

RECOLLECTIONS II

1952 - 1970

BY

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Chapter 1

Arrival in New York

Sailing from Rotterdam to New York in September 1952 brought an end to one period in my life and meant the start of a totally different one. The time in London with Helbert Wagg & Co., Limited had in many ways been the equivalent of going to college and the very active London social scene had exposed me to people from many different origins and persuasions. All this experience had been a tremendous education. Now I was going to be put to the test of putting all I had learned into practice in New York.

In London I had left behind Caroline McDougal Howard, a young lady of whom I had grown very fond, to the point that we had talked about our future. Even though she expected to return to the States when her father's tour of duty at the American Embassy came to an end, she could not commit herself to waiting to see how I would do in New York. This was understandable. Several years later I learned that she had married a wealthy titled Englishman.

The nine day voyage across the Atlantic turned out to be extremely pleasant. I shared a cabin with three American college students who were returning home after a summer in Europe. It turned out that there were many more such students on board ship. My roommates immediately introduced me to a large number of them and they included me in all their activities.



Party in our cabin 394 on Thursday September 11, 1952

Even though we travelled Tourist Class, the food was excellent. Here is the dinner menu for Friday September 12, 1952.

HOLLAND-AMERICA LINE
S.S. "RYNDAM"

DINNER

TOURIST CLASS

Friday, September 12th 1952

MENU

Herring Salad

Consommé Bourgeoise

Baked Codfish, Home Style

Roast Roulade of Pork with Gravy
French Beans in Butter
Mashed - Roast Potatoes

Holland Lettuce - Paprika Dressing
Greengages Compôte

Barquette d'Ananas - Chocolate Ice-Cream

Assorted Fresh Fruit

Rolls - Butter

Coffee

The ship's arrival in New York harbor early in the morning of September 15 was of course incredible. It is impossible to forget the impact of sailing past the Statue of Liberty and seeing the skyline of lower Manhattan.

It had been arranged with my new employer, Rubber Corporation of America, that one of their people, Dick Powell, would meet me on the dock. Since we did not know each other it had been agreed that he would try to find my luggage on the dock and wait there for me while I cleared customs on board ship and I could come ashore. This worked out fine and soon we were on the subway heading for uptown Manhattan. Dick had arranged that I could temporarily use the apartment of a friend of his who was out of the country and this gave me a chance to get myself organized and start getting familiar with the subway system because that would be my primary means of transportation. I recall going to a bank branch in the neighborhood to cash some traveler's checks and I was so nervous that they asked me to sign several times before they agreed to cash my checks!

Rubber Corporation of America, or RC as they were known, had its office in an old non air conditioned building in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn. RC imported liquid latex in bulk in ship's tanks from rubber plantations in Indonesia. The price of liquid latex was directly related to the price at which natural rubber was traded on the Singapore, New York and London commodity exchanges. In an adjacent building was their plant where compounds based on liquid latex were manufactured as well as some of the early versions of plastic sheeting.

RC was owned primarily by the Merton family. William Merton was President; Richard Merton was Vice President while Alfred Merton did not seem to do much more than PR. There was a financial connection with Helbert Wagg in London and a manufacturing connection with a company named Revertex in England. I soon learned that the father of Dick Powell, who had met me at the dock, was a director of Revertex in England and that explained perhaps why Dick, an Englishman, was working at RC.

It was important to get up to speed on how things were done in this country and so I started in the accounting and payroll departments. An interesting experience was handing out pay envelopes in the plant. Whenever anyone felt that we had not paid them the exact hours they worked I would hear about it right there and then. Soon I was given an office adjacent to Richard Merton and I started tracking latex contracts for him.

Meanwhile, I had found a room at the West Side YMCA at 5 West 63rd Street, a block from Central Park West and walking distance from the Columbus Circle subway station. While small, the room was perfectly suitable for my needs. I had a telephone and bought a small radio. There was a cafeteria in the basement but I soon learned that the only half way decent meal served there was breakfast. Since there were lots of little eating places in the neighborhood that was no problem. For lunch Dick Powell and I would usually go to a little hole in the wall near our office where a German couple cooked whatever they had on hand that day. My starting pay was \$300 per month and I soon found that by living at the YMCA I was spending relatively little money and so I was quickly able to buy some suits and other necessities.

