

MY LIFE
ANASTASIA LEE MCALEAR

MY RELIGION

"Live and Let live." Live life to its fullest, being busy, attempting new things, seeing new places, enjoying people, never being too old to learn. Let other people live their life in their own way. Respect others opinions and ideals but maintain the right to hold on to your own. "Don't worry about any thing and pray about every thing." Praying is easier than the not worrying part. If a problem arises do what you can to solve it, when it cannot be changed accept the situation and try to forget it.

Why someone has a strong faith in a superior being and others are luke warm or have none at all is not clear to me. I just seem to have had it always, and not especially from a great amount of religious training. It is hard to explain why you believe but in troubled times this closeness to God has been very real. I sense it in the beauty of a sunset or a breathtaking view of a mountain lake or a child's smile. I saw the Muslim at prayer in a mosque in Cairo and I thought they had great faith. Seeing the Buddhists at prayer in a shrine in Kearra in Japan; as I prayed at the Grotto at Lourdes in August of 1958 I was overwhelmed with the feeling of a divine presence. When I watched an old blind Indian on the Flathead Indian Reservation, praying everyday in church, and making his way to the cross and reverently kissing it, I was filled with esteem and uplifting of my own spirits and an increase of faith.

Honesty is the best policy. I guess being truthful is a phobia of mine, so that it bothers me when I have to tell a so called "white lie," to protect the feeling of others. "Actions speak louder than words." If someone talks about doing something for another I like to see them carry through rather than just use idle words.

MY FATHER

As I remember Father I was twenty-four when my dad died at age 68, so he must have been forty-four, when I was born. This leaves me with a memory of only an older man, partly bald, with graying hair and mustache. He wasn't ever physically active but always reading during the winter months. Never novels but more serious material as news and congressional records. I don't recall his punishing any of his ten children but I was in great awe of him and a stern look from him would quiet the room whether gathered around the long dining table or just sitting around.

Even though he lived in Ireland until he was around nineteen years of age he did not have much of an Irish brogue. However, when he was road supervisor these were the words he was often heard to say, "If ye men are going to get any work done today, ye had better get busy." Only once did I hear him speak Gaelic. That was when his cousin, Bill Powers came to buy part of our place.

It must have taken a great deal of courage and forethought for my father to leave Ireland and go to Boston where his two older brothers and a sister had already gone to live. It was never clear to us how he happened to go to Baltimore where he met my mother. However, when I went to look up the genealogy of the Lee Family I found a hundred or more Lee names in Baltimore.

In Dad's younger years he must have had great ambitions and good thinking as he left the mine in Butte, Montana to Homestead in the Flathead Valley near Columbia Falls, Montana. In 1881 there was no town and only a few neighbors. Though he did not work over six or seven years in the mines in Butte he did not escape miners consumption or asthma. Today it perhaps would be called emphysema. He tried to better his health by going to Arizona several Winters. Mother went with him. The winter of 1922-23 he suffered Angina on the way home.

It was his ingenuity that gave us running water in the eight room home he had built in 1909 from timber cut off the land along the mountain. He had the water piped from a spring at the foot of the mountains, three quarters of a mile away. To keep the water from freezing the water was left to run constantly down the hillside into the garden. This icy slope furnished us great fun when we took off the cellar door and all climbed aboard.

There was no electricity or telephone but this spring water made it possible for a modern bath and hot and cold water.

While in high school Dad spent several weeks in town with my two brothers while he was assessing property for the County Assessor. Because of his asthmatic condition I never saw him do much hard work around the farm. My four older brothers did most of the farming. However, the summer before he died he was road supervisor for a road crew building a road around Lake McDonald in Glacier Park. I can still see him on top of a road grader turning the wheel as I drove the car to pick him up on Friday evening.

There were three lakes on our farm near the mountains and Dad had stocked the deep lake with Rainbow Trout. Nearly every Thursday evening or Friday morning he would catch enough fish for our Friday dinner. He liked to fish and hunt. I never cared very much for fish and how disgusted he was with Gennie, my Sister-in-law and myself when we ate only a small part of the Dolly Vardon, he had caught and fried. He furnished the family food with deer and elk gotten at Hungary Horse on the South Fork.

