

Chapter 11

Ralph & Shirley
Wilson



Ralph -- 1954



Shirley



Ralph, Gip, Roy Jr.



Roy, Ralph
Fern, Gip, Esther, Jr, Eleanor



Ralph



Tonly, Kernal, Ralph, Maud

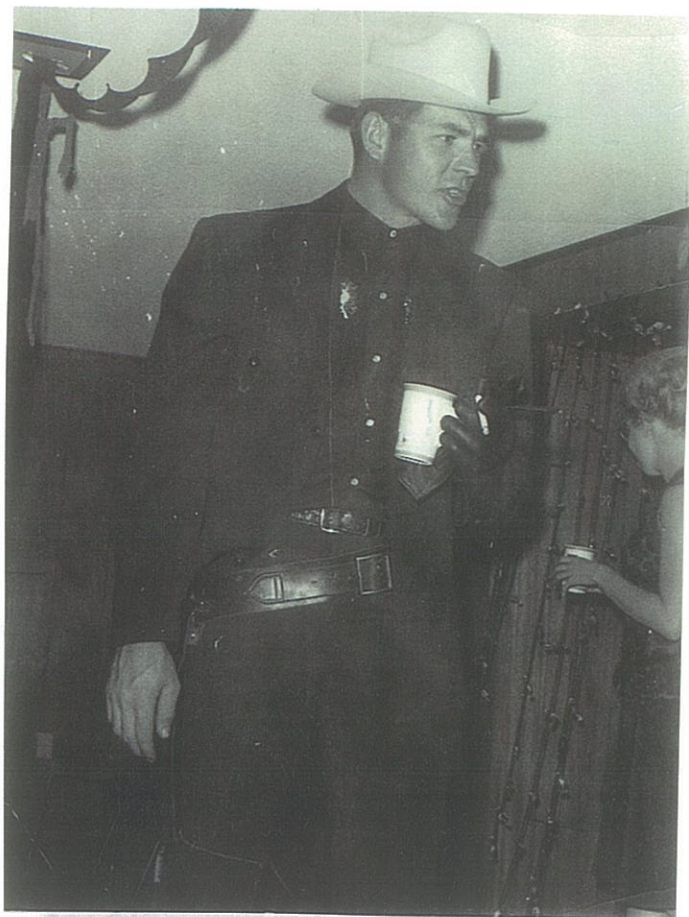


Wlaker, Letha, Shirl, Ralph, Nell, Roy

July 21, 1962



Ralph & Shirley
1962 -- Honeymoon



Ralph



Shirley & Ralph



Shirley & Ralph



Joni



Joni, Shirley, Cody, Ralph, Stony



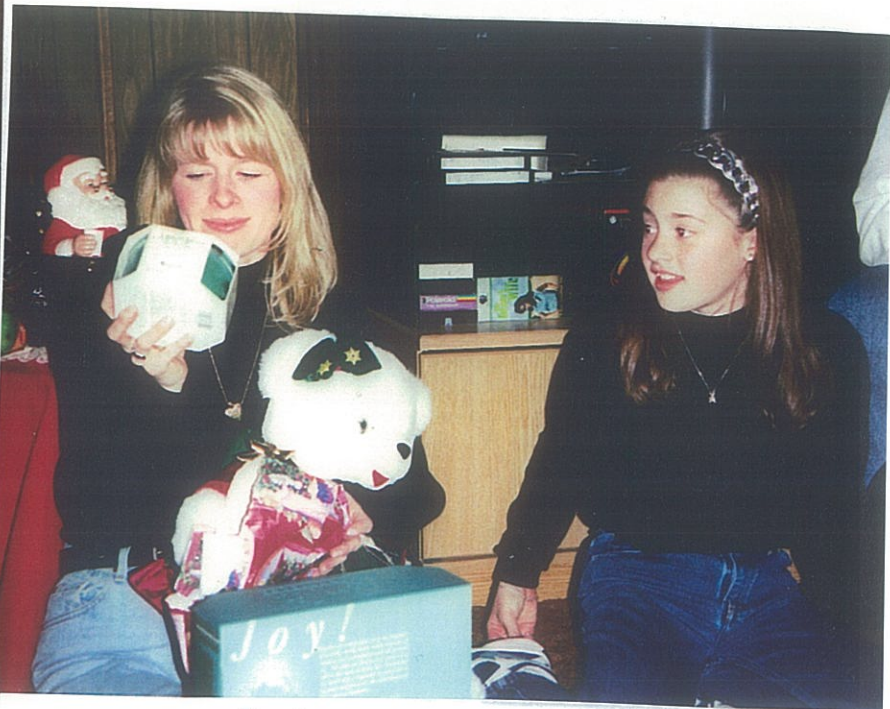
Brady
Karen Jason
Nikki Stony



Zack, Brock, Rashaun



Stony & Cody



Gerri

Rashaun

Ralph Glenn Wilson

Then along came Ralph: I was born in my parents' home. The son of Roy Elmer and Nellie Olive Barnard Wilson. Our home was located one mile west and one half mile north of highway 27 on the Sherman County line on July 4, 1936. My mom had a midwife to help her through the birthing process.

I was the last living child. There was a stillborn boy after me named Ellis. He was buried in the Lawnridge Cemetery.

I remember later in years that some of my older brothers and sisters weren't very happy that I was born on the 4th of July because the family missed the celebration they were intending to go to. I believe it was going to be at the Lawnridge Church, located about three miles north and two miles west of our home.

I was six months old when my oldest brother, Oren, died of pneumonia at the age of 18 years old. He was buried in the Lawnridge Cemetery, located by the Lawnridge Church.

I can remember my parents were still farming with horses and also had a Model U-Allis Chalmers Tractor. We always had a big garden, milk cows, other cattle, pigs and chickens.

Our home was a three room house. There was a kitchen, living room and a bedroom. We had no running water. We carried the water from the wellhouse. We had a party line phone. We had kerosene stove for heat. It was a 30 gallon barrel with a drip system. We had a Maytag washing machine that was run by a gas motor in around 1945. Prior to that, the clothes were washed with a washboard and tubs. Kerosene lamps were a way of light and then in time we had a wind charger with battery for electric lights around 1944. The cook stove used wood, coal, cobs or cow chips or whatever was available for cooking and baking. We had an icebox and the iceman would deliver ice on a regular basis.