Chapter 2

Getting into the Swing of Things

The YMCA turned out to be the perfect spot to be. A great location and a terrific place to meet people. So it did not take long before a small group was formed, later named The International Club, consisting of a young Frenchman, a young man of German descent from Argentina, a Mexican and myself. We got together frequently to talk about things to do. We planned out of town trips and searched out dances in town.



Dan, Claude Erulin, Gert Barsdorf and I don't remember!

The Frenchman, Claude Erulin, soon found that there was a weekly dance, a “bal musette”, sponsored by the local French community. Then we learned about a weekly dance at the YWCA in Midtown Manhattan. So it was at one of the dances at the YWCA that the four of us met Beverly Dobbyn and her sister Barbara. The story goes that I first danced with Barbara but then switched my attention for the rest of the evening to Beverly. This was about October 15, one month after my arrival in New York.

The membership of our International Club grew and it was soon decided that Beverly and Barbara could be honorary members. I recall that the four fellows were invited to dinner at Beverly's parents' house; perhaps it was for Thanksgiving. Trips were arranged to a cabin at Bear Mountain, up the Hudson River Valley, and it seemed that there was always a party somewhere.



Gathering at the Bear Mountain cabin



Party at someone's house



Party at Bev's house



A more formal party

At work I learned more about the business each day, including the connection with Rubber Cultuur Maatschappij Amsterdam, or RCMA as they were known. That was the Dutch firm that controlled certain rubber plantations on the island of Sumatra and from whom we purchased the liquid latex. I also went down to the docks to be present when the latex was being pumped from the ship into tank cars and tank trucks. There is nothing like seeing the actual operations when later you are called upon to assemble the needed railcars and trucks to be at the right place at the right time. Tank cars and tank trucks were then dispatched to customers like Sponge Rubber Products, Goodyear, etc. to match sales contracts we had with them.

Gradually I was spending more time with Beverly, be it in the city or at her parent's house. At Queen's College, Beverly had been awarded a medal in table tennis so we frequently stopped by a table tennis club in Manhattan. Fortunately I got along well with her parents and her father was more than happy to introduce me to Early Times, his favorite bourbon, which usually meant that I would stay for dinner. Since Beverly was a secretary at Architectural Forum with offices in Rockefeller Center in Manhattan we often met in town after work, particularly on Fridays when we would go to a bar named Headquarters. The bar manager frequently had free tickets to plays that did not have a full house so we saw a lot of plays, some good and some less so.

My first American Christmas dinner was at the Dobbyn house. A complete turkey dinner with all the trimmings was quite a treat and very different from what I had experienced growing up. That was followed by a New Year's Eve party with a French family living in an apartment on Central Park East. Since this was a formal affair Beverly wore a long evening dress and I my tuxedo. I vividly recall that it started snowing during the evening and the view from the apartment looking out over Central Park covered with snow was incredible.



Spring snow in New York
Barbara, Dan, Beverly



Easter 1953
Barbara, Dan, Beverly

During the early summer of 1953 Beverly and I frequently went to Jones Beach on Long Island and sometimes to the Hamptons. As my skin was not used to the strong sun, I managed to get some really serious sun burns, including one time when the backs of my knees were burned so badly that I had to stay home from work for several days!

In July 1953, Beverly and Barbara decided to drive down to Miami and spend some time there. I hitched a ride with them and on the way down they dropped me off in Washington DC, not realizing that they had dropped me in an almost totally black section. Fortunately a car stopped soon and the black driver asked me where I was going. I gave him the address of some people I had met on the ship. On the way there he very kindly explained to me that it had not been a very good idea for a young white person to be dropped off in that section of town. After a few days in DC I took the train down to Fayetteville, North Carolina. Nearby Fort Bragg was the home of the 82nd Airborne Division, where I stayed with Colonel Draper and his wife. This couple, whom we had met in London when he was with the U.S. Embassy there, had sponsored me as part of my visa application. It so happened that while I was there, there was a practice parachute jump of part of the division which was a most incredible sight.

After several days I took the train down to Miami where I met up with the Dobbyn girls. By now my skin was much more used to the strong sun so I started to look pretty healthy!



Dan



Beverly and Dan

The drive back to New York was the longest and hottest trip you can imagine but we made it! In order to economize, the three of us shared a motel room at our overnight stops.