In 1907 he went back to Ireland to visit his father. He brought back potatoes which were planted and saved for seed. He brought back an ivy plant which grew to such length that it almost circled the room.

He whittled some fans during the winter months. Two of them now are with Mildred Lee Gregory, my niece.

He was not a man to show much affection and the only time he kissed me was the day before he died when I was leaving to go back to Somers, Montana to teach.

MY MOTHER

The most outstanding characteristic of Mama was how hard she worked. Up early in the morning, finding the coffee for breakfast, frying bacon and potatoes or occasionally hot cakes and never stopping except for a few minutes nap in the afternoon. In the spring it was planting a huge garden as she sold many hundred dollars of vegetables in the summer. On Friday they were gathered, washed and bunched ready to be peddled in Columbia Falls on Saturday. Between planting and harvesting there was weeding. Hoeing and of course the moving the water sprinkler from place to place. The onion patch in front is most vivid to me as that is where Theresa and I were allocated to keep the weeds from growing. How generous Mama was with those vegetables she worked so hard to raise. No town visitor ever went away without being loaded down with vegetable or fruit when in season.

Winter or Summer I can see her carrying two buckets of milk from a barn 100 yards away from the milk house where it was separated and the cream put in the cooler to be made into butter. There was usually someone to turn the big wooden churn but Mama made the butter, first working out the butter milk very well and then patting into a mold with flower on one side. In the winter a carrot was grated and a little carrot juice added to the butter to give it color.

Mother's cooking was predominantly German. During the winter, sauerkraut and fresh pork with mashed potatoes was the usual Sunday dinner with apple or huckleberry pie for dessert, another favorite was potato cake made with grated raw potatoes. She also made sour cabbage and beans. In the spring we had tender lettuce with cream, sugar and vinegar dressing. As the lettuce got bigger it was wilted with bacon and hot vinegar dressing. We also had dandelion leaves.

Mother rarely measured anything and neither do Bill or Bob, who tried to give me the recipe. This might be somewhere near the ingredients:

4 cups raw grated potatoes(well drained)

1 t. baking powder
2 eggs
1/4 cup milk

Stir in enough flour to thicken slightly. Batter should be runny. Flatten out cake as it is put in a pan to fry.

Mother's family was her life and a great tribute was paid to her in her obituary. Mother talked very little about her early life, but I do remember saying that Dad went West sometime after they were married and that she didn't hear from him for some time because her Mother destroyed the letters he wrote. After several years, Dad wrote to the parish priest who contacted mother. Mother came out to Butte, Montana; But Grandmother wouldn't let her take Johanna, who perhaps was around six years old. Later on Grandmother did take Johanna on the train to Butte, but took the next train back to Baltimore. In 1886, Montana was considered a wild country. Mother never saw her mother again. A letter edged in black came in 1906 to tell of Grandmother's death. Mother and Dad went back to Baltimore and Boston in 1913 and brought back a cousin, Nora Doherty, who was not well.

MY EARLY YEARS

The first recollection I have of my life is being awakened by a loud knock at the door on Christmas Eve in 1903. I can still see my sister just two years older than I trying to carry two huge stuffed dolls into the room. Having been asleep on my mother's lap I was slow to realize it all, but getting the doll didn't compensate for having missed the candy the rest of the family enjoyed while I slept. Candy no doubt was a rare treat for a pioneer family of ten for that disappointment to make such a lasting impression on a child of three.

The two story log house which I was born became the birthplace of four of my sister's children. Though it is now torn down I can vividly picture every room of the house as I often stayed with my sister and husband when the winter snow became so deep that one mile and three quarter walk from our second home to Bad Rock School was more difficult than a Quarter mile to my sister's home. It is a coincidence that my Father's homestead was sold to Henry Matheisen, whose son, George, married my sister Kathryn (Kate) and their son Donald now lives on part of the place and still farms the field just south of the Bad Rock School. I attended this two room school until I graduated froth the eighth grade. I don't remember too much about my first teacher Amanda Ladenburg but how I loved Miss Rose Hart. She taught us the golden rule, good morals as well as the three R's. Phonics was then in vogue for reading skills and how ironic that

she some years later almost was fired from the Columbia Falls School because she was too old fashioned and didn't get with the new method of sight reading.