When the kids got old enough, they slept in a two room bunkhouse. We had a garage that was used for a vehicle and tools. It was also used to butcher hogs and cattle. We had a storm cellar where we stored our vegetables and home canned goods. We had a milking barn, a hog house, a chicken house and one grain bin. I remember riding hogs, calves, and getting scraped off of them when they ran out of the hog house. I remember scooping manure out of the chicken house and milking the cows.

I remember playing in the trees and there was a pipe that laid on a branch of one tree and on a branch of another tree and I would swing around it and sometimes there was a rope swing hanging from it.

We had a traveling salesman that brought around spices, salves, utensils, and cleaning materials. From the main road, you drove down the hill toward our place. The way I learned to ride a bike was when one of my brothers and sisters put me on the bike and shoved me down the hill. If you didn't learn how to ride by the time you got down the hill, you would either run into the fence or the barn.

I would sometimes get inside of an old truck tire and roll down the hill.

One day we were picking up junk off the place and Gip was throwing an old fender of a vehicle up on the truck, only it went over the truck and hit me on top of the head and cut the top of my head open. Dad carried me to the house and then dad and mom took me to St. Frances to the hospital to get stitches.

When I was nine years old in 1945, we took a trip to Denver, Colorado. At that time, we used ration stamps to buy gas, sugar, tires, meats, shoes and other things because of the war (World War II). While we were in Denver, the war ended and there was a big celebration. We never worried about ration stamps after that.

Us kids went to school three miles north of our home. It was called the Pleasant View School. It was a one room schoolhouse and I went to the school there through the fourth grade.

We had an old topless car called the "Jittney". We got to ride to school in it sometimes, but most of the time we walked. (Would you believe it if I told you we always walked up hill three miles against the wind?) Ha HaJunior drove us to school in the "Jittney" one day and when we got to school, a bunch of kids jumped in the car and I stood up and he drove in a building at school and the frame of the building was low enough that I slammed into it and they had to take me to St. Frances, Kansas for stitches under my left eye.

