

# FROM FARMLAND TO THAILAND:



**WHAT A RIDE!**

**My Life Story**

**By: Samuel J. Burris**

## From The Author

While scanning the web recently I viewed a write-up by a friend of mine which interested me. My friend's short article on the highlights of his life gave me the idea of doing my own life story. I have lots of thing stored in my memory bank as you will see. Enjoy!

Samuel Johnson Burris

August 14, 2017

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- **Early Life 1943 -1953**  
**Pilger, Nebraska**

Samuel Johnson Burris was born in the Lutheran Hospital, Norfolk, Nebraska, on August 14, 1943. His parents were Samuel Clifton "Cliff" and Elsa Emma (Nee Dohren) Burris. At the time of his birth, Sam's parents were renting 160 acres of land from Mr. Pete Topp from Pilger. Mr. Topp was a long time resident of the Pilger community and had come to the U.S. from his home country of Germany. The farm was five miles northwest of the small town of Pilger in Stanton County, Nebraska.

<http://casde.unl.edu/history/counties/stanton/pilger/>

Sam came into the world smack in the middle of World War II and, though he was the first born, he was to have two other brothers: Ronald Clifton born in 1945 and William George born in 1954. Sam's mother Elsa Dohren Burris was the daughter of John and Emma Kirk Dohren who lived on a farm north of Pilger, in northeast Nebraska.

### **Family History: The Dohren Family (mother's side)**

As to family history on his mother Elsa's side, John Dohren's father, Nickolas, with his nephew Otto Dohren in tow, immigrated to the United States from Holstein, Germany, making passage by stowing away on a grain ship. After entering the country through New York City in 1869, the three first moved west to Illinois. Nickolas was working in the city of Chicago as a mason during the Great Fire from [October 8](#) to early Tuesday of [October 10, 1871](#). The fire killed hundreds and destroyed about four square miles of [the city](#). During his years in the Chicago area, Nicolas met and married Sophie Marie Bowman. The wedding took place in Yellow Head, Illinois on February 11, 1880. Sophie was from Bible Grove, Illinois which is now part of the city of Chicago. After the fire, Nicolas and Sophie decided to move west to Nebraska, purchasing land and living in Millard just south of Omaha. After a few years, Nicolas sold the land and moved a hundred or so miles northwest of Omaha where he purchased land about four and one half miles north of Pilger. He raised corn, oats and alfalfa and also built a house, cellar, barn, garage and corn crib which was used to store corn after picking. Sam's father Cliff told him that at one time, a person could stand on the hill above Grandpa Nickolas Dohren's farm and all the land one could see had been owned by Great Grandpa. According to Cliff, much of his property was lost in a land fraud scheme having to do with Nickolas selling his land in order to relocate to a site in the state of Michigan. It turned out the sale of the Michigan land was fraudulent. After his money was lost, Nickolas had to sell some of his land to provide for his family. Nickolas and Sophie had six children. They were: John, Lizzie, Henry, William, Mary Ellen and Emma.

It is said that Grandpa Nickolas in his old age had suffered from Alzheimer's and that the family confined him to one of the rooms in the house much of the time for his own safety.



**Nickolas Dohren**

When Sam was a child, the Frank Glover family occupied the home place where Nickolas and Sophia lived. The Glovers were members of the Dohren family through Ellen Gemelke Glover, wife of Frank.

Sam recalls playing at the farm as a child. In the summer of 1954 a tornado hit the farm and caused considerable damage. According to Cousin David Tobias, the Glover family saw the tornado heading towards their farm from the direction of Pilger. All of them made it safely to the cellar and no one was injured. Verlan, one of the sons, was the last one to close the door and he spoke of seeing the twister coming down the field toward them as he closed the cave door.

As a Kid Sam recalls that, when it hit, the farm house had been lifted up by the winds and set back down on the lawn which was slightly sloped. When Sam walked in the living room, it felt like a phenomenon of not being able to keep his balance! Sam also remembers that the cows had been in their stanchions and that the tornado blew the barn away but the cows were still standing as if waiting to be milked. Later all the kids, including Sam and Ron, walked out into the various fields to pick up handkerchiefs, oil cans and all sorts of personal belongings of the Glover family. Just two months before, Frank Glover had tragically committed suicide by gassing himself in the garage on the farm. It was said that part of it was due to financial worries he faced. Cousin David Tobias stated that Frank Glover bought his son Verlan a brand new car just two days before he gassed himself.

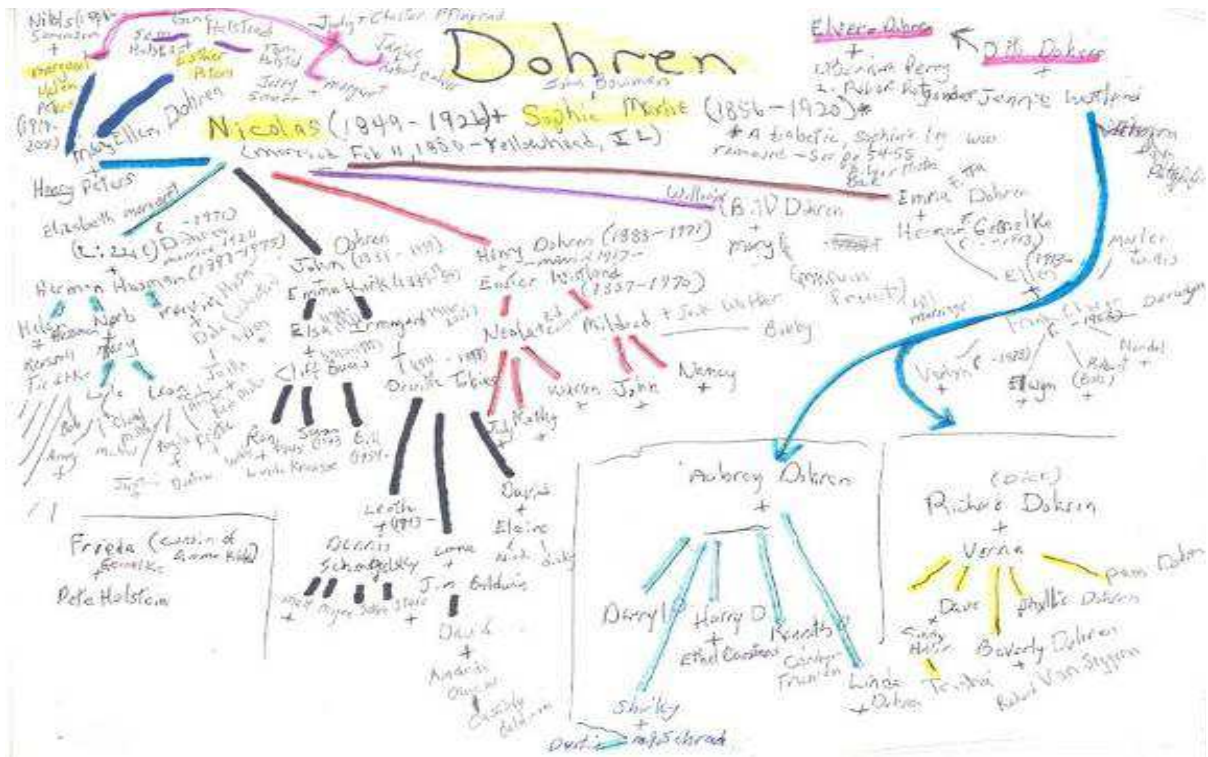


**Sophia Bohlmann Dohren**

A tragic story to tell, about Sophia, Sam's great grandmother happened during the last year or two of her life when the family was living on their farm north of Pilger. It seems that in her later years, Sophia had diabetes. The disease was in such a state that Doctor John Reid, the local physician from Pilger was called. Doctor Reid came out to the farm and decided that Sophia's leg had to be removed to save her life. The story is that Doctor Reid was said to have had Sophia lay on the kitchen table in order to perform the amputation.

*Historical we know the doctors at that time used to be called "Saw Bones".\*1*

# Dohren Family Tree



## The Kirk Family

### 1911 – Sailing on the Nector

Not a great deal is known about Emma's Kirk Dohren's family, other than the names of the parents. Emma's father's name was Feuerwehr Johann Meinrich Fredrich Christian Kirk who died in Germany at the age of 43. Her mother's name was Anna Dorothee Karoline Kirk (nee Gossman). Sam's mother often told him that his great grandmother Kirk was a cook for Kaiser Wilhelm, Emperor of Germany and the country's leader during World War I but the family hasn't been able to confirm that.

There were millions of immigrants that came to the United States through Ellis Island, New York and Sam's grandmother Emma Kirk was one of them. About 100 million Americans - 40 percent of the population - can trace their ancestors to the port of Ellis Island which is located near the Statue of Liberty.

Sam found out that his grandma, Emma Kirk, from Hanover, Germany boarded a ship called the Neckar at Bremen, a well known departure city for German immigrants. She arrived in New York on August 9, 1911, being 26 years old at the time.

**Copy below is from the ship's Manifest:**

First Name: *Emma*  
 Last Name: *Kirk*  
 Ethnicity: *Germany, German*  
 Last Place of Residence: *Hannover, Germany*  
 Date of Arrival: *Aug 09, 1911*  
 Age at Arrival: *26y* Gender: *F* Marital Status: *S*  
 Ship of Travel: *Neckar*  
 Port of Departure: *Bremen*  
 Manifest Line Number: *0030*

### The Neckar:

**Built by J.C. Tecklenborg, Geestemunde, Germany in 1901. 9,709 gross tons; 409 (bp) feet long; 58 feet wide. Steam quadruple expansion engines and twin screw. Service speed 14 knots. 750 passengers (200 first class, 550 third class). One funnel and four masts.**

**Built for North German Lloyd, German flag, in 1901 and named Neckar. Laid up 1914-17. Seized by US Government, in 1917 and renamed USS Antigone. Transferred to U.S. Mail Steamship Company, in 1921. Transferred to United States Lines, in 1921 and renamed Potomac. New York-Bremerhaven (1921-1922) service. Scrapped in Holland in 1928.**



### Neckar:

***The ship Sam's grandmother Emma Kirk sailed to America on in 1911.***

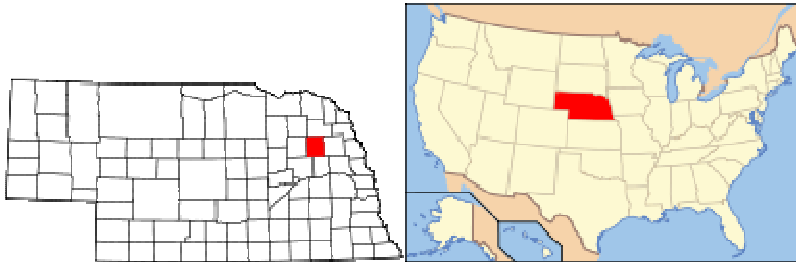
**Emma Kirk had two brothers who both fought for Germany in World War I. She also had a sister Annie who was to later immigrate to the United States after Emma. Annie would come into the country with her husband Gerhard Jacobsen through Philadelphia rather than New York.**



**Uncle Gerhard Jacobsen, later in life, he served as a state legislator in Wyoming (photo taken about 1958).**

Annie and Gerhard arrived on September 2, 1913; leaving Africa after Gerhard had contracted Malaria. Emma's sister Annie had gone to Tanganyika, Muhesa, Africa from Hanover, Germany where she was born and raised to work for her brother William or "Willy" who was running a plantation there. Most likely Annie worked as a bookkeeper/secretary. She was 23 years old at the time. Gerhard Jacobsen, age 22, was managing a plantation across the river. The two met and were married in that African country on November 12, 1912. Gerhard and Annie first lived on a farm located in Wayne County north of Pilger. Eventually they moved to Wyoming where they owned a ranch near Glendo. The couple had two girls, Ingaboy and Evelyn.

## **Stanton County, Nebraska, U. S. A.**



John Dohren, along with his brothers Henry and Bill inherited land from their father Nickolas. John received a 160 acre farm three miles north of Pilger from Nicolas and Sophia. John met Emma Kirk and the two were married, moving onto the farm place he inherited about three miles north of Pilger, Nebraska.

The couple had two daughters, the eldest, Elsa being Sam's mother. John Dohren, as his father had, used horses to farm. The sets of harnesses used are still in the barn on the John Dohren Farm site which is now occupied by the David Tobias family. John would have raised corn, oats, alfalfa and perhaps hemp which is now called Marijuana. In those days, hemp was used for making rope and clothing along with other uses.





**Wedding photo of John Dohren and Emma Kirk Dohren**

Sam's mother, Elsa Emma Johanna Dohren was born on July 4, 1914. She was the couple's first child while sister Irmagard was born in 1916. Because their parents wanted both of the daughters to start rural school together, they waited for Irm to be old enough to attend school. Then they sent both girls. At the time of school enrollment, neither sister spoke any English, only German. What a challenge that would have been for a rural, one room school teacher in the Midwestern state of Nebraska, but not uncommon!



**A photo of Pilger High School class of 1931. Irm Dohren is 2<sup>nd</sup> row, 4 from the left and Elsa Dohren is 8<sup>th</sup>. Virgie Burris is the one in blue with Elsie Petersen next to her.**



**Pilger High School as it looked in 2012. It was damaged by a tornado in June, 2014 and later torn down.**

Both Elsa and her sister completed grade eight at their local country school and then attended Pilger High School where they graduated in 1932. The two were in the same graduation class with future husband Cliff's cousin Virgie Burris.



**Left to Right: John Dohren, Gerhard Jacobsen, Henry Dohren, Pete Holstein, Freida Holstein, Emma Dohren with Irmagard and Elsa, with Sophia in front, 1918.**



**Left to right, a photo of Elsa Emma and Irmagard Dohren in 1925. They are wearing their confirmation dresses at St. John's Lutheran Church in Pilger.**



The John Dohren Farm north of Pilger as it looked around 1918.

## A Burris Family of Grayson County, Virginia

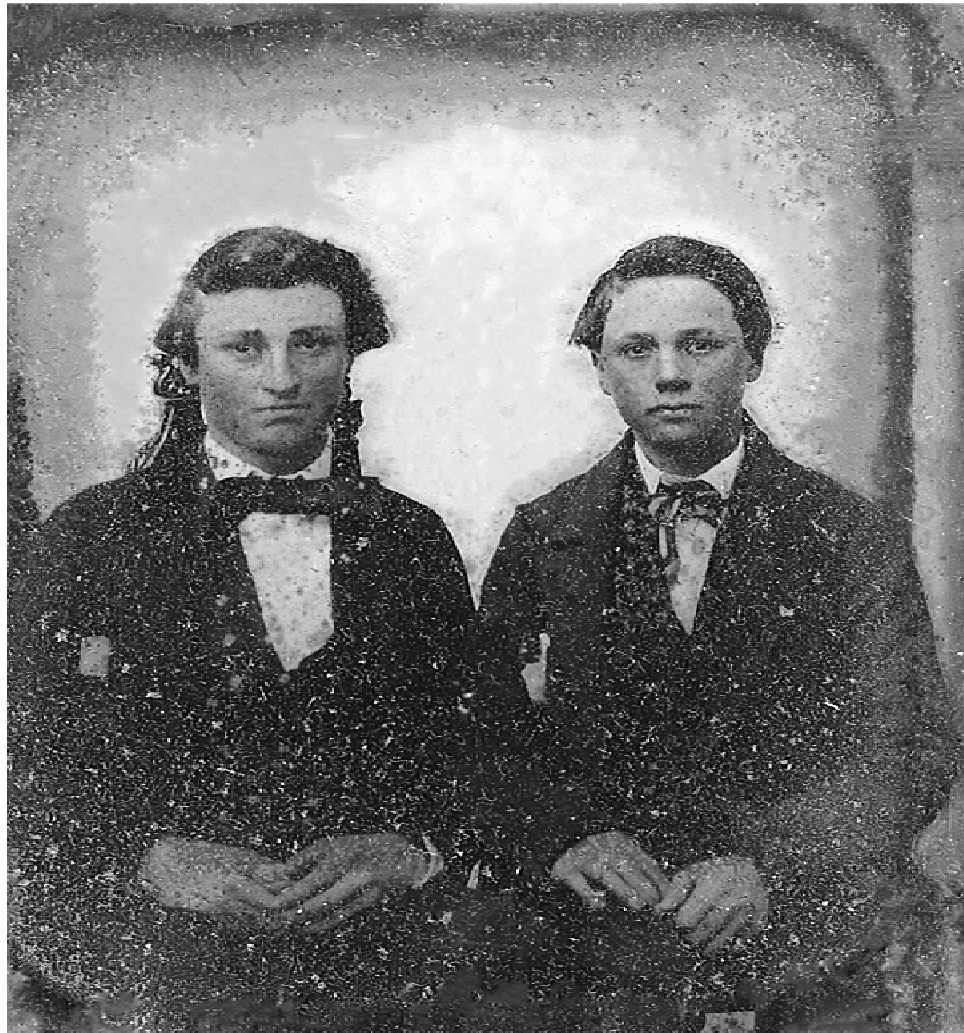
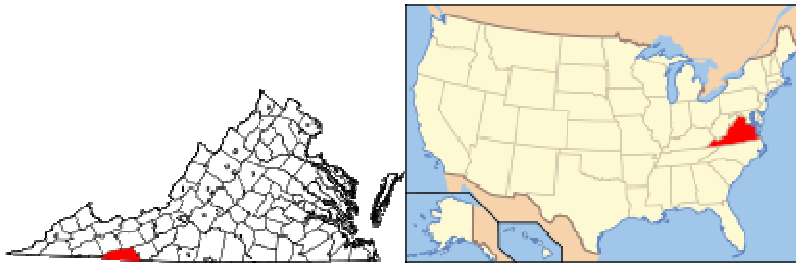
To begin to look at the history of the Burris family, one has to travel back. Let's look now at how the family came to Grayson County, Virginia.

"According to "The Heritage of Surry County North Carolina, Volume 1 - 1983", published by the Surry County Geneological Association, Thomas Burrus came south from Virginia to Haystack, Surry County, North Carolina. Thomas met and married Nancy Tucker. The couple went to the Siloam area and from there to Rockford, North Carolina where they bought land just west of where the Rockford Baptist Church now stands. Here they raised four sons and named them John, Lee Hammond, Miley and George Thomas. One of the four sons, George Thomas Burris, born in 1790, married Mariah Pell, born the same year. George and Mariah had four children. They were George Thomas Jr., Jestina, Thomas and William. William and his brother Tom grew up in Rockford and eventually traveled north to settle in what is now the Fallville region of Southwest Virginia. Here they established a home on Briar Patch Mountain just below Chestnut Flats".

We are not sure the exact year the move by oxcart across the mountains was made. One thing interesting is that William and his brother George T. Burrus, along with George's wife, Allie Cave got together. It seems they agreed that William would wed Phoebe, his own niece and daughter of George. We are not sure why, but perhaps there was no suitor for Phoebe at the time and the family felt more secure having the wedding within the family.

\*From the book, "View from Briar Patch: A Burris Family of Grayson County" by Samuel J. Burris

**Map of Grayson County, Virginia and map of the United States showing the state of Virginia.**



**Left to right: William and Thomas Burris in Rockford, North Carolina about 1845.**



**A photo of the Burris family in Grayson County: Left to right front row Great Grandfather William Burris, Great Grandmother Phoebe Jane Burris and Great Uncle Tom Burris. Second row: Grandpa Jonce Weldon Burris, Grandma Lena Tabitha Byrd Vaughn Burris, Aunt Missouri Martin Burris and Uncle George Martain Burris, Uncle Johnny Guy Burris, Uncle William (Will) Thomas Burris holding a child, Uncle Charles Mitchell Burris and Aunt Norma Naomi Oma Katherine Phoebe (Callahan) Burris. Missing from the photo are UncleTom's Wife Lottie Charlotte Poole Burris, Columbus (Lum) Thorton Burris and Flora Roberts Burris.**

Sam's father, Samuel Clifton Burris or "Cliff" was the son of Jonse and Lena Byrd Vaughn Burris of Spring Valley, Virginia. Cliff was born and raised in a mountainous region in Appalachia, southwest Virginia not far from the North Carolina border. His parents were poor and the family lived in a two room wooden cabin with an addition built on the back. The largest room in the rear served as the family's living room.



**The cabin home of Jonce and Lena Burris as it looked in the 1940's/50's.**

The cabin is located at about 3,000 ft elevation in an area of the Appalachian Mountains called Spring Valley. On the other side of the cabin, in front, is a porch and then a rather large clearing of grass after which is the old Garley Burris home with paved highway # 805 fronting. The original cabin was moved across the road log by log sometime prior to 1900 by marking each log with white paint in Roman numerals. The cabin is well over 100 years old.

Cliff's father Jonce was a veterinarian of sorts though he didn't have formal training. His father, William and mother Phoebe had migrated north from Rockford, North Carolina and settled on Briar Patch Mountain to raise their family of six sons, Jonce being one. He also farmed and milked cows, selling the milk. Grandpa Burris had chickens and raised a garden in the summer so food could be stored in the winter months. He may have also raised tobacco. Sam remembers his grandpa Burris as a very kind, good natured person. He loved kids and when Sam and brother Ron came with the family to visit in the 40's and early 50's, his grandpa Burris would always let Sam and the cousins take the milk to the road after it was loaded on a wooden wheel barrow. Garlie Burris, a cousin of Jonce, was living on the highway right where the mailbox was and where the milk was picked up. The milk truck would then drive by, stop and pick up the milk can.

Grandmother Lena Byrd Vaughn Burris was also born and raised in the same area. Cliff was born on September 10, 1910, the third child with two brothers, Bayse and Ross, two sisters, Viola and Lena Grace and two boys. One was Howard Byrd, son of her brother Steven. The other was Lena's son from a previous marriage to William Vaughn who had passed away earlier. During the 40's and early 50's, Lena worked as a Fallville telephone operator out of her home. Lena used a switch board located in her living room and from there plugged in lines to connect parties in the area.

Since the Cliff Burris family visited Virginia many times, traveling by car from Nebraska, Sam recalls one of those visits when his grandmother Lena was sitting in her rocking chair chewing snuff (powered tobacco). She would put it in the side of her cheek with a spoon and then, once in awhile, spit in a spittoon she had nearby. Sam was fascinated by this sight since he had never before seen anyone chew snuff in Nebraska!

When she was older, Grandma Burris had a sometimes hardy appearance. She had to be strong to cook all those meals over a fireplace for the eight children of the family plus grandpa Jonce of course!

Sam recalls one visit in the late 1940's when he and his cousins were playing in the pasture across the road from the Grandpa Burris cabin. All of the kids were catching crawdad from the creek. That included Ron, Sam, Ruth and Ann Jackson and Eldon Burris. For some reason, Sam sat on a rock and, with an old tin can, started cutting his hand on purpose with the sharp edge of the can. Of course Cliff and Elsa were not happy about that!

One of the most memorable trips to Virginia took place in the summer of 1961. That was the year that Cousin Evelyn Atkins, Sam's cousin from Norristown, Pennsylvania and Sam graduated from high school. Both the Atkins family and the Cliff Burris family stayed at Uncle Albert and Aunt Viola's house off the old dirt road and located in a hollow in those mountains. The kids all loved the biscuits, gravy and ham Aunt Viola made; the cornbread, green beans and other staples of the Appalachian diet. There was no end to the noise the young people made every night upstairs with 45 records blasting, playing games and telling scary stories. Ron, Sam and Bill were joined by Ruth and Ann Jackson, Evelyn Sue, Patsy and David Atkins in a week or more of fun! All through adulthood, the cousins would have fond memories of these times.



**The former Albert and Viola Burris Jackson home in 2012. The house has been vacant since 1980. It is located in a remote pocket in the mountains off a dirt road not too far from the Jerusalem Methodist Church.**

Out of all of those stories told by the kids, one was true. It was about "Devil Steve" Bourne who in the late 1790's, had a peach orchard on a farm a few miles from Ebenezer Church where many of Grandma Byrd's family attended. It was said that Devil Steve was so mean that there was no green grass growing on his grave! You see, Devil Steve had numbers of slaves working on the orchards and his reputation of how mean he treated these slaves last even until now! In later years, Sam and cousins actually drove to the old Steve Bourne home site and searched until they found the graves. Sure enough, only

briars grew on their grave....no grass! Since the wife and husband died at about the same time, they were said to have been buried together in one coffin.

In 1980, when Sam and his wife Celia stopped in Virginia on the end of their around the world trip, they stayed with Uncle Albert and Aunt Viola. It was summer, and in the evenings, they watched the Republican National Convention with of course Ronald Reagan eventually nominated as the candidate for president of the United States. Celia and Sam enjoyed that stay, with hot biscuits, bacon and gravy freshly baked in the wood stove by Aunt Viola! In the evenings, Celia and Sam walked on the steep side hills above the place, gazing at the valley below.

This was to be the last time the couple would be visiting this home, the original Jackson place, while his aunt and uncle lived there, because Uncle Albert was building a new house on the main highway just down the road from the Grandpa Burris cabin in Fallville section of Spring Valley. Sam remembers that once, as Uncle Albert and Sam walked to his hay barn during that stay, Sam could hear him breathing hard, huffing and puffing. He had emphysema, perhaps due to all those years working in the furniture factory in Galax and some smoking on his part too. Uncle Albert was building the new house as he didn't want Aunt Viola to stay alone in this remote spot, where their home now was, after he had passed away. He did finish the new house on the highway before he died.

## Fallville School

Sam's father Cliff was fortunate because just up the hill from the cabin where he lived with his parents, brothers, sisters and step brothers was the local elementary school. Most of the young people in the area attended Fallville and from many years it also served as a teacher training school as well. Sam's grandfather Jonse and his brothers went there so not only Cliff, but Viola, Grace and went there too.

One can see the school had quite an interesting design and many school photos were taken of students in front. Eventually it was torn down, sometime in the 70's or so and a private residence was built on the top of the hill where the school once stood.





A photo of Fallville School, Virginia with students in front of the building. We do not know the exact date this was taken or the names of any of the people in the picture.



Elk Creek High School, Elk Creek, Virginia in 1930.

After Cliff Burriss completed elementary school at Fallville School, he decided to attend Elk Creek High School. At first he had to contend with the distance which was 7 miles one way. Cliff began by walking to school, cutting across some farmer's lands to shorten the walk. Soon he was able to find a place to board near the high school which worked out much better. His sister Viola also attended high school there and boarded as well with the same family. Cliff graduated in 1928 and though offered a scholarship in track at V.P.I ( [Virginia Polytechnic Institute](#) ), he could not afford to take advantage.



**Home of George L. and Charlotte Hale Delp as it appeared in 1919. Cliff and sister Viola boarded at the house while attending Elk Creek High School in the late 1920's.**

After high school, Cliff found employment difficult. He had a few jobs including running a jack hammer during the paving of highway 805 near his home. He told Sam he only lasted two days on that job! In 1930 he joined three of his friends on an automobile trip west as there was little employment in the Appalachian Mountain region.

The four young men, including one of Cliff's best friends, John Fielder drove west to find work. They first drove to Kansas and worked a short time in a rock quarry, but soon they were to drive to Colorado and Nebraska. I recall my father Cliff saying that, at that time there were wooden boardwalks in Denver, Colorado.

Eventually the four drove to northeast Nebraska where they knew of some Virginians who had moved west previously. Among those Virginians was Cliff's Uncle George and Aunt Alfa Pinion. Alfa was a sister to his mom Lena. Cliff originally checked in at the Winside Hotel but when his aunt Alfa and Uncle George found out, they insisted that he stay with them at their farm north of Winside. Employment opportunities in the Winside region were not good either so, finally all four of the men contemplated returning to Virginia. A decision was soon made by his three friends to go back.

The main reason Clifton was able to remain in Nebraska is that luckily he had another uncle in the region. About 15 miles south of Winside was the Pilger community and just north of Pilger lived his Uncle Will Burris, brother of his father Jonce. Will had migrated west earlier. Cliff said that when he told his Uncle Will that he was considering going back to Virginia due to lack of work, Uncle Will said, "No kin of mine is leaving because you have no work or place to stay. You can stay right here with us". He didn't know it at the time, but Cliff would not return to Virginia again for another 10 years.



**Will Burris family with Cliff and Elsa Burris in 1940.**

**L-R: Gyda (Burris) and Hans Grieves, Gifford and Marian Burris with Tom, Herb and Virgie(Burris) Frerichs with Virgie holding Joyce and Daryl and Milan standing in front, Don and Lillian(Burris) Jones and Cliff and Elsa Burris.**

While Cliff was residing with the Will Burris family, he managed to get a job as a farm hand at the Herman Ritze farm, not far away. About this time, Cliff met and began dating Elsa Dohren. Elsa's parents, John and Emma Dohren, had a farm about two miles away. The couple began dating and were eventually married in March, 1936.

After their marriage, Cliff worked as a farmhand for other area farmer named Walt Chase. The couple resided in a house near the Walt Chase home which to couple always called the "Honey House".



**The “Honey House” Photo taken in 2012. The house was the first residence of Cliff and Elsa Burris after their marriage.**

While at the Chace farm, Cliff said that he worked for 50 cents a day during that time, getting up at 5:00 am and often working until dark. He liked working for the Chace family. Though the work hours were long and hard, Walt treated Cliff and Elsa very well and they always fondly remembered those years.

It was in 1941 that Elsa and Cliff drove to Virginia after the marriage of Cliff's cousin Gifford Burris to Marian Doty. Gifford was the son of Will Burris. That trip was Elsa's first opportunity to visit the Burris kin folk out east in Appalachia. Since Gifford and Marian were on their honeymoon, the Jonce Burris family covered the upstairs walls of their cabin with beautiful pink and red wall paper in honor of the occasion!

About this time, Cliff and Elsa were able to rent 80 acres of land across Humbug Creek from their “Honey House” to a farm owned by Mr. Pete Topp. The farm, near the Humbug Bridge, was where the couple were living when Sam was born on August 14, 1943. Following is a web site of the history of Pilger, Stanton County, Nebraska:

<http://casde.unl.edu/history/counties/stanton/pilger/>

Humbug Creek flowed by that farm on the east side forming the border of the rented property. The land in this area was hilly and because of that, no other farm could be viewed from the property unless one walked up the hill going west. On the one mile dirt road, there were two farm places, the Burris farm and a farm owned by Alfred Grenz. When the children from the area went to District 25, they walked. The group included Ron and Sam, Donna and Marlene Lehman, Mary and Larry Grenz. Sometimes it would be raining in the morning and the kids would have to wear overshoes due to the mud. Then, if it dried in the daytime, they would still wear overshoes going home only there might be dry, dusty soil to walk in.



**Left to right: Cliff and Elsa Burris in 1932. The photo was taken in front of the evergreen trees on the John and Emma Dohren farm north of Pilger. Cliff is wearing his “Humbug Locals” baseball uniform.**

Early memories for Sam include riding in an oats wagon pulled by a two horse team driven by his dad. Sam also recalls lying in the back seat of his parents 1948 black Ford. It was parked in the oats field and outside his parents worked to shock oats in preparation for threshing. There were snakes around the area because the Humbug River was nearby. As a youngster, Sam recalls running around a corner of the house and almost stepping on a large bull snake! In 1945, a second child was born to Cliff and Elsa Burris and Sam had a brother Ronald Clifton.



**Photo of Sam age four**



**Photo of Ron age two**

Sam remembers happily receiving, along with his brother Ron, a brand new cowboy shirt and hat to wear to the Aksarben Rodeo in Omaha. He also remembers crawling under an electric fence on the farm northwest of Pilger and trying to "stand up too soon" resulting in an electric shock across the middle of his back!

Sam and Ron were quite often having disagreements, as kids often do. One afternoon Ron got upset with Sam and hit him in the eye with a baseball bat! Sam had a shiner after that one!

Though overall he was a healthy kid, Sam did have infantigo while very young, <http://www.infantigo.com/> His tonsils and adenoids were removed in surgery at Norfolk Lutheran Hospital around 1950. He also had measles and chicken pox as a child.

Sam was injured in a pitch fork incident around age seven which resulted in his being hospitalized at the Norfolk Lutheran Hospital in nearby Norfolk, 18 miles away. It happened when he and his brother Ron were playing in the barn, forking cow manure into their dad's manure spreader. Sam expressed being

bored and told Ron he wanted to quit. Ron said, "You better not or I'll throw this pitchfork at you!" Sam didn't take that threat seriously and walked away, reaching the barn door when he heard Ron shout his name. Sam turned around and saw Ron's pitchfork fly through the air. When the pitchfork reached Sam, two tines stabbed him in the left side. The force lent him falling out the door and onto the ground. Ron ran to where Sam was lying, pulled the fork out and then ran to the house to tell mom.

Cliff was in the field working when Elsa came out of the house screaming, picked Sam up and put him in the back seat of the car. Elsa drove the car to get Cliff and the couple took their son to see Doctor John Reid in the town of Pilger five miles away. Doctor Reid wasn't at his office, so Cliff drove to the Winch Pharmacy on main street, bought a bottle of iodine and poured it into Sam's two stab wounds. The family took a long drive to Norfolk where Sam was taken to the emergency room at the Lutheran Hospital and hospitalized for some time. When he did go home, Sam passed blood while urinating and had to return to Lutheran Hospital for another stay, finally returning home a second time.

Around 1950, life was made easier when father Clifton installed an indoor toilet and bath. Before that, the family had an outhouse for use which sure was cold to walk to in the winter! Bathing in the early days consisted of the boys getting one bath per week, every Saturday night, the word Saturday being derived from the Old Icelandic word [laugr](#) meaning bath, thus *Lördag* equates to bath-day. With numbers of European immigrants in the community at that time, it's no wonder the custom was strong.

While on the Pilger farm, Sam and Ron enjoyed their dog "Tippy" whom they were very fond of. The dog was a present to the youngsters from their parents.

Social life during this time was filled with events involving relatives, neighbors and friends of the family. The Dohren side of the family was of German stock, so card parties and picnics were filled with the sound of German being spoken along with English. German songs, especially at Christmas were commonly heard. At neighborhood gatherings, older men would often smoke pipes, cigars or cigarettes and play cards while the ladies talked and/or played cards too. Such popular games as Sheep Head which is the American form of the German game [Schafkopf](#). Later in the evening, the ladies would make lunch, everyone having coffee with sandwiches and cake before going home.

Picnics were another popular activity. These were often held on Sundays after church. The Pilger Park was a main gathering place for such picnics but sometimes picnics were held on the lawns of people's homes as well. Family reunions were very popular. Sam's parents were Missouri Synod Lutheran and many church activities had pot lucks. Originally Sam's father Cliff was Methodist, but changed to Lutheran when he married Elsa.

When it came to music, Cliff, Elsa and their friends enjoyed dancing to the sounds of Lawrence Welk and Guy Lombardo along with other great bands of the time. Most of the big bands played at the old Kings Ballroom in Norfolk,

Sam's parents, Cliff and Elsa Burris, loved to dance and as a youngster of five or six, Sam remembers his parents getting friends Lars and Elsie Peterson, an elderly couple from Pilger, Nebraska, to come out to the farm and babysit the kids while his parents joined Herman and Lydia Topp, Gary and Hilda Grimm, Ferd and Lorinda Siegert, Albert and Lavaina Topp and other couples. They would journey to nearby Norfolk, location of Kings Ball Room.



### **King's Ballroom in Norfolk, Nebraska, 1960's.**

King's Ballroom was built by Harry King in 1917 as the first showplace of his King's Amusement Park. The first band Harry hired was Guy Lombardo, who traveled with his orchestra by motor car over the dirt roads to Norfolk to play for their fans. The ballroom was rebuilt five different times and hosted every type of family entertainment from polka, big band music to rock'n roll and even roller skating. The King's Friday night teen dances became a ritual for Northeast Nebraska teens in the 50's, 60's and 70's. The annual Levi Hop often packed the 2,500 capacity ballroom. As Harry King's health failed in the late 50's, the running of the ballroom was passed to his sons, Dale and Charles. Wedding and anniversary dances were often held. Sadly, King's Ballroom burned down on April 3, 1986. This was a great loss to people in Norfolk and all around the community.

During the late 40's and early 50's, Cliff and Elsa continued to live in the Pilger community. There were two bars in the village of Pilger, Heller's Bar and Struddy's Place. On Saturday night, the two businesses had lots of customers as farmers and others took breaks and relaxed after a long week of work. Watching movies was a popular means of entertainment. About that time it cost only 13 cents for a kid to see a movie at the old Pilger Theater. Of course Saturday night was the time people "went to town" where they would buy groceries, meet friends or talk on the street. The Farmer's Union was busy filling orders for farmers who needed products such as animal feeds. People would shop at the Miller Brothers store or Butterfield's IGA. There was a malt shop in the pharmacy run by Ray Winch on Pilger's main street where kids loved to go in and have milk shakes in different flavors like strawberry, chocolate or butterscotch! Of course Dr. Reid was available for medical treatment. Doc Reid came from the old school as he dressed



formally, often wearing black or dark colored clothing and carrying a big doctor's bag. The doctor had a small office just down from Miller's Store and often did house calls. Doctor John Reid practiced for many years and had an excellent reputation in the community.

One of the most important buildings in Pilger was the Pilger Bank. Lee Baer, the banker in those days, was responsible for many a farmer getting a start with a loan. These loans allowed farmers in the area to purchase of livestock, land or farm equipment. Two other buildings of note were the Washington Hall and the Legion Hall. The Pilger Legion hall was on Main Street and was the site for regular meetings of the military veterans of the surrounding community. It also became the site of important events such as wedding receptions or even family gatherings. Washington Hall was a block off main and was a long wooden building also noted for social events of various kinds.

When Sam was young, Pilger still had a railroad running through the town and a nice two story wooden building, the Pilger Depot. The railroad tracks are all gone now and as is the old depot. Sam remembers events at Washington Hall and the kids running across the street to play inside the depot building.

A special time for families was always Christmas Eve. It was the time the family went to church and then proceeded to grandma and grandpa's house to open presents.



**At the John Dohren Farm in 1952. In this photo on Christmas Day, father Cliff is in back, Ron on the left and Sam the right.**

The farm place where the Cliff Burriss family lived was close to a dirt road that ran just off state highway 275. The farm buildings, mainly the chicken house, out house and corn crib were on a side hill. Other buildings on the land included a granary for grain storage, a hog house and barn. The house was at the foot of the hill and on the east side were two large Cottonwood trees, the trunks often containing nests of bees in the summer. Sam and his brother would sometimes tease the bees by poking a stick in their nest and then run away!

Sam has an early childhood memory relating to those Cottonwood trees. One day when he was about six or seven, Sam was outside playing when a car sped into the farm place and stopped right under the Cottonwood trees. Two men were inside the vehicle and hot on their trail was a Nebraska State Patrolman with his siren wailing. Sam doesn't remember why the patrolman was chasing the two, perhaps for a violation like speeding. The cop pulled his car behind theirs, walked over and stood by the driver's side. He wrote the two men a ticket after checking their identification. As a little kid, Sam stood by that tall patrolman and remembered thinking, "Wow", I want to be a State Patrolman someday just like him when I grow up! Of course that never happened but for many years into high school, Sam was interested in being a law enforcement officer when he reached adulthood!

The old Humbug farm place was bulldozed in the mid 80's by a new land owner presumably because the owner wanted to farm "fence post to fence post". In addition, by this time most of the buildings, including the house, were in bad condition. The road which was used by Sam and Ron to walk to school is no longer passable since the old Humbug Creek Bridge over Humbug Creek has been long condemned. Below that old bridge is where Brother Ron used to catch fish with his "lucky yellow fishing rod". It is also where the boys used to dig up buffalo bones, horns and Indian arrowheads buried along the creek bed. Sam remembers an afternoon when cousin Tom Burriss walked on top of the steel structure of the bridge balancing precariously!

### Rural School District similar to #25 in Stanton County



The school Sam and his brother Ron attended was a one room affair heated by a coal stove in the winter. During those days, there was a large population in the rural areas so there were small, mostly white buildings of various designs

that served students and everyone in the countryside. Most of them were small with 10 to 20 students at the most. They all had outdoor restrooms to serve the kids and of course standard playground equipment such as merry-go-rounds and slippery slides. Each rural school had a number and the one Sam and Ron attended was District 25.

In cold weather, the boys sometimes rode a big white horse named "Babe" to their school. Father Cliff's hired hand, Marvin Frevert, sometimes took the kids and then picked them up again at the end of the day. In warmer months the boys would walk. Sam recalls walking to school with Donna and Marlene Lehman along with Mary and Larry Grenz. Later, Cliff bought each of the boys red bikes which they rode when it was good weather.

The school house was a one room wooden structure with a small room at the entrance for the children to put their coats, hats and overshoes. Most of the one room schools across the state of Nebraska had similar designs. A coal stove was located in the basement of the building and older students would take turns going downstairs to put coal in the furnace. The heat came up through a fairly large floor level metal grate in the middle of the room. On really cold days, the students enjoyed standing there letting the radiated heat warm them up!

In those days, there were no structured after school programs as such. Still, at least one or two days a week, Bible school was offered to students at District 25. It was often taught in the home of Joyce Snider's mother, Joyce being a student at the school.

Sam's first school teacher was Miss Nancy Prawitz and, on his first day of school, Sam wanted to play with blocks on his desk instead of coming up for class. After a couple of warnings to come up, Miss Prawitz brought Sam up to her desk, turned him over on her knee and gave him a good whack on the behind. After that, Sam went to class every time he was called! That wasn't the only spanking he got however.

One warm day as the kids were walking home, Mary Grenz wanted to climb up a small apple tree along the road and asked Sam to help her up. Sam did so by giving Mary a push by placing his hands on her buttocks and pushing her upward. When Mary got home, she told her father, Alfred Grenz, what Sam had done and Mr. Grenz telephoned Sam's father. When Sam got home, Cliff told him about the call. Sam remembers father Cliff for punishment, cutting a branch off the tree and giving him a good whack on his back side near the old corn crib further up the hill from the house.

That was the third and last time he got a spanking. The first time was during the St. John's Lutheran Church service when, as a kid of about three, Sam kept crying and wouldn't stop. Cliff took him in the basement and gave him a whack on his bottom that time!

The small white outdoor toilets on the school grounds were located up the hill. There was one toilet for the girls and another for the boys. Winter or summer, the students used the outdoor restrooms. Once during the spring time, Sam's brother Ron asked the teacher if he could go to the toilet. She agreed, and he walked out of the school building and up the hill. After some

time, the teacher, Miss Marian Wolverton, asked Sammy to go find his brother. Sam looked everywhere and decided to walk up the road to look for Ron. At the top of the hill, Sam looked down the dirt road. There was Ronnie running away towards the Burris farm. It turned out that he wanted to go home and watch the men who were shelling corn.

When Sam told Miss Wolverton where Ronnie was, the teacher said, "OK students, let's take a field trip", and we did. The teacher led the students up the hill and all the way down the dirt road to the Burris farm. There they found Ronnie and brought him back to school!

Other students who attended school with Sammy and Ronnie were Joyce and Janette Roe, Bobby Christinsen, Virgil Stradley, Don and Randy Schneider, Gary Schultz and Lois Schneider, Janette and LaFay Stuntman and Larry and Mary Grenz.

Sam's life was somewhat typical of a farm youngster at that time. He had chores to do on the farm that included feeding chickens, gathering eggs and often being with his father to help out with other tasks. The same was expected of his brother Ronnie as well.

The first TV came to this farming community around 1949. The Lloyd Schneider family was the first to buy a black and white television. Sam and Ron joined other neighborhood children on Sunday afternoons to watch Kookla, Fran and Ollie.

It was 1950 when Cliff and Elsa Burris bought their first television. At the time, the family was still living on the farm five miles northwest of Pilger, Nebraska. The TV picture was black and white of course but both Sam and his brother Ron adapted quickly to it. The kids enjoyed such shows as Howdy Doody; I Love Lucy and the Pinky Lee Show. They watched old westerns and stars like Howard Hopalong Cassidy, Lash Larue, Tom Mix, Buck Jones and eventually The Lone Ranger, Roy Rogers and Gene Autry. There was the Arthur Godfrey Show and soon Ed Sullivan. Then it was on to Laugh In. Later it would be All in the Family and many more.

Sam was fortunate because his family traveled to other states in the U. S. In those days, virtually all schools were structured on a 9 month/3 month system to enable farm kids to help with the field work during summer months. Because his father Clifton was originally born in Spring Valley, southwest Virginia, that area became a prime destination for summer vacations. Cliff was still close to his relatives there and the family traveled during Sam's youth seeing many things along the way each time. These trips were the beginning of his interest in history and geography. The Burris family also made trips to South Dakota and Wyoming as well as Montana.

Another influence for Sam was the fact that his dad enjoyed sports. After Cliff had graduated from Elk Creek High School in 1928, he was offered a track scholarship at Virginia Polytechnic Institute but Cliff said he didn't have enough money at the time to attend. Regardless, Cliff loved baseball and played the sport often, especially after he arrived in Nebraska in 1930. At that time, Cliff joined the "Humbug Team", which played in the northeast

Nebraska area. Herb and Emil Gemelke were two players on the team with Cliff.

The importance of physical education was stressed as Sam grew up and chose to play baseball. Vernon Putz of Pilger was his first coach. Vernon formed a local Pee Wee team and then midget league team in Pilger. The players wore black 66 t-shirts being sponsored by the local gas station. Some of the players on the Pee Wee team along with Ron and Sam were Dale Topp, Ken Grasshorn, Loren Burris and Dave Dohren. Later Sam and Ron moved to Winside and joined the Winside, Nebraska Midgets and then the Junior Legion. Fellow players included Randall and Roger Bargstadt, Stanley "Butch" Redel, Ronnie and Donnie Retzlaff and Gary Bowers.



**Winside, Nebraska Main Street**

The main Street of Winside, Nebraska showing the former Cliff's Tavern with red and white sign in the background on right side of the photo. Also the Farmer's Union Coop is the white building on left side, the old Winside Fire House, Power Plant and Auditorium.

Cliff Burris and family moved to Winside, a community 15 miles north of Pilger after he applied for and received a loan to buy his own farm instead of renting. The farm was situated along the Humbug Creek northwest of Pilger. Of all memories of his youth, Sam remembers his father purchasing the farm from Bill Carey as a major event. That's because it was very difficult for he and his brother Ron to leave all their relatives, friends and playmates in the Pilger area and move to a totally new surroundings. Moving meant Sammy would attend a new school and make all new friends. It was quite an adjustment and both Ronnie and Sammy didn't adapt easily.

After first moving to Winside in 1953, the two boys insisted they wanted to continue to play baseball with the Pilger Little League Team, coached by Vernon Putz, since all their cousins and friends played with the team that the boys had always played on while living in Pilger. Father Clifton decided he would drive the boys to Pilger for practices and back home again for that first summer. That Pilger team wore black T-shirts with red letters that said

"Phillips 66" and both Ron and Sam were happy to be playing with the team again. After that first summer however, the boys became more adjusted to their new home town and played for the Winside Little League.

Out on the farm northwest of Winside, Sam and Ron were grateful that their favorite dog Tippy moved with the family. Tippy was with the boys since he was a puppy and now was old and in poor health. Cliff left instructions to neighbor Gus Hank, who was taking care of the farm while the family traveled to Virginia, to shoot Tippy, thus, "putting him out of his misery". When the boys came back from the Virginia trip after three weeks, of course they looked everywhere and Tippy could not be found. That's when father Cliff told them Tippy was dead. The boys buried Tippy under a tree near the back yard fence. Cliff then acquired two other pet dogs for the boys. Their names were Scotch and Snowball.

Another special treat for the kids was a Shetland pony their dad bought named "Midge". The pony was purchased in Pilger from the Siecke family and was rode by Ron Siecke who was just a few years older than Sam. Actually, Midge was quite old when she was purchased but the kids enjoyed rides for several years from the pony!

In those days, Sam and Ron would ride Midge a quarter of a mile to the mail box corner to get the mail. One fine day, Sam went to get the mail. On the way, Midge trotted slowly along but when Sam turned him back towards home after getting the mail, Midge took off running. Sam got excited and lost both of the reins! All he could do was hold on to the saddle horn until nearing the barn. Down the hill, down the lane to the farm and toward the barn galloped Midge at a very fast pace! When Midge slowed to go into the barn door, Sam was just able to jump off! That was lucky because the door Midge used to go into the barn was very low and there would have been very little room for Sam to duck down without hitting the top!

The farm where the Burris family moved to northwest of Winside was double the acreage as compared to the previous farm near Pilger, The house was also larger than the house near Pilger but was not in very good condition.

Ron and Sam each had their own rooms upstairs whereas in Pilger they shared one room upstairs. Sam's room was located on the west side and Ron's on the east side front. It should be said that the house was moved to the site from the town of Winside many years before, but had been allowed to deteriorate. A cousin of Elsa's, Mary and her husband Norbert Husmann with son's Lyle and Leon decided to rent the farm for a couple of years prior to the Burris family moving. The Husmann's, Norb and Mary really enjoyed the community and formed a long time friendship with the Art and Arleen Raabe family just over the hill and about one mile away. Norb and Art Raabe helped each other a lot while farming and later Cliff and Art "neighbored" with each other also. When Cliff and Elsa where ready to move onto the Winside farm, Norb and Mary moved to the Humbug Creek property where the Burris family had lived. It wasn't long before Kent Jackson, another Virginian in the area, helped Cliff put a new basement under the house which improved the living conditions for the family greatly. Eventually the farm was sold by Cliff to

Sam's brother Bill Burriss in the early 1980's. Bill then resided there with his wife Patti and daughters Emma and Caroline. The two girls were raised on the farm, attended elementary and high school in Winside. Eventually Emma graduated from Washington and Lee University married and moved to Connecticut where she now lives with her husband. Sister Caroline attended college in Baltimore, Maryland and went to graduate school at the University of South Dakota in Vermillion. Brother Bill and wife Patti now live mostly in Wymore, Nebraska, in the southeast part of the state but also have a home in Wnside. The farm place is owned by Bill Burriss rented to another family.



**The Burriss family farm house in 2006**



**L-R: Sam, Patti, Bill, Emma and Caroline Burriss at the farm northwest of Winside in July, 2006.**

[www.casde.unl.edu/history/counties/wayne/winside/](http://www.casde.unl.edu/history/counties/wayne/winside/)

**Rural School building similar to #58 in Wayne County**



As he had done in the Pilger area, Sam and his brother Ron attended a one room school northwest of Winside, District #58 was about 1 and 1/2 mile from the Burriss home. Both Ron and Sam attended the school through the eighth grade when they graduated and were promoted as freshman, attending Winside High School.

Another brother, William George, born in 1954 and attended District #58 as well. The school population at District #58 was a bit larger than Sam's previous school near Pilger in Stanton County.

District #58 had an average of about 14 children from Kindergarten to eighth grade when the two boys started in 1953. The teacher that year was Miss Gladys Reichart who resided in the town of Winside. Miss Reichart did not drive so was taken to work and picked up every day by her brother Willis. The children who attended the school included Roger and Randall Bargstadt. The Burriss and Bargstadt families were to become best friends. Other families at the school included children from the Edwin Brogren family(Lois), George and Elva Farran family(Glenda, Barbara and Bob), Dewey and Dorthia Jensen family(Andrea and Donna), Delmar and Luella Kremke family(Harlan), Norman and Pearl Carr family (Becky, Arjean and Holly) and the Erwin Ulrich family,(Kenneth and Ruben Ulrich), Richard Lambrecht son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Lambrecht and Sylvia Coulter, daughter of George Coulter, Jim and Jerry, sons of Art and Arlene Raabe and Pat Chaney along with her two brothers. Mr.Chaney worked for a time as a hired hand for George Farran. The Cliff Burriss family found their new neighborhood was one where they could rely on their neighbors. Everyone helped each other mow, rake and stack hay, pick corn and shell. The sheller for most of the years they lived there was run by Ken Fleeer and Howard Voss. The farmers who wanted to shell the corn from the cobs and store the corn in a grain bin would call a few neighbors who would come and help scoop. In turn, that farmer would be called when someone else had to shell. It was that way for everything in the 1950's, 60's and 70's. An example, once one of our neighbors, Vern Jensen decided to stop cultivating corn and go into Winside and have a few drinks at the bar. When Cliff found out Vern was inebriated, he drove to town and made sure Vern was driven home. After he came home, Cliff sent Sam out to Vern's field to finish the cultivating for him.

In those days, during the winter, if someone's car wouldn't start or perhaps a driver ran his car into a ditch, a local farmer could always be counted on to



drive over and pull out the car or help charge the battery. No one would think of calling a mechanic or tow truck.

In those days, Sam was riding his bike to school, helping milk cows, feeding the cattle and pigs, hauling bales of hay and taking care of chickens. Gathering eggs was a mainstay duty for Sam all through high school. The biggest day to look forward to for the Burris boys was on Wednesday because that was the day their mom made fresh French-style bread, hot buns and cinnamon rolls after school..Yum! The two boys would race home on their bikes and, as they approached the farm, could smell the aroma of bread fresh out of the oven! Often the boys ate liver sausage on the hot buns, a German-style favorite.

Attending school with Miss Gladys Reichart as a teacher meant strict rules! Her word was law. One of Miss Reichart's rules was that no one could go out to recess until everyone was finished eating their bag lunches. One student, Sylvia Coulter, was a very slow eater and often the last to finish. The rest of the children were always impatient to get outside to play. "Pump-Pump-Pole-Away", softball with Miss Reichart umpiring, "keep away" and "telephone" were some of the games played on those school grounds. Christmas plays along with field trips to Omaha and other destinations were a special treat.

As an elementary student in Nebraska in the late 1950's, the District #58 student body of about 12 took a bus the 124 miles from rural Wayne County to Omaha.

The purpose of one journey was to visit the Omaha Stock Yards. On this trip, the children got to see the actual slaughtering process for pigs and cattle. The site of the killing fields inside was something most of the children hadn't experienced before. The animals were suspended on chains on a conveyor on a carousel by one leg and were bawling or squealing! After seeing all of the killing, the classes exited.

Just after emerging from our tour into the fresher air outside, the stock yard personnel gave each student one slice of free luncheon meat! Sam recalled the floors inside the building and at the exit being covered with sawdust and , because of what he had viewed, Sam didn't feel hungry and let go of the piece of meat he had been given. It dropped from his hands down onto the sawdust floor and a student behind him said, "Hey, somebody dropped their meat!"

In those days, the rural families would sometimes visit other neighbors or friends, sometimes having card parties. At these events, the kids would often play card games, listen to records or play "spin the bottle". In this game, someone would spin the bottle and where the bottle stop, it would point for example to a boy. Then the lights would be turned out and the boy would kiss the girl whose name had been given at the spin. It would then be the girl's turn to spin and when the bottle stopped, the girl would have to kiss the boy, and so on.

## The Burris Clan in Nebraska

As mentioned previously, Sam's father Cliff stayed in northeast Nebraska only because his Uncle Will Burris gave him room and board when he had few funds and no where to stay. Without Uncle Will and family, Cliff's life would certainly have taken an entirely different course.

Uncle Will was married twice. His first wife was named Minnie and his second wife was Winnie. The children, all from the first marriage, were Geida, Lillian, Virgie and Gifford. These four children were all Cliff's first cousins though by staying within the household, it wasn't long before Cliff was "like a brother". Cliff's presence with the Will Burris family served as an opportunity for the four cousins to connect with him since he was from Virginia, where their own father was born and raised.



**Virgie, Geida and Lillian father Will Burris. The photo was taken in Nebraska in the 1940's.**

Uncle Will's children would listen to all the stories he told about those mountains and of course Cliff could join in too. As a result, three of the four kids went back to Virginia to visit in their lifetimes having a place to stay with kinfolk when they went. On one trip, Cliff and Elsa went back in the early 40's with Gifford and Marian (Doty) Burris on their honeymoon. After they arrived in Spring Valley, the newlyweds slept in the upstairs room of the Jonce and Lena Burris cabin. The host family even wallpapered the upstairs in floral design, especially for the newlywed couple!

As a further extension of the "Cliff and cousins" relationship, the grandchildren of Uncle Will and children of Cliff and Elsa Burris, Sam, Ron and Bill spent a lot of time together as children. The families visited each other's homes on holidays so that helped the kinship even more. Even today, when Sam goes to visit northeast Nebraska, there is often a "Burris Clan Gathering" as was the case in summer of 2006 at the Darryl and Becky Frerich's residence.



**Left to Right: Gifford Burris, Marian Doty Burris, Elsa Dohren Burris, Cliff Burris, Gyda Burris Greves, Herb Frerichs, Virgie Burris Frerichs with Lillian Burris Jones. Photo was taken by Don Jones at the Pilger Park during a Burris Family gathering in 1983.**



**This 1955 photo shows most of the Will Burris and Cliff Burris descendents. The photo was taken at the Gifford Burris farm east of Pilger. L-R: Gordon Greves, Ron Burris, Loren Burris, Warren Frerichs, Sam Burris, Bill Burris, Neiva and**

**Megan Jones. Behind: Unknown friend, Marilyn Greves, Tom Burris and Joyce Frerichs holding her sister Rita. Absent were Darryl and Milan Frerichs. In the background is the Cliff Burris family's 1954 Plymouth.**

## Winside High School



**Wildcats**

By the year 1957, Sam had entered Winside High School as a freshman, eventually to graduate in the class of 1961. His former elementary school teacher, Miss Reichart would remain at the rural school district # 58 until the mid 60's when she was replaced by Miss Janette Jaeger. Gladys Reichart moved to Winside Elementary School where she taught for several more years until retirement.

When he entered Winside High School as a freshman, Sam did not take the Winside school bus. Instead he rode to high school his first two years with a neighbor Harlan Kremke. Harlan had an old green 1948 Ford. Along with Harlan rode Ruth and Faye Jensen, daughters of Vern and Eunie Jensen and Roger Bargstadt.

The old Winside High School Building was a marvelous structure. It was a three story affair and sat in the center on a full city block. The basement area was where the rest rooms were located while on the main floor, several classes including Home Economics and mechanical drawing classes were held. The second floor is where most classes were held and where the study hall was located. The school library was located in the study hall and was very small. Sam recalls reading almost every Edgar Alan Poe work available from that small room. All the old class photos of years gone by were hanging on the walls in the Study Hall. The Principal's office was in the center hall near the stairs. It was also from the second floor one could have access to the bell tower though I think few students were able or lucky enough to go up! Sam did not have the opportunity.

Does one day in particular stand out now for Sam? Yes, the day he says he came to school on a cold, snowy day and climbed the wooden stairs to the second floor of the high school building. What he noticed was that most of the girls were sad and crying. When Sam asked what happened, they told him that Richie Valens, Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper had all died in a terrible small plane crash just across the border in Iowa. Sam recalls it as the saddest day of his school days.

Sam's freshman class of 1958-59 was small, eventually graduating 24 students. His favorite high school teachers were Mr. Matz who taught Science, Mr. Tourney, typing and Mr. Donald Dean, shop teacher and vice principal. His favorite classes were History and Industrial Arts. The class members changed somewhat from year to year with some students coming and others leaving. One classmate who arrived during Sam's second year of high school was Kenny Dohren, a relative on mother Elsa Dohren's side of the family. Along with Kenny came Darryl and his sister Linda Dohren. Their older brother Harry had already graduated from Hoskins High School but began dating Ethel, a sister of Sam's classmate and friend Leroy Carstens. Eventually the couple married. The Dohren students came in 1959 when the nearby town of Hoskins consolidated their high school students with students from Winside. Other students like Jim Falk, Bud Wittler and Garland Larson also came into the class from that town.

Sam's favorite subject in school was history and the further he got in school the more interested history, geography and government became. Eventually he was to major in history as an undergraduate, later teaching the subject in public schools. WHS was really a beginning in that area. He also liked the old "Weekly Reader" which brought current event issues to the classroom. Passed out once a week in the class taught by Mr. Paul Krohn, students often were assigned tasks from it or read on their own.

In high school, Sam lettered in football by serving as student manager his junior year. Sam played football one year as a senior and turned out to be a, "third string quarterback on a two string team". He also played basketball three years but tended to be one of the smallest kids on the squad. In those days the football teams dressed in the Town Auditorium built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930's. The football field was located on what was usually the outfield of the town baseball field. The players ran down to the field along the railroad tracks, a distance of about one half mile and walked back after.



**The old Winside Auditorium was built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.**

Basketball games were played in the old downtown City Auditorium with just a few bleachers on two sides. Still crowds packed in to see the games while the "W" Club raised money by serving pop corn and cokes. In addition to lettering

as football student manager, Sam was also elected Vice President of the 1960-61 class. Both and his brother Ron enjoyed sports including basketball and football. The auditorium had dressing rooms in the rear where equipment for both sports was stored. Here is where the infamous "initiation" was held in 1961, the brain child of then coach Paul Krohn.

Looking back, Sam recalled that it was sometimes hard for him to adjust to high school then. As a young 14 year old when he first came to Winside High School, freshmen were looked down upon, even severely harassed by the seniors of the school. One of the reasons for the problem was there were many actions of the students at that time that were unacceptable in later years. To Sam, he felt the school lacked guidance in discipline as some of the teachers were quite lax, others more demanding with the students in these classes showing better behavior. Mr. George Norris, principal at the time, was not known as a tough disciplinarian. Though there was a formal initiation day, freshmen, especially some of the boys, continued to live in fear of encountering senior boys who would harass them before and after school classes and especially lunch time. Some of the activities today would warrant police reports. Boys were taken forcibly at lunch time into cars parked near the school where some of the seniors would take down the freshman's pants and put leaves or shaving cream inside. One of Sam's classmates was even taken into a main street gas station and some senior boys and one student who had graduated the year before, rubbed grease around his private parts. Some of this harassment was no doubt damaging to the youngsters sense of well being due to the fear and apprehension it caused them. Students who knew of these activities were intimidated and failed to report to authorities whom they did not trust to do the right thing. Parents were not told often because the students feared the possible results.

Such behavior on the part of seniors was also true of individual undergraduate students in the classes. One particular girl in Sam's class was not popular, was teased quite often and many mean tricks like putting tacks on her seat or even sticking her with a pencil was not unheard of. Sam personally regrets being part of that cruelty which today would be called "bullying". Such hazing during the 50's was sometimes quite common in America in many areas of the country and deaths occurred.

The Letterman's club was called the "W" Club and at first Sam was proud to belong to it. Mr. Paul Krohn, the coach was the sponsor.

The worst example of harassment Sam knew about at the school was the "W" Club initiation night held at the Winside Auditorium under the supervision of Coach Paul Krohn. A major incident occurred in the spring of 1961. Though senior students may have done the stunts, Mr. Krohn was there and approved the entire thing. A new system was put into place by coach saying that *whoever worked in a sport to achieve a letter couldn't belong to the Letterman's club unless they went through an initiation.*

On the night the initiation was held in the auditorium, the new letter men candidates were whipped with belts, shocked with strips of tin wired to a battery since, when the youngster sat down, the power was thrown and their

butts were bare. They also had to suck a raw egg out of the shell using a straw. There were other incidents including putting bananas in the locker room toilet stool and the new letter men were forced to smell real manure while putting their hands into the water blindfolded. Many of the youngsters, when we grew to adulthood, would talk about these terrible events with regret and wonder that their coach actually sponsored and supervised such behavior. Also only one letterman refused to take part; Bud Wittler from Hoskins stood up to do the right thing and refused to attend. As far as Sam knew, no adults were ever told about the incident nor was the coach ever disciplined.

During off school hours, reckless driving, speeding and group fights were not that unusual. Drunk driving was so serious in those days that one student was killed in a car returning from a school sponsored field trip. Seat belts were not in older cars then and, if they were, consisted of lap belts only. Lots of students didn't use seat belts, some saying they were for "sissies". A classmate of Sam's brother, Dwayne Swanson, died when he missed a curve going 90 miles an hour north of Wayne, Nebraska where his car hit a tree. "Cat" Swanson died instantly.

Rock and Roll was the music in those days and lots of students would hang out after school at Nelson's Cafe on Main Street. Nelsons had cherry cokes and pin ball machines, banana splits and booths to sit in and eat or chat. Most of the guys with letter jackets were "popular" and were called "jocks" after the apparel worn during some sport events by the boys. Later, a popular TV show called, "Happy Days" patterned this era of young America.

Halloween...ho, that was a time for young kids who bordered on juvenile delinquents to "raise holiday hell" in town. Trick or treat meant mostly "trick" as an excuse for vandalism. Machinery was stolen, windows broken; the principal Mr. Retzlaff had gravel dumped into his gas tank one Halloween night while his car was at home in his own garage. A farm wagon was hoisted on the top of a barn roof; buildings with storm windows were tipped over with glass shattering!

One Halloween the mayor of the town of Winside at the time, Don Wacker, came up to Winside High School study hall with a couple of other town board members and took a number of "lawbreakers" out of school to help clean/pay for the damage done the night before. The students knew it was wrong but "group loyalty" was more powerful for the youngsters than doing the right thing. Butch Redel, whose father John was the town sheriff, was the kid to be with during Halloween because everyone knew that if his dad the sheriff caught them, he would likely not do anything because his own son was involved, at least that was the theory. Luckily, it was never tested!

