning the Better Made

Pants people called Sue to tell her the loom had been delivered and was on the sidewalk

outside of 13 Avenue A. Sue called me at work and when I came we disassembled the loom, carried it up 2 flights and reassembled it.

After a couple of months we rented part of our studio to another artist. This helped a great deal to pay the rent of fifty dollars a month.

We had acquired another expense, the rental space for the car we had brought from Montana. The small parking space to park Sue's 1951 Chevy was twenty dollars a month, a few cents more than our apartment rent.

Sue found a ceramic studio near our apartment and continued her interest in doing some pottery since she had developed her own style of creating some very interesting pottery. Her interest in pottery first started when she was working in the Archie Bray Foundation in Helena, Montana.

Sue also became part of an army medical unit because she was an experienced occupational therapist. The reserve unit she was attached to spent two weeks of active duty each year. I became a camp follower. Also, she had the experience of marching with

her unit, on Armistice Day, down Fifth Avenue.

Sue worked in the same monogram shop that I did, her specialty was designing monograms for women's blouses. The day that the shop was to have an employee party she was asked to go to the Lower East Side of town to Kat's Deli to pick up the knishes for the party. She couldn't find a cab to get back to the party. One of the deli workers had

to bring her back to the shop, none too soon, in order to have the knishes at least warm.

It was a very new experience to work in the garment district. Garment personalities were short fused. When tempers flared during an argument, conciliation was

resolved by calling each other "sweetheart".

It was a grand time being a citizen of New York City. Many thoughts go back to those years. The building super would take a mop and bucket of water to swab the six flights of stairs. By the time he made his way to our floor the bucket of water had diminished somewhat and had changed its color. But be as it may, Sue would make her remark, "I'll never again live in a place that has marble halls." This place of ours was called Weissbloom Heights, named after the apartment building owner.

The Puerto Rican family that had the apartment down the hall from ours would invite us to one of their parties. Their bathtub of course was full of beer, iced down. All the furniture stacked in the adjoining room, making room to dance to the music of their sons and son's friends playing their guitars, singing songs about their Puerto Rico homeland. The whole room was filled with friends, neighbors and many children all moving, dancing and talking amongst balloons and colorful streamers.

Across the hall from us lived Ruth, Frank and Ruth's son, George. There were many Georges that lived nearby. There was George's Chinese Laundry and George's Ukrainian Deli. Also, there was Minnie George, the Gypsy woman, her family lived in the ground floor store front and they used colorful bed spreads to cover their front windows. It was an amazing sight to watch our gypsy friend and her mother walk down the street teetering on their high heels and their very full satin skirts, keeping in rhythm with their

swinging hips. Gypsy Minnie George would insist that Sue wear a pair of highheeled shoes, but Sue didn't think wearing high heels would be very comfortable or practical for the streets of New York. We were invited to a Gypsy wedding, but unfortunately we didn't attend.

Some of the Gypsy men would take their toolbox and ask the owners of their cars parked on the street if they had any fender or body dents that needed fixing. The Gypsy men were expert metal craftsmen and knew how to repair dented cars with just a box full of tools.

Taking the Staten Island Ferry Boat to Saint George Staten Island cost twenty-five cent, perhaps at that time only a dime. (After awhile the memory gets to be tricky remembering facts, yet one can't knock fictionalizing events.) My first teaching experience teaching was in an adult evening painting class in Tottenville, S.I. New York. What a wonderful ride it was, after the ferry, to ride the local streetcar to my evening painting class. I was still feeling a bit on the nervous side after the experience I had on the ferry to Staten Island. I was the first car in line to leave the ferryboat and it was a shock to discover that I had locked myself out of the car. When it came the eventful time to leave the ferry boat, one of the boat's crew member realized that I wasn't about to lead the pack of cars behind me. I told him the good news that the car was very much locked up with the keys inside of the car. With that he grabbed a fire axe and was ready to break the car's window. I told him I would yield his axe and I broke the smaller wind wing window, then I got in the car and drove off the boat to my painting class.

A warmed over hot dog served late at night, returning home on the S.I. ferryboat was a just and welcome reward of my new adventures, especially when it was a warmed over Coney Island hot dog.

My first New York exhibition, was a one-man exhibit of paintings at the Staten Island Institute of Art and Science Museum in 1956. I didn't sell anything, but was paid by the gallery's insurance company for a damaged painting caused by one of its viewers. Another interesting experience living in New York City was a trip Sue had that involved an excursion in the New York Harbor. She was a guest aboard a tugboat pushing a ocean liner out of its dock, to continue its appointed voyage seaward. The boat ride was made possible by an artist we knew, who was friends with the captain of the tugboat. Sue was invited to be a passenger for this adventure. I had my art class in Staten Island and was unable to go along.