Meanwhile, it had become clear to me that I did not know enough about the American banking system nor about Commodity Exchanges so I took courses in “Money and Banking” as well as “Commodity Exchanges and Futures Trading” at College of the City of New York (CCNY). Attending classes in the evening made for some very long days but this brought me up to speed on how these systems functioned and this turned out to be very useful later on.

Chapter 3

Things are Changing

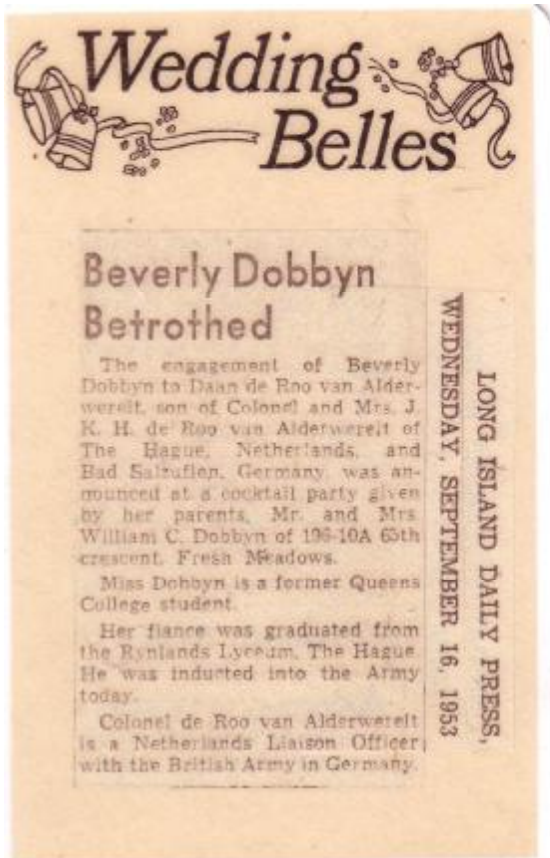
Towards the end of the summer of 1953, I moved out of the YMCA into a small apartment in a building at the corner of Bank Street and Greenwich Avenue in Manhattan. At least I had some more room than I did at the Y but it was still pretty small and not air conditioned.

And so one fateful day my mail included a notice from the draft board to report for my preinduction medical and other tests. The fact that I was not a citizen did not make a difference nor did the fact that I presented evidence that I had been rejected for military service in the Netherlands. Because of scoliosis (curvature of the spine), I was classified 1A but for non combat duty only and instructed to report for induction on September 16, 1953, exactly a year and a day after my arrival in New York.

Beverly and I had already been talking about getting married but now I was facing two years of military service. This really produced some serious choices for us. I could refuse to serve but then once I left the country I would never be allowed back into the States. That was simply not acceptable. I could go into the Army but then we would have no idea when we could get married. We made the decision that we would announce our engagement before I had to report for duty and then hope that we could get married when I had completed my basic training. So, invitations went out for a cocktail party and buffet supper, to be given by Beverly's parents, at which our engagement would be announced. The date was September 12, 4 days before I was to report.



Engagement party September 12, 1953



Engagement party September 12, 1953

My office was not happy about my leaving because I had become very useful as the side kick to the VP, taking a lot of work off his desk. The office staff contributed to a collection and I was presented with a farewell gift.

I was able to store my few belongings at Beverly's parents' house and after long and sad farewells I left early in the morning of September 16 to report for duty at the induction center in lower Manhattan.