Such 50's/60's tricks like driving a car on the railroad tracks, yes, Sam and a group of other boys tried it! All went well until suddenly they saw the lights of a train on the tracks at a distance. It was lucky that on-coming train did not hit them because the youngsters were able to turn off the rails and on to a country road just before the train came!

Such acts as drag racing, playing chicken with cars on the highway, chasing kids "out of town" who were students at another school or lived in another

town was fairly common. Mud flaps, glass pack mufflers, white furry dice hanging on mirrors, a green or red Christmas tree cardboard deodorant hanging somewhere in the car, side burns, greasy hair combed back Elvis style, smoking for some, going steady, exchanging class rings or a guy giving his letter sweater to his girlfriend having "lettered" in a sport, all these things were in an era that Sam lived through and experienced.

Sam graduated from Winside High School in 1961. His parents, Cliff and Elsa, gave him a gold Bulova watch for graduation, driving all the way to Sioux City to purchase it.

During his senior year at Winside High School, Sam at first applied to Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska since he was strongly influenced through his activity at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, where his family attended services. Sam was also the first altar boy in the new church along with his schoolmate Larry Brudigan. He also served as a member of the ushering team. Pastor Hilpert also encouraged him to apply but Sam's application was not accepted as his grade point average was not high enough. He then applied and was accepted at Norfolk Junior College in the nearby town of Norfolk where he began his quest in higher education.

## Norfolk Junior College Norfolk, Nebraska



### Jay Hawks

Fall of 1961 arrived and Sam enrolled at Norfolk Junior College in Norfolk, Nebraska. At the time, Norfolk Junior College was situated on the old downtown campus. During his first year, Sam lived at home on the farm five miles northeast of Winside and drove his 1959 Chevy back and forth to classes. When he found out Kenny Jaeger, another Winside area resident was also attending N.J.C., he and Kenny began taking turns driving the 18 miles one way. In the winter months, both students had alternate apartments to stay in during bad weather. Sam rented a room at the Koenig residence just a block from campus on the second floor of an older wooden structure which has since been torn down. The house was located right next to what was, at the time, a new activity center for the students called Teen Town, a popular place where lots of students would have lunch and socialize after classes as well as in the evenings.



Norfolk Junior College, is now located on a new campus and has been renamed Northeast Nebraska College, When Sam attended at the old site, the school was small in comparison in both campus size and school facilities. At one time, the main building used to be an elementary school. Other buildings were added on when N.J.C was first begun. The student lounge at N. J. C. was very small and located in the old administration building.

Sam's major interest evolved into the subjects of history and physical education and, by the time he finished his freshman year, Sam declared history his major and physical education his minor. His ultimate plan was to be a school teacher at the secondary level.

Academics were adequate though facilities were very limited as compared to the present day college. Ted Skillstad, Sam's English teacher had also been Johnny Carson's teacher. Mr. Skillstad had taught at Norfolk High School during the years Johnny attended the school.

The old college site had a weight room but it was very small and limited, again nothing like college facilities at Northeast today. One of the transfer students during Sam's second year was Preston Love who was in one of Sam's physical education class. Preston was about 6'5 inches and was originally an athlete from Omaha who transferred to NJC from the University of Nebraska where he had excelled. One day Sam asked him if he wanted to shoot free throws and find out who could get 10 baskets before the other person. Sam shot first and made one then missed the next. Preston followed by making 10 in a row which brought about a quick end to the free throw challenge.

Social life for the students during the two years Sam spent at NJC mostly consisted of going to movies, hanging out at Teen Town or in the student lounge during the day, studying in the NJC library, going to movies, having parties or going to dances.

Parties held often had liquor available though most of the students weren't of age. At one of these parties, a fellow student, Gary Webbelhaus from Laurel, who was a Golden Gloves boxer, had been drinking and chose to demonstrate his punch. Since he was a bit drunk, he ended up demonstrating on Sam, hitting him and breaking his nose! Sam didn't go to the hospital for treatment and it was only years later that he found his nose had been broken.

In his second year at NJC both Sam and Ken Jaeger decided they wanted to rent apartments rather than commute back and forth from Winside. Sam roomed first with Dave Steffen from Crofton and Darrel Vosberg from Plainview. For a time they roomed on Norfolk Avenue around 13th street, then later in a suburb on the north side of the city. Both of these rentals were basement apartments. Eventually Sam rented another basement apartment on 6th Avenue. Upstairs lived Sam's NJC speech teacher.

The second semester Sam shared an apartment with Jim DeBlauw and Don Asdemore, both from Crofton. Their basement apartment was just off First Street and was coincidentally next to the home of a former neighbor in Winside who came from the same area as Sam's father in Virginia. Sam enjoyed going to visit Pyatt Rhudy and his wife Kizzie and having coffee in their kitchen. Not long after Sam lived next door to them, Pyatt and Kizzie

moved back to Virginia where they lived out their lives. Both are buried in Jerusalem Cemetery where Sam has his tombstone.

There were many parties during Sam's sophomore year, some of them held in apartments. One of Sam's friends was Clark Addison, a student from Laurel. Clark wasn't an athlete but he did love to fight. There were times when, if Clark had a disagreement with someone, he would call them out and challenge them to a fist-a-cuffs. Sometimes, if there was a "rumble", some of the kids from Teen Town would go out to the parking lot and form a circle, watching the event unfold.

Lots of Sam's friends from Winside would come up to Norfolk on Friday night. Beer was the beverage of choice and, in those days Friday night teen dances were a favorite place to go. Held at King's Ballroom, teenagers from all over the region would be there and rock and roll bands would play. There would be a host of teenagers with different things on their minds. Some of them just loved to dance on that ballroom floor; some loved to watch or were too bashful to ask girls for a dance. Perhaps they didn't get asked to dance often. Some of the teenagers liked to fight. There were some Norfolk teens at the time that liked to go after the "country kids", harass them and challenge them to fights.

During the week, King's featured wedding dances. Ron and Sam even took dancing lessons at Kings. One of their instructors, Yolanda Mountjoy was a favorite teacher since she was a few years older and a very beautiful woman! King's was a well known dance hall in the region for 40 or 50 years at least. For many years, Sam's parents, Cliff and Elsa and their friends danced to the music of Guy Lombardo and Lawrence Welk, both famous band leaders of the era.

Good times were to be had at Kings by all but sometimes bad times happened too. One of those occasions was on a Saturday night in around 1961. The teen dance was the night before and Cliff had warned Sam and Ron, knowing they would go to Norfolk, to stay out of trouble while there. The very next Saturday night, a fight broke out at the entrance to King's involving Merlin Topp and Cliff Burriss among others. The Norfolk Police were involved and German Sheppard dogs were used by the police. A trial was held soon after and Cliff had to testify that he was hit by one of the policeman on his rib cage just under his arm. Sam and Ron used to tease Cliff about the incident whenever he would talk to them about staying out of trouble!

One popular activity for many young people was driving to Yankton, South Dakota, 60 miles north of Norfolk. These journeys could be dangerous for the youngsters. In those years, the legal drinking age in Nebraska was 21 and in South Dakota, 18. Teenagers at that age were allowed to consume low alcohol beer, even those from out of state. This meant that lots of teenagers from northeast Nebraska would drive the 60 miles on highway 81, across the Missouri River Bridge and enjoy bars and pizza places in Yankton. The problem came when there was too much drinking which sometimes led to unsafe behavior on rides home after wards. One student from Norfolk Junior College with the

last name of Shaffer, from NJC was paralyzed from his waist down after he was in an accident while coming back from Yankton with a group of friends.



**The former Cliff's Tavern located on Main Street in Winside, Nebraska.**

A fairly major event in the Burriss family in 1961 was when Sam's father purchased a tavern in Winside from Paul Zofka. The tavern was an old brick structure (bricks made in Winside) just west of Marilyn's Beauty Shop on Main Street. The beauty parlor was ran by Marilyn Monk and was located west of the Winside Auditorium. The price Cliff paid for what was to be "Cliff's Tavern" was around \$15,000.00. Sam could be found many a weekend working in the bar. His father would tend bar while Sam ran the lunch counter. Sam's job was to fry up and serve hamburgers and sell soup with crackers. Coffee was also available at the counter. Later, his mom Elsa would make homemade meals and bring in from the farm since there was not an active restaurant in Winside at the time. Elsa's home cooked meals were very popular in the area for several years. Additionally, Sam got to meet a lot more people from the neighborhood, since so many folks were customers at Cliff's Bar. He would now see many of them on a regular basis in the tavern.

Sam didn't date much in high school as he was a "late bloomer", maturing late. His first formal date in his senior year was with June Falk, a sophomore and a cheerleader for the "B" team. June's brother Jim was in Sam's senior class. The Falk family lived in nearby Hoskins. In those years, second level squads in basketball would play a pre-game before the varsity game. June, Sam, Sandra Wockman and Ron would sometimes double date those days. Sandra was a cheerleader and a good friend of Junes. Another friend of theirs from Hoskins was who went along, named Nan, ended up later on getting pregnant. She had

her child out of wedlock and told everyone she did not know she was pregnant until the birth of the child!

It is important to remember that, during those days, pregnancy meant that the guy was obliged to marry the girl, even if they were very young. There were other couples who ended up dropping out of high school after such a pregnancy in order to earn a living to support the child they had, "out of wedlock".

In Sam's second year at NJC, he had his first "steady" girlfriend. Her name was Barbara Quady and Sam met her as a result of his roommate Jim DeBlauw who was dating Barb's friend Dixie Unger at the time. Both girls were students at Burns High, now Norfolk Catholic. Barb was born in Crofton but her family moved to the North part of Norfolk since her dad quit farming and began selling insurance. The couple would be together for about two years, eventually "going steady" which in those days meant the young man would give the girl his letter sweater to wear or his class ring as a symbol of commitment.

Jim and Sam would sometimes finish classes at N.J.C. and drive to the high school to see the two girls after their classes were over. The four of them would go out to eat somewhere or drive around. Barb was soon introduced to Cliff and Elsa as well and brothers Bill and Ron. She was Catholic and Sam attended the Lutheran Church so that was a difference that mattered then since Barb's family was stricter in their faith.

In May, 1963, Sam graduated from Norfolk Junior College with an Associate of Arts Degree. His major was history and minor physical education. Cousin Leatha Tobias, daughter of Orville and Irm Tobias, was from Pilger and graduated in the same N.J.C.class with Sam.

During the summer of 1963, Sam worked as a farm hand for Eldon Thies, a neighbor who lived just two miles west of the Cliff Burris farm. That year, Eldon had a farm accident involving a power take off and one of his arms was mangled as a result. Eldon needed to hire someone to help him with farm work. Sam worked that summer for Eldon at one dollar per hour, the standard minimum wage at the time.

In the summer of 1962 and 63, Sam also joined "Richard's Rejects", a local league softball team playing on Hoskins Field. Sam played first base, the same position he had played in Junior Legion Baseball. The team was made up of area youngsters, mainly from Winside. They included Randall Bargstadt, Ron Burris, Dale Jaeger, Dean Jaeger and Larry "Tank" Wittler. This meant weekends spent playing sports and of course having fun as well with plenty of parties held after the games.

**Wayne State College**



## Wildcats

Address: 1111 Main St, Wayne, NE 68787, United States  
Phone: +1 800-228-9972

Sam enrolled at Wayne State College in Wayne, Nebraska as a junior in the fall of 1964. Wayne was a town of about 4,000 in population just 12 miles from Winside. Among the reasons Sam chose the school was its strong education program (formerly Wayne State Teachers College) since Sam declared as a history major and planned on being a school teacher. The fact that the college was "in state" meant the tuition was reasonable and of course it was close to home as well. Going there also meant he could continue to date his girlfriend from Norfolk, Barbara Quady and see his friends and relatives regularly. Sam quite often joined his former schoolmates from Winside or from NJC at parties or trips to Yankton. Sometimes going to movies or drive in movies in Norfolk, 18 miles drive. Dancing also continued to be a favorite pastime as well, including King's Ballroom on Friday nights.



### Wayne State College, Wayne, Nebraska campus.

At Wayne, Sam lived off campus, sharing a basement apartment near the college at the Erxleben residence. His roommates were David Warnemunde, who graduated one year ahead of Sam at Winside High School and two other male students from Iowa. Sam continued his program in history and physical education. Physical Education was chosen as a minor subject so Sam signed up for several physical education courses. At the same time, he continued to attend several of the Wildcats football and basketball games. Sam also joined the Young Democrats Club on campus as his interest in politics was growing.

One event he recalls vividly was being home for lunch one November day in 1963. While watching T.V, there was an interruption in the programming. Walter Cronkite announced that President Kennedy had been shot in Dallas, Texas! A follow-up announcement stated that the president had died. Along with the entire country, Sam felt the shock of this event which was to drastically change the history of the United States of America.

From the jump go, Sam didn't really adjust well to Wayne State. Part of it was restlessness as a result of so many years of schooling plus problems had appeared in dating as girlfriend Barb including the religious question plus the two of them were living further away with Sam in Wayne and Barb in Norfolk. Sam didn't really join in many activities at WSC or make many new friends being off campus and going home on weekends where he often worked on Saturdays with his father Cliff who had purchased Cliff's Tavern on the main street of Winside in 1963. The bottom line was that he was also getting restless.

As the first semester moved into second, Sam's grades went down as compared to what they were at Norfolk Junior College. This was an added frustration. By the end of the school year in May, 1964, Sam found that if he wanted to continue at WSC, he would have to attend summer school to try and raise his grades. He took a couple of summer classes, but that did not improve Sam's grades as he had hoped. He had thought about the military, but had always rejected that option previously, however

Shortly after the summer session was completed, Sam walked into the Wayne County Courthouse in Wayne, Nebraska, went downstairs to the basement office and volunteered for the Draft.

## Military Service

Sam volunteered for the draft in late August, 1964. He was thinking that he was ready for a change after three years in college and needed some adventure in his life. Sam had not talked with his family or friends about his intentions. Thus, after volunteering for the draft, Sam returned home and told his father what he had done. Father Cliff was not happy at all and said, "You'll learn something now!" and, indeed Sam was about to! It would end up being his biggest life mistake.

On September 10, 1964, which was his father's 54<sup>th</sup> birthday, Cliff took Sam to catch the bus from Wayne to Omaha for his induction physical. Sam had not even told his girlfriend of his plans, thus saying farewell to Barb was hard, as he knew that if he passed the physical in Omaha, he would go straight to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri for basic training. Still, she supported him in his decision. Father Cliff later said that seeing Sam off at the bus in Omaha was the saddest day of his life. In Wayne, while waiting for the bus, friend Larry Topp came by on his way to work at the bank. Later Larry recalled that morning.

Once arriving in Omaha to report at the induction center, Sam recalls that when some of the Omaha young men asked him about his status, he told them he had volunteered for the draft. One Omaha lad next to Sam said, "You did what?" Many of the guys were shocked since many of them were trying to avoid serving in the military, not joining as Vietnam was escalating! Sam passed the physical. Afterwards, he left Omaha by train immediately for U. S. Army basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. His formal induction in Omaha had been September 10, 1964. On this train ride through Kansas City, Sam met Ron Suing from Bloomfield who had also volunteered for the draft. They were to go through most of their army experience together and also become lifelong friends.

## Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri (Basic Training)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort\\_Leonard\\_Wood,\\_Missouri](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Leonard_Wood,_Missouri)



Fort Leonard Wood road and barracks in the 1960's.

"During the Vietnam War, Fort Leonard Wood became a virtual fulcrum of activity. Basic Trainees from around the country arrived at Fort Leonard Wood for Basic and One Station Unit Training (OSUT) prior to shipping out to South East Asia. This tradition of training enlisted soldiers and officers in the U.S. Army continues at Fort Leonard Wood to this day.

The recruits entered the Fort facility by bus where seasoned Sergeants met the men, forcing them to empty their pockets and give the contents to the commanders. The possessions were never seen again by the recruits. The Sergeant yelled at the troops: "The speed limit is 35 miles per hour"! The trainees had to run or "double time" everywhere they went and had to say, "Yes Sir" or "No Sir". In formation, the officers would stand toe to toe with recruits, yelling in their faces. All the troops were inoculated, got buzz haircuts and issued uniforms with boots.

Basic training was a real test for Sam but he made it through along with his friend Ron Suing. Both of them had gone to church their first Sunday on base and the chaplain asked during the service for anyone interested in being a

Chaplain's Assistant to see him at the end. Both Ron and Sam talked to the Chaplain and volunteered for the Chaplain's Assistance program.

Basic was tough for Sam because, as so many guys in basic those years, it was a world he hadn't known existed before. When inducted, Sam received early lessons in some of the harsh methods used to control young military recruits. The theft of all the new inductee's property they carried with them on that bus was just the beginning. Basic training at Fort Leonard Wood could be called "brutal" at times. The soldiers called it Fort Leonard Wood, **"Mi-ser-y" instead of "Missouri"**.

The barrack Sam lived in at Fort Leonard Wood was an old, pre WWII two story wooden structures. The buildings were heated with coal furnaces and, during cool weather; a "fire guard" had to be posted at night. The guards were trainees in the barracks like Sam and served four hour shifts.

Sam's company, Echo 5-2, was led by Platoon Sergeant Elkins. A majority of inductees were from the St. Louis, Missouri area and most were national guardsman. They gave Sam a bad time for being "U.S." or draftee but the real harassment was saved for the "lifers", those that volunteered for three years. These guys were labeled, "R.A." which stood for "Regular Army".

Training in 1964 included lots of full pack double timing and chanting various messages such as, "I've got a girl upon the hill, she won't do it but her sister will", Sound Off, One, Two, Sound Off, Three, Four, Sound Off One, Two Three Four, *One Two, THREE, FOUR!*"

A lot of time was spent at the firing range with M 14 rifles, as well as crawling in the low crawl pits. Physical training included using hand bars moving one bar after another; hand over hand until palms blistered. Sergeant Elkins was a, "grit your teeth", tough staff Sergeant from the South who was harsh but fair. He led us through bivouacs where we put our tents up and then struck them. There were live fire exercises with machine gun bullets firing over our heads. On one day, every trainee had to pull the pin and throw a live grenade over a wall. If there was any error in the exercise, the trooper was called a "bolo". The trainees donned gas masks and walked through some gas chambers one day and a few soldiers didn't put their masks on in time and had to leave quickly. During practicing with hand to hand combat, the Sergeant yelled, "What do you want?" and the soldiers would yell, "KILL". The Sergeant would yell, "LOUDER" and the soldiers would yell, "KILL".

"Louder".....KILL!

Troops performed Kitchen Patrol or "K.P". A group photo of his platoon was taken the first week and Sam wasn't in the photo because he was peeling potatoes on K.P. in the Mess Hall. Food was plentiful, hot and generally good with choices of both white and chocolate milk...all the troops would want. The P.X. was available to the soldiers and they could buy beer there. Mail was sent and received at "mail call". One day, Sam received a letter. The Sergeant saw it was from a female and asked who the woman was. Sam replied that it was from his sister-in-law and the Sergeant asked Sam out loud if he had sex with her, making this statement in front of the whole platoon!



Soldiers were trained to not call their rifles a "gun". If they did say the word gun accidentally, the soldier was forced to put one hand on his private parts and the other on his rifle and say, "This is my rifle, this is my gun. This is for shooting and this is for fun!"

At one time, Sam was bullied by his bunk mate and, in an assault, he got Sam's head between his knees and squeezed, injuring his jaw. Another time, he had an infection on his trigger finger and a young medic treated it by sticking a cotton Q-tip in the wound and around the finger joint which made it worse!



Interior of a barracks at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri in the 1960's.

After passing basic, both Ron Suing and Sam ended up receiving orders for Clerk Typist-Chaplain's Assistant School at Fort Dix, New Jersey. The conversation with the chaplain at Fort Leonard Wood many weeks ago had been for real!

Sam rode in an airplane for the first time on his trip to Newark, New Jersey, located not far from Fort Dix. The TWA flight was a propeller plane and unsteady weather meant a rough ride it!

Fort Dix was so much different than the post in Missouri. The barracks were old but renovated. Attending classes daily was routine. No more grenades and carrying rifles. Not long after arriving at their new post, both Sam and Ron went home to Nebraska on a two week leave for the Christmas/New Year holidays.

Prior to volunteering for the draft, both guys were dating young women from the Norfolk area. Ron Suing's girl friend, Mary was from his home town of Bloomfield and Sam reunited once more with Barbara Quady from Norfolk. Christmas was a lot of fun for Sam being with family, friends and his girlfriend of course.



**Barbara Quady was Sam's first girl friend.**

Brother Ron was home from the University of Montana where he was a freshman. Ron had joined Air Force ROTC at U. of M. One party that Christmas season was at the Junior Langenberg farm with son Gene Langenberg hosting. Randall Bargstadt, Ernie and Dale Jaeger, Richard and Dean Jaeger, Ron Burris, Linda Krause and others gathered for what was to be the last time for everyone from high school days to be together. After Sam was inducted in the military on September 10, 1964, he returned to visit his parents every chance he got. After awhile, he discussed this with Cliff and Elsa. They agreed that it was very good to come and visit them when they were still living rather than be present at their funerals. Over the years, it worked out that Sam came home every year, mostly during the summers. That was because as a teacher/educator, he tended to get time off during the summer months. Only during the year he was in Korea, the two years he was teaching in Singapore from 78 to 80 and a couple of summers when moving, did he fail to come back.

After their holiday stay, Sam and Ron traveled by train to Omaha. At Employ Field they boarded a jet for Newark, New Jersey. The two of them returned to Fort Dix to complete their Clerk-typist, Chaplain's Assistant course. It was back to typewriters in class, barracks duty, weekend passes. Little the soldiers know that neither of their relationships with their girl friends would survive the military commitment the young men had ahead of them.

**Fort Dix, New Jersey (A. I. T.)**



[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort\\_Dix,\\_New\\_Jersey](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Dix,_New_Jersey)

At Fort Dix, Ron Suing, Sam and other soldiers were trained as clerk typists and Chaplains assistance. Much of the time in the school for Sam was reviewing since he already took high school typing at Winside High School several years Sam found himself "going through the motions". Life in the army at Fort Dix still didn't change in many ways. The soldiers still had morning inspections and had to maintain their shoe shines and tight blankets on their beds in the barracks.



### **Soldiers at parade rest, Fort Dix, New Jersey in 1965.**

Sam still holds memories of the first sergeant at Fort Dix who used a ruler to measure the length of the soldier's hair and, if it was more than one inch long, the soldiers didn't get their weekend pass! The sergeant was formerly an airborne ranger and did all he could to keep the soldiers strictly disciplined! Sam and Ron visited New York City from Fort Dix, meeting Sam's Cousin Leatha Tobias as she was working for TWA at the time and had an apartment near Central Park. The two pals also journeyed to Norristown, Pennsylvania to visit relatives Sam and Grace Atkins and Cousins Evelyn, Sue, David and Patsy Atkins. It was like a "home away from home" for both Sam and Ron. They had great fun walking the snowy streets of the area and spending time looking at photo albums with Sam's relatives.

Eventually the 10 week training was over and both soldiers graduated. Ron and Sam received their orders at the very beginning of a troop serge in Vietnam so, when standing in formation one dark morning, orders were read for all over the world, many to Vietnam. Sam recalled he was standing in line at morning roll call. All of the schools nearby, including the radio carriers training group had their orders read. Almost all got Vietnam. It so happened that both Ron Suing and Sam got South Korea. Their good friend Learthen Dorcey, whom they had met at Fort Dix as well, also got orders South Korea.

The three soldier friends were flown to San Francisco where they began a 21 day slow journey by ship on the USS Mann, which was on its last voyage before being scrapped in December, 1965!



## USS W. A. Mann

The USS Mann hit a storm on the first night out so the entire shipload of troops, around 800 were all very ill. Sam recalls being on guard duty at night and seeing a metal file cabinet sliding back and forth in the hallway of the dependent's quarters. In the mess hall, apples and oranges rolled off the tables along with dishes and silverware. Down below, the bunks were full of sick soldiers, most of them vomiting. The latrine smelled so strong of vomit that Sam could barely stand to go in. Whenever he had the chance, Sam went top side to the deck just to breathe some fresh salt air from the Pacific Ocean around him. The weather was so rough however that waves constantly washed over the decks so that wasn't safe either! It was a hard introduction to the sea!

After the San Francisco portion, the ship stopped at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii for just 24 hours, Sam and Ron actually requested to go ashore but were denied as were all the troops. After the Hawaii stop, the Mann maintained its 21 knots as normal. Keelung, Taiwan was the next stop. Then we pulled in at Inchon, South Korea. There were 12 soldiers who had orders for Korea. Ron, Learthen and Sam got off at Inchon with the other approximately 800 soldiers staying aboard for the next stop...Vietnam. The Korean bound troops were off loaded on *landing craft*\* for the short journey to shore. Sam was never so happy to set foot on land in his life after that voyage!

*\*Landing craft* are boats and seagoing vessels used to convey a landing force () from the sea to the shore during an amphibious assault.

## Arrival in South Korea

After landing in Inchon, Sam, Ron, Learthen and the other soldiers carried their duffel bags on their shoulders and walked from the landing to a waiting 2 three quarter ton vehicle. Here was Sam's first view of Korea in January, 1965. The road was dry and dusty. Sam looked out the back of the truck and saw a Korean man peeing on the side of the road. Most of the people were wearing traditional Korean attire.

Eventually the soldiers were brought to a base with a high barbed wire fence around it. At the gate, Sam saw several young Korean women who waved and greeted the new troops. Sam realized these young women were sex workers and that soldiers would come out the main gate and choose the women they might want. Many of the soldiers at the base, including the Chaplain's Assistance were all in transit to various locations of military bases in the country. It turned out that Ron Suing, Learthen Dorsey and Sam were all sent north to 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Infantry Division near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) which roughly followed the 39<sup>th</sup> Parallel, dividing the two Koreas.



Map of the two Koreas showing the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

### First Cavalry Division, South Korea (The DMZ)



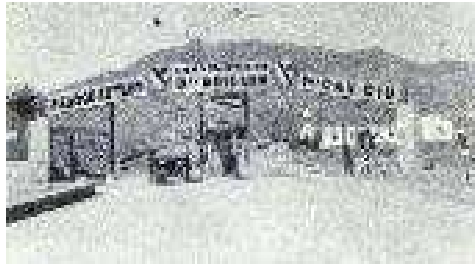
A Sentry posted at the 38 Parallel.

After arrival in South Korea, Ron, Learthen and Sam were sent to the First Cavalry Division operating 30 miles north of Seoul. Though placed in the division area, all the troops were at different camps. Sam was sent to Camp McGovern, Recreation Center #3. His boss was Chaplain (Capt.) Kohlberg.

## First Cavalry Division Shoulder Patch



At first, Sam stayed in the Chapel at Camp McGovern and didn't sleep in the barracks with the other soldiers. This was the case until about eight months into his stay. Then, while Sam drove Chaplain Kohlberg to Seoul for a meeting, someone had broken into the chapel. The *Colonel found out Sam had been sleeping in the chapel separately. He was immediately moved into the barracks and got guard duty too!*



**Main Gate at Camp McGovern in 1964**

Most of Sam's duties as chaplain's assistant at Camp McGovern consisted of driving the chaplain around when needed which included transportation by jeep to various chapels in the area. The Chaplain had a jeep assigned to him and it was Sam's job to make sure it was maintained by taking it to the motor pool for maintenance. Vehicles were serviced at the base motor pool and there were wash points where Korean civilian employees washed vehicles, usually near the rivers. Once in awhile Sam would get to drive a staff car, mostly to Seoul for the monthly chaplain's meeting or other locations though the jeep was used for their regular transportation.

Being in the infantry within sight of the mountains of North Korea was a whole new world for Private Burris. The good thing was that not only did Sam avoid going to Vietnam, being here instead, but also worked for an officer, the

chaplain. Though going on bivouac at least one week every month, he didn't have it nearly as rough as the regular infantryman.

One terrible incident did occur while Sam and Captain Kohlberg were on one of their field exercises, Sam had set up the chaplain's tent as usual when they heard an explosion and saw a big cloud of smoke rising from the other side of the near where they were standing. Sam and the Chaplain rushed to the area immediately. They drove to the explosion site and found out that two soldiers on a bomb disposal team were driving a 3/4 ton truck with a load of disarmed explosives from the Korean War. One of the shells was live and exploded. That set off the other shells and it blew the men and the truck all over the area. The shrapnel hit a large area on the side of the mountain. What the Chaplain and Sam saw were pieces of bodies including a boot with a leg in it on the side of the road. Arriving soldiers were assigned to pick up all the body pieces they could find in the area. Later there was a religious service for the two men who were killed. Sam had his camera and took photos in black and white of the memorial service held in the valley. Copies of these photos were sent to the wives of the two men, one officer and one enlisted man.

Roads were so dusty in the summer everyone had to use goggles to keep the dust out of their eyes. Except for the goggles, the driver/riders were a red brown color due to the dust. Then there was the rain. Driving through streams when bridges washed out meant the possibility of hitting a mine or shell left over from the Korean War just over 10 years earlier. These old shells would become dislodged and float down the streams during rainy weather.

One unusual incident happened while Sam was in the north. He was actually at another base, Recreation Center #4 and visiting the service center when, while exiting, he ran squarely into another soldier at the door. Sam looked at the soldier's name tag and it had "Grenz" printed on it, so Sam immediately said, "Larry!" and Larry, who went to rural school back in Stanton County, Nebraska with Sam said, "Sam"! It was great seeing each other again! Two former schoolmates and neighbors meeting on a base in South Korea wouldn't seem to have been likely.

## **Trips to the capital city of Seoul**



### **A street scene in Seoul, South Korea about 1966.**

The capital and largest city in South Korea is Seoul. Although Seoul was only thirty miles from the base where Sam was stationed, the mountain roads were dirt and ran through the center of many villages along the way. The homes of the rural people at the time were made of mud with straw roofs and mud floors. Most roads had ditches along the way dug so people would throw their waste water out. The driving was hot in the summer and wet and cold in the winter. Often the jeep top was down during the summer and the canvas top was put up in the winter. Winter roads could be icy, snow covered or muddy, depending upon the temperature and weather at the time.

Once in Seoul, the chaplain's assistants, like myself, got time off for the weekend, something they didn't get in the division up north where they worked seven days a week. The capital then was filled with small little taxis, lots of ox carts, vehicles of every description plus bicycles. Driving was a tough job just to avoid hitting anything by accident.

In Korea the only time Sam had breaks from soldering were these trips once a month when he drove the chaplain to Seoul where the chaplain had meetings with Chaplain's from other units. Once the assistant dropped off their chaplains, they were free to go around the Seoul.

Often Sam and his friend Ron Suing would go sightseeing together, including winter time when the two of them would go hot whiskey tea hopping. They would go from restaurant to restaurant trying to warm themselves in that



manner. There were the usual bars, restaurants and shopping centers though not anything like the modern ones of today. Some of the hotels offered hot tubs and massage which was really nice, especially in the winter. There were also lots of Buddhist temples and open markets too. Walker Hill Resort was the latest development in Seoul at the time. It had golf courses and served western food. Today it is called The Sheraton Walker Hill Hotel. It features 139 acres of nature and forest land with just under 600 rooms for guests at the resort. On one trip to Seoul, Sam met a high school friend from Winside, Nebraska, Larry Brudigan, who was stationed in Seoul as that time. Larry and Sam were the first altar boys at the dedication of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Winside and, for a time, the Brudigan family farm was located not far from Sam's parents. The two also went to high school together although Larry was one year behind Sam.

## Blue Lancer Valley



## Second Infantry **Division** Shoulder Patch



### United States Army Headquarters 2/38 Infantry near the Imjim River, South Korea

Just about mid way in Sam's service time in South Korea, some changes took place. His unit, the First Cavalry was no longer stationed in Korea but in Vietnam as the First Cavalry Air mobile. Soldiers didn't move, just the unit names. In the division, all the soldier's arm patches now became 2nd Infantry

which featured a Native American chief with a black background. About this time, Sam was moved from the 2/9th Infantry at Camp McGovern and posted north. His new post was just one mile, "As the crow flies" from the DMZ or 38th parallel. His new infantry unit was located at Blue Lancer Valley, the 1st/38th Infantry. He followed his chaplain, Captain Fred Kohlberg to the new base.



**Blue Lancer Valley, South Korea Forward Infantry Post, winter, 1965.**

Go to the following web address to see an excellent collection of photographs from Blue Lancer Valley the year Sam was there:

<http://www.bluelancervalley>

Blue Lancer Valley was a more remote infantry unit within sight of the North Korea Mountains. Units from the valley often went on patrols around the DMZ and spent at least one week of each month in the field on maneuvers. Sam lived in a small structure or "hooch" next to the chapel from which an excellent view of the northern mountains could be had. No recreation center here though there was a small PX, a theater and gym. Sam's duties remained about the same only infantry marked. There was also a Catholic priest here, Father O'Connor and his Chaplain's assistant Tom Antoine from Washington State. Sam recalls walking guard duty along the perimeter fence hearing the Korean music from loud speakers across the parallel and some U. S. soldiers who had deserted, crossed the line and now urged the soldiers south to leave or be killed. All this by loud speaker nightly!



**Fall, 1966**

**Photo was taken in the center of the road that runs through Nullo Ri. This road led eastward to the Turk compound then curved right to a conglomeration of villages including Nopae Dong and Camp McGovern.**

**Nullo Ri Village was located there because of the military presence in the area. There was a Turkish compound not too far down the road and then the larger American base. Many of the people who lived there serviced the bases one way or another. There were also Korean women in the village and many of the soldiers have lady friends in Nullo Ri. At Chapel Christmas service for Protestants in 1965, there were only three of four soldiers out of hundreds stationed at the base present. Good shares of them were in the village on pass. The same situation was true on weekends. If the soldiers didn't have duty or be on maneuvers, numbers would be in Nullo Ri. Soldiers up north in the infantry usually never took leaves or passes, especially to other countries. Most every base of any size in South Korea had civilian support if the bases were any size at all.**

**Japan the Philippines**



While at Blue Lancer Valley, Sam took two leaves of absence, one to Japan with his friend Ron Suing and another to Japan and the Philippines. Unlike the soldiers in the upper regions of the infantry in Korea who never took a leave of absences from their units, Sam and Ron did. Most went up to their bases after arrival, then south to Kimpo International Airport after their time was served and flew home. Ron Suing and Sam decided they were going to take advantage of their time by seeking leaves outside of South Korea with the Chaplain's approvals. Since both men were chaplain's assistances and the Chaplain's were officers, it wasn't that hard to get there leaves approved! Taking "military hops", which were free, was the way the two guys chose to travel on leave.

When they got to Japan, Sam and Ron were able to stay on U. S. bases without charge. The two of them couldn't believe the modern advances in Japan versus South Korea at the time which was during 1965 and 1966. The two of them loved going to the Ginza, to the U. S. O. Club, Tokyo Tower and travel on the train system in the country.

Sam recalls the first time he went into the U.S.O. Club and was asked to sign in. When he did, he looked at the name just above his and it was an American sailor from his home town of Winside, Nebraska named Cecil Nettleton. Sam had never met him because Cecil had graduated before Sam got to the high school, but knew his younger brother Kennard Nettleton. Unfortunately Cecil had already left the U.S.O. before Sam arrived so he and Sam did not connect and never did meet each other.

It was good luck for Sam and Ron to meet an American that was going to school in Japan. The American student was attending Wasada University so Sam and Ron got to visit a Japanese family he knew and were given a tour the campus where he went to school. They also visited the Kamakura Buddha and went inside the Buddha itself. Sam also took a train to Kyoto, the ancient capital. In the winter, the snow was so beautiful in all the parks and temples.

## Japan - A Second Trip

Sam and Ron returned for a second trip to Japan in the early part of 1966. The plan was, after a few days in Tokyo, the two of them to meet at the airport where they again had seats on a military aircraft to the Philippines. They spent a few days in Tokyo and were preparing to arrive separately at the airport. Sam arrived at the airport on time and waited for Ron. Soon the flight was ready to leave so Sam, thinking he would not have a chance to get another military hop to the Philippines, went ahead by himself. It later turned out that Ron arrived too late to board the flight.

## The Philippines, January, 1966

Sam took a local bus as shown below. He road by the famous rice terraces on his way up the mountain. The buses were very much like those he would ride in Samoa.





Sam was fortunate to get the military hop to Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines but missed his friend Ron Suing along the way. At Clark, Sam was Lucky to meet Captain Peter Pressman who was also stationed in Korea. Captain Pressman was from the Gramercy Park section of Manhattan, New York City. Sam was staying in a barracks on the base at Clark, but Captain Pressman, along with a Lieutenant friend of his, invited Sam to the Clark Field Officers Club, an invitation Sam accepted. The three of them then traveled to Manila together.

Sam was pleased to be in a tropical country having been in the winter weather of South Korea and Japan prior to arrival. Peter and his officer friend had reservations at the Manila Hotel, the best hotel in the country at the time. Peter invited Sam to stay since it was a large suite. Peter was a doctor in the military and knew some friends serving in the Peace Corps near Manila. His friends were also from New York. Sam was invited to go along with the group on a sightseeing trip. The gang rode with the Peace Corps Volunteers in their Volkswagen to Tagaytay to view the Taal Volcano and many other sites around Luzon. After leaving Peter Pressman, Sam took some tours on his own, including the University of Santo Tomas and the American Military Cemetery and Memorial which is 152 acres and has over 17,000 military buried there. Later

Sam also toured Malacanang Palace in Manila which was at that time occupied by Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos, Marcos having just been elected for the first time.

The next trip for Sam was a longer trip by local bus to Baguio City, high in the mountains north of Manila. The bus had wooden seats and open air windows. Along the way, the bus stopped at many stations and sellers displayed eggs called "balut", a Philippine delicacy which is a boiled duck egg with an embryo inside. The route the bus took was up a large mountain with long switch back drives but with spectacular views of the steep rice fields. Sam stayed at John Hay Air Force Base while in the city. Baguio was a smaller city in 1966 than now and very cool compared to sea level. The view from the air base was spectacular! In the city markets, election posters of Ferdinand Marcos were still posted on walls. Of course, after a week in the tropical islands, it was hard for Sam to return to Korea and the winter weather there.

## Back in Korea



1965

This photo of the chapel was taken facing east from the NCO Club area without the steeple. The coffee shop is above the chapel with the craft shop and EM Club behind. The laundry building and officers' quarters are in the far distance. The tank is in the picture's center with the barbershop in front of the gym and the playhouse at the upper right corner. Note that the chapel is without a steeple. The dark Quonset had no windows and is where the Chaplain's assistants, including Sam, stayed.

After the Philippines, Sam returned to Blue Lancer Valley for a short six weeks of duty. He remembers marking off the days on his calendar. The soldiers called Sam, and/or any other soldier leaving soon, "short", meaning

that soldier would soon return to "the World"(U.S.A.). Chaplain Kohlberg had already returned to the U. S. and a new chaplain was at the base. Tom Antoine, the Catholic assistant as well as Father O'Connor had already gone stateside.



## Returning to the United States

In March, 1966, Private first class Samuel Burris completed serving his U. S. Army overseas tour one mile south of the DMZ with the 2/9th Infantry Division in South Korea. He flew home from Kimpo Air Force Base to his destination, Karl Steffen Memorial Airport in Norfolk, Nebraska. At that time, Sam had less than six months to serve on an active duty time of two years.

Sam has this distinct memory of landing at Norfolk, Nebraska with Sam's parents and his brother Bill greeting him. Sam was in his winter dress uniform when the plane landed and, after greetings, the family went to Prenger's Steak House on Norfolk Avenue to eat. Some years later, Cliff asked Sam if he remembered what he had said that night while they were eating at Prenger's. Sam said he didn't recall. Cliff then told him he had said, "Here we are all eating steaks while soldiers are dying in Vietnam". For Sam, the war and his Korea experience were very much in his mind.

When the family arrived at the farm later that evening, five miles northeast of the village of Winside, visitors came. Art Monk and his wife plus their daughter Koreen. Koreen and Sam had attended Winside High School together though Koreen was one year older. It was quite an evening of chat but Sam noted very little time was really spent asking him any questions about Korea or



the infantry. Later Sam found this to be the case most of the time wherever he went. People around him dwelled mostly on talking about local subjects, not inquiring about Sam's experience on the DMZ far, far away. Such inability to share experiences for so many soldiers like Sam made it more difficult to readjust to the U. S. again. It was especially true for those coming back from Vietnam but Sam later realized that readjustment problems were not limited to Vietnam Vets and Sam was affected by what he saw in Korea too. Unknowingly, his hearing had been damaged seriously by the explosion on maneuvers near the DMZ plus another incident of almost being robbed in a rice field compounded by the accidental death of a four year old by a fellow soldier and friend. He was driving an armored vehicle and didn't see the little girl, striking her fatally. For that his friend was busted down and sent back to the U.S.

Sam did have a week or so leave before returning to his next post. Of course it was winter and Sam got together with his old friend Ernie Jaeger. As they often did, the two friends went to Norfolk or Wayne, the two nearest towns to drink a few beers. One incident reminded Sam recently of something he recalls about those days. The incident involved the burning of all of his baseball and football cards that he had collected growing up as a child. He didn't know that, later on, many years later, these cards would be worth thousands of dollars if not more. Before he cleaned out his room and burned these and other items, Sam's brother Bill told him not to do it and that he would regret it some day but Sam was in a depressed mood, took the cards out and burned all of them. Was it an act that resulted from a bad day or was it blowback from his time in the military, most recently in Korea?

## Redstone Arsenal, Alabama

For information on Redstone, go to: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redstone Arsenal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Redstone_Arsenal)



## Redstone Arsenal, Alabama Front Gate, 1964

After returning from South Korea and taking a short leave of absence, Sam was reassigned for five months to Redstone Arsenal, Alabama near Huntsville in the northern part of the state. Interestingly enough Learthen Dorcsey, who Sam and Ron had met at Chaplain's Assistant School in Fort Dix, New Jersey, was stationed together with Sam in Korea and now both soldiers worked in the same office at the main chapel on base.

Coming by bus to Redstone was just a whole different world than the infantry in Korea where Sam either stayed in the chapel (Camp McGovern), barracks (Camp McGovern) or in a "hooch" or hut as in Blue Lancer Valley (vintage Korean War).

At Redstone the soldiers stayed in upgraded housing. Everything was clean and modern. No guard duty, no going out for field exercises with infantry. No regular daily formations. The only people heard at early hours of the mornings were the marines marching in cadence outside the building at 5:00 am!



### **U. S. Army barracks at Redstone Arsenal about 1966. Sam spent six months at Redstone after duty in South Korea.**

The barracks were three to four story affairs built in stylish red brick. There were inspections but it wasn't like the infantry. In the infantry, if one made a mistake a second lieutenant might yell in a soldier's face making the soldiers wish for a good set of ear plugs! Not here.

Lert and Sam both worked in a large, stylish base chapel in a spacious office. Sam got to drive the staff car often since he was chaplain's assistant for the married housing area chapel located some distance away.

The unit softball team Sam played on had real uniforms! It was almost like a regular 8:00 to 5:00 job with weekends and holidays off, except for Sunday when the chaplain's assistants helped at religious services. Still, Sam had the

blow back. At one point, he was talking in his sleep so much that he was sent to a psychiatrist for a few sessions to talk out his feelings.

On a positive note, Sam was promoted to Specialist four, the rank equivalent of a corporal.

In June, 1966 Sam took a one month leave from his duties at Redstone to return to Nebraska as his brother Ron was getting married to Linda Krause in Hoskins. Linda and Ron had been dating for several years and Ron was attending the University of Montana at Missoula at the time. Sam served as best man at the wedding. Now that was a pleasurable duty! Linda, who had been working in the telephone office in Norfolk, was able to transfer to the office in Missoula. Gilbert and Lucille Krause, Linda's parents, gave the couple a new 1966 Chevy as a wedding present.

After the wedding and an enjoyable stay in northeast Nebraska, Sam headed south in his 1959 brown and white Chevrolet Bel Air which he had owned prior to entering military service. Of course it had Nebraska license plates on the car and Sam didn't think too much about it until he was driving through the mountains of Mississippi. On a mountain road he met a car driven by a Caucasian man perhaps in his 30's or 40's. The man did a u-turn on the highway and started following Sam. Sam kept driving and when the man got closer, Sam sped up. The driver did the same. This went on for several miles on this mostly deserted road. Finally the man passed him with a roar. Sam realized that man's reaction to "northern" license plates meant he needed to be more careful and alert in the South!

Another stop for Sam was the Cotty College campus in Nevada, Missouri, where Sam's cousin Ann Engle had once attended. Sam completed a drive through Mississippi, a very scenic mountain state and on to Arkansas.

While in Little Rock, Sam visited Little Rock Central High School, the scene of a confrontation in 1957 between Governor George Wallace who had tried to stop the integration of the high school and President John Kennedy, who had called in the National Guard out to enforce the law at the time.

Sam arrived at Redstone Arsenal without incident but there was a problem when he reported in. He was told the Captain wanted to see him right away. When Sam went into the office and saluted, the Captain responded with anger. It seems Sam hadn't studied his leave papers very well because he had been AWOL for one day! Of course the captain was wondering where he was. Other than a tongue lashing, no punishment followed!

With just three months left in service, Sam rather enjoyed his duty. He and his friends did a trip to Nashville where they toured the Andrew Jackson home, the Grand Old' Opera House and other sights. Sam certainly learned that the south is a beautiful part of the country. There were other trips off base,

including one experience Sam wrote up and sent out an e-mail in 2006. Below is a copy of the write-up.

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## Driving South to Birmingham – 1966

### Arriving at Redstone Arsenal, Huntsville, Alabama

Orders had come down in February for PFC Burris to report to Redstone Arsenal, Alabama as his next duty station. It should be a fairly good way to end a two year hitch Sam thought, certainly a whole lot better than serving five months in Vietnam!

Sam may have been pleased with his reassignment to Redstone Arsenal, but one of his friends stationed in South Korea was not so happy getting orders and that was Learthen Dorsey who was black. In April, 1966, The Civil Rights Movement was in full swing in the U. S. and there had been riots and violence in several states in the Country including Alabama. When Lert got his orders for Redstone, he told friends Sam and Ron (Ron Suing from Bloomfield, Nebraska), another chaplain's Assistant, that if he were to be stationed in Alabama, he wouldn't leave the base! Of course Learthen WAS assigned to Redstone too.

Learthen arrived at Huntsville, Alabama in April to the reality of a post in the South. Being on base every weekend when almost everyone else went out on pass soon meant Learthen got bored even if it was like a resort compared to duty in South Korea. Besides, despite his vow, friends kept urging Lert to join them on pass off base. Eventually he gave in to those urgings.

Driving to the nearest town of Huntsville with a group of soldier friends out for pizza was Lert's first excursion off Redstone. All went well, though Lert mentioned afterward that, while he was in the restaurant, he had felt some people were staring at him which made him uncomfortable at the time. Still he enjoyed the trip and the pizza.

A few weeks later, Learthen agreed to go along on a planned trip south to Birmingham. The gang wanted to watch an NFL exhibition football game between the New York Giants and Cleveland Browns. It took some effort, but friends again convinced Learthen to join the group. That was a major step because Learthen wasn't even a football fan!

A couple of days later, four soldiers on pass left base early in the morning. The group included Sam, Lert, Junior Charbonneau and another friend from Cleveland. After about an hour of early morning driving the guys stopped at a restaurant in a small Alabama town to eat breakfast.

As the group entered and sat in a booth, a young waitress (Caucasian) came over to the table and said, "You all can stay, (meaning the three Caucasians in the group) but you have to go (meaning Learthen)". The restaurant was refusing to serve Learthen because of his skin color! At that point the other young guys told the young woman that *if Learthen wasn't allowed to eat, then none of them would either*. She refused to budge so they all walked out. Everyone was very unhappy at the event that had transpired, especially Learthen! He said he would stay in the car next stop and we could bring food out to him. The rest of the group tried to dissuade Lert from staying in the car, but he wouldn't hear of it.

In the next town the three Caucasian soldiers went into a restaurant in the second town and asked the owner if he served Blacks. The owner looked outside at Lert in the car and said, "Serve Blacks, of course we do! Tell your friend to come on in!" So Learthen was able to eat breakfast inside with the rest of us.

Finally to Birmingham! The football game was great and, due to the smaller crowd, Sam and friends were able to get lots of autographs of major players on both the New Your Giants and Cleveland Browns teams. Everybody had a great time before the game started *by purchasing programs and passing them right down the line for signatures where the Giant players were sitting on the sidelines!*

Sam and his friend from Cleveland were especially pleased as they got Lou Groza's autograph when the two of them ran out on the field just as Groza finished practicing his place kicks. Sam's Cleveland friend was really excited and said, "You can't even get close to Lou in Cleveland!"



**Louis Roy Groza, nicknamed "The Toe", was an American football placekicker and offensive tackle who played his entire career for the Cleveland Browns in the All-America Football Conference and National Football League.**

After the game, everyone headed north to Huntsville in Sam's 59 Chevy. Sorry to say, another similar incident happened on the return trip when the group

went in to a truck stop to eat! We agreed to eat there because we assumed that a truck stop on a major highway couldn't deny Learthern food. We were wrong! As happened previously, everyone walked out since the waitress at the truck stop wouldn't serve Learthen either! While the group was leaving, Junior told the waitress, "You can take your Southern hospitality and go to hell!" Later Sam would recall he felt lucky they got out of the place peacefully!

Back on base at Redstone Arsenal, all of us breathed a sigh of relief to be coming back without further incident. As a result of incidences one the journey, the problems that were encountered, meant Learthen didn't leave the base until his discharge the following September.

Sam finally completed his time at Redstone Arsenal. Having finished his military service with the U. S. Army as well, he loaded all his personal possessions in his car and drove off the base. That day he was "freed"! September 9, 1966, Sam was very excited and from the main gate, for the next few miles *just drove along the highway yelling and screaming he was so happy! Free at last after two years in the U. S. Army! It was a great day!* Sam drove most of the way back to Nebraska on interstate 70. While he wanted to do a few tourist stops, he had to get to on to the northwest as he had decided to enroll as a senior at Idaho State University in Pocatello, Idaho.

## Idaho State University

Address: 921 S 8th Ave, Pocatello, ID 83201, United States  
Phone:+1 208-282-0211

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idaho\\_State\\_University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idaho_State_University)

Electing to continue his education under the G. I. Bill, Sam enrolled as a senior at Idaho State University, Pocatello, Idaho in the fall of 1966. The G. I. Bill at the time allowed Sam \$100.00 per month in school tuition, books and fees. He was soon to take advantage of this benefit for both his bachelor and



### **Masters Degrees.**

Driving the 1959 brown and cream colored Chevy, Sam drove across Nebraska, Wyoming and into southeast Idaho to start the 66-67 year as Sociology major. Assigned to Gravelly Hall next to the Student Union Building (SUB), he settled into the 2nd floor Room. After a week or so, Gravelly Hall was in need of a Floor Manager and Sam took the job. One of the benefits was having his own room but there was no pay involved.



## **Student Union Building at Idaho State University, Pocatello**

It was fun in the dorm and good friends were made as well as good times had. Once Sam had cold water thrown on him by another student while taking a hot shower! A student also short sheeted his bed too!

The 1968 election was coming up and George Romney, a presidential candidate spoke at ISU as did General Maxwell Taylor, a commander in the Vietnam War. Star Trek was one of the most popular programs on television. There was only one T.V. set in the dorm and that was in the lobby so students came down to watch. Food was served in the Student Union Building or S.U.B. One of Sam's friends was John Turner, a runner on the track team. John was from Boise, Idaho. Another friend was Dave Claiborne from Gooding, Idaho. Linda Runz, freshman from Idaho was a friend too. Another friend of John's was Judy Welch, who Sam had the biggest crush on but never dated! Other friends included John Simpson and The twin Perriera brothers from California.

Switching his major to Sociology from history, the year was really a "just got out of the army" time for Sam. He took nine hours first semester and ten hours the second semester. Pocatello gets really cold in winter so Sam recalls sitting in classrooms in some of the older buildings with the sound of the winds whistling through the structure!

It was interesting that Sam had just got out of the U. S. Army when an incident happened a few days before school started. Here he was, trying to rejoin civilian life again when who should he see on campus but his old first

sergeant from Fort Dix days! This was the very sergeant who used to measure soldiers hair and, if there was a hair longer than one inch on any soldier's head, that soldier had his weekend pass canceled! Of course that made the first sergeant *very unpopular* with the troops! Sam saw the top sergeant several times but always avoided him! Another acquaintance he met was his old jeep mechanic from his army days at Blue Lancer Valley in Korea who was from Idaho and going back to school on the G. I. Bill as well.



**Gravelly Hall men's dormitory. Sam stayed here for the 1966-67 school year. He was the third floor student manager which meant he got his own room.**

Most of the students at I.S.U. were from the Idaho region with at least one student in Gravelly Hall, Joe from Lincoln, Nebraska. Football season was in full swing at the "Spud Bowl", the old football stadium, since replaced. Sam enjoyed a fruitful social life with such a light academic load. Activities included taking the "Weber Train". It had been a long tradition for ISU students to ride on a train to Utah to support the Bengals football team in their game against Weber State. Of course there was lots of food and partying all the way down and back.

"Beer Softball" was another activity played in the waning summer like days of fall, and a keg of beer was always ordered for the occasion. The rules stated that each player had to take a drink of draft beer before and after every play, catch, run...well, there were a few inebriated players after a couple of innings! The mid sixties were also when "panty raids" were popular. The guys on campus all went to the girl's dorms and the girls were to throw a pair of their panties down to the guys. During this activity, some of the groups of male students were in a frenzy running from dorm to dorm!

Another happening at ISU was Sam's Brother Ron and wife Linda visiting from Missoula. Ron was attending the University of Montana as a Forestry and then Sociology major. Linda was working for the telephone company in Missoula. The couple came to visit Pocatello when University of Montana played football against ISU at Homecoming. That next summer, Sam stopped by Missoula on his way visit to Nebraska.



During winter, Sam was one of a group of campers who journeyed to Yellowstone National Park for a camp out. Since it was the last couple of days before Yellowstone Park closed, there was snow on the ground....*plenty of snow on the ground* and freezing temperatures too. Everyone slept in tents and used sleeping bags to keep warm. The guys got a close view of a bear when it jumped up on its hind legs on Sam's car! It was a fun time being in nature for a weekend.

That Christmas, Sam took a train home, traveling back across Wyoming to Columbus, Nebraska where Cliff and Elsa picked him up and drove back to the farm near Winside. Of course it was really nice for Sam to be back since the previous Christmas for him had been spent in South Korea only one mile from the DMZ! When Sam got on the train at Columbus, he saw Sue Topp who was going to Denver as she attended nurses' training school there. On the way back to Pocatello, the train stopped in Cheyenne, Wyoming. The station was just a block from the Wyoming State Capitol. Sam decided to walk up to see the building during the train layover. Going up the stairs, he came to a wall with individual photos of many Wyoming state legislators, one being his Uncle Gerhard Jacobson who had married Aunt Annie, grandma Dohren's sister. It was kind of a neat feeling for him to see his uncle's photo hanging there just at the top of those stairs. After staying for a bit, it was back to the train and on to Idaho.

Basketball was a favorite sport for Sam so he often attended the Idaho State Bengal's games. That year, the Bengal's players wore a black arm band on their uniform when they played Brigham Young University because of that school's discrimination against blacks. Under church rules at that time, Blacks were not being able to reach the highest level of heaven (later changed by a vision the head of the Mormon Church had to reverse the church rule).

By May of 1967, spring had arrived and Frisbee was played on the campus mall in front of Gravely Hall. Sam's year at ISU was about to come to an end. By this time, he had decided to change majors by going back to the education field. He would soon return to his original history major and continue physical education as a minor.

Sam had traveled to Boise during the previous school year and really liked the campus at Boise College, so it was transfer time for him after only one year at "Pokey"(nick name for Pocatello! Sam packed his car again and drove to Boise where he enrolled in summer school. It would turn out that of all the colleges and universities Sam attended, Boise College (Now Boise State University) was his favorite.

# Boise College

Boise College, (now Boise State University) is a public research institution in Boise, Idaho. Founded in 1932 by the Episcopal Church, it became an independent junior college in 1934, and has been awarding baccalaureate and master's degrees since 1965.

: 1910 University Dr, Boise, ID 83725, United States

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boise\\_State\\_University](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boise_State_University)



In the summer of 1967, Sam enrolled at Boise College. Boise College was a smaller campus at that time. It was more intimate and easy to get to know many instructors, workers and fellow students there. Sam enrolled as a transfer student from Idaho State University. He was a senior majoring in history with a minor in Physical education.



**The Administration Building at Boise College as it looked in 1967. It was one of the original buildings on campus built in 1940.**

The entire time Sam attended Boise College, he worked on the grounds crew on the campus. The job of the grounds crew was to mow, weed eat, trim the grass, do the flower beds and generally keep the campus beautiful. The boss

was "Saik", which was short for Saiki, since he was ethnic Japanese. After a few weeks of work, Saik became confident in Sam's work on the grounds and noted that he worked independently. Many of the employees were younger students and only worked for the money so that, if Saik turned his back, they would "take a rest". Sam however actually enjoyed the work. Perhaps it was his farm background in Nebraska that helped give him a "green thumb"! It wasn't long before Saik gave Sam the key to the work shop so that he could work extra hours anytime he pleased, even on weekends. Earning one dollar per hour, a standard but an adequate wage at the time, Sam was able to work more hours and earn more as a result.



### **Boise State University is located near the Boise River.**

After work on Fridays, the grounds crew workers usually headed for a bar. The guys tended to go to the same bar on Capitol Boulevard. Lars, one of the crew, had a Volkswagen painted yellow with a big banana painted on both sides that said, "Chiquita". He was a cool guy who talked a bit slowly but had a great sense of humor. With all the characters he met, the job turned out to be one of the best memories of Boise College!

Sam actually drove home during the later part of the 1967 summer session. He had problems immediately as while driving through Mountain Home, Idaho, his engine had locked on his 1959 Chevy. Sam called his dad to ask what he should do. Cliff told Sam to pay to have the engine repaired. He did so and was able to spend a couple of nights at Mountain Home Air Force Base, as he was a veteran, and later in the old Mountain Home Hotel where he enjoyed all the photos of well known people who had stayed there.

After a few days, the engine was repaired and he was on his way. Once in Nebraska, he had less time to spend as he soon returned to Boise College to begin the first semester of the 67-68 year.

After registering, Sam was back in his favorite major again, history. One of Sam's history professors was from China. He enjoyed his History and physical education classes, getting to know many of the athletes and coaches.



## Fairmont Junior High School

Address: 2121 N Cole Rd, Boise, ID 83704, United States

Phone:+1 208-854-4790

Sam spent the second semester of the school year teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade American History under Coach Steve Van Ocker. Sam taught American history and was working with Fairmont physical education classes. At the time, it was one of the newest schools in Boise.



**The Falcons**

A few years later, his head teacher was hired to coach the Borah High School Basketball team and had a fine career there for many years.

While teaching his 9<sup>th</sup> grade class one day, Sam looked out the window at the playground during recess and one of the students "mooned"! Mooning was the rage at the time when an individual pulled down their pants and showed their bare rear end towards someone. It was a popular thing to do in 1968.

"Streaking" was also popular. Streaking was running naked in a public place. For example, Johnny Carson had someone "streak" his Tonight Show and there were even records set. Some streakers tried to set the record for the longest streak of a shopping mall in the U. S.!

During the semester Sam was at Fairmont, there was a faculty vs. student basketball game with the 9<sup>th</sup> grade team playing the teachers and staff. Even with Mr. Van Ocker playing, the faculty still lost by one or two points! That was one of the most exciting basketball games Sam could remember playing in!

Now it was time for two summer school sessions at Boise College. Sam stayed off campus in a house on Warm Springs Avenue, one of the older more prestigious addresses in Boise for many years. The upstairs level in the one room apartment cost \$25.00 per month. Downstairs lived the landlady Mrs. Rockwell, a very nice person whose husband was recently deceased. Her husband was a fishing partner of Coach Lyle Smith, at the time the new athletic director at Boise College. The house was right across the street from a vacated fraternity house which had a nice swimming pool in the back yard. Since it was vacant, Sam very much enjoyed swims in that pool during his stay on Warm Springs.

A highlight about this time was a couple from Winside, Dale Langenberg and his wife who stopped to see Sam on their vacation. Not long after the Langenberg's left, Sam moved into the one bedroom just across the hall in the same Warm Springs house paying \$50.00 per month for his rent. The apartment had a kitchen attached. The bedroom/living room had a unique bed that could be pulled down for sleeping at night and when one awoke, it could be put up against the wall again. A mirror was built in to the bottom of the bed. It was quite an antique!



***Albertson's Stadium –Boise State University***



**Coach Lyle Smith. The photo was taken about 1978.** He served as the head football coach at Boise Junior College—now [Boise State University](#)—from 1947 to 1967 (except for military duty),<sup>[4][5]</sup> compiling a record of 156–26–6 .

Boise is the capital of Idaho and largest city so there were more activities there including tubing down the Boise River, which ran right through the Boise College campus. Sam did this journey one weekend with a few military veteran friends he met while attending classes. This group did a lot of drinking as compared to other friends Sam had in those days. Still, since Sam was recently discharged himself, he had things in common with veterans. It was common in those days for vets to hang together the idea being that they understood and shared similar experiences. Some of the vets had recently been to Vietnam and discharged.

After leaving the Army in September, 1966, Sam was asked to and did join his hometown Winside, Nebraska American Legion Post. It wasn't long however that he learned more about the situation in Vietnam. Being opposed to the war, Sam wrote a letter declaring his resignation as a symbol of protest against the War. 1968 was an election year remembered for many things but one being the fact that Lyndon Johnson refused to run again. Soon a new president, Richard Nixon was elected on the Republican ticket.

## Romance and Marriage

Meeting and dating a fellow education major, Linda Eichelberger from Boise, was a life altering experience for Sam during his senior year in college. Linda was the second daughter of Lynn and Esther Eichelberger, her sisters being Ruth and Carol. Her parents were both originally from the farm community of Kuna, Idaho, not far from Boise.

Both Linda and Sam were to graduate from Boise College in 1968. The couple met at a pizza parlor at a joint activity between the Boise College "Circle K Service Club" which Sam belonged to and the Valkeries Service Club which Linda belonged to. Linda and Sam enjoyed their chats by the fireplace at the pizza parlor and a couple of days later, Sam called Linda for a date. The two hit it off well and became a couple for the rest of that school year. Linda's plan after graduation was to enroll in a stewardess school for Southwest Air Lines in Texas while Sam was interested in applying for a teaching position in the northwest.

By the time they had received their degrees in the graduation ceremony that May, both of them made a decision to stay together. About this time, Sam

had an interview at McLaughlin Junior High School in Vancouver, Washington for an intermediate school history position. He was offered a contract and was also asked if he knew anyone with a German major since there was an opening at Vancouver's brand new Columbia River High School in the northern part of the city. Linda then decided to go for an interview and was also offered a position. After a discussion, they decided to accept the two jobs offered. The two planned for a summer wedding prior to the start of the new school year in Vancouver. One immediate problem was that the conservative Baptist minister at their church refused to marry the couple because Sam didn't testify that he was, "born again". Eventually they did get a younger and more liberal minister who agreed to perform the ceremony!

After graduation, Linda took a German immersion camp course she had already planned to go to while Sam did a session of summer school. Before the wedding, Linda was given several wedding showers where she got lots of gifts.

The couple was married on August 17, 1968 at the Mt. Whitney Baptist Church in Boise. Sam's parents Cliff and Elsa Burris came from Nebraska for the wedding as well as brother Bill who was ring bearer, and friends Randall Bargstadt, Gene Langenberg and Ernie Jaeger from Winside who served as best man. Brother Ron Burris was in National Guard training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma at the time and couldn't attend the wedding. The bride was given away by Lynn Eichelberger with Carol Eichelberger serving as bridesmaid. Cousin Shirley Eichelberger caught the garter thrown by Linda. Sam and Linda decided to put Sam's 59 Chevy at Uncle Frank Eichelberger's garage so no one would bother the car. Seems some of the cousins found out though, went to the garage and put pebbles in the hub caps. Wow, was there a noise when the couple backed out of the garage!



**Sam and Linda Burris after the marriage ceremony at Mt. Whitney Baptist Church in Boise, Idaho August 17, 1968.**

Linda and Sam signed teaching contracts at Vancouver, Washington to teach for the next two years at salaries of \$6,600.00 each per year, very high salaries at the time. Sam taught social studies, typing, English and Reading as well as being the assistant track coach at McLaughlin Junior High School. Linda taught German and English at Columbia River High School and sponsored a German Club on campus.

## McLaughlin Junior High School

Address: 5802 MacArthur Blvd, Vancouver, WA 98661, United States  
Phone: +1 360-313-3600

1968-1970





**Entrance to McLaughlin Junior High School in the 1960's**



### **Mac High Colors (Pioneers)**

When Sam and Linda first moved to Vancouver, they stayed at an apartment on 4<sup>th</sup> Plain Boulevard however there were problems with spiders especially in the bedroom at night. As a result, they moved to another place off the main thorough fare and much quieter. Just adjacent to them at the new apartment complex was George and Marcie Strauss who had recently been married and had a one year old baby. George was from the Vancouver area and had served in the Air Force in Thailand. Marcie was originally from Beatrice, Nebraska. The couple became friends, playing tennis and cards in the evening and having dinners at each other's apartments.