Sue and her friend boarded the tugboat, named the Dalzell, from a dock located nearby the Battery. Sue told me that the Dalzell's powerful engine and its hull's deep water line made it possible for the tugboat, so small compared to the massiveness of the large liner, to do its job. One doesn't realize that the full mass of the tug's hull is below its water line and the mighty engine pushes its adversity seaward. Sue told me that looking up from the deck of the tug that the ocean liner appears like a mountain rising from the land.

Sue describes her experience living in Manhattan like her mountains of Montana to the skyward grandeur of the skyscrapers.

Trips outside of the city were many. We would spend an afternoon in the city of Keansburg, New Jersey. This was another boat trip and one felt they could well be on an European Cruise. The pleasure boat named City of Keansburg, small as it was, provided the passengers with four decks that gave the adventurous traveler a place to

dance, sunbathe, partake of food and refreshments, or just sit on its decks and enjoy the passing landscape.

In the city of Keansburg, once docked and gone ashore, was the chance to sunbathe, swim and have a stroll on the cities boardwalks, with its various stores and shops to make a purchase of a summer souvenir.

Walking to our studio, that was on Avenue A, we would pass a pharmacy that had displayed in its window a full sized replica figure cast in plaster about six feet tall, the statue, that we later learned, represented the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates, the author of the oath that medical students are required to uphold. The Hippocratic Oath embodies the duties and obligations of medicine. The pharmacist that owned the pharmacy, believed that it was his duty to display this Greek statue that represented the very essence of medical practices, despite the state officials that came from the State of New York informed our East Side pharmacist that he should get his statue thrown-out, even though it stood for the very essence of medical practices.

During the summer months when it was hot and humid, our pharmacist would go into his drug store to wait upon a customer from his car that he had parked in front of his store. He found that his car seemed much cooler to be in than waiting upon any business inside of the store. During the cooler weather he would be inside the store in a large overstuffed chair watching his T.V. that was placed between the store's merchandise. Sometimes you were asked to wait upon yourselves.

Sometimes, coming from our Avenue A studio, we would have some borscht and a glass of tea at a Russian restaurant. Returning to our apartment later in the evening we might find our friend, who was known by the name of Pop, asleep on the steps of the fifth floor and at this point he couldn't make it any further to his sixth floor apartment. He was happily sleeping off too many beers, after his chef duties in a local restaurant.

During some evenings we could hear Pop snoring away and I would get up and go down to the fifth floor landing and gently wake him up and take him up the next flight of stairs to his room. As he opened his door to go in he would bid me a good night.

Pop had many stories to tell. He could make the most wonderful boats out of scraps of wood, perhaps found, in the garbage cans that remained on the sidewalks.

When you had some discarded and unwanted useful possessions, it was a common ritual to take it down to the street's garbage cans and place them on top. Street people and, at times, non-street people would find a choice item to their liking and claim it for themselves.

Another thing that proved very useful was the garbage can lids that the kids on the block used as sleds to rattle, with much noise, down the front apartment steps. Also during the summer months a garbage can lid would be very handy to divert the water that was coming from opened water hydrants that the fire department opened for the kids to play in and cool off. But it wasn't favored by the police to let some kid playing the wonderful game of deflecting the water from the hydrants just at the moment the city bus came down the street with its windows opened drenching the bus passengers.

The kids in the city objected to being victims of the "do-gooders" that wanted them to go off to the mountains to get fresh air and all the benefits of nature; mosquitoes, poison ivy, perhaps a poisonous snake and sand. There was too much to offer being in the city, especially to guard one's territory from another street gang.

We managed to see Carol Burnett's performance of "Once Upon a Mattress" at the Lower East Side's Off Broadway Theater, also an uptown theater production, "The Seven Year Itch", starring Tom Ewell. Katy Jurado performed in "The Best Little Whore House in Texas" and having attended this play opening, and enjoyed it, we learned it was the only performance because it was regarded to be little too "naughty". It could upset the puritanicalness of the New York theatre goers. Another case of the hypocrisy of New York City's moral codes was making the African women wear bras during the performance of their Grand Troupe of African Dancers production. This wonderful display of authentic native ritual dances with the women wearing bras was like leaving the gin out of a martini. We saw this one before the bras were required.

One of the most memorable experiences we had was the fortunate opportunity to hear Andres Segovia playing his guitar, especially the music of Falla and Villa Lobos. At the Cooper Union Theater we attended a program of Pete Seeger and some other folk musicians. In contrast to this type of music we also had the enjoyment of Victor Borge and his wacky musical presentation and his phonetic alphabet.