One time Gip, Esther, Junior, Norie and I were at home while our parents were gone from home and I had my chair leaning back on the back two legs of the chair against the wall. Gip told me to put the chair down and I didn't do what he said, so he kicked the legs out from under me, and my head hit the wall and I ended up with a big knot on my head. I don't think I ever leaned my chair back like that again.

Several times we spent some time in the storm cellar when severe storms came through.

Between my fourth and fifth grade I got a horse for my birthday. That summer we moved to the R. L. Stanley, Morning Side Ranch, 17 miles north of Edson, Kansas on the Beaver Creek.

I went to Edson Consolidated School from my fifth grade until I graduated from high school in 1954.

When we were on the ranch most of my times in the summer was spent riding horses, counting cattle and checking fences. We had 2000 acres of pasture with cattle on them that had to be checked about every day. I also helped saw and chop trees for wood for the wood furnace that heated the house. This house had two bedrooms, a kitchen, a dining room, living room, bathroom, and a mudroom on the main floor. There were three bedrooms upstairs and a full basement with a coal chute, furnace, laundry room and storage. The house was equipped with carbide lights. We had a 32 volt light plant with storage batteries that provided electricity for the house.

There was a very large barn with milking stations, horse stalls, pens and garage space on the bottom floor. There was a large hayloft for storing feed and several bins for storing wheat and grain on the second floor. It was built against a cliff so you could drive into the second floor to unload wheat and grain into the bins. There was a chicken house, a brooder house and a shop with a forge. The place set right beside the Beaver Creek so there were lots of big cottonwood trees all around. At times the creek would flood so we couldn't get across it and we would have to wait for the water to go down before we could leave. There was catfish, sun perch and turtles in the creek so Don and Dean Peter (my nephews) and I did quite a bit of fishing and camping out overnight.

There were always cows to milk (twice a day), eggs to gather, and chickens to feed and cream to separate. (The chores). About every two weeks, usually on Saturday, we would go to town (Goodland) and sell cream and eggs, buy groceries, go to a show and get some French-fries afterwards.

During school months we would ride the school bus 17 miles, morning and night. I was interested mostly in sports, football, basketball and track. Thanks to some very determined teachers, I did learn some things.

Most social events involved the community. Beaver Valley 4-H, card parties, 4th of July celebrations and school ball games. One time the creek stopped

running so the neighbors came over and we stomped around in the mud and caught the catfish and turtles that were in drying up ponds and had a community fish fry.

We hauled feed for the cattle on a one horse hayrack and did most of the cattle chores on horseback. One thing I learned on horseback - you don't tie your rope to the saddle horn and then go running by and drop your loop over a post. The horse and I both ended up on the ground.

The horses we had were called Kernal, Tony and Maud. Kernal was the horse that I got for my birthday and taught me about all I ever learned about riding and horse sense. He would always stop if I fell off and would do about anything I wanted him to do, if it wasn't stupid. If it was stupid, he would sit down and I'd slide off his back. One time, I was probably 11 or 12 years old, and I got new boots, and feeling pretty cocky. I got on Kernal and started kicking him in the ribs and he took me to the creek and when he got to the middle of the creek he sat down. I slipped off, filled my new boots with water. I was mad, but I knew what caused it to happen.

Tony was the A #1 cattle horse. You could rope, cut, pen, load trucks, outwit bulls and just about anything you could want. One time I was on Kernal and Junior was on Tony. We stopped to open a gate. Junior did the honors. When he started to get back on the horse, he got one foot in the stirrup and I said "Giddy Up", and Tony took off like a scalded cat. When he got him stopped about a half mile later, he still had one foot in the stirrup, one hand on the saddle horn, his belly on the saddle seat and the other hand holding one rein. I stayed a good distance away until he had plenty of time to cool down.

Maud was the workhorse. She weighed about 2300 pounds and did everything most teams could do. We used her to plow the garden, disc, cultivate, move logs, haul hay and if you were riding her, she was broad enough you could lay on her back and not worry about falling off. You had to be careful with your talk around her because if you said anything she stopped to see if you said "Whoa".

