

Kay Frances Wakley

Reflections

March 10, 1993

Ecclesiastes 7:1

A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth.

For several months now, words and thoughts and memories have been going around and around in my mind and it came to me one night that maybe something worthwhile would be gained from writing them down. In the event that nothing worthwhile comes from this, maybe it will serve as a testimony of my life. Maybe years from now someone will read these words and gain some sense of the continuity of life and people and all that God does and is for us.

God was good to me even in the beginning of life as He gave me loving, kind and devoted parents. Clyde and Bertha Wakley were family centered – they were never social minded people and stayed pretty much to themselves. Guess that's where my being a loner started. To get into the family genealogy is not my intensions in this writing.

My life with Mom and Dad began August 3rd, 1939 in Lincoln County, Oklahoma; Chandler to be exact. Chandler was to be my home (in and around Chandler) for the next 17 or so years. I believe Mom said the doctor's name was Robinson, who delivered me. At the time, Mom and Dad lived in the Oak Grove Community where they had been born and raised. They lived across the creek from Daddy's parents David and Bertha Wakley. Yes, my Grandmother and Mom had the same name as in years ahead I and my daughter-in-law would have the same name.

Forever the "house across the creek" was my Mom and Dad's term for my birth place. When they were first married, they lived with Daddy's family. The Wakley family all were as I described Mom and Dad. The term today would be clannish, but to me it was family in the best since of the word - Sundays at Grandma and Grandad Wakley's with Aunts, Uncles, and Cousins. The same food every Sunday (we never got tired of it either!), beans, fried potatoes (mashed sometimes), shell macaroni with tomatoes (my favorite) and fried chicken that Grandma Wakley killed, cleaned and cooked herself.

I have no recollection of the house across the creek at all, and I'm not sure how long we were there. I think until I was at least 4. The only tale that Mom ever told me was during my "Potty training" era. She said I was too busy playing outside and wouldn't take time to do the job properly so when I wet my panties I would take them off and hang them on the fence to dry.

All of my life a terrible fear of water has kept me from enjoying a seemingly fun time of swimming, boating and etc. I've wondered if something happened during the time we lived close to the creek that instilled that fear. I'll never know because no one else seems to know or remember.

My memories of early preschool years are few and months apart at times. I do remember my Aunts Mabel and Hazel on those Sundays at Grandma's fixing my hair and putting make-up on me. They were not married yet and still lived at home. I think Mabel may have been working in town. They would "doll" me all up for everyone to ooh and ah over.

I guess the next memory I have is the terrible tornado in Oklahoma City. All we got was a horrible wind and rain storm. Mom and I had been to Grandma Wakley's and started home. Mom parked under a big tree to shield us from the rain (God didn't let the tree come down on us). I believe it was a Model A that Mom drove. (There were only two makes of cars: Model T and Model A) Daddy came walking and looking for us after the storm; by this time we had moved 2 miles east and back north of Grandma and Grandad's. When Daddy found us after the storm, we all went back to Grandma's. And somehow we got word that my Daddy's Grandmother's trailer had been hit by a tornado. She lived in her son's yard. His name was Uncle Paulus. They all lived in Oklahoma City (it's Del City at this time). The next Sunday, Daddy, Momma, Grandma Wakley and I all went to Uncle Paulus's. As far as I know, this was my first trip to anywhere. The year must have been 1945, maybe 1944. It's the only memory I have of seeing a Great Grandparent.

Two memories kind of run together next. It was winter 1945. We lived on what they called the old Palmer place. Mom, years later, worked in Hazel Palmer's Dress Shop in Chandler. As I said, we lived at (rented) the Palmer place and Daddy had bought 50 baby chickens. In order to keep them from freezing, he kept lanterns lit and somehow the chicken house caught on fire. I remember Faye and Clyde Smith were there. In fact, I think it was when they drove up that we discovered the fire. Everyone worked carrying buckets of water to put out the fire, but no baby chickens were saved.