The Whitney Museum had moved at this time from its location in the Village in lower Manhattan to be next to the Museum of Modern Art mid-town Manhattan in the area of the Fifties.

The new Guggenheim also presented to Fifth Avenue the architectural wonder created by Frank Lloyd Wright. The space for art was presented and hung upon curved walls; allowing this silo like structure to happily allow enterprising paper glider makers the opportunity to launch their paper gliders from the top floors and watch them glide down to the building's ground floor.

When one day our apartment kitchen ceiling gave away and water descended into the kitchen sink it was divine that we should pack up and leave the city. Weissbloom Heights' roof leaked especially after many months of rain and snow. When the snow piled high I would get a shovel, not to shovel the sidewalks, but to shovel off the roof above our apartment. The snow I shoveled off would crash down into the court of the building, ripping out the tenement dwellers clothes lines below. A lot of unhappy apartment resident's voices could be heard coming up from below.

Sue told our apartment agent that we were leaving and he told her, "Mrs. McCullough we'll certainly miss you".

Therefore, after five years being married citizens of Manhattan Island with cat and a carload of our possessions, plus a moving van of all our worldly goods, we headed for California in 1960, where our parents were living. We believed it would be a good idea to live closer to our families.

Once in California I apprenticed in a stained glass studio. Sue worked as an occupational therapist in a home that was for those individuals who were an embarrassment to their families, for one reason or another. It is very amusing for us to remember the few months that Sue painted tissue boxes with butterflies. This was a very small studio arrangement located in a garage in north Hollywood. She was very skilled for this specialty and the two owners of this great enterprise were sorry to see her leave.

In 1964 we rented a California bungalow to live in. It was close enough for me to ride my bicycle to work. Our bungalow was located in a multi-cultured neighborhood. Sue would take some of the neighborhood kids to the nearby hills and to a small play ground

area tucked close to the small woodland area of Aladena, California. Sue was called by some of her young charges, as their "White Momma". She would load gangs of kids and the fuzzy black puppy in the Chevy Business Coupe and head for the hills.

Our fuzzy faced mix breed dog, perhaps with a pedigree of a cocker spaniel and poodle, was adopted by us one afternoon when she came limping to our back door with one of her back legs dragging behind her. We took her to the vet and he put a splint on her broken back leg. We paid the bill for services rendered and with that we had adopted "Princess", as this stray was called by the neighborhood children.

Princess found it very much in her favor to keep an eye out for the small children that were holding their recently purchased ice cream cones from the local Mom and Pop grocery store. The children were small enough, enabling Princess to take away the ice cream from the cones that were at just the right height for her grab the ice cream. She loved to get into my brother-in-law's fish pound when we visited my sister and her husband. We feel that she knew by doing this, we would pack up and return home. That was her way of telling us, it was time to go home.

I painted several landscapes around the foothills of Altadena and some of the beach areas around the harbor of San Pedro. We visited the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History and Fine Arts and the Norton Simon collection of Edgar Degas. The new Getty Museum hadn't been built upon a Los Angeles hilltop yet. The new museum would over look the view of houses and commercial buildings laced with ribbons of a web of automobiles nose to nose upon a vast sea of freeways peeking out here and there in a mist of pale yellow smog. We made our get away from smogville to see Sue's parents that had settled in Montana. I did some painting of this Big Sky country during our visits.

One morning, upon our travels, we saw a truck with a camper type of arrangement upon it and a cowboy by it signaling with his cowboy hat to cars coming down the pike. We stopped to find out if he needed any help. He told us about having a flat tire, and his family had been there all night and the early morning and that we were the first car that had stopped.

We loaded his tire into our VW to take it to a gas station to be repaired. The cowboy's name was Frank Lavender and he was tall and found it difficult to fold up into the VW and had to remove his cowboy hat in order to get in. Upon loading his tire into the front compartment of the car he remarked, "Where was the car's motor?" This was the first time he had ever seen a VW car. We found a gas station and they repaired the flat tire. We returned to his truck and another tire was flat. Back to the station for repairs and soon they were on their way, his teenager wife and baby. He invited us to be his guest to watch him bulldog the steers at the rodeo where he was bound for. We've always been sorry that we didn't take him up on his offer, mistakenly thinking it was important to be on our way.

On another trip, to get away from the smog, we made arrangements to paint at the site of the famous Custer Battlefield Monument near Garryowen, Montana Rts. #87 and #90. Upon the VW, was a large box that had my canvas for my oil painting of this historic site. We had arrived here when there was a full moon. We both felt the spirits of the fallen U.S. Cavalry troops and those of the buried Sioux, Cheyenne and Crow Indian warriors.