When Sam and Linda first moved to Vancouver, Sam drove a 1959 Chevrolet and Linda had a Chevrolet Corvair. Sam traded his car in after a few months and bought a new 1969 Chevy custom made from the factory. It was blue with a white and black interior and white vinyl top. The Camero with a four speed on the floor shift and 350 engines, total cost just \$3,000.00.

Both Linda and Sam enjoyed their jobs. Sam liked his principal, Jack Slater and vice principal in Jack Grace. It was during the Vietnam War era of course and some students at Mac Hi had a sit in to protest the war. When this event

was reported to the office, Mr. Slater's said that if they wanted to sit in the halls, let them. After awhile the students got bored and went back to class. There were weekly sports nights for the faculty at Mac Hi. Usually the men played basketball half court and the women played volleyball on the other end. It was great fun. The staff also had regular parties or socials. I recall one wine tasting party in Portland at an old mansion along the Willamette River. Sam got so drunk on wine that Linda had to drive home!

Sam smoked a pipe and cigarettes now and then when he and Linda first got married. He smoked at times after the couple moved to Vancouver. Linda got really unhappy about this after awhile since no one in her family either smoked or drank. Finally Linda said to Sam, "Either the smoking goes or I go!" That's when Sam quit smoking and hasn't smoked to this day!

A tragic event at Mac Hi was the death of one of his fellow teachers, Mr. Bob Fielder, who taught math. Mr. Fielder was a retired army sergeant and entered the field of education after retiring from the military. Mr. Fielder smoked and drank heavily and had a bad heart as well. One day, he was teaching his class at Mac High when he excused himself to go out to his car and get his nitroglycerin medication. When he didn't come back, a student went out to find out where Mr. Fielder was and found his body lying on the front seat of his car with his nitroglycerin bottle nearby.

A big assembly was held at the Mac Hi gym a few days later. That assembly served as a memorial for Mr. Fielder and was a very sad event with most students openly weeping. It was probably one of the most touching things Sam experienced.

Sam was kept really busy teaching and, in addition, was the assistant track coach his first year under Ron Sudvick, another teacher on staff originally from North Dakota. The teams first year, 1968-69 were good and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> at district. One issue related to the star athlete on the team, Daby Sherman. He was warned many times about missing practice and not working with the others on the team. He was often not coming to track practice and also not fully participating. Ron and Sam usually met every Friday after track for beer and sausages at a bar in Vancouver called Dew Drop Inn. Finally, after several warnings, Daby was removed from the team for the rest of the year. In the long run that act paid off since the next year as a ninth grader, Mac High won the District Meet and Daby led the team.

One scary day was when early in the morning when Sam found out from another teacher that Linda had been in a wreck on Interstate 5 while going to work. The Mac High teacher had passed the incident on the road going to work. It turned out it was only a fender bender but at the time it sure gave Sam a fright.

When Sam first started teaching in 1968 at McLaughlin Junior High School in Vancouver, Washington, he and his then wife Linda both joined the National

Education Association. Sam had heard about the NEA since his relatives, Lillian and Don Jones were both teachers and very active in the organization, attending every national convention almost every year. On their way or way back, they often stopped in Nebraska to visit the Burris relatives.

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The logo for Trans World Air Lines (TWA), featuring the letters "TWA" in white, bold, sans-serif font centered within a solid red square.The year "1970" in black, bold, sans-serif font centered within a solid yellow square.

While still in Vancouver, Linda applied and was accepted for training as an airline stewardess for **Trans World Air Lines (TWA)**. Both Sam and Linda resigned their positions at the end of their school year in Vancouver and Linda attended her training that summer in Overland Park, Kansas. Linda had wanted to be a stewardess for many years having passed up a chance to do training initially back in 1968 when she married Sam. Linda drove her Chevrolet Corvair. Her route took her from Vancouver via Boise to Overland Park, a suburb of Kansas City, Missouri. She did very well in her training and enjoyed

the experience. Out of a class of 18 stewardesses, she finished number one. All went well for her in that she was placed at New York City flying out of the surrounding airports, mostly JFK.

Linda and Sam were very excited about moving to New York City. Being placed there after her training meant it convenient for both to drive to Nebraska and then on to New York. The couple drove Linda's Corvair knowing full well what might happen to the more expensive Camaro in the "Big Apple".

In August, 1970, the couple moved to Kew Gardens, Queens, New York City, one of the Burroughs outside Manhattan. The Burroughs village, Kew Gardens is best known as the site of a murder, that of Kitty Genovese. The crime took place just a couple of blocks from their building near the Kew Gardens Public Library.



**Kew Gardens, Queens, New York City subway station which Sam used to go to work in Manhattan and other locations while he and Linda lived in New York City.**

Linda soon began flying routes between New York and various European countries. Soon she ventured to cities such as Paris, London and Madrid. Meanwhile, Sam worked part time in Manhattan and other sites for several temporary agencies.

As an indication of the difference between New York City and Winside, Nebraska, the building where they lived on seventh floor had a suicide one day when someone jumped off the top of the building and landed on the parking lot below. The next day, they searched the newspapers but there was no mention of the event that they could find. A routine schedule of sorts was worked out for both of them after the first couple of weeks. Sam, working for part time agencies, would take the New York Subway into Manhattan most of the time to work while Linda was flying to Europe. When both were together, they would tour around the city and surrounding area visiting many sites such as the Statue of Liberty, the Empire State Building. They went to professional tennis matches at nearby Forest Hills and also enjoyed attending plays on Broadway such as "Man of LaMancha" and seeing the Rockettes perform at Radio City Music Hall.

The two of them visited Uncle Sam and Aunt Grace Atkins, sister of Cliff Burris, in nearby Norristown, Pennsylvania as well as Morgantown, West Virginia to visit Ron Burris and wife Linda who had recently had a baby, Chad Burris. It was easy to either drive or take a train in and around the New York City.

Sam's Linda also had a cousin living north of the city and Linda and Sam visited them too. It wasn't all fun however. Linda found it grueling sometimes since the hours and demands of her job were heavy, especially the double crossings

when she flew to Europe, back to the U. S., turned around and did the same thing again. For example, once she flew to Europe and came back to Philadelphia. Sam drove there where he and Linda stayed in a hotel in the city. She would then fly back to Europe. Sometimes Linda would have time to visit Uncle Sam and Aunt Grace and sometimes not. If she didn't, Sam would visit them before he returned to New York. After a few days, Linda would fly into the New York Airport and pick her up.

A real plus was that Linda was able to use her German successfully while in many of the European countries which strengthened her language. She also experienced countries like Spain and France which broadened her knowledge of Europe and the cultures there. Sam however wasn't able to share in these experiences. He did have his own New York happenings such as working for a law office in one of the towers of the World Trade Center. For two weeks, he worked on the 61 and 62 floors. Sam recalls looking out the window and seeing the Statue of Liberty way far down!



**The twin towers as they looked in 1971 when Sam worked there.**

Sam learned to love the sound and feels of the city. He loved the hot dogs for sale by vendors on the streets and buying slices of pizza for 25 cents while doing deliveries for say, Colgate Palmolive. Of course while Linda was in the city, the couple attended Broadway plays and liked sitting in on television shows as part of the audience. Visiting West Point Military Academy and the Empire State Building were examples of outings they made. They attended a New York Yankees game with the Minnesota Twins and saw the New York Jets play football when Joe Namath was the quarterback. After six months however, Linda was terminated by the air line along with everyone else in her class due to TWA budget problems.



The Capital of San Juan

## Puerto Rico

### Territory

Puerto Rico is a Caribbean island and unincorporated U.S. territory with a landscape of green mountains, waterfalls and the tropical rainforest of El Yunque National Forest. It's known for its white-sand beaches and coral reefs, popular for snorkeling, diving, surfing and sailing. In San Juan, the capital and largest city, the Isla Verde area is known for its beach bars, nightclubs and casinos.

When the T.W.A. budget cuts happened, the two of them used her airline discount to fly to Puerto Rico for a vacation, thus escaping the New York winter. They loved their stay in historic San Juan, taking tours and going to beaches on the island. The couple was also impressed with the old Spanish forts and history as well as the food.

Upon their return to New York City however, they decided to pack up and head west, seeking to relocate in Boise, Idaho. At the time, both of them agreed they had enough traveling for awhile. Most of Linda's family was in the region and they thought they could hopefully pick up teaching jobs in the Boise Independent School System midyear. A U-Haul was rented, which Sam towed behind his car while Linda drove the Corvair. The car almost got stolen two times in the city but in both cases, the thieves couldn't keep it running!

Their winter trip took them to Nebraska for a stay at the farm northeast of Winside.



It was snowy and cold when they got to Winside and Sam almost got stuck on a dirt road driving north from Highway 275 to the farm. Linda and Sam made it safely home to the farm northeast of Winside and enjoyed Christmas with Sam's family

Ron, Linda and baby Chad came from Morgantown as well. They reunited also with old schoolmates including Randal and Connie Bargstadt and Ernie Jaeger to mention a few. They then headed across the state of Nebraska, Wyoming and on to Idaho.



**The Wayne County Court House in winter, Wayne, Nebraska**

Initially, they stayed with Linda's parents Lynn and Easter Eichelberger. At first, having come in the middle of the school year, no teaching jobs were available in Boise. Sam and Linda lived in the Garden City section of Boise in a mobile home. It was the first time either one of them had lived in a structure like this, but it got them through the winter. Both did substitute teaching for the semester while applying for jobs for the next school year.

**Hillside Junior High School** and **Capital High School** 1971-74



**Hillside Junior High School, Boise, Idaho**

Address: 3536 W Hill Rd, Boise, ID 83703, United States

Prior Phone: +1 208-854-5120

In August, prior to the next school year, they were both successful at getting employment as teachers. The couple spent the next three years living in the city and teaching in Boise Independent School System. Sam taught social studies at **Hillside Junior High School** and Linda taught German and English at **Capitol High School**.

**Hillside** was one of the best middle schools in Boise Valley. Sam taught 7 - 8 - 9<sup>th</sup> grade social studies at the school and was 7<sup>th</sup> grade girls basketball coach one year. After getting full time teaching jobs, they had moved from Garden City to an apartment on 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue in the old section of downtown. The apartment was small but nice. The couple that rented to them was very friendly and Sam even went to their home to watch basketball games during the N.B.A. finals. He was a Lakers fan and the team was strong in those days. Being in Boise meant lots of family gatherings with the Eichelberger and Strobel families. That included all the holidays like Christmas and Thanksgiving. Sam usually rode the two miles to Hillside by bike except in the winter when he got a ride with a fellow employee, Leroy Hansen, the social worker at the school.

Sam enjoyed his three years at Hillside, perhaps being more involved or at least equally involved as he was at Mac Hi in Vancouver. During the first year, Sam had a schedule that had him moving to different classroom every period so moving around kept him busy. He would usually come to the school on weekends to get everything set for the students including bulletin boards. Sam enjoyed his students a lot. One activity he ran was "Current Events" where students cut articles out of the newspaper and presented them to the class. These sessions led to lots of discussions, sometimes with heated debates. One time, Sam was called into the principal, Mr. Wilson's office because a parent complained that he had encouraged homosexuality in the class during one of the classes. Generally he discussed almost any topic so Sam was lucky to only get one complaint! At that time, Mr. Wilson urged him to be more careful in the future.

Field trips were another activity and Sam's class took some interesting ones including a visit to the Governor's Mansion where his class got to meet the governor of Idaho. The Boise City and County Jail was a neat experience too. In that field trip, the guide asked if anyone was willing to get locked in a cell. The students all shouted that they wanted "Mr. Burris" to! He was in the cell for a couple of minutes and found it not to be a very comforting experience. That's probably what the students remembered most!

On another field trip for the ninth grade "American Society" class, the students visited a retirement home and paired off with each team visiting one retiree at the home. Both the residents and the students really loved that one because when they got to class the next day, all the students compared notes



on their senior citizen, one of them being Lilly Eichelberger, an auntie of wife Linda!

In his home room period, the students had a real public fundraiser with the parent's help. They were able to purchase bicycle racks for the school by selling recycled paper, newspaper and other materials. This effort led to a newspaper article, including a photo, in the Idaho Statesman.

Wife Linda taught English at **Capitol High School**, at the time the largest high school in the state. Hillside was a feeder school to Capital so many of Linda's students had brothers and sisters at Hillside. Linda enjoyed teaching at Capitol even though she herself was a Borah High School graduate. Borah was the main city rival of Capital High.

In the summer there was water skiing since Uncle Frank Eichelberger had a boat and skies. On weekends, the two families would get together and water ski at various lakes in the Boise area. Ron, Sam's brother came to visit more than once. Ron had graduated from the University of Montana in 1968. He was employed in a small Montana town as a social worker while wife Linda was working as a telephone operator. He had joined the National Guard and had trained in Boise when Sam was attending Boise College. He and Linda came to visit in Boise.

About this time, Linda and Sam joined Zero Population Growth, an organization favoring no couple having more than two children to control population and save the earth from damage. Sam was president for over a year. Usually ZPG met on the campus of Boise College since there were several staff members who served on the club who were either faculty or students. Activities included riding in the Earth Day Parade in Boise and other events.

Linda and Sam attended Boise College activities like football and basketball games since they were graduates and fans. By 1970, the new Bronco Stadium was used, the old wooden stadium having been torn down. Sometimes they were able to get good seats on the 50 yard line at the new Bronco Stadium. Linda's sister Carol would occasionally attend Boise College basketball games with them.

Sam attended city council meetings too being interested in politics. Trips to hot springs in the mountains of Idaho were fun! These were outdoor hot springs in the winter. It sure was cold going from the pool back to the dressing rooms with ice in ones hair at times!

Sam also joined the YMCA to stay in shape during the winter months even learning how to do back flips on the trampoline.

**Mexico**

In the summer Of 1973, Sam and Linda did a three week trip to Mexico. The trip started on the border by train which took the travelers to Guadalajara, Mexico City and on to Merida and the Yucatan. They also spent a few days in Acapulco where and watched divers go off the rocks into the ocean.



## Map of Mexico

Mexico felt like a whole different world for Linda and Sam. Merida and the ancient ruins were very impressive. They climbed the Castle, Teotihuacan and many other ancient sites on their trip.

The trip south started by train from Nogales, Mexico to the city of Guadalajara is a city in western Mexico. It's known for tequila and mariachi music, both born in Jalisco, state of which Guadalajara is the capital. Guadalajara's historic center is dotted with colonial plazas and landmarks like the neoclassical Teatro Degollado and a cathedral with twin gold spires. The Palacio del Gobierno houses famous murals by painter José Clemente Orozco. From there, Sam and Linda traveled to Mexico City and then Acapulco. Lastly were Merida, Yucatan and the area of so many ancient ruins the country is known for.



## Ruins of Chechen Itza (The Castle), Yucatan

Chechen Itzá is a world-famous complex of Mayan ruins on Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. A massive step pyramid known as El Castillo dominates the 6.5-sq.-km. ancient city, which thrived from around 600 A.D. to the 1200s. Graphic stone carvings survive at structures like the ball court, Temple of the Warriors and the Wall of the Skulls. Nightly sound-and-light shows illuminate the buildings' sophisticated geometry.



## Teotihuacan

City in Mexico

Teotihuacan /teɪˌoʊtiːwəˈkɑːn/, also written Teotihuacán, was an ancient Mesoamerican city located in a sub valley of the Valley of Mexico, located in the State of Mexico.

Unfortunately, "Montezuma's revenge" or in this case, food poisoning laid both Linda and Sam out. Possibly the bean soup at the Merida Hotel could have been the culprit. Anyway, they had to take an early flight from Merida, Yucatan, and return to the U. S. to get treated. Linda was so ill, she had to be taken off the plane by wheel chair. Eventually, the two were hospitalized in New Mexico before returning to Boise.

Eventually, in Boise, the Sam and Linda moved to a larger, two story apartment with more space. This was a two story structure with living room and kitchen on the bottom floor and bedroom with bath upstairs. There was extra land in the back for gardening too. It was great having fresh ear corn served on the table! There was so much that Sam and Linda froze some for the winter. They often went to visit the Lynn and Esther Eicheberger family, sometimes helping to mow their lawn or just visiting. Linda's sister Carol came over often as by now she was attending Boise State (Boise College was changed to Boise State University in 1970).

In 1973, Linda's father Lynn would undergo heart surgery at Boise Hospital. He was the third person in Boise to have the procedure. Sam and Linda saw him right after wards and he was so pale with all the tubes in his nose and

mouth so that they both thought he had died! Of course he hadn't! Lynn lived until age 86, passing away in 2008!

About this time, Sam applied and was accepted in a graduate program at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona in the area of *Guidance and Counseling*. Sam always felt grateful to Linda since she encouraged him to *Consider working for an advanced degree.*

## **Masters Degree in Guidance and Counseling**

## **Northern Arizona University at Flagstaff**

**1970 - 1973**



**A view of the N. A. U. campus from the air**

**Flagstaff is a city in Arizona that is host to Northern Arizona University. It is surrounded by mountains, deserts and ponderosa pine forests. It's also a gateway to the San Francisco Peaks, home to Arizona's tallest mountain (Humphreys Peak) and the Arizona Snow bowl ski resort. Nearby, Wupatki National Monument has Native American pueblo sites, and Walnut Canyon National Monument is dotted with their cliff dwellings.**



**Seachrist Hall, the Men's Dorm at Northern Arizona University**

Each summer Sam and sometimes Linda would drive down from Boise to Flagstaff and stay for the summer, taking classes for one quarter. On his first trip from Boise to Flagstaff, he drove through the scenic state of Nevada to Las Vegas where he stayed overnight. Sam and Linda had visited there before so Sam was familiar with the city. They couple had usually stayed at Motel 6, and, at the time a new chain which had clean, modern rooms for only \$6.00 per night.

Las Vegas also had Roosevelt Dam and the Howard Hughes Ranch, both very interesting to see. Leaving Las Vegas, Sam drove across the dam and on to Flagstaff where he was housed at Seachrist Hall.

The rooms in the dorms at Seachrist were set up for two males to a room. Sam enjoyed his six week course in Guidance and Counseling and adapted well to N. A. U. His roommate the first year was a returned Peace Corps volunteer who had been to Belize. His second year was Mike Stevenson from Illinois. Mike and Sam formed a friendship that lasted several years.

One year Sam's wife Linda joined him (1972) and the couple stayed in married housing on campus. Another year, Linda attended Arizona State University for classes and the couple would get together in Phoenix. The other two years, Linda took classes at B.S.U. Whatever their activities; they still arranged a few weeks off to visit Nebraska the other half of the summer.

Sam made many friends at Northern Arizona University and even hiked the Grand Canyon twice. On his first hike, he and his friend Brian hiked down Kaibab and up Bright Angel Trail in one day. Yes indeed, and Sam had blisters to prove it! The last 8 miles were straight up to Bright Angel Trail with water available at three mile and mile and a half.

Sam did a second hike of the Canyon the following year, going down North Rim with a friend and up Bright Angel. The second hike was done after a long drive around the canyon, about 200 miles, for the drop off by another friend Gregg. The actual hike started in the late afternoon and was done by moonlight.

It was a bit spooky for the two hikers as they kept thinking about there being rattle snakes on the trail but it was certainly much cooler than the previous daytime hike the year before! Sam and his friend did meet a few other people who were using the cool of the night to hike up. The group members told them that they always hiked at night due to the high daytime temperatures. On the north to south rim hike, the guys slept at Phantom Ranch, located at the bottom of the Canyon along the Colorado River. Arriving early in the morning, the two of them slept on park benches. Hiking the Grand is special because hikers get to meet people from all around the world with the views being spectacular! Completing the hike itself is a major undertaking physically, mentally and emotionally. Sam borrowed some hiking shoes from another student on the first hike and learned to always wear his own shoes that have been well broken in first!



**A view showing Indian Garden and Three Mile from Bright Angel Trail, Grand Canyon, Arizona.**

Along with friends, Sam also hiked Sunset Crater and enjoyed Bryce Canyon. Sunset Crater is now closed due to environmental damage done when hikers step and rocks slide down the side of the crater. Flagstaff itself is a very interesting and growing city. There are lots of parades, many including Native Americans from the Navaho tribe. The Navaho reservation is very near "Flag". One summer Sam counseled a Navaho student during his practicum. The students were on a special summer trial basis and, if they did well enough, could enroll at N. A. U. The campus itself had very good facilities including the Field House which was an indoor sports complex with basketball courts, a running track and areas for volleyball and badminton.

## DIVORCE IN IDAHO

Though in many ways, the marriage Linda and Sam had was successful, one overriding issue divided the couple. Linda wanted children. Prior to marriage, the two decided not to have children for five or six years, then deciding the issue as to whether to go ahead. Sam, over time had made a decision not to have children and wasn't in favor of adoption either while Linda wanted a child of her own. That made it very hard to compromise.

This issue had grown more and more important as time went on and the couple continued to feel differently on this issue. Eventually, the decision to divorce was made and the couple drove to Gooding, Idaho in March, 1974. The divorce was done there with each of them having their own lawyers.

During those days, divorce wasn't very common and so the couple lived together until the end of the school year. During the weeks prior to the end of second semester, Sam had decided to join the Peace Corps after attending summer session at the University of Arizona, Tucson. Linda did not really want Sam to go and had no plans, hoping for reconciliation. When it was finally time for Sam to leave, the separation wasn't easy for either of them. In the end, Linda asked him to stay, but Sam packed his car and departed, driving south to Nevada.

As Sam looks back now, he realizes that he was "25 going on 15". Another words, he wasn't really mature enough to marry and Linda, at 21 was no doubt unprepared as well. They had dated only a year prior to marriage, being separated for part of that time.

## Signing Up For Peace Corps

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United\\_States\\_Peace\\_Corps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Peace_Corps)

During the period they were divorcing, Sam had become very interested in the United States Peace Corps and had applied through the Peace Corps recruiter on Boise State campus. A married couple at Hillside Junior High School, where Sam worked, had also joined the same organization.

In truth, ever since Sam had spent a year in South Korea back in 1965, he had been interested in returning to the Asia/Pacific region. Now he saw the Peace Corps as an ideal situation since he qualified for positions and he could do service as well. After acceptance, there were three positions in three different countries to decide upon. Sam accepted a position at Teachers Training College of Western Samoa as a teacher of history. The job involved teacher training which he was interest in. Sam experienced having a student

teacher who had taught under Sam for one semester during his last year at Hillside Junior High.



## Peace Corps Logo

Former wife Linda stayed in Boise and continued teaching at Capital High School for a number of years. As of the time of this publication, her main family members are still in the Boise area so it was natural for her to stay. Eventually she met and married a teacher from Boise High School. Linda decided to change careers and worked in promotions for Ore-Ida Potatoes, one of the larger companies in the state of Idaho. The couple had one daughter who graduated from Brown University.

Throughout the years, Sam stayed in touch periodically with his former father-in-law Lynn. Lynn's first wife Easter had died of a brain aneurism in the late 1970's at which point he married his second wife, Virginia.

Sam reconnected with Lynn and former sister-in-law Carol on a return trip to Boise in 1978. They continued to contact each other periodically through the years. Sam wrote a letter of apology to Linda in 1995 but never received a reply. After than he telephoned and e-mailed both Lynn and Carol on occasion.

In 1974, Lynn had become one of the first persons in Boise Valley to have open heart surgery. After all those years, his heart problems finally did catch up to him in 2006 when he passed away. Just prior to his death, Lynn as honored by the Governor of Idaho and other dignitaries for medals he never received earlier since Lynn had served in the U. S. Army in the Philippines and the Ryukyu Islands in Japan where he was wounded during World War II. During his life, Lynn had enjoyed being a pilot and also ridding his Harley Davidson motorcycle around the country, often accompanied by his brother Frank. Lynn had worked as an engineer for the Idaho State Highway Department before he retired. His daughter Carol had her career with the same department in computer technology. She has also retired.





*Lynn Eichelberger was honored in 2006 with the presentation of two WW II medals. With him in front are Linda and her friend Bonnie. In back is wife Virginia, granddaughter, Linda's husband, Carol Barton with her husband Dean Barton and Ruth Card. Not long before his passing. Lynn received the medals he was supposed to have gotten in the 1940's.*

## The University of Arizona at Tucson

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University\\_of\\_Arizona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Arizona)



**View of the campus of the University of Arizona at Tucson. Sam did two sessions of Summer School in 1974.**

Prior to leaving for the Peace Corps, Sam attended two summer school sessions at The University of Arizona in Tucson. Most of his classes were in Physical Education and Psychology. A good number of his fellow students in the P. E. classes were athletes at U. of A.

Sam strengthened his minor in Physical Education by taking golf, handball and other courses in the subject area. It was while he was sitting in the club house at the Tucson Golf Course after completing his class that he saw on T. V. that Richard Nixon had resigned as President of the United States.

Sam stayed in Kaibab-Huachuca Hall on the campus at U. of A. His neighbor at the two summer school sessions was Herbie Kay. Herby is best remembered by the guys at the dorm as the student who had a pet boa constrictor, which he kept in his room and sometimes took to classes. Once when Herby came to visit Sam next door, the snake wound itself through the springs of Sam's bed! How is that for a problem?

His neighbor across the hall named Ray had been in the Marines but was injured seriously at Paris Island while training and got a discharge. He then enrolled at U. of A. after the injury. Ray was very angry at the Marine Corps since he told the story that he almost died at basic training due to ill

treatment by his sergeants and then lack of follow-up medical care. Another resident in the dorm was Gregg who was from New York. Sam and his friends spent many a weekend on outings or going to night clubs or bars. One time Sam went out to lunch with Herbie in between his classes and the gang "kidnapped" Sam, traveling south to Nogales, a small city near the border of Mexico. Herbie's family had a summer home with a swimming pool overlooking the city there. The house was a luxurious one. Sometimes the guys went down to Nogales to spend time at the house and then travel around the area. Sam didn't want to go that particular day though because he would miss a class but the guys didn't care and drove to Nogales for an overnight anyway. Other times, while in Nogales, the crew went across the border to Nogales, Mexico which was very different as compared to the American side. There were signs of poverty everywhere. Prices of both food and drinks at restaurants were much cheaper than on the American side. That is why Sam and friends enjoyed crossing the border to go to the restaurants. It was during this summer at U. of A. that Ray offered marijuana to the guys. Sam rarely smoked it but did add marijuana to brownies which he baked in his pop corn popper! Some do not know that you can get "high" on Marijuana brownies! A favorite drink of students in those days was "Tequila Sunrise". Available in Tucson were bottles of Mexican tequila with a worm in the bottom of the bottle!

## Preparation for the Peace Corps

By the end of summer school at the University of Arizona, Sam had already been accepted into the Peace Corps and was assigned to the South Pacific nation of Western Samoa (now Samoa). It would not be until October, 1974 however that he would actually be going to his assigned country.

At the end of the summer quarter, Sam left Tucson and headed to Boise, Idaho with another stop in Las Vegas along the way. He returned to the apartment that he and Linda had rented to collect his belongings and take them to Nebraska using a u-haul behind his 1969 Camero. Linda was in summer school at Arizona State and Sam had stopped to see her before he left the state. After spending some time with family and friends in Nebraska, he decided to take a break and drive to visit his friend in Illinois.

While at N. A. U. his final year, Sam's roommate was Mike Stevenson from Peoria. Sam journeyed through Iowa and stopped to stay at Mike's parent's home. It was great seeing Mike again. He then drove on to Springfield and from there to St. Louis. Sam stopped at the University of Missouri to visit with his former high school friend and classmate Cheryl Behmer who worked as a psychologist there before driving to Kansas City. There he stopped to see

the Truman Library before taking the scenic route full circle to the farm in Nebraska.

After the long journey, Sam felt happy being with his parents again on the farm northwest of the small village of Winside. By that time, he had received more information about the next step in his serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer plus a letter had arrived telling Sam that he had been accepted as a Peace Corps volunteer. It was later confirmed that he had been placed as a social studies teacher at Teachers Training College (TCC) in the capital city of Apia.

## Denver Colorado (PRIST)



In mid August, 1974, after a plane ticket arrived in the mail, Sam left to attend a Peace Corps "PRIST" which was short for "pre-staging". The PRIST was held for three days at a hotel in Denver, Colorado. At the PRIST, volunteers had an opportunity to meet other volunteers as well as people from Western Samoa who had come to talk to the attendees about their island nation.

There were over 84 possible volunteers who came to Denver. In 1974, the Peace Corps era was a time of America reaching out in a peaceful way on a larger scale as proposed by President John Kennedy in the early 60's. Although in some ways an "impossible dream", congress past and supported it as thousands of volunteers experienced for the first time being immersed in another culture with all of the results and/or consequences.

At the PRIST, Peace Corps staff included a psychologist who interviewed and screened the potential candidates. There were also several Samoans who talked to the perspective volunteers about what life was like in the islands and a bit about how the volunteers would be living. In the group were three people in their 80's, and at least one in her 60's. The three in their 80's, Harold and Bertha Soderquist and Cordelia Cox along with Trudy Ferrick, in her 60's, would all end up serving in the country.

Less than 10 of those at the PRIST dropped out of the program after hearing about the country and what their jobs would entail. Sam enjoyed the event and was beginning to anticipate going to the Pacific islands. He was impressed with

his fellow volunteers and the Samoans who attended. He left the conference for Nebraska excited about this new adventure.

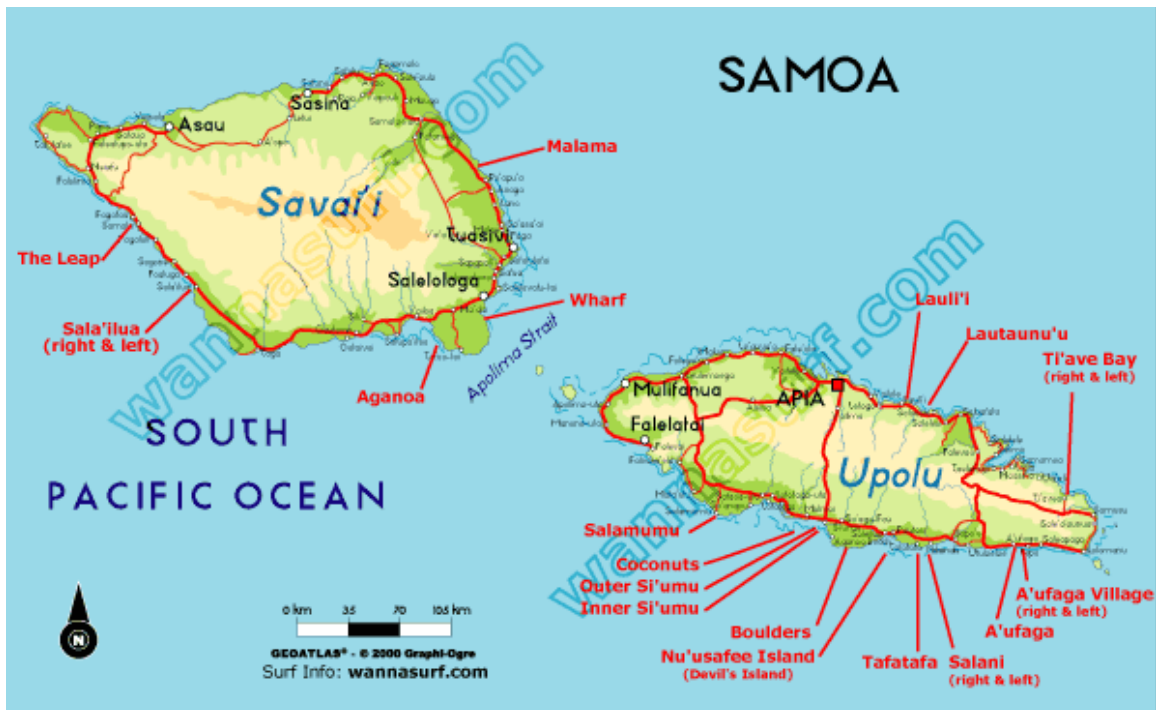
A couple of weeks later, a letter arrived in the mail with an airline ticket to San Francisco. Sam flew there in October and met many of the same people who were at the staging in Denver. It was then on to Hawaii, a change of planes and a five hour flight to Pago Pago, American Samoa.

## Samoa 1974-1976

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samoa>

**“On November 1, 1974, Peace Corps Group 15, composed of 77 volunteers (the largest Peace Corps group ever assigned to Western Samoa) arrived at Pago Pago International Airport on a Pan American Airways Boeing 707 at 4:20 a.m., en route to Faleolo Airport, Western Samoa.\***

\*from the American Samoa Historical Journal



After a five hour flight from Honolulu, the group of 77 volunteers landed in Pago Pago, American Samoa. Since the landing took place at mid morning, it was dark and seemingly desolate as the plane coasted in. The volunteers stepped out of the plane into a cool, humid, jungle smell of American Samoa! It had been a long haul from San Francisco via Honolulu. Since it was a short couple of hours until daylight, volunteers were all asked to sleep in open "file" or Samoan native huts located on the airport grounds! It was a miserable, mosquito ridden time for everyone. There were Samoan woven mats over the stone flooring in the fale. Many volunteers slept fitfully in their clothes fighting off the mosquitoes. No mosquito nets were supplied to members of the group.



Finally daylight arrived. Volunteers awoke and a Polynesian propeller plane landed to ferry some of the volunteers to Faleolo Airport in Western Samoa as one plane couldn't seat the whole group! Sam was among the group left behind who had to wait and take the second trip over the 90 miles to be delivered at Faleolo Airport. At the airport, a bus was waiting to take the volunteers to the Hideaway Hotel which was on the south side of Upolu Island.



**Flag of Samoa**

Training for group #15 was rigorous. One week of language and cultural training in the isolated Hideaway Hotel on Southern Upolu Island and then everyone was assigned a village. The food at the hotel was quite good however. One group of volunteers had a close call during this period of training as they took a canoe out and got hung up on the reef. Several of them were cut by coral including Jeff Erickson who would later be assigned to the same school as Sam. Volunteers experienced their first earthquake during training at the Hideaway when, while in a class inside the main building, all the lights and the whole structure started shaking!

A lot of the volunteers at the Hideaway got to practice their Samoan language with the six or seven year old daughter of the New Zealand managers of the establishment since the little girl could speak very good Samoan. She had lots of fun spending time teaching Sam and other volunteers.

After the training ended at the Hideaway Hotel, Group 15 members were transported to various villages around the island Sam was picked up and taken by Samoan villagers to Salamumu, a small village in Safata District. There he lived with a teaching couple, Faletolu and Kuini Lofipo. Sam was to spend three weeks living at their home (no electricity or indoor plumbing) and walk 3 miles to Matau'utu, Lefanga District during the week where Faletolu taught Form I and II students. Sam shadowed Faletolu, observing his teaching style and gradually he felt integrated into the class.



**Faletolu Lofipo and Sam with the form four class at Matautu School, Upolu, (Western) Samoa, November, 1974.**

Physical punishment was standard in the classrooms and used by all teachers and the principal. Sam was surprised to see Faletolu throw an eraser at a

student for not knowing the answer to a question and then striking the students on the fingers with a ruler for discipline. The students had no text books, only notebooks where they copied information Faletolu read or wrote on the board. At one assembly Sam recalled the principal Rebecca calling one little five year old girl up to the front as she was talking and not listening to her. Rebecca struck her on the face with her open hand quite hard and the girl fell to the floor. She didn't cry, just walked back to her seat rubbing her jaw.

During those three weeks, Sam resided in a newly built traditional Samoan fale on the grounds of the school. He slept on a Samoan mat laid over a cement floor. At night Sam used a mosquito net and covered himself with a sheet. He wore a lava wrap around and showered outdoors under a pipe.

Life in Matautu meant living similar to Salamumu. The difference was that he Salamumu every night. Otherwise the dwelling was a house with no walls, no running water and no electricity. Only lanterns were available for light. The toilet was called a "faleuila" which was built over the ocean. Sam would walk out on the crude wooden jetty; open the door to the hut at the end to see a wooden seat with two holes cut. Toilet waste went directly into the sea. The surroundings were beautiful with blue water, hot tropical climate and green forests. Local families cooked for Sam each evening and the food was brought to his fale.



**Roberta Haynes and Gary Cooper in 1953.**

### **“Return to Paradise” - Matautu, Lefaga, Upolu**

Back in November, 1974, Sam was in Peace Corps training shadowing a Samoan teacher named Faletolu Lofipo. He taught in a small school in the sea side village of Matautu, Lefanga.



Shortly after Sam arrived in the village he lived in a small little fale or hut near the village church. Soon he was told about a film that was filmed in the village in 1953 titled, "Return to Paradise" starring Gary Cooper. O'eau, Sam's next door neighbor, told him all about the movie and how Gary Cooper traveled back and forth to Apia, the capital, every night rather than sleep in the village. The female lead in the film was played by actress Roberta Haynes.

*For all those years, until 2010, Sam had never had the opportunity to see the movie and decided to try and find a copy. Sure enough, his friend John Mayer at the University of Hawaii at Manoa had a copy as did the University Sinclair Library Film Library. He didn't know then that it was available on the Internet for free. Sam called Sinclair Library on campus and, yes, they had the film. Sam then went to view it on the third floor which is where the audio-visual department is located. What a neat film! Here's some information about the movie from the Internet:*

[Return to Paradise \(1953 film\) - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

[China builds Matautu school, Gary Cooper Other data: Roberta Haynes Biography, Videos, Movies, Relationships ...](#) What is interesting about Roberta is that she seems to have become fascinated with Samoa. In the movie she spoke lines in the native language and wore a Samoan lava lava during the shooting. Two of the four photos of her in her biography show her in Samoan attire with one photo showing her dancing (the Samoan "siva"). During the filming, Roberta broke her toe according to one of the references.

## Training at Alafua Agricultural College

After their village experience, the Peace Corps trainees spent a week at Alafua Agricultural College near Apia where volunteers did gardening and had more language classes.

Group 15 members generally look back at Alafua as the worst of their training time. During this stay, the food was greasy and the toilets were filthy. After a couple of days, everyone had diarrhea and were getting sick day and night which made the situation even worse! Volunteers complained a lot, but marginal improvement was made. Sam, being ill with stomach flu, heard that the Soderquist's were about the only ones not ill so he visited them and asked how they managed to avoid getting the flu. Harold told Sam that was easy since he and Bertha didn't drink the water, they only drank beer!

Finally the volunteers left the college and group #15 members traveled to Saliamua, Satiatoa on the eastern coast of Upolu. This village was clean and there was fresh sea air, far different than Alafua College conditions! Just like other volunteers, Sam was assigned to a Samoan family. It was during this time the trainees worked on their language and cultural skills. Unfortunately, Sam got sicker than he ever had been in Samoa. He had the flu which brought his temperature to 104 degrees. Sam recalls sweating profusely and waking up the next morning with the sheets soaked as his fever broke!

Not far away from Saliamua, fronting the ocean, were two islands. It was also not far from here that an earlier Peace Corps volunteer, Al Banner was killed by a shark. The incident happened when the volunteer was swimming with another volunteer searching for turtle eggs. The shark took the male volunteer and no remains were ever found.

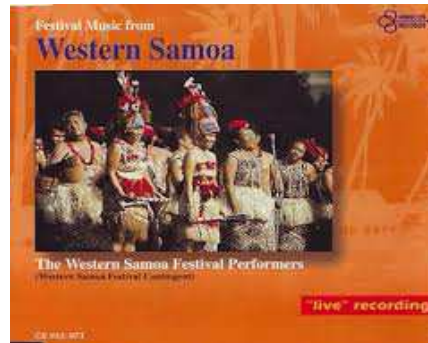
At the time group #15 members had moved to Saliamua, some of the volunteers were already dropping out. One of the volunteers left his village and walked some 20 kilometers to Apia, asking to be sent home. Another one, Carolyn, who had been overseas before, living in Taiwan, was also unable to cope for psychological reasons. She had to be accompanied by a nurse all the way to the United States. One volunteer living near the hut Sam occupied during the training, Patrick Diamond, "snorted" or inhaled a fly up his nose. It wasn't long after that Patrick left the country too. Another volunteer at Teachers Training College in Malifa, Carolyn Sowards, got severe diarrhea having it for several months. She finally had to terminate her stay and return to North America even though she said she liked living in the country...she just couldn't get her health on track.

At the conclusion of the Satiatoa stay, the volunteers had a swearing in and kava ceremony at Samoa College Campus. From there, the volunteers were sent around the islands to their designated positions.



Photo of the old living facilities at A.A.C. in 1974 at the time Peace Corps Group 15 trained there. The facility was unclean and many volunteers suffered from acute diarrhea during their stay there.

## Teachers Training College of Western Samoa



### Music by the students of Teachers Training College of Western Samoa

Sam was assigned to Teachers Training College as a history instructor. He and three other teachers found a place to live at the Nana Ryan house; an old, two story wooden, open air house located less than a block from the T. T. C. campus. The Ryan family were actually a family of mixed palagi (white) and Samoan descent. The family was well known in Samoa because they ran much of the shipping into and out of the country at that time. For the next year, Sam stayed on the second floor of the house sharing it with three other volunteers. They were Pat Galvin, Jeff Erickson and Gene Macken. Jeff, Gene and Sam were assigned to their teaching positions at T.T.C. while Pat was placed as a teacher at St. Patrick's School.



During this year, the guys became very close to the elderly woman who lived downstairs, Nana and eventually considering her their "Samoan mother". Nana, then in her mid 80's, was the patriarch of the Ryan family and other family members always did the cooking and brought the foot to her. She often was unable to eat all of it and would give freshly cooked Samoan food to the guys

almost daily. If the volunteers were upstairs, Nana would hit her ceiling with her cane and call, "Mea'ai" (food)! One of us would then run down and take the food upstairs to eat.



**Sam and Nana Ryan who was part Samoan/Caucasian.**

When Sam came home from teaching at T. T. C., Nana would often be sitting outside on her bench in the front of the structure. She wore glasses but one side was taped with black tape because she couldn't see out of that eye. Nana would always wave Sam to sit down by her on the bench as he returned. Then she would give him advice. Nana would say, "Teeny, (Nana always called Sam "Teeny") remember two things: "Money is your best friend" and "Never marry a Samoan woman". Nana would say this to Sam, and the other volunteers, often. Tragically, Nana died in early 1976 and it was a very sad funeral indeed for the four Palagi (whites) who rented the upstairs rooms in the Ryan house. All four of them were weeping openly in the church that day, having lost a good friend.

Teaching at Teachers Training College in Malua was quite a challenge. The school system and setting was entirely different than Sam had experienced before. The school buildings were open air with wide metal screens in place of windows. Sam did have filmstrips and a filmstrip projector in his classroom. When he opened the drawer to look at the filmstrips the first day in the classroom, several mice jumped out of the drawer, scaring Sam! Sam had disturbed a family with babies inside that drawer! Another time in the classroom later in the year, Sam plugged in the filmstrip projector and when he touched it, got a jolt of electricity!

Along with Jeff and Gene, other American Peace Corps also taught at T. T. C. Harold Soderquist, a Group # 15 member, was assigned to Teachers Training College too. After awhile, Harold moved to another campus at Papauta School, with his wife Bertha. The couple had some disagreements with administration. The average class size at the college was around 25 to 30 students. The grade levels were One, Two Three and Four. The fourth year students in level four did their student teaching at schools all around Upolu. It was Sam's, and other teacher's jobs to journey to these local schools where the teachers observed the student and critiqued them.



**The main building of the Teachers Training College of Western Samoa in Apia**

When on campus for classes, a delicious mid day snack was almost always prepared for the teachers by the school students. The teachers gathered in a room next to the principal's office on the second floor where students served hot tea and sandwiches, crackers and cakes. The sitting was called "Tea" in the British tradition. Meanwhile, individual teachers were doing their practice teaching out in the field in different schools.



**Sam with his home room class at Teachers Training College, Malifa, Apia.**

When the teachers journeyed to the schools to observe their teaching styles, the instructors would travel to at least two or three schools in one day. That meant they would be fed two or three times, once at each school! By the third school, the observing teacher would be so full they could hardly eat!

All the students at TTC had school uniforms with white tops and wore a beautiful blue wrap around them called "lava lava". The students also were taught music and often entertained visiting dignitaries doing Samoan dances or "Siva Samoa".

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siva\\_Samoa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siva_Samoa)

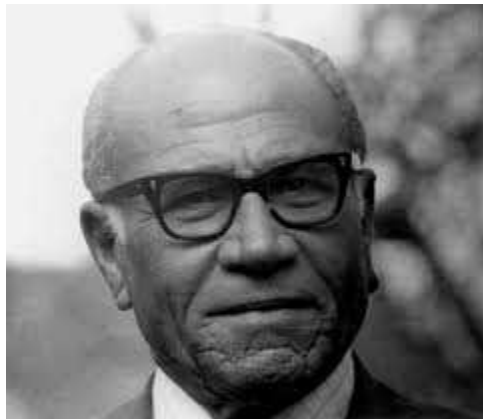
While at TTC, Sam was the coach of the tennis team and house mate Jeff Erickson was the soccer coach. All the students spoke English and were from 18-22 years old, though they were not as mature as most western students would be at the same age level. Life in Samoa wasn't always easy, even in Apia. The hot, humid climate meant infections came easily and many volunteers came down with things they had never seen or heard of in their lives before such as Dengue Fever. Shortly after Group 15 arrived, there was a typhoon. All volunteers were safe but there was heavy flooding and loss of Samoan lives. During their stay in service, some volunteers lost up to 40 lbs switching from a western to the Samoan diet of taro, breadfruit, banana, fish and rice. Of course the teachers had weekends off so this was the opportunity to travel to other parts of the island country. Sam was able to visit the larger island of Savai'i two or three times as well as the small island of Manono. He also traveled to the island of Tutuila, American Samoa as well as Niue, Tonga and Fiji.

## Niue, Tonga and Fiji

**Niue** is an island country in the South Pacific Ocean, 2,400 kilometers northeast of New Zealand within the triangle formed by Tonga to the west, Samoa to the north, and the Cook Islands to the east.



Along with his friend Mary Szumila, Sam flew a "triangle" special flight on Pacific Air Lines to Niue, Tonga and Fiji. The first leg of their journey was a flight to and landing at the Niue Airport.



Sam and Mary met Mr. Rex, the prime minister of Niue, at the airport when they landed. Rex had only been in office for one year in 1975. He served for 18 years, passing away in 1992. At the time, Pacific Air landed there once each week. The Prime Minister and many of the people on the island came to the airport not only to get their mail, but also to see the plane arrive and depart. Sam was able to talk with Mr. Rex briefly and found him to be a very interesting.

- Capital: **Alofi**
- Area: 100 sq mi
- Population: 1,611 (2011 EST.)
- Languages: Niuean, English

- Currency: [New Zealand dollar \(NZD\)](#)



Niue Island from sea level

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## Tonga



Tonga is a Polynesian kingdom of more than 170 islands, many uninhabited, most lined in white beaches and coral reefs and covered with tropical rainforest. The main island, Tongatapu, is protected by lagoons and limestone cliffs. It is home to the laid-back, rural capital of Nuku'alofa, as well as beach resorts, plantations and the Ha'amonga trilithon, a Stonehenge-like coral gate from the 1200s. Tonga became known as the Friendly Islands because of the congenial reception accorded to [Captain James Cook](#) on his first visit in 1773. Tonga has never lost its [sovereignty](#) to a foreign power. Tonga provides for its citizens: free and mandatory education for all, secondary education with only nominal fees and foreign-funded scholarships for post-secondary education and Tongans have universal access to a national health care system.

Capital: [Nuku'alofa](#)

King: [Tupou VI](#)

Population: 105,323 (2013) [World Bank](#)

Currency: Tongan pa'anga



When they arrived, Mary Szumila and Sam stayed at Leo's Guest House in Nu'kualofa. They found the life styles of Tonga very similar to Samoa. The Ha'amonga, mentioned above, was a very interesting structure as was the royal palace. Peace Corps were also based in this nation.



**Ha'amonga trilithon, a Stonehenge-like coral gate from the 1200's.**



**Children of Tonga in traditional attire.**

Although Sam is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer and generally supports the organization, he agrees it is not without need for improvement. One glaring need to change is justice for what former volunteers in countries like Tonga are faced with injustice. Failures can come back to haunt the organization even now. A photo of Jenifer Gardner is below and the story of her tragedy can be read at the web site below.



Deborah Gardner, Peace Corps Volunteer, Murdered in Tonga.

[Murder of Deborah Gardner - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Deborah_Gardner)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder\\_of\\_Deborah\\_Gardner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_Deborah_Gardner)

[Deborah Gardner's death - Murder in the Peace Corps ...](#)

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## FIJI



Map of the islands of Fiji



Children of Fiji

Fiji, a country in the South Pacific, is an archipelago of more than 300 islands. It's famed for its rugged landscape of blue lagoons and palm-lined beaches, and eco-activities from mountain climbing and surfing to soft-coral diving and zip-lining. Its major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, contain the lion's share of the population, meaning much of the country is less crowded.

Capital: [Suva](#)

Currency: Fijian dollar

Population: 881,065 (2013) [World Bank](#)

Prime minister: [Frank Bainimarama](#)



**Kava Ceremony in Fiji**



**Women of Fiji in traditional dress**

The third and final country Mary and Sam visited was Fiji. What a fascinating country! Luckily, the two travelers had met a Peace Corps volunteer in Apia, Sandy Crispin, who had invited them to stay with her at Methodist College in Suva, the capital city. As a teacher, she was able to contact students around the island of Viti Leavu so Sam and Mary stayed at various Fijian villages of her students as they went around.

There is a split population as the British brought many Indians to work in manual labor in the sugar plantations and so on. Thus the population is split between the Native Fijians and Indians brought in by the British.



**Traditional Bure in the highlands section of Viti Levu**

Overall, Sam really enjoyed his first year in Samoa teaching at T.T.C. The students were very nice and generally very cooperative. Of course Samoa at the time lacked a lot of the resources that might have been available in other countries but the system worked well for them at that time. Many of the students were later placed in village schools but many of them took opportunities to relocate overseas.

Sam had so many difficulties adjusting his first year that he actually terminated his commitment early. Having resigned from the Corps in December, 1975, Sam returned to Honolulu with the intent of returning to Nebraska. Before going back however, he decided to take a tour around the islands of Oahu, Molokai, Maui and Hawaii. of New Zealand and Australia so he bought a ticket that took him from American Samoa to New Zealand, then to Australia, Fiji and American Samoa again and finally back to Hawaii.

## New Zealand

New Zealand is a country in the southwestern Pacific Ocean consisting of 2 main islands, both marked by volcanoes and glaciers. Capital Wellington, on the North Island, is home to Te Papa Tongarewa, the expansive national museum. Wellington's dramatic Mt. Victoria and the South Island's Fordland and Southern Lakes stood in for mythical Middle Earth in Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" films.

Capital: [Wellington](#)

Dialing code: +64

Population: 4.471 million (2013) [World Bank](#)

Currency: New Zealand dollar



Map of New Zealand



South Island, New Zealand

After Sam flew to American Samoa and on to Hawaii, he did a self tour of Oahu, Molokai, Maui and Hawaii Islands.

After that experience, he missed the South Pacific and decided to return. He bought a ticket in Honolulu which took him back to American Samoa and then on to New Zealand and Australia with a stopover in Fiji.

Arriving in New Zealand, it was a December summer but not THAT warm for sure. Still Sam really enjoyed the majestic scenery and beauty of the country. He soon met so many of his Peace Corps volunteer friends from Samoa on the New Zealand portion of the trip that he began to re-think his decision to leave the Peace Corps. *Finally he decided that he had made a big mistake by doing so.*



A Maori warrior performing the Haka, a traditional native dance.



The community of Waikato, New Zealand in the fall season.

# Australia

Australia is a country, and continent, surrounded by the Indian and Pacific oceans. Its major cities – Sydney, Brisbane, Melbourne, Perth, and Adelaide – are coastal, but its capital, Canberra, is inland and nicknamed the "Bush Capital." The country is known for its Sydney Opera House, Great Barrier Reef, the vast Outback (interior desert wilderness) and unique animal species including kangaroos and duck-billed platypuses.

Capital: Canberra

Dialing code: +61

Population: 23.13 million (2013) World Bank

Currency: Australian dollar

Governor-general: Peter Cosgrove



From New Zealand, Sam flew to Sidney, the largest city in Australia. It is famous for many things and the Sidney Opera House in one of them. It was while Sam was staying in Sidney that he confirmed his return to Samoa and a second year in the Peace Corps. At a guest house, he met some Returned Peace Corps volunteers from Fiji and they all urged Sam to go back to Samoa and finish his obligation.



**Sidney, largest city in Australia, with a view of the opera house.**

Sam enjoyed Sidney but soon caught a bus to Canberra, the capitol city. His main memory of the city was the modern, beautiful capital though the flies were thick during the summer he was there.

From Canberra it was off to Melbourne, another larger city. Luckily Sam had contacted his cousin, Megan Jones who was living and working there. She and her boyfriend invited him to stay at their house in Melbourne which was great since Sam hadn't seen Megan in years. They had a great time and one of the things Sam recalled was seeing the home of Captain James Cook which was in a Melbourne park displayed for the public. Cook was actually born in England, not in Australia.



**Sam stayed with his cousin Megan Jones and her boyfriend while visiting Melbourne.**

When he got back to Honolulu After leaving Australia via American Samoa, Sam rented a room at the YMCA across from the Ala Moana Shopping Center waiting and thinking...what to do? A few days later, Sam met by chance his fellow group #15 volunteer friend Ron Lubcher in front of the Ala Moana Shopping Center bus stop. Ron was on his way back to Samoa for his second year of service after a visit to his home in Maryland.

When Sam told Ron the fact that he now regretted leaving the Corps and would like to return, Ron suggested that Sam telephone Samoa, talk to director Bill Lontz and ask to be reinstated. What a great idea! Ron left for Samoa not knowing if Sam would make it back to Samoa or not.

Sam tried to phone Apia but couldn't get through so he decided to just buy a ticket to Samoa, go to the Peace Corps office in Apia and ask for reinstatement which was another of Lubcher's suggestions if phoning

failed. Sam asked if he could store some of his personal things, mostly Samoan gifts, at the YMCA, which a lady at the YMCA agreed to. He then left for the airport. It turned out that the flights were all full but Sam went back to the YMCA and was lucky on the second trip the next night to get a seat on a Pan Am flight. He then flew back to Apia from American Samoa and went directly to the Peace Corps office. Bill Lontz, the Country Director for Peace Corps Samoa was very cordial and agreed to take Sam back as a volunteer. It turned out that Sam had several teaching positions to choose from. Of the choices, he took Lelumoenga Fou College, the same school where his friend Ron Lubcher taught. Shortly after his meeting with Bill, Sam saw Ron coming down the street in Apia, so he hid and when Ron came by, Sam jumped out in front of him! Ho, what a surprise! Sam ended up teaching social studies that year at L.F.C. located 12 miles outside Apia on the road to Faleolo Airport.

- One year later, when Sam went back to Hawaii. His personal items were still at the YMCA in Hawaii waiting for him.

## Leulumoenga Fou College



The student hall at Leulumoenga Fou College, Samoa.

While at Leleumoenga Fou College, Sam lived in a house he shared with David and Usoali'i Mayer and their young son Tavita. Dave had transferred to Samoa from Peace Corps service in Afghanistan. He said he had to leave that country for violating a rule at the college there. David said he was talking to one of his female students in his office with the door closed which was prohibited. As a result, he had to leave the country and decided to transfer.

The house we got for free was a house typical to the South Seas, wooden structure with two units. Sam had the smaller unit facing the Pacific Ocean.





**Some students displaying the Leleumoenga Fou College Flag.**

During that school year, Sam taught Form III Social Studies and Form V Geography of New Zealand. For the Form V class which had seven students. All of them had to set an exam under New Zealand standards. If they passed it, they would qualify for school in New Zealand. It was a struggle that year and, in the end, four of the seven students passed. One of the students named Pafute was working in Aggie Grey's Hotel in Apia several years later when Sam traveled from Hawaii and met her accidentally there.

Living in the country-like campus of Leulumoenga Fou College was in many ways better than living in the crowded, noisy and smoky Apia. For social life on weekends, Sam would leave the campus on Friday afternoon by either bus or hitch hiking to travel the 12 miles into the capitol. There he would spend two nights, Friday and Saturday, usually staying with other Peace Corps friends and going to various bars, movies, or clubs. Sam loved to dance and have fun. Saturday would be spent doing activities such as swimming traveling around the island or hiking. He also enjoyed getting together with Jeff Erickson, Mary Szumila, Dick Bowen and others in his circle of friends. Some of the clubs he enjoyed were the Mount Vaea Club, Tanoa Club and Tusi Tala Hotel.

Sam and his friend Ron Lubcher coached the school basketball team which meant they traveled sometimes to play other teams. The two volunteers became close friends, a friendship that would last their lifetimes. Sam's Form III classes were larger, sometimes 40. In the school system, corporal punishment was used but some Peace Corps would hit while others did not. I did not. One favorite punishment for some teachers was for the students to go out and pick some Vau Fefe plants which were equivalent to stickers in the Midwest. Picking say ten of those things bare handed weren't very pleasant!

One of Sam's students lived in the village and her father was the *Samoan religious teacher at the college*. One day, Sam noticed she had black and blue bruises all over her body so he asked her what happened. She told him that she had snuck out of the house to go to a movie with her boyfriend. When her father found out, he beat her quite severely.

Near the end of his stay at Leulumoenga, a Samoan woman Sam had dated became very angry when Sam stated seeing another woman. She came out to the school on the pretext of visiting the Mayer family in the other side of the house from Sam. Later in the night, however, she took a knife from the Mayer's kitchen, knocked on Sam's door and tried to stab him with the knife in a fit of rage. It took David, Usoali'i and Sam to wrestle her down. Luckily no one was injured but she left swearing to come back and shoot Sam. At that point, the Peace Corps director elected to have Sam terminate just a week or so early for his own safety. The next Day Sam was flown to American Samoa; his Peace Corps services had ended early.

<http://peacecorpsonline.org/messages/messages/467/3210665.html>

## American Samoa

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Samoa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Samoa)



Having been to American Samoa several times during his Peace Corps service in Western Samoa, Sam decided to stay there for a time instead of going directly home to the U. S. The two island chains were only 90 miles apart. American Samoa is an American Territory while Western Samoa (Now "Samoa") was a Polynesian country.



Mary Jewett Pritchard was a Samoan master Siapo (tapa cloth) maker and teacher. She passed away in 1992.

Mary Pritchard and Sam were special friends, first meeting in Apia at an exhibition of her tapa. Later they accidentally met in China, 1979 (See China section of this work).

On another occasion, Sam was invited and spent an afternoon at Mary's Samoan fale in Tutuila, American Samoa. Also in the early 80's, Mary had an exhibit in Oahu which Sam attended.



### Sam and Peace Corps friend Terry Bengtsson hiking in American Samoa

Sam and his friend Ron Lubcher had stayed at the "Hurtling Moose Youth Hostel" on Tutuila on one trip several months before. On some of Sam's trips there, he had met several people who lived on the island of Tutuila including Stan and Carol Golembeski who were local school teachers from the U. S. Both had served with the Peace Corps in Tonga before coming to Tutuila on teaching contracts.

Sam also first met Art Whistler there. Art, a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer from Western Samoa Group #1, lived in Hawaii but made many trips to the islands due to his work as a botanist. Sam had made friends with Dick and Rose Arthur in Tutuila, also American contract workers. They had offered to let him stay with them before he got on his way back home to Nebraska. The Arthur's helped Sam to get a teaching job for a few weeks at a small private school in Pago Pago since he was interested in spending time there before returning. A teacher had gone home for a few weeks for the Christmas holidays and they needed a replacement so Sam took the job. During this time Sam lived with another American who was teaching at a high school nearby and lived in a flat just behind and up the hill from the main police station in Pago Pago. Sam was able to use the other teacher's bike to go back and forth to work as it was only a short 5-7 minute ride.

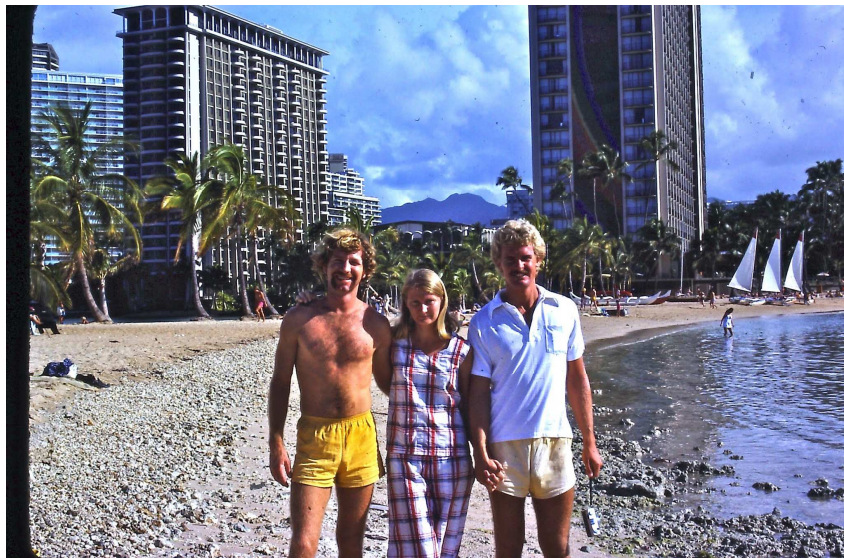
Every day Sam would ride by Leone High School, the main high school in American Samoa. He recalls his first experience going by and having the local student's call him names that he had never heard in Western Samoa. It was

definitely a different feeling living on Tutuila as regarding the local attitude towards palangi than in Samoa.



**Sam with friends Stan and Carol Golembeski in American Samoa, 1976.** Sam reconnected with his friends who were former Peace Corps volunteers in Tonga and now worked on contract with the school system in American Samoa. Later they would be working with the Hawaii Department of Education on the Big Island of Hawaii.

After substituting for a few weeks, the teaching job ended and Sam flew on to Honolulu.



**Sam with Mary Szumila and Jeff Erickson at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort Lagoon in December, 1976.**

He stayed a few days on Oahu because he had managed to contact Mary Szumila and Jeff Erickson, his good friends from the Peace Corps, who were also on their way home from two years of service. The three all stayed at the same hotel near Ala Moana Center in Honolulu. They were able to spend time together before they took their flight back to the continental United States. Sam would see Mary a few more times in the next few years. Once when Mary stayed in Sam's apartment in Honolulu and another time in Pennsylvania, Mary visited Sam at the Uncle Sam and Aunt Grace Atkins home in Norristown. Later they all gathered again for the 2012 Returned Peace Corps gathering in Olympia, Washington and Mary's home.

Sam's two years of service in this Pacific nation was a major defining event in his life for many reasons. About 60 Peace Corps Volunteers completed their two years of service in Samoa. Certainly living in these islands gave Sam a new viewpoint of his own country and how much material wealth it had. Sam's ideas of the world expanded as did his ability to see the world as one.

## Back to Nebraska: From Tropical to Winter

It wasn't easy coming back to cold, snowy Nebraska after the hot and humid weather in the Samoan Islands! Sam remembers several cold, windy nights being up in his room back on the farm and thinking about the land he left behind. Getting correspondence from friends still in the islands didn't help much either.

It was great being back. Saint Paul's Lutheran Church even arranged for Sam to speak in the church basement one evening. There was a good crowd in attendance when he spoke all about his experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer. Sam showed slides and narrated as well as displaying many items from the islands.

It isn't unusual for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to have readjustment problems to life in the U. S. after their service is completed. For several weeks Sam mulled what to do next with his life, finally deciding to travel to Washington, DC to try and apply at Peace Corps Headquarters for openings as a Peace Corps recruiter.

His transportation there was a special on Grey Hound Bus of \$50.00 one way anywhere in the country. Sam picked this time to go, and "rode the dog" all the way from Norfolk to D.C. He recalls his mom Elsa packing a Butternut Coffee can full of her homemade chocolate chip cookies and by the time the bus got to Chicago they were almost gone!

## The Carter Inauguration in Washington, DC



**President Jimmy Carter and wife Rosalynn walked from the Capitol Building to the White House down Pennsylvania Avenue, the first presidential couple to walk the route. Sam was part of the crowd at the left.**

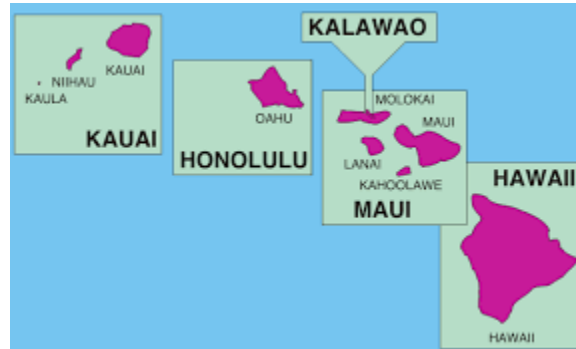
At the time Sam was in Washington, D.C., January, 1977, President Jimmy Carter was being inaugurated president of the United States. Sam recalls how cold it was and how everyone whispered, "Their walking" prior to their coming past. He was the first president to walk the route, not ride.