The same winter, we were all going crazy with cabin fever. Snow was deep and so Daddy and Mom decided we'd try to make it to Mr. and Mrs. Allen's place about a mile uphill from us. Daddy got the old Model A out and we did good until just before the top of the hill and the wheels slid on the snow. We couldn't go up, or back. Daddy walked to Mr. Allen's and they got one of the horses and tied a rope to the poor horse's tail and pulled Mom and Me in the car up the hill. I cried all the way up – I just knew the horse's tail was going to be pulled out of the

socket!! We made it and the afternoon was spent eating popcorn and drinking hot cocoa. Mr. and Mrs. Allen were Ervin's parents, he married my Aunt Hazel.

Some of my memories are mixed up in the sequence, but I'm not writing to put years and dates in order, so it doesn't matter. Most of my memories are either with both Mom and Dad, or just Dad. Mom was a liberated woman before the term even existed and worked outside of the home. I was taken to my Aunt Faye's to stay during the day. But one memory of Mom before she started working in town was during cotton picking time. We lived on the Delphon place, so it had to have been before the Palmer place. Anyway, Mom and Dovie Delphon (she lived across the road from us) would pack lunches for the cotton fields. I have no idea of anything we ate, but oh how I remember the cold cocoa. Mom would make it early morning in a Mason fruit jar and wrap a wet gunny sack around it and sit it in the shade of a tree. That good ole Oklahoma wind would keep it cool until lunch time. It was still hot during cotton picking, so the cold wet drink was so good. I was too little to pick cotton, but I remember riding on my Daddy's cotton sack. That was love – the cotton got heavy enough I'm sure and then to let me ride on it. My Daddy made me feel as if I was his whole reason for being around and, oh how I loved being with him.

March 11, 1993

It has occurred to me that while remembering the beginnings of my life, I should include my life as it is today. That's how I feel. My life is all tied together and how I am and what I am and how I react is because of the beginning and the beginning of the end.

We all have to prepare for the end whenever it may occur. My preparation began when I was 10 years old and I ask Jesus to come into my heart and he saved me and gave to me eternal salvation - more to follow on that experience later. But I would say to any who may read these words, God's promise is real. Jesus is real. And Salvation can be real to you if you repent and accept Jesus.

Today was good - a quiet day. Milford and I worked on household records and tonight I ate with my friends from Lads and Lassies. All of my days with Mom and Dad were quiet and seemingly, at times, very uneventful. We moved several times, but I don't remember the moves themselves, just a few memories at each place.

While we lived at the Palmer place, Dad began to work in town (Chandler) at the produce store. Mr. Seaborn owned the store. Daddy had always farmed, but this was during World War II, I would guess, and for whatever reason – he quit the farm. I remember he brought Mom home a hamburger every night from town. She would have had to eaten it cold (no microwave). We

cooked with wood and kerosene. I think she had a craving for hamburgers and I think that in a few months we had an addition to the family!! - More on that later.

During the time at the Palmer place, I remember having the croup all the time from fall until spring. Glass-Co was the name of the croup medicine and if I think about it, even today, I can taste the nasty stuff. I had earaches a lot and Daddy would blow smoke from his cigarettes into my ears. Thinking about it, I'm sure it served no healing purpose, but I felt petted and pampered. Daddy was so gentle that way, always, not just to me; he treated my Mom even more gentle.

I slipped on a rock while at the Palmer place and for months I had to go to Doctor Smith (the chiropractor) for physical therapy. The doctor's office was up a long flight of stairs and poor Daddy had to carry me up and down. I was 5 by this time.