I pictured for my painting of Custer's Last Stand a large horse in the foreground of my composition with the landscape of the battle field behind the large horse (1) that represents the only survivor of the bloody battle between the Indians and the Cavalry Troops. The horse in this painting of mine represented the only living survivor of General George A. Custer's last battle June 25th 1876 near the Little Big Horn River, I believe we were at this site upon the 100th anniversary of this famous battle.

#### 1. Capt Keogh's horse Comanche

We moved to Fort Wayne, Indiana in 1965 and were fortunate to purchase an old farmhouse behind the city's Water Treatment Plant located at the confluence of the three rivers, the St. Joe, the St. Mary's and the Maumee. Fort Wayne was named after the famous Indian fighter General Anthony Wayne. We left Southern California to come to Fort Wayne to work in a stained glass studio.

My father had died recently and the continual breathing of the dosage of smog we felt that a move eastward to the Midwest was a good idea. With all our possessions, loaded once again we moved on with Phoebe our cat and Princess our dog. Indiana has a geographical advantage of being close to Chicago, Toledo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Ohio and New York, that all have excellent Art Museums.

I worked in the stained glass studio for two years. At this time I was asked if I would like to join a staff of artists that were part of a faculty of a private art school in Fort Wayne. I taught a variety of studio classes and Sue taught weaving courses. Due to financial problems, the art school closed its doors and the faculty moved to the IndianaPurdue University at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

We enjoy our old house that has many windows. They let in lots of light that make it so pleasant to live in. Plus, there was room for a garden in the backyard. Later we built a studio located behind our house. We did the actual construction of the studio except for hiring a contractor to pour the cement for the building's foundation. We poked around new building sights in the neighborhood learning about framing a building, using studs and the differences between a spike and a nail. The library helped, as did friends.

Then came the deluge. We were in a flood plain area but I believe we knew about the history of the area. That took place over one hundred years ago, so why worry! After all we only paid four thousand dollars for our house. We were flooded three times. Ronnie (President Ronald Reagan) helped us, so now our neighborhood is protected by a system of dikes to control any future flood waters from the three nearby rivers.

In 1982, we bought a house across the street. This was to take care of storage, a place for Sue's looms and a place for my etching press.

Since retiring from teaching duties in 1989, we now have more time to pursue our art work and take some trips abroad. One of the most exciting experiences was to participate in an art related workshop program in Gera, Germany. Gera is part of a Sister City arrangement to co-author an artist exchange program. We were fortunate to be selected to take a part in this type of foreign exchange.

Gera, Germany is located near Leipzig and Weimer. Gera was still part of Communistic Russia at the time. The art program was sponsored by the state and the artists were provided with art materials. Those of us from other countries were given housing and even a light breakfast before starting to work in a large area that was used, at certain times, as a social center. This building had a fairly large courtyard, was called the Wald

Haus, and was located in the beautiful Thuringen Forest. It was about a fifteen minute trip to the central part of Gera.

Besides the German artist, Eberhard Dietzsch, Uwe, Klos, Barbara Lechner, Barbara Koch, Christian Luttich, Holger Mittenzwei, Wolfgang Schwarzenrub, and Siegfried Weiss there were those from Czechoslovakia, Greece, Poland, Romania, Russia, and the United States.

Another important art experience I had was being in the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. to copy some of the masterpieces that are in this splendid museum. I copied Vincent Van Gogh's "The Olive Pickers" and Paul Cezanne's "Baroque Vase of Flowers", Jean Baptiste Camille Corot's "In the Studio" and Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez "The Needlewoman". Also Adolf Monticelli's "Women, Men and Dogs", that is part of the collection of the Indianapolis Museum of Art, Indianapolis, Indiana.

At present Sue does her quilts and weaving besides taking care of the vegetable garden, baking bread, coffee cake, pies, breakfast rolls, and patiently, or impatiently keeping income tax records and doing the necessary bookkeeping.

I keep painting in the studio and go with friends painting landscapes. I have time to do some etchings, take care of my roses, feed the cats and take out the garbage. We make short trips to the grocery store, the pharmacy, the dentist, the doctor for yearly check ups, the gas station, the bank and the vet with our cats, when they can be caught and put in their traveling case.

Sometimes we watch the baseball World Series games. It brings back the days we spent in L.A.'s Chavez Ravine's baseball stadium to see an evening baseball game to escape from the heat and smog. The real special times were to watch Sandy Koufax pitch shutouts for the L.A. Dodgers.