We lived on the ranch from 1946 to 1951. I was a freshman when we moved to Goodland, KS., but I continued to go to school in Edson, KS. I drove back and forth from Goodland and carried some teachers and cooks, that worked at the school to help pay for the gasoline. I drove a 1947 Chevrolet. I played American Legion Baseball in the summer.

The reason for leaving the ranch was strange, to say the least. The owner of the

ranch would not continue to rent it to my dad because my dad was making more money off the ranch than the owner had. The owner was also making more money but he couldn't stand to see my dad make his share. My dad continued to farm the barnyard ground until he retired in 1957.

While I was attending Edson High School, I played on the six man football team that went undefeated for three years. The basketball team went to State my junior and senior year. It was held in Hutchinson, KS. While I was going to school I worked after school and on Saturdays at a body repair shop. While working there I bought a 1932 Model B. Ford. I completely restored it. My friends and I had a lot of fun running around the country in that automobile. It was purple and white. The same colors of the Edson Rockets.

In the fall of 1954 I went to Scott City Business College in Hutchinson, KS. While I was there I worked at a service station and bowling alley and drove a delivery truck. I also took a correspondence course on airline training and went to Kansas City for six weeks in the summer of 1955 to finish the airline training at a hands-on-school. I was hired directly from the school by Western Airlines in Los Angeles, CA. and they flew me out there to start my job as an airline agent in the fall of 1955. I lived and worked in L.A. for one and a half years and transferred to Denver, CO. Don Peter and I lived in Gip and Betty Wilson's basement for a while until we got an apartment in Denver. I stayed with Western Airlines until the fall of 1957.

In the fall of 1957 I moved back to Goodland, KS. Dad had decided to retire from farming and so I rented the Barnard ground. At the same time, I decided to go to college at Kansas State University in the winter time since the land I was farming was dry land and didn't require much work during the winter months. Dad had agreed to work for me, so he took care of things when I wasn't around. He had told me when I took over the farming that he always wanted a tractor out there that he could get on to drive whenever he wanted to. I studied pre-law in college and attended K-State from 1957 to 1960. I played freshman football, but later decided to pursue more interesting activities. In the summer when I wasn't farming I worked for a construction company, drove semi-trucks and ran a furniture store. In the summer of 1959 I got married. Six months later that marriage was over.

It seemed like we always had a town team basketball, softball and baseball team to play on.

During this time, I owned at one time or another, the following vehicles: 1947 4-door Chevrolet; 1932 Model B Ford Sedan; 1948 Studebaker Commander;

1942 Buick Convertible; 1949 Mercury; 1952 Mercury Convertible; 1949 Ford Coupe; 1931 Model A Coupe with rumble seat; 1958 Ford Crown Victoria; 1954 MGB Roadster; 1960 2-door hard top Buick, and a 1960 Mercury Cruiser 16 foot boat. I would like to have them all today, but I remember when I asked my mom why she didn't keep the cast iron cook stove, the pot belly heating stove, the coal oil lamps, the wash boards, the chamber pots, the butter churns, all the things we want now, she said she guessed they wanted newer and more modern stuff.

In the summer of 1961, one of the many times I spent at the lake, I met Shirley and have been enjoying that wonderful encounter for the past 40 years. More about that is contained in the following pages.

History of Ralph Glenn and Shirley Kay Wilson

Shirley was 23 years old when she was introduced to Ralph at the Bonny Dam, north of Burlington, Colorado. We were attracted to each other immediately. (Shirley tells the story). Ralph was 25 years old and had his own boat and asked if I would like to go for a ride. I was afraid of water and had never been on a boat before, but I knew I wanted to go and sit beside him. I said, "You will be careful, won't you?" Ralph said "Sure". Before I knew it, he had the boat spinning around with the nose of the boat up!!!! Scared me for sure. He was so handsome. Ralph says "Shirley was with my nephew, Don Peter, but when I saw her, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven!!!

I was working at the hanger in Kanorado, Kansas at that time, keeping books for the Wayne Winter Flying Service. He sprayed crops for farmers and one day he took me for a ride in his plane, a trainee plane with the dual steering wheels. I took the wheel for a short while but not for long.