Like most country schools Bad Rock School was closed and the children were transported by bus to Columbia Falls School four miles away, and for a while the building was used to raise chickens and now it stands empty. Those school days were the happiest days of my life. The walk of one and three-fourth miles didn't seem a hardship even in winter. My sister and I each wore white angora bonnets. One day the teacher was surprised to see what looked like two bunny rabbits bobbing up and down in the snow at the old Brandenburg place. She didn't expect to see many children come to school that day because of the heavy snowfall. Our farm lay a mile and a half along the foot of the mountain and sometimes we didn't get as much snow near our house as other places. When the snow melted in the spring there were ponds of water in the fields and in the spring I can remember ice skating most of the way to school and at noon skating in the Brandenburg field with a Gilchrest boy who was also in the sixth grade.

School days, school day, good old golden rule day.

Yes, it was reading, writing, and arithmetic but not taught to the tune of a hickory stick. There were Christmas programs with songs in the first grade holding dolls. How well I remember my sister Kate, bringing my doll to school having dressed it up in red velvet with a white fur cap and a muff. All eyes were on me when I went to the door to take it from her. At Valentine's Day there was always a big box of home-made valentines. How we treasured a picture of a lamb, a kitten, or a flower that we could cut off and decorate on a white heart. One day we walked three miles to the Howell place to cut and paste these valentines. We never knew anything about Trick or Treat on Halloween but we wore costumes to school. On May day we would pick yellow bells and some purple shooting star flowers and fill home-made paper baskets and walk miles to hang them on a door knob and try and run away before the door was opened. One farmer didn't think it much of a surprise and surprised us by coming at us with a shot gun. Though we colored hard boiled chicken eggs we never talked about an Easter Bunny.

Country School houses were the center of social life with Christmas programs and basket socials. I was told to be a good sport if some older man bought my basket. Sure enough I was put to the test but the fried chicken and cake, etc. was not relished by me.

One year a minister and his wife were the teachers. The two rooms came together each morning for a reading from the Bible. This I thought was great as I got to see my three older brothers and sister. One morning instead of Bible readings there was a discussion of who bent the poker used in our pot belly stove. No one ever learned who did it for those big boys would rather risk being whipped within an inch of their lives than squeal.

Physical punishment or so called whipping must not have occurred often at school or at home as I have no memory of this happening. In my Twenty-one years of teaching it has been my experience that farm children are the easiest to conform and work at their assignment.

I think it was my seventh grade teacher whose reading each morning struck a note that triggered the desire to acquire a higher education. It was often the custom to start the school with a chapter from some book but this teacher read articles that were not from a novel. One stormy day with only three pupils the teacher read a complete novel.

"Wait until your father gets home." For two months that dread was before me because I was too curious about the wheel that went around in his watch my brother was holding and stuck my finger in it. As often happens it was all forgotten about by everyone but me when dad arrived back from his native land of Ireland.

As I was the youngest I had no other name than Babe until I was to enter school. "What name are you going to call yourself," my oldest brother said. I answered, "Annie." "Annie, Nanny Goat." he teased. That did it. I dropped the Ana from Anastasia and wrote my name just Stasia. I learned later that my father's sister Mary, came to live with her Aunt Anastasia Kennedy when she came from Ireland to Boston in 1878. She lived to be 104 years of age.

We only lived a few years in this one story log cabin before my father built an eight room house with a bathroom. The logs had been cut and sawed in lumber on the home place. Just a few memories of that time; a letter edged in black telling of my mother's mother death in Baltimore, my going to sleep behind the kitchen stove and every one out looking for me, my sister's white gloves missing when she was to be confirmed and someone opening a visitors purse and finding them. Irish cousin's coming from Butte and one of them giving me money every time he saw me. Of course I gave him the opportunity often until my father put a stop to it.

What a great house warming was planned. My father had piped water from a spring three quarter miles away and we had the only bathroom in the valley.

I remember the plumber as he became our special friend. I also remember the terrible accident for which I was responsible. Gracie Sherman was visiting me from Kalispell and one morning having slept late attempted to serve her breakfast. I recall we had wieners which we seldom had and as she was hopping around selecting her wiener I started to pour the coffee. She bumped my elbow and the coffee spilled down her neck.. The painter and carpenters came in to all give advice. No one thought it was too bad a burn but she carried the scar the rest of her life.