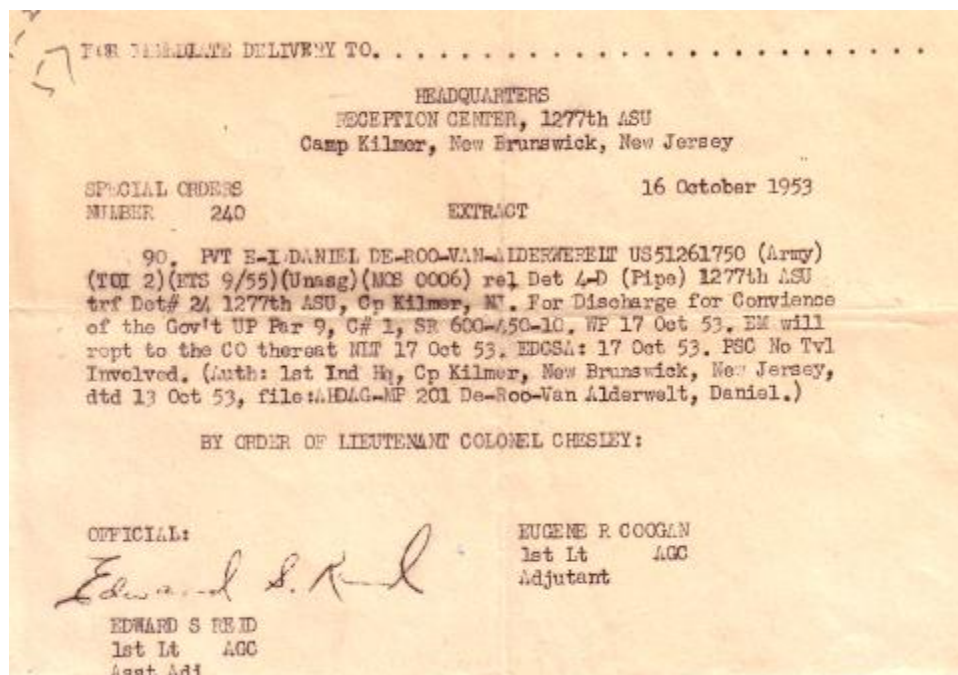
Chapter 4

Camp Kilmer, New Brunswick, New Jersey

It was a pretty sad bunch of guys with whom I arrived at Camp Kilmer. A lot of them were from the Bronx and other less desirable parts of New York City and I really felt like an outsider. After issuance of uniforms and other gear and assignment to specific barracks, there was yet another medical exam. It was at this time that a young army doctor picked me out of the line up for a more detailed examination. He had noticed my scoliosis and tendency of my arches to drop and a short time later he put me on limited duty. This did not make me particularly popular with the other recruits or the NCOs as it meant that I did not any longer have to participate in forced marches, KP or guard duty. Instead, I was put to work sorting mail. After a while, relatives were allowed to visit the camp so Beverly came to see me several times and I was able to tell her much more than I had been able to do in letters.

Only recently did I find the letters I had written her from Camp Kilmer. They were way in the back of a box that contained mostly old pictures. Rereading those letters enabled me to write these few paragraphs because I had forgotten many of the details. In one letter, I wrote Beverly: "... this afternoon I was interviewed to determine my job in the army but they did not disclose anything other than the fact that my score on the officer's candidate school test was one of the highest and my aptitude test score was at the top limit"

After about another week I received instructions to report to the camp hospital where I was assigned to a bed and simply waited to see what was going to happen. So a day or so later, several doctors, including the one that had taken me out of the line up, examined me and asked a lot of questions. I must admit that I really played up my wartime episode of diphtheria and subsequent paralysis. In a separate conversation with my doctor, he said to me "You don't really want to be here, do you?" and I of course agreed with him. What followed was a formal hearing at which it was decided that I would be discharged for medical reasons or as they say in official language "for convenience of the Government". I was then promptly transferred from my detachment 4-D (incoming recruits) to detachment 24 (preparation for discharge). The special orders for that were dated October 16, 1953, my 24th birthday and exactly 30 days after I first reported for duty.



Special Orders

Again, I found myself in unusual company because I was now in a barracks full of veterans who had just come back from combat in Korea and were being discharged. More paperwork needed to be done which included a paper I had to sign that I had not been hurt while in service and that I was not entitled to any veteran's benefits except a \$100 one time payment and my duffle bag full of uniforms.

What a happy bus ride it was back to New York City. It was just a few days over a month since I had initially reported for duty. Once in town I immediately called Beverly at her office and we met for lunch at the Holland House in Rockefeller Center. I was still in uniform and had not had a shower for a while but we were very happy to see each other.

At a much later date, I received my certificate of honorable discharge, which did not mention anything about the convenience of the Government. The local draft board reclassified me as 1CDis(charged) and in June 1954 again reclassified me now as 4F, which they should have done in the first place.

Chapter 5

A New Phase

While the first year in New York had been a time of exploring and partying, all of a sudden I had to become much more responsible and start planning for a different, married life. I went back to Rubber Corporation and picked up my job where I had left off. That was a bit awkward since the staff had given me a present when I left only five weeks earlier.