While in D. C., Sam had arranged to stay with another R.P.C.V. Jim Seltzer, a West Point graduate was living in an older walk up apartment in the city. Jim had also taught at Marist Brothers School near Apia for one year as a PCV in Samoa. It was great for Sam to see Jim again and having a nice place to stay in the city was an extra treat making the city easily accessible. This was the time when the nation was watching "Roots", a T. V. movie made from the book of the same name.

During his stay there, Sam went to Peace Corps Headquarters but there weren't any openings. Also Sam felt in his heart that, when the chips were down, he really wouldn't choose to go the Peace Corps route again. He did however enjoy a week of parties and tours during the inauguration and was there when the President with wife Rosalynn and daughter walked from the National Capitol to the White House. There were presidential balls and gatherings all over the city for a week. Many tours in the city were free. Back on the bus returning to Nebraska in the snow and cold of winter, Sam recalled passing Pilger, his old home town and the turnoff to his rural District 25 country school, then and on to Norfolk. As Sam looked out over the snow and lights of the city of Norfolk, it was then he decided to buy a one way ticket to Hawaii as he was so used to living in a tropical climate!

When Sam got back to the farm again after attending the Inauguration of President Jimmy Carter in January, 1977, he told his dad of his plan. His father said, "it's up to you". Not long after, Sam took a flight from Omaha on United Air Lines landing at Honolulu International Airport!

## Islands of Hawaii



After all those winter experiences Sam had in the mainland, leaving the weather of Northeast Nebraska behind was a welcomed thing! Sam found it just great to land at Honolulu International in the bright tropical sunshine. The first thing that impressed Sam was looking down at the beautiful blue water and the green of Oahu Island. He felt really happy and that he was doing the right thing.



### Waikiki Beach and Diamond Head, Honolulu, Hawaii

After getting off the plane, Sam took The Bus to Ala Moana Shopping Center and telephoned one of only two people he knew who lived in the city. The first person he dialed was Joe Fortier who had been a Peace Corps Volunteer in Samoa serving in Savai'i. Sam knew Joe was working on his masters' degree in forestry at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He called the number he had and Joe answered, asking where Sam was and if he had a place to stay. Sam replied that he was at Ala Moana Shopping Center and had just arrived from the "mainland". Joe invited Sam to come to stay at Shinshu Kiokai Buddhist

Dormitory at 1631 S. Beretania Street. It turned out there was a space available in the room near Joe's, a room Sam would share with a young local guy from Kauai named Alan. He would be there for the next eight months and paid a total of \$100.00 per month for room and board though food was only served during the week Monday through Friday. Little did Sam know that young Barack Obama, later president of the United States for eight years, was staying with his grandfather and grandmother in the neighboring apartment building located next to Shinshu Kiokai. Obama had attended nearby Punahou School from 1971 fifth to 1979 twelfth grades.



**Shinshu Kiokai Buddhist Dormitory on Beretania Street in Honolulu. Sam stayed for eight months there in 1977. At left is the apartment house where Barack Obama, lived at that same time, with his grandparents from 71-79. He was attending Punahou School, a short walk away.**

After moving into Shinshu, Sam called Art Whistler, the second person whose name and number Sam had. Art was also a RPCV from Samoa living on University Avenue in the Ala Wai area. Art's girlfriend Mae Sapolu answered the phone.

Sam had met Mae in Samoa the previous year when she was visiting her family in Apia and Sam was serving in the Peace Corps. Mae was at the Mount Vaea Club in Apia the same evening Sam happened to be there. A friend of Sam, Ron Lubcher, pointed Mae out, telling Sam that Mae had a boyfriend in Honolulu who used to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer in Samoa. Sam asked if the boyfriend (Art) was there and Ron said "no" so Sam asked her for a dance and also a date to dinner the next night at the Tusi Tala Hotel. Mae accepted. The couple had an enjoyable dinner the following evening.

About two months later, Sam was hitch hiking into Apia from Leulumoenga College on a Friday afternoon and a car slowed, then stopped to pick Sam up. When they introduced each other, Sam said, "Oh, so you're Art Whistler"! When Sam told Art his name, Art replied, "Oh, so you're Sam Burris". It seems Mae had told Art about going out on a date with Sam that previous evening in Apia!

Sam was very pleased to be back in the Pacific region again. It turned out that other friends from the Peace Corps were also living in Honolulu at the time. One of them was John Mayer who was working to establish the teaching



of the Samoan language on campus at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Soon Sam met Jim Carr who, also was in Samoa in an earlier group. Also at East West Center were Bill and Lete Cable. Bill was working on his Ph.D. in agriculture and, though Sam had seen him in Apia a few times, didn't get to know him or his wife Lete until they met in Hawaii in 1977. Lete had a beautiful singing voice and would combine with Samoan friend Tofa to perform duets in Samoan. Sam also met Bernie and Si'u Hvidding. Bernie served in Samoa in group I and his wife Si'u was John Mayer's wife, Mary's sister. Also in Honolulu was the Alailima family with wife Faye Calkins the author of "My Samoan Chief" written in 1962. The bibliography is the story of how Faye met her husband in Washington, D. C. Sam dated one of their daughters, Marie Ala'ilima, briefly since Marie was a friend of Mae Sapolu. Samoan picnics were regularly held as well as various gatherings which were always fun. In addition, visitors who were also returned Peace Corps Volunteers from Samoa sometimes came as did Mary Jane Holmes who was in Sam's group # 15 in Samoa and was teaching in San Jose, California.

## Waipahu High School Reading Tutor

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waipahu\\_High\\_School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waipahu_High_School)



Address: 94-1211 Farrington Hwy, Waipahu, HI 96797, United States

District: [Hawai'i Department of Education](#)

Phone: +1 808-528-9555

Founded: 1938

Lowest grade: Ninth grade

Colors: Navy Blue, Gold



### **Campus of Waipahu High School, Waipahu, Hawaii**

After only ten days on Oahu, Sam was fortunate to be hired as a reading tutor in a federally funded program managed by the state of Hawaii. He had gotten the job through the State Employment Office where he went to interview as he saw the opening in the Honolulu Advertiser. Sam would be working at Waipahu High School in Waipahu along with Irving Emoto, another Reading tutor in the program who was hired in the same fashion. Both Irving and Sam ended up in careers with the State of Hawaii in Education with Irving later becoming a school principal.

While at Waipahu High School, which is about 16 miles from Honolulu, Sam car pooled with three other local teachers for the semester since he didn't have a car of his own. The teachers would come by to pick him up every morning. All the teachers shared in the gas costs for the trip Leeward to Waipahu.

Sam's Samoa Peace Corps background helped him at Waipahu High School as Malua Utuga, one of the security guards, needed help to set up a Samoan Club for the 78 students from the Samoan Islands. Principal Milton Shishido agreed so Malua and Sam worked actively that semester with the students. There were many activities such as going on field trips and, at the end of the school year, practicing for the group to be in the May Day celebration, something the Samoan students hadn't done before. In addition, there was an evening performance which was attended by a few of Sam's Samoan friends from Honolulu including Bill and Lete Cable. Bill was a returned Peace Corps Volunteer who elected to live in Samoa after his service was completed married his wife Lete. They were both still staying in the Hale Manoa Hall at East West Center.

What an introduction to Hawaii and having a job of this nature so quickly was very fortunate. That summer of 1977, Sam had to find another job as the tutoring position was for only one semester. One effort was to apply for a position in American Samoa teaching history. The interview at Mid Pacific went well but the funding didn't come through.

About that time, Sam moved from Shinshu Kiokai to an apartment near the freeway called Kalo Terrace. Sam shared an apartment with a Filipino man

doing his M. A. in agriculture at the University. John Mayer, Sam's friend lived just two doors down and had told him about the vacancy. That summer, Sam looked for a job and also audited a summer course in Samoan Language taught by John Mayer. It was during this time Sam met Pua Noa, who was a student in John's class. She was from Waianae and native Samoan. His friend Jim Carr was also dating a Hawaiian student from the University so the couples would often double date. Later Sam met another student from Guam who was Chamorro or native Guamanian.

## Fern Street House

After only a couple of months at Kalo Terrace, Sam saw an ad in the newspaper for a room to rent. It turned out to be a house located on Fern Street in a much nicer McCully neighborhood away from the freeway. Sam was interviewed by the other renters and they all got along famously so he moved in. Sam paid \$100.00 per month for the room. Individuals who shared the house with Sam included Donna Brown, a former VISTA volunteer from California, Danny Goldman, a pre-school teacher from New York City, and Stan Herder who later became a school principal in Honolulu. Stan later married the local woman he was dating named Susanne. The other room was rented by a married couple, Cliff and Julie. All of us hit it off very well from the start. Everyone in the house cooperated with each other and it turned out to be great fun for Sam while staying there.

Fern Street House had the kitchen on the first floor. Because some of the residence smoked, marijuana was always located in the refrigerator. Sam had never done much pot, as a matter of fact only a couple of times at the University of Arizona in Tucson during summer school there. In those days, late 70's, there was lots of pot in Hawaii and it was a casual thing generally in the population of the state at the time. Lots of people wore t-shirts with "Kona Gold" or "Maui Wowee" on them. Smoking marijuana was more acceptable than today.

One night Sam smoked a bit too much weed at the Fern Street house. He got in his car and wanted to drive to Ala Moana to go dancing at the Hawaiian Hut at Ala Moana Center. Sam realized after a block or two that he wasn't in shape to drive and got out of his car. He telephoned his friend John Mayer to ask if John could please come and pick him up at Mama Mia's Pizza on University Avenue. John lived just a block away at Kalo Terrace. John arrived and took Sam back to Fern Street house. Not long after John left, Sam got

on his bike this time and rode to Ala Moana! Those were indeed crazy days and John and Sam still have laughs about the incident!

Sam recalls that about a year later, Donna's boyfriend Danny, who had quit his job at the preschool and moved back to New York City, committed suicide by jumping off the George Washington Bridge. According to Donna, his parents had been pushing him to be a doctor though Danny had really wanted to be a pre-school teacher. Sam and his friends speculated that the issue had become too divisive for Danny. Perhaps he couldn't take it mentally as he felt he was disappointing his family. It was all so very sad. Donna was especially unhappy because she and Danny were very close.

During the time Sam was searching for a job that summer of 1977, he was also taking a Samoan Language class from his friend John Mayer at the University of Hawaii. John had been Sam's Peace Corps language trainer in Samoa back in October, 1974. It was great fun for Sam to be in the class and the students had fun working together doing the SaSa plus putting together and organizing their own Fia Fia.

## Instructor at The University of Hawaii at Manoa

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University\\_of\\_Hawaii\\_at\\_Manoa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Hawaii_at_Manoa)

Address: 2500 Campus Rd, Honolulu, HI 96822, United States



UNIVERSITY  
of HAWAII®  
MĀNOA

The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is a public co-educational research university, and is the flagship campus of the greater University of Hawai'i system.

Address: 2500 Campus Rd, Honolulu, HI 96822, United States

Acceptance rate: 81.2% (2012)

Enrollment: 58,941 (2013)

Getting an opportunity to work at the University of Hawaii at Manoa was one of the greatest things Sam could think of that occurred after all his years of employment as an educator. About the time John's summer school Samoan

Language class ended, a position opened up at the University of Hawaii in teacher training. Sam was watching the weekly bulletins at U. H. Manoa and thought that, since he had a background working as a teacher trainer at the Teachers Training College in Malifa, Apia as a Peace Corps Volunteer, perhaps he would have a chance to get the job!

Sam applied and was one of six interviewees. The interview, in front of a panel of four people, went well since it seems almost all of them had been to Samoa. This created a commonality in the group. Afterwards, Sam felt that he had done very well and was hopeful. Still, a few days later a telephone call came saying he did not get hired.

Of course after not getting the U. H. Manoa position he was disappointed. Due to his financial state at the time, returning to Nebraska came to Sam's mind. Two days later though, the phone rang again and this time *the job of Student Teaching Coordinator at the Department of Education was offered to him* if he could show up at 8:00 the next morning to be introduced to the students as the newest Student Teaching Coordinator. The position did require a car so he began to shop for one. It seems the first applicant had already found another job; the second could not get released from her present position to take the U.H. Manoa job. Sam was the third on the list to hire!

The next morning Sam rode his bike up to the campus and was soon introduced as the newest coordinator at the University student teaching program. Shirley Fujita was Sam's supervisor and they worked together very well! Sam was also able to purchase a 1977 Dotson (used) from the professor of religion at the University of Hawaii. It was a nice two door green color Dotson and turned out to be a very reliable car.

Sam's first semester was spent having elementary level student teachers and his second semester with high school level. Sam's job was driving from school to school every day and critiquing the student teachers, a similar routine he had followed in Samoa. Sam drove to Wai'ena, Windward side, Leeward and Honolulu District so he was kept very busy. Every Thursday he would teach a seminar so he didn't have to go out in the field that day. He held seminars in different sites such as on campus, in parks or, in one case, in his house on Fern Street. Parking was hard to get on campus so alternate areas had big advantages for the student teachers.

The fellow professors, instructors and staff in the Field Services section of the Department of Education were very cooperative and great to work with. Ray Smith, who had lots of background in Micronesia, was a special friend during this time. So was Shirley Y. Fujita, professor emeritus at the College of Education, University of Hawaii at Manoa, the Chairperson of Field Services. Another professor, Frank Brown was often going back and forth to American Samoa so he and Sam shared commonalities too. Dr. Alex Pickens was also a good friend.

Sam's own office was on the second floor of Wist Hall which he shared with Doris Ching, later to be Vice Chancellor of the University. Wist Hall is located right across the street from Sinclair Library on University Avenue, a good location since Sam would often ride his bike from Fern Street up McCully Street. The University at Manoa is very difficult place to find parking much of the time and Sam found himself going to campus for department meetings every week, mostly by bike.



From 1977-1978, Sam had his office at Wist Hall, second floor during his one year as an instructor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.



Doris Ching, Present Chancellor at the University of Hawaii-West Oahu (January, 2016) shared an office with Sam in Wist Hall that year.

While at the University, Sam grew to love the campus and area around since there were so many opportunities for activities. The campus has two major libraries and the East-West Center campus is adjoining. It was at East-West Center that Sam met a Korean War veteran who spoke at a public forum at

Hale Manoa about his going AWOL and crossing to the North Korean side during the Korean conflict. The speaker was on his way back to North Korea that year, 1977, after visiting his mother who was very ill in Pennsylvania. A few years later Sam did a slide show for the public on his three week trip to China in the same room at Hale Manoa.

During Sam's stay in Honolulu, he was able to link up with other Returned Peace Corps Volunteers like Jim Carr, who served in Samoa and worked at C & H Sugar in Aiea. Jim had a small apartment near the freeway in Makiki. Another Friend was Joe Fortier, mentioned previously who eventually got an apartment in Manoa Valley. Joe returned to his home state of Alaska after just a year in Hawaii. He is now a Catholic Priest in Washington State. During those days, Sam and his friend Jim double dated. Jim was dating a Hawaiian woman and Sam dated a co-ed from Guam. He then dated a student from John Mayer's class, Pua Noa a young Samoan student from Wai'anae. John had been a trainer of Sam's in the Peace Corps in Samoa. Another friend was Vita Tanielu who taught Samoan language at Manoa in John's department. About this time one of Sam's friends, Art Whistler, and Mae Sapolu broke up. They had been together for ten years. Mae had previously been a student of Art's when Art was a Peace Corps teacher in Apia at Samoa College. Mae was working at the time for Pan American Air Lines as a flight attendant. Mae later was involved in a tragic air line incident with United Air Lines. A baggage door came off in flight and several people were pulled out of the plane. Luckily, the pilot was able to return to Honolulu and land. Mae had a back injury and sued the airline for what was said to be a million dollars at the time. Mae later returned to Samoa where she manages a guest house in Apia, the capital.



### [United Airlines Flight 811-Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Friend Mae Sapolu was a flight attendant on this flight, narrowly missing being swept out of the plane through the large hole shown above.

Soon Art began to date Debbie Nanod. Sam later met a Filipino, June Ahuna who worked as a nurse and lived in Wai'anae. Sam met June because she was

a friend of Bernie and Si'u Hvidding. For a time, Sam also dated his first Hawaiian girl friend. Her name was Erlene Waiiau who introduced Sam to lots of Hawaiian musical groups in the city of Honolulu. Erlene was a divorcee who worked for the Honolulu Police Department. Sam later dated Jennifer Wah, a teacher visiting from Idaho as a tourist. They met on a Honolulu Trail and Mountain Club hike. Jennifer was in the state with her friend and co-worker. They stayed in the Hawaii for several weeks. It was an enjoyable time in Sam's life being single and in Hawaii! At the time, Sam felt he had the best of both worlds being able to live in the Pacific region yet be in a state of the United States though that was about to change.



**Basic Map of the World**



**Map of Southeast Asia**





**Flag of Singapore**

**Singapore American School**  
**Teaching social studies at Ulu Pandan Campus,**  
**1978 to 1980**

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore\\_American\\_School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singapore_American_School)

Address: 40 Woodlands Street 41, Singapore 738547

Phone: +65 6363 3403

Right across the hall from Doris and Sam's office in Wist Hall at the University of Hawaii at Manoa was the Job Placement Center. There on the bulletin board were jobs listed for teachers around the world. Sam often glanced at the board as he went to and fro from his office. He usually looked at the offers since his contract with the University was only for one year and that contract funds hadn't been renewed as the end of the year approached.

One day Sam noticed that Bangkok International School and Singapore American School, two schools in Southeast Asia, were having interviews in Waikiki. Sam decided to sign up for both.

As luck would have it, Sam's roommate Julie took a phone call at the Fern Street House. The message was to let Sam know where and when the Bangkok International School interview would take place. The only problem was that Julie forgot to give Sam the message *until after the interview was over!*

Naturally Sam was disappointed that he didn't get that message in time, but he did still have one more interview with Singapore American School, which was in Waikiki and held by the superintendent of S.A.S. John Plank. Mr. Plank had been born and raised in Western Nebraska. Of course that set up a situation where he and Sam had some things in common. With Sam working as an instructor at the University at the time, he felt good about the interview and thought he might have a chance for a contract. Just a week later, a packet arrived and, sure enough, a job offer for Sam was inside. This job

meant he would be teaching for two years at the middle School in Ulu Pandan, Singapore. It was a big decision but Sam consulted several people who had been there and talked to his parents of course. All of them were encouraging him to go as they saw it as a great opportunity! The deadline for Sam was one week and he accepted the SAS contract offer.

As was the case with the Peace Corps, living and teaching in Singapore was a major experience that shaped Sam's life. Sam got a calendar in the mail with dates set for his summer school program and an air line ticket arrived. He was busy selling his car and closing out personal things in his life there in Honolulu. S.A.S. paid for the air and sea freight along with a round trip ticket. Soon the shipping company arrived and he packed all his possessions to go, one set for air freight and one for surface. Mae Sapolu took Sam to the airport while Erleen Waiau came too and brought him a lei, saying farewell. Sam recalls looking down and the island of Kauai and feeling pulled between two places. Was it the right decision?



**Map of the City State of Singapore**



## **Singapore**

**Gazibo at Singapore Botanical Gardens**

Population: 5.399 million (2013) World Bank

President: **Tony Tan**

Prime minister: **Lee Hsien Loong**

Singapore, an island city-state off southern Malaysia, is a global financial centre with a tropical climate and multicultural population. In circa-1820 Chinatown stands the red-and-gold Buddha's Tooth Relic Temple, Little India offers colorful souvenirs and Arab Street is lined with fabric shops. Singapore is also known for eclectic street fare, served in hawker centers such as Tong Bahru and Maxwell Road.

When Sam landed at Singapore International Airport at Paya Labar, the superintendent, Dr. Plank was there to greet him. Sam was taken to one of the major hotels on Orchard Road for the night. The first night he went to the John Travolta movie, "Saturday Night Fever". His stay had begun! As was often the case for S.A.S. Summer School, some parents who were gone for their vacation offered their home to new teachers at the American School so Sam was housed in one of these condos. He shared the apartment with Leon Cooper who would also be teaching at the King's Road High School campus. Sam was placed at Ulu Pandan Middle School teaching 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Leon and Sam enjoyed their stay at the palatial condo on the 14 floor. Sam was doing a summer workshop so he could learn the S.A.S. team teaching methods as that was the system Ulu Pandan was using.



**Singapore American School -New campus located in Jurong, West Coast.**

Sam spent quite a bit of time acquainting himself with the city-state. After the workshop was completed, he moved to an apartment off River Valley Road, just off Orchard Road. The apartment was managed by a Chinese woman named Ivy Tan. Sam rented a room and the renters shared the kitchen. The American School paid a housing subsidy covering most of the rent Sam paid. There was also another Chinese man there as well in a third bedroom. Sam lived near another Ulu Pandan Teacher named Kirk Dillion who taught sixth

grade at Ulu Pandan. Once school started, the two of them shared a taxi to work every morning.



### **Sam Burris, teacher at Singapore American School in 1978.**

At Ulu Pandan, Sam was assigned to Gamma unit. Because the Social Studies teacher, Mrs. Boreli preferred teaching English, she switched subjects with Sam so that Sam was placed as the social studies teacher. It had been his major at Boise State, so it all worked just right. Another teacher in Gamma was Maggie Gremler from the east coast and Ed Moore from Texas. The team worked well together during their two years together. Rohiya, a Malay woman was the secretary and did all the photo copying plus running things off for all the teachers in the team.



**Sam Burris with students of Singapore American School in located in Ulu Pandan. Sam taught social studies there for two years. Pictured are the Gamma Community eighth graders, 1979-1980.**

As a social studies teacher Sam took the students on quite a few field trips as part of the Singapore unit including visits to public housing estates. Students got to sample Singapore food at the hawker's centers and even toured a candy factory. In the World Cultures unit, Sam scheduled some Maori dancers who were part of a New Zealand military unit based in Singapore at the time. The Maori came to do the "hakka", their war dance, which was a very active display that tested the strength of the floors in the building as the performers jumped up and down! In the Samoa unit, the students performed in plays and did multi-choices of various reports, building models or dioramas. The room had a music center with earphones and a reading center as well.

Prior to coming to Singapore, Sam had met a Japanese flight attendant in Waikiki. When she found out he was moving to Singapore, the two stayed in touch with each other. Sam then met one of her Japan Air Line flights when it came to Singapore. That was a fun experience as the two of them went all around the city for a couple of days, including Sentosa Island.

Mike Norman, Nat Bava and Ceril Perreria were Sam's best friends at the American School. The guys often met after school at the Wessex Estate Club where they would play tennis and drink beer after. Another teacher, Graham Bywater from Australia served as a fourth player in doubles.

One not so good experience Sam had was losing his sea freight sent from Hawaii. His personal belongings weighing 500 pounds were lost at sea when a typhoon hit the container ship and drove it onto a reef on the Paracel islands.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracel\\_Islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paracel_Islands)



**Paracel Islands**

Of 200 containers on board, seven were ejected into the sea and Sam's was one of them. Though he did get reimbursed for the damage, no money could

replace what was lost. Luckily his air freight *did arrive* with all the slides and other collections intact. Later, after an investigation, it was shown that one employee of the American School was putting goods on cheaper ships and pocketing the difference in monies he received. He was later prosecuted and fired which included a big write-up in the Singapore Straits Times newspaper. Not only was tennis a sport of choice while Sam was in Singapore but basketball was too. Along with his friend Mike Norman, Sam joined the Singapore Teachers Training College basketball team. The two played with the other local student teachers against other schools. The staff also played basketball regularly in the gym at Ulu Pandan and had a Staff/Student game once every year which was very popular with the students.

Hiking was also fun, especially on Bukit Timah Hill which had lots of marked trails on it, including one that led to the large water pipes that came from Malaysia to supply Singapore's drinking water. Bukit Timah is the highest point in the city state at around 500 feet. Sentosa was another popular hiking site with the island having a beach that rivaled East Coast.

Early on in his stay, after some time teaching at the American School, Sam was introduced by Liz Ong, the school librarian, to Cecilia Sivaguru who would be his second wife. Though it was the second marriage for Sam, it was the first for Cecilia. The two dated for two years and married just prior to Sam's completion of his two year contract with the school.

Celia is part Chinese and part Ceylonese. In 1923, her father, Siva Sivaguru had come by boat from what was then Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, for employment and never returned to his country. He met his Chinese wife Mary during the Japanese occupation in the early 1940's when Siva, an ethnic Indian, was able to protect Mary from problems involving the occupying Japanese troops.

The couple eventually married and had four children, Celia being the youngest. The oldest sister was Helen (step) and Jane was the second oldest. The fourth child was a son.

Part of the joy of living in Singapore for Sam was its central location to countries like China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Celia and Sam traveled to Bali, Indonesia where a theft occurred and Sam's passport was stolen; an incident that changed their travel plans. They also traveled to Malaysia, Thailand, Java and Sumatra in Indonesia. Visiting Borobudur in Java was one of the most exciting places the couple went. In Java, Sam and Celia traveled with a young French couple Jon and Veronique. In Bali, a passport incident forced the couple to return to Jakarta where they contacted the American Embassy and got the passport back. It was stolen while the couple rode in a mass transport vehicle. During those days it was common for the thieves to send passports back to the victim's embassy but of course all money and travelers checks were stolen and later cashed at a bank in Java.

## China - 1979 - Chance of a Lifetime



The most awesome trip that Sam took during his lifetime was his sojourn to China. He and his friend Mike Norman had an opportunity to sign up for the trip with a group of 16 others on a trip through China in early summer, 1979. During this time, China had barely opened up to the world as this was not long after President Nixon's journey there. The itinerary called for a trip from Singapore to Hong Kong/Quang Cho/Peking/ Tsing Tao and back to Singapore. In addition to Mike and Sam, Melanie and Jim Swetz, another teaching couple from Singapore American School went as well. The group also included a family of four Americans from Texas, a mom, dad with a son and daughter in their teens. An elderly Chinese couple from Singapore also went. The entire agenda including all hotel rooms, flights and ground transportation Costs for each traveler US\$1,300.00 per person (3 weeks).



**Mike Norman, Singapore American School basketball coach in 2010. He and Sam did a three week trip to China together in 1979. Mike is pictured with Mr. and Mrs. Tanner Nichol.**

In the China of 1979, the bicycle was the main mode of transportation for most Chinese. The cities at the time included a few cars, trucks, vans and trains as well. Attire in those days included both men and women wearing pants, the most popular colors being grey, blue and olive drab. Many men and some women wore Mao caps.

The Chinese guides during the trip called people in Sam's tour group, "friends" since the policy of the government at the time was to encourage courtesy to all tourists. Once the group flew from Singapore to Hong Kong, the entire trip was by either train or van. Long distance trips were done by rail and these trips were quite something. Everyone had Chinese style tea cups with round lid covers to keep the beverage hot. Meals were served on the trains and there were sleeper cars. Once arriving at a destination, vans were used to move the group from one place to another.

The first city the group stayed in China was CANTON (more correctly KWANG-CHOW Fu), a large and populous commercial city located in Kwangtung Province near the Pearl River. It was in Kwang-Cho that the group got its first taste of Chinese hospitality when a 13 course meal was served the first night and the group got to visit the kitchen. Sam recalls a waitress lighting Mao-tai whiskey on fire in a small saucer during the meal!

### [Maotai - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

All the workers came out on the steps of the restaurant when the group departed to wave goodbye. That had to be one of the most memorable meals that Sam ever ate and was a great introduction to the country.

The people in China were very respectful toward the group of visitors wherever they went. Mike and Sam brought a Frisbee along with them and almost no Chinese at the time had ever seen one. Thus when the two American School teachers threw the saucer shaped plastic thing back and forth, large crowds would gather and marvel at the object. Sam and Mike both liked the sport of basketball and, on several occasions the two played with local young men. These "Pick up" games were played at the spur of the moment on outdoor courts. Again, large crowds would gather. The same thing happened in their ping pong matches. Sam recalls the first time he played in China was on a ping pong table outdoors and red bricks were used instead of a net!



When in many cities, especially **Qīngdǎo** or Tsingtao, lots of people would gather around the van and stare at the tourists in the group, pressing their noses against the glass.



## [Tsingtao Brewery - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

One of the cities visited was Tsingtao. It was previously a German colony at the turn of the century. The largest brewery in China at the time was located there. Founded by the Germans in 1903, the green bottles are still familiar to many people. After the tour, the group members adjourned to the tasting room which consisted of a long table with a white table cloth.



As for the Chinese in the city, in many instances, this was the first time many of the Chinese had ever seen a Caucasian since, if they were rural people, they may make only one trip to a city in a lifetime or perhaps, at best, every five years. Some of the people would reach out and touch the long blond hair of the University of Texas student with us on the trip. Her hair grew down to her waist, a style not seen in China at the time.

### History

The Tsingtao Brewery was founded by The Anglo-German Brewery Co. Ltd., an English-German joint stock company based in Hong Kong who owned it until 1916. The brewery was founded on August 15, 1903 as the *GermaniBrauerei* (*Germania* Brewery) with a paid-in capital of 400,000 Mexican silver dollars divided into 4,000 shares priced at \$100 each.<sup>[4]</sup>

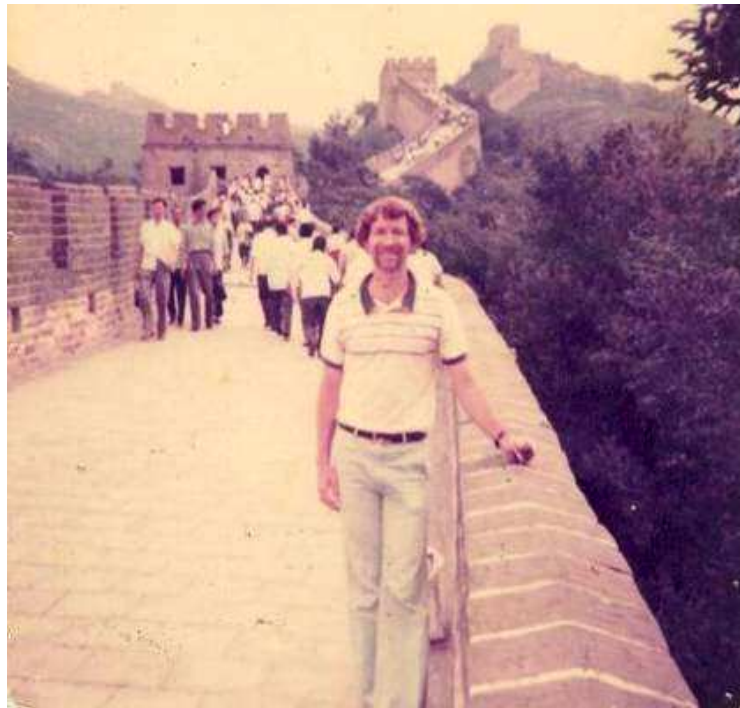
Founding members of the Supervisory Board <sup>[4]</sup>

- John Prentice, of SCFarnham, Boyd & Co., Ltd., Shanghai
- Alexander McLeod, of [Gibb, Livingston & Co.](#), Shanghai
- CW Wrightson, of Fearon, Daniel & Co., Shanghai
  - Max Slevogt, of Slevogt & Co., Shanghai
  - J.Jürgen Block, of H. Sietas & Co., [Qufu](#)  
Brewery Directors <sup>[4]</sup>
- Heinrich Seifart (1904 – 25.11.1907)
- Ernst Siemssen (Nov. 1907–1914)  
Brewmasters <sup>[4]</sup>

R. Schuster (1904–1905) Martin Wehle (1906–14)

The first beer was served on December 22, 1904.<sup>[4]</sup>

## The Great Wall



*Sam is standing on the Great Wall of China, summer, 1979.*

One of the greatest thrills of traveling in China was to experience the Great Wall. The main site of the wall most tourists see is just a short 30 mile drive

from Beijing. The day we walked it, there were not that many people on the structure. Sam was most amazed at how steep it was while walking up and down. What a massive project running for 5,500 miles! In 1979, there were just a couple of small shops selling mementos at the main entrance. Nowadays we are told one hardly sees photos of the wall without a big crowd in the background and many more shops to serve the tourists of today.

The tour group also visited the Royal Tombs in Beijing and the Emperor's Palace or the "Forbidden City". Below is "The Palace of Heavenly Purity".



One of the strangest visits was to the tomb of Mao Tse Tung because everyone lined up in single file on a long red carpet, took off our head gear and walked inside the building. Mao's remains were in a glass covered case. His embalmed remains made his look as if he were plastic.

Sam recalls being in the capitol on the fourth of July when he placed a call to Winside, Nebraska to talk to his mom Elsa. She was so shocked to get a call all the way from China!

While in the city, Mike and Sam heard a rumor that Bob Hope was there and that he was going to have a show from Beijing. They wanted to find out if it were true so they went to the nicest hotel in the city, the Beijing Hotel, the only real tourist hotel in Beijing at the time, and asked the man at the desk if Bob Hope was there. The man said yes so they then asked if he was giving a fourth of July show. The clerk said, "Room 314". Due to English problems, the clerk had given us Bob Hope's room number instead! It turned out that he wasn't doing a show.

One night the group went to see a gymnastics show in Beijing. Everyone was seated towards the back when official delegations walked in and were seated in the front of the stage. Sam told Mike that he knew several of the people in the delegation and that they were from Samoa. Mike could hardly believe it so Sam walked down to the front and greeted the Samoans in their own language. Sam already knew four of the seven people in the delegation. They included Salamasina Malieatoa, Mary Prichard, the "Tapa lady of Samoa" and the poet. They also found out that Sam's group was staying in the same hotel so Mary Prichard and Salamasina agreed to meet in the bar at the hotel later. It

turned out that Salamasina was too tired, but Mary Sam and Mike had a great time in the bar that evening! A stop near the end of the tour included a trip to see the tomb of Sun Yat Sen.

The group returned to Hong Kong which seemed like "re-entering the world" in those days. That's because China lacked TV, English newspapers and magazines, all of which Hong Kong had. What a trip to China and what a return as well!



## Hong Kong Island Indonesia



## Map of Indonesia

Celia and Sam planned a trip to Java, Bali and Sulawesi, going in the summer of 1979. The departure was a week or so after Sam returned from China. What a change of scenery Jakarta was. Sam had an American teacher friend in the capitol city so visited them and saw the sights before leaving for Jogjakarta.

## Borobudur



**Borobudur**, or Borobudur, is a 9th-century Mahayana Buddhist Temple in Magelang, Central Java, and Indonesia.

Near this city on Eastern Java, Borobudur is the major Buddhist site after Angkor Wat in Cambodia. The ancient ruin is fantastic site to see and explore. Afterward a flight to Bali and residence on Kuta Beach was pleasant until Sam's passport and traveler's cheques were stolen just a few days after arrival. It happened in Denpasar when a local took Sam's items from his *travel bag*. Prior to the theft, there had been trips to a volcano and to the art center in Ubud. Canceling Suluese, the couple flew to Jakarta to get another passport for Sam and returned to Singapore Two days later, the thieves mailed his old passport the American Embassy. Thieves did that in the old days!

### Kuta Beach, Bali, Indonesia



## Depart Singapore/Around the World - 1980

Back in Singapore for the beginning of the 1979-80 school year, many of the teachers at Ulu Pandan agreed that the biggest disadvantage to the school was the leadership at the middle school. The principal, Helen Johnson was not well

qualified for the position she had, the school was plagued with mismanagement and the teachers experienced lack of support. Mrs. Johnson was however viewed as a "strong disciplinarian" by a bare majority of the school board. When Mrs. Johnson accepted a contract offer for the 1980-81 school year, 21 teachers resigned, most from Ulu Pandan. Sam was one of them. He actually loved Singapore and wanted to stay but like so many others, including his friends Len McClure and his wife Cathy, it was not to be.

Meanwhile, Sam had proposed marriage to Celia! The two of them were married in Toa Payoh Gardens in a private ceremony. Not long after, the couple packed their bags to depart the City State.

Though the American School had provided round trip tickets back to Hawaii, Sam bargained with the school with a claim that Nebraska was his real home. The school accepted the claim. That meant many more travel miles were granted. Thus, for just \$350.00 each, or a total of \$700.00 the two of them received two "around the world" tickets. The route went from Singapore-Thailand-Greece-Denmark-New York-Nebraska-Taiwan and back to Singapore. It turned out to be an exciting eight month trip.

Both of them especially loved Greece where they took a 10 day tour of the Peloponnese, seeing the original Olympic Games site, the Parthenon in Athens and many other sites.



The Parthenon is a former temple on the Athenian Acropolis, Greece, dedicated to the goddess Athena, whom the people of Athens considered their patron. Construction began in 447 BC when the Athenian Empire was at the height of its power. The Parthenon was one of the most beautiful things Celia and Sam saw in Greece.

Sam and Celia met a traveler on their bus tour who had just graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa and knew Sam's friend Art Whistler who was teaching at the University at the time. The Greeks were very fun loving and musical. Fresh salads with olives were especially enjoyable.

From Greece, the couple traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark and on to New York City before flying to Omaha, Nebraska.



**View of the Cliff and Elsa Burris farm located five miles northwest of Winside, Nebraska.**

## **Nebraska**

Arriving in Nebraska, it was quite a task for Celia to adapt to such a radical change from a big city like Singapore to the rural mid west but she did very well. The couple spent a considerable length of time on a stay at the farm. Luckily it was summer in the Midwest. The two traveled around the region including seeing several state parks. Ponca State Park was their first where they enjoyed swimming in the pool there. Niobrara State Park, located near Gavin's Point Dam on the South Dakota border, was another place they visited. The swimming pool there was memorable as it was set on top of a hill with a view of the rolling hills around.

Because Celia and Sam spent a longer period of time in Nebraska on their trip around the world, one of the things they got to do was help Sam's parents on a decision. That was whether to buy a house in Winside, the closest small town to the farm. For some time, Cliff and Elsa had thought about selling the 160 acre farm to Sam's younger brother Bill. That way the property would stay in the family. One day, Cliff, Elsa, Celia, Sam and Bill went to look at the house which was located directly across the street from the tennis court right on Main Street not far from the baseball field. All of them felt it was a good idea but Celia and Sam left for Hawaii before the final decision was made to purchase the house. Cliff and Elsa moved in 1981. That allowed Bill and soon his family (after marriage to Patti Holtgrew) to move there. They lived on the "home place" until 2012. Cliff, though retired, still journeyed out to the farm regularly for several years to help Bill. Eventually, his health prevented him

from continuing to do so and he and Elsa enjoyed their new home on located on the Main Street of Winside.



**The Cliff and Elsa Burris home in Winside, Nebraska.**

Sam's parents lived there from 1981 until Elsa's death in 1993. Cliff continued to live in the house until he died in 1997. The house is still in the family.

## Onward To Singapore

After their stay in Nebraska, Sam and Celia traveled to Taipei, Taiwan where they had a very enjoyable stop at Sun Moon Lake in the central region of the country, still one of the most beautiful places Sam and Celia had ever seen.



**Sun Moon Lake is the largest body of water in Taiwan as well as a tourist attraction. Situated in Yuchi, Nantou, the area around the Sun Moon Lake is home to the Thao tribe, one of aboriginal tribes in Taiwan.**



Back to Singapore, the couple stayed at Tao Payoh with Celia's parents enjoying the island state again before flying to Hawaii in December, 1980.

## The State of Hawaii Department of Education from 1980 to 2001

Arriving in Honolulu, Celia and Sam rented an apartment on Wili Wili Street in the McCully-Mo'ili'i section of the city with equally good access to Waikiki and the University of Hawaii. Sam immediately interviewed for a job with the Hawaii Department of Education and, even though it was the middle of the school year, landed a position at Pearl City at Waiau Elementary School half time and Momilani Elementary School half time. Meanwhile Celia interviewed and accepted a job as a secretary with Administration at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Later she worked as a secretary for the Gulf Oil Company. Their office was located in downtown Honolulu.

Sam and Celia continued to share a love of sports such as tennis, badminton, hiking, photography and travel. Hawaii's tropical climate and cool breezes provided an excellent opportunity for outdoor sports and they took full advantage. During this period of time, Sam and Celia spent a lot of time with friends, especially Art Whistler and Debbie Nanod. Tennis was one of their favorite pastimes as well as overnight trips to Camp Mokuleia, a Y.M.C.A. Facility located on the northwest shore of Oahu. Cabins at the time were only five dollars a night. When Celia's parents, Mary and Siva Sivaguru of Singapore came to visit Hawaii, they went out to Camp Erdman to spend a night there.

### Camp Erdman | YMCA of Honolulu | Honolulu, Hawai'i



Camp Erdman is blessed with a beautiful white sand beach though swimming is prohibitive due to rough waters and dangerous undercurrents. The camp had a

tennis court and basketball court as well. Many a sunset was viewed while grilling food and enjoying a glass or two of wine!



**Cabins at Camp Erdman in the 1980's were \$5.00 per night. Sam later camped near this spot in the 1990's.**

Sam also spent almost every weekend camping at Camp Mokuleia in Waialua side when he later worked at Iroquois Point Elementary School in Ewa Beach. He would put his tent and supplies in the trunk of his 1991 Honda Accord and go directly to Camp Erdman for the Friday night camp out. Sometimes, Sam would stop at the Hawaii Country Club Golf Course where he and Celia took his parents to visit back in 1984-85 during their Hawaii visit. Sam would often relax and have a draft beer with pupu (snacks).

The trip to Waialua was beautiful. First within view were the pineapple fields along the way, then the slow, zigzag drive down the hill with the ocean in the background and Waialua below. After that it was a straight shot by Dillingham Field where the gliders would be taking off or landing. After that, it was a drive by the polo fields, Camp Mokuleia, a couple of military beaches and then Camp Erdman.

Erdman is a YMCA camp which was established in the 1940's as a rest center for fleet officers and is located in a more remote section of northwest Oahu. After arriving, Sam would either hike up the Waistband Range Mokuleia side, play basketball, jog or do a bit of all three. There were so few people in the area because just beyond was the end of the road just a quarter mile up. Sometimes Sam would run out onto the isolated beach, remove all his clothes and end up rolling in the sand like a creature without a care in the world! What a great place for relaxation at the end of the week, or anytime!



**The beach at Camp Erdman near where Sam and Celia brought Sam's parents for a BBQ in 1984.**

Sometimes Sam was invited to join other campers at their campfires. At times there would be songs or maybe marshmallows roasted over the fire. One time a group of Waianae teachers asked him to join them. They played guitar, ukulele and generally made the most of a wonderful seaside environ. During his stay in Ewa Beach and his work at Iroquois Point, Sam went camping there so often that he received the combination to the front gate from the staff so that if he wanted to, he could come during holidays when no one would be utilizing the facility!

## **Waiau Elementary School**

**Address: 98-450 Hookanike St, Pearl City, HI 96782, United States**

**Phone:+1 808-453-6530**

On his first job after coming back from Singapore, Sam couldn't find a job as a teacher but was able to use his M. A. degree to work as a school counselor for the State of Hawaii, Department of Education, Sam had an alternating 3 - 2 and 2-3 schedule. He serviced two elementary schools in Leeward District for the second semester of the 1980-81 school year.



### **Courtyard at Waiau Elementary School**

At Waiau, Walter Luke was the principal. The campus was more dusty and dry as the school is at a lower elevation than Momilani and gets less moisture. Waiau is also closer to the H-1 Freeway. Momilani was located higher, at the foot of the Ko'olau Mountains near Pearl City High School. As a result, it was much cooler there. One extra project at Waiau was a slide show Sam did during the May Day Celebration. He took photos on slide and put the slides to a Hawaiian song, "The World is a Rainbow", showing it to the students who really enjoyed the show! Sam had a successful semester at both schools.

## **Momilani Elementary School**



Address: 2130 Hookiekie St, Pearl City, HI 96782, United States  
Phone: +1 808-453-6444

Richard Takamoto, who was great to work for, was the principal at Momilani, located just beside Pearl City High School.

Sam had his own office in both schools Momilani and Waiau. During this time, there were a lot of Vietnamese "boat people" who had escaped war in their country by sea. Many of the families ended up in Hawaii which meant more teachers were needed for English as a Second Language. My friend Jim Carr's wife Tina was Vietnamese and, Sam succeeded in helping to get her hired as an ESL teacher at Momilani.

Many of the teachers in Hawaii were pleased to find that much of the time, these immigrant students from the Asian region did very well academically. At the time, Rubik's Cubes were all the rage and whenever there were Rubik's contests held at the schools, the Asian students seemed to do very well!

- *(The Rubik's Cube is a 3-D mechanical puzzle invented in 1974 by Hungarian sculptor and professor of architecture Ernő Rubik.)*

One of the tasks Sam enjoyed at Momilani was attending the 4<sup>th</sup> grade field trip to the Polynesian Cultural Center. The fourth grade in the public school system study Hawaii and Hawaiiiana. Though he was the school counselor at Momilani, Sam was invited to help chaperone the group. The students stayed overnight at the hotel next to the Polynesian Cultural Center. While there, everyone got to see real native villages of Polynesia such as Samoa, Tonga and New Zealand topped off with a Polynesian show that night. The students loved it! The only down side to Momilani was its location near Pearl City High School as there were periodical encroachments by high school students into the grounds.

## Honowai Elementary 1981-82

Address: 94-600 Honowai St, Waipahu, HI 96797, United States  
Phone: +1 808-675-0165

Sam's next position with the Hawaii Department of Education was again in Leeward District at Honowai Elementary in Waipahu. Byron Yoshina was the principal and Ann Toyota was a fellow school counselor. Ann and Sam worked very well together. Byron and his wife even dropped by Sam and Celia's apartment in Honolulu on Christmas to give them a loaf of bread Byron's wife had made as a Christmas present! Byron would later be principal at Mililani High School.

The student population of the school was mostly Filipino since the area was mainly sugar plantations in the old days. The school is located very near what

was at that time several large sugar cane fields so that when workers burned the cane after harvesting, especially on a windy day, the black flakes blew in the school's direction! Soot would be on the desks, chairs, in classrooms and grounds.



Administration building at Honowai Elementary School, Waipahu.

Sam's school counselor office was located on the right.

## Nebraska – Summer- 1982

A big event in 1982 was Sam's parents, Cliff and Elsa, selling the farm northwest of Winside to his brother Bill. Cliff and Elsa had purchased a house to live in on a corner lot on Main Street. The house, with a garage on the property, was quite a good location being right across from the tennis courts and down the street from the baseball field. Sam and Celia enjoyed jogging around the baseball field during their visits. Sam always enjoyed riding Bill's bike around Winside. He could do so because Bill was often too busy to ride it. After Sam's parents moved into town and Bill moved to the farm, Celia and Sam stayed in the Winside house on their visits. The house had plenty of room for them since there were two bedrooms upstairs and one down. The lot soon had two garages as Clifton had a second one built not long after they moved.



**In 1982, Cliff and Elsa Burris purchased this house on Main Street, Winside, Nebraska. Sam and Celia were home visiting them from Hawaii at the time. They helped make a decision about the purchase of the dwelling.**



**Laura and Albert Jaeger were good friends and next door neighbors of Cliff and Elsa Burris for many years. Their children went to school and attended the same church as they did. In this picture, the Burris home and part of the newer garage can be seen on the far left.**

**Back in Hawaii, Sam helped establish the Hawaii Gun Control Coalition. The group was founded right after the murder of John Lennon in New York City on December 8, 1980. Sam was elected president.**

# Hawaii Gun Control Coalition

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_death\\_of\\_John\\_Lennon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_death_of_John_Lennon)



**John Lennon**

**Born:** October 9, 1940, [Liverpool, United Kingdom](#)

**Assassinated:** December 8, 1980, [New York City, New York, United States](#)

**Spouse:** [Yoko Ono](#) (m. 1969–1980), [Cynthia Lennon](#) (m. 1962–1968)

**Children:** [Sean Lennon](#), [Julian Lennon](#)

Since 1980, there have been many tragedies, multiple shooting, school shootings and other deaths around the United States from handguns but when John Lennon was shot, the country and the world mourned. In some places, like Honolulu, people got active in trying to prevent gun proliferation.

A group of Honolulu activists who felt strongly about what had happened to John Lennon met soon after his murder at Church of the Crossroads near University Avenue and Britannia Street. One of them was Emmett Cahill who was to become a lifelong friend. At that time, Emmett was best known for his work as a lobbyist at the legislature for the Hawaii Counsel of Churches.

<http://archives.starbulletin.com/2004/09/24/news/story13.html>

Others in the group were Ram Das, a professor of Religion at the University of Hawaii at Manoa and his wife. Nancy Mower was one of the most active in the group. Her daughter was killed by a Fijian male student at East West Center. The murderer had killed the daughter because she was trying to break up with him. He then shot himself afterward.



Certainly it wasn't politically possible to completely ban handguns, but a lot was accomplished by this group in Hawaii in that year through constant lobbying, meeting regularly to work strategy, writing letters to the editor and contacting legislators. By the end of the 1982 legislative session, Hawaii had stronger gun laws than any other state in the United States. The cause was also aided by the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981 that also shocked the nation.

The down side for Sam in working in such an effort publicly was threatening letters, cold stares and frowns at hearings on bills and even fears that he might not get to his car safely after testimonies at the Capitol building. Still, the group prevailed as they ended regular meetings in mid 1982. Today, Hawaii has the sixth lowest rate of gun ownership in the country and the lowest percent of gun deaths. Hawaii is still one of the safest states in the country crime wise.

## Koko Head Elementary School Counselor 1982-83

Address: 189 Lunalilo Home Rd, Honolulu, HI 96825, United States  
Phone:+1 808-397-5811

Toward the end of the summer, 1983, Sam was "in between" jobs, not tenured and a bit nervous having not found a full time position.

His previous position had been a temporary one year experience. The regular counselor, Hazel Szumile was returning for the next school year. Sam's lucky break took place

when he got a call from another school, this one in the Hawaii Kai area of Oahu at Koko Head Elementary. The principal, Cecilia Lum was a very kind but firm principal and one of the best



administrators Sam ever worked with. She was principal at the same school for 26 years later before retiring!

<http://www.staradvertiser.com/hawaii-news/school-cheers-scores>



### **Campus at Koko Head Elementary School, Hawaii Kai, Oahu, Hawaii**

The counselor at the school, Sharon was to have a baby so elected to take a one year leave to do so. Sam was hired to take her place. Koko Head was one of the best schools Sam worked in as a school counselor in Hawaii. The school was a 20 minute drive n good traffic on H-1. In many ways, the school seemed to have everything. The community was generally upper middle class; the teachers were virtually all competent, caring and supportive. The school secretary was the same. Sam ran a program called "Cobra of the Week". This was because the cafeteria had problems with noise and adults involved worked to come up with the idea of rewarding the class that had the best behavior, judging being done by the cafeteria manager and staff. It was very popular. As the counselor, every Friday Sam would go into the cafeteria and announce the winning class for that week. A Bulletin board was maintained all school year in the cafeteria and a small cobra puppet was purchased and served as an award for the students to keep in their classroom for one week. Sometimes the principal awarded the Cobra.



**Koko Head and Koko are part of the area served by Koko Head Elementary in Hawaii Kai, Oahu, Hawaii**

While working at Koko Head, Sam and wife Celia were still living in their one bedroom apartment at Wiliwili Street in the McCully area. It was a good place

to commute to work as the H-1 freeway runs east to west so traveling was quite fast. One day Sam was going a little too fast and got a speeding ticket coming home one afternoon from school.

**SINGAPORE:** Sam and Celia spent most of the **summer of 1983**, in Singapore. While there, they did house sitting for their friends Mike and Tina Norman who were visiting the U. S. The Norman house was located in Wessex Estate, an estate where previously Sam and Celia lived in 1980. Sam and Celia really enjoyed their time as it was like the old days again.



**There were 26 Bungalows and dozens of flats in a quiet, country-like setting named Wessex Estate.**

Wessex Estate was originally a British military barracks built around the 1940's and was originally constructed as housing non-commissioned officers. The housing estate is not far from the Malaysia Railroad tracks as they could sometimes hear trains go by in the distance. The apartments were built in the old style cement typical of the period. They had been renovated nicely by the government, were now privately owned and highly desirable. The couple enjoyed the reconnecting with friends, Singapore food and all the joys of their old neighborhood.

## **Hawaii Nuclear Freeze Coalition 1981-1984**

Returning to Hawaii, Sam continued to be active in the peace movement. In 1980 while attending a function at East West Center in Manoa, he met a student at the University of Hawaii who belonged to the Hawaii Nuclear Freeze Coalition. Sam called the number he was given which connected him to Charlie and Eileen Fujimoto. Charlie had lost his university teaching job during the 50's. He was accused of being a communist and had to attend the McCarthy

hearings in Washington, DC. Little did Sam know at the time how active he would be in the effort to try and persuade the Reagan Administration to negotiate a "freeze" with the then Soviet Union!

The nuclear freeze was a proposed agreement between the world's nuclear powers, primarily the United States and the then-Soviet Union, to freeze all production of new nuclear arms, to leave levels of nuclear armament where they were currently and then negotiate to reduce them.

The Honolulu contingent of the Nuclear Freeze Coalition was closely allied with Physicians for Social Responsibility among other organizations and worked hard to get the United States Government to attempt to negotiate a freeze of such weapons with the Soviet Union. Activities included meetings, sign waving and protesting at events. An example was the Ronald and Nancy Reagan attendance at the Easter Service at Saint Andrews Cathedral in Honolulu. On that day, there were around 700 protestors from various peace organizations holding signs with union members bringing hand held megaphones. The groups were doing chants such as, "No more guns to kill nuns" referring the murder of four nuns in El Salvador by troops supported by right wing groups in America including Ronald Reagan who supported the government at the time. The regime was receiving U. S. military aide.

Sam was active in petitioning and would often spend some weekend time taking four clipboards down to the bus stop at Ala Moana Boulevard to get signatures. It was while doing this one day that he met by chance a sister to Dr. N. L. Ditman, the veterinarian in his home town of Winside, Nebraska. It turned out that, after she and Sam got into a conversation about where each was from (Nebraska), she mentioned Stanton as her home town. It turned out "Doc's" sister also knew Sam's father Cliff since Doc's sister then told Sam she was present when Sam was born at the Lutheran Hospital in Norfolk, Nebraska!. At the time Sam met her, she was taking a vacation from her job as a nurse in Lincoln, Nebraska. What a fine chance happening!

Despite all their efforts, the issue of a "Nuclear Freeze" was never negotiated, mostly because of the opposition of President Reagan and his administration.

One of the biggest benefits for Sam of this organization was meeting people that would be some of his best lifelong friends such as Emmett Cahill, Will Butler, Francis and Valdo Viglielmo, Jim and Renee Brewer, Doctor Fred Dodge, Tara Hands and Jim Albertini.

[http://www.malu-aina.org/who\\_we\\_are.htm](http://www.malu-aina.org/who_we_are.htm) .



**Jim Albertini, political activist, at his farm Malu Aina on the Big Island of Hawaii**

One afternoon, while standing next to Jim Albertini at a protest, Sam came close to getting arrested! Jim at the time was living in Oahu and organized groups to protest nuclear weapons at military camps on the island. One weekend, Sam went with Jim and others to protest at Pearl Harbor. During the protest, while activists were handing out flyers, Jim was taken by security, hand cuffed and forced onto the base. Sam had been standing beside Jim at the time and one security guard poked his finger into Sam's chest and said, "And if you hand out one more flyers, you'll go with him!!" Sam did not hand out any more flyers since he wasn't prepared to go to jail. Because of this incident and others, Jim was later tried, convicted and sentenced to several months in a federal prison at Lompoc, California.



Phone: (808) 832-3130

Fax: (808) 832-3140821 Kalihi Street, Honolulu, HI 96819

A "tenured position" is what almost every Hawaii Department of Education teacher looks for. That is a job that puts one on a track to more job security. Once a teacher is hired into a "tenured track", that person has served two years of probation and then becomes a permanent hire with all the rights of an

employee. That was the position Sam was hired for as 8 grade counselor at Kalakaua Intermediate School in Kalihi.



**Main office complex at King David Kalakaua Middle School where Sam served as eighth grade school counselor for one year.**

At the time, the school had a population of over 1,000 students and a reputation as the toughest intermediate school in the state of Hawaii. There were three guidance counselors on staff, Hank Rivera, Roberta Richards and Sam. There were three grades at the school and Sam had 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

The principal, Bernie Williams was seated with a janitor drinking a beer on campus the first time Sam met him. Bernie had a reputation of being tough but, as other teachers including Sam soon found out there were problems. One of the worst was his kicking a teacher in the shin under the table at a parent teacher conference because the principle didn't like something the teacher said at the meeting. The use of profanity in the office and in public by this administrator was common place. More

For Sam's part, during his career, he had served as union representative several times including at Mac High, Vancouver and Kalaniana'ole School, Hawaii.

The personal realization of the need for union representation first came to Sam at Kalakaua Intermediate School in 1984. At that time principal Bernie Williams, became very emotional during a conversation, poking Sam in the chest with his index finger! Sam immediately contacted his union representative at the school, who advised Sam to call the Union representative Sam Moore. Within 30 minutes of phoning, the principal got a call and Sam went the same day, for a meeting with Bernie. Before the two went in, Sam Moore told Sam to let him do all the talking.

Sam, through the union representative, proceeded to really lay down the law in a bold way with Mr. Williams the principal, threatening him and saying, "If you ever touch Sam or any teacher at this school again, I'll make sure....."

Principle Bernie Williams never caused any problem the rest of the school year for Sam.

There was a positive balance to Bernie Williams though. Partially due to the administrator and his style, the faculty really stuck together to help each other. There were activities such as tennis after school some days and at least once a month the staff held an international day lunch when everyone brought ethnic food to share. The Hawaii State Teachers Association came regularly to the school to help the teachers when problems happened.

Sam was familiar with the Samoan culture and since there were quite a few Samoan students at the school, his background helped him in his work. Eni Jennings, an 8<sup>th</sup> grade boy was one of the most "energetic". One day he ran into Sam's office with two high school security guards close behind! Eni had gone off campus to Farrington High School which was up the street and out of bounds for the students. Eni had said something to offend one of the security guards. Eni then took off and ran back to our campus with the security guards right behind him. This student ran into Sam's office, locking the door behind him. That was some afternoon! A compromise was eventually worked out between Eni and the guards by talking to the guards out the window. Eni was suspended for that act.

While working at Kalakaua, Sam got to know Dennis Masui who was teaching history there. Sam had initially met Dennis at a school counselor's conference a couple of years earlier because Dennis was a school counselor at Mililani High at that time.

It was while Sam was at Kalakaua that he attended a credit class at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The presenter was Bruno Bettelheim, an interesting Freudian psychiatrist from Chicago. Because Sam knew the professor who introduced Dr. Bettelheim, he was invited by his friend to go to lunch at the Willows Restaurant with the teacher. Only after ordering the food did Sam find out that Dr. Bettelheim had been a prisoner in Auschwitz during World War II. It was the only time that he actually saw a numbered tattoo of a prisoner of the Nazis. Later studies claimed that Mr. Bettelheim was a fraud.

[Bruno Bettelheim - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

## Cliff and Elsa Burris Visit Hawaii, 1984

From November through Christmas of 1983, Sam and wife Celia had paid for two airline tickets so that Sam's parents, Cliff and Elsa Burris could come and visit in Hawaii. This was to turn out to be one of the most joyous times for Sam as it was the only time his parents visited the state.

Sam and Celia were still living in a one bedroom apartment on Wiliwili Street in McCully - Moiliili area of the city. Initially, after their arrival, Cliff and Elsa stayed with the couple, but the apartment on the third floor was a bit small for four people so the decision was made for Cliff and Elsa to move down to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the unit just below. It worked out great because everyone had more privacy, the apartment was roomy and his parents were still close.

Because their visit coincided with two holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas, there was ample time to travel around. The visit included three days in Maui at a hotel on the Ka'anapali Coast, the main resort area on the island. Another highlight of their stay was the trip to Polynesian Cultural Center on Oahu which included the night show. They also enjoyed staying in a cabin at Camp Erdman on the north shore of Mokuleia. This remote area was a big change from Honolulu. Sam recalled that during their stay at the rented cabin, a mouse was killed by Sam with a tennis racket! It had come up from a hole in the cabin

floor! Everyone jumped at the action! Later, a barbecue was held along the beautiful white sandy beach at sunset and lots of food, fun and wine made it a memorable occasion. For years, Sam's parent talked about their trip to Hawaii and kept a photo album to remember their journey!



Polynesian Cultural Center



## Crime on the Court

Almost everyone who knows Sam knows that, during his life, basketball was his favorite sport. As is the case for most players, prices are paid for playing the sport with "the highest injury rate in the world". Over the years, Sam has been elbowed under the chin and receiving four stitches, had numerous ankle turns, knee injuries and even a black eye given to him by David Leong one evening on an outdoor court in Bedok South, Republic of Singapore. This injury, happening the night before his departure from Singapore and meant a black eye that grew on the flight back, moving down his face!

Of all the injuries Sam had in the sport, the worst was on a day in mid June, 1984. He was playing full court basketball at Alawai Park one late Friday afternoon and a controversy arose. A local guy came over and wanted to play with the group, insisting that the 10 year old boy with him be able to play too. Several of the guys said they were against it because the boy might get hurt but the local guy insisted and the two joined in the game.

At one point in the play, Sam was guarding the young boy when the local guy screamed at Sam in anger. He accused Sam of tripping the boy and ran across the court toward him. Sam was in the midst of saying, "But I didn't...WHAM! The man punched Sam very hard with his right hand fracturing Sam's left jaw and sending him smashing to the cement court. At that point, Sam knew his jaw was broken because it wouldn't stay shut. Meanwhile, as the man threatened him, Sam crawled off the court with no one lending a hand to help him. He made his way to a nearby condo, where his friend Art Whistler had his apartment, and called police from a pay phone.

A few minutes later the police arrived and went with Sam to the basketball court. As Sam and the two officers approached, a full court game was going on with the same group minus the perpetrator and the little boy. The police asked if anyone saw the incident. Two or three of the players said, "Punch, what punch?" or "What fight?" The police were unhappy with them but told Sam, "Don't worry, we'll get him".

Sam then, with his broken jaw, rode his bicycle home where Celia was fixing dinner. Celia was shocked and immediately drove Sam to Kaiser Hospital where he was admitted and kept overnight even though, surprisingly, the lady doctor on duty stated that the jaw wasn't broken! The next day, another doctor confirmed his jaw *was* fractured and Sam went to a specialist to have it wired shut. The worst part of the surgery was getting the 12 injections in his mouth before the surgeon put bars on his upper and lower jaw, wiring his teeth

So he couldn't open his mouth for six weeks! He then gave Sam pliers so that he could cut the wires if he got ill and vomited. Without using the pliers in that case, he told Sam he could choke to death on his own vomit.

Sam spent the next six weeks with those wires. Despite what the officers had said, the perpetrator was never found even though Sam cooperated and went to the police department to get a sketch of the suspect done. The drawing *looked exactly like the perpetrator!*



### **Alawai Basketball Court**

Sam can recall going to McDonald's on King Street and bringing along a previously purchased burger and French fries blended while other friends like Art Whistler and Debbie Nanod who would have regular burgers. One thing was certainly true and that is without his wife Celia, he would have had a much more difficult time! She was constantly cooking all the vegetables, fruits and starches into shakes for Sam to consume, helping him back and forth to doctor's appointment and a thousand other things. Although Sam did lose seven pounds in the process, he was able to move about and function on normal schedules during that time.

Naturally, Sam and Celia's summer trip to Nebraska was canceled which disappointed all since relatives from Virginia including Aunt Viola Jackson with daughters Carol and Ann along with Aunt Grace Atkins were visiting Winside. After six weeks of having his jaw wired shut, Sam got the wires and bars removed. This process wasn't painful but very emotional for Sam as he cried like a baby after. In the next few weeks, Sam did rehabilitation by working to get his mouth open wide again *AFTER he went to his dentist to get his teeth cleaned!*

## Two Samoa's: A Cultural Comparison



Vita Tanielu, John Mayer and Sam Burris in the Samoan Language office at the University of Hawaii at Manoa

[Two Samoas: A Cultural Comparison](http://www.hawaii.edu/oceanic/film/filmdb/3441.html)

[www.hawaii.edu/oceanic/film/filmdb/3441.html](http://www.hawaii.edu/oceanic/film/filmdb/3441.html)

Location: Samoa; American Samoa. Subject: Social life. Length: 16 minutes. Format: DVD. Hue: color. Year Released: 1997. Series: Director: Producer: Samuel Burris.

**Sometimes what might seem to be a negative event can lead to positive things happening soon there after.** That was the case after Sam's jaw was broken after an assault on the basketball court. Because he didn't go to Nebraska due to the assault, he ended up starting his own business, Samu Productions in June, 1984.