Such baking and preparation for that house warming. People came from everywhere. The only time I ever know for my mother to have hired help. Later that year was an occasion for another big gathering as my oldest sister was married in the Catholic Church and the whole neighborhood

was invited. My most vivid memory was walking the floor in the kitchen with a toothache where Mrs. Prestine was walking alongside of me with her hand over her heart. My brother, Tom, who had left home after quarreling with my father had come home and we had all gone to Kalispell to have our picture taken. All twelve of us.

My mother and father made a trip back to Baltimore and Boston in the winter of 1913 bringing back cousin, Nora Doherty to improve her health. How I did enjoy her. The living room rug lost some of its roses that year as that is where I learned to do the Waltz and the two step. I was really too young to be going to dances at the Grange Hall or to Nutters Hall but with four Brothers to look after me and give me a whirl whenever they saw me sitting out I gained my mothers reluctant consent. "When You Wore A Tulip and I Wore a Big Red Rose" was a favorite.

I don't know why Nora and I chose cucumber sandwiches for breakfast but it seemed all the family had eaten by the time we came downstairs and we went to the garden and picked the cucumber. I wonder if I ate too many then as now they make me very ill.

Irish Soda Bread. How good it tasted with jelly and very strong Irish tea. This was what we were treated with when we went to visit Bill and Mary Powers who drove from Butte with buggy and horse and bought part of my father's farm. I guess Bill Powers thought farming would be better than working in the mines in Butte.

We had a little black Mare named, Jennie, whom my brothers would enter in the races on the Fourth of July. Instead of Jennie, I was given old slow poke Charlie to ride to bring in the cows from the pasture along the mountains. Our dog, "Shep, a collie always went along and helped to roundup a stray cow. It wasn't until I was in high school that I got to ride Jennie and how startled I was when I started down the mile lane to our house to have Jennie light out at her top speed and there was no checking her. My heart was in my mouth as we neared the closed gate. Jennie veered to the left but I was one shaky gal when I dismounted to open the gate.

The week the Thresher came out to our farm was a highlight of the year. Most of the crew were neighbors and Mother served a banquet at every meal. My sister, Theresa, and I would climb on the grain wagons and ride from the Threshing machine to the granary, often munching yellow transparent apples. Often the men would try to give us a bad time and threaten to put us in a sack and dump us down the chute. The men worked late and it was a job for the kids to take cold lemonade, sandwiches, and cookies or cake to the fields in the mid-afternoon.

With four older brother and an older sister at home I never did much outside chores. The first time I tried to milk a cow she kicked the bucket over and that ended my milking experience. My chores were to keep the wood boxes full for both the heating and the job I hated the most was to keep the bathroom clean. I was thankful for my older brothers except on Saturday night when I

had to clean the bathtub after each one. Talk about a ring around the bathtub. Each brother left a big one because of the dirt accumulated from working in the fields or woods. I found a rag soaked in kerosene to do the quickest and best job.

My mother's garden was no doubt the biggest perhaps the best in the community. Along with having the know how she had a sprinkling system that furnished water from the spring at the foot of the mountain. I pulled many a weed in the onion patch and when those vegetables were mature I helped to wash and bunch carrots, beets, onions, and turnips. That money furnished us with clothes and luxuries that we would otherwise not have. How hard my mother worked and what a good person she was! Not often punishing always helping.

When my father was at home he was always reading, sitting in a rocking chair in the dining room near the stove. Occasionally he would play solo with my Brothers. A look from him was all that was needed to bring us to time. We were expected to do our chores and be more or less quiet.

The fourth of July was a time for a picnic at the Billie Burns place in Bad Rock Canyon. On election years there was always the politicians. The fourth I remember most was when Theresa stood in the grass where my brothers were cutting hay to put on the buggy for the horses. A scythe cut Theresa's leg to the bone and she carried the scar the rest of her days.

I should have learned to swim as we had three lakes on our place, one stocked with rainbow salmon, that furnished us fish for the Friday's except in the winter. The lake where we did paddle around in was open to boys driving out four miles from town to swim. No swimming suits in those days and no girls ever went near that lake in the evenings.