Writing all these memories down is making me realize there were a lot of incidents that happened to me while living on the Palmer place. One evening, while Mom and Dad were out doing chores, I decided the pencil I was drawing with needed sharpening. I had seen Mom and Dad sharpen pencils, so I got a razor blade and started sharpening. I cut my thumb to the bone, the whole length of the thumb. I still have the scar. Daddy put grease from the farm machinery on my thumb and wrapped it. It took months to heal and you talk about pain – not from the cut – but because I couldn't suck my favorite thumb! I was a thumb sucker until I was in 3rd grade. Anyway, I toughed it through with my other thumb until my favorite had healed. Mom tried all the thumb sucking breaking techniques (hot pepper, grease on both thumbs wrapped up, threats, prizes and etc.). Nothing worked until I got embarrassed about having to hide my head in my desk at school to suck my thumb – then I quit.

March 16, 1993

It's been a different weekend around here. We had blizzard conditions beginning Friday night and lasting until Saturday night – early Sunday morning. I went after Lianna and Richard (my grandchildren) Friday after school was out. They stay here while their Mom works at Raley's Grocery in Ridge, Maryland over the weekend.

No one went anywhere from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon. Federal Government gave a liberal leave policy Monday, so not too many went out yesterday. It's so cold nothing is melting. Milford did go to work today. He has a computer class today and tomorrow. Thursday, March 18th, Milford will be 55. It is so hard to believe that I can remember his 16th birthday. We saw each other in class at school, school parties and church. We had to let his brother, Earl, drive us if we went anywhere together because he didn't have a car.

Those were difficult days for both of us. Our family lifestyles were so different. Milford's family were farmers and having a hard time. I knew something was different, but I was too young and innocent to understand. My life had always been gentle – we seemingly had what we needed and a few things we just wanted and Milford seemed to be at war with someone or something all the time. His Dad was a very hard man – I've learned with age our circumstances make us what we become.

Nothing is too big or tough for Milford to handle in life. Me, I don't want to have to get into the difficulties of life. Who knows why we are put in the situations we find ourselves. I've learned – we usually put ourselves there because of wanting everything our way.

Milford is ready for retirement and that's been his goal for 35 years, to retire and return to Oklahoma. At this point, that goal to return to Oklahoma has been put on hold because of my illness. I feel guilty and at times want to tell him to go back without me. Going to Oklahoma has never been a desire for me. My family and friends are here and I know in my heart nothing is ever as we dream it and so I'm leaving it in God's hands.

Leaving it all with God takes a lot of work and faith on my part. I like to be in control, so God usually lets me get myself in a real mess. I used to blame Him when life became a mess. A lot of my life has been spent in real anger at God because of the messes of life. He is a loving, wise and patient God and has led me to books, articles, His Word, and has taught me – He wants only the best and if I'll do His will – my life will be blessed. I've asked God's forgiveness for those times I was angry and blamed Him, and He has forgiven me. Sometimes it's hard for me to forget, forgive myself and go on, but again, by reading His Word, the Bible, I can be renewed and filled by His Spirit and know it's going to be alright.

The one thing I lacked in my preschool years was training in God and His goodness. My parents, to my knowledge, only took me to church one time before I was 8 years old. It was to a non-denominational Sunday School and preaching at the Oak Grove Schoolhouse. My Sunday School class met behind the stage curtains. I don't remember anything except some singing. We went that one time and I did not go to Sunday School or church again until, as I said, I was about 8. I must have been 4 ½ at Oak Grove.

My people were good, honest people and it was hard to get them to believe we are all sinners and Jesus died on the cross for our sins and that we might have everlasting life because of Jesus' sacrifice, if we believe. God blessed me with a husband whose mother had taught him from the beginning and he has been the head of the house in the since the Bible speaks of. Our children never knew a time when Christ was not a part of their home life and teaching. I know in my heart our home would never have survived without Jesus because of the difference in mine and Milford's backgrounds. I'm getting ahead of my memories, so more on my salvation experience later.