Ralph was working at Neil's Furniture in Goodland and farming land he had rented from his Aunt Ora Barnard in 1957. It was all dryland (Approx. 1280 acres) that was summer fallowed and planted to wheat. Also during that time, he worked for Dick Morton in construction and attended college at K-State in Manhattan, Kansas from 1957 to 1960.

After a few months Shirley went to work at the Goodland Savings and Loan in Goodland when Don Soden was president and Nell (his wife) Soden was Vice President. Shirley was still living in Kanorado in a trailer house and Ralph was living in an apartment above one of the stores on Main Street in Goodland.

I went to the furniture store on my coffee break for some reason and what do you know, Ralph asked me out on a date. I accomplished my first step. Ha...We went to the Lake quite a few times and he taught me to float in the lake with two life jackets on and then I learned how to ski. Most of our dates were skiing with friends, playing tennis in Kanorado and going out to the farm where Ralph was working and visiting friends and his parents and my parents.

We were married July 21, 1962 at Shirley's parents' home in Kanorado. A small wedding with family present. Our friends, Dwight and Edie Look stood up with us. After the reception we all went to Las Vegas for our honeymoon. We stood up with Dwight and Edie that morning. They were married in Goodland by the Justice of the Peace. We all had a great honeymoon in Las Vegas.

We bought a house at 304 Broadway in Goodland and I continued to work at the

Goodland Savings and Loan until I found out that I was pregnant and was so excited about it that I quit my job when I was about two or three months along.

Our first born, Stony Ray, was born September 1, 1963. I was active throughout my pregnancy and Doctor Beethe brought him into this world in Burlington at the Kit Carson Memorial Hospital. He weighed five pounds and nine ounces. We were so happy and blessed to have our baby boy.

We got us a basset hound and named him Sarg. I was almost ready to have our second baby when Stony followed Sarg down the street from our house and I was so worried, trying to find him, when my neighbor, a block away, had found him and was on her way up the street with him. I was huge with my pregnancy, but still carried him home, crying with relief.

Our second child came into the world, July 18, 1965. A beautiful baby girl and we named her Joni Kay. She was brought into the world by Doctor Beethe at the Kit Carson Memorial Hospital in Burlington. It just happened that she came feet first and one of her arms got pinned behind her and consequently her arm was broken in the birth process, but it mended quickly on its own with just a little gauze sling to hold her arm in place for a few weeks.

Before Joni was born, Stony was 17 months old. My parents, Walker and Letha Sivey, want us to come out to their farm (where I grew up) to help Walker work on their irrigation well. We (Ralph, Shirely and Stony) spent the day at the farm and the next morning we got a call that my dad, Walker, had passed away at their home in Kanorado. Walker had been having heart problems for at least a year before he passed away.

We decided to build a house 10 miles northeast of Goodland around 1966. It was a nice brick home. We bought 10 acres from our landlords, who originally was owned by Nellie Wilson's brother, Hugh Barnard and after his passing, it belonged to his wife, Ora Bea Barnard. Ralph was farming all of their ground, by renting from them. Ralph's dad, Roy E. Wilson, farmed all this ground before Ralph took it over. Barnards never farmed the ground they owned. They lived in Wichita. Ralph put down two more irrigation wells on the Barnard land about nine miles north of Ruleton. These were sprinklers. The home we built was about 1000 Sq. Ft. on the main floor with a full basement which was to be finished in time. Beautiful fireplace downstairs and upstairs. We planted the lawn, trees, built a white fence around the back yard. Had it fixed up nice. 320 acres of farm ground was on the west, north and east of our home that we farmed on rented ground.

This home, 10 miles northeast of Goodland is where we lived when our third child decided he was ready to come into the world. We drove to Burlington and our son, Cody Kip, was born in the Kit Carson County Hospital. He was delivered by Doctor Orr, a partner of Doctor Beethe's. Cody Kip was born January 13, 1968. We were so happy and fortunate to have three healthy children. We always went to Doctor Beethe because he had been our family doctor when I was younger and lived in Kanorado. We knew he was a good doctor.