Fortunately, there was enough room in the Dobbyn house so that for a while I could have my own room there. Beverly and I quickly started work on our wedding plans. We wanted the wedding to take place before Christmas but since the Dobbyn's were not regular churchgoers there was no obvious choice of a church. Then, when driving into Connecticut on a weekend we saw a nice small church in Greenwich. This was the First Presbyterian Church and we were able to speak to the minister, the Rev. Bates. After answering all his questions, he said that he would be happy to marry us. Meanwhile we had also noted that across the street from the church was an establishment called the Pickwick Arms Hotel, a perfect place for a wedding breakfast after the ceremony. November 21st turned out to be workable for all concerned and since this was only a matter of weeks away, we needed to get invitations out quickly and attend to all the other details.

Mr. and Mrs. William C. Dobbyn

request the honour of your presence

at the marriage of their daughter

Beverly Grace

to

Mr. Daniel M. O. de Roo van Alderwerelt

on Saturday, the twenty-first of November

Nineteen hundred and fifty-three

at half after eleven o'clock

First Presbyterian Church

and afterwards at the

Pickwick Arms Hotel

Greenwich, Connecticut

November 21st came quickly and I seem to recall that it was a chilly and somewhat foggy day. Everything went beautifully with Beverly's sister Barbara as maid of honor and Gert Barsdorf, a co-founder of The International Club, as best man. Since my whole family was in Europe and Beverly's nearest relatives were in Canada it was a very small wedding, perhaps 25 guests. My family in Europe did record their good wishes, including a speech by my father, on a 78-RPM record, which was played at the wedding breakfast.



Gert delivering his toast
 From left to right: Bill Dobbyn, Grace Dobbyn,
 Gert Barsdorf, Beverly, Dan, Barbara Dobbyn



Leaving Pickwick Arms



Ready to hit the road!

For our honeymoon, we had chosen to go to Washington DC. The highlight of an otherwise unremarkable train ride was the fact that Beverly got into a conversation with Eleanor Roosevelt in the ladies' room. We kept our stay in Washington relatively short because the weather did not cooperate and we wanted to get back to New York for Thanksgiving at the Dobbyn house.

We were able to live at the Dobbyn house while looking for an apartment. So one evening we settled down in the living room to chat with Beverly's parents after we had been out to a cocktail party and supper. As the conversation progressed, I became very uncomfortable because my throat felt very scratchy and started to close up. I went upstairs to lie down on our bed and that was the last I remembered. Fortunately, Beverly came upstairs to see why I had disappeared and when she found me I was turning blue. Bill Dobbyn, Beverly's father, had the presence of mind to pick up the phone and call their doctor at his home a block away. He apparently understood what was going on because he came over immediately, rushed up the stairs and injected me with a very potent antidote that opened up my throat so that I could breathe again but it also gave me a terrible headache. Beverly had almost become a widow only a short time after our wedding. Subsequent skin tests showed that at that moment I was very allergic to shellfish and tree nuts. So that was thought to be the explanation of my "attack" since we had nibbled on crab and lobster items at the cocktail party and had a waldorf salad with walnuts for supper, all of which had of course been well lubricated with martinis. Now you know why to this day I avoid these items.

Fortunately, we were soon able to find an apartment in Forest Hills, Queens. It was very small, on the third floor of a building just a block off Queens Boulevard. So our address became 75-20 113th Street, Forest Hills 75, NY. The location was good because we were within walking distance of a subway station and a super market. There was a Chinese restaurant around the corner where one could eat for very little money. I recall that when summer came around the apartment was very hot so we invested in a window air conditioner. That was our very first purchase on credit. The landlord insisted on charging us extra because of our higher electricity use.

Beverly's parents offered us their 1947 Plymouth, which we gratefully accepted, but since our apartment building did not have a garage we had to park on the street. This meant that in winter we frequently had to dig it out from under a hefty layer of snow.

In 1954, the company transferred its offices from Brooklyn to Hicksville, Long Island where a new processing plant and office building had just been completed. While the surroundings were much more pleasant than in the old building in Brooklyn, this move created some commuting problems for me. Eventually I worked out an arrangement whereby I took the bus to the Jamaica train station and the train from there to Hicksville where one of the company's employees picked me up at the train station. The return trip at the end of the day was arranged similarly. Needless to say there were days that connections did not work and I would have to drive which, particularly when the weather was bad, was no joy.