While talking to friends Vita Tanielu, John Mayer and Art Whistler one day about his jaw (actually mumbling through the wires), a thought struck Sam. Now that he had the summer in Honolulu instead of Nebraska, maybe he could make a slide show about his Samoa experience! *The project gradually became a reality.* Sam decided to do a comparison between American Samoa, an American territory and the country of Western Samoa. Eventually Vita, for a nominal fee, agreed to narrate the show, John Mayer agreed to work by getting a recording studio sound room and Art Whistler agreed to fill in the gaps in Sam's slides to fit the narration. It fell together very nicely.

After all of this was done, Sam worked on a design for the container and chose a name for his company: Samu Productions. Samu is Samoan for "Sam". The decision for a title evolved to "Two Samoas: A Cultural Comparison". Eventually this show, in cassette, C/D and DVD form, was sold to universities, public school systems and individuals around the world. Not only that, but Sam

was hired to work with Elder hostel using his show as a centerpiece for presentations on the Samoan islands. Sam did many individual appearances in front of classes at various schools, retirement centers and other sites. "Two Samoa's: A Cultural Comparison" is available on DVD in the Hawaii Public Library System, at universities in Hawaii and in the Hawaii public schools.

After the physical attack and injury Sam suffered in Honolulu, he and Celia both decided they wanted to escape the big city life and that perhaps going to a neighbor island would bring new opportunities. The couple traveled to the Big Island to search for a possible place to settle and apply for jobs.

Shortly after one of their trips, Sam was interviewed by telephone for a full time job as a counselor at two different schools on Hawaii Island. A position was offered with half time at Kalaniana'ole School and half time at Hilo Intermediate as the 8<sup>th</sup> grade counselor.

After accepting the job in Hilo, it turned out *that there was just one week to move before school started!* After giving notice to the manager of the apartment on Wili Wili Street it was, "off...to Hilo"!

## Island of Hawaii

Hawaii, commonly called the Big Island, is the largest island in the Hawaiian archipelago.

Central [Area](#): 10,432 km<sup>2</sup>

[Max width](#): 122 km

[Elevation](#): 4,205 m

[Population](#): 186,738 (2011)

Initially, after their arrival in Hilo, there were no apartments available in the town, so the couple took a room at the Seaside Hotel on Banyan Drive. Sam and Celia spent one month there before finding an apartment on Kumukoa Street, not far from the University of Hawaii at Hilo.

From the beginning, Sam and Celia enjoyed Hilo despite the large amount of rainfall averaging around 128 inches per year. They loved the relative quiet, beautiful beaches, mostly of lava or black sand as well as the many places to go hiking. Celia got a job at the Hawaii Department of Education main office

not far from Hilo Intermediate School on Waianuenue Avenue. Sam busied himself serving his two different D.O.E. schools.



## Hilo Intermediate School

Address: 587 Waianuenue Ave, Hilo, HI 96720, United States  
Phone: +1 808-974-4955



The main building and classrooms at Hilo Intermediate School located on Waianuenue Avenue in Hilo, Hawaii. Sam's counselor office was on the ground floor main entrance, right side.

Hilo Intermediate School's principal was Dan Sakai, later to become Hawaii District School Superintendent. Sam worked with Susan Becker who taught ESL at the school. Sam counseled several of her students who had emigrated from other countries.

Nancy Lum, the special education teacher was also a good friend. Sam and Celia were to dinner at the Lum's home not long before Nancy died of a brain aneurism during the 1985-86 school year. The students were overwhelmed with grief given she was so close to her students. The day the memorial was held at Hilo Intermediate there were many tears.

Sam ended up serving  $\frac{1}{2}$  times at Hilo Intermediate School for only one year.

## Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole Elementary and Intermediate School

Address: 27-330 Old Mamalahoa Hwy, Papaikou, HI 96781, United States Phone: +1 808-964-9700



### Prince Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalaniana'ole\\_Intermediate\\_School](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalaniana'ole_Intermediate_School)

Happiness would best express Sam's feelings when he accepted the job at Kalaniana'ole School.

Kalaniana'ole was K -8 with Satsuki Unyoke as his fellow school counselor and Tom High as principal. Tom had attended college at Midland in Fremont, Nebraska which is near Sam's home town of Winside. The population of the school was over 900 in the fall of 1984. Many of the students were Filipino or Hawaiian as the area was located in what was then a declining sugar industry area. Sam gained some lifelong friends at the school. Along with Satsuki, there was Julia Tao, the librarian and an excellent teacher as well. Julia had much positive influence on her students through books and her library classes. Barbara Balkan was also teaching at the school and was a neighbor in Hilo to

Stan and Carol Golembeski. They had served in Tonga as Peace Corps volunteers and Sam had met the couple in American Samoa. Both of them had teaching contracts on the island in the mid 1970's.



**A rainbow in the background shared space with classrooms on the campus at Kalaiana'ole School.**

Towards the end of the 1984-85, Sam was offered a full time position at Kalaiana'ole by Tom High and the offer was accepted. Sam was to remain as school counselor there for a total of eight years. His stay was the longest of any school he worked at. His job was full of variety, successes and generally good experiences. Here are just a few examples:

**STAMP CLUB** - The Kalaiana'ole School Stamp Club was formed because a fellow teacher at Hilo Intermediate had great success with a club at that school. Sam began the club after he noted so many students were coming into his office during lunch or breaks. The idea of a club was discussed so the club was established. The Stamp Club had up to 150 members and ran for several years. Speakers came to visit including Sam's good friend from Volcano Village, Emmett Cahill, who as an author had published two books on stamps. The kids were really excited when he came and they lined up for his autograph! Lots of films and games were part of the schedule and officers were elected for each individual stamp club. Displays were done in the cafeteria during parent night and some of the parents even came and talked about their collections or brought them to school for the members to view.

**HISTORY CLUB** - Students collected items of interest from Kale Schools past including old photos, framed pictures and yearbooks. Some of the older alumni worked with the students to gather materials and to write a history of the school.

**COUGAR PROGRAM** - Established the first year Sam came to Kale School and continuing after he left, the Cougar Program was an incentive for students to show their best behavior in the cafeteria. Each week a stuffed Cougar,

the school mascot and award was given the class that met the challenge. Sam or

Principle Tom High usually gave the award every Friday at the grade levels lunch time. The students in *the lower grades really did love the Cougar!*

**RECYCLING** - Librarian Julie Tao and Sam worked together to begin a recycling program which ran for years after Sam left. All kinds of paper, plastics and other materials were recycled through the program. Old books from the library and classrooms were donated to shelters for the Homeless in Hilo.

**ALLISON ONIZUKA** - an astronaut who lost his life in the challenger disaster was an alumnus of the school. Allison came to the school as a guest speaker just a few weeks before he was killed and gave the kids a large signed photo. The photo is still hanging in the school library. After the death, Allison's brother came to campus and the students held a memorial assembly in the astronaut's honor. His brother planted a tree in his memory in front of the library on campus. Sam and Julie Tao were both very active in making the memorial at the school a reality.

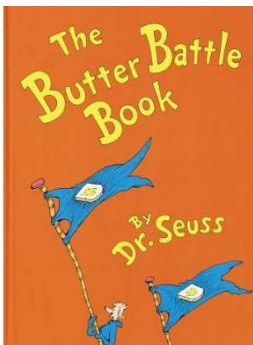
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellison\\_Onizuka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ellison_Onizuka)

**BUTTER BATTLE CURRICULUM** - Based on the well known Dr. Seuss book, "The Butter Battle", with permission from Dr. Seuss, Sam wrote a curriculum and first gave the lessons to the students at Kal School. It was very popular with the students and was then published and distributed to all School Districts in the state of Hawaii. Sam also did public demonstrations on the Big Island and in Honolulu including a workshop for counselors at Kamehameha School. Click on site below for more information:

## The Butter Battle Book

Book by Dr. Seuss

*"If we are to reach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with the children." Gandhi*



*The Butter Battle Book* (theme is silly conflicts can escalate into a dangerous situation) was written in response to the arms buildup and nuclear war threat during the Reagan administration. Published in 1984, *Butter Battle* shed light on the growing threat of war between Yooks and the Zooks. The threat stems solely from the way Yooks and Zooks choose to eat their bread: butter-side up and butter-side down, respectively. The story ends with a blank page, leaving a cliffhanger ending that is open to interpretation. *The Butter Battle Book* was on the adult *New York Times* bestseller list



for adults. In 1990, a televised version of *The Butter Battle Book* was shown on Russian television.

### [The Butter Battle Book - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

***BISCA PRESIDENT*** - during his time at Kalaniana'ole School, Sam was an active member of the Big Island School Counselor's Association serving one year as Vice President and one as President. School counselors met four times a year on different parts of the island and Sam was first involved in doing the newsletter with fellow counselor Eleanor Wolf, counselor at Pahoa Elementary. As president, it was his job to preside at the meetings.

***BIG ISLAND SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR*** Award came as a result of the work Sam did as a school counselor on the Big Island School Counselor of the year.

***KALANIANA'OLE SCHOOL STAFF PERSON OF THE YEAR*** Award honored Sam for his work as a school counselor at the school. Sam received the award and trophy at the end of the year meeting of the Kal School PTA.

***"GIVE ME 5"*** - Sam heard about a counselor on Oahu doing a program on stress reduction so he flew to Honolulu District on Oahu for a school visitation (every teacher has one school visitation day in the DOE each year). As it worked with Chris, the Oahu counselor, "Give Me 5" related to "give me 5 minutes" of relaxation in a class. Sam thought it was a great program so began it at Kalaniana'ole School. He would visit classes once each week, or more if requested, and lead the class and sometimes the teacher in stress reduction movements, calming with relaxation tapes or meditation. It was very popular and had the advantage of Sam going into the classrooms as well.

***BANANA SPLITS*** - A program that dealt with students whose parents were either going through a divorce or had already experienced one. The groups would meet by grade level once a week. A guide book of activities helped Sam go through weekly activities which included coloring books of the student's feelings about the divorce in their family as well as films and other hands on projects. A luncheon was held the final day and parents of the students were invited to attend and have lunch in the Counselors office. Sam enjoyed Banana Splits plus it was very effective at helping the kids work through their feelings.

***PARENTING SKILLS CLASS*** - Sam assisted a presenter in offering evening classes in parenting skills training. The group met once a week for a series of six weeks to help parents deal with issues of raising a child or children. Sam transferred from Kalaniana'ole School to Keaukaha School in the fall of 1992 after eight years of service.

Pu'u O'o Volcano was visible from the condo Sam owned on the seventh floor at Mauna Loa Shores.



www.alamy.com - AR3AG0

**[Pu'u 'Ō'ō - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)**

**Mauna Loa Shore Condominium, Keaukaha, Hawaii**



After Sam and Celia spent two years renting an apartment on Kumukoa Street in Hilo, they had an opportunity to purchase a one bedroom unit at Maunaloa Shores Condominium on the seventh floor penthouse level. The couple viewed the one bedroom property and made an offer of purchase during the summer of 1986.

The condominium was located right on the Pacific Ocean with views of Carl Smith Park, the swimming pool and ocean on the Hilo side and forest on the Puna side. Looking out over the Kalaniana'ole Avenue side one could see Pu'u O'o, the main vent from which lava, started flowing in 1984, until present, spewing from the site to the shoreline at Kalaupana. On its' way, the lava set fire to trees, homes and businesses as it flowed down. The glow of fire could be seen coming out of the top of the crater from the seventh floor unit at night.

For most of the time he resided there, Sam was on the Condominium Board of Directors. Sam was board president for five years after serving as Vice President. During those years, the building was repainted and the parking lot repaved. The grounds were improved too with one of the residents, Tom Loomis, hired as a grounds keeper. He knew pretty much how to take care of the plants and all the MLS area. The condo had an elevator in the central area and stairs on both sides. While living there, Sam ran up and down for exercise.

While Sam and Celia were living in unit 705, they became friends with neighbors Ron Gordon and Faith St. Germaine. Ron was a Communications Department professor at the University of Hawaii at Hilo while Faith worked at a local bank. Ron received his PhD from the University of Kansas and at one time worked for the Omaha World Herald, the main newspaper in Sam's home state.

Sam and Cecilia enjoyed #705. The apartment was decorated with rattan furniture the couple brought from Singapore on sea freight paid for by the Singapore American School. The furnishings were used first in McCully Moiliili Street in Honolulu for four years and then in unit 705 from 1986 to 1997. Sam sold the furniture with the unit in the spring of 1997 at which time other personal affects were shipped to Alaska. Later, many of Sam's possessions were taken from Alaska to Nebraska via automobile where they remain in the family house in Winside.

Both Sam, his second wife Cecelia as well as third wife Marilou enjoyed unit #705 and Maunaloa Shores. It was a very nice building near Four Mile Beach, a popular beach area. Carlsmith Park was used for picnics, playing Frisbee and just relaxing. Sam enjoyed the ocean swimming and the pool as well though he also spent a lot of time at Richardson Ocean Center and Beach Park which is just a half mile down Kalaniana'ole Road from Maunaloa Shores.

Many friends and acquaintances were made at the condo. Along with Ron Gordon mentioned earlier, there were Michael Kaltos and Jenny Samaan who also lived on the same floor. Michael served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Philippines and his wife Jenny worked as head of International Students at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Jenny also supported the Returned Peace Corps island organization on the Big Island.

Later the couple moved to Honolulu and then to Washington, DC.

Helen and Leo Hoff were mainstays at the condo for many years. Helen, a real estate agent, handled the purchase and sale of Sam's unit but was also involved in the management of the building. Helen was also on the board for many years. Later Leo passed away and Helen Hoff moved to another residence though her son Buddy continued lived there.

Another friend for many years was Praful Shah, who worked as a lab technician at Hilo Hospital. Wife Nancy worked as the post master in Hakalau. Shah was born and raised in Kenya, though ethnic Indian and then immigrated to the U. S. to attend a University. He and Nancy met at college in Indiana and eventually moved to Hawaii from there.

Another friend in unit 706, Paul Hewitt, was an educator and author of Physics books. For a while, his friend and mentor Burl Grey also lived in unit 706, but soon moved to California. Later Paul met Lillian; they were married and moved to Florida.

In discussing friends, Lily and David Day should certainly be mentioned. David was also a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer in Malaysia while Lily was ethnic Filipina. The couples were friends even before Sam's third marriage to Marilou Lemon. Their friendship grew more after that. Sam and David played a lot of tennis together and the two families went on a number of hiking trips including one overnight camp out at Kilauea, Volcanoes National Park where they viewed some of the most beautiful stars in memory!

Larry Test and Larry Daugherty were also both good friends. Larry Test worked at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and Larry Daugherty worked for a time as school counselor at Pahoa Intermediate School. "Larry D." had been a Peace Corps volunteer in Brazil. After a short stay on the Big Island, he moved to California where he met his present wife Peggy. The couple now lives in Florida. Larry Test and his wife are now divorced. Lorry is now retired, living in both Honolulu and the Philippines.

<http://www.bigislandforsale.com/rental.html>

**Leleiwi Community Association**

In the Oceanside community of Keaukaha, Hilo, Hawaii, there were two community associations, Keaukaha and Leleiwi.

As soon as Sam and Celia moved to Maunaloa Shores, they began attending Leleiwi meetings held at Richardson Ocean Center. The association was made up of a number of folks, many of them older residents. The members combined working for the community along with fun things like the annual Christmas Party. The special treat at the Christmas party was numbers of the older set dancing various hulas and singing the 12 days of Christmas of course. One of the most popular hula performances was "Laupahoehoe Boy", performed yearly by Merale and Jim Finley.

Eventually Sam accepted the position of vice president and then president of the association. He remained as such for about five years. Meetings were held monthly at Richardson Ocean Center. His friend and neighbor Ron Gordon was vice president.



**Main building at Richardson Ocean Center**

During that time the association worked with other groups in a variety of issues. An example is the savings of trees in the community and working successfully to get pesticide free public parks in all of Keaukaha. Often various speakers came such as the Hawaii County Council representative from the area. The group also supported other organizations in environmental efforts. Outstanding members were Keaukaha Community Association President Abbie Napeahi, Jan and Carl Moon, Helen and Leo Hoff, Mae and Lofty Cook, Burl and Beth Barberry and Ron and Donna Saiki.

## Big Island Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

Sam found the Peace Corps in Western Samoa to be one of the most defining experiences of his entire life. Since returning to the U. S. after two years of service in December, 1976, his circle of friends had included many Returned

Peace Corps Volunteer friends. This was true while he was a resident of the Big Island as well. Consequently, when the Hawaii Island Returned Peace Corps Volunteer organization was founded, Sam took an active part. Eventually he was chosen by consensus as President and served as such for most of his 10 years of residence in Hilo.

The Big Island organizations held social gatherings about three or four times a year. At one point in the late 80's, a Peace Award was given by the Big Island Returned Peace Corps group to Senator Spark Matsunaga for his efforts toward peace. Senator Matsunaga started the Peace Academy at the University of Hawaii. The award, a wooden plaque made by returned volunteer Tomas Belsky who served in Brazil was given at Kona in a formal presentation. The plaque was presented by Sam to Sparky's brother at a gathering there. Later on, one of his visits to the nation's capitol, Washington, DC, Sam viewed the plaque which was in a display case in Sparky's office. It is now located with the Sparky Matsunaga Collection at East-West Center, Oahu. The Matsunaga Peace Institute at the University of Hawaii at Manoa is named in his honor.

While arranging that trip to Washington, DC, Sam telephoned ahead and was able to get a few free tours of the capitol through Sparky's office. Sam was also lucky enough to be able to sit next to the Senator at Lunch in the Senate Dining Room one afternoon. He had earlier presented Sparky with some Anthuriums, a floral gift from Spark's friend Bill Reich living in Puna, on the Big Island.

Some memorable gatherings the RPCV organization had was one overnight stay in Waipio Valley at Tom Araki's Hotel. Sam often went down to the valley for overnights and knew the place well. He arranged it so that the group could stay at Mr. Araki's for the weekend. Tom's hotel had no electricity and cooking was on a gas stove downstairs. The remains of the 1960's Peace Corps training site were nearby as some members followed a guided tour by Sonny Bratt, a school Principal and RPCV - Thailand. The organization also brought more attention to the Kennedy Memorial on Waianuenue Avenue which was built with donations from volunteers training on the Big Island at the time of Kennedy's death.

Some members of the Big Island RPCV organization included Stan and Carol Golembeski, David Day, RPCV - Malaysia and author of several travel books on Asia. Others were Marilyn Andrews-Micronesia, Dexter and Susan Cate - Sierra Leone and John and Julie Countess

Not long before the plaque was presented to Sparks Brother by Sam in Kona, Sam had visited Washington, DC. At that time he was able to arrange a free tour of the Capitol and sit next to Sparky at a luncheon in the Senate Dining Room. Spark was a very nice person and great Senator.

## Senator Spark Matsunaga, Democrat – Hawaii – 1977-1990



### **Patsy Mink with Husband John Mink**

Patsy Matsu Takemoto Mink was an American politician from the U.S. state of Hawaii. Mink was a third generation Japanese American and member of the Democratic Party.

Born: December 6, 1927, [Maui, Hawaii, United States](#)

Died: September 28, 2002, [Honolulu, Hawaii, United States](#)

Spouse: [John Mink](#) (m. 1951)

Education: [University of Chicago Law School](#) (1951),

Children: [Gwendolyn Mink](#)

During Sam's active political years as a member of the Democratic Party and as a political activist, he met and knew well many politicians in Hawaii. Of all of them, Sam was most closely acquainted and friends of John and Patsy Mink. Sam first met Patsy in the early 80's while living in Oahu. Later, after moving to Hilo on the Big Island, Sam was photographer for her campaign for

Governor. Sam also had Nebraska in common with her, Patsy being a student in Lincoln.

The true story was that she transferred to the [University of Nebraska](#) where she faced discrimination. The university had a long-standing racial segregation policy whereby students of color were forced to live in different dormitories from the white students. This annoyed Mink, and she organized and created a coalition of students, parents, administrators, employees, alumni, sponsoring businesses and corporations. Mink and her coalition successfully lobbied to end the university's segregation policies.

Sam recalls his visiting Washington, DC in the mid 90's. Patsy sponsored tours of the city as was common for Hawaii delegations. After the tour, Patsy invited Sam to lunch her at the house cafeteria. Patsy said she was worried about John's health. Sadly it turned out that Patsy died just a few years later before her husband John Mink.



**Rayburn House Office Building in Washington, DC where Patsy Mink spent so much of her time as an elected representative from the state of Hawaii.**

**Emmett Anthony Cahill was an author of several books on Hawaiian history and an activist in social causes. He died Sunday at his home in Volcano on the Big Island at the age of 90.**

**Cahill is best known for his books, including "Yesterday at Kalaupapa," relating 125 years of the leprosy settlement, as well as a history of**



Hawaiian postage stamps, a biography of the early Hawaii settler John Young, illustrated by artist Herb Kane, and a history of the land-owning Shipman family of East Hawaii.

He and his wife, Bernice, moved to Honolulu in 1946, where he worked for the Mutual Telephone Co. Bernice died in 1999. Mr. Cahill is survived by sons Jeremiah and Timothy, a daughter Winifred and two grandsons.



**Emmett Anthony Cahill: He pushed to make Kalaupapa a national park**

## Emmett Cahill

One of Sam's best friends all his time in Honolulu and Hilo was Emmett Cahill. Sam first met Emmett in Honolulu when he was head of the Council of Churches and did much lobbying in the legislature. Sam and then wife Celia moved to Hilo in 1984. The couple became great friends with Emmett and his wife Bernice. The two couples often went to lunch at the Volcano Golf Course Clubhouse. When Sam was the school counselor at Kalaniana'ole School, he had Emmett speak to the Stamp Club there for many years. The students at the school treated him like a real celebrity!

After Bernice died in 1999, Sam had remarried and once stayed with Emmett at his house. That was not unusual because the two of them often did hiking together at Volcanoes National Park. Anyway, when Sam asked Emmett where he would sleep, Emmett said you can stay in that room. It's where Bernice died. Do you want to see a photo I took of her body lying in the bed? Sam proceeded to view the photo and slept in the bed where Bernice had died. Emmett and Bea always had great flowers and raised strawberries that were big and red. There house was an old wooden one but had a nice, cozy fireplace in it; a great place to sit and chat. Lunch there was often crackers with sardines and tomato soup.

## Christmas in Nebraska

That year Sam and Celia decided to do Christmas in Nebraska and visit the Burris family as well as cousins, relatives and friends.

Sam was still school counselor at Kalaniana'ole School and Celia was working for the Hawaii State Department of Education in Hilo. It was a good flight and winter weather was certainly a change though great fun for everyone.

Christmas dinner that year was at the Bill and Patti Burris home on their far five miles from the small town of Winside. The day was cold and snowy but the house was warm. Bill had a nice front porch with three sides of glass so that everyone that day got a nice view of the snow and cold weather. Celia of course, though from tropical Singapore but had spent several months here when Cliff and Elsa Burris lived there in 1980, so she was used to it. Of course it was in the spring and summer months at that time.



Left to Right: Bill Burris, Emma Burris and Sam. In back are Elsa, Cliff, Patti and Celia. The photo was taken on the enclosed front porch at the Patti and Bill Burris home on Christmas Eve, 1990.

## Some Wonders of the Island of Hawaii

### Waipio Valley, Hawaii Island

Waipi'o Valley is located in the Hamakua District of the Island of Hawaii. "Waipi'o" means "curved water" in the Hawaiian language.



It was the capital and permanent residence of many early Hawaiian Ali'i (kings) up until the time of King Um'i. A place celebrated for its nioi tree known as the "Nioi wela o Pa'akalana" (The burning Nioi of Pa'akalana). It was the location of the ancient grass palace of the ancient kings of Hawaii with the nioi stands. Kahekili II raided Waipi'o in the 18th century and burned the four sacred trees to the ground.

During his time residing in Hilo, Sam spent many a day and night in Waipi'o. Most of the time he would drive up, leave his car near the Waipi'o Lookout and hike down, often spending the night at Tom Araki's Hotel on the floor of the valley.



**The Waipio Valley Hotel or "No Name Hotel" in Waipi'o Valley cost only \$25.00 per night.** It had no electricity but propane stoves were used to cook your food brought with you.

The photo is of Tom Araki who had his wife and son living in his house in Hilo. Even so, Tom preferred the Valley. Many a night, Sam would spend on the porch of the guest house chatting with Tom who was a retired construction worker. Mr. Araki's parents came to the Big Island from Iceland via Japan in 1907 to work for the plantation. Tom was born in 1909 and lived most of his life in Hilo then moved to Waipi'o Valley, when he inherited the land from his father. Mr. Araki owned three patches of taro in the Valley. Taro is used to make poi, the staple food of the Hawaiians. Tom had many old books and photos of the valley that one could look at for hours by the light of the lantern with the sound of water run taro plants.



Tom Araki



View looking towards the back of the valley with road from the top side shown on the left.

### Obituary Tuesday January 27, 2000

**Tetsuo "Tom" Araki, 90, of Hilo, a retired proprietor for the Waipio Valley Hotel, died Tuesday in Hale Anuenue Restorative Care Center. He was born in Hakalau, Hawaii. He is survived by wife Sueno; sons Samuel and Derrick; daughter Patricia; brother Raymond; sisters Bernice S. Koga, Betty Wong, Peggy S. Maesaka, Ruth Kino, Nancy Lile, Sumiko Sakamoto and Jean Fukuki; stepbrother Wallace Yamada; five grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren. Services: 5 p.m. Monday at Dodo Mortuary. Call after 4 p.m. Private burial. No flowers.**



## Hawaii Volcanoes National Park

Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, established in 1916, is a United States National Park located in the U.S. State of Hawaii on the island of Hawaii. [Wikipedia](#)

[Address](#): Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, HI 96718, United States

[Hours](#):

Open 24 hours

[Established](#): August 1, 1916

[Phone](#): +1 808-985-6000

[Management](#): [U.S. National Park Service](#)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawai%CA%BBi\\_Volcanoes\\_National\\_Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawai%CA%BBi_Volcanoes_National_Park)

In all, Sam spent 15 years living on the island of Hawaii and living in Hilo. Of all the places he explored while there, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and Kilauea hiking trails was one of the major highlights. Sam recalls his neighbors saying, "Why don't you just move up to Volcano since you go there every weekend"? Well, it was true.

Below left is a view of hot, molten lava, the result of a flow. Below right is a rainbow and native Hawaiian hula dancers honoring Pele, the "Fire Goddess".



## Waimanu Valley

Waimanu Valley is a remote valley on the northeast coast of Hawai'i island. Besides the main Waimanu Stream, it includes Waihilau Falls on a tributary.

One of the main valley's Sam enjoyed in Hawaii Island Waimanu. The parking lot is at the end of the road and hiking starts from that point. It is more remote and yet has awesome beauty similar to Waipio Valley. There is a family residing in a house right on the site where the trail starts, which is unusual.



**Map of Waimanu and the Island of Hawaii showing the location of the valley.**



**Waimanu Valley view towards the interior.**

## Instructor for Elder Hostel Program

While living and working in Hilo in the mid 80's, Sam was hired by Elder Hostel to teach a unit every month on The Samoan Islands.

<http://www.elderhostel.org/programs/topinternational.asp>

The program was run by the Lyman House Museum in Hilo. Sam was hired for the position by the director.

<http://www.lymanmuseum.org/>

The slide show, "Two Samoas: A Cultural Comparison" was featured followed by discussions of language, handicrafts and ways of life in the islands. Sam brought many of his handicrafts and items from Samoa for the elderly in the audience to see.

Most of these programs were presented at the Seaside Hotel where Sam and Celia stayed for a month when they first came to Hilo in 1984. Since the members of the audience were mostly retired folks, Sam found this experience very enjoyable. One resident of a group from Vancouver, Washington, knew several people in that city that he knew since that was where Sam's first job was as a teacher back in 1968-70. The program ended when a new director came in to Lyman House and changed the focus to *include only* Hawaiian topics.

## Big Island Peace Activities

Sam continued to be active in Peace groups after moving to the Big Island, especially in the 80's and early 90's. One of his friends from Oahu, Jim Albertini had moved to Kurtistown on the road to Volcano and started farming his own land. He called his farm retreat, "Malu Aina".

[malu-aina.org/](http://malu-aina.org/)

Another friend from Oahu, Emmett Cahill moved to Volcano to retire in a house near Volcano village with his wife Bea. Finally Anson Chong, a fellow Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Africa, a former Hawaii State legislator and activist moved to Fern Forest with his wife Ann Gleason.

Sam first joined Jim Albertini's group in 1984. It was focused on slowing nuclear weapons proliferation. One main effort each year was to protest the U. S. Navy ships coming into Hilo Harbor during the Merrie

Monarch Annual Hula Festival. Since the County of Hawaii had passed a resolution making the Big Island the first nuclear free zone in the Pacific, the people on the island had government support. It wasn't long however before the council voted to resend the ruling. The U. S. Navy then ruled that anyone could be arrested if they came within a measured area of the ship in port. Three activists felt strongly that the resend was wrong, and jumped into the water where the nuclear powered ship was berthed. The three activists were Jim Albertini, Jim Snyder and Warren Wineman. All of them were arrested eventually Jim Snyder died of A.I.D.S. while Warren Wineman moved from Kona to Florida as he had lost his real estate business and wife to a divorce due to the incident. Jim still remains on the Big Island today although he was sent to prison some time afterwards at Lompoc, California federal prison for non-violent protesting.

Sam had another good friend was Ruth Robison who works as head of the International students at the University of Hawaii at Hilo. Along with another friend, Kevin Krisiunas, Sam helped form the Big Island Peace Organization to consolidate all of the various groups on the island. The group usually met in the home of Don and June Wells which was located two miles up the Hamakua Coast. Don was professor emeritus at U. H. Hilo. Carol Westby, a real estate agent and one time Hawaii County Council candidate was also in the group.

Bob Akamine and Jim Good, along with others, worked on the Contra War in Nicaragua and El Salvador were part of the coalition to help these people. Linda and Marcus Murphy were also in the same group. As of the date of this publication, peace vigils are still being held in front of the main post office in Hilo, coordinated by Jim Albertini. One of Sam's best friends on the Big Island was Bill Reich. Bill, who died at age 92 in 1992, was very active in the Democratic Party and some of the Peace groups on Hawaii Island. He lived on a farm near Nanavale in Pahoia, Hawaii Island. He and Sam traveled to Samoa together in 1986.

Bill was always offering his home for those in need. Sam was a close friend of Bills and, after Bill became ill because of a gas release from the geothermal well near Pahoia, visited Bill at his farm regularly. Sam was there just a few hours before Bill died in his bedroom with his dog on the floor beside him and roosters crowing outside the screen



door. Bill and his wife Phillipa are both buried across the road from their farm under a tree in the forest.

## ***Instructor in Honua Hawaii English Program, Hilo***

Teaching English as a Second Language to Japanese students during four summers in the mid 80's was another rewarding experience for Sam. He taught in a program called Honua Hawaii on a site near the Hilo Zoo. The school was housed at the National Guard facility just off the main highway to Keaau. The students were Japanese girls who came from four private schools in Tokyo to do an intensive six week language study. Susan Becker, Sam's friend from Hilo Intermediate School days, was director of the program and the one that hired Sam. By coincidence, Susan lived across the street in Volcano Village from Sam's friend Emmett Cahill. Later Diane Theroux, another RPCV from Samoa hired him for the last two years of the program as Susan left for a teaching contract in Japan. As of this writing, Susan continues to reside in that country.

In the Honua Hawaii Program, each language teacher had an aide and twelve students per class so the student numbers were quite small. Sam found the students very well behaved and interested in learning. The Japanese students even had a travel agent that came with the group. These students were housed with families in the Hilo area. Celia and Sam housed a student one year as well.

With an aide in the class, Sam found it easier to break down into groups so the students had a lot more practice on their English language. The classes also did field trips to various places which reinforced what they did in class. The six weeks was topped off by a live show performed for an audience with many of the home stay parents in attendance. The hardest part for Sam was the student's departure from Hilo Airport to Japan. It was very sad with the girls crying a lot. Sam got letters and post cards for many years from the students afterwards.

## **1990-1991 Leave Without Pay - Singapore**

By the end of his sixth year at Kalaniana'ole School, Sam and Celia had thought long and hard about traveling to Singapore for a more extended stay.

Sam and Celia had, for the most part, a fine marriage but things began to be a bit more difficult for a number of reasons in the late 1980's. While both

were working in 1988 and 1989, Celia lived separately in an apartment in another part of Hilo while Sam remained in the Maunaloa Shores unit. The couple talked and decided that they would rent the condo and take a one year leave without pay. Then they would spend that year in Singapore. When school finished in June, 1990, Sam and Celia rented their condominium to an instructor at the University of Hawaii at Hilo prior to leaving to Singapore. For this and other reasons Sam applied for and received a "leave without pay" for one year so, in June, 1990, the couple left for a year in Singapore. A substitute counselor filled Sam's position for a one year period of time. After arriving in Singapore, Sam and Celia stayed in a hotel enjoying being back on the island of Singapore again but eventually, after a few days, they started thinking about a place to stay. It was about this time that Celia's sister Jane invited them to stay at their newly purchased flat on the east coast in a new housing estate called Simei. The two accepted. Sam and Celia lived in one bedroom in the flat owned by Jane and Leonard. Jane and Leonard were working full time. Jane managed a book store in the downtown area. A friend of Sam's, Janet Taylor, stopped and stayed a couple of days in the apartment as she was just returning from Bali, Indonesia. Not long after Janet visited, Leonard, Jane, Celia and Sam took a 5 day trip to Koh Samui. It was a great time had by all staying at a guest house on the west side of Samui near the jetty and touring around the island.

[https://www.google.co.th/?gws\\_rd=cr,ssl&ei=9NKFV6O7JMbTvgTdkZuoDA#q=koh+samui+thailand](https://www.google.co.th/?gws_rd=cr,ssl&ei=9NKFV6O7JMbTvgTdkZuoDA#q=koh+samui+thailand)

After they returned to Singapore the couple made a second trip to Thailand, this time going to not only Koh Samui but also to Hat Yai and Songkla in the southern region. They especially enjoyed Songkla which is in the Muslim south. Their hotel was right on the water near the famous mermaid statue in the bay. Food was served right on the beach! All in all, a great trip!

## Simei and Teaching E.S.L. at Singapore Peace Center

All the while they were living in Simei, Sam had a job teaching English in Peace Center, a high rise building on Selegie Road near "Little India". Sam enjoyed the position very much and especially recalls two Burmese students he had, a brother and a sister, a female student from Holland and another student from Brunei. During one "show and tell" session, the sister brought a Burmese school bag and talked about it in front of the class, then, after class gave it to Sam as a present.

Peace Centre was, like many high rise buildings in the city-state, a small community with all the shops and store workers knowing each other. Sam especially enjoyed his coffee breaks with Singapore coffee and curry puff. On visits to Singapore over the years, Sam continues to go back there and enjoy the food once again! After the ESL term was over at the Peace Center English School, Sam left with very good memories such as the nice postman Sam talked to so often and so many of the workers there.

<https://www.google.co.th/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=Peace+Center+in+Singapore>

While living at Simei, Sam, with differences between he and Celia continuing, *was thinking about being on his own for a time, but didn't have a place to go.* Each day on the train to and from work, Sam would look out the train window and notice a sidewalk with globe lights leading over a knoll with a forest on each side. One time, coming back from the city in the late afternoon, he decided to get off at Tanah Merah stop and walk over that knoll to see what was on the other side.

Immediately upon walking along on the sidewalk, Sam had this feeling of well being. When he got on the other side of the forested hill, he saw this beautiful residential neighborhood with track housing, parks and areas with forest combined with grass. Because it looked like such a nice, friendly area, Sam decided to just go door to door and ask if there were any rooms for rent. He walked and walked until it got dark. One Chinese resident said, "You'll never find a place to live here", but Sam kept looking.

Finally, tired after a long day, Sam decided to stop and begin walking back over the knoll to the train station, vowing to return again. Suddenly, he met a fairly tall, young Chinese man. Sam stopped him and, in one last effort, asked the guy if he knew of any rooms for rent. It turned out that young man's name was John Ong and he replied that yes, he knew of some friends of his, a family that he thought had a room for rent. Sam and John walked back to Jalan Limau Manis or "Sweet Lemon Street", together. John led Sam to the family residence where the vacancy was.

At the house, another young Chinese guy greeted John warmly. It was David Leong and his mom owned the property where the Leong family lived. John asked David if the room was still for rent and David said it was. I asked if I could see it and we walked to the back of the house through the kitchen to what was obviously originally the maid's quarter, a small room with a bed and dresser. I asked the price and David said S\$400.00 which was about US\$300.00 but that his mom was the one who would have the final word as to whether it could actually be rented. Sam left in a good mood going back to Simei. That evening, he called Mary Leong, David's mother and arranged to meet her at the house the next evening. Sam did and after talking to Mary, the owner, rented the room. As Sam was about to find out, it was very

fortunate for him that he was able to find a place to stay with the Chinese family from Bedok South near Tanah Merah Mass Rapid Transit (M.R.T.) stop. The next day Sam talked to wife Celia about moving out. She didn't like the idea at first but the two of them talked and Celia agreed. Sam moved out the next day and began communication by phone thereafter.

## ***The Leong Family***

At the time Sam rented a room from them, the Leong family consisted of Singaporean Mary Leong and her four sons: David, Chris, Bernard and Andrew (their English names). David and Bernard stayed in two of the rooms upstairs while Mary had the other upstairs room. Chris was away at University in the United States and Andrew; the oldest had just gotten married and lived with his wife Adele in Timpines, another Singapore housing estate nearby. Eventually, day by day, Sam became a part of the family. He ate breakfast in the kitchen, played basketball with David and his friends and rode a bike the family wasn't using to and from Tanah Merah M.R.T. station every day which was a great help to Sam getting to work at Peace Center. It was about this time that Sam completed his first session as ESL teacher at Peace Center. He ended up staying with the Leong's for eight months but from the time he left, he returned often over the years, usually staying with the family. When Sam lived in Thailand later on in his life, the Leong family came up to visit in Pattaya. Sam played basketball with John, the young man he met that night on the sidewalk and they are still friends, e-mailing each other regularly. John had lived in California and Florida, so had experience in America.



Standing in front of their house at Jalan Limau Manis Street, Singapore in 2006, left to right: Mary, April with Denise, Kanchana, David Leong and John Ong.

Web Site: <http://www.sstc.edu.sg/current-students-overview/>

## Singapore Secretarial Training Centre, Orchard Road



After renting a room from the Leong family, Sam decided he would search for another teaching job in Singapore. To do this, he turned to the Want Ads in the Singapore Straits Times newspaper. While looking through the ads one day, he noticed an opening at SSTC on Orchard Road. SSTC stood for Singapore Secretarial Training Center. Sam called the number and talked to the Head Mistress Rose Ho. Rose said they were seeking to expand their school to include English as a Second Language, having the classroom space available in the daytime. Rose had hired one American teacher and was looking for a second to help start the program. Rose and Sam had a very friendly chat and after talking for some time, Rose hired Sam by phone asking him if he could be available to come and teach a class starting on Monday(it was Friday). Sam agreed and the very next Monday, Sam was standing in front of his new class at his new school, an ESL teacher again! He would be teaching at the school for the next eight months.

## About SSTC

Secretarial Specialist Training Centre (SSTC) was established and registered with the Ministry of Education (Singapore) in April 1978. Since then it has continued to flourish as a market leader in the preparation of students for the secretarial profession. Facilities at the school include one computer room, a language laboratory, three typewriting rooms, a seminar room plus numerous classrooms equipped with overhead projector, tape recorders as well as television and computers.



The other teacher hired at the time, Hugh Waters, was from Georgia and had come to Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War. Hugh stayed in the region until the time of this writing. He presently teaches ESL in Bangkok and at times travels to Burma to teach also.

Sam really enjoyed his time at SSTC. He and Hugh worked well together. The students were great as was the ESL school director, Rose Ho and Mary Ho, the ESL coordinator. Sam took his classes on many excursions including to the National Library, Botanical Garden and even journeyed to Pulau Ubin. Ubin is an island that Sam had become quite fascinated by at the time and when the students heard about Ubin, they wanted to go too. Sam asked Mary Ho and the school for approval of the trip. It was a great experience because most of the students in the school had parents who were wealthy and the students hadn't seen an old style area like this in Singapore. Everyone took the MRT to Changi, bum boat to Ubin and then toured the village as well as an old granite quarry. All of them had lunch in the village and toured some temples and other sites before returning to Singapore Island.



**Sam, Mary Ho and husband Kenneth in 2009. Mary was Sam's boss at the SSTC English Program in 1990 – 91 and in the summer of 1993.**

**Written below is an experience Sam relates on July 10, 2009 while he was teaching at S.S.T.C.**

**"Heal the World" was the song the English as Second Language students in my Singapore class sang for their parents. The occasion was the end of our session program banquet held in a Singapore hotel facility one July evening in 1991.**

**Attached is the web site of Singapore Secretarial Training Center, the school I taught at that year in Singapore. I was one of two teachers originally hired by Ms. Rose Ho to start the ESL program for the business school back in 1990, ending up teaching for eight months that year while on a leave without pay from Kalaniana'ole School, Papaikou, Hawaii. I later returned to Singapore again two years later to teach one summer session at the school.**

**Just imagine about 20 Indonesian, Iranian, Korean, Malaysian, Japanese and Thai students from ages 13-20; all singing the Michael Jackson hit song "Heal the World". I would nearly tear up at practices and felt so proud of them at the end of that evening! The parents loved it.**

**Fortunately, I still stay in touch with my old boss and department head Mary via e-mail. Gan and I had lunch with Mary Ho and her husband on a recent trip to the city state.**

**Hearing the same song lately here in Hawaii brought back positive memories of one of the real highlights in my life. I wonder now where all those students are. I know that wherever they are, they'll hear, "Heal the World" and think back to all those good times that summer in Singapore just like I do. 🥰**

**Michael Jackson singing, "Heal the World" on YouTube:**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvYBnC3XciY>**

# Pulau Ubin - Stone Island

Pulau Ubin, also called Ubin Island, is a small island (10.19 km<sup>2</sup>) situated in the north east of Singapore, to the west of Pulau Tekong. Granite quarrying supported a few thousand settlers on Pulau Ubin in the 1960s, but less than one hundred villagers live there today. It is one of the last rural areas to be found in Singapore, with an abundance of natural flora and fauna.



**Map of Pulau Ubin, located in the Straits of Johore between the countries of Malaysia and Singapore. It is part of Singapore.**

As mentioned in the previous article, Sam began to take a great interest in the island of Pulau Ubin and its history while staying with the Leong family in Bedok South. One day, after hearing about the island, he took a bus to Changi Village and a boat across the Straits to Pulau Ubin. The name, "Pulau Ubin" comes from the fact that a great deal of granite rock was quarried there over the years. "Pulau" means Island in Malay and Ubin means "stone".

Throughout much of his adult life, Sam found himself infatuated as regarding certain places. After he completed his two years in Samoa it was the Samoan Islands that occupied much of his time for nineteen years. He went back to the country three times, started a company, Samu Productions and sold his slide show, then video and finally DVD around the world. Sam wrote several stories published in Pacific Magazine and gave many talks on the country.

In Singapore, his fascination turned out to be Pulau Ubin.

After he arrived in Singapore in 1990 for a one year leave without pay from the Hawaii Department of Education, Sam found out about the island, took his first trip there and was hooked! He would rent his bikes for S\$1.00 per day and explore the island taking all the backward trails through the old rubber plantations, the Malay Village and hike up to the highest point of the island for a view of Singapore Island.





**Pulau Ubin Village Main Street.**

Sam found Ubin Village fascinating as it was quaint and the people very friendly. Singapore coffee (kopi) and tea (teh su su) was always inviting. Local food was available including sea food and of course beer and other drinks.



**Boats from Changi Jetty, Singapore Island dock at the Pulau Ubin Jetty near the village after the 10 minute boat ride.**

Eventually, Sam heard about another historian and writer, Mr. Lee Wat Sim. Lee lived on the island and he and Sam became good friends. Lee had a story published on a Chinese temple called, "Temple of the German Girl". Sam wrote his story of same in English and published it in Changi Magazine. Lee published his in a Chinese language newspaper.

The two of them explored the island, photographing and tracing graves of Chinese cemeteries where imported workers from China were buried after deaths on the island.

an elephant from Malaysia swam across the Straits of Johore. Sam and Lee went out searching for the animal but didn't find it. The elephant did attach a local man before police and other officials managed to get a truck with a female elephant and the male was coaxed into coming on too!



**Temple of the German Girl on Pulau Ubin as it appeared when Sam wrote his article in 1993.**

In 1993, Sam helped to organize a boat tour to Malaysia to visit an old ruin on a river bank. His old friend Mike Norman went along on a Canadian friend Ken's boat. One time, Sam and Lee took Lee's motorcycle to try and find an escaped elephant that swam across the Straits of Johore and attacked an elderly Ubin resident. Eventually the elephant was captured. The animal was lured into a truck by another elephant and driven back to the neighboring country.

There are so many stories to be told of this fascinating island. Once Sam was riding his rental bike along under some coconut palms when he heard something hit the back of his bike. When he turned around to look, Sam saw a medium sized snake crawling on the paved road. It had dropped down from the tree and hit the back of Sam's bike! Another time he was exploring an old British gun emplacement on Ubin when he heard some noise in the grass. Out crawled a large monitor lizard looking like a real alligator! Sam just stared in awe as the lizard was as surprised as Sam!

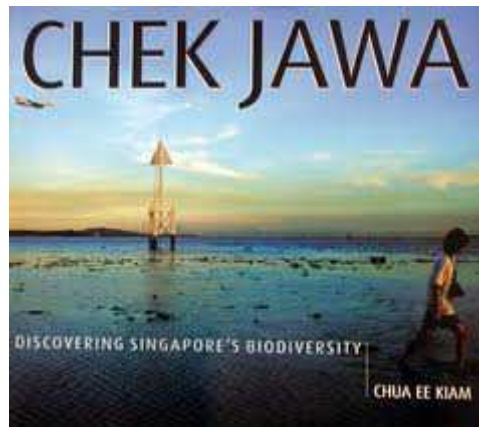


**Type of Monitor lizard Sam saw while on a bike ride in Pulau Ubin.**

## Pulau Ubin and Chek Jawa: A National Park

**September, 2001** – Could private citizens succeed in turning a planned site scheduled for a military base into a natural treasure instead? Could this happen in Singapore?

A real highlight of Sam's involvement in Singapore was his being one of the people responsible for gathering an activist group whose goal was to save Chek Jawa. The incident that began the push was a public showing by Dr. Chua Ee Kiam a dentist in Singapore who had just finished a book titled: Pulau Ubin, Ours To Treasure. His second book cover is below.



Tanjong Chek Jawa (or Tanjung Chek Jawa or simply Chek Jawa) is a cape and the name of its 100-hectare wetlands located on the south-eastern tip of Pulau Ubin, an island off the north-eastern coast of the main island of Singapore. Chek Jawa is among the last few places left with a natural rocky shore.

The wetlands are unique as several ecosystems can be observed in one area – sandy beach, rocky beach, seagrass lagoon, coral rubble, mangroves and coastal forest.<sup>[1]</sup> The site forms part of the Ubin–Khatib Important Bird Area (IBA), identified as such by BirdLife International because it supports significant numbers of visiting and resident birds, some of which are threatened.<sup>[2]</sup>

In December 2001, the government called off reclamation plans of the Chek Jawa area after a biodiversity survey conducted by conservationist volunteers. State use of the land will be deferred for the next 10 years. However, Chek Jawa may still be re-used by the government in and after 2012.

The slide show and lecture Dr. Kiam was of various shots he had taken on Ubin. They were to be part of a book he would soon publish on the island. At

the end of the discussion, the fact that the Singapore government was planning to install a small military base on the northeast side of the island came up. It was quite lively with many people speaking up to reject the idea and preserve the unique shoreline and sea bed. As people were about to leave, Sam stood up and suggested that if anyone was interested in saving the mud flats, they could stay, sign their names, leave contact numbers and perhaps have a short meeting. Among those staying to meet that night were K. P. Tan, Michael Tan, Lee Wat Sim and Misco, who runs a bicycle shop in Ubin Village.

The small group that met that night expanded and pushed hard along with several other groups in Singapore to win the fight to oppose a military base being placed on mud flats of great environmental significance.

Within the next few days, Sam organized a tour and inviting some Singapore government officials to see the sea bed for themselves. Sam had use of a van some of his friends had on Ubin. The tour was a great success as the officials loved the natural area they experienced!

Soon after, a committee of activists was formed and began to work with other groups to make their voices heard. In the end, the government canceled its development plans and the island of Ubin is now a National Park with Chek Jawa a major site. Special boardwalks on concrete pillars now allow visitors to walk over the top of and view the mud flats at low tide!



**Chek Jawa Pulau Ubin walkway as it appears today.**

Long before Chek Jawa, in 1990, Sam often went to the Nature Traveler's House on Pulau Ubin as he knew the proprietor. During the time, just after Sam got hired at SSTC as an English Teacher in 1990 he met Marilou Lemon. That day, Marilou, a Filipina working as a maid for an Indian family, was on an excursion there with her Indian family (her boss, named Marie was a divorced parent).

Sam introduced himself to Marilou and got her phone number after chatting for at Nature Traveler's. So began a courtship that would end in the couple's marriage almost a year later in August, 1991.

Back on Singapore Island again, Sam telephone Marilou and they met for dinner. After wards they went walking at National Botanical Garden that evening, their first evening out. Soon they began to see each other regularly. Because Marilou worked full time, they usually met on weekends and liked to go to Ubin to hike and bike as well as traveling to other islands, going to movies and other activities. Eventually, Marilou left her former job and came to stay with Sam at his room in the Leong residence. Soon after, Marilou was hired as a maid again, and found a stable family. From that time on, until he left Singapore, he and Marilou were together as a couple.

## Divorce

From January to June, 1990, Celia and Sam had kept in touch with each other by phone. Sam was the first to bring up divorce. After talking, disagreements developed. Eventually, Sam was served a notice to appear in court on the matter. One of the summonses was served to him while he was teaching his ESL class at SSTC on Orchard Road.

When Sam shared the news of the court summons with the Leong family, whom he rented a room from in East Coast Singapore, they told him they had a family lawyer who might be willing to help. Mary Leong telephoned the lawyer and Sam went to meet him at his office. After hearing the details, the lawyer said that, in his opinion, the case would end up in Sam's favor. He was so sure of it that he said he wouldn't have to accompany Sam during his court appearances. The lawyer told Sam what to do and to follow the suggestions he had made.

There were two appearances in court. The first was the opening session and the second, the judges were to give their verdict. The men sat in front of the court wearing white wigs and black gowns, British style. When Sam spoke, he was in the "docket", a square shaped elevated podium with wooden gates on all four sides. Sam faced the court and submitted his financial statements. He stated that it was fair since it was his home and that he could keep the property as owner. The panel of judges agreed and found for Sam.

Shortly after that, Celia called and asked if they could meet at the Singapore Library on Orchard Road to discuss a settlement.

As Sam looks back now, he recognizes how much Celia had done for him in their 11 years of marriage. Eventually, the two settled for a flat sum of money which Sam paid Celia. Later he flew back to Hilo, Hawaii with the appropriate divorce papers already signed, appeared in the Hilo court and the marriage was officially ended. Celia continued to reside and work in Singapore.

In 2010, Celia contacted Sam in Hawaii. Two years later, Sam was in Singapore, telephoned Celia and they soon became friends. 2012, communicating regularly by e-mail.

In August, 1991, Sam married Marilou Lemon, a Filipina who was working in Singapore. The ceremony was held in the Marriage Registry off Fort Canning Road at the base of Fort Canning Hill. Sam's best man was Calvin Tay. The civil ceremony was nice with a real wedding atmosphere. The couple exchanged rings and after the ceremony, all who attended went to a coffee shop next to the National Library for drinks. Then Marilou and Sam walked about two blocks to the American Embassy where Marilou got her final resident visa papers with green card application completed. Marilou was thus given the go ahead to immigrate to the United States that day.

That evening a wedding party was held at the Leong residence in Bedok South. Mr. Lee Wat Sim, John Ong and many of Sam's students from SSTC came to celebrate. A great time was had by all! The next evening, the couple spent their honeymoon night staying at the suite at Nature Traveler's House on Pulau Ubin.

It turned out that Marilou couldn't leave for the United States at that time since she had a work contract to complete. Sam flew back to Hilo in late August, 1991 and Marilou joined him three weeks later. When Marilou flew into Honolulu, Sam's friend John Mayer greeted Marilou at the airport and helped her to get on her inter-island flight to Hilo.

Upon arrival in Hilo, Sam was happy that he had met the woman who was his third wife. Their story had begun on an island in the Straits of Johore named Pulau Ubin. It was a great place to explore either by bike or walking and had old quarries to swim in around the island.

## Keaukaha School

Address: 240 Desha Ave, Hilo, HI 96720, United States  
Phone: +1 808-974-4181

Sam's one year leave without pay had ended in August, 1991, and he returned to Hawaii District to work another year at Kalaniana'ole School in Papaikou. Sam completed his final year as a school counselor at Kalaniana'ole School from 1991-1992. His old principal, Tom Higa (deceased in 2010) had retired and his new principal had taken the position. It was good to be back again, but many things had changed at the school with Satsuki Unoki, whom Sam had worked with for seven years, retiring as well.

Marilou completed her contract a few weeks later and joined him at Maunaloa Shores unit # 705 in Keaukaha.

After Marilou arrived, she found a job teaching at a private school near the University of Hawaii at Hilo. His new wife adjusted well to life in Hilo as the two of them enjoyed traveling, hiking, swimming and other activities. Sam did notice early on that she wasn't as enthusiastic joining him in many events as she had been in Singapore. Marilou also belonged to a Hula halau and danced in several performances with her friend Cherry Test, Filipina wife of Larry Test, Sam's friend at U.H. Hilo.

Sam and Marilou attended the First United Protestant Church on Wainuenue Avenue where they had many friends. Two of their friends, Kay Herford and Bobbie Belcher lived in their neighborhood in Keaukaha and they often rode to Church together. The church congregation included a number of Filipinos who made Marilou feel at home.

After one year at Kalaniana'ole, Sam moved to Keaukaha School in August of 1992.

**Keaukaha School was founded in 1930 and provides K-6 regular education and special educational services. *More than ninety percent of KES students are of Hawaiian ancestry.* KES is located in the heart of Hawaiian Homestead Lands. The Keaukaha community is one of the first two Hawaiian Homestead Lands established by the Hawaiian Home Commission Act by Prince Jonah Kūhio Kalaniana'ole.**



**Main office complex at Keaukaha School Sam's school counselor office was on the right where the small roof is shown.**

Keaukaha was Sam's own neighborhood school. At the time, it had two populations: the Hawaii Immersion School where only Hawaiian was spoken, and the regular English language population. Sam served as counselor for both sections, working at the school for three years.

Sam's interview with the principal, Rosemary Kawamoto told Sam he was to replace Richard Takamoto who was more of a Physical Education person even though he had the job title of "school counselor". Sam had a great relationship

with his principal Rosemary that would last through the years. Rosemary gave Sam his own office, which hadn't been the case with the previous counselor who only used the back area of the office, mostly to store P. E. equipment. Sam was close to Maunaloa Shores, a little over a mile, that he rode his bike almost every day, even with periodic Hilo rain.

An interesting event was a visit from a delegation from the South Pacific who came to Keaukaha School to see the Hawaiian Immersion Program. One of the ladies on the bus had been one of Sam's Samoan teachers back in the days when he was a Peace Corps Volunteer! That was quite a coincidence!

A few months after the school got under way in the fall of 1992, Principal Rosemary Kawamoto took a new position as Hawaii District Personnel Coordinator at the Hawaii District Office and Kathy Webster took the principal position.

Things changed with the new principal and Sam began to be given non-counseling assignments. The free and reduced lunch program was a job usually done by clerical staff since it is very time consuming and rhetorical. The task was mostly counting money and balancing books for those families with subsidies which Keaukaha had a lot. Fully 80% of the students at the school, or more were qualified for free and reduced lunch. After Sam was told to take the job, he found it was a struggle. Sam consulted other counselors, the Hawaii School Counseling Association and finally the Hawaii State Teachers Association. All agreed that the job was not suited for a school counselor. For the first time in his career, Sam filed a union "grievance" against the principal for assigning The Free and Reduced Lunch Program to him.

The next two months were a struggle. In the end, after mediation was done, Sam won the grievance but it wasn't easy and though this set a precedent for other principals actions toward other school counselors, the ongoing relationship between Principal Kathy Webster and counselor had worsened. Soon other incidents occurred. Mediation for the two of them followed and allowed most things to be worked out for the rest of Sam's stay at the school.

Kathy Webster remained as principal for the remaining two and one half years Sam had at the school. At the end of the 1994 - 1995, Sam transferred to the island of Molokai as school counselor at Kaunakakai Elementary. Marilou resigned her teaching job in Hilo and was to work part time on Molokai as a substitute teacher at Molokai schools.

## **Summer in Singapore, 1993**

During the summer of 1993, Sam and Marilou spent most of their time in Singapore. Sam had applied to teach at his old ESL school Singapore Secretarial Training Centre (SSTC) and been accepted starting in June, 1993.



While in the City-State, the couple rented a room from Hugh Waters, Sam's friend from ESL back in 1991. He had a four bedroom apartment and rented the other three out. One was rented by two Sri Lankan guys, one named Ravi. The fourth room was rented to a Japanese man. Sam and Hugh teamed up again at SSTC. The program was still a good one and there had been several more ESL teachers hired since 1991. A total of about seven teachers now worked on staff at SSTC. Sam commuted to his job using the M.R.T. or Mass Rapid Transit system. Marilou enjoyed reconnecting with her mostly Filipino friends who were still in the city-state working as maids or other jobs.

*A very sad moment occurred that summer when there was a telephone call from Sam's brother Bill about two days after Sam arrived in Singapore.*

### **Losing a Mother - Elsa Emma Dohren Burris 1914 - 1993**



**Cliff and Elsa Burris taken about 1990, just three years before Elsa passed.**

Sam's brother Bill called to tell him his mother Elsa had died. Sam was devastated but called Bill to tell him he couldn't come back to Nebraska because they had just arrived and, in two days he was scheduled to begin teaching his class.

Elsa had undergone a procedure in the Norfolk Lutheran Hospital involved her veins and was recovering nicely, just starting on solid food when she had a stroke and passed away. Sam's father Cliff was very sad as the couple had just four more years until their 60 anniversary of their marriage.



Elsa loved flowers and this flock was one of many plants she had nurtured for years by the Winside house. The flowers are still there in summer time. This photo of them was taken in 2008, 15 years after her death.

In the past, Sam had visited Nebraska almost every year, usually in the summers but sometimes at Christmas as well. All agreed previously that, if Sam was overseas and anything happened to his parents, it might be possible Sam wouldn't be able to return. That was the case this time and all understood.

Sam loved his mom very much. She was a loving, caring, peaceful person. Sam owed so much to her for her guidance and support all his life.

At the funeral in Pilger, father Clifton was pleased to see Sam's old army buddy, Ron Suing, at the funeral. Though he lived in Lincoln, a 2 ½ drive from Pilger, he told Cliff, *"I came because Sam couldn't"*.

Sam always remembered that favor his old friend did for him and thanked Ron for it. At this writing, Ron has retired as he was teaching part time at Lincoln High and then East High School, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Overall, other than that sad news, it was a great Singapore summer. Marilou and Sam often visited Pulau Ubin or Stone Island in the Straits of Johore. Another highlight was Sam and Marilou inviting her mom, Cora, to fly to Singapore from the Philippines. Cora didn't complete her visit incident free as she had to pay a \$50.00 bribe to get on the plane in Manila and was held and questioned by customs in Singapore which did shake her up a bit. Otherwise, she had a wonderful time touring around the city-state. There were even a couple of really great Filipino parties at Hugh's place with plenty of home cooked Filipino food too!



**Cora, Marilou and Sam on Sentosa Island, Singapore, summer, 1993.**

After the summer spent teaching in Singapore, it was back to Keaukaha School. Sam finished the 93-95 years successfully. His highlights were working with all the students, the Immersion teachers and the community members. Though not wealthy, the Hawaiians in Keaukaha made up the largest Hawaiian community in the state. One of the nicest was Auntie Abby Napiahi, a Kumu and leader of the community who helped the school with ho'oponopono or mediation. Abby has since passed away. Sam knew her well from his years in the Leleiwi Community Association as well as his position at the school.

## **THE ISLAND OF MOLOKA'I**

***Kaunakakai Elementary School  
Counselor 1993-1996***

Address: 30 Ailoa St, Kaunakakai, HI 96748, U.S.A.  
Phone: +1 808-553-1730



**Kaunakakai Elementary School in Kaunakakai, Moloka'i.**

**Moloka'i!** Wow, what a story! But how is it possible that Sam, after living on the Big Island for ten years, would suddenly up and move to a small little island the size of Molokai with a population of 7,000 or so people and only one stop sign!

The reasons are varied. He had lived on Hawaii Island for 11 years; working the last three at Keaukaha School, he experienced ups and downs. It seemed like a good time to move to experience another island. Luckily with the Hawaii Department of Education system, transferring isn't that difficult. Having traveled to Molokai several times while living in Oahu in the 80's, Sam was intrigued when he saw an opening at Kaunakakai Elementary School in Kaunakakai for a K - 8 counselor.

After some consideration, He decided to interview for the position. When he flew to the island and toured the school, he liked what he saw. The principal was very progressive and seemed quite a capable and competent person.

The idea of moving to this smaller island with peace and quiet seemed like a good one. Marilou wasn't too thrilled about the move but decided that we could rent our condo at Maunaloa Shores and always return if and when we wanted. *The short of it was that Sam accepted the job and he and Marilou began planning their move to Molokai.*

Apartment # 705 in Hilo was rented to the new editor of the Hawaii Tribune Herald, the local newspaper in Hilo. The couple stored most of their things, packed their bags and shipped their 94 Honda by boat to Kaunakakai, Molokai. Their first residence in Molokai was in Kaunakakai, the main town and consisted of wooden teacher's cottages. The old, plantation style cottages were old, hot and in a low area with little or no breezes. While living at the cottage, Sam

started work and liked the school but also decided he and Marilou would start looking for some better housing.



**Meet Jan Esperito, a teacher at Kunakakai Elementary when Sam worked there. Now she is principal of the school.**

A rental was found about four miles east of Kaunakakai where a small but new house was for rent by the psychology teacher at Molokai High School. Ernie and his wife lived in their own house located closer to the water. Marilou and Sam moved to their smaller house and felt a lot more at home than in the cottages! Marilou found there were quite a few Filipino on island which was good though employment wasn't nearly as easy to find as in Hilo.

Included with the school counseling position Sam held was his own air conditioned office in the main office complex. Among his responsibilities was being in charge of the School mediation program. Sam had over 50 student mediators that helped the teachers manage recesses and mediate any problems encountered. The program went very well. Sam also had assistance with an Anger Management program where a counselor came to work with the students having the most problems in the school in regards to anger and violence. The rural community environment on Molokai produced a fair amount of various family and behavioral problems and there were programs in place to help deal with these problems.



**A view of classrooms on the campus at Kaunakakai School.**

Sam was also in charge of the Banana Splits program for students from divorced families. He had both individual and group counseling. The school was run with a positive learning environment. The teachers were by in large cooperative with each other. The principal, Joyce Bolino, was popular in the school and the community. One program lasting for eight weeks was called "Arts r Us". Teachers all taught some art area subject they enjoyed or had knowledge about. Sam taught about stamps with Marilou coming to assist. Sam sent a story in to the local Molokai News including a photo of the field trip they went on. **Following is the story:**

## **YOUNG STAMP COLLECTORS VISIT KAUNAKAKAI POST OFFICE**

***From Internet site, Moloka'i News, 1995***

**Students from Kaunakakai School who took the "Stamps are Fun" class at Kaunakakai School second quarter got to take a field trip to the Molokai Post Office. The "Stamps are Fun" class was offered as part of the "Arts R Us" Program at Kaunakakai. The purpose of the program is to offer enrichment to the students. "Arts R Us" is taught by community resource persons and teachers every Friday from 1-2 pm and class titles change every school quarter. *Students in Mr. Burris' class* spent eight weeks learning about stamps and how to collect them. The U.S. Postal Service supported the class by donating materials on stamp collection including coloring books on stamps.**

**a special treat was hosting a local collector, Mr. Phil Ke, who told about his personal experience as a collecting and gave each student some stamps to increase their collection.**

The school system on the island of Molokai was on a, "year around schedule". October was the first school break for the faculty, staff and students on the island. Sam and Marilou decided to visit Ron and Dee Burris in Alaska for their vacation that October.

Flying to Anchorage, Sam's Brother Ron met them at the airport and took the two to the trailer in Anchorage Ron and Dee rented. This was the second trip to Alaska for Sam but the first for Marilou. It was nice that the "Alaska Burris family" got to meet her for the first time! Ron and Dee had a second residence located 60 miles north of Anchorage past Wasilla on Big Lake. The cabin was in the shape of a triangle with an all glass front on the side facing the lake.