While living in the country, Ralph and Bill Cole started up a fertilizer business. The plant was located directly east of Goodland. They named their company "Green Acres Fertilizer Co.". Ralph also started selling seed corn around this time. I worked at the Sugar Beet Factory as a traffic Director while the harvest was going on and I worked at the Schneider's Clothing Store for a few months one winter.

Around this same time, our recreation consisted of Ralph's Town Team Basketball, Shirley's Sorority, bowling and all the events the sorority planned for them and their spouses, dances and etc. And of course, going to the lake in the summer on the weekends if we didn't need to be farming.

Ralph rented 480 acres from E.F. Ochsner for about three years. That land was located about three miles north and four miles west of Goodland.

While we were living in the country, we moved an old one room school house out to our place and had dances on a good oak floor. Before our home was built, we had an irrigation well dug $\frac{1}{4}$ mile north of where we built our home. The fun of laying out pipe began so we could water the corn.

I drove truck with Cody tied in a car seat with a dish towel. He loved to be on the go, whether by truck, combine or tractor. Stony and Joni were in school. Stony was in the second grade and Joni was in kindergarten. If I was in the house and Cody got fuss, I would take him out to the field to Ralph and he would ride on the combine or tractor and be happy.

I took Joni to tap dancing classes in St. Francis about once a week for about a summer or winter and then there was a recital and of course dressed up in their pretty costumes. She did very well, but I realized in time that she really wasn't enjoying it that much, so we didn't do that the next year. She sure was cute doing her dance.

Ralph started coaching baseball when Stony was seven years old, which later you will see continued for many years.

The kids all helped in the field as soon as they were big enough to change water. They were with us in the field when they were babies, even if they weren't old enough to help yet.

About 1970 Ralph decided to buy a fertilizer plant in Caruso by the Sugar Beet Factory and named it "Central Fertilizer". He then leased ground from the railroad and built the Central Fertilizer Plant in Ruleton.

Ralph and Shirley decided to see their home in the country and they moved into a 15 by 60 ft. trailer house in Kanorado. Stony went to school in the 3rd grade and Joni went to the 1st grade. We lived there a year. We then bought the home in Ruleton, which was the original post office and general store in Ruleton at one time. This house only had tar paper on the outside of the building. No lawn, no garage, no pool area, no porch. Only a few ragged looking Chinese Elm trees and an old chicken house. We built the rest, including the room added off the kitchen. Sometime after we moved to Ruleton and put sod down for lawn, we had a house warming party - adults - for 100 people. It was a good time. Later we added on the swimming pool and hot tub and many of our friends and our kids friends spent many hours and good time at our home.

The land northeast of Goodland was Barnards Land. The land, three miles south and one mile west, belonged to a Mr. Chandler, a banker, from Pratt, Kansas. Ralph rented that land and put down irrigation well and put a sprinkler on it.

Ralph bought 160 acres from John Petracich and rented from him 160 acres. There were two irrigation wells on these acres. This land was located eight miles south and two miles west of Ruleton.

Ralph bought 320 acres from Bill and Larry Tagtmeyer. There were two irrigation's well and sprinklers on this land. He bought the house that Bill owned with the land. Ralph rented 160 acres from Larry with one irrigation well with sprinkler and he rented 800 acres from Maxine Tagtmeyer which had two irrigation wells (pipe irrigation) and some dryland and pasture.

We bought Bill Tagymeyer's place and we bought his cow herd also. Then Ralph found out about some cows up in the mountains that were starving because of a drought. He made arrangements to have them purchased for us and trucked down so we could feed them out down here in western Kansas. The

cows came from Delta, Colorado. We fed them out on corn stocks, wheat and feed. The kids helped catch the calves to be branded, cut and vaccinated. We had that herd from about three years.

Ralph bought 360 acres from the 1st National Bank with irrigation well and two sprinklers located across the road west of where our country home was located.

All irrigated crops were corn and pinto beans and dryland was wheat, milo, alfalfa, and sunflowers.

Throughout some of these years, Shirley worked at Central Fertilizer, keeping books and started her own Action Photography business. Other jobs she took on were working at Kloe Radio Station (typing advertisements to be announced on the radio. These advertisements had to be a certain amount of minutes long). Drove truck for Carl Duell, hauling sugar beets to the factory from his field, went to work at the Anchor Savings and Loan in Goodland and Frank Blain was the president at that time. I made costumes for Joni's twirling baton routine and Stony and Joni's musicals in school and once in a while made my own dresses for dances and parties.