Easter April 10, 1955

My job generally remained the same, namely tracking latex purchases and sales and monitoring markets in New York and overseas. This included tracking our market position and exposure to price changes. An interesting subject was calculating the correlation between the markets in Singapore, New York and London, taking into account transportation costs and currency exchange rates.

When one of the directors of RCMA, our Dutch liquid latex supplier, was in town, the Mertons decided that Beverly and I should entertain him and so we took him to the Latin Quarter nightclub in Manhattan.



Latin Quarter, New York

Chapter 6

Trip to Europe 1955

I had felt all along that Beverly needed to meet my family as soon as possible. So, in July 1955 we flew to Bonn, Germany where my parents were living at the time since my father's official title was Military Attaché at the Netherlands Embassy in Bonn. In reality, what he was doing was advising the German Government on the formation of a new German army. Since that subject was not very popular at that time, all this work was being done in secret.



Dan and his parents



Beverly and Dan's parents



Just relaxed!



Very formal!

As I had not been in Germany before, everything there was as new to me as it was to Beverly. Since my father had an embassy car with driver, we were taken on many driving trips along the Rhine and to lots of historical villages, castles and cathedrals.



My parents and Beverly



My father, Beverly, Dan, embassy driver



Old fortress on the Rhine at Bonn



Downtown Bonn



Cathedral in Limburg



Diez

After touring around Germany for many days, we drove up the Mosel Valley to Luxemburg to visit with my father's sister Stan who had a high position at the Netherlands Embassy in that country.



Aunt Stan



Dan, my mother, Aunt Stan, my father



Old Roman aqueducts in Luxemburg

After several days in Luxemburg we returned to Bonn in order to get ready for our drive to The Hague where we would be staying for the rest of our trip. That drive took us through Cologne, where we stopped to look at the Dom cathedral that had miraculously survived the war.

My brother Rugier had arranged that we could use the apartment in The Hague of some friends who were out of town. This did not work out because we felt we could not stay there since the place was far from clean. So my mother then called her cousin Jaap van Till, the banker, to ask if we could perhaps stay at their house. He said absolutely and so we settled in a complete apartment on the top floor of their very large home in the center of The Hague. This is the best thing that could have happened. Uncle Jaap, as we called him, had a much younger wife, Adrienne, and they had three young children. In order to run the very large house they had a butler and a maid. We could come and go as we pleased as long as we informed them as to which meals we would share with them.



Uncle Jaap



Aunt Adrienne & one of her girls

My parents returned to Bonn and now it was time for Beverly to meet more relatives. Not only my two brothers and their wives and children but also Aunt Willemine, my father's oldest sister.



My brother Frits, wife Eve,
Willem and Henriette



My brother Rugier and wife Iet



Aunt Willemine

I rented a Volkswagen and we made a complete circle tour of the Netherlands, staying overnight in several small country inns. In this way I saw more of the country than I had ever seen and it was of course all new for Beverly. Along the way a bug got into my shoe and its bite created a nasty swelling and infection. By the time we returned to The Hague I could hardly walk so I saw a doctor who confined me to bed for several days. The butler brought me my food while Aunt Adrienne took Beverly around town during the day and uncle Jaap took Beverly to a concert one evening.



Dan with rented Volkswagen



Beverly



The Hague

On the left the Mauritshuis Museum – on the right parliament buildings.



Royal Palace in The Hague

All in all it was a successful but sometimes tiring trip. Beverly was received extremely well by everybody. Particularly my father became very fond of her during this trip. My mother was a little less forthcoming but perhaps that is to be expected when her youngest son had left home and had married an American with whom he would live far away from The Netherlands.

In 1956, a year after we had visited my parents in Bonn, my father retired from military service with the rank of Colonel and subsequently was promoted to Brigadier General. They returned to The Hague where they purchased an apartment.



My father

Chapter 7

More Changes

Promptly after our return to New York at the end of July 1955, Rubber Corporation purchased Hecht, Levis & Kahn (HLK), a major New York firm of rubber importers and dealers. They imported bales of natural rubber from Malaysia, Indonesia, etc. Since HLK normally had sizable positions in the rubber market, the President of RC, William Merton, wanted a trusted person to monitor the business and so he asked me if I was interested in being the representative of the new owners in the HLK office. Of course I immediately agreed because that was something that could open up a completely new direction for me. So, I transferred to the HLK office which was around the corner from Wall Street. I was more than happy with this change as this job was bound to be more interesting than what I had been doing, and I could again use the subway for my commute.