It was fresh fish in the warmer month and smoked or salted whitefish the rest of the year. The whitefish caught were brought home in sacks full from the mouth of Whitefish Lake. There were too many to be caught with a hook and line so perhaps a little illegal seining must have been carried on. Our kitchen was a mess for days when all those fish were scaled cleaned and either smoked or salted down. I can't remember eating many of those fish. I guess I just never have been too crazy about fish.

Pig butchering time saw the kitchen the same as making lard, pickled pig feet, head cheese, bacon and hams prepared for smoking. Mother fried pork chops and put them in a crock and covered them with lard.

The cellar under our house was a storage place for hundred and hundreds of jars of plums, cherries, huckleberries, gooseberries, and some peaches, and pears, canned tomatoes, and beans. There were crocks of plum butter, apple butter, raspberry, and strawberry jam. Barrels of home-made sauerkraut and pickles. With potatoes, cabbage, rutabaga, carrots in the root cellar. There was always plenty to eat.

Many of our neighbors cut cakes of ice from our deep lake or fish lake as it was called. These cakes of ice were drawn on a go-devil sled and stored in sawdust in our milk house. It kept our milk and cream cool in the summer and furnished the ice for that ice cream we enjoyed nearly every Sunday.

It seems that every Sunday was a big gathering at our house. First it was my brothers' girl friends, along with my sister Kates family. Then later my brothers and their wives. I always had to wait for the second setting of the table.

Mountains huckleberries are larger than the coast berries and may be either red or almost black. They vary in size from a pea to the size of a cherry. These are very tart and have a flavor all their own. They make wonderful pies and an experienced huckleberry pie baker know that they must put plenty of flour or the juice will ooze out all over the stove. They were usually canned without sugar. The juice was thickened and cooled before putting in a pie shell. Huckleberry's keep for several days when we went for a three or four day camping trip.

The trip most memorable was the one up the North Fork of the Flathead River. Eight or ten of us started early in the morning in a wagon up a very rough and narrow road that stopped down a steep bank. When nearing Canyon Creek we girls were frightened and got out and walked. The bank was just as steep and frightening when coming back over the same road but we took our chances in the wagon.

In 1914 it wasn't the custom for girls to wear pants. Some had overalls but I didn't have any or the money to buy a pair. I rummage through my brothers trousers and found one pair that fit but they had a tear in the seat. I thought this no problem so sewed them up and thought I was all fixed for the trip. There were a couple of things wrong. The trousers were not only torn but worn in the seat and my rear filled them out more than my brother Bob. Result the cloth wouldn't hold the stitches and every day they would pull apart. Climbing over log on the mountain side put greatest stress on that worn out cloth. In the middle of the afternoon I was begging safety pins. When trying to pin me together my sister-in-law was laughing so hard that she missed the cloth and the pin was going into my skin.

My pant splitting was the joke of the evening and the next morning while the rest were eating bacon and hot cakes. I was in the covered wagon trying to sew those darn pants together. To add to my chagrin and embarrassment my brother Tom lowered the wagon top on me. My predicament was that we only brought along the clothes we wore.

When cars were more plentiful our huckleberry expedition would be a one day affair. Leaving in the early hours and returning when the shadows were long. The evening ride home with the mountains always in view is such a pleasant memory. I don't ever remember not having found

enough huckleberries to fill many milk bucket. If we found a good patch we would often go several days in succession.

With the berries put in a cool place they would stay firm for days. This is not true of raspberries which we always canned immediately. One day my sister, Theresa, and I canned one hundred quarts of huckleberries. One hundred jars to wash and sterilize, be filled with berries and water and then place in the boiler of hot water for several minutes. To keep that water boiling it meant poking wood in the stove regularly. This night might not have been so uncomfortable if we had had an electric stove and air conditioning.

Bears are also fond of huckleberries and they seem to find the best patches. The last time I picked huckleberries along the North Fork Road I imagined I heard a bear behind every log.