Luckily Sam and Marilou were able to use nephew Seth's pickup to sightsee as Seth was away attending St. Norbert's College in Wisconsin. The two of them took this opportunity to travel to Denali National Park where they took a bus tour of the park to see animals such as bear and moose in the wild.



Denali National Park and Preserve encompasses 6 million acres of Alaska's interior wilderness. Its centerpiece is 20,310-ft.-high Denali (formerly Mount McKinley), North America's tallest peak. With terrain of tundra, spruce forest and glaciers, the park is home to wildlife including grizzly bears, wolves, moose, caribou and Dall sheep. Popular means of exploration are biking, backpacking and hiking, on maintained trails or in backcountry.

The city of Fairbanks followed later by a cruise off the Seward coast. Most fascinating on the trip were the dolphins swimming along side the ship and, of course gazing at the wonders of the mighty glaciers. Along the rocks, monk seal lay sunning themselves. Sure it was a bit cool, but the sun was out and provided just enough warmth. It was a great adventure!

During their three week stay in Anchorage, Marilou and Sam often saw Ron, Dee, Chad and Angie. During that time, the weather was cold and snowy but Marilou enjoyed the environment very much. Even Sam used the skills he learned in Nebraska as a boy to find pleasure in being back in a winter environment by going sledding.

## Departure to Anchorage and Return to Molokai

Upon returning to Molokai from Anchorage, Marilou announced to Sam that she liked Alaska so much that she wanted to move there. One of the reasons was that she couldn't find employment on Molokai, only finding part time substitute work. Given that Sam had a one year contract in Molokai, of course he couldn't go with her and was not willing to break a one year teaching contract at that time. Sam initially tried to discourage her from leaving but Marilou insisted and finally left later on that month for Anchorage leaving Sam behind. After putting her on the plane to Oahu, it was a sad time for Sam. Living in the house east of Kaunakakai town seemed pretty lonesome! Given the rent Sam was paying at the new place, Sam decided to move into Kaunakakai and rent an apartment just a block or so north of the elementary school. The

apartment was just the right size for one person. Most of the time, Sam rode a bike the two blocks to work instead of driving. Still, Sam missed Marilou the next two months so, at Christmas time, he flew to Anchorage again.

By this time, the third week of December, 1995, she had her own apartment and a job working at a shopping center. The shop she worked in sold Ballet clothes and equipment. Marilou had a good boss and enjoyed the job. She and Sam had a nice reunion upon Sam's arrival and connected again with the Alaska Burris family. Seth came back from Wisconsin and everyone enjoyed Christmas at the Big Lake Cabin! Marilou and Sam were able to be with each other for the three weeks before Sam returned to Molokai again.

With a small population and most of the island Hawaiians or Filipino, Sam did find it very much to his liking most of the five months he had left on his contract. Praful Shah and wife Nancy had come to visit earlier while Marilou was there and friend Dick Bowen from Oahu came early in the second semester. A couple of other people Sam knew in Hilo either lived on the island or visited and he could view Diamond Head and the high rises of Honolulu from the dining room of a hotel on the coast.

## **Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement and National Historical Park**

**Kalaupapa National Historical Park** is a United States National Historical Park located in Kalaupapa, Hawai'i, on the island of Moloka'i.

**Address:** Kalaupapa, HI 96742, United States,  
**Phone:** +1 808-567-6802 **U.S. National Park Service**



**Kalaupapa Settlement as seen from the cliff above. Access to the settlement is by mule trail. Hikers are allowed to use the same trail.**

There was lots of hiking for Sam the year he lived and worked in Molokai. One of his favorite hikes was into Kalaupapa Leprosy Settlement and National Park.



Sam's friends Lon and Christine Rycraft lived at Kalaupapa, the Hanson's Disease settlement on the Kalupapa Peninsula. Lon was the pastor of the First United Protestant Church there and the couple had a parsonage where Sam slept when he visited.



**The mule trains on the trip down the face of the cliff to Kalaupapa below.**

Sam would hike down the trail, sometimes avoiding the mules, and stay at the settlement with the Rycrafts. Christine worked at the Kalaupapa Post Office so both were employed. Through them, Sam met several of the residents. There was also the bar where many a mug of beer was consumed with good snacks as well. When Sam went into the bar, the patients almost always bought him beer!



**Once at Kalupapa, rugged sea cliffs and beautiful views mix with the isolation of the settlement.**

On one visit, Sam and Lon explored extinct volcanic craters and old graveyards of deceased patients. At church on Sunday mornings, patients would sometimes share stories with Sam about how they escaped "topside" years ago, only to get arrested and brought down to be put in the Kaluapapa jail.

While visiting Molokai one weekend, Lon and Sam had the pleasure of visiting Olivia Breitha who had written a wonderful book on her tragic removal to Kalaupapa as a child. We sat in her kitchen having coffee and listened to her in awe.



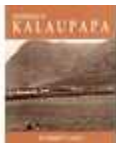
[Olivia: My Life of Exile in Kalaupapa](#) Paperback

Olivia R. Breitha



The photo shows Olivia holding a copy of a photo taken of her in 1934 when, at the age of 18, she was taken from her family and exiled at Kalaupapa. She crossed her arms to show her objection to being forced to leave her family in Oahu.

Another friend, Emmett Cahill, also wrote a great book of which Sam had two copies. One was signed for his father Cliff Burris. Emmett was a political activist as well as a fine writer.



[Yesterday at Kalaupapa: A Photographic History--A Saga of Pain and Joy](#) Paperback

Emmett Cahill

When May, 2006 came, and Marilou continuing to enjoy Alaska, Sam had to make a decision. It was then that he resolved to take a year without pay. After all, it was a great opportunity to spend more time with the Burris family there as well. Principal Rosemary Belino knew Sam's wife had moved to Anchorage so when he went in to the principal's office and gave the news to his boss requesting a leave, the first thing Rosemary said was, "Are you OK Sam?" The statement showed just how kind and understanding Joyce Belino was, a fine person and a rare boss indeed!

If the truth be known, Marilou and Sam had actually divorced back in 2005 while living in Hilo due to many disagreements they had back then however, this time they decided to give it another try. The result was that Sam had a garage sale in Kaunakakai, then took his 1993 Honda to Honolulu to sell and flew off to Anchorage only this time to live for one year on a leave without pay. A downer from Sam was that, due to a leak in his small Kaunakakai rental, water had come into a cooler filled with his photo negatives, original university degrees and other items. They were all spoiled by mold and mildew! It was summer, 1996, and Sam was on the plane to Alaska. Waiting at the Anchorage Airport was Marilou. This next year was to be spent in Alaska in an attempt at reconciliation for the couple.

## ALASKA – THE FORTY-NINTH STATE



**“Picnic with bear” A photo taken by Chad Burris during a 2008 fishing trip in Alaska.**

Alaska, northwest of Canada, is the largest and most sparsely populated U.S. state. It's known for its dramatic, diverse terrain of wide-open spaces, mountains and forests, with abundant wildlife and many small towns. It's a destination for outdoor activities including skiing, mountain biking and kayaking. Massive Denali National Park, home to Mt. McKinley (aka Denali), North America's highest peak, is a site of animal-viewing tours.

Capital: Juneau , Statehood granted: January 3, 1959  
Area: 1,717,854 km<sup>2</sup>, Population: 736,732 (2014)

Marilou had moved to another apartment on Arctic Boulevard not far from the international airport. Sam arrived from Hawaii in mid-June, 1996. Marilou was working as a pre-school teacher in the city. She enjoyed her teaching a lot and her school was not far from the duplex she lived in. The day after Sam arrived; he and Marilou attended a party at her boss's house. Many of her co-workers were there. It was a "welcome to Alaska" party in a sense for Sam. The apartment on Arctic Boulevard was a nice little one bedroom with a picture window looking out over the lawn and the graveled street. The house was a duplex, shared with another couple.



**Map of the State of Alaska**

The owner of the apartment lived in a small house on the corner property. He was a carpenter by trade and had lived in Hawaii previously working for the Department of Defense. Tiring of the work, he had returned to his native state to work as a builder.

In Alaska, everything is so green in the summer and that year was no exception. Sam was able to spend only a short time there before he left on a trip to Chicago. During the school year, he had ran for and won the position of Alternate Delegate from Maui District to the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

Sam left Marilou and flew from Anchorage to spend 3 weeks with his father Cliff in the northeast Nebraska town of Winside, population 430. He flew Northwest Air Lines to Minneapolis and then changed to a smaller plane for his flight to Sioux City, Iowa. Brother Bill was at the airport to pick him up and they took the sixty mile journey to Winside.

Cliff was very pleased that Sam was to be a delegate to the Convention and also to be able to spend some time in Winside prior to his departure for Chicago. Sam always enjoyed visiting his parents and, staying in Winside was especially important after the death of his mom since his father was still recovering emotionally from her death.

Cliff loved to cook and raised his own vegetables in his fairly large garden on the corner property. Cooked cabbage was one of Cliff's specialties and Sam loved it too. He also did excellent corn bread, biscuits and gravy! While at home, Sam would drive to Pilger with Cliff to visit Elsa's grave, usually stopping in to see relatives or friends in the area. They would also have lunch at the Pilger Cafe on the main street of the small town. Every couple of weeks, Sam and Cliff would also attend a Sunday service at St. John's Lutheran Church in Pilger, the church where Cliff, Elsa, Sam and Ron went when they lived northwest of the village on the farm by Humbug Creek. The Frerichs family would host a "Burris Family" gathering, usually held at the Darryl and Becky Frerichs Farm north of Pilger. Relatives and friends would attend. Sometimes there would be a large gathering and the event would be held at the Pilger Public Park. Those attending would be Milan Frerichs and Shirley Topp, Loren and Pat Burris, Chad and Carol Frerichs, Julie and Clint Frerichs and children, Warren and Mary Frerichs, Darryl and Becky Frerichs, Bill and Patti Burris and other friends and relatives.

While visiting his dad, Sam found out that a former elementary schoolmate was also a delegate to the convention in Chicago. Bob Farren, who attended elementary school with Sam, was a teacher in California so Sam looked forward to meeting him in Chicago.

The National Education Association financed Sam's fare to the Chicago Convention and funded his hotel as well. Sam's roommate during the convention was Sam Mitchell from Oahu. The other "Sam" was one of the labor leaders from the Pearl Harbor shipyard. Sam's flight left from Omaha directly to Chicago.

## The 1996 Democratic Convention in Chicago

The 1996 National Convention of the [U.S. Democratic Party](#) was held at the [United Center](#) in [Chicago, Illinois](#) from August 26 to August 29,

1996. President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore were nominated for reelection.

### 1996 Presidential Election



Nominees  
Clinton and Gore

The Democratic Convention in Chicago was a fantastic experience for Sam. The delegates were treated very well while in the city because in 1968, during the Vietnam War protests, the Mayor and Chicago police cracked down hard on protesters. Now the governor was the son of Richard Daley and wanted to make sure all went smoothly and peacefully this time around.



**The United Center in Chicago was the site of the 1996 Democratic National Convention.**

Along with Governor Ben Cayetano, the Hawaii delegation was seated below the NBC News booth in the convention hall. With the regular gatherings seen on T.V. nation-wide, there were also many caucuses where well known politicians were in attendance. Sam went to the NEA Caucus and met Tipper Gore, wife of the vice president. He also shook hands with Vice President Gore at another caucus later at the Sheraton. Sam was able to hear Hillary Clinton speak at two caucuses and managed to get Hillary's book, "It Takes a Village" signed by her as he accidentally met her secretary at one of the gatherings.

One evening the entire Hawaiian delegation was invited to Chinatown for a Traditional Chinese dinner. The delegation went by bus and police went with the group. The police stopped and held traffic so the Hawaii delegation could cross the streets of Chinatown.

The entire three convention days were very busy. Sam, being an alternate, would only periodically be able to be seated on the floor for folks who took breaks. Sam was interviewed by PBS McNeil Lerner Report staff. He traveled from one special caucus to another, some being mandatory to attend and other times when delegates could choose which caucus to attend. Since Bill Clinton was nominated by the convention, the final event was his speech in front of the entire body. It took 54 minutes from start to finish and, at the end, delegates were very elated. Most of the delegates had great hopes at the time for the Democratic Party, and for the country. Sam recalls thinking that, after these next four years, Al Gore may be the next candidate. Sam was bound and determined to work extra hard for Al Gore, since he felt even better about supporting Gore than Clinton!

It should be noted that, Sam went over to meet some members of the Alaska Democratic Party delegate because he knew he would be moving to Alaska soon and was hoping to work for Clinton while in that state. Many of the delegates in the Alaska delegation were teachers/NEA members as well. Sam was able to meet the president of the Alaska State Teachers Association and returned to that state directly from Chicago to join Marilou.

## One Year in Alaska



**Anchorage, Alaska, in the winter. Nearby is the Chugach Mountain Range.**

The first time Sam was in Alaska was in 1978. While teaching at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, he took a trip from Honolulu to visit brother Ron Burris and his then wife Linda and two nephews Seth and Chad. That year, the Alaska Burris family was staying in a mobile home park in what was then in the outskirts of the city.

On that visit, Sam was startled upon arrival at the airport when he found a lost wallet that belonged to an oil pipeline worker. The wallet had quite a bit of cash so Sam was able to contact the owner, an oil pipeline worker. When he came and received the wallet, he paid Sam \$100.00 for his honesty. After a nice trip to Brother Ron's cabin on Big Lake, 60 miles north of Anchorage, Sam used the money he had been paid to fly to Kodiak Island. Here he had a few days touring around the island and visiting the Samoan family of Luafa, who worked for the Peace Corps office when he was a volunteer there. Sam returned to Anchorage and eventually back to Honolulu.



The Ron Burris family: L-R front: Jackson and Zach, 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Seth with Jackson and Brady. 3<sup>rd</sup> row: Allie, Ron, Dee and Chad Burris.

The 1996-97 Alaska stay was different than 1978 because Sam was there for a longer term of one year. His attempt at reconciliation with Marilou followed the couple's divorce two years earlier in 1995. Sam and Marilou continued to live together after the previous move to Molokai but, the two of them took a school vacation break trip to Alaska (Molokai was on a year around school schedule) to visit Sam's brother Ron and family. Sam and Marilou borrowed his nephew Seth's truck and did a 10 day trip to Fairbanks and various other parts of the state, taking a cruise on a ship and generally having a great time.





**Boat quay at Big Lake. This is where Ron Burris and Dee kept their boat. It is used in the late spring- summer-early fall months, because in winter there is at least a four foot cover of ice on the lake and vehicles can drive it to get to their destinations.**

The couple did well the first few months. Sam adjusted well to Alaska considering his living so many years in the Asia Pacific region where the environment is hot and humid. The truth was that Sam was born and raised in Nebraska, a state that gets its share of winter so it wasn't all that much of a problem. At the time of Sam's arrival, Marilou had a full time teaching job at E Makaala, a private school and Sam got a job as a driver for the private elementary school she was working at. Sam was taking kids back and forth from the school in a van and delivering them to their homes. Sam also did substitute teaching for the Anchorage School system. These activities kept Sam busy until summer break came around. A shock for Sam was Marilou taking an extra night job at McDonalds. This resulted in their not being together nearly as much. Also, Sam found out that Marilou had an affair so they were not on the best of terms. At school end, Marilou was working so Sam went to visit his dad on his own.



**Big Lake as it looks in the winter months when ice fishing is popular.**

## 1997 Visit to Nebraska and Death of Father

Sam's Father Cliff Burriss had retired from farming in 1981. The decision was made at the time because Cliff had suffered a stroke while at a farm sale. After that happened, both he and Elsa agreed to purchase and move into an older two story house that was for sale on Main Street in Winside. The home, on a corner lot, was located across the street from the town's tennis courts and just down the street a block from the baseball diamond, Frank Weible Field.

It took Cliff and Elsa some time to adjust to small town life after farming all those years. Early on in his retirement, Cliff would drive out to the farm every day and help Bill at some task or another. He had sold the farm at a very reasonable price to son Bill which made it easy for Cliff to spend time there.

Elsa fell right into her routine in Winside. She and Cliff knew most of the people in town since they had run Cliff's Tavern on Main Street for so many years. Just a block away from them was their old neighbors from the farm days, Wayne and Leora Imel. The Imel's had built on to a mobile home and the two retired couples would often visit each other and talk, play cards and eat. Elsa continued in the St. Paul's Lutheran Ladies Aid. She and Cliff still had their card clubs with Alvin and Hilda Bargstadt and other old friends. They also continued to maintain ties with friends and family in Pilger.

Sometimes they would attend church in Pilger and Elsa would attend Ladies Aide at St. John's Lutheran or join card clubs in Pilger. Of course there was the Old Settler's annual celebration every summer and, although it grew smaller each year, it continued through the 90's.

Cliff and Elsa lived together in the Winside house through the 80's until Elsa died in 1993. Elsa's death came after she had surgery in the Lutheran Hospital in Norfolk. The procedure involved stripping veins in her legs and, though she was just getting on solid food after the operation, she had a heart attack and passed away.

Cliff preferred to continue staying in the house after Elsa died rather than moving to a retirement home. He continued to grieve. After all, they'd been married for almost 60 years!

Sam and Marilou had yearly visits. Sam's stay in the summer of 1997 was centered on Sam attending the N.E.A. Convention in New Orleans. Marilou had to teach that summer. Sam spent much of his time with his father Cliff,

as well as Bill, friends and relatives. While there, Sam sometimes took his dad to medical appointments since Cliff had survived a stroke, was taking blood thinner along with other medicines and seeing doctors regularly. In addition, at age 86, Cliff was almost blind yet still living by himself.

It was suggested again to Cliff that he consider a rest home located in the nearby town of Wayne, but he wasn't interested. Instead, he had everything arranged in his home to be user friendly for him including the kitchen. He also listened to cassette tapes as a replacement for reading since his eyes no longer allowed him to read. The cassette tapes were sent to him through a State of Nebraska program for the elderly.



**Cliff Burris and Sam having a beer at Shelly's Bar in Winside. It was formerly known as Cliff's Tavern, Winside, Nebraska from 1962-1972. This photo was taken just a few days before Cliff passed away in July, 1997.**

Cliff's physical condition affected his balance and at times he used a cane to walk, though much of the time he insisted on doing without. He often walked outdoors, even in winter when ice covered the sidewalks!

That summer, Cliff walked every day and sometimes Sam strolled with him. Father and son would also work together on tasks like painting the house and garage or doing gardening. Cliff had a full-on vegetable garden to take care of with lots of tomato, corn, cucumber, onions, beans and potatoes all of which he planted in early spring!

It was July 1<sup>st</sup>, just before the anniversary of Elsa's birthday. Cliff had cooked "supper" as he usually did during Sam's stay. Though he was almost blind, *Cliff could still cook a mighty good meal!* After a good supper, the two settled down for the evening chatting and watching TV in the living room.

Prior to that evening, Sam and Bill had noticed Cliff was tiring easily. The three sons had even discussed the possibility of Sam postponing his next day departure to Alaska, yet, in the end, Bill and Sam had agreed that it was better for Sam to continue his planned schedule as no one could predict their father's health, what might occur and when.

Later that evening, Cliff had told Sam that his ankles and feet seemed to be swelling. Sam even had a look, but he wasn't too worried since his father had swelling in his ankles before. After nodding off on his living room chair, Cliff awoke and said he was going to bed. On this warm summer night, Sam said, "good night" and stayed up reading for another hour in the living room. Later, at his dad's request, Sam moved the fan for his father. After checking on him one more time, he wished his dad a "good night" and went upstairs to bed.

## **The Morning My Father Died**

**By: Sam Burris**

It was 7:45 am, and after a good sleep upstairs in my father's house, I got up and went downstairs. The first thing I noticed was that my dad wasn't up yet which was unusual. When I went into the kitchen, his clothes were still lying on a chair and the kitchen curtains were whipping from the brisk northerly wind blowing in the window.

At that point a strange feeling came over me! I thought to myself, "Oh... is dad O.K.? Quickly checking the bedroom I saw he was quietly lying on his side, under a sheet seemingly fast asleep. I left him in that fetal position and proceeded to take a shower. While I was showering, the thought occurred to me that dad might not be asleep after all!

I dried myself quickly, put some clothes on and hurried through the living room to the bedroom. When I looked in, I saw that dad was *still lying in the same position*. Moving to the bed, I reached out ...and touched his hand. Dad's skin felt cool.....he had passed away in his sleep.

The idea of my father's death sent a whirl of thoughts through my mind all at once. What should I do? My bags were all packed and in the living room, ready for my departure to Alaska! Brother Bill was to pick me up at mid-morning for the trip to Sioux City Airport. The Northwest Air Lines flight was due to depart in just a few hours! Quick.....call and talk to my brother Bill! He lived on the farm just five miles northwest of town!

I dialed Bill's number several times...no answer! Why? I began to panic and dialed again! *This time my brother answered explaining that he and Patti usually turned their phone off at night*. With emotion, I told Bill how I had found our dad's body in his bed. Suddenly I started weeping openly! Bill said he would be right there. While I waited for him to arrive, I went to the bedroom and sat on the bed next to the body, keeping my hands on his lower leg and chocked up as I did so. I was saying over and over, "I love you Dad, I love you Dad"!

Brother Bill arrived not long after. He called the County Sheriff who called the local mortician. While Bill was calling, I was still in the bedroom waiting

with the body until the hearse came...all the time sitting there on the edge of my father's bed, feeling a deep loss. When they came, the morticians put my dad's body in a grey heavy plastic bag and zipped it up; carried the bag out and put it in the hearse. They drove away.

Now, all these years later, as I look back, I'm so happy...because I was there.....there for his last night.....there in the morning.....I found his body in his bedroom. Those three weeks we had spent together during the Nebraska summer would be our last. He had died just hours before I was to depart for Sioux City, Iowa airport.

What of the timing of his death? A friend of mine commented during those days that older people often die in the evenings or early mornings. It was almost as if he had chosen the time of death. He died when I was still there; was it time for him to leave us? Thinking back now, those of us in the family were happy that he left us peacefully, dying in his sleep while in his own bed...lying curled up under his sheet at home.

## THE FUNERAL



St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Winside, Nebraska

A large crowd occupied the pews in the St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Winside. Ron, Dee, Seth and Chad all flew down from Alaska as did Marilou. The church was quiet with soft music playing. Sounds of people entering could be heard now and then. It didn't seem comfortable that day. It didn't feel right.

The first call from any relative after Cliff's death was from Virginia. It was cousin Dwight Burris saying how sorry he was to hear of Cliff's death. Not long after, Don Ausdemore, an old roommate from Norfolk Junior College days who had visited at Winside with his wife Arlyce just three days before, said he couldn't believe it and was it really true? How could it be Cliff when they

just visited Winside? When Sam went to the library, Joanne gave him a hug and said how sorry she was about Cliff's passing.

The usual preparations were made for the funeral. Notifying people by phone was first. The next step was arranging for the event, informing newspapers and radio, all the things needed at a time like this. Now mom and dad were both gone! A sadder feeling washed over us because a generation was now passing. There would not be mom or dad to ever visit any more.

Megan Jones from Washington State arrived. The body had been displayed at the downtown Winside funeral parlor and many people came to visit. Now the funeral service began. Pastor read the summary of Cliff's life and then the poem he had written about his Virginia home at Spring Valley in the Appalachian Mountains. Sam regrets even now that HE should have read it but he hadn't thought of it in time.

Many people came to the reception and lunch afterward which was held in the St. Paul's Lutheran Church basement. Guests included Lisa and Byron Wacker. Lisa Wacker had developed a friendship with Mairlou over the years, both ladies being Filipina.

One day later, Marilou, Ron, Dee, Seth and Chad all flew back to Alaska on the same flight. Sam stood by the garage driveway watching the rental car drive away. It was a lonely feeling. Sam had decided to stay for three weeks or so, winding things up before he finally left for Alaska. Wife Marilou had been scheduled to take a trip to the Philippines and the plan was for her to be gone for about two weeks and then fly back to Alaska about the time Sam was to arrive from Nebraska.

After Sam wound up things in Winside, he closed the house and took a Northwest flight to Anchorage.

## ANCHORAGE AND RETURN - 1997

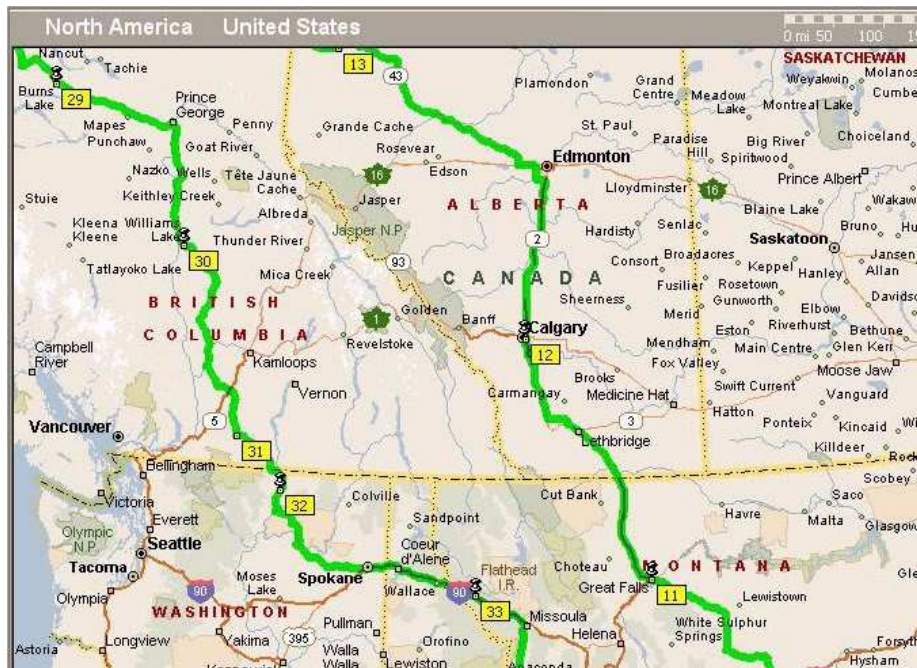
Sam had called ahead but Marilou hadn't arrived back. The flight to Anchorage went smoothly and Sam arrived at the apartment but still no Marilou. After a few days, Marilou's boss from the school called saying school was starting and she was wondering where she was. Sam tried to reach the Philippines by phone but there was no response even though he called many times.

After a few days came a big decision for Sam. He decided he had done all he could in the relationship. Sam recalled that he and Marilou had been divorced in 1995 in Hilo. Their relationship had been "up and down" since then but gone downhill as of the past few months.

Marilou had started to work at McDonald's as a second job so she could pay off her fairly large debts on her credit card. She had been working at night

and started going out to clubs with the other Filipinos working there. Eventually she had an affair not long before Sam had left for Nebraska. By this time, Sam already had felt the relationship was at an end. Now, a decision had to be made. Should Sam wait in Alaska for her to return? Was she going to return? Sam's leave without pay from Hawaii was near an end...what should he do? Finally he reached a decision. Sam talked to the owner of the apartment and he agreed that the remaining months rent would be paid by Sam but they were not sure whether Marilou would come back or not. At that point, Sam left her things, packed his items in the car and drove from Anchorage through Canada, Montana, and Wyoming to Nebraska, a journey taking over two weeks.

## Alaska to Nebraska



Sam's trip through Alaska and down the Al-Can Highway from White Horse, Yukon to Edmonton and Calgary, Alberta to Montana through Wyoming and on to northeast Nebraska was one of so many beauties and wonders of nature....miles and miles with virtually no one on the road. Wild Moose drinking from ponds near the highway, brown bear crossing the road in plain view! Oh, the wonders of the wild! The Canadian range, blue sky, lush tree lines and cool, bubbling streams made for some of the most beautiful scenery in the world!

Prior to his leaving Alaska, Sam's brother Ron had, upon request, loaned him a tent. Ron challenged Sam to not sleep in a hotel between Anchorage and Winside, Nebraska! Sam almost made it, staying only one night in a hotel in northern Montana due to a lightning storm.

## Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park

Liard River Hot Springs Provincial Park, British Columbia, Canada. It is home to the second largest hot spring in Canada. The park is part of the larger Muskwa-Kechika Management Area



The Delta Hot Springs Beta Pool, where Sam swam the day before a bear grabbed a man in the same pool and started dragging him away!

*"Near Miss" at Liard Hot Springs.* The British Columbia site had a series of two hot springs. When Sam saw that the first hot springs was crowded with people, he decided to walk a forested boardwalk and swim at the second hot spring which could be reached by a trail through the woods to higher elevation. Sam saw a sizable round, natural hot springs fed pool with a mud bottom. Around it was a nice walkway and then all forest. He dressed in his swim suit laid his pack on the side and entered the water, enjoying the warm but sulfur smelling experience. Not a soul was there except him. Drying off after exiting, he slowly returned to his car and proceeded to drive off feeling very refreshed. [The following is from the Laird Internet site:](#)

“There are two hot springs with water temperatures ranging from 42 to 52 °C (108 to 126 °F); the nearest is the Alpha pool. Beta pool is beyond Alpha and is larger, cooler and deeper. **As of 2013, Beta pool has been permanently closed due to bear traffic, and the boardwalk leading to it has been removed.**

There are raised walkways from the parking area to the springs so that the delicate muskeg that forms the swamp is not disturbed. The walkway was the scene of a much-publicized black bear attack that killed two tourists on



**August 17, 1997.<sup>[6]</sup> However, at least 50 bears were killed around the springs in 1998 to ease the public's concern.**

The next day, Sam read that a hungry bear killed two people on the same trail at the hot springs Sam had been swimming at! Unknowingly, Sam had just missed a terrible tragedy. Just twenty-four hours later, a Mother of two from Texas and a Canadian man would be killed by a hungry bear and the trail to the very same pool Sam had been swimming in. Additionally, another Canadian was taken in the same pool, the bear's plan thwarted by another man with a rifle who killed the bear before he could make off with the swimmer!

Record from the Internet, August 17, 1997:

Patti  
McConnell, 37, female

August  
17,  
1997

Died from injuries while defending herself from attack near Liard River Hot springs, British Columbia

Raymond  
Kitchen, 56, male

August  
17,  
1997

Died from injuries while attempting to rescue McConnell. McConnell's 13 year old son and an unidentified 20 year Calgary Alberta man were also injured in the attack Liard River Hot Springs, British Columbia



A black bear; the same type of bear that killed two people the day after Sam was swimming at Laird Hot Springs, British Columbia. The bear attack happened on Sam's birthday.

## **ON TO EDMONTON AND PANOKA, ALBERTA, CANADA**

That day, after stopping at the hot springs, Sam drove on to Alberta where he toured the capitol building at Edmonton, then on to Panoka where he stopped to see friend Alma Hagerman. It was in the Panoka Library, across the street from Alma's home that Sam read in the newspaper about the bear attack!

After only two days in Panoka, Alberta, Sam's car would not start as he was about to leave to drive south. The mechanics took five days to repair his car at the local Chevrolet garage. Thankfully, Sam's friend Alma put him up for It was a great chance to see even more of this interesting area in north central Alberta.

On the road again, Sam drove through Calgary where he visited a Filipino family he had met through Marilou. He proceeded on to beautiful Glacier National Park, and then entered Montana. Sam spent his one and only night in a motel due to severe lightning accompanying a thunder storm.

Driving through Wyoming, Sam had his next stop, which was Casper, elevation 5,700 feet; to visit Cousin Evelyn Albanese and her husband John. Sam had called ahead and arrangements were made for him to stay overnight at their home.

Stopping in Casper was such a blessing and, after being on the road so long, Sam felt great being with family again. Evelyn, John and Sam enjoyed sitting on the porch drinking iced tea and watching a bull elk with large antlers grazing in their yard. Having not seen Evelyn in over 20 years, there was a lot of catching up to do as regarding relatives and friends. Evening came and a fine dinner with wine was had by all. The next morning with a map at the ready, John and Evelyn let Sam know how to get to Wheatland, Wyoming where uncle Gerhard and his aunt Annie Jacobsen were buried.

Sam stopped at the cemetery and, though Sam began a systematic search, including walking the whole cemetery, he was unable to find the graves. Next, it was off to see his Uncle Gerhard and Aunt Annie Jacobsen's former 4,400 acre ranch near Glendo, Wyoming. This ranch was a special place because Sam's family had journeyed there several times when he was a child. Sam and both his brothers had fond memories of the visits.

Entering the small town of Glendo, Sam asked for directions and found his Aunt Annie's former house! It was at this location in the town of Glendo that his Aunt Annie had lived after his Uncle Gerhard had passed away. Sam had stopped here on the way back from Idaho, where he was attending Idaho State University in 1966. Sam enjoyed staying with his grandmother's sister Annie on his way through.

### Cassa Area/Horseshoe Creek

After finding his aunt's former Glendo residence, Sam asked someone for the location of the old ranch where Annie and Gerhard had lived. He was able to get directions and followed the 15 miles of road to the turnoff and the ranch site. Oh, what an experience of joy Sam felt as he drove through the open hay field towards the familiar cotton wood trees.



**Horseshoe Creek as it flowed near the Gerhard Jacobsen Ranch near Glendo, Wyoming.**

First to meet his eyes after the belt of trees was the old wooden bridge over Horseshoe Creek. It was here that Sam, Ron and Bill played in the water of Horseshoe Creek with their Wyoming cousins Ann and Arlene as well as Nebraska cousins Leatha, Lana and David Tobias.

Sam looked around at the scene and determined that the ranch seemed almost unchanged. It was now the home of the former hired hand of Uncle Gerhard's, Gene Russell, since Aunt Annie had sold the ranch to him after Gerhard's death.

Clothes were flapping in the breeze on the line, white sheets billowing in the wind. Horseshoe Creek was flowing below the bridge just as Sam remembered it. Though the weeds were a bit more grown up all around, the old bunk house and stable were still there as was the barn. Cheyenne Mountain could still be seen in the distance just as he had seen it so many times before as a child. Memories of his dad Cliff and Uncle Gerhard mounting their horses for a ride around the ranch came flooding back. His Aunt Annie listening to music in the living room in the evening while Uncle Gerhard sat and read nearby. Once, according to Cousin Evelyn, a rattle snake had somehow crawled into the living room of the ranch house. This happened while Aunt Annie was entertaining some guests from Torrington. When Aunt Annie saw the snake, she got a hoe and chopped its head off right there in the cabin!



### **Laramie Peak from the Gerhard Jacobsen Ranch near Glendo, Wyoming.**

Sam spent a couple of hours eating lunch and enjoying the warm summer breezes that day. The birds singing in the trees while the air had that smell of dry grass, real Wyoming! Eventually, even regretfully, he moved on, retracing his drive back onto the road and then to the highway. It was back to Glendo, then continuing east.

### **Maps of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Nebraska**



### **Buffalo Bill Cody's Scout's Rest Ranch, North Platte, Nebraska**



### **The Ranch House near North Platte, Nebraska**

After his drive through the town of Cody, Wyoming, Sam stopped at Buffalo Bill Cody's Scouts Ranch near North Platte. What an interesting stop touring the old house and super large barn Cody had built in the early 1900's. This was the headquarters for the Wild West Show that Cody took around the world. Sam enjoyed his time spent on the front porch swing, then looking around at the ranch site and thinking how this was the home of the man who did more than almost anyone to bring the United States at the time to the attention of so many millions of people around the world.

Next, after crossing the Nebraska border, Sam stopped for breakfast in Scottsbluff. Going into a diner in the city, Sam had the feeling that he was indeed back in his home state again! Great smells and great food! Folks with familiar Midwest accents were chatting away at their meal of pancakes, bacon and eggs. It was a great way to be welcomed!

### **Chimney Rock National Historic Site**

Chimney Rock is a prominent geological rock formation in Morrill County in western Nebraska. Rising nearly 300 feet above the surrounding North Platte River valley, the peak of Chimney Rock is 4,226 feet above sea level.

[Address:](#) Chimney Rock Trail, Bayard, NE 69334, United States



## Chimney Rock

Going east the next stop was Chimney Rock, a structural wonder that served as a marking place for covered wagons moving west over a hundred years before. The sign just off the walking area to the museum said, "Danger - snakes -*stay on the sidewalk*".

Driving into south central Nebraska, Sam stopped in Kearney to see the home and birthplace of Henry Fonda. The house had been moved from Omaha, its original site to a new place here in Kearney. The house had been redone to look just as it may have in the 1940's. The guide said that both Peter and Jane Fonda had visited the house.

Pushing on, Sam followed Interstate 80 East to Columbus, then turning north to Norfolk and finally drove safely into the town of Winside.

## BACK IN WINSIDE

Arriving in his old home town of Winside in mid August, 1997, Sam unpacked and settled in to the former Cliff Burris house but "oh", it seemed so different with his father gone! Everything looked the same but dad was gone! The decision by the three sons had been made to keep the house for family and friends who might want to stay someday, a blessing which Sam really appreciated upon returning this time. With all the events of the past few weeks, it was wonderful for Sam to put his Chevrolet Cavalier in the upper garage while his father's old 1981 Chevrolet remained in the lower garage.

It was mid August and a decision had to be made since Sam's leave without pay was soon to end. Should he go back or consider extending his leave a few months until December. Thus although he was due to return to work in the public schools of Hawaii, Sam telephoned Rosemary Kawamoto who was his former principal and now in charge of hiring for Hawaii District. Sam asked if

he could extend his leave until the second semester which would began in January, 1998. Finally it had been decided that, instead of going back to Hawaii, his request to extend one more semester was granted. Sam would spend his next four months in his old home town.

The project he and his father had talked about just a few days before Cliff's death was getting new sidewalks put in. Cliff had already contacted the Winside High School Shop teacher to see if he could get the shop teacher to put the sidewalks in as one of their class projects. Within days, a request for Winside High School Shop Class to do the project for the cost of the cement was agreed upon between the high school shop teacher, Bill and Sam. Day after day, the students and their shop teacher came down to work until it was completed. What Sam thought was quite interesting is that some of the students in the class were children of his old high school friends and classmates. For example, Jim Rabe's son and Randall Bargstadt's son worked on the project.

Sam loved that fact that he was able to eat from the garden his father had planted which meant he had fresh cucumber, tomato, beans, potato and carrots from his father's garden. He even had fall apples from his friend and neighbor Lee to the north. In mid October, Sam and his brother decided to plow up the garden plot and sow it to grass since no one would be there to plant or take care after Sam left. While Sam did the work, he thought of all the gardens all those years that his dad had put in. The present one would be the last.

During this time, Sam, with permission from the mayor, planted seven ash trees across the street along the tennis court to replace the old trees that the town workers had cut down previously. Those trees provided some shelter from the south winds. Unfortunately, after a year or two, the trees were possibly cut but no witnesses came forth to solve the mystery.

Though they were divorced, it was during this time that Sam was still trying to get in touch with Marilou and finally, yes, she did telephone Sam from Anchorage. It turned out that Marilou had indeed arrived back in Anchorage and had resumed her job teaching in the same pre-school. The other news was that Marilou had become pregnant while in the Philippines and was now expecting a baby.

## Lake Poinsett, South Dakota

About this time, Sam made a memorial journey north to the state of South Dakota. Sam's destination was Lake Poinsett, where his family used to go

fishing back in the 1950's. Often the Herman Topp family or Lyle Husmann and even Uncle Orville Tobias joined the Burris clan and made trips there to fish. After driving the two hours north, they would fish the lakes of the region, bring back their catch, clean and fry them at the cabins. It was a great break from farm life and a real outdoor experience than none of them ever forgot!

The drive to Poinsett was about 150 miles to the north and, on the way in 1997; Sam had an amazing experience which was related to Singapore. When teaching at Singapore American School from 1978-1980, the U. S. Ambassador to Singapore was the former governor of South Dakota Bill Kniep. The Kniep's had several sons and one of them was in Sam's social studies class at Ulu Pandan, the elementary/middle school campus of the Singapore American School. Continuing his drive north, Sam happened to glance to the right side of the road. As he approached, he saw a big sign that said, "Kniep Chevrolet". Sam stopped and, when he went inside, met the owner. He turned out to be the brother of the former Governor of South Dakota/Ambassador to Singapore, Richard Francis "Dick" Kneip. Sam was then shown some Chinese furniture in a room of the dealership, which came from Singapore from those years past. A fun chat followed. Later, Sam sent a copy of a video one of his students made with Ambassador Kniep to the brother as a Christmas present. As a matter of fact, for extra credit one semester, three of his students agreed to interview Ambassador Kniep and report back to the class. It was this cassette tape that Sam later mailed to Kniep Chevrolet so that the ambassador's brother had a tape to keep as remembrance.

[Richard F. Kneip - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Once Sam reached Lake Poinsett, he found that nothing seemed to have changed since those old fishing days! The cabins looked exactly the same. Sam rented a cabin unpacked and relaxed with a nice view of Lake Poinsett. He walked down to the shore line and threw some flat rocks that skipped over the lake surface, just like the old days when he was a kid. Sam sat on a picnic bench, having brought a pint of Thai whiskey his brother Ron had given him in Alaska, Sam sat for a long while, sipping a few drinks and soaking in the wonder. Later, he had a great dinner at the restaurant and a fine sleep in that cabin on the Lake!





**Cabins at Lake Poinsett today**



**Lake Poinsett South Dakota cabins. L-R; ft – unknown, Ron Burris, Dale Topp, Sam Burris with black hat. Behind L-R: Cliff, Elsa, Unknown, Pete Topp, Larry Topp, Lydia and Herman Topp. This photo was taken about 1952.**

Not long after the Lake Poinsett trip, Sam did a drive to Spring Valley, South West Virginia. His brother Ron had purchased the cabin in Fallville, Virginia and had been working on the project. Sam decided to help out by doing some work around the cabin area. While there, Sam stayed with his Aunt Viola (Burris) Jackson just down Spring Valley road. It was so nice to see her again and after all those years! Lo course Aunt Viola did indeed miss her brother Cliff so she and Sam spent some time really grieving together, looking at her collection of old family photos and talking about the good old days. Virginia had changed so much but still Sam found that being back again, he felt at home there in the mountains.

During this stay, Sam worked on the grounds of the log cabin where his father was born and raised. His brother Ron had purchased the cabin in 1992. Sam mostly did weed eating and cleaned up old wire the land. Cousin Ruth Bova came down for a visit from Roanoke, where she now lived, for a visit. She helped Sam work for a few hours one day. Of course Spring Valley was the real roots for Sam's father Clifton and Sam had a strong feeling that Spring

Valley in Virginia was his "soul home". During the visit, he also drove around visiting relatives like his cousin Dwight Burris and family. He revisited several graveyards in the region that held both Burris and Byrd relatives.

## Winside and Pilger, Nebraska

Upon returning to northeast Nebraska from Virginia, Sam worked with Diane Jaeger and Rose Janke on a Winside improvement project. Meetings were held by the group in the American Legion Hall to begin addressing problems in the village and how things could be improved. One of the most important changes discussed was a new water system for Winside including a new water tower on the hill above the town.

One old style event was a hay ride which was done in the old traditional way at night including cold and snow!

As fall passed and the Nebraska winter set in, Sam began to think more about his return to Hawaii. Dad's old garden was finished and was leveled successfully to be sown to grass later. Halloween and "trick or treat" came and went.

Sam journeyed to Lincoln to see his friend from U. S. Army days, Ron Suing and his family. Staying over before returning to Winside, he began driving back from there in a winter storm. The wind on the highway was blowing hard making his vision limited during his drive as the sun set and it became night driving. Slowly but surely Sam drove by Pilger heading north to Winside. Finally he arrived in the cozy Cliff Burris house safe and sound!

It was in early December when Sam stepped out the back door one morning and, as a result of a cold rain shower, there was a layer of ice on top of the snow. That was it! Sam called United Air Lines and tried to make a one way reservation to Hawaii but found that almost every flight was booked. There was just one seat found which was for Christmas Eve, would he want it? Sam said "yes, book it"!

The car was stored in the top garage, his bags were packed and, thanks to Ernie and Diane Jaeger, he was able to join them for a ride to Omaha. Not long after, it was check in at Eppley Field followed by a Christmas Eve crossing of the Pacific Ocean.

## HAWAII

Before leaving Nebraska, Sam had called ahead to his friend Art Whistler in Honolulu to ask if he could stay with him and his family while looking for a

position with the Hawaii Department of Education. That meant Sam had a place to stay in the city for a short time before he established his own residence. His United Air Lines flight went smoothly and it felt good once the blue ocean and the green mountains of Oahu came into view!

It sure was nice to be back in the balmy, sunny weather of tropical Hawaii again after the cold and snow of northeast Nebraska! Art, Ann, Sean and Charlene, the Whistler family, was very kind to Sam during his stay. He was able to rest, readjust to the island again and start making calls to seek employment before the second semester of the 2007-2008 school year began.

Fortunately, just at this time, Sam's friends Jenny Samaan and Michael Kaltos arranged a one month house sitting opportunity near Punahou School. Michael and Jenny's friend went to the mainland for four weeks and she had wanted someone to stay and watch her apartment. The apartment was near the residence of Sam's Samoan friend Vita Tanielu on Alexander Street which was great! Sam soon moved into his new digs for a period of one month.

One evening not long after moving, Vita came to Sam's apartment with his Samoan friend who turned out to be one of Sam's former students at the Teachers Training College in Samoa. Sam showed them a recently converted "slides to video" project which he had done in Alaska. This show was later to be his production of, "Two Samoas: A Cultural Comparison". While showing the part involving a matai (chief) funeral in Manono, Vita's friend exclaimed that one of the photos showed was the funeral of her father! It turned out that the old man lying in state was indeed her father and the family had no photos of the funeral. The next day, Sam was able to make an 8X10 copy for her. The search for a job continued though it would take some time since Maui District, where Kaunakakai School is located, was where he was due to return to. After some effort, that was changed so that Sam could transfer to Oahu and Leeward District instead. Shortly thereafter, Sam interviewed for and accepted a position at Iroquois Point Elementary School, Ewa Beach, as one of three school counselors there.

## Iroquois Point Elementary School

Address: Ewa Beach, HI 96706, United States

Phone: +1 808-499-6500



### **Scheduling Board at Iroquois Point Elementary School, Ewa Beach, Oahu, Hawaii.**

Iroquois Point Elementary School is located on the Iroquois Point Naval Base which at the time consisted mostly of Navy housing. There is also a firing range for the U. S. Marines on the facility. Sam interviewed for the position after the situation was resolved that he would not have to return to Maui District. Sam wanted to live on the island of Oahu. The interview went well and he was hired.

After getting the school counseling job at IPES, Sam decided to rent a room in Ewa Beach close to the school instead of driving 30 miles round trip to and from town every day. Sam found a vacancy listed in the Honolulu Advertiser by owner Willie Espero and, after looking at the room, rented it. Later on, Willie would be appointed by Governor Ben Cayetano, in 2000, to fill a vacancy in the Senate. Willie was divorced at the time and had two teen age boys. He worked as the property manager for Ewa Beach Housing Estate. As of this time, Will is still a State Senator.

While living in Ewa, Sam joined the Ewa Beach Methodist Church pastored by Robie Correa. Sam would be very active and formally joined the church. His friend Vita Tanielu came out from Honolulu for the occasion as a witness. Friends Sam made within the church included Bob and Marie Edwards, Bret and Lisa Gary along with Winston and Lynn Owen.

Working at IPES was a real eye opener for Sam as far as seeing how supportive the military parents were in the education of their children. There

was no end to volunteers to help with so many things at IPES. Karen Petersen, the principal was very good at her job and an understanding, sensitive leader. At the end of Sam's first year there Karen was transferred to another position and Janie Yamane, the vice principal took her place. Besides Sam there were two other counselors, Coleman Fanin and Nicolle Tateishi. Sam had a very good three years there even though the difficulties of noise from planes landing at the airport were an issue since by then, Sam had already been suffering from high frequency hearing problems. This problem would continue for his lifetime, eventually ending up in an application to the Veteran's Administration for benefits which was approved.

While at the school, Sam did individual and group counseling. He also led an effort to collect and preserve historical photos and other items. A lucky find was a cardboard box on the stage in the cafeteria full of memorabilia. Sam had a committee of students who helped at shows at parent nights and an ongoing display in the glass protected bulletin board in the library.

The actual facilities improved while Sam was there. The main improvement after the 1997-98 school years was air conditioning for the counseling office. IPES is located in a very dry, arid region on the Ewa Plain. The takeoff and landings from the airport went right over the school grounds.

Socially, Sam enjoyed trips to Chinatown and the Fort Street Mall Ba-le Coffee Shop where he met John and other friends. Sometimes Jim Carr or Dennis Masui would join him. The Ba-le shop was located next to the Downtown Hawaii Pacific University Campus. Another shop was on King Street not far away. Both shops have since closed or moved.

## **Camp Erdman**

**Community-focused nonprofit established in 1844 with recreational programs & services for all ages.**

**Address: 69-385 Farrington Hwy, Waialua, HI 96791, United States**

**Phone: +1 808-637-4615**



**Mokuleia Beach where Sam spent get away time from the early 1980's until 2000 when he moved to the Island of Hawaii.**

Sam also spent almost every weekend at Camp Mokuleia in Waialua side. He would put his tent and supplies in the trunk of his 1991 Honda Accord and go directly to Camp Erdman for the Friday night camp out. Sometimes, Sam would stop at the Hawaii Country Club Golf Course where he and Celia took his parents to visit back in 1984-85. Sam would often relax and have a draft beer with pupu (snacks). The trip to Waialua was beautiful. First within view were the pineapple fields along the way, then the slow, zigzag drive down the hill with the ocean in the background and Waialua below. After that it was a straight shot by Dillingham Field where the gliders would be taking off or landing. After that, it was the polo fields, Camp Mokuleia, a couple of military beaches and finally Camp Erdman.

Erdman is a YMCA camp that was established in the 1940's as a rest center for fleet officers and is located in a more remote section of northwest Oahu. After arriving, Sam would either hike up the Waistband Range Mokuleia side; play basketball, jog or do a bit of all three. There were so few people in the area because just beyond was the end of the road just a quarter mile up. Sam would run out onto the isolated beach, remove all his clothes and end up rolling in the sand like a creature without a care in the world! What a great place for relaxation at the end of the school week, or anytime!

Sometimes Sam was invited to join other campers at their campfires. At times there would be songs or maybe marshmallows roasted over the fire. One time a group of Waianae teachers asked him to join them. They played guitar, ukulele and generally made the most of a wonderful seaside environ. During his stay in Ewa Beach and his work at Iroquois Point, Sam went camping there so often that he received the combination to the front gate from the staff so that if he wanted to come up during holidays when the staff were gone, he could utilize the facility!

Sam built a small stone memorial for his parents in the sand at the spot where his mom and dad had enjoyed a BBQ during their visit. He used to spend

almost every weekend there camping. Sam continued to maintain the memorial until leaving for the Big Island for his final year as a school counselor in 2000.



**A view of Camp Erdman, showing the beach, swimming pool, cabins and cafeteria.**

A highlight of Sam working at Iroquois was the fine group of teachers and staff at the school. Virtually all worked in harmony and unity. The parents did the same. When the Hawaii Department of Education said they couldn't install computers at Iroquois, or do it for some time to come, the parents all pulled together, raised money and installed a school-wide system themselves! One of the final good memories for Sam was his run in a 5 K fundraiser in the spring of 2000. He still keeps the koa bowl he received after the run for being the first person to cross the line in his age group.



**Military housing at Iroquois Point, Ewa Beach, Hawaii. It was U. S. Naval property when Sam worked there as School Counselor for three years.**



Taken at Iraquois Point Elementary School library in 2000



## National Education Association

During his career, Sam was H. S. T. A. school representative several times including at Mac High, Vancouver, Washington and Kalaniana'ole School, Hawaii. He was an active member during most of his career and was to remain an active member of H.S.T.A. during his 20 years with the State of Hawaii Public School System. He was elected as delegate to the Hawaii State Convention almost every year while living in the Big Island from 1984 - 2005 and then again from 1997 - 2001.

Sam was also a member of the HSTA Political Action Committee for several years as well. One job of the committee was to choose which candidates for elections were to be endorsed by the union. Sam and other teachers then



campaigned for those pro-education candidates. Again, Sam had lasting friendships with some members of the union including Lari Yasui and others. While at Iroquois Point, for the first time Sam attended the 1999 NEA Convention as a delegate representing Hawaii. The convention that year was held in New Orleans. It was an interesting and well organized convention during which Sam spoke on the floor in support of normalizing relations with Cuba and other issues.

## *New Orleans*

New Orleans is a Louisiana city on the Mississippi River, near the Gulf of Mexico. Nicknamed the "Big Easy," it's known for its round-the-clock nightlife, vibrant live-music scene and spicy, singular cuisine reflecting its history as a melting pot of French, African and American cultures. Embodying its festive spirit is Mardi gras, the late-winter carnival famed for raucous costumed parades and public partying.

Weather: 20°C, Wind NE at 23 km/h, 69% Humidity

Population: 378,715 (2013)



**View of the downtown area of New Orleans, Louisiana**

Sam almost didn't make the N.E.A. Convention. The way it happened was that he ran as a delegate in 1997 while working as a school counselor at Iroquois Point Elementary School in Ewa Beach, Hawaii. His air line ticket was paid for by the Hawaii State Teachers Association from Honolulu to New Orleans and return. Sam managed to work a visit to Nebraska both going and coming.

While staying with his dad Cliff in Winside, Nebraska, Sam drove his car, purchased in Alaska the year before, to the Sioux City, Iowa Airport. About five miles from the airport, the car stopped and wouldn't start. Sam's flight was to depart in one hour and he was in a real fix, sitting on the highway with a stalled car! Luckily, an auto repair shop was nearby and open so Sam walked there and explained his situation to the mechanic. The man agreed to drive him to the airport. Sam gave the man the keys to his car and the mechanic drove him to the Sioux City Airport in time to catch his flight! The mechanic agreed to tow the car, repair it and pick Sam up at the airport upon his return, which he did. Wow, perhaps only in the Midwest!



## Bourbon Street, New Orleans, Louisiana

The convention was a great thrill for Sam who roomed with his good friend Tom Aitken from Pahoehoe, Big Island, Hawaii. HSTA provided the hotel room and food stipend for the trip. Just being in New Orleans was a real blast. Sam and Tom took a Bayou tour in an area of swamp not far from the city. Alligators came right up to their boat because the guide threw marshmallows which, amazingly enough, the gators love!

Bourbon Street was a highlight too but truthfully, the convention was the event for Sam. He was able to stand up and bring a motion on the floor on the U. S. recognizing Cuba plus join in other issues on the floor. There was also a

lot of excitement with the sightseeing and tours of historical sites of the New Orleans area.

In addition to the union business in New Orleans, Sam and other delegates rode street cars, visited old grave yards and soaked in the history of this old city in the U. S. In the evening there was Bourbon Street and Sam recalls a sign outside one of the bars that said, "Al Hurt tomorrow night". Coffee Vietnam was served at outdoor coffee areas was a welcome morning treat. Later Sam took a photo of the entire group from Hawaii which was sent out to Hawaii delegates after the convention was over.



## *Ernest Bowen de Silva Elementary School*

Address: 278 Ainako Ave, Hilo, HI 96720, United States

District: [Hawai'i Department of Education](#)

Phone: +1 808-974-4855



**Classroom at E. B. DeSilva Elementary School, Hilo, Hawaii in 2001.**

After three years of living in Ewa Beach on Oahu and working as a school counselor at Iroquois Point, Sam started thinking at the time about where he might want to retire and when. The more he thought, the more Hilo came into

his mind as the place to retire. Hilo was where he had spent 11 years living during the 80's and 90's. Sam began to travel to Hilo for various interviews during the end of the second semester of the 1999-2000. Eventually a job came up for Sam that he was very interested in. He flew over and did an interview for a counseling position at E. B. De Silva Elementary School. The school had an excellent reputation and Sam was pleased with the interview even though the principal who did it was retiring. It ended up that Sam was offered a position at DeSilva, just off Waianuenue Avenue.

Just about that time, a unit in his old building at Maua Loa Shores came up for sale at \$93,000.00. Sam put in a bid on the unit and bought it for that price. Unit # 712 was absolutely the most beautiful unit in the building. After closing, Sam said goodbye to Oahu and moved his car and all his personal affects to Hilo. There was some refurbishing to be done in the unit, such as putting all new carpets, a new cement floor cover with green indoor outdoor carpet on the lanai and rattan bed in the master bedroom. In addition, his friend Jim Metz from Honolulu came over and put in a front door screen and a new screen on the lanai or "patio" which overlooked the Pacific Ocean. By the time it was finished, the unit was very nice!

Because his unit had two bedrooms, Sam was able to rent one of them. Renting the room would give him somebody he could chat with and at the same time help him financially. His renter paid him \$400.00 per month. His roommate, Tom Anderson was a retiree from Florida and a very interesting person. Tom used the internet quite often to find a woman or mate for himself. He eventually concentrated on the Philippines, made a trip there, met a female he liked and moved to that country in the spring of 2001.

## The Philippines

Tom's wedding in Manila took place during spring break and Sam was invited. He bought a ticket on China Air by way of Taiwan. By coincidence, Laurie, a friend of Sam's from U. H. Manoa, met Sam on the flight to Taipei. It turned out that Laurie, former husband of Pressi Esperitu, one of Sam's trainers in the Peace Corps, was moving to Japan to retire after a career at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Sam had a hotel overnight in Taipei and upon arrival the next day, Tom and his fiancé met him at the airport. They lived in the city near Makati, the shopping and financial district. It was a good time getting together again and seeing the sites as Sam hadn't visited the country since 1966.

During the visit, Sam also flew to Cebu where relatives of his Filipino friends in Hilo met him at the Cebu City Airport. Because he knew family in Hilo, he was able to visit the rural countryside, experience the life of Filipinos in the rural areas with water buffalo and rice crops as well as see waterfalls, beaches and coastlines of Cebu. At one beach, Sam could see Negros Oriental from afar, the island where Tom Anderson and his wife would later move to and reside.

Back in Hilo, a challenge for Sam as Mauna Loa Shores president of the Board of Directors was the cutting of forests on the west side of the condominium. The County of Hawaii had already signed papers to cut the trees, bulldoze the area and make it a parking lot. Along with others, Sam opposed the project but organizing to stop it was difficult. Since the Leleiwi Community Association had already signed off on the project and the previous Board of Governors had agreed to it. A lawsuit against the County of Hawaii was considered, but with Andy Levin at the county advising against it, the lot was cleared and the parking lot put in.

As for Sam's new job, it turned out to be an unusually challenging year at DeSilva with a \$1 million upgrade at the school going on to make it handicap friendly! The project was supposed to be finished before the school year started but the work was delayed so that it *started at the beginning of school*.

The noise and dust from the construction got to be so bad that it caused a petition from the parents and staff to be circulated to moderate the disturbances. Sam played a major part in getting virtually every staff member, including the principal, to sign the petition. The PTA called a special meeting which included the Hawaii District Superintendent Dan Sakai and officials from the DOE and D.A.G.S. The results were several modifications in the construction methods and times worked. It was still a very loud and unpleasant experience for students, teachers and staff. By that time, Sam had been diagnosed with "High Frequency Hearing Loss". This affliction had already bothered him at his old school at Iroquois Point in Ewa Beach, Oahu, but there an air conditioned office helped a lot. In this case, Sam wore ear plugs often during the day and "made it through" the year.

Additionally, later in the school year Hawaii became the first and only state to have a strike in the history of the U. S. that shut down an entire educational system of Hawaii from pre-K thru university! That strike lasted six weeks. The strike seemed to be primarily differences between the HSTA union leadership and the present governor Ben Cayatano. Teachers were told to walk in protest in front of their schools eight hours every day.

At the time of these events, Sam worked as a full time school counselor. He was in charge of the DeSilva School Student Counsel, supervising students and holding regular meetings. There were constant events and issues to deal with

at the school all year, he being the only counselor there. In addition, Sam had his regular duties counseling individual and groups of students. Along with that were the special education meetings and paperwork. For example, the principal and Sam intervened in a case of some sixth grade students bullying a student during recess which was successfully resolved.



**Hilo High School track where Sam used to run with Larry Test and train for the Honolulu Marathon, 2001.**

Most of this time, Sam's health was fine and he did his regular running at Hilo High School track, swimming in the ocean fronting Carl Smith Park plus playing basketball. Sam enjoyed playing basketball at the outdoor court on Waianuenue Avenue in front of the First United Protestant Church parking lot. As for the state-wide strike, Sam had opposed it from the beginning, and had even called the governor's wife but all to no avail. After two days of walking the hard sidewalks, Sam got a note from Dr. Tom Green, his personal physician to excuse him from picketing for health reasons.

The strike was during the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival. His good friend, Elinor Wolf also did not support the strike and didn't do picketing either. The settlement for the teachers was finally reached and, as it turned out, the Hawaii State Teachers Association publicly apologized for not increasing salaries of the retirees of which Sam became one.

On a personal level, Sam had a few dates during that year, Hilo being a small and provincial community. Sam was also had a very busy life at the time. Nationally, the election of 2000 was held between Al Gore, the Democratic Party Candidate, and George W. Bush, the Republican candidate. Of course history shows the 5-4 decision by the United States Supreme Court to give the election to Bush after halting the ballot recount in Florida is now history. After these events, Sam had a bad feeling about the future of the United States and felt very apprehensive.

## Happy Cats



### **At Happy Cats: L – R: Julia Tao, Elinor Wolfe, Sam and Doug in 2001.**

One of favorite places for Sam and his friends to meet and socialize was an outdoor restaurant across from the Hilo Market on Mamo Street called Happy Cats. The place was owned and run by a very nice local woman who bought the previous restaurant at the site named "Broke the Mouth".

On Saturday mornings, a regular group of people congregated there for breakfast from around 8:00 to 12:00 or 1:00pm. Discussions were of a wide variety including religion, politics and the environment to name a few. The coffee, from Africa, was excellent and the food was delicious! On many occasions Sam would bring chilled Ava or kava which he bought already prepared from a Fijian Indian man in the Hilo Market. On one occasion a couple of Samoans came by and drank Ava with the group. Sadly, the routine Sam had been interrupted around the end of April, 2001, when Happy Cats closed. Sam actually came to Happy Cats on a daily basis since he would arrive after work around 4:00 or so, have coffee with some homemade chocolate chip cookies and then go do his run at Hilo High track or play basketball at First United Protestant Church on Waianuenue Avenue. This was usually followed by a swim in the area fronting Carl smith Park. A ladder was there to enter the cold, spring fed bay for a refreshing dip or sometimes Sam just dove in!!

As early as February, 2001, Sam was considering taking a "leave without pay" and going to S.E. Asia, then returning. His hearing problem was becoming more bothersome at this point in his life. On a trip to Honolulu, he was having

coffee with his old friend Dennis Masui and the two talked about Sam's Asia plan. Dennis pointed out that, since Sam was near retirement age, he could retire and would get paid while he was living there! That sounded good to Sam and he explored that possibility. He did this without any really serious consideration at first because there could be a financial impact on his future. By April of 2001 however, Sam had already filed his retirement papers and firmed up his decision. His plan was to rent out his condominium. Sam proceeded with an agreement to have his friend Paul Hewitt manage the renter in his unit for him. Long term, this did not turn out to be a good plan. Sam didn't know it at the time, but he would return to Hilo the very next year to sell his condo by the sea.



**A farewell party was held for Sam in June, 2001 just prior to his departure for Thailand. Elinor Wolfe at right baked a cake for the occasion. A friend, Janet Taylor is sitting behind at right.**

## Thailand

Thailand is a country on Southeast Asia's Indochina peninsula known for tropical beaches, opulent royal palaces, ancient ruins and ornate temples displaying figures of Buddha, a revered symbol. In Bangkok, the capital, an ultramodern cityscape rises next to quiet canal and riverside communities. Commercial hubs such as Chinatown consist of labyrinthine alleys crammed with shop houses, markets and diners.

**Capital: [Bangkok](#)**

**Currency: Thai baht**

**King: [Bhumibol Adulyadej](#)**





## Map of Thailand

### Chaingmai 2001

Two weeks after the 2000-2001 school year was finished at DeSilva School, Sam left Hawaii and flew to Bangkok on Northwest Air Lines. It was the last week of June, 2001 after his final year spent as a school counselor in Hilo. Taking advantage of his mileage, Sam flew free to Bangkok via Narita, Japan.

Landing at Don Muang was a different experience for Sam. The airport was no longer surrounded by rice fields as it had been on his visit in 1980. Now it was surrounded by concrete city! Sam took a taxi to his hotel, the Nana on Sukumvit Road and here he was, back after 21 years!

Sam spent just five days in Bangkok sightseeing, getting used to the food and climate. Eating in outdoor courtyards and hearing Thai spoken again was a great feeling for him. He met three Thai women who went dancing with him the first evening in the city! Shortly after, due to a previous internet connection, Sam went to the airport to meet a friend from China teaching in Singapore. They enjoyed her three day visit by touring the city. Now, for Sam, there was no job to return to. The challenge was how would things go in this new country for him? Would he stay here and live or would life in this Asian country be too much for him to adjust to?

Soon though, old memories flowed of how wonderful a city in the north was for Sam back in the late 70's. He had enjoyed the city of Chiangmai all those years ago and now he booked a first class ticket on a train heading to the

north of the country. After a scenic ride of rice fields and mountains, plus having a night's sleep, Sam arrived in Chiangmai and rented a room in the same hotel that his brother had stayed in just a month previously.