While Mom and Dad were busy working in town early '44-'45, I was left with my Aunt Faye (Daddy's sister). I don't remember where we lived, but it was in the Oak Grove Community. I think Faye and Clyde lived on the Lillibridge place. Anyway, to me, Faye was my second Mom and her daughter, Norma Jean, was my sister. Norma Jean died several years ago and I still miss her terribly. Faye had a younger daughter, Betty. Betty was about 3 years younger than Norma and I. Faye couldn't or didn't have a car to drive during this time, so if we went anywhere during the day, we took the tractor. Faye drove with Betty on her lap. Norma Jean and I'd sit on the back behind the seat. It was a very bumpy ride because of the tractor's big wheels and the unpaved rocky roads. Faye decided to go to Grandma Wakley's one morning, so we were all in our places on the tractor going down the road and Norma bounce off! She landed sitting down in the middle of the road. We both were too scared to say or do anything. I sat on the tractor crying (Faye unaware she was leaving Norma Jean behind). Norma was sitting in the middle of the road crying. To this day I can still see her sitting there. Faye finally looked back behind her – Norma was a good block back. She backed back and Norma got on again, and we continued to Grandma's (both of us still crying). In later years, we would remember the incident and get to laughing so hard we'd wind up crying. I don't remember ever taking another tractor trip.

They say that when Betty was born, it was during World War II and gas and tires were rationed. Daddy had the Model A (or T?) and Clyde had one. But they had to take tires off one car in order to have gas and tires to take Faye to the doctor for Betty's birth.

During one of my stays with Clyde and Faye, we were going to town. Clyde was driving the car this time. I'm not sure what happened but we wound up in a big ditch with a can full of cream on top of Norma Jean and I. We were taking the cream can to town to sell the cream at Seaborn's Produce where my Daddy worked.

Seaborn's Produce was a farmer's business. They bought the farmer's goods (cream, eggs, pecans, hay, etc.) and in turn the farmers bought feed for their animals. Sometimes, it was just a trade off. Daddy worked there for years even after Mr. Seaborn sold it to Clyde Beatty and Vernon Myers. In fact, Daddy worked there until about 1958, I believe.

About the time of the cream can incident, Mom quit work and moved (Daddy and I too) to the Horner place. Remember the hamburger ever night at Palmer's? At the Horner place, my sister Clydena joined the family. I was tickled to death to have a sister. I would have settled for a brother. I just wanted someone else in the family. Daddy and I had Jimmy or Johnny picked out for a name, but we got a pretty little girl and I was very satisfied (didn't care for washing diapers though). Momma and Daddy named her Freida (for Frederick) Clydena (for Clyde), and we called her Clydena. The Beattys had a daughter named Clydena too.

Thinking back to Clydena's birth, I've always wondered (since I've been old enough to know about how babies get here) how she was conceived. By this time, I was 6 years old, in the

first grade, and we had never had but one bed, so I always slept with Mom and Dad. I must have been a very heavy sleeper and got carried to the couch. Those are questions you don't ask your parents in my generation. The kids now would have no problem asking their parents.

The Horner place was outside the Oak Grove Community and the farthest from family we had lived. Probably 10 - 15 miles. I started in the first grade while living there. We were about 2 miles from school and I had to walk (no school buses back then). It was closer to cut through the pasture than walk around the road, but I had a problem – there was a BIG bull in the pasture. I had to sneak by him every morning and every afternoon. One day, he turned his head and saw me. I ran with Mom yelling (she always stood and watched until I got through the pasture) for me to run faster. I got through the fence and I may have had to use it to hang my panties on again!!!

The neighbor boys, J.L. and Billy Horner, decided they could solve the bull problem for me. I could ride on their horse behind one of them. I decided I'd take the bull for a while longer. But, one day, as we were leaving school, it came one of those Oklahoma spring storms and it was raining in sheets. J.L. was probably in 7th or 8th grade. I was not going to get on a horse. I would walk the 2 miles in the pouring rain and wind. J.L. was bigger – he threw me up in the saddle, got on behind me and we went flying home. I rode with him from then until we moved and he was my hero!