Ralph and I were quite involved in the kids sports and activities such as baseball (boys), softball (girls), volleyball, football, basketball, wrestling, musicals, 4-H meetings and all the projects that went with it, like fair projects, including showing steers, sheep and horses competing in the rodeo. Other projects were photography, cooking creating floats to be made for the fair parade.

Other activities were cattle drives with the John Boyingtons and events where the kids did barrel racing, heading and heeling and calf roping.

We were busy though out life. All of us working to make a living. We were farming 3360 acres at one time with 12 irrigation wells. We finally leased out Central Fertilizer, we think, around 1978 and the time came to sell Central Fertilizer in 1988.

In later years, around 1980, Shirley drove the tractor and grain cart to catch the loads on the go while Ralph drove the combine in corn harvest. We had help to drive the trucks. We harvested our own wheat sometimes and other times hired harvesters from Texas. Ralph was a good manager and later you will see. Ralph was envied by many people.

Shirley worked with the kids in 4-H, as 4-H leader in recreation. We practiced

in our home in Ruleton, getting our music numbers and skits ready. They always were in costume for these events.

Ralph held a Central Fertilizer Supper at the Elks for all the farmers that were doing business with him. Shirley arranged the entertainment. One number was "The Great American Farmer" music in the background while Ralph told the story. There were tears in the farmer's eyes. Cody and Ralph did the song, "Daddy What If?" and Stony played guitar and Joni and Roxanne Henderson also sang the performed in the show. It was well received by the farmers.

Some of our vacations with the kids were several trips to Broomfield, Colorado to visit Gip, Betty and family. Several trips to visit Mary Ellen, Ray Foote and family in Salida, Colorado and later in Woodland Park, Colorado, then later in LeMoore, California and Nashville, Tennessee, Hawaii, Table Rock, Missouri for water skiing, North Pole in Colorado and Disneyworld, Florida.

Ralph and I made several trips to Las Vegas with friends, two trips to Hawaii with friends. Ralph and I went to Nashville, so Shirley could do her recording and they went by car to Corpus Christi, Texas. Just for a getaway trip one time. The kids got to stay with family or friends during these times.

NOTE: If you want to leave something behind, plant a tree. SKW

Ralph's Notes

In 1990 we moved to Manhattan for two years and while we were there, we both took computer classes and received our completion certificates. Shirley took a paralegal course and received her diploma. We moved to Porterville, California for two years. We returned to our home in Ruleton - the same home we had lived in prior to going to Manhattan which we had purchased in 1972.

Our son, Stony and his wife, Karen, live near Goodland and when the band "Exit17" is performing out of town, we sit with their babies, (Cocker Spaniels), Niki and Ginger. They are busy with music lessons, recording studio, band and cleaning service and also work at the Comfort Inn sometimes.

Our daughter, Joni Wilson (took back her maiden name), and her two boys, Brock and Zachary, live outside of Goodland. Joni is the manager of the Comfort Inn Motel in Goodland and keeps up with all of the boys activities of a 4th grader and a 8th grader. To name a few of their sports: football, baseball, wrestling, soccer, basketball, motorcycles, school programs, etc. etc.

Our son, Cody and Gerri and daughter Rashaun live in Brewster, Kansas. He is the assistant manager of Walmart in Colby and Gerri is a teacher at Colby Cody plays the drums in the band "Exit 17", and occasionally gets to get in some flying. Rashaun in the 6th grade in Colby and is involved in basketball, bowling, dance recital's bank, along with all of the other school programs and activities.

We still work at the Comfort Inn in Goodland, but not as much as we did the first three years. Ralph plays golf when the weather permits and builds golf clubs as a hobby. Shirley is front desk supervisor at the Comfort Inn and works on genealogy and history booklets and picture albums to be handed down one day. We both enjoy both reading and dancing.

We are very fortunate to have our kids and grandkids close to us so we can share in their lives and activities and have our family get together. Who knows what the future will be, but it has been a great trip to this point.