There must not have been a Catholic Church building in Columbia Falls when I was born as John Sullivan vows that he and Eve were both baptized in a saloon. From inquiries I believe it was really the room above the saloon. Just how often we had church service I do not recall but it was not every Sunday as our priest had to come from Whitefish. Receiving instruction for our confirmation was only on Saturday for three months in the summer. I never missed a Saturday even though I gave up a trip to attend. For perfect attendance I received a white prayer book which I still have today.

COLLEGE & HARVEY

In the spring of 1926 all the teachers of the Pablo Schools in Montana were invited to the McAlear Ranch for Saturday dinner. Ruth McAlear was my sixth grade pupil. Murl McAlear was reported an outstanding student in high school. Rex was in the third or fourth grade. Earl was attending Polson High School and on the basketball team. Harvey had just returned home from the service. Freda and Faye were through school and helping at home.

After a most sumptuous and delicious dinner we took a sleigh ride to their other ranch for hay. During the evening while playing rook I asked Harvey sitting next to me if I could show him a card trick, "Sure" a flip of the cards and they were all on the floor. "It's pick-up."

Little did I know that Saturday pointed to my future life. Murl delivered a note from Harvey inviting me to hear the Montana University Glee Club singing in Polson. More notes and invitations to shows at Polson. There was to be an early horseback ride in June before my brother, Jim, would come to drive me back to our 200 acre ranch four miles from Columbia Falls. Either the lame horse I was to ride got sick or was needed. Any way with no telephone Harvey had to ride to the teacherage to express his regrets.

I spent the summer at the ranch until I registered at University of Montana for some summer courses. There were letters and telephone calls and a short meeting at Polson before I boarded the Klondike to cross the Flathead Lake to Somers where I got a ride to Columbia Falls in time to be bridesmaid for Bill and Della's wedding.

In September, Mr. Hausen the Superintendent of District offered me the 3rd and 4th grade at St Ignatius which is about 20 miles from Pablo. Harvey was able to borrow his father's car to visit me frequently. It was on one of those visits at Evaro Hills that he proposed. Because of our difference in religion and my feeling that his family were antagonistic toward the Catholic Religion I thought it wise to think it over.

Visits continued until school was out and I went to Portland, Oregon to be with my sister Bee, for the summer. When I returned to my school at St. Ignatius Harvey met the boat at Polson and I visited the McAlear home. On a lovely moonlit night we became engaged. Harvey had changed his mind about farming and decided to attend the University of Montana and study law. After seeing how hard my mother worked on our farm the last thing I wanted to be was a farmer's wife. I had hoped to attend college as soon as I could save up enough money. It is hard to believe I could have \$500 from my \$1,000 yearly salary.

Harvey had saved some money during the year and with help from Freda he was able to get through the first year. Money was an item for both of us but Harvey was able to get to St. Ignatius and I to Missoula several times during the year. Grandma McAlear was very opposed to any type of alcohol even the vanilla she used was minus alcohol. When visiting the family where Harvey was staying in Missoula I accepted a small glass of wine. What a lecture I got walking for hours in the rain on the streets of Missoula. I thought our engagement was about to end.

When school was out I spent the summer at the ranch. I loaned Dad my saving of \$500 to help buy a Ford car. We went to Whitefish to pick up the car. It was with fear and trembling that I drove that 14 miles home. The only experience I had in driving was the few lessons Harvey had given when driving from Pablo to St Ignatius.

I spent the summer at the ranch where Bob, wife Hattie and daughter Mildred were staying. Dad was supervisor for the road crew at Pablo Bridge in the North Fork. Bob drove us up there several times. Harvey was finding what work he could to save money to go to college. When I wrote him that I had driven the binder for my brother-in-law, George Matheisen, because he couldn't find help, Harvey called and offered to help but by that time all the grain had been cut.

In September I took the train from Columbia Falls to Somers where I boarded the Klondike and crossed the Flathead Lake to Polson where I caught a train to Missoula. Harvey met me and helped me with my luggage to Mrs. Mason's where I had obtained a room near the college. Mrs.

Mason was the mother of Mrs. Buckhouse with whom I had stayed with for 2 years at St. Ignatius. My roommate in Missoula was Leonida Zigan of Great Falls. She not only became my Sorority (Sigma Kappa) sister but a long life friend.