Chiangmai had changed....and grown! It was no longer the small, provincial town that he knew but a bustling city. To his surprise, the ancient Buddhist wats and temples had been renovated over the years. It was marvelous doing walking tours of the old city and viewing these ancient wonders which had previously been just broken rubble in 1978. Sam moved inside the old city walls to a guest house called the Golden Fern. It was just a block or two away from Wat Chedi Leong, soon to be Sam's favorite wat in Thailand!



**PHOTO OF WAT CHEDI LUANG**

### **Chiangmai, Thailand**

Just two days later, Sam met Kanchana Kulseenor on Taipei Road, near Taipei Gate. Sam was getting hungry and decided that he would approach the first young woman he was attracted to and ask her out for lunch. About that time, Kanchana and her two friends were coming back from their English class. When Sam walked up to Gan and asked her if she wanted to have lunch, she replied in the affirmative. After that, the couple began dating. Often they would meet for breakfast in the morning before Gan went to work as a traditional Thai massage therapist. They would also have dinner together in the evenings and sight see around the city. Gan took Sam to Buddhist temples where he learned about Buddhism. They often went to Wat Chedi Leong together in the

evenings. Gan loved sports too and they would play basketball together or go running on the University of Chiangmai campus.

During this time, Sam had a group of friends visit from Hilo, one of them being Janet Taylor, who attended Sam's farewell party in Hilo. They had a great time touring the area including a trip to Sukothai Ancient Ruins south of Chiangmai. The trip was timed for a special holiday, Loi Katrong, when people float lanterns into the sky and have candles floating on bodies of water as well. It was a beautiful experience for all!

### [Sukhothai Historical Park - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)



On a trip to Bangkok in December, 2001 Sam and Gan checked in to the Miami Hotel, the oldest hotel in the city. It was here that Sam met Gan's children. Duang Tip was 11 and Satid was five years old. The four of them ate breakfast in the dining room of the hotel and later the kids went swimming in the pool. Initially the children stayed with their father in Samut Prakan which is where they were at the time. Gan would visit them whenever she went to Bangkok.



**Duang Tip, Satid, Sam and Gan at Miami Hotel in Bangkok.**

Back in Chiangmai, Sam and Gan spent much of their time touring the city and areas around.

An important time for Sam was when Gan invited him to accompany her brother in law, Jerry Apt and her sister Chanida to meet Gan's family in Ban Na Ku, Gan's home village in Issan, situated in the northeast part of the country. Sam enjoyed the trip very much having met Mama, Papa, Ao and Adoon and other family members. It was the dry season and it was hot with much of the vegetation brown. Still, Sam, having served in the Peace Corps in Samoa, could relate to the village scene of about 1,000 people.

## Krabi

Krabi is a town on the west coast of southern Thailand at the mouth of the Krabi River where it empties in Phang Nga Bay. As of 2010 the town had a population of 52,867. The town is the capital of Krabi Province and Krabi District.



### Local boat and limestone Karsts are all attractions to tourists.

After their visit to Issan, Jerry and Chanida invited Sam and Gan to ride down with them to Krabi, in the south, where the couple was building a house right on the Andaman Sea. When they arrived, Sam and Gan were very impressed with the south in general. To Sam, it looked a lot like Hawaii with white sand beaches and palm trees. The south is a big tourist destination for the country. Jerry and Chanida were renting a house not far from their new home on the water they were building at the time. Sam and Gan chose to rent a place right along the Krabi River. It cost just US\$50.00 per month, and was a room with a walk out bathroom just around the corner though not shared with anyone else. What an excellent location, clean and modern and the price was right so they decided to move there. It was December, 2001.

After a ten day stay in Krabi, Sam and Gan took a train back to Chiangmai in the north. It took a few days of packing and planning before the two boarded a train again, this time with boxes of their personal items aboard. They took the train to Surat Thani where Jerry and Chanida picked them up and drove them back to the apartment they had rented along the Krabi River and right on Exercise Park.



### Map of the Krabi, Thailand region and Andaman Sea.

Krabi is the jumping off place for tourists to all the Andaman Islands. The islands are located off both the east and west coast. National parks also abound in the region. Early on, the couple hiked up the 900 step Wat Tom Sua, built on top a limestone karst not far off the highway and close to Krabi Town. The view from the top is magnificent but it sure is hard on the knees since the steps are all cement going up! Neighbor islands like Koh Siboya or Siboya Island was another favorite destination. There were only two small, guest house areas on Siboya in 2001-20002 so it was a great getaway. Sam and Gan, made friends with Gan Gritsida and family while in Krabi. Gritsida, who ran an Internet café, and his wife had three children and his mom staying with them in their rather new home in the downtown area of the city. Sam enjoyed using the internet cafe there since it was air conditioned. Gritsida even made a CD with music on trips the couple made to the ancient cities of Sukothai and Ayutthaya.

Krabi Town is located on the Krabi River and the population in 2001 was about 25,000 people. Tourist sites around it include Koh Phi-Phi, Koh Lanta, Ao Nang and Rai Lei Beach. The area has some nice WATS including Wat Kaew in the city. Sam and Gan developed a friendship with the owners of the Chan Chalay Guest House and often ate breakfast in the back garden there under a beautiful jack fruit tree.

Since Krabi is in the south of Thailand, there are lots of Muslims living in and around the town. At one point, Sam and Gan house sat for Jerry and Chanida Apt. Their new home was located 21 kilometers northeast of Krabi and right on the waters of the Andaman Sea! The couple stayed there for seven months and used Jerry's vehicle to travel back and forth to Krabi. Every evening the chimes of the local mosque could be heard. The Thai Muslim neighbors were

very friendly and helpful. The families nearby would come visit or Sam and Gan would visit them and even borrow tools and other necessities at times. For Sam, Gan and sometimes Duang Tip and Satid (Gun) who came to visit them from Bangkok, travels from Krabi were by boat, train (Hat Yai) or Surat Thani and bus or minivan.



**Sam is shown here sitting with the boatman by the steering apparatus just before going around Laem Point, Phi Phi Island to Hat Ranti, Thailand.**

One of the adventures Sam and Gan took part in is taking a boat at the jetty, not far from their residence in Krabi Town. Their destination was Phi Phi Island, one of the most beautiful in the south of the country.



After looking all around the main part of Phi Phi, they elected to take a boat to the other side of the island for a more private state. The boat we hired left on the destination to Hat Ranti where it was very peaceful until time to sleep. Then we found out about the frogs croaking all night! First and last time we stayed at Ranti!



The small house at right was where Sam and Gan rented a downstairs room on the Krabi River at only US\$50.00 a month.

One thing that was fortunate upon their arrival was the couple's living facilities which were right on the Krabi River. The Krabi has many tributaries and Gan and Sam took boats to view all the Mangrove areas. What a beautiful journey. Also on the way were caves in the limestone Karsts. With small hotels nearby, it wasn't always as quiet as needed at night but the exercise park was nearby and it was a very fresh air area compared to living in the town.

## Malaysia



Map of Malaysia

**The border of Malaysia** is fairly close to Krabi Town so when Sam needed to renew his visa, he and Gan often headed for the Malaysian border. The couple usually took the train. That meant busing it to Hat Yai and then catching the train from there to Butterworth, Malaysia with a ferry crossing to Georgetown. On one train trip, Sam was amazed to meet a family of five from Norfolk, Nebraska on one train ride. The family was living in Laos and the wife had graduated from Northeast Nebraska College. A chat brought memories of people in the area they both knew. Sam had immediately recognized their "Big Red" t-shirts they were wearing. On another trip, Sam met a Vietnam vet who was from Arizona, married to a Thai lady and running a cattle ranch in central Thailand.

## George Town, Penang

George Town is the colorful, multicultural capital of the Malaysian island of Penang. Once important in the Straits of Malacca as trading hub, the city is now known for its British colonial buildings, Chinese shop houses and mosques. Beyond the old town, George Town is a modern city with skyscrapers and shopping malls. Verdant Penang Hill, with hiking and a funicular railway, overlooks it all.

Founded: 1786

Population: 740,200 (2010)



**Map of Penang, Malaysia**

It was Gan's first visit to the main city of Georgetown. Then they headed to Penang and the resort area of Batu Ferringhi enjoying the seaside resorts. Georgetown is known for great food and so much history to see. For a view of the area, anyone can take the cable car ride to Penang Hill and there is a paved road which can be used to hike down. At the end, is the famous Botanical Garden, which is an excellent place to view a variety of animals.





### **The Lone Pine Hotel is one of the oldest hotels in Batu Ferrenghi.**

Just north of Georgetown is the resort area of Batu Ferrenghi. Here is where Gan experienced her first jelly fish sting though not a serious one. Prior to the Tsunami in 2004, there were lots of small guest houses along the shore and great sea food places.

As for national parks, the couple's favorite was Khao Phanom Bencha with an attraction of 12 waterfalls. Sam and Gan loved the fifth falls where it was quiet and one could often dive or skinny dip if no one was there. Here Gan had her first encounter with a leach. It stung Gan but Sam managed to stray insect repellent on it, which resulted in the withdrawal of the stinger!

Overnight cabins were available At Khao Phanom Bencha and the couple enjoyed staying a few nights at the National Park.

Another island well known was Khao Lanta. Friends Pop and Gan ran a travel business in Krabi right on the jetty near the Krabi River. This is where Sam and Gan often ate so they did the ticketing for the couple on many occasions, including to Lanta.

Another great trip was by bus to the ancient city of Nakhon Si Thammarat where an impressive Wat Phra Mahathat was enjoyed. The city is over a thousand years old and the chedi or Buddhist temple area seemed that old for sure!

The kids, Duang Tip and Gun, came down to visit Sam and Gan a couple of times while they were living in Krabi. The kids especially enjoyed One Mile Beach at Hat Noppharat Thara. A long boat from Noppharat Thara took Sam and Gan to one of their favorite escapes from Krabi Town which was the Andaman Inn, a native style resort on the beach. There a bungalow could be had for less than five dollars and the Thai food was wonderful. Only sand fleas kept Sam from fully enjoying the beach more. For a few weeks, Sam and Gan even lived at one of the bungalow called The Pine before moving to Thalane to house sit for Jerry and Gan's sister Chanida.

In January, 2004, Sam and Gan flew to Bangkok so that Sam could take a trip to Hawaii, staying with his friend Jim Metz at Punahou Terrace in Makiki. He enjoyed his almost annual trip there, seeing old friends again and hiking the

mountains, going to the beach. They also enjoyed body boarding at Sherwood Forest, a beach near Waimanalo. Sam also had medical checks while there in Hawaii.

## **PATTAYA - Resort City on Gulf of Thailand**

While Sam was gone, Gan was invited to stay in Pattaya, a city along the Gulf of Siam and one of the major tourist destinations in the country. Sam and Gan had met Fred and Patayang the year before at Khon Kean Inn, one of the main hotels in that city. Both couples were having breakfast there and Sam had chatted afterward outside the entrance of the hotel. This led to a real friendship between the couples from then on. Fred, from Scotland, was a retiree in his late 70's at the time. He was a World War II vet who had arrived in Singapore just after the Japanese departure and also served in Burma. The couple sensed that, with Sam gone, Gan might be a bit lonely so they invited her to stay with them at their hotel in Pattaya.

When Sam came back from Honolulu, Gan met him at the airport as usual. Prior to his returning to Thailand, Sam's friend Jim Metz had questioned Sam as to why, since he and Gan had been together for three years and that they loved each other, then why didn't Sam ask Gan if she wanted to be married? After pondering, Sam had decided he would do so upon his arrival back in Bangkok. After the taxi ride to the Miami Hotel and back to their room, Sam asked the question. Of course Gan accepted, and they spent a week in the "City of Angels" filing papers, getting married on February 17, 2004 at the marriage registry in Bangkok. The two had decided upon a honeymoon in Pattaya, since Fred and Patayang had invited them to come there to the Weekender Resort (now named the Sabai Resort).



The bungalow shown is where Sam and Gan rented when it was the Weekender Resort.

Once Sam and Gan came to the city, they were attracted to the hotel, beach and other advantages of living. As a result, they rented a Weekender Hotel

bungalow which included a living room, kitchen, bedroom and bath at US\$250.00 per month. Once they moved into the bungalow, they decided to take a train back to Krabi, gather their things stored at Jerry and Chanida's house on the Andaman Sea and move to Pattaya.

A few months later, Duang Tip and Gun came to visit Gan and Sam in Pattaya and stayed over a week. By that time, their friend Fred returned to Scotland and his girlfriend Patayang went back to her farm in Issan. The Weekender had two swimming pools, snooker and ping pong table so it was great fun to stay there. The hotel had a clientele from around the world so Sam and Gan met Iranians, Dutch, German and folks from many other countries staying there. Sam enjoyed drinking beer a couple of times with the Iranians who played cards often. Some of them had shops they ran in the area of Pattaya. In just five months however, the hotel changed ownership asking everyone to vacate. This resulted in Sam and Gan having to move at short notice to a small apartment not far away in Soi three.

After a short stay of one month in an apartment on Soi three Sam and Khan rented a 3<sup>rd</sup> floor unit on Soi two. It turned out that the apartment on Soi Two, the Rainbow Apartments, would be theirs to rent for the next three years since it cost only \$200.00 per month. The two of them rented it full time as it was A/C, close to the beach and had a pool for the residence use. Just about this time, construction of their Naku house began to become a serious plan.

After living for some time in the city, Duang Tip met Khun Tom and for about two years, Khun Tom, Duang Tip and Gun all stayed in the same apartment in Naklua with Tom's sister Khun Muk. It worked out well since Duang Tip could walk to school while a bus picked up Gun every morning. Tom worked at a hotel and went to school on weekends.

## Living in the Issan Rice Fields

Instead of building a house near a city, as Jerry and Chanida had done near Krabi, Sam and Khan decided to build their house on the outskirts of Ban Na Ku, Gan's home village in Issan, in the northeast. The village is about 50 miles "As the crow flies" from the Mekong River which is the border with Laos.

Gan's father gave the land outright so construction began immediately. The rice field was bull dozed so that a high area was formed for the house and a low area for a pond was dug. From that time on, for the next two years, the two of them spent part of their time in Pattaya at the apartment, part traveling and part living in Na Ku. Within one year, Gan's two children, Duang Tip and Gun both left their father, who lives in south of Bangkok, and moved to Pattaya where they were enrolled in private schools in the area. Duang Tip



**Photo above: Staying amid the rice fields of Issan about five miles from Ban Na Ku, Gan is shown with her cousin, daughter and baby.**

came first and lived in an apartment near Sam and Gan on Soi Three. Later Satid transferred to Pattaya and the two kids lived together in an apartment in nearby Naklua.

While the house was being built outside the village, Sam and Khan traveled up from Pattaya and lived very "Thai style" in a series of Thai huts around the village of Ban Na Ku. The first one was located about five miles southeast. The site was the home of Gan's uncle on her mom's side who had just passed away. No one was living there so the two moved in with the help of the family. The hut they stayed in was on stilts and there were 13 mango trees around the property. It was mango season! Both Sam and Gan enjoyed the sweet fruit every day and grew to calling the Uncle's estate "Mamuang" which is Thai for "Mango"!

While living in the countryside they used lantern for light, had no indoor toilet and took well water from the rice field except for cooking and drinking when they used bottled water. Luckily, Sam had served in the Peace Corps in Samoa so was not adversely affected to spending time living in such a situation.

After their first stay at "Mamuang", Gan's cousin Papan, a school teacher in Mukdahan, moved into his dad's Thai hut. No more "Mamuang" for them, so Sam and Gan rented a small hut from Gan's other cousin which was located near by. Mama's entire family owned/farmed land all around this area and many of her cousins lived around including Pap and her husband. This second hut was smaller but available because Boon Tin's wife had died and he no



The second hut Sam and Gan stayed in while their house was being built belonged to Gan's cousin Boon Tin. Here are the receding flood waters after heavy rain and flood, 2004.

longer wanted to use the hut since he couldn't take the memories. They used to love spending their off times in the country, staying in the sala Sam and Gan were now using.

Boon Tin's hut was located just 10 yards or so from the Yang River. The Yang crested during the rainy season when Sam and Gan were in the hut so it was a *bit scary*. For example, once Sam saw a snake swimming toward the hut and asked Gan where it was going. Gan said the cobra was coming to try and stay in the hut! The two of them threw some stones then and managed to scare it away. The rice fields did have quite a few cobra though the snake was tame compared to some poisonous snakes in some other countries!

While living in Boon Tin's hut, Gan cooked using a gas cannister and the two bathed in the Yang River, using the river for their water supply except for cooking and drinking.

While living in the rice fields, they went to town occasionally to check on the progress of their house. Brother-in-law Adoon worked with Gan's uncle in the actual building of the structure. Often the family would bring food and bottled water out to the countryside. A nephew sometimes came with his motorcycle and when Sam and Gan went to shop, they would hire a "tuk tuk", or three wheeled motorized vehicle to send them all the supplies they needed. Cousin Papan, nearby, had a good garden so Sam and Gan had fresh vegetables and there were some fruits in season growing in the area.

Eventually, Sam and Gan found another hut much closer to the village of Na Ku to stay in. This hut was one just down the road from the building site. Sam called it the "Rice Road" because it was a small but fairly smooth dirt track through the fields in a half moon which connected the two villages on Na Ku and Van Viang.

The two rented a hut located about half way between the villages along the canal for about \$50.00 per month. It was owned by an old family friend Khun Yai, an elderly and very friendly lady who lived in Vang Vieng, a neighboring village. This hut was also next to a small pond and the pond made it a very beautiful site. There weren't floods here while the couple stayed, but the two did experience a strong windstorm one night that had both Sam and Gan holding back the rain and wind with plastic sheets hung from the sides of the hut. The nearest neighbor to Sam and Gan while living in the hut was Boon Mee, a Vang Vieng village man about 42 years of age. Boon Mee loved his whisky and would often get drunk, either by himself or with friends. Sometimes he would come and visit, being friendly and outspoken but when he was sober he was quiet and shy.

Another neighbor was Khun Lope who had a hut across the road but closer to the village. He made his living herding water buffalo and cows for other people. Khun Lope did not have lanterns in his hut as Gan and Sam did. He would walk around the area at night with no light as he knew the rice fields very well. He would stop and chat with Sam and Gan often when they lived in the Rice Road hut.

It wasn't until mid 2005 that Sam and Gan could actually move into their new house. It took that long to build because the original builder stopped working on the project and Gan hired her uncle and cousins to finish it. Even then there was some delay when the rice cutting and harvesting season came and all work stopped so the men could work in the rice fields. Afterwards however, work resumed. It then took some time to do the landscaping which meant choosing and purchasing the kinds of grass, trees and other plants to put around the property. In addition, in 2006 and 2007, the land was expanded twice when lots were purchased from neighbors to enlarge the grounds.

Initially Gan's mama lived in one part of the house but, she got lonely for her grand children and other family members after a time and moved back to the family house near the main highway, just about two blocks away. Sometimes the house was left empty while the couple were either traveling or staying in Pattaya.

The house was designed mostly by Gan except for the porch where Sam requested his "Virginia swing" be hung. With his dad having been born in Virginia, Sam had this need to put a wooden porch on one side with a swing, just like Virginia! The project was a success when brother-in-law Atoon built a wooden swing for Sam which was exactly what he wanted...and more!



The Sam and Gan Burris house in Na Ku, Kalasin Province, Thailand. Sam's "Virginia porch swing" is on the left side. The kids room, which was Mama's previously, is located on the right with a large common room is in the center, 2009.

It was in 2006 that Sam and Khan decided that, since the house was pretty much done, it was time to do a trip to the United States. They chose Nebraska as their destination so that Gan could meet Sam's relatives and friends.

Before they left however, the two decided to purchase some land. They ended up buying 11 (3 acres) Rai from Gan's dad which Gan and Sam named, "Darland". The word was a combination of "Darling" and "Land". This piece of property has no structures on it and is covered mostly by Eucalyptus trees, known for their white bark.

## Nebraska and Washington, D.C.

Prior to leaving Thailand for Nebraska, the couple felt that six weeks would be a good amount of time to stay in the Midwest and, if Gan liked it in Winside and surroundings, they could stay longer. As it turned out, they both did enjoy themselves and extended their stay to four months!

Gan and Sam always enjoyed working on the lawn at the Cliff and Elsa Burris home on the Main Street in Winside. Going to shop at Oberle's Market, Winside's grocery store was a regular event as was going to the Winside Library to use the Internet, read the papers or check out magazines. A few times Sam went up to Porkies for coffee in the morning. Their friends, Ernie and Diane Jaeger had a back yard pool where they swam a few times but most of the time they went to swim in the Pilger Pool or to the Wayne Public Pool. Sam's friend Ron Suing with wife Barb and grandchildren stopped to see Sam on their way back from Bloomfield to Lincoln. Sam and Ron were in the military together in Fort Leonard Wood, Fort Dix and in South Korea.



**Sam and Gan with Ron Suing from Lincoln, Nebraska. He and Sam were in the U. S. Military together in South Korea for most of their two years of service.**

Sam and Gan would often go on drives to Wayne with Cliff's 1981 Cheve, sometimes visiting Raymond and Mabel Peterson, cousins of Sam's mother Elsa. Going to Ponca State Park on the banks of the Missouri River, having a picnic on walking in the park was great fun! Nebraska is famous for the number and quality of state parks in the state. Sam and Gan liked to drive to Ron's farm located near the brother Bill Burriss farm northwest of the village of Winside.

## PHILADELPHIA, PA. AND WASHINGTON, D.C.

The four months spent in Nebraska included some another destinations. Sam's old friend and fellow teacher from Peace Corps days in Samoa, Ron Lubcher, telephoned Sam early in the visit and opinioned it wasn't right for him to keep Gan in Nebraska for the entire stay since she would get the wrong impression of the U. S., that everything was like Nebraska!! He and his wife Traci then invited Sam and Gan to travel to Washington, D. C. and stay with them on a visit. After consideration, they both agreed and soon booked a ticket to Washington, D.C.

First they drove to Eppley Field in Omaha where they enjoyed a picnic lunch they had packed before boarding the Northwest Air Lines plane for a trip to Philadelphia via Detroit.

Landing in Philadelphia, Sam and Gan were met by Cousin David Atkins who took them to Aunt Grace Atkin's house in Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania. Aunt Grace was happy to have them stay at her house.

For several days Gan got to visit this branch of new relatives for the first time. She had the opportunity to get to know Aunt Grace well and see some of the neighborhood. Everyone spent time looking at old photos and talking about the mountains of Virginia. The next day, Sam and Gan visited Cousin Martha Sue's house nearby where a family reunion and barbeque was held. Later they all visited David and Marsha Atkin's home on the border of Valley Forge National Park.

David and his wife live very near the Audubon house which was home to John J. Audubon. Sam recalled the home because of an earlier visit there with his parents in the 1980's. It was so great to visit Aunt Grace since it turned out to be the last opportunity as she died just four years later. After the visit, Sam continued to telephone her often, made easier because Sam and Gan moved from Thailand to Honolulu the next year.

The following morning, David took the couple to the local train station in Norris town for their next stop. They caught a local train to William Penn Station in Philadelphia. From that recently renovated structure, Sam and Gan took



Amtrak to Washington, D. C. where Ron Lubcher, Sam's old returned Peace Corps friend, was waiting at Union Station to pick them up. It was nice for Sam to be back again, as he had visited and stayed with Ron and Traci previously. The next several days were spent enjoying Ron and Traci's home in Burke, Virginia. Burke is reached by local train, passing over the Potomac River from the Pentagon. The four of them enjoyed old photos that Ron had kept in his basement showing their time in Samoa as Peace Corps Volunteers back in 1974-76.

Lots of sightseeing was on tap for the couple as they got a VIP tour of the Capitol Building by contacting Senator Dan Akaka's office ahead of time. Fortunately, only Sam and Gan had signed up for that day so, after a continental breakfast at Senator Akaka's office (formerly occupied by Senator Bob Dole of Kansas) *they had a real VIP tour from the guide from Senator Akaka's office.* The next day, they visited the Air and Space Museum and the relatively new Native American Museum. Of course the Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam War Memorial were on the itinerary. Sam was able to get some crayon and paper to trace one veteran who had been shot next to his friend Dennis Daum. Sam also viewed the names of the three young me killed in the war from Winside. They were all age 18 when they died.



Sam, Traci Lubcher, Gan and Ron Lubcher directly behind the Reflecting Pool with the Lincoln Memorial behind, June, 2006.

Soon it was time for Sam and Gan to leave, flying from Washington, D. C. to Omaha and then a drive on Highway 275 in his dad's 1981 Chevrolet to Winside. What a wonderful trip it had been, seeing lots of people and various sites in the east coast.

Many more treats were waiting for Sam and Gan in Nebraska including visits with Virgie Frerichs and Hilda Bargstadt. Virgie is a first cousin of Cliff Burris, Sam's father, while Hilda was the wife of Alvin Bargstadt since deceased. The couple was best friends of Cliff and Elsa Burris.



**Sam and Gan with Virgie Frerichs at the retirement home in Stanton, Nebraska, 2006.**

During the Nebraska visit, the two did a trip to Gavin's Point Dam on the Missouri-Nebraska border. Dennis Daum, a childhood friend of Sam's worked at the dam site. Dennis had been shot as a soldier in the Vietnam War, and Sam and Gan had traced the friend's name from the Vietnam War Memorial. When they gave it to him when they came back, he was very happy. At Niobrara State Park the couple drove through the land enjoying the views. Of course there were the usual trips to Pilger during which visits to David and Elaine Tobias or Darryl and Becky Frerichs took place. They also stopped to see Harlan and Elaine Burris for a visit with Janet Burris and her family from Colorado as well as stopping to see Hilda Grimm, Sharon and her husband plus visiting the Pilger Library where Elaine Tobias worked.

The Pilger Cafe was a destination too. Sam had published his story of Bud Tinning, major league baseball player from Pilger who pitched for the Chicago Cubs. The story he wrote was printed in the Norfolk Daily News, the Wayne Herald and the Wisner-Pilger Enterprise. Sam framed the article from the Enterprise and, after getting permission from the owner, Ms. Linda Eckert, placed it on the wall in the Pilger Café on Main Street.

It was on this trip that Gan met Tippy Johnson and her husband. Tippy was from Thailand and was married to Stanley Johnson from Wayne. Also Sam and Gan visited Byron and Lisa Wacker on their farm and had an "Asian gathering"! The event was held at their farm home with a number of Asians in the area attending.

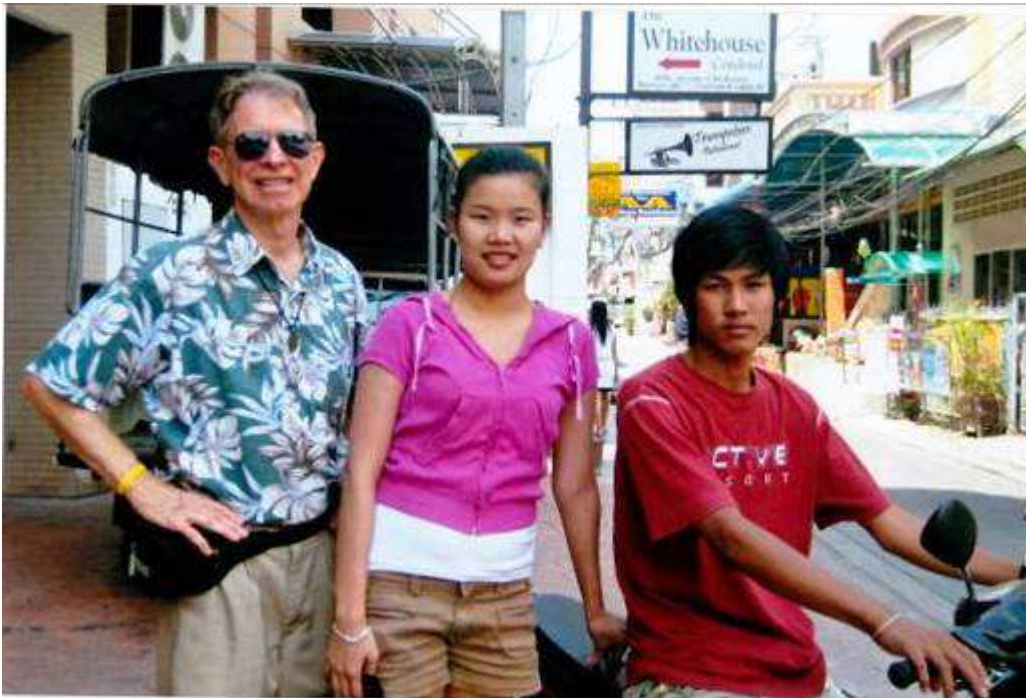


**Gan visiting with Hilda Bargstadt in Hilda's farm home south of Winside. Hilda lived a few miles south of Winside in her farm house. Alvin and Hilda were close friends of Sam's parents Cliff and Elsa Burris.**

It wasn't long before it was time to head for the Sioux City Skyways Airport and a return flight on Northwest Air lines to Omaha via Minneapolis. Bill Burris drove Gan and Sam there to catch the small plane flight to their Northwest connection to Thailand.

Much of the time in 2005, 2006 and 2007, Gan and Sam spent time completing work on their house in Issan and taking breaks by staying at their apartment in Pattaya. The couple would travel through Khon Kean, staying at the Khon Kean

Hotel where breakfast was included each morning. A favorite thing to do was also eating down an alley just off the street near the 7/11 store nearby. Sam always said this outdoor place was the best place for noodles in Thailand! By 2006-2007, both Duang Tip and Satid were fully immersed in their two private schools. Duang Tip was attending PBAC and living with her boyfriend Khun Tom. During this time, Tip had part time jobs at the same hotel Tom worked at as well as a travel agency in town where she did work on the computer. Satid also enjoyed his school too and sometimes did ocean fishing and played soccer with his school mates. The two kids stayed in their own place at Na Klua, a nearby suburb of Pattaya, along with Tom's sister Muk.



**Sam with Duang Tip and Tom in Pattaya, 2008.**

In 2006 Lari and Roger Yasui came to visit Sam in Pattaya and they were able to meet Gan of course. Lari is a retired teacher from Hawaii who worked with Sam a lot in the HSTA teachers union in Hawaii. Lari and Sam served on the HSTA Political Action Committee together for several years. During their visit, everyone had fun going to Walking Street, a favorite site for tourists, and to Jom Tien where Roger got a para-sail ride over the waters of the Gulf of Thailand!

The Leong family from Singapore came up to Visit Sam and Gan in 2006 as well. The youngest son David Leong and wife April came with their new baby Denise. April's mom was along too and of course Mary.

Another visitor was Sam's old friend from Singapore, Lee Wat Sim. He and two of his friends flew to Thailand and worked as volunteers in a village north of Kanchana Buri. They then came to Pattaya to visit Sam and Gan.

Almost every year, Sam would take a three week trip to Hawaii. On one occasion, he did house sitting for Lari and Roger Yasui in Pearl City. Sam often stayed at the Jim Metz residence on Makiki Street in Honolulu. Jim, a returned Peace Corps Volunteer Philippines, enjoyed going body boarding on Oahu on the other side of Waimanalo at Sherwood Forrest. The beach was great and the waves bigger than Waikiki.

In 2007, Sam's friend Ron Gordon came to visit. Ron is chairman of the Communications department at the University of Hawaii at Hilo and a former neighbor of Sam when he lived at Mauna Loa Shores Condominium. In 2007, Sam and Gan continued to visit Issan and finish their house as well as stay in Pattaya and enjoy the beach there. Sam made a trip to the Cambodian border at one point to renew his visa but finally applied for a one year retirement visa so that he could stay in the country without making regular trips to the borders.

## Move to Hawaii - living in Oahu

Though Sam enjoyed so many things about his life while living in Thailand for several years, gradually his body seemed to have developed a very low resistance to a number of pathogens in the humid tropical environments in that part of the world.

In November of 2007, Sam developed a cold which turned into bronchitis. For several days, though a doctor was treating him, Sam didn't seem to be getting better. Made worse was the ongoing problem of poor air quality in the city of Pattaya plus exposure to the various diesel gases that were common there. That combined with burning of trash and other items finally took their toll. One day, Sam talked to the doctor about whether he should return to Hawaii. The doctor agreed it was desirable as long as he was well enough to travel. After some thought, a round trip plane ticket were purchased on China Air, bags were packed and Khun Ae, the driver Sam chose to catch a flight. This time the couple didn't stay in Bangkok, but found a hotel not far from the new airport. The night before the flight, Sam wasn't feeling that well. Never-the-less, he had some good Thai food at the hotel, slept early and well. Khan and Sam took a taxi to the airport the next morning where Sam bid farewell. The 14 hour flight went fine! Sam had a great seat, good food and lots of rest.

Arriving in Honolulu on Thanksgiving morning November 22, 2007, for Sam, it was like coming home again! Jim Metz, Sam's friend, had already been called and met Sam at the Honolulu International Airport. Sam felt so nice to be back in Hawaii again with the fresher air and more relaxing surroundings. Jim Metz had offered Sam a place to stay in his apartment on Makiki Street and had already shared with him by phone from Thailand about his health problems. He had told Jim that with his acute bronchitis, he felt that he could have even died there in Pattaya if it turned to Pneumonia.

Sam was invited by Jim to go along to a Thanksgiving dinner that evening and by the next day Sam was already feeling much better. After several days of good health and getting his strength back, Sam decided that he didn't want to return to Thailand. He called Gan long distance and the two of them discussed her traveling to Hawaii to stay in Honolulu with Sam. One of the things discussed, among many, was the fact that both Sam and Gan were covered by Sam's medical plan in the state.

After the plans were firmed, it meant a lot of work for Gan on the Thailand side. She had to terminate the rent of the apartment in Pattaya after three years and move all belongings to their house in northeast Thailand. Luckily brother-in-law Adoon drove down, loaded them in his pickup and moved everything to Issan. Meanwhile the kids were to have to adjust to not having their mom close to them in Pattaya. Since the kids were born, Gan had always lived in Thailand and worked so, although the children might be apart from their mom for long periods of time when they were staying with their dad, mom was still not that far away and communicated by phone. Now mom would be leaving Thailand to live in Hawaii with Uncle Sam.

On the Hawaii side, Sam was about to begin a search for housing when he saw an old friend go by Jim's apartment where Sam was staying at Punahou Terrace in Makiki. It turned out that the old friend was Fred Dodge and he owned a one bedroom apartment. Sam and Fred had met in the 80's when they were both active in the peace movement during the Reagan/Bush years. Now Fred offered to show the apartment to Sam. He looked at it and immediately asked if he could rent it! Sam moved out of Jim's apartment a few days later.

Meanwhile, in Thailand, Gan had moved their belongings to their house in the northeast and arranged her ticket to Hawaii. She came to Hawaii on a tourist visa but the two made plans for her to apply for a Green Card after arrival in Hawaii.

Gan arrived at 6:00 A.M. on December 16, 2007. Jim and Sam picked her up at the airport. After driving to Makiki Street, Gan disembarked, looked at the apartment and loved it. After a rest in the daytime, both of them attended a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Party that evening at Banyan Tree Plaza just

walking distance from their new apartment. The two of them were so happy to be with each other in Oahu as planned!

The first few days after Gan's arrival were busy because of the unpacking and settling in, going to Chinatown and introducing Gan to the city. It was the beginning of the Christmas and New Year holidays. One highlight for them happened early on with a chance meeting in Chinatown of Sam and Watana, a friend from Hilo. Sam and Gan were told by Watana that she was married to Allan Dougherty whom Sam had not met. The couple used to live in Opiikau, Hawaii where they farmed for many years. Later, on Christmas Day, Gan and Sam decided to go to Queen's Surf next to Waikiki and fronting the zoo. They were surprised to meet Sam's old friend Mac (Sombat) from Hilo and her two daughters. Watana came also and all had a great time. Sam and Khan would later become good friends with Watana and Allan, whose daughter Kathy had lived near where Sam lived in Keaukaha, Hilo and whose daughter-in-law Margie was a friend of Sam's also. Margie was married to Allan's son Mark. December 24 was the couple's first Christmas Eve celebration. They had a small tree and gifts. The next day, Gan and Sam went to Christmas dinner at Allan and Watana Daugherty's home at Diamond Head Ambassador in Waikiki which was very enjoyable!

After the holidays, the two of them took their bikes on the bus to Mokuleia, the northwest part of the island where Sam had rented a cabin on the ocean for New Year's Eve. The Camp Mokuleia venture was a new environment for both of them and, though the cabin was rustic, the ocean view was fantastic! The smell of salt was in the air and big waves continually washed ashore. It was more peaceful with a lot fewer fireworks than in Honolulu! This adventure was a fitting introduction to the ocean environs of Hawaii which are so much different that the flat seas of the Gulf of Thailand and event the waters of the Andeman Sea in the south of Thailand where they had lived for five years. Here in Hawaii the waves were big and the water so blue. There was no industry and development as in Thailand. The air was fresh and clean being in the middle of the Pacific, 2,000 miles from the nearest land mass.

The next morning, after having a good rest and breakfast "Haole style", it was time to return to Honolulu again. Sam and Gan rode their bikes to Waialua caught a shuttle to Haleiwa and bus back to Honolulu.



**Sam and Gan at seaside, Camp Mokuleia on the northwest shore, 2007.**

The weeks from December to April, 2008 were filled with lots of work, fun, adjustments, Gan meeting Sam's friends and learning more about living in Hawaii. The truth is, Gan adjusted very well though she still missed her children in Hawaii, Duang Tip and Sattid. One friend, Luke Jones, took the couple on a one day tour of the island of Oahu so Khan could see the sites. Gan and Sam had first met Luke more than a year before in Pattaya when Luke came to stay in an apartment nearby. Many friends like Dennis Masui were helpful in helping out with household things and going out for picnics at the beach, hiking in the Ko'olau Mountains and going to the beach.

The price of a bus pass was \$40.00 per month each. Then, in mid year, Sam turned 65 and bought a senior pass for \$31.00 per year! Taking the bus is easy because Makiki Street is so centrally located. Places like Waikiki, the University of Hawaii at Manoa, King Street Main Library are all just a short bus ride of 10 to 20 minutes depending on the traffic.

In April, Gan flew to Thailand to visit her children, the rest of the family and to spend some time at their house in the northeast. With a five year multi-entry visa, she had to leave the United States every six months. The new plan was for both Sam and Gan to go to Thailand via China Air in October, 2008



during the kid's school vacation and, at the same time, apply for a permanent resident visa for Gan.

To accomplish this, Gan spent almost two months in Siam while Sam stayed in Honolulu. During this time they missed each other but telephone almost every night using phone cards purchased in Chinatown, Honolulu. Step by step their schedules and plans were being set.

During this time, Sam and Gan lived mostly in Honolulu at their Makiki Street apartment. Living in Honolulu, Gan enrolled at the English as a Second Language School at McKinley High where she met other Thai students and made friends. One of the friends she met was Jaeb Vourlas and her husband Mike, a retired Admiral. Another Thai friend she met at this time was Khun Ad whose husband Jim worked for a gas company in Hawaii. Finally there was Bruce. Born and raised on Oahu, Bruce worked as a patrol officer with the Honolulu Police Department. He is married to Na Li who is Thai. Na Li has two children from her former Thai husband. Our circle of friends includes Richard and Karen Fassler. Richard speaks fluent Thai and served in the Peace Corps for three years in Thailand. Included also was Rudi Mitsche, a German chef by trade, Rudi has a Thai wife in Hua Hin, Thailand. All are a part of a larger Thai community in Honolulu. Many get together for Thai festivals such as the yearly Songkran Festival at Kapiolani Park. Then there are Thai restaurants to go to as well as hikes, meetings at the beach and other activities.

## The Mountains of Virginia

In June, 2008, Gan and Sam were able to take a Nebraska trip, staying in the U. S. for two months. It was an exciting trip, flying directly on Northwest Air Lines to Minneapolis and catching a small plane to Sioux City where Bill and wife Patti picked the couple up. This was the second trip for the two and both felt it was so nice to be back in the Winside house again! Almost immediately, discussions began on going to Virginia. Bill, Patti and Caroline had driven to the Appalachians just a week or so after Sam and Gan arrived. Another Northwest flight was booked, this time via Detroit to Charlotte, North Carolina. A smooth flight brought Charlotte. From there it was a rental car and off for a three hour drive north to Galax, Virginia via Mount Airy, North Carolina. Mount Airy was the sight of a 60's-70's TV show but was also where two twins from Thailand, born connected at the hip, spent most of their lives. The two came here to retire after touring with the Barnum and Bailey Circus. Each of them married and had many children leading to the Bunker reunion still held every year here.



[Chang and Eng Bunker - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

Finally, after a long day, the couple made Galax. Stopping for a hot plate to take with them for cooking, Sam immediately got lost trying to get to Spring Valley Road. After the sun set, it was even more difficult but, finally the two arrived about 9:00. Bill and Patti were staying in the front house and had been wondering what had taken them so long!

The next ten days found Sam and Gan really enjoying the cabin.



**Gan standing in front of the Virginia cabin with Iron Mountain in the background, June, 2008.**

The highlight of their stay in Southwest Virginia was centered on the cabin. The structure was owned and occupied by Grandpa Jonse and Grandma Lena Burris. For a brief few years in the late 80's and early 90's, the cabin was occupied by Cliff's brother Uncle Ross and his wife Auntie Helen Burris. When they moved out, the property was sold and became vacant for a few years. Finally, in 1993, Sam's brother Ron Burris and his wife Dee purchased the land and cabin one weekend on a phone hookup from Alaska. Presently, Ron and Dee typically visit twice a year, in the spring and then later, in the fall. There is no indoor toilet or bathroom in the cabin. Baths are taken in a metal tub and the water is thrown outside. There is an outhouse in the back that is the only toilet. The cabin has two rooms. The downstairs room serves as kitchen and living room and the upstairs serves as the bedroom with a room used as a closet and for storage.



**L-R: Patti Burris, Virginia and Warren Holtgrew, Bill and Sam Burris, 2008.**

After the 10 days spent in the cabin, *Sam felt that it indeed was his "soul home"*. Bill and Patti stayed in the Garlie Burris house. Good friends and neighbors, Walter and Mary (Phillips) Dobson, lived right across the road. They were neighbors years ago to Grandpa and Grandma Burris since the land has been in the Phillips family for many years.

During their stay, cousin Eldon Burris and wife Carol came to visit Sam and Gan. Virginia and Warren Holtgrew, Patti's parents also came from Galax. Eventually, when Decoration Day arrived, Cousin Ruth (Jackson) Bova and Ann (Jackson) Whitlock traveled from their homes in Roanoke.

Although the nearby Jerusalem Church is no longer having regular services, a service is conducted for Decoration Day, when descendents come to place flowers on graves. A big highlight is the pot luck in the community building next to the church. Wow, good Virginia food was enjoyed by all! For the occasion, Charles Jackson and children Barbara from Stanton and Bob from came all the way from Winside, Nebraska. Bill and Jane (Jackson) Tibbs drove up from Florida. It should be noted that Sam already has his tombstone up on the far end of the graveyard near his Uncle Sam and Aunt Grace (Burris) Atkins and Evelyn.



**A group photo of the Jackson-Burris clan for Decoration Day at Jerusalem Church of Spring Valley. L-R: Don and Jane Tibbs, Warren and Virginia Holtgrew, Bill and Patti Burris (behind), Ruth Bova, Barbara and Bob Jackson with Charles, Sam and Gan Burris, Bud Phillips, Della Holtgrew and Ann Whitlock in June, 2008.**

Sam and Gan spent their time driving around to see the sights which included Elk Creek where father Clifton graduated from high school and Independence with the museum and library. Just being in the Appalachian Mountains and all of the beauty was wonderful. A tour of the former Albert and Viola Jackson home was also fun. It wasn't long until it was time to depart for Charlotte for the flight to Omaha via Detroit. The trip surely left a lasting impression on both Sam and Gan who hope to return as often as they can!

## Six Weeks in Northeast Nebraska

Back in the Winside house again, Sam and Gan spent a very relaxing time visiting friends and relatives, sightseeing and working on the house and lawn on Main Street.

One highlight was Gan's birthday, June 26, 2008 when she got a special card from husband. Of course Mulberry season was going, a favorite time for Gan. All the trees around were full of berries and Gan had purple fingers for several days. The couple even drove to the Ron Burris farm northeast of Winside to pick. A special treat was traveling to the nearby town of Wayne to visit Raymond and Mabel Peterson. Mabel and Raymond were always very good friends of Sam's parents. When Sam and Gan visited, Mabel served apple pie, ice cream, coffee and chocolate chip cookies!! Yum-m-m-m.



**Sam with Raymond and Mabel Peterson in their living room in Wayne, Nebraska, 2008.**

The fourth of July was a big day as it marked the birthday of Sam's mom Elsa who was born July 4, 1914. That day, Sam and Gan went to the nearby town of Hoskins for a pancake feed in the Hoskins Fireman's Hall. Later the same day, they visited Lucille Krause on her farm outside Hoskins. Lucille's daughter Linda was the first wife of brother Ron Burris. Lucille, at that time,

lived out on her farm by herself as her husband Gilbert having passed away many years ago.



**Sam with Lucille Krause in the living room of her farm house near Hoskins, 2008.**

That evening was a party at the Randall and Connie Bargstadt home where food and drink were had followed by fireworks. Most of those who attended the party were friends of Sam going way back to elementary school days. The host, Randall, attended elementary school with Sam back in the 1950's. Dean Mann, Dale Jaeger, Ernie Jaeger and Sam attended St. Paul's Lutheran Church during their youth.

Ernie's wife Diane (Miller) Jaeger at first live in Win side with her parents, then moved to Norfolk and then back to Win side again when she married. Also at the dinner were Mickey and Sue Topp. The Topp family was friends of the Burris family going back to the 1930's. Mickey's father Albert was a good friend to Cliff as was his brother Herman. Their father Pete Topp owned the land Cliff and Elsa Burris farmed at the time Sam and Ron were born.

With their visiting time nearly over, it was soon time to take the drive to Sioux City. From there, they caught a small plane to Minneapolis. From there was a direct flight to Honolulu. Both Gan and Sam really enjoyed their stay, not only visiting many people and traveling around but also doing work on the house and lawn in Winside.



Left to Right: Dean Mann, Sam and Ernie Jaeger. Between Sam and Ernie in the background is Randall Bargstadt's son Jason. The men are sitting outside in the garage on the Fourth of July, 2008.



Wives who attended the Fourth of July party at the Randall Bargstadt farm south of Winside, Nebraska. L-R: Georgiana Jensen, Connie Oberle, Cheryl Mann, Mrs. Dale (Ruth) Jaeger, Connie Bargstadt, Diane Jaeger, Gail Jaeger, Mrs. Mick (Sue)Topp and unknown, 2008.

**Hawaii and Thailand**

Coming back, Sam and Gan continued to live in their apartment in Makiki located just "make" (north) of Ala Moana Shopping Center in Honolulu. Luckily, Gan was able to enroll in a Massage School and at the same time earn some money doing her practicum in training as a massage therapist. She found out about the school from her friend Pim who at that time had enrolled in the school, but could no longer work as a masseuse due to a shoulder injury she acquired. Her teacher at the time was Mai who owned Mai Thai Massage on the 38<sup>th</sup> floor of Century Center.

Gan is certified in Thai massage, having graduated from the Wat Po Massage School in Bangkok. Wat Po is the best massage school in Thailand but that license doesn't allow her to practice her work in Hawaii. Gan entered the school took the classes and qualified. Because of her heavier work schedule and travels back and forth to Thailand, Gan decided to drop her ESL class at McKinley High School.

## Living in Two Different worlds

For various reasons, the subject of Gan's two children, Duang Tip and Satid were discussed. It was decided to work through immigration so that they also could join Sam and Gan in Hawaii. That way they could attend school, work and learn English while at the same time being near their mom.

The next year and a half, roughly mid 2008 through 2010, the couple worked with immigration in both Honolulu and Thailand to accomplish this. The final decision was to do the processing in Thailand since, if they were approved, they would arrive in Hawaii and get Green Cards that would be good for 10 years and then renewable. For this period of time, Sam and Gan went between Hawaii and Thailand...living in two different worlds.

When in Thailand, they lived in their house in the northeast most of the time, only going to Pattaya where they still had their apartment. At the same time, the two kids, Duang Tip and Satid, continued to live in Naklua, a section of Pattaya, and attend private schools.



## Duang Tip and Satid Arrive in Hawaii

In February, 2010, Duang Tip and Satid had their interview at the United States Consulate on Wireless Road in Bangkok. Sam had flown to Hawaii already while Gan stayed back in Thailand to work with organizing the family's journey to Honolulu. On March 4, 2010, Sam and his friend Jim Metz with one car and Dick Bowen driving another, picked the kids up at the Honolulu International Airport and brought them back to Makiki.

For the first three months, the children stayed with Sam and Gan in the Punahou Terrace apartment before an apartment was rented for them at the Oahuan, a similar complex just around the corner a half block away. Duang Tip enrolled in an English As A Second Language class at McKinley High School until she started working at Honolulu School of Massage. Meanwhile, Satid enrolled at Stevenson Middle School in Makiki for about three months and then graduated.

As mentioned previously, it was decided that Duang Tip and Satid would move into their own place. The Oahuan, condo units built by the same builder who did Punahou Terrace, had an apartment available.

## Living on Oahu

Sam continues his retirement in Honolulu while Gan and Duang Tip worked and Satid went to high school. Sam's time was spent in writing as well doing work as a volunteer at Hawaii Nature Center in the Koolau Mountains just above where they live. Sam rode his bike there about three times a week and worked at the trail head site doing gardening as a volunteer. Equipment was provided by the Hawaii Nature Center.

There were also a number of social gatherings going on in their lives including meeting friends at the beach. This generally happens on a regular basis every Sunday morning. A variety of friends often come including Rudy Mitsche, Richard and Karen Fassler, Allan Daugherty and others like Larry Test, his old friend from Hilo.

There were also a few friends who come in and out of Oahu that Sam got together. They include Ron Gordon, professor at the University of Hawaii Hilo, Luke Jones who was, and is, retired in Chiangmai, Thailand. Dick Bowen had recently retired from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. There were also several folks, including returned Peace Corps Volunteers he stayed in touch with as well as "war corps" friends like Ron Suing and his wife Barb and Learthen Dorcey. Both of them served with him in U. S. Army during the 60's in Korea.



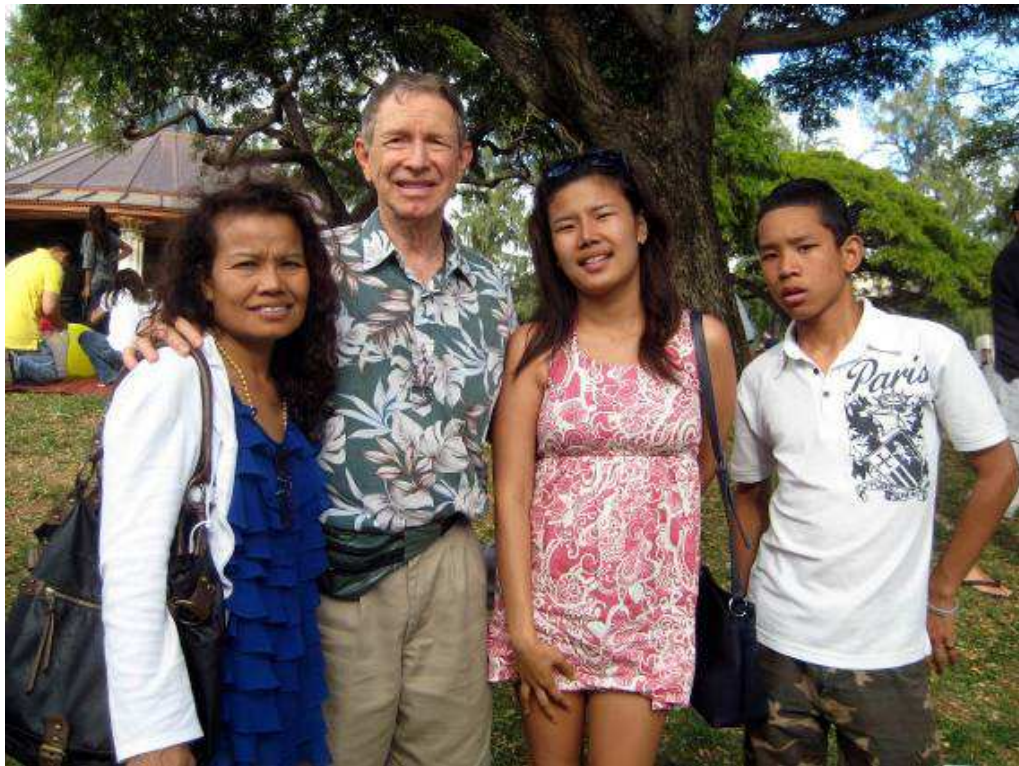
**Allan Daugherty, Jonathan and Sam at Queen's Surf Beach, a Sunday morning meeting place in Waikiki, 2010-2011.**

Sometimes Sam and Gan went out to eat with their friends or visited homes of friends such as Mike and Jeab Vourlas. Because Gan did massage, the two would go to the home of Allan and Watana Daugherty at their Diamond Head Ambassador Condominium on the ocean in Waikiki. Usually after Alan has his massage, the four of them would all have Thai food and sometimes wine. Then they watch the sunset which is especially good from their location on the shoreline.



**Watana, Alan, Richard Fassler, Gan and Sam, Aug 14, 2010 birthday**

During the day time, Sam did quite a bit of writing and visited friends at the University of Hawaii at Manoa as well as going to the library. He continued to have interests in Samoa and often stopped to see his friend John Mayer who is still chairman of the Samoan Department at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He is also head of the Linguistics Department. Sam and Gan used to love to walk on Punahou School campus just three blocks from the home on Makiki Street and go to Makiki Park just a half block away Sam also belonged to the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer organizations on Oahu. The couple saw movies sometimes and Sam did "bus/bike". His transportation on Oahu only costs \$30.00 a year for retirees like himself who preferred public transport. Also the buses in Honolulu have bike racks on the front, so Sam put his bike on the rack, traveled to a place and took it off, riding away!



**Gan, Sam, Duang Tip and Satid at the 2010 Songkran Thai Festival at Kapiolani Park in Waikiki.**

As for travel, Sam and Gan once spent a week in Hilo, staying on Haili Street at the Hilo home of Allan and Watana Daugherty. Visiting Hilo gave Gan a chance to see where Sam spent 11 years during the 1980's - 90's. One night was spent in Volcano village and the other nights at the Daugherty home on Haili Street in Hilo. The first day allowed Gan to see the wonders of Kilauea Crater and the volcano, all at 4,000 feet elevation. She also met a number of Sam's old friends who lived on the Big Island. Sam himself hadn't been back to the Big Island in nine years so it was a chance for him to renew old acquaintances plus both he and Gan enjoyed Puna and the Opihikau community where Wantana's daughter and family still reside. The couple walked out over new lava to the edge of the Pacific Ocean at Kalapana. Here a real feeling of raw nature prevailed as the salt air and wind consumed them as they viewed the large white caps rolling into the relatively recent black sand beach.



**Sam and Gan at the new black sand lava beach formed from the Pu'u O'o flow over Kalapana, Hawaii Island, August, 2010.**

## Life Changes

Sam meanwhile liked to go to Chinatown and visit with his friends Flo and Jim Ho who ran the Chinatown Museum there. Jim is World War II veteran and retired professor from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He also had lunch every Tuesday at the Honolulu Academy of Arts with his friends Valdo and Francis Viglielmo. Valdo is Italian and a retired professor from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The three have been friends for more than 20's years since their peace activist days back in the 80's and 90's.

Though not really active in politics today, Sam still stayed in touch with many of the elected officials on some issues. He was a member, but not too active in the Democratic Party at the time

Duang Tip celebrated her 22 birthday in 2010. What an event it was with so many of her friends and of course, her family present. The party has marked a milestone in their lives and Sam was hoping that the future would be as bright as it was that day.

## DIVORCE



**The court yard of Punahou Terrace, the apartment complex Sam and Gan lived in from 2007 to 2013. Their apartment was on the ground floor just to the right and can be seen behind the small bush.**

Sam and Gan were able to rent for a reasonable price, their ground floor one bedroom apartment from Doctor Fred Dodge, an old friend of Sam's. It came about because Sam was staying with his friend Jim Metz in 2007 when he saw Fred go by. He went out and talked to him, found out the apartment was for rent, and that was that. Sam called Gan and both agreed Gan would come over and relocate to Hawaii



**Photo shows the pool and some units at Punahou Terrace in Makiki, Honolulu.**

**After facing the unexpected problems that developed, difficulties in marriage for Sam and Gan occurred, hardships that they did not see coming.**

**When only Gan came to Hawaii, it was no problem because the relationship was the same only in Honolulu, not Thailand.**

**When the two children came, Duang Tip age 18 and Satid age 13, extra pressure was put on all. The couple lived in a one bedroom apartment at that time, large for normal size in Makiki but not big enough for four. Instead of looking for larger and more expensive housing, Gan and Sam decided to have a separate apartment for the two kids, as was done in Pattaya. As a result, an apartment was rented just around the corner. After a time, the apartment owner changed and the kids were forced to move out. By their choice, the kids and Gan picked an apartment 6 blocks away. This brought stress to the family given the extra time and effort Gan now had to use to take care of the kids. Another issue was money. It had been agreed that Gan and Sam would both have to work but the division of cash was not acceptable to Gan who wanted more money. Gan was now to pay rent for the two kids with Duang Tip getting a job so there was two working to pay the rent for the kids.**



**Century Center located on Kalakaua Street in Honolulu. The building where Gan and Duang Tip both attended massage school and worked as massage therapists.**

All still might have worked but for some unexpected events. Both Gan and Duang Tip were working as massage therapists. Both had licenses in Thailand but neither, in the beginning, had. This was somewhat common in the city at the time. Duang Tip finally earned her certificate but Gan had been unable to pass. All these things were behaviors causing stress. Sam had realized too that he really couldn't support the three of them on the retirement money he had and Gan began to realize that too.

Though Sam stuck by Gan all the way in a court case she had and helped with Duang Tip as well as helping Satid in several things involving Roosevelt High School, (where Sam knew the School Counselor) the situation had grown beyond them. During these years prior, Sam could feel the situation slipping but was unable to arrange counseling or any other solution to the problems.

The stress and lack of ability to solve problems appropriately ended when Sam told Gan to move out of the apartment in 2012. Gan moved out and did not return as Sam had thought she would. Instead, she stayed with her children in their apartment.

Sam began to busy himself working as a volunteer for the State of Hawaii at Nature Center in Makiki. He also authored a book about his relatives in Virginia which meant two trips to Virginia and Nebraska as well as three trips to Washington State to visit friends and relatives. He finally published the book in 2012 through Wallgreens.com. The book is titled: *"View from Briar Patch: A Burris Family of Grayson County"*.

Sam's book dealt with the history of the Burris side of the family and their movements in the 1800's and 1900's. Rather than expect people to order by Net, Sam spent monies of his own, sending copies too many of his relatives as well as to the Fries, Galax and Independence libraries in Virginia.

The next book, completed in 2015, was also published under Wallgreens.com. The title is "House with a Stone Wall". The book explores the history of the former Garlie Burris house, located near the highway in front of his grandpa Jonse Burris cabin. He got lots of help from his relatives in Virginia and Pennsylvania as well as Mary Dotson, former neighbor across highway 805 from the home.

Despite some of his accomplishments during those days, Sam's life was really in a state of confusion. He had to face up to the fact that his marriage had failed and that his house, built in Kalasin, Issan, Thailand may never be his to live in again. His behavior was that of going from one place to another, one country to another, trying to find peace and plus how and where he would be living. He was certified with depression by a psychiatrist in Honolulu but wasn't getting the help he needed.

In December, 2012, Sam had an invitation to visit the Leong Family in Singapore to celebrate Mary Leong's 80th birthday. What was amazing is that Sam arranged his ticket to arrive exactly on time for the birthday party! He

was able to give directions in Chinese to the taxi driver, bringing them right to the house! Sam had written Mary's life story many years before and that was part of a book given to Mary by son David.

Before Singapore, Sam had stopped by in the Philippines on the way. He later flew to Thailand as well, residing in Pattaya condo. This was followed by some trips back and forth between Hawaii and Pattaya. On one trip, he moved out of his apartment on Makiki Street, staying on Dominis Street for some time until he finally gave up that apartment as well.



Pictured are Mary Leong and her grandchildren. She is celebrating her 80 birthday party at home in Bedok South, Singapore.

## **Moving to Pattaya, Thailand**



Photo of the city of Pattaya, Thailand from Pattaya Hill.



By May 29, 2014, Sam, now living in Pattaya, Thailand, was hosting his long time friend Ron Gordon who was visiting from Hilo, Hawaii. He and Sam had been friends since 1986, when they lived as neighbors on the seventh floor of Mauna Loa Shores condominium in Keaukaha, Hilo, Hawaii.

Sam suggested to his friend Ron that they eat at Pattaya Garden that evening and then enjoy dancing at the Bamboo Bar nearby. After eating at the Garden, the two of them went to the Bamboo. After a couple of dances, Sam was sweating and decided to get cool under the air conditioning in the back of the bar. That was when he met Emmi Suksipanao. They spent the rest of the evening enjoying each other's company and dancing.

After their meeting at the Bamboo Bar, Sam and Emmi struck up a relationship. Emmi soon moved out of the apartment where she was living in another part of Pattaya and in with Sam at Soi 5 Apartments. By coincidence, Sam's friend Ron Gordon also met his future wife, Vitlai, at the Bamboo the same night. The two couples did return to the Bamboo Bar after that but only now and then. Because Sam had a severe hearing problem which since the late 90's had bothered him if there were loud noises. This hearing problem, which he suffered due to an explosion in the military in South Korea, was a big factor in his retiring from the position he held with the Hawaii State Department of Education early in 2001.



**A typical evening at the Bamboo Bar.**



**Emmi and Sam at Pattaya Garden, Gulf of Thailand.**

After a couple of months living together on Soi 5 in Pattaya, Emmi and Sam decided to move out of the small apartment.

There were some very good things about Soi 5. It was close to Pattaya Beach and also near Big C Shopping Center. On the other hand, lots of construction started in the area and dust in the air became an issue.

They had been looking around and soon found the View Talay 5C condo located in Jom Tien, a smaller city joined to Pattaya. This meant a whole new life for them as initially, they lived on the eighth floor with a patio and nice view of Koh Larn Island and the Gulf of Thailand. The condo was bigger than the old apartment and Emmi could cook since there was a kitchen. In addition, the condo had two 50 meter pools which both of them really enjoyed.

Because they were now further away from Pattaya, Sam helped Emmi by paying for her motorcycle to be moved from her home village of Chakalak near Korat. That meant Emmi had transportation and could do the shopping much easier. Sam still only had his bike.

Sam decided eventually not to ride with Emmi on her motorcycle due to dangers but the public transportation in the form of the, "Songtao" or pickup. The system had passengers that rode back and forth for only 10 baht or about 30 cents per ride.

For the first ten months of their stay in View Talay, they resided on eighth floor. Though it was so much better than their former Soi 5 Pattaya apartment, it was still a bit noisy and the air was sometimes a problem along with one neighbor. Finally there was an opportunity to move to the 19, and finally the 20 floor, far away from noise and pollution or even mosquitoes!



## The Gulf of Thailand as seen from the eighth floor of View Talay Condominium.

As mentioned earlier, both Sam and his friend Ron Gordon from Hilo met their ladies on the same night. Sam, living in Thailand at the time, was able to stay together with Emmi and eventually end up in Jom Tien at the View Talay 5C unit where they lived.

Ron and Vitlai however had a different story since Ron was and was still working at the University of Hawaii at Hilo where he is chairman of the Communications Department. That meant that he had to leave Vitlai and for the next nine months, they had to communicate mostly using SKYPE. Ron returned to Thailand in June, 2015 and the two were together in their own condo just one floor from Sam and Emmi. After moving to View Talay seven, Ron and Vitlai married. He stayed until December 9, 2015 when he flew back to Hilo for the second semester teaching in the Communications Department. He returned again in May, 2016 and by August, still had not processed to bring his wife to Hawaii. December was their new goal.

After moving to Jom Tien from Pattaya, Emmi and Sam found their life a lot more pleasant. Their condo was a 24 story building so it was a big change from the crowds Pattaya city. The US\$460.00 paid for the furnished place was affordable and there were two condos, two swimming pools and two restaurants. It seemed to them so much more pleasant than the Soi 5 Apartments in Pattaya.