I remember getting into trouble one time, during first grade. There was a stream across the road with a tree trunk across it. Our teacher (I don't remember her name) told us to stay in the school yard and not to walk the tree trunk. My friend and I did, and we fell in the water. We had to sit by the wood stove and dry out for the rest of the day and for punishment, we had to stay in at recess for the rest of the week.

I remember the Christmas program and my part. I said this verse by myself. "I'm too young to speak a piece. Anyway, I wouldn't know what to say. But I wish for each of you a very Merry Christmas Day." Mom said Daddy was so proud while I was saying my piece, but he was so nervous he was sweating like it was summer.

Christmas was a special time with a doll, candy, fruit under the tree. But until I was 8 years old, I never knew it was the birth of Jesus.

April 24, 1993

It's been a long month since I wrote last. Not too pleasant a month. I got the results from my tests (sonogram, etc.), and the chemo is not working. So, I'm on a new program. This is the 3rd change of chemo since last June. Sometimes, I get almost desperate thinking about what is

happening to my body, and then Jesus reminds me that it'll be alright. His presence calms me, God's words strengthen me and all is well with my soul.

All the above is a miracle to me! For 43 years, Jesus has been my personal Savior, and through the joys and trials of life, He has given me the will to go on when I didn't really want to.

It was in May of '49, during Vacation Bible School at the First Baptist Church of Chandler, Oklahoma that I heard about God loving me so much, He sent His only begotten Son Jesus to die on the cross for my sins. (John 3:16) As a 10 year old, I didn't comprehend totally all that meant, but something was pulling at my heart (the Holy Spirit) and I thought it was going to come clean through my skin. I walked the isle of the church and made it public that I wanted Jesus as my Savior. The pounding and pulling of my heart stopped and Jesus came in with joy. That Sunday night I was baptized. God lit up my heart and eyes to the extent I didn't feel like electric lights were on. It was as if it was the brightest sun-shiny Oklahoma morning ever! It was the light of Jesus!!

I wish I could say that the rest of my days were that bright, but I was not always willing to let Jesus guide my way with His light, and I would stumble and fall and call to Jesus and He never ever failed to pick me up, put His arms around me and I would cry out for God to forgive me and help me to be a better person. He was always faithful and my growing up years were all the better because Jesus walked with me and even though I found myself alone much of the time, because Mom and Dad worked and I was staying by myself after school and on weekends, I was never afraid, never alone. His presence was so powerful to me. It was a good beginning in my Christian walk and God knew this because it has made me all the stronger for adult crisis.

So... the month has been long, the days have been filled with nausea and etc. But, I committed anew my body, mind and soul to God when this illness came on me last May, and I will continue to trust in Him. My prayer is that my mind will continue to function properly (there are those who will argue that it ever functioned properly or otherwise). My mind brings to memory Bible verses, verses of Song and etc., those times when I'm facing difficult medical tests and I know without a doubt... I am not alone!

It's against the law today for parents to leave children, under the age of 13, home alone. And it's a good law. The time I was growing up was so innocent compared to now. Sometimes I feel like it was another planet I lived on back there. I don't think I liked my life then. I felt put upon and I would get angry with Mom for working and not being home. Cooking meals and etc. is not what a 10 year old wants to do. I've spent a lot of wasted time fretting over missing fun or what I thought was missing because of the responsibilities I had when I was still home with Mom and Dad.

Saturdays, I certainly enjoyed!! From 1 PM until 6 PM was spent at the old H&S Theatre watching Johnny Mack Brown, Jimmy Wakely, Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, and Tarzan. I could go on and on. Movies were 10¢, cokes 5¢, popcorn 5¢. We spent the whole afternoon on 25¢. I

went to Wackers (5 and Dime) with the nickel left from the movies. Daddy would come on his lunch break on Saturdays and pick me up, drop me at the movies and I would walk to the produce store in time to go home with him. Sometimes Clyde Beatty would take us all out to eat on Saturday night. Sometimes we'd just sit on Main Street and visit with family and friends. Maybe have an ice cream cone - 5¢ or 10¢ depending on 1 or 2 dips.