Harvey and Earl, his brother, were splitting a night shift at the Bonner saw mill on the green chain. They had a small apartment and managed to get by until Earl dropped out of school. Harvey found a job working for Mrs. Forbes who had a big house and was alone. He took care of the furnace and did some of the cooking, washing dishes, etc. On the Sunday's when she had a family dinner he waited on table which seemed to bother him a great deal.

At the end of the second quarter my money ran out even though I ate at the cafeteria and did without breakfast and ate very little dinner. Mother and Dad were at Yuma, Arizona where Bee joined them. They loaned me \$100. It was at this time that I had the good fortune to get a call from Maude Walsh McCrea to come and live with them and help with the work and taking care of Jimmy as she was expecting a second child. Maude's folks were pioneer at Columbia Falls and good friends of our family. My stay with them was a most delightful time and was only a block from where Harvey was staying. (We walked to the University together which was over a mile.)

Not having a car or much money for shows or other entertainment we went for long walks up Hellgate or Rattlesnake Canyon. In the evening the Mason parlor was usually vacant. Harvey had been pledged Sigma Alpha Epsilon his first year. Leonida Zigan, Ann Cromwell Needham, and I were invited into Sigma Kappa at the same time. Ann made up a skit about the Three Little Pigs. Since I was usually with Harvey I didn't attend many of my sorority functions. One particular Saturday night when the sorority sisters were entertaining one of the Fraternities they made an issue of my being there. This did not set well with Harvey. I was in a dilemma. What strange ways things have of working out. Believe it or not I came down with a terrible cold. Neither Harvey or the girls would believe it until they saw me at the hospital. I had frozen the tip of my nose while walking home from the University and I recall the doctor teasing me about that.

CHRISTMAS

Midnight Mass was special to me with the beautiful Christmas music, the candle flickering, and all snug and warm inside. Riding to church in a two seated cutter with the sleigh bell ringing and the snow flakes gently falling across our faces.

Until my Mother and Father died in April of 1924, one week apart, I can't recall ever having

spent a Christmas anywhere but at the home ranch. After I was married and moved to Chester, Montana we spent every Christmas there except one where we went by train to Columbia Falls, borrowed my brother's car, and drove to Polson to spend Christmas with the McAlear's. The thing I remembered most was trying to warm up the house after we got home. Though both stoves were burning on high the heat was instantly cooled before it left the stove.

We vowed we would never try a Christmas away from home again but after eight years we seem to forget and anyway Great Falls was only 90 miles away. Remembering the coldness of our other journey my husband cleaned out the furnace and filled it with plenty of coal and hired our neighbor man to keep the furnace going while we were away. That was our undoing as we were not gone over an hour when Ray Stronich noticed a light in the basement. When he went to investigate the light he saw it was a fire on the ceiling of the basement. He called the volunteer fire department and they got the hose on the hydrant but no water came. Someone had rolled up the hose wet after the last fire and water wouldn't go through. The neighbors all came and formed a bucket line from the house across the street. The fireman had called the Shelby town Depot where we were to have purchased tickets to Great Falls. When my husband went to buy tickets the agent asked his name and informed him his house was on fire and they couldn't get water to it. I had vision of going back to a charred home and my Christmas present, my first electric refrigerator, dropping through the floor to the basement. The house was still standing and the refrigerator though a smoky brown was still standing in the kitchen. A fireman remembered a discarded water hose and when it was hooked up they soon had the fire out. Friends turned out in great numbers to save that house in freezing weather. We had Christmas dinner, with some wonderful friends and found an apartment to move into for three months.

ADDENDUM

To raise two children after a divorce Stasia became a realtor and was listed in Who's Who in Oregon. Later she returned to Montana to teach for four years and at the age of 61 she moved to Fallon, Nevada to teach 4th grade, but she was required to waive teacher's retirement. After ten years the waiver was cancelled and upon her retirement she was honored with a "day" and returned to her friends and McMinnville. She was one of the original residents of Hillside Manor and renewed and made many more friendships before she played her last bridge game, wrote her last card and did her last kind deed when she left her life on earth swiftly and painlessly on March 25, 1991 at the age of 91.

The above Life Story of Anastasia Lee McAlear was given to the Broken Mountains Genealogical Society by Allen L McAlear - Gallatin Block # 5, Box 1066 - Bozeman, Mt. 59715.