**EMMI AND SAM AT CHINESE GARDEN ON PATTAYA HILL, 2014**

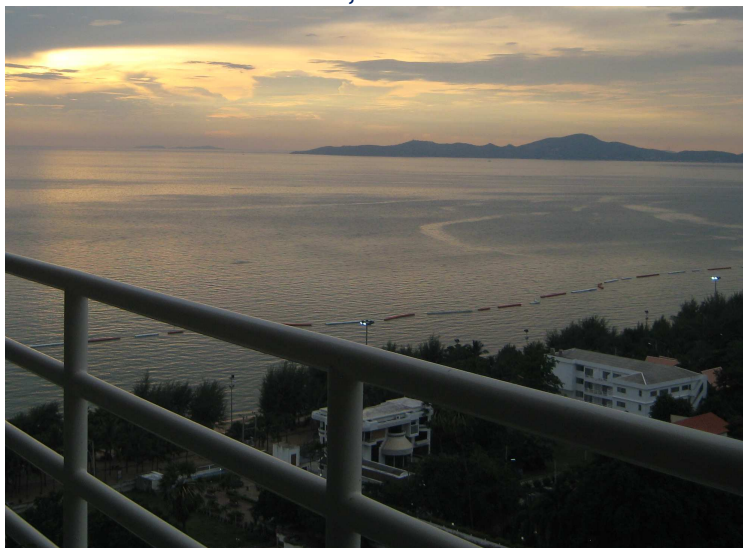


**As of this writing, Sam and Emmi have been together for more than three years now.**

They continue to stay, enjoying their condo in View Talay 5C. Their condo is just the right size for them and is in "old Thai style. Inside are a number of carved wooden elephants, Buddhist wall hangings and other pieces in the unit. That includes the floor of wood and the ceiling of the patio.



With the beach in front and mini-marts in the two buildings, trees and flowers all around all year around, it is a difficult place to leave. We find that after 6:00 pm, the beaches are empty and quiet. Often there are cool breezes blowing and with the island in the Gulf such as Koh Larn, it can be marvelous!



**Of course now, the view from their 20 floor patio (lanai) is wonderful. Sam enjoys sitting in his soft chair and having his fruit shake in the morning. The two would often take in the view at sunset.**



**View Talay Condo five is in the background on the left.**

**There are lots of sports available for residents. At first Emmi and Sam swam every day in one pool or another, went to the beach a lot and Emmi jogged. Now Sam rides his bike, does his yoga, stretches and both of them enjoy do the Hula Hoop.**



**Emmi does hula hoop near the pool.**

## **BUILDING A HOME IN THE VILLAGE**

In early 2016, Emmi and Sam were able to plan to have a house built in Emmi's home village of Chakalat, Karat. For many years, the family lacked a house, living mostly in a hovel. Once, the project began, Emmi was the one who went back and forth to her village in Korat and then back to Jom Tien. Sam had built a house in Kalasin Province near the Mekong River when married to Gan so he didn't want to take an active part. Sam therefore stayed in Jom Tien and, though talking often with Emmi, she was the one heading up the building of it along with a lot of help from her oldest son Toi and others. The project was completed in just over two month's time.



**Emmi and youngest son Taw at the house in Issan.**

Emmi knew the four men from her village whom she hired and, once the dump trucks built up the site with loads of soil early the previous year, the ground was settled and off they went. The house is a small two bedroom affair built on land that Emmi got from the family so the land was clear and the house paid for.

Sam and Emmi both went to the village and stayed for 10 days working on the grounds along with her older brother who is a farmer in the area. The project was good for the family as the brothers and sisters got involved in the work and neighbors encouraged the project knowing the family's need for housing. Of course the status of Emmi's family also rose in the eyes of the village as well! One of the best things is that Emmi's mama loves sleeping every night in her new home.





**EMMI AND SAM BUILT THIS HOUSE IN CHAKALAT, ISSAN, JUST A 30 MINUTE DRIVE FROM THE CITY OF KORAT. THE HOUSE WAS FINISHED IN AUGUST, 2016. AS OF THIS WRITING, THE HOUSE IS OCCUPIED BY EMMI'S MOTHER, JATLEO, EMMI'S TWO SONS, TOI AND TAW AND FINALLY EMMI'S NIECE AI. EMMI AND SAM SPEND MOST OF THEIR TIME RESIDING IN THEIR CONDO IN JOM TIEN NEAR PATTAYA.**



**VIEW OF THE ISSAN HOUSE FROM THE ROAD.**

# ADDENDUM

## Hobbies and Life Activities

### Baseball



Sports were a major part of Sam's life from childhood. As a youngster of four or five, recalls games at Pilger Park diamond when his dad was playing softball and he sat on the grass near the family car. Later Sam attended Pilger Town Team games when players like Bob Cornell and Ernie Wolfe played. It was an exciting time. Once he was sitting higher up in the seats behind home plate with his dad, watching a game, when Sam took a tumble and fell down underneath the stands! He was very frightened but not hurt!

During family visits or after picnics, the Sam, with second brother Ron, cousins and friends would often play catch or hit fly balls.

Already mentioned was the Pilger Midget Team coached by Vernon Putz. On the team with Sam and Ron were cousins Loren Burris and Dave Dohren as well as friend Dale Topp. Home games were at Pilger Field.

When the family moved to Winside, neither Sam nor his brother Ron wanted to move away. They missed their baseball team so much that during their first summer in Winside, Cliff still drove 15 miles so the two boys could practice and play with the Pilger Midgets.

Later, Sam played on the Winside team and the players wore real baseball uniforms. Both Ron and Sam put on the uniforms and enjoyed playing. Sam recalls a ball game one Sunday afternoon on the Winside diamond when, late in the game, he hit a fly ball just over the short stops head driving in the winning run against Pilger. Though his parents weren't there, busy hosting a picnic at the farm, he was really happy!

It should be mentioned that Sam was also a big collector of Topp's Baseball and football cards and accumulated over 500 cards of various players and team cards during his youth from elementary school through high school. Most of his cards were purchased at Troutman's Store in Winside where each card cost

one cent. Inside the packet was a square of pink bubble gum and one baseball card. The buyer wouldn't know which player was on the card until they opened it. Many kids had doubles of players, encouraging trading with other kids. Those pink pieces of bubble gum inside the pack made a big "wad" in many kids' cheeks since the boys tried to imitate tobacco chewing professional players! When Sam, first a Winside midget and later a legion player, those pieces of gum were probably responsible for a few cavities in lots of players teeth! Sam used to put all his bubble gum in a yellow plastic pouch which said "Black Mariah" on it. Sam had brought the pouch back from one of the family's visits to Virginia.

The baseball cards collected were in color and on the flip side were all the statistics of the player and a few sentences about their career. In later years, that same card that kids used to stick in their bicycles to make clicking sounds when the wheels turned now may be worth hundreds or thousands of dollars to a collector. Whole catalogs are now built around baseball card collecting.

So what happened to Sam's collection of over 500 cards? Sad to say, when he came back from the army in 1966, Sam decided to "clean out his room" and ended up tossing out the cards. Actually worse than tossing out, he threw them all in the old burning barrel his parents had out in the trees! Many years later, Sam talked to Dwight Troutman, one of the Winside "town Kids" that he traded with. He was asking Dwight if he still had any of his old baseball cards. When Dwight said, "yes", Sam asked where and Dwight replied, "In a bank vault in Omaha".

Later Sam played with the Winside Legion Team for kids age 15 and older. His position was either first base or outfield. He played with Bill Ditman, Roger Bargstadt, Dick Ditman, Dennis Bowers, Gary Bowers, Doug and Roger Hill, Rodney Hilpert and others. The first coach was Bob Ditman but later Lawrence Retzlaff the Winside High School Principal took over. The principal's two children, twins Ronnie and Donnie Retzlaff, also played. Alvin Bargstadt a neighbor often umpired. One memory Sam had was being hit in the right leg with a fast ball thrown by Meryl Strudoff when Winside played Pilger at Pilger diamond. Sam got a walk to first base but a painful one. Several years later, after cousin Milan Frerich's funeral in Pilger, Sam mentioned that incident when chatting with Meryl at Shirley Topp's home in the village of Pilger. Winside also played Stanton, Wisner, Pierce, Wayne, Pender and other teams around the area. Van Stekelberg, later a player for Wayne State College, was an example of one of the excellent athletes from Stanton and the surrounding area.

Sam's interest in baseball included watching Saturday and Sunday professional games on television and of course the World Series games. He also listened to games on radio at night during the 50's and 60's as well as collecting baseball

cards. The main team he listened to was the Kansas City Athletics. When a player came into the lineup, if he had that card, he would pull a baseball card out and lay it on the carpet until he had a whole string of players from both teams.

## Early Romance

As is true of many people, Sam's life has consisted of ongoing relationships with members of the opposite sex which has led him to the heights of joy and pleasure to the depths of sadness and even depression plus everything in between. In the end though, Sam says he found his dating and marriage periods one of the most enjoyable in his life.

His first girl "friend" was as a second grader in District #25, Stanton County Nebraska. Her name was Janette Roe. Sam and Janette used to hold hands at recess and sometimes even sneak behind the girl's outdoor toilet and hug each other (why did they feel they had to sneak?). All the kids played together at recess and after lunch. It was a time of curiosity and adventure for little kids and being together was part of their learning to play in the process of growing up.

After his family moved from Pilger in Stanton County north 15 miles to a farm near Winside in Wayne County Nebraska, Sam was involved in lots of sports, having fun at many levels but girls weren't at the top. Yes, Sam joined in games like spin the bottle and kissed the girls or the girls kissed him (the lights would be turned out first), but romance or a sense of it wasn't yet his to have. It was later, when he became a freshman at Winside High School that kids had parties, gatherings and even "strip poker" was played. It was a bold attempt to be liberal for that time, but no one ever took off their clothes completely!

Formal dating didn't come into Sam's life until he was a senior in high school because he was slow to mature. As a freshman, he was the smallest kid in the class, including the girls. Despite this, Sam would have crushes on some of the girls, especially the cheerleaders. This was mostly day dreaming because physically, mentally and emotionally, he certainly wasn't "there yet". For example, he first ran around with a "gang" of kids in his class including Ralph Libengood, Carol Jaeger, Roger Bargstadt, and Mary Jaeger. Carol was a cheer leader and Sam had a "crush" on her but it was never to be.

*Sam's first real date* was when he was a senior and went out with June Falk, who was a sophomore cheerleader and sister of Jim Falk from Hoskins. The year before, 1959-1960, the Hoskins High School was closed and the pupils were "consolidated" into the Winside system. Brother Ron Burris, then a sophomore was dating another Hoskins girl, Sandra Wockman who was also a

cheerleader. Most of the dating was spent going to movies in Norfolk and double dating with other couples. Of course there was "parking", when a couple or even two couples would find a secluded road and proceeded to "neck" which was kissing, hugging and other personal acts!

As mentioned in the Norfolk Junior College section, Sam started dating seriously at the beginning of his sophomore year when his roommate, Jim DeBlauw introduced him to Barbara Quady. Sam and Barb were together for a year and a half as a couple who "went steady". That meant that Sam gave Barb his letter sweater to wear which was a symbol of coupling for teenagers at that time. One of Sam's friends, Richard Jaeger, teased Sam and started the nickname, "Minnow muncher" to describe his being a Lutheran and Barb being Catholic. At that time, most protestant students dated protestant and Catholic, Catholic. Barb graduated from Burns (Catholic) High School, Norfolk, Nebraska in 1964. Their relationship ended after Sam was sent overseas to South Korea in 1965 and Barb was a nursing student at Mount Marty College in Yankton, South Dakota.

## Softball

### Soft ball Field in Hoskins, Nebraska

Sam stopped playing baseball at the age of 19 and switched to softball. The team he played with during the summers of 1962 through 1964 was "Richard's Rejects", coached by Richard Jaeger. The game was called "slow pitch" and played under the lights at night. Playing was great fun! Other players on the team were Ron Burris, Dale Jaeger, Kenny Jaeger, Lyle Wittler, Tank Wittler, Randall Bargstadt and Dean Jaeger. Almost all the players were from Winside except for Tank, who was our catcher.

After leaving for the U. S. Army in September 1964, Sam played for the unit softball team while stationed at Red Stone Arsenal, Alabama. Later, as a Peace Corps volunteer in Samoa, he played on the Peace Corps team coached by Ron Lubcher, who was the pitcher. The Peace Corps players organized games with other mostly Apia based teams like the Mormon Team from Pasinga. Most of the players were in their twenties and thirties and there were great rivalries. One game even came to "fist and cuffs" which wasn't befitting the "Peace Corps", but reality!

## Basketball

Sam's favorite sport most of his life was basketball and he played it from very young. The barn on the farm northeast of Winside was big. He and his brother Ron would shoot baskets in the hay loft on the smooth wooden board floor of the second story. The way to the loft was a climb up a wooden ladder. Sam would have been age ten at that time. He suffered from hay fever or allergies as a youngster so playing basketball in a large area full of hay bales with all the dust was a big challenge for him to overcome!

Sometimes neighbor kids would join in shooting baskets too. The strong smell of hay and other materials in the barn mixed in to the atmosphere! Games had to stop when the ball would fall through one of the numbers of open space areas in the loft. Then someone would have to climb down, find the basketball and climb back up when the game would continue again.

About the same time as the hay loft games, in the mid 50's, veterinarian Dr. Noran "Doc" Ditman, the local veterinarian in Winside along with his son Bob, formed a youngster's basketball team and asked if anyone wanted to play. Both Sam and his brother Ron joined. Certainly at that time it is fair to say that Sam was not the best of players despite his "hay loft practice" out on the farm. As he recalls now, Stanley "Butch" Redel, Gary Bowers and others were outstanding players. Butch was the son of John Redel who was the town sheriff. Butch also had two twin brothers, Gary and Larry who played as well. Butch would later be an outstanding player for Winside High School, sporting an unorthodox "two handed shot" that served him well. Sam as a youngster tried to copy Butch's style but failed, contributing to his ability to gain a lot of bench time.

Eventually Sam graduated as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader from Rural School District #57 and entered Winside High School as a freshman. He immediately went out for basketball but, at 98 pounds was small for the sport. Still he enjoyed it a lot. His coach for the first year was Mr. Matz. Practices and games were held in the old Winside Auditorium built by the Civilian Conservation Corps on Main Street in the 1930's. A solid, thick cement structure until today, it has a nice wooden floor with glass back boards. When night games were played during the regular basketball season of the late 50's and early 60's, the screaming was very intense. Cheerleaders dressed in school colors of red and white, twirled, leading the shouts. One would hear, "Red and White, Fight Fight" and "two, four, six, eight, who do we appreciate, our team, our team, our team".

Thanks to his background in basketball, Sam, when he finally got his first teaching job in Vancouver, Washington at McLaughlin Junior High School, was

able to join the faculty men in evening basketball. After two years, he was able to improve his ability in the sport. Later, as a staff member at Hillside Junior High School in Boise, Idaho, he played with the faculty against the students and played often on outdoor courts near where he lived at South Junior High School. Sam also coached the eighth grade girls' basketball team at Hillside.

By the time he reached the Singapore American School on contract in 1978, Sam not only played regularly with the other teachers each week but joined Mike Norman, the SAS basketball coach, on the Singapore Teacher Training College team.

From then on, after returning to Hawaii, Sam always had a basketball in the trunk of his car and often stopped by any court he saw and shot around. The only down side of the sport for him was the injuries over the years which included four stitches under his chin when he was elbowed at Hillside during a faculty game in the gym.

## Volleyball

Sam doesn't recall playing much volleyball as a child but did play some while in P. E. classes at Norfolk Junior College. Later, as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Samoa, the sport was very popular with the people of the South Pacific so games were played at that time.

After moving to Hawaii, Sam played recreational volleyball while in Honolulu during the late 70's and 80's, often during picnics at Kapiolani Park or at the beach. In the mid 90's, he played with Art Whistler and a group of his friends. The games were played on the fifth floor of a condo on University Avenue. The players were on cement and the competition was intense. Though this proved to be an excellent workout for Sam, it was not good for his knees!

## Football

As a youngster, Sam didn't take much of an interest in football until high school. As a junior in 1959-1960, during his junior year, Sam served as a Student Manager for the football team under Coach Paul Krohn, earning a "W" letter and joining the "W" club. As a member, he helped make and sell pop corn in the kitchen of the auditorium during home games to raise money for the school. The following year, as a senior, Sam actually went out for the sport. He stuck out the season as a third string quarterback, mostly playing in practice though put on the field for a couple of plays in only one game.

Luckily, Sam wasn't seriously injured though he certainly got hit hard during many practices! It turned out that Sam's brother Ron Burris, a sophomore on the team, was much better at this sport than Sam!

Sam enjoyed watching football games and traveled to Lincoln one year to see the University of Nebraska play Kansas when Gale Sayers played for that team. Butch Wieble, the Wayne County Sheriff, took the lettermen down to Lincoln, Home of the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

Later, in married life while living in Boise, Sam and wife Linda had regular season tickets for the Boise State Broncos at Bronco Stadium. Of course this interest led Sam to collect professional football cards during the 50's and 60's. These cards, which were very valuable later, were burned by Sam when he came back from the army in South Korea. That was 1966 and, while he was cleaning out his room, he took all the baseball and football cards and burned them out on the farm in the burning barrel. As a result, thousands, even million dollars in cards were gone forever!

## Swimming

From birth to age nine, swimming had little part to play in Sam's life. Cooling off in Virginia swimming holes when the family was on vacation or wading in Humbug Creek northwest of Pilger were limits at a time when that small town of Pilger had not built a public pool.

Things changed when, while living in Winside in the late 50's, Sam' parents decided it would be good for their two boys to learn to swim. Both boys were signed up for swimming lessons which were given at the old YMCA indoor pool in Norfolk, just 18 miles away. Interestingly enough, all the boys in the class for some reason were not allowed to wear swim suits so *everyone was equally nude every Saturday at the "Y"*. It was quite something to see all these young guys swimming and diving! Until today, Sam has never found out why we youngsters weren't allowed to wear swim attire.

Sam's favorite memory wasn't of the pool so much as it was the stop at the Dairy Queen afterwards. He especially liked the vanilla cone with the ice cream dipped in chocolate! Sam learned how to swim and, at an opportune time because in 1957, Pilger built a swimming pool. The pool was donated by a wealthy former resident of the town and Sam was there on opening day, getting his picture along with Dale Topp. It was the one on the front page of the Pilger Herald the following issue. After that, swimming in pools was a regular thing in the summers for the Burris brothers and their friends. Sam later swam at the Wayne Public Pool as well.



When he attended Boise College in 1968, there was an old fraternity house across the street on Warm Springs Avenue and it had a pool in back. Since the property was empty, Sam walked across the street and swam there often. Later, while married to Linda and living in Boise in the early 70's, he learned to water ski on Idaho lakes in the summers. This was possible because Linda's uncle, Frank Eichelberger, had a boat and water skies so the family would often do weekend trips to the mountains.

## Photography and Two Samoas

### Two Samoas: A Cultural Comparison (1997) 15 minutes

Director: Samuel J. Burris

Synopsis: A cultural comparison of American and Western Samoa showing the way of life of the people.

Sam's parents used a camera to take photos. His dad shot pictures earlier on with an old Box Brownie and then later a Kodak Instamatic. The Brownie shot black and white but the Kodak shot both black and white as well as color. Cliff began using a movie camera when Kenny Wolverton, who worked as a hired man for Cliff on the farm northwest of Pilger, gave him a movie camera. He had purchased it in Germany while serving in the U. S. Army in the early 50's. The small reels of movies taken during the 50's thru the 80's. Sam gathered the photos together and did a presentation of family activities with music. The project was done at the time Sam stayed in Winside for four months after his father's death in July of that year. He extended his leave of absence without pay from the Hawaii Department of Education after the death of his father Cliff.

It was while serving in the U. S. Army in Korea that Sam bought his own 35 millimeter camera and shot both slides along with color and black and white photos. His photo book of the year he spent in South Korea in 1965 was displayed at the Winside Museum located in the basement of the facility. Sam had his U. S. Army uniforms there as well

After returning from military service, Sam has continued to take photos of his travels, in particular during his Peace Corps service in Samoa as well as living and teaching in Hawaii and Singapore. Most recently, Sam took digital photos during his seven year stay in Thailand.

After Sam and wife Celia moved to Hilo from Honolulu in 1984, Sam started his own company, Samu Productions. His first project was a slide show titled, "Two Samoas: A Cultural Comparison". The results were that for several years from 1984 until 2001, Sam sold his work around the world. At first he mailed Kodak Carrouseles until 1997 when he put his work on VHS.

Even though he had discontinued his sales and company, Sam put his work on DVD, replacing many of the VHS copies in libraries and schools in Hawaii. Prior to his retirement from the Hawaii Department of Education, Sam was able to travel to Samoa two times to sell his product (he returned there in 1977-78 for Christmas holiday). His work continues to be listed and viewed. Besides his DVD production, Sam did several photo displays including one at the Hilo Airport departure lounge titled, "Around the Big Island". He also sold 8X10 enlargements of Hawaii photos. In 1985, Sam was hired to take a photo of the Hilo Hawaiian Hotel, the result being his first post card. The Hilo Hawaiian Hotel post card sold for many years at the hotel gift shop.

## Running

Sam came to the sport of running late in life. Though he had coached track while at McLaughlin Junior High School in Vancouver, Washington, Sam started with a few fun runs in the 1980's and 90's, one of them with his friend Anson Chong. Anson, a former State Legislator from Oahu, now deceased, did a 5 K Manoa Valley fun run together. He did pick up running in the mid 90's and earned a Koa bowl in his age group at a run in Iroquois Point, Ewa Beach. At the time, he was a school counselor at Iroquois Point Elementary School in Ewa Beach on Oahu.

In the 1998-99 school year, two of the faculty members at Iroquois Point Elementary ran the Honolulu Marathon. It was at that time Sam became interested in becoming more involved in the sport. His friend Jim Carr was a member of the Nike Town Running Team.

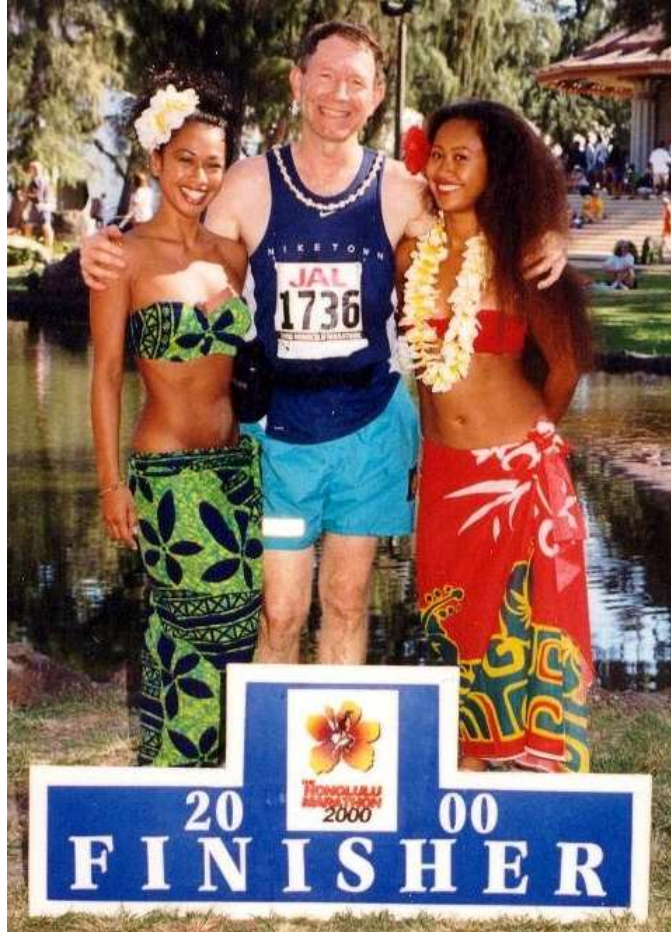


**The Nike town running team in front of the Nike town Waikiki store. Sam is in the front row at right, second person. Jim Carr is standing on the right, 3<sup>rd</sup> row.**

Nike town runners met at Nike town on Kalakaua in Waikiki every Wednesday where those interested would sign up and choose to do either two, three or four mile runs. Sam started with Jim and finally joined the team on a regular basis. Eventually Sam earned his "100 miles" t-shirt. He enjoyed Nike Town because it was a great way to meet fellow runners. The team usually started off with stretches, did their runs and then had healthy foods and shakes provided by Nike town.

It was in 1999 that Sam decided to run in the Honolulu Marathon. His thought was that he would start and go as far as he could not being sure he really wanted to finish the entire 22 miles. When he woke up that first year in the early morning, it was (3:30 A.M.) and pouring rain! Sam almost turned over and went back to sleep but "no", he decided to get up and drive from Ewa Beach into Honolulu to be at the starting gate at Ala Moana Park.

The fireworks went off and so did Sam. Initially he jogged through downtown with its beautiful Christmas decorations, on down through Waikiki and around Kapiolani to Diamond Head. He still felt good so he proceeded up the highway even though; at this point he saw the finishers were already coming back from Hawaii Kai! Sam continued through Kahala stopped to get some energy bars and just kept running! As a result, he finished the run to Hawaii Kai and back though it took him over seven hours to do so! Afterwards he felt great, treating himself to Thai food after. Yes, he did run one more, the 2000 Honolulu Marathon. This time was a bit tougher and, it was to be his second...and last. The main reason his decision to stop running marathons was that his Hilo orthopedist told him that if he kept running marathons he would need artificial knees later in life and that long distance running is for animals, not people! At that point, Sam told him, "Doctor, I've just ran my last marathon!"



**Sam, with two local wahine in traditional dress, after finishing the 2000 Honolulu Marathon**

## Dancing

Early on, as a youngster in elementary school, dancing played a major part in Sam's life. While attending Rural School District # 58, Sam was one of many youngsters who took square dance lessons at the old American Legion Hall in Winside. It was loads of fun circling up on that old wooden floor in the Hall. At intermissions, the kids enjoyed walking outside and in the alleyway between the buildings on the north side of Main Street.

In high school, Sam was more of a, "wall flower", very shy and tended to sometimes attend dances but avoided the dance floor. It was the 50's era and the "Jitter Bug" was a favorite dance for many though Sam never learned how. Later, as the 60's began, Sam lost the shyness and enjoyed! From Norfolk to Wayne to Pocatello and Boise, Idaho to Boulder, Colorado to Apia, Western

Samoa to Honolulu to Singapore to Bangkok he had a great time. Dancing was done on ball room floors, bars, discos, in Gymnasiums or hotels, beer gardens, the music was great! It was often live bands but sometimes D.J.'s played. Whatever, it was always loud which surely contributed to Sam's high frequency hearing loss later in life.

## Movies and Television

Sam and Ron all enjoyed sports of all kinds, so when sports became part of the television scene, the two boys really enjoyed it. They eventually collected baseball cards and Sam loved to listen to the radio Professional football soon came to the "Tube" and there were football cards as well. At that time there were fewer teams than today but it was fun buying for just one cent when kids received a little packet and inside a piece of pink bubble gum with a player card! How many dentists made more money after kids chewed those pieces of bubble gum.....I wonder!

Finally, there were movie theaters and film showings. The Pilfer Theater was the first time Sam enjoyed movies as a kid. On Saturday night in Pilfer, it cost only 13 cents to see movies like, "High Noon" with Gary Cooper.

After Cliff and Elsa with boys moved to the farm northwest of Win side, they found there were black and white films shown in the Win side Auditorium for kids sometimes shown in the Win side Auditorium. Later, when Sam was a teenager, he and his friends would go to movies at the Granada Theater, where Johnny Carson use to work as an usher, and Rialto Theaters in Norfolk. As Sam started dating, the Norfolk Drive in Theater became a great place to take a date."Buck Night" was popular on Thursdays when every car would be admitted for just one dollar no matter how many people were in the car....or even in the trunk!

Sam's favorite movies of all times were Doctor Zhivago (1965), La Bamba (1987) and Return To Paradise (1953).

## Card Playing and Other Games

During those long winters in Nebraska, it was desirable to have games to pass the time on cold nights. Beyond that, there were card parties and card clubs that Sam's parents belonged to in both the Pilger and Winside communities. During the summers, the kids would always play outside while the adults were inside. In the winters, the kids would move upstairs or out on the porch, perhaps in the basement of the house if they had them. The farmers would work in the day times and during the

work week, have certain nights when cards were played. Sometimes families visited other families and cards were introduced as entertainment. Many times there was gambling but usually only what was called, "penny ante" so folks could play the night but never win or lose more than loose change. An early favorite was "Chaskap", a card game that originated in Germany. Many of the families in northeast Nebraska came from Germany or that region of Europe.

Another game was pitch. There was also Old Maid, Rummy and later, in the 70's and 80's a fun one called, "Be Dirty to Your Neighbor". Quite often the games would get very exciting with lots of shouts, screams and pounding of the table. Sometimes men and women would play separately but if there were just a few people, say two couples, it would be both men and women playing cards together.

The young people in those earlier "school days" had their own games. One was "spin the bottle". The purpose of this game, with both boys and girls playing, was to go counter clockwise around the circle. The person who would spin the bottle would say, "Whoever this points to has to kiss "someone" three times! Then the lights would be turned out, they would kiss and the lights would come on for the next spin. Later on, in high school, a teen age game was "Strip Poker". In this game, regular poker was played but the losers would have to pay by taking off an article of clothes rather than paying money! The boys or girls would always stop before any final piece(s) of clothing were removed!

Another popular game during study hall and recess was Checkers and Chess, both played on the same kind of board. In Adult life, games like rummy and pitch were still played. Two other favorites were pinnacle and "Scrabble", a word game.

## Ice Skating

It was in Alaska that Sam learned to ice skate. After taking a leave without pay from the Hawaii State Department of Education for a year in 1996, Sam moved to Alaska from Molokai to join his third wife Marilou in Anchorage. The couple lived in a house on Arctic Boulevard not too far from the airport. Of course another good thing about living "way up north" was that Ron, wife Dee and the two nephews Seth and Chad also lived there.

One of the first things Ron told his brother Sam when he moved to Alaska was that if you want to avoid "cabin fever", he should have outdoor sports in both winter and summer. Of course Sam did basketball and biking for summer sports but chose sledding and ice skating for his winter. Ice skating is very popular in Anchorage. Many of the ponds had pathways made for ice skating. Schools also run water on the basketball courts which then freeze in the winter, becoming skating rinks. Sam's brother Ron was not skating when Sam first came to Anchorage, but, when he left in September, 1997, Sam gave his skates to Ron who then used them! Since they had a cabin on Big Lake, north of Anchorage, it wasn't long before Ron was skating on the lake ice! Sledding in Anchorage was a lot different than sledding in the old days in Nebraska! In Anchorage, sledding is done on the parks and land areas where snow has been removed from the streets. The snow is then dumped on designated city parklands. During the winter months, millions of dollars are spent on snow removal in the city. Sam remembers that he had a plastic bowl style sled that could really move down the hill quickly.

## Reading

One of the reasons Sam has enjoyed reading during his lifetime is the encouragement from his mom and dad. Both of them had earned high school diplomas in a time when many young people didn't finish school. The Burris household always received newspapers and magazines in the mail and Sam and his brothers saw their parents reading daily, often in the evening.

In high school, Sam took full advantage of the small high school library in the old Winside High School building. He loved Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain and other authors. Just like his two brothers, Sam enjoyed history. This was enhanced by regular trips the family took east. The Burris' would often stop at historical places and make many trips to sites located.



**Mount Rushmore National Memorial** is a massive sculpture carved into Mt. Rushmore in the Black Hills region of South Dakota. Completed under the direction of Gutzon and Lincoln Borglum from 1927–1941, the sculpture's roughly 60-ft.-high granite faces depict U.S. presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln.

Throughout college, Sam studied history. Even as a kid, he did drawings of historical scenes such as Little Big Horn. Finally, Sam declared his major in History at Norfolk Junior College with further study at Wayne State College, Idaho State University and finally at Boise College(now Boise State University). He graduated with a major in History and a minor in Physical Education. At Boise College, Sam did his student teaching at Fairmont Junior High School on "the Bench" in Boise. After marriage in August, 1968, Sam was hired to teach history at McLaughlin Junior High School in Vancouver, Washington. He also taught English, Reading and Typing and was assistant track coach. Later he taught history at Hillside Junior High in Boise, Idaho for three years before teaching history at Teachers Training College, Western Samoa (now Samoa). Later, Sam taught History for two years at Singapore American School in Singapore.

## Writings

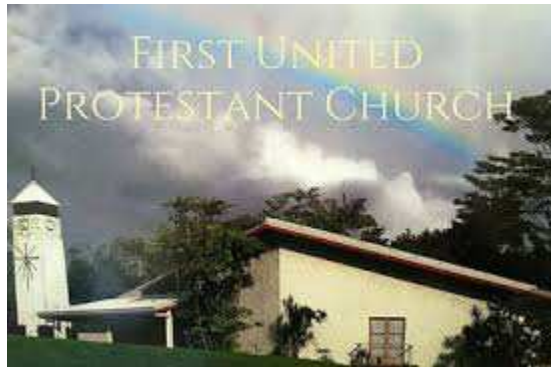
Even though he was a left hander and his writing style was sometimes difficult to read, Sam progressed through elementary school in Pilger, Nebraska first and later in Winside. Both elementary schools he attended were small one room country schools. Still, throughout his life, he enjoyed writing.



As a young adult, Sam began keeping a diary and maintained the hobby throughout his life. As a result, he has boxes full of these writings that have come in handy many times.

The first time Sam wrote anything for publication was after he returned from the Peace Corps while he was living in Hawaii. At that time, he published a series of four stories on Samoa for Pacific Magazine. To do such was a real thrill since Sam never dreamed that he might get paid for his thoughts on paper. He published a story in Singapore for Changi Magazine. His most recent works are two coffee table ones titled, "View from Briar Patch: A Burrus Family of Grayson County". Both books came about in order to tell the story of the Burrus/Burris family. The second book, done in 2015, is about a house along hwy #305 along Spring Valley Road in Grayson County, southeast Virginia titled, "House with a Stone Wall".

## Religion



**View of the First United Protestant Church located in Hilo, Hawaii. Sam was a member for about 10 years. Both Celia and Marilou (wife # 2 and #3) were members as well.**

Sam's religious background was originally Missouri Synod Lutheran. When his father Cliff married mother Elsa, Cliff changed his primary protestant faith to Lutheran so Sam and his brothers followed suit.

When living in Pilger, the family attended St. John's Lutheran Church which at the time was a small, white, wood framed structure. It was destroyed by a tornado in June, 2013. Some years later a new church structure was completed next to the old parsonage, but both the old parsonage and the newer church were also destroyed by the same event.

When the family moved 15 miles north to a farm near Winside in 1953, the Burris clan attended St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Winside. Again, the first church was a small white colored structure which was moved and replaced in 1958 by a new brick building. Sam was one of the original two altar boys that lit the candles that day. The other was Larry Brudigan.

Sam and his brothers attended Sunday School, Walther League and catechism in the Lutheran Church. Later Sam attended the Catholic Church in Singapore and Honolulu as his second wife was Catholic. When married to his third wife, Sam attended the United Church of Christ in Hilo, Hawaii. Marilou was comfortable there as many Filipino attended. At this church, Sam was very active in the Peace Group associated with the church. He also read scripture as well as taking part in other readings. Finally, after joining the Methodist Church in Ewa Beach, Oahu, Hawaii, for three years, Sam bought a condo in Hilo with plans to retire there, moved to Thailand and became Buddhist after meeting his fourth wife Kan. At this time, Sam continues to follow Buddhist teachings.

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## Politics

### Hawaii Democratic Party

Sam had joined and been active in the Democratic Party a year before moving to the Island of Hawaii when he attended the Oahu County Convention. His next experience was as a delegate to the 1984 Democratic State Convention held at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu.

After moving to the Big Island of Hawaii, Sam continued to work as an active Democrat. Eventually he was elected Chairman of the Keaukaha Precinct of the Hawaii Democratic Party. His job for several years was to gather as many people in the community as he could to meet and seek delegates to the Democratic County and State Conventions. He also worked to sign citizens up to join the party. Resolutions were also written and voted on at the precinct meetings. If they passed there, they would advance to the County and eventually the State Convention.



**Democrat State Conventions were always held at the Sheraton Waikiki Hotel in Honolulu.**

Sam was elected to attend almost every Hawaii County and Hawaii State Conventions through the 80's and 90's. He wrote many resolutions, most of them passing at the State Convention such as to stop funding for "Star Wars". Sam also attended the 1996 National Democratic Convention as an alternate delegate supporting the Clinton/Gore ticket. Sam went as a Maui delegate since he was living in Molokai at the time. He won easily as there were no other delegates who had applied. Fortunately, Sam's air fare and hotels in Chicago were paid for by the National Education Association. The convention was one of the major experiences of his life.

Through his work, he got to know many of the politicians of the time including Governors John Waihe'e, Ben Cayatano, Linda Lingle, Senators Spark Matsunaga, Dan Akaka, Daniel Inouye plus representatives Patsy Mink, Neil Abercrombie and Mazie Hirono. Some of Sam's best friends in the party were Bill Reich, Emmett Cahill and Andy Levin.

## Andrew Levin



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### A photo of Sam and Maya Satoreo-Ing, half sister of Barack Obama

Sunday morning February 17, 2007, Gan and Sam attended a neat event across from the fountain at Kapiolani Park in Waikiki. The event was called, "Pot Luck for Obama". Scheduled from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm, it started a bit late due to weather but ended with a group of really excited people and a good crowd. As is the case for most pot lucks, this one had delicious food and great conversation.

One of those present was Maya Soetoro-Ing, half sister of Barack Obama. Upon arrival, Maya spent time greeting people. It was around 12:00

noon before the speeches began. First up was Congressman Neil Abercrombie, attending with his wife Nancy. Neil delivered a spirited talk and included complimentary statements about Barack's father who he knew when both were students at the University of Hawaii at Manoa.

The second speaker was U. S. Congressman Eni Falemavaega, also strongly supporting Barack as a product of the Islands.

Following Eni, was Kelly Hu, an actress from Hawaii, who urged us to stay active in the campaign.

The final speaker was Maya who talked about her brother and shared things about him with us.

Though Sam is no longer a member of the Democratic Party, he did still stay active at times in local, state or federal issues in Hawaii. Presently, Sam is living in Thailand. Previous years he had testified at State hearings and even worked to get a bill of his own through the state legislature. He is also acquainted with many politicians at various levels of Hawaii government.

## Writings of Interest- Not published

### "How It Was"

By Sam Burris (unpublished)

Taking a few weeks in early summer, 1997, I flew from Anchorage, Alaska, where I was living at the time, to spend 3 weeks with my father in the northeast Nebraska town of Winside, population 400.

Dad had retired from farming in 1981 and moved into an older two story house in Winside. He and mom lived together in that house until she died in 1993. Staying there by choice afterwards, he had taken mom's death quite hard. After all, they'd been married for almost 60 years!

My visit in 1997 was a very pleasant one, spent mostly with my father Cliff, family, friends and relatives. I was sometimes taking dad to his medical appointments since he had survived a stroke and was taking blood thinner along with other medicines and seeing doctors regularly. In addition, at age 86 he was almost blind yet still living by himself.

We brothers had once suggested to dad that he consider a rest home located in a nearby town, but he wouldn't hear of it! Instead, he had everything fixed in the home to be user friendly for him including in the kitchen. He could "feel" the settings on the stove, so as to do his cooking for example and listened to cassette tapes as a replacement for reading.

My dad's physical condition affected his balance and at times he used a cane to walk, though much of the time he insisted on doing without it, going out even in winter when ice covered the sidewalks!

That summer, dad took walks virtually every day and sometimes I'd stroll with him. We would also work together on tasks like painting and gardening. Dad had a full-on vegetable garden to take care of with lots of tomato, corn, cucumber, onions, beans and potatoes all of which he planted in early spring!

It was July 1st, just 3 days before my departed mom's birthday. Dad had cooked "supper" for us as he usually did during my stay. Though he was almost blind, *he could still cook better than me!* Later we settled in that evening, chatting and watching TV in the living room.

Both my brother and I had noticed pa was tiring easily by this time and I had even discussed postponing my next day departure to Alaska because of it. Yet, in the end, Bill and I agreed that it was better to continue my planned schedule as no one could predict what might occur and when.

Dad told me later on that evening that his ankles and feet were swelling but I wasn't too worried since he'd had these problems before. After falling asleep in his living room lounge chair, dad awoke and said he was ready to go to bed. On this warm summer night, I stayed up reading for another hour in the living room. Later on I fixed the fan for him and after checking on dad one more time, wished him a "good night" and went upstairs to bed.

The next morning I got up about 7:45 after a good night's sleep but, when I went Down stairs, I noticed dad wasn't up yet which was unusual. When I went into the kitchen, I saw his clothes still lying on a chair and the curtains whipping around from the brisk northerly wind blowing in the window.

A strange feeling came over me! I thought, "Oh... is dad O.K.?"

Checking the bedroom I saw he was quietly lying on his side, under a sheet appearing to be fast asleep. I left him and went to take a shower when the thought occurred to me that he might have died during the night.

I dried myself, quickly put some clothes on and hurried to the bedroom. When I looked in, I saw that dad was *still lying in the same position*. Walking to the bed, I reached out ...and touched his hand. His skin felt somewhat cool.....he had died in his sleep.

The idea of my father's death sent a whirl of thoughts through my mind all at once. What should I do? My bags were all packed and in the living room, ready for my departure! The Northwest Air Lines flight was due to depart in just a few hours! QuickCall my brother Bill out on the farm!

I dialed Bill's number several times...no answer! Why? I began to panic but when I dialed again my brother answered. I told Bill how I had found our dad in his bed and suddenly I started weeping openly! Bill said he would be right there. While I waited for him to arrive, I sat on the bed with the body, keeping my hands on his lower leg and weeping at times as I did so.

After my brother arrived, he called the County Sheriff who called the local mortician. I waited with the body until the hearse came...all the time sitting there on the edge of my father's bed, feeling a deep loss inside. The morticians put my dad's body in a bag and zipped it up. Dad was gone!

Now, years later, as I look back, I'm so happy. I was there.....there for his last night.....there in the morning.....I found his body in his bedroom.

Those three weeks we had spent together during the Nebraska summer would be our last. He had died just hours before I was to depart for the Sioux City, Iowa airport.

What about the timing of his death? A friend of mine commented during those days following, that older people often die in the evenings or early mornings. It was almost like he chose the time of death. Did he feel it was time for him to leave us? Looking back now, those of us in the family were happy that he left us peacefully, dying in his sleep while in his own bed...lying curled up under his own sheet at home.

## Hawaii Nature Center

By: Samuel Burris      (Not Published)

One mile mauka (towards the mountains) from the apartment complex on Makiki Street in Honolulu is the Hawaii Nature Center. It's a great place to hike as one can get into the rain forest to enjoy the experience of fresh mountain air and take in some great scenery! I know the area quite well since I have been a volunteer for seven years there. Having just taken the trail hike this morning, all of these things are fresh in my mind.

The beginning of the Kanealole Trail was once an old road built by I. M. Herring back in 1864. He had a coffee plantation for many years in the valley and built two bridges which crossed Makiki Stream on route to his home. The old rocks he had placed those years ago are still used as a platform for the present hiking trail bridges. The remains of Mr. Herring's old house (just the foundation stones) are still visible at the estates old location in the jungle.

This trail is part of a network used by ancient Hawaiians to cross over mountains to the other side of the island. They could also travel the entire island on mountain ridges. Native Hawaiians also had taro growing in the valley with sites dating back to 1200 AD. Some of their stones are still visible in places along the trail.

Coming to the rain forest just up from city streets is quite an experience as the lush, green, cooler environ is felt immediately. The higher you go, the more the walls of the valley soar on both sides. It is a very exhilarating feeling to hike the trail with birds chirping and moisture from the last rain dropping down to small plants near your feet as you hike along.

The Kanealole Trail begins at the Hawaii Nature Center. The trail is not long in miles but can take around 1 1/2 hours to do since it is steep and sometimes muddy. Great views of the city are a highlight with the Pacific Ocean below. Below is a description of the trail from a hiking web site:

## **MAKIKI VALLEY TRAILS**

**1. Kanealole Trail, 0.7 mile, 500-foot elevation gain — This trail on the west side of the Hawaii Nature Center is usually wet and muddy, but it is a gentler ascent than the Maunalaha Trail (#2) on the east side. The trail follows an old road under a canopy of large trees, which makes it a fairly cool hike for the whole family. Look for Surinam cherries which, when bright red, are quite sweet. This small, ovate cherry from Brazil is a local favorite for making jelly. The Kanealole Trail ends at a junction with the Makiki Valley Trail (#3) that goes from Tantalus to Round Top Drives.**



**The start of the Makiki Trail is at Hawaii Nature Center, Ko'olau Mountain Range in Oahu, Hawaii. Sam was a volunteer for seven years doing gardening for the State of Hawaii.**

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Writings Authored and published by Samuel Burris

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## Field of Dreams and a Baseball Player From Pilger, Nebraska

by Samuel Burris

This story published in the Wisner-Pilger Herald in July,  
2006.

The movie "Field of Dreams" starring Kevin Costner was all about building a baseball playing diamond in an Iowa corn field. Baseball in northeast Nebraska in the 1930's was not exactly like that movie, which included spirits of long dead baseball players, but there was a lot of effort, inspiration and even fame for some of the real life players of that era.

Back in the 30's, many of the baseball games in northeast Nebraska were played on rural farm fields. These fields were sometimes located in or near small towns but were also dotted here and there throughout the farming areas.

Because most of the players were farmers or farmhands, they needed facilities close by their work where they could gather to play more easily. Though the fields would be considered crude compared to the diamonds of today, they were more than adequate for many young men, improving their skills in the game, providing healthy rivalries and allowing for a lot of fun. Whole families enjoyed these opportunities for socialization, exercise and recreation.

The 30's were tough times as it was during the depression so baseball games then were a community activity as well as a diversion! Pasture land was often chosen for a baseball field as many of these pastures were flat and already established. These "fields of dreams" sometimes had bleachers and backstops were built in some form or another. Though these fields didn't have the same smooth surfaces as big city ball fields, lively times were had!

My own father, Clifton Burris, played in those days and was a member of the "Humbug Team". His team was named after a creek that flows through the farm lands northeast of the town of Pilger. I recall my dad showing me many farm fields where the diamonds were as we drove the country roads around Pilger in the 70's, 80's and 90's,

My father loved baseball and played the sport into his 30's when he switched to softball and finally retired entirely. Sometimes he chatted about the good old days with former players from surrounding towns. Both minor and major league players emerged from those early teams, like Bud Tinning (Lyle Forrest "Bud" Tinning) who worked his way up through the minor leagues to pitch for the Chicago Cubs, including throwing in the famous 1932 World Series against the New York Yankees. In those days, baseball was often played for the love of the game rather than the

money. Baseball seasons were short and salaries were low so players had off season jobs to supplement their summer season pay.

Tinning was born in 1906 into the Arthur Tinning family. Siblings included two sisters Mabel and Marie with two brothers, Oger and Dewey.

The Tinnings were living on a farm northwest of Pilger when the children lost their mother to childbirth. Bud was just two years old.

The Tinning children worked hard on the farm and then played hard, with baseball being the most popular sport. Bud grew up listening to major league games broadcast on the radio. In his teens, he started playing on the local diamonds. He attended Pilger High School but like so many youngsters during the depression, helped on the family farm full time and so did not graduate. Bud proved to be an excellent pitcher and soon joined the Pilger Town Team. Marty Willers (deceased) was a catcher in those days and said Bud was known as the hardest thrower around with an excellent fast ball.

Bud Tinning left the Pilger area to play for Omaha in the old Western League and later played for the 1930 Minneapolis Millers. He was moved to Des Moines, Iowa, before being called up by Chicago. Lou Gehrig wrote, "Lyle hung up one of the most sensational minor league records ever established in 1931 while pitching for Des Moines in the Western League when he won 24 games and was beaten only twice."

Brought up to the Chicago Cubs in 1932 (the year the team won the National League Pennant), Bud wore number 22 on his uniform, was 5'11", weighed 198 pounds, threw right handed and was a switch hitter at the plate.

The Baseball Almanac described him as "a crafty pitcher who started about one third of his games. Perhaps his finest effort for the Cubs came in relief when he threw 12 -2/3 shutout innings in an Aug. 17, 1932 Chicago win."

During the 1932 World Series, Bud pitched in two games against the Yankees, both in relief. In game three he pitched in the ninth inning and in game four, the seventh. One of those games is perhaps the most talked about of any in baseball history which was game three in which Babe Ruth of the

New York Yankees is said to have pointed to a spot in center field as if to predict a home run and then, sure enough, followed through.

After moving to Chicago, Bud pitched three years with the Chicago Cubs and then one with the St. Louis Cardinals (in 1935). He regularly returned to Pilger to visit, staying with his brother, Dewey, his wife and their two daughters. The brothers often hunted pheasants during these visits and Bud packed cleaned birds in dry ice so he and his friends in Chicago could feast upon his return! While in the majors, Bud married his wife, Inez, who was from Terra Haute, Indiana. She joined him on some of his Pilger visits. The couple later divorced without having any children. When back in Pilger from Chicago or St. Louis during his pitching days, Bud and other men played baseball at the Pilger town diamond and

and people from around the area would come and watch. Brother Dewey's daughters (Bud's nieces) were so proud they told everyone that Bud was their uncle!

Bud became part of the St. Louis Cardinals as a result of a trade on November 21, 1934, when he and Dick Ward went to St. Louis for pitcher Tex Carleton. At St. Louis, Bud was a teammate of well known players such as Leo Durocher, Dizzy and Paul Dean.

Spending most of his adult life after baseball away from the corn fields of northeast Nebraska, in death Bud returned. He died in January, 1961, in Evansville, Indiana and his body was sent back to Pilger for burial. Funeral services for Bud were held at the Pilger Methodist Church. He is buried in the Pilger Cemetery, one mile north of Pilger.

**About the Author:** A baseball fan for many years, Sam Burris was born and raised in the Pilger/Winside, Nebraska area. He graduated from Boise State with a BA in history, receiving his MA from Northern Arizona University in guidance and counseling. Before retiring, Sam worked 34 years as an educator, the last 20 years for the Hawaii State Department of Education as a school counselor.



**Bud Tinning at the peak of his career while pitching for the Chicago Cubs in 1934.**

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## The White Girl of Pulau Ubin

Story and Photos by Samuel J. Burris published in [Changi Magazine](#), November, 1993 (Revised in May, 2006).

Pulau Ubin is a tranquil island in the Straits of Johor. The island today has lots of visitors though few are aware of a story about an incident that happened on the island almost 100 years ago.

On this island, located on the northeast shore of Singapore Island, there was once a coffee plantation managed by a German man who, in 1914, lived there with his family. The family resided in a plantation house on a small rise with a scenic view of Pasir Riis across the water. Located nearby was the coffee processing equipment and off shore were wooden structures built above the water on concrete pillars where the workers resided.

### War

In 1914, the news of the declaration of war reached Singapore. Since it was a British Colony at the time the "Alien Enemies Winding-Up Ordinance of 1914" was put into effect. German ships in the harbour were seized by the British and German citizens were soon interned on the main island. Most of them, 309 citizens, were kept at Tanglin Barracks. All German property, including private property, was confiscated as well as German businesses.

British officials soon arrived on Ubin in August of the same year. Their task was to seize the coffee plantation on the island and transfer the German family to the main island for internment. When the officials arrived however, the young daughter of the family became frightened and ran away. As she fled, the girl lost her way and accidentally fell down a steep quarry cliff, hit the bottom below and was killed. Since the daughter couldn't be found, the rest of the family was taken away by the authorities and interned.

Not long afterward, the young girl's corpse, covered with ants, was discovered by Boyanese plantation laborers, who threw sand over her body and offered prayers, flowers and incense as a gesture of goodwill each time they passed her. Some of the people came to believe they had experienced good fortune after these prayers, so the decision was made to exhume her body and put it in an urn, placing the urn inside temple high on one of the hills nearby. Visitors accessed the temple by using many steps leading up to the structure. More people, especially gamblers began to pray for good luck at the site. Several of these individuals were successful and attributed their success in winning to the spirit of the German Girl. When World War I was over, it is said that the German plantation manager and his family were freed and returned to their country without finding out what had happened to their daughter.

## Quarry

Over the years, the Temple of the German Girl became a popular place for residents of Ubin, including some who journeyed from the main island of Singapore and other countries. For many of these people, the urn, said to contain remains of the girl's hair, some coins and a small Christian cross, represented hope in achieving various goals in their lives. In 1974, the quarry company needed to expand, so the temple was moved to the present site.

I first visited the temple in November, 1990. After that visit, my curiosity about this tale was roused. After a number of visits afterwards, I got to know Mr. Chia Yeng Keng, the long time caretaker of the temple. He had earlier shared tales about the temple and about the urn inside. Mr. Chia stated that somehow, over the years, the original urn with the remains of the young girl was stolen. After hearing of this, I asked to look inside the present porcelain urn to verify as to whether the hair, iron cross, coins and any other remains of the German girl were inside. He agreed and I opened the top to look in. The urn was empty!



**The old Temple of the German Girl, Pulau Ubin, Singapore as it stood in 2012.**

Not too long after, another resident of Ubin, Mr. Lee Wat Sim, agreed to accompany me on a trip to the site of the old German plantation. When we arrived at the site, the ruins of the coffee mill were still there as were the cement pillars, atop which, at one time held housing for the plantation workers. It is said those

old structures later served as a school, but now the old structures were long gone.

Mr. Lee and I returned to the coffee mill site. Not far away we found the foundation of the old plantation house. Strangely, as I walked on the ground inside the area where the house once stood, many aggressive red ants began to crawl up my legs. This had not happened to me anywhere on Ubin before! I hurried away, brushing them off as best I could! It was then I recalled the story of the *ants said to have covered the young girl's body when local people first found her remains! The encounter with those ants on the house site gave me a strange feeling indeed!*

One can imagine there would be many questions asked about this young German girl and her fate. What actually happened to her remains? If the original urn was stolen, who would have taken it, when and why? Where are the girl's remains now? What about the history of the family. We know almost nothing about the family, even their names. Did the family ever return to the island of Ubin to find the remains of their daughter? It is hoped that someday, somehow, someone will be able to shed more light on this mystery.



A later, temporary structure of the German girl Temple. May, 2015.

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## Blue Ridge Mountain History

By Samuel J. Burris

Not Published

The article below was written by Sam Burris in 2006 and describes the kind of cabin in Spring Valley, Virginia that his father Cliff Burris was born and grew up in along with Cliff's brothers and sisters.

Recently, while reading my copy of the book [The Blue Ridge](#) passing the time in the house in Issan Province, Thailand, I came across this author's description of a Blue Ridge cabin.

For those who have visited my Grandfather Jonce Burris' cabin in Spring Valley southwest Virginia, you may agree that his words described Grandpa and Grammas' cabin too! When I was a kid, this cabin was one of two "second homes". I had another second home, that being the Emma and John Dohren farm north of Pilger, Nebraska.

Those were the days when, while visiting Virginia, we thought it good fun to help Grandpa Burris wheel the milk out to the road with his "wooden wheel barrow" after he was finished milking. With my cousins Ruth and Ann Jackson, Eldon Burris and others, we'd play in the creek that flowed just below the cabin in a bottom-land pasture, sometimes catching the small black crawdads abiding there.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crayfish>

Memories of sitting on the floor next to my grandmother's rocking chair while she took some snuff. She'd take a spoonful of the powder, place in her cheek and then once in awhile, spit into the spittoon on the other side. Being a Nebraska youngster, I'd never seen the likes of it before!

We'd go swimming in the old swimming hole not far behind the cabin just off the back road. There are the memories of my cousin Don Jackson yelling at us that there was a snake in the tree above our heads. We thought he was joking until we all looked up and yipe...there *was* a *snake on the branch just above us!* 🐍

Now of course, times have changed and so has the cabin; a lot for the better! When my brother Ron bought the cabin and land in the early 90's, it hadn't been lived in for several years. He did a lot of restoration work on it, but didn't alter the interior much. It's the same structure with siding around and new tin on top with a wraparound porch on two sides. The old chimney has been replaced but there's still the same fireplace where we kids watched my grandma Lena Byrd Burris cook. Ron also installed Aunt Viola's old wood stove that she used to fix so many delicious biscuits on! If you can, get the book and enjoy the description of those cabins from Mr. Bake.



**Rear view of the Jonce and Lena Burris cabin, Fallville, Virginia, now owned by Ron Burris, Anchorage, Alaska.**

The following quotes were taken From: THE BLUE RIDGE copyright by William A. Bake, Published in hardback by Viking Press in 1977. Published soft cover in 1984 by Oxmoor House, Inc. Both volumes are now out of print.

From Page #78: Setting: *The author is visiting a restored log cabin along the Blue Ridge Mountains. Mr. Bake says:*

"The cabin itself was typical of those built about two hundred years ago. The entire ground floor was a single rectangular room with a fireplace at one end. A steep, narrow staircase led to the second floor, which consisted of two small rooms. There just wasn't much to the old cabins, but what they lacked in space they made up in sturdiness. Walls were constructed from carefully hewn logs that were notched at the ends to fit tightly at the corners. Chimneys were usually quite massive and were made with flat stones picked up on the farmer's land and then plastered together with thick southern clay. The roofs were originally made from oak shakes and later were often covered with tin, and floors, when they existed, were likely of yellow poplar. The cabins were dark, smokey places with low beams and the smell of countless hearth fires. Cooking was done in iron pots hung over the fire, food was prepared on the table, and beds were jammed close together on the second floor. Most of the farmer's work was done outdoors; perhaps only that made the lack of space in the mountaineer cabins tolerable. By today's standards, a building of such small size would not be taken seriously as a permanent home."

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## Michael Scott Deeds

Written by Samuel Burris June, 2002 (not published)

On Mother's Day, 1996, I had just flown to Moloka'i, Hawaii from a weekend in Honolulu. At the time I was working for the State of Hawaii as a school counselor at Kaunakakai School on this small island not far from Oahu.

After landing at the airport that day, I decided to stop off at the Hawaii Coffee Shop near Kualapu'u, a relaxing spot which includes a great view of the island from the front patio.

As I entered the shop my mind was on thoughts of my mother Elsa who had passed away just four years earlier in 1993. There were some roses for sale on the counter so I sat down, purchased a cup of coffee and a rose in memory of my mother.

At that moment, another haole (white) customer entered the shop. He appeared to be a visitor in his late 50's and asked me about the rose that lay on the counter next to me. I told him about my thoughts on this special day and offered to buy him a cup of coffee, an offer accepted. The man's name was Karl Deeds, on a visit to the islands from California.

I asked Karl why he was in Moloka'i, a small island with no stop signs and no buildings taller than a coconut tree! He responded that he was visiting to honor the memory of his brother who worked briefly at the Hotel Moloka'i back in the late 70's. Since the Hotel, located on the south central coast, was one of my favorite places on the island, I asked him a bit more about his brother and we ended up chatting with each other for an hour or more.

His brother had been working in Moloka'i when one of his friends asked him to accompany him on a sail to Southeast Asia. His brother agreed to go and the two of them sailed across the Pacific Ocean and to Southeast Asia. They were just a few miles off Cambodian waters when they were captured by a government patrol boat. The Cambodians took them to Phnom Penh, the capitol where they were interned, tortured and killed.

Please go to the following site to learn more of the sad story Karl shared with me that day:

[http://www.camnet.com.kh/cambodia.daily/selected\\_features/a\\_wakening\\_to\\_the\\_terror](http://www.camnet.com.kh/cambodia.daily/selected_features/a_wakening_to_the_terror).

It was an internet search a few weeks ago that led me to learn of the death of Karl, a kind, gentle but saddened acquaintance. Our paths crossed briefly that hot Sunday. We met because of deaths of loved ones each of us. Since then I had often thought of Karl though we never met again. We had each other's addresses but both got busy with our own lives and never corresponded.

Having lived seven years in Thailand, which is a neighboring country to Cambodia, where Karl's brother Michael died a terrible death, that meeting has become much more meaningful to me. I also know more about the tragic story of Cambodia, still a troubled land. A land troubled because of actions of many countries, most recently, America. As is the case of

millions of others, Michael and Karl Deeds lives were swept up by the conflict. The blow back of the conflict has never ended.

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In early 2002, Sam did a rice barge trip from Ho Xai, Bokow and Laos, to Luang Prabang. The trip down the Mekong River took two days with overnight stay.

Published by "Good Morning Chiangmai" in a three month series.

The series can no longer be accessed on the Internet.

<http://www.chiangmai-online.com/gmcm/03-2002/mekong.html>

**Good Morning**  
**Chiangmai**

March, 2002 - May 2002

## DOWN A LAZY RIVER



Sam Burris took a slow rice boat to Laos along the mighty Mekong River

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## A book about the Burris family history:



### View From Briar Patch: A Burris Family of Grayson County

By: Samuel Johnson Burris    March, 2012    Revised in August, 2017

#### Background:

Sam Burris earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from Boise State University in 1968 and taught history in several schools, including middle schools in the states of Idaho and Washington. In 1974, as a member of the U. S. Peace Corps he taught history at Teacher Training College in Malifa, Apia in Samoa. He also taught history two years at Singapore American School in the Republic of Singapore, 1978-1980.

The Briar Patch book was Sam's attempt to explain the history of the Burris family as it related to earlier ancestors who moved from North Carolina and settled in the mountains of southwest Virginia where descendants still reside today. Sam's father, Clifton, born in Virginia, was always very interested in history and the genealogy of his family. The log

cabin where Sam's grandfather lived and where his father was born is located near Virginia State Highway 805, Spring Valley Road, southwest Virginia.



## House with a Stone Wall

By Samuel Johnson Burris

March, 2015 / Revised in August, 2017

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A history of an Appalachian home with photos

While researching his book, "View from Briar Patch: A Burris Family of Grayson County", Sam stayed in the former Garlie Burris home fronting his grandfather's cabin. The house is located on Spring Valley Road, southwest Virginia, about 12 miles from the town of Galax.

While staying in the house on two different occasions for a total of about three weeks, he began to explore its history. He interviewed several former residents and kin, including his own cousin Gary Burris, who was born and raised in the house as well as neighbors. Soon he had enough material available to successfully complete the work. The property is currently owned by Sam's brother Ron Burris. The dwelling is well

preserved and cared for. Houses like this, especially in good condition, are getting harder to find in the region.

## Professional Awards - August, 2001

**In the summer of 2001, Sam retired after 23 years of service to the State of Hawaii. Awards earned while active included:**

**“Staff member of the year” – 1987 at Kalanianaʻole School - Hawaii District.**

**“School Counselor of the Year” Hawaii District, 1988.**

## **RESUME OF SAMUEL J. BURRIS**

### **Highlights of Qualifications**

Graduate degree in Guidance and Counseling  
 Special talent and effective techniques in working with individuals and groups  
 Nineteen years experience working in counseling  
 Kindergarten to university teaching experience including student teaching supervision

### **RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

#### **Counseling**

Counseled in personal issues, self-esteem, coping skills and social adjustment.  
 Facilitated groups on peer pressure, divorce, mediation, social and academic adjustments as well as anger management.

#### **Teaching**

Taught elementary, middle, high school, college and adult levels in both the U. S. and overseas.

College and university instructor in teacher training programs.

Teacher in Elder Hostel Program, University of Hawaii at Hilo for two years.

### **Employment History**

2000-2001	School Counselor	E. B. DeSilva Elementary, Hawaii
1998-2000	School Counselor	Iroquois Point Elementary, Hawaii
1996-1997	Substitute Teacher	Anchorage School Dist., Alaska
1995-1996	School Counselor	Kaunakakai Elementary School, Hawaii
1992-1995	School Counselor	Keaukaha School, Hilo, HI
1981-1992	School Counselor	Kalaniana'ole School, Papaikou, HI
1990-1991	E. S. L. Teacher	Singapore Secondary Training Center,
Singapore		
1985-1989	E.S.L. Teacher (summers)	Honua Hawaii Language Training
1886-1987	Samoan Culture	Elder Hostel Program, Hilo, Hawaii
1984-1990	School Counselor	Kalaniana'ole School, Hawaii
1983-1984	School Counselor	Kalakaua Middle School, Hawaii
1982-1983	School Counselor	Honowai Elementary, Waipahu,
HI		
1981-1982	School Counselor	Koko Head Elementary School, Hawaii
1980-1981	School Counselor	Waiau and Momilani Elementary School, Hawaii
1978-1980	Social Studies Teacher	Singapore American School, Singapore
1977-1978	Instructor, College of Ed.	University of Hawaii, Manoa, Honolulu
1977	Reading Tutor	Waipahu High School, Oahu, Hawaii
1974-1976	Peace Corps	Teacher Training College, Samoa (then Western)
1971-1974	Social Studies Teacher	Hillside Jr. High School, Boise, Idaho
1968-1970	Social Studies Teacher	McLaughlin Jr. High School, Vancouver, WA
1964-1966	United States Army	Basic - Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri A.I.T. - Chaplains Asst. School, Ft. Dix Chaplains Ast. 1st Cav/2nd Infantry, Korea C. A., Redstone Arsenal, Alabama E-4

### Education and Training

M. A., Guidance and Counseling - No. Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona 1974  
 B. A., History/Physical Education - Boise State University, Boise, Idaho 1968  
 A. A. History/Physical Education - Norfolk Junior College, Norfolk, NE 1963

### Affiliation

National Education Association  
 Hawaii School Counselor Association  
 Hawaii State Teachers Association

Retired August, 2001