Clydena would have been about 4 at this time. She stayed with our Aunt Fady Wakley, who was married to Daddy's brother Hank. I stayed there during the summer and had a good time with my cousins, Patsy and Sue. They had a neighbor, Jean Myers, and we were all very close. During High School, Jean, Sue and Milford, worked at H&S Theatre. After Milford went into the Navy, I worked there, even for a while after we were married and Milford was in Guam.

May 4, 1993

I went for blood count yesterday and they tell me the count is fine. I sure feel tired and listless. I remember back in 1980 – 1981 how tired the chemo made me. A person thinks real hard before getting up and walking across the room - if it's really not necessary, you don't – takes too much energy.

I stopped by Lads and Lassies Daycare after the test and visited with everyone. The children I had last year all came running to greet me. I miss everyone over there. It was a good place to work – with its home atmosphere. The children were content and happy, and I felt if I had to work outside my home, at least I was helping those little ones be away from their parents. Again, I know it is a throwback to my raising.

I thank God for having a husband who provided for me to stay home while our children were young. I worked for a while when he was in college and Melita was 3 or 4. She stayed with her Grannie Caudle. That's a story in itself. Milford and I moved from Shawnee, Oklahoma to Midwest City so he could transfer to college in Edmond. We lived with his parents until we found this little place to buy that required no down payment. We had sit down and figured up all of his college fees, car payment, house payment and food; and we had just enough to get by on his paycheck. That is until we got the first electric bill. We had forgotten to include utilities in our expenses, so I went to work as cashier and assistant manager at the Skytrain Theatre in Midwest City.

I worked at the Skytrain for about 2 years. I quit a few weeks before JR was born. Milford graduated from college and we moved to Altus, Oklahoma where he began his Civil Service career, which will end in retirement this coming July 3rd, 1993 - God willing.

Getting back to my staying home with the children – I worked for a while (January – June 1970) in Altus. JR was born in June 1964. Fred was born in Jan 1966. Those two became so attached to me, I could not even go to the bathroom without them crying. So, I went to work to wean them away a bit. It worked. But it was hard on all of us, especially Melita. The two boys always had each other, as they were so close in age. Melita was always on her own because she was 5 years older than JR.

June 20, 1993

The time between writings is getting further apart. My body is getting more tired. I go next Tuesday for a rerun of tests (3 months since the last tests). I am going to prayerfully consider getting off chemo if the tests are still not good. It's been a year with life on hold and I don't want to continue in this mode, but I am trying very hard to listen for God's leading, so I will wait for the tests.

I had been home from the hospital a little while last year, when I had what I call "My Vision". I was reading the daily devotion and Bible (2 Kings Chapter 20) and it was about when God told Hezekiah when he got sick, God would give him 15 more years of life. While I was reading, the words 15 more years of life kept lifting up off the paper in big bold black words and coming to meet my face. Everything else in the room blacked out. After the words went back in place on the page, I sat on my bed stunned. After a few seconds, I said, "God, are you telling me I have 15 more years to live?" To be honest, I felt God's presence and this feeling of peace came over me, but He did not answer me. I take the peace as His answer.

I've shared the "Vision" with family and somehow they (Milford especially) felt it was 15 years from my first experience with cancer. God has never let me know, except for the peace – and I will live until he calls me home!!!

What I'm getting to is... why continue on with chemo and staying in this miserable shape if it's not showing any results. God may be telling me He's not going to use chemo this time for healing. So, for the next few days, I will be reading my Bible and praying for guidance and have calm assurance His Will Be Done!

Kay Frances Wakley

Reflections