The trading room at HLK contained a large square table, three sides of which were occupied by traders. Each had in front of him a bank of direct telephone lines to other dealers and brokers and to the HLK trader on the floor of the commodity exchange. In addition there was an old-fashioned ticker machine reporting markets and news. I took the seat at the unoccupied side of the table. Since I also had a complete set of telephone lines, I could listen in to all conversations and make notes of all transaction that were being closed. This set-up enabled me to keep the position book going and also told me immediately if the traders were exceeding their limits, which did happen once in a while but it was usually unintentional or the other half of a deal had yet to close to balance things out. It was exactly the control that the Mertons wanted to have in place. In the process I learned very quickly how the business was being operated. I also spent time with the people in the grading and shipping departments to learn what their functions were and I went down to the docks to observe rubber being graded as it was unloaded.

Once I had learned the basics of the operation in the trading room, I spent several months on the floor of the Commodity Exchange handling the telephone for our floor trader and relaying buy and sell orders to him. On very busy days it was quite chaotic and sometimes in the rush of things mistakes were made but these could always be corrected quickly. These orders came from our own trading room and in this manner I was able to observe and learn both sides of that business.

The traders were certainly aware that I had a direct line to the President's office but they gradually accepted me and eventually allowed me to handle trades. The chief trader, a man named Jackson, but always called Jack, would periodically take me out to lunch. This was fine except lunch consisted mainly of manhattans so now you know why I like manhattans!

Now I also put in practice the three way trading concept between Singapore, London and New York that I had outlined on paper previously. By using shipping differentials and current exchange rates I could calculate which market was high or low compared to the other two and place trades accordingly as well as cover the foreign exchange risk inherent in the transactions. It was never contemplated that physical delivery would take place; instead, when markets adjusted themselves, wash out trades would be concluded and differences, hopefully in our favor, would be settled.

Allergies that first manifested themselves in late 1953 now produced a further problem, namely, a large polyp had developed in my nasal cavity. This was surgically removed and at the same time a non malignant tumor was removed from the left side of my neck.

Beverly's father retired in 1955 from his position as a tax manager at Shell Oil Company in New York. He had joined Shell in San Francisco in 1928 when they arrived in California from Manitoba, Canada. The Dobbys returned to California where they bought a home in Los Altos, on the San Francisco Peninsula.

In the summer of 1956, Beverly learned that she was pregnant. I have to admit that this came as a bit of a shock because it was not planned. We nevertheless went on an already planned vacation trip to California in December of that year. Fortunately we were able to stay at the Dobbyn house. This was my first exposure to the California scene and I was amazed at being able to play table tennis in the back yard at Christmas.



On vacation in Los Altos December 1956

I also recall being much attracted to the San Francisco area and its business community; this is probably when the first thoughts of moving to California started. A family friend was a stockbroker with E.F. Hutton in San Francisco and he gave me the names of some San Francisco companies to think about.



San Francisco December 1956

Chapter 8

An addition to the family

Upon return from our California vacation we started our search for a larger apartment. We were very fortunate to find a two bedroom one bathroom apartment in Rego Park, only a short distance from our apartment in Forest Hills. The new addition to the family would have her/his own room! Our new address would be 62-05 84th Street, Rego Park 79, N.Y. and we were again only a short distance from a subway station.

Beverly continued working at Architectural Forum in Manhattan but as time went by and she grew larger, the subway ride into and out of Manhattan became more uncomfortable for her. She stopped work about 6 weeks before her due date but that meant that we went from two paychecks to one!

Peter Charles was born at Jamaica Hospital at 9.06am April 16, 1957. The names Peter (in Dutch that would be Pieter) and Charles (in Dutch that can be either Charles or Karel or Carel) had been in use in the van Alderwerelt family since the 17th century. Beverly had urged me to drive faster on the way to the hospital and to ignore traffic lights because she felt that Peter was in a great hurry. Of course it turned out that she was right in needing to get there as soon as possible because Peter arrived very, very quickly. When mother and baby came home from the hospital, Peter did nothing but cry and Beverly used to tell the story that she called her doctor and said “my baby is crying, what I do?” That just goes to show how little prepared we were for the new arrival. Beverly was not the maternal type and the fact that we had no relatives in the area that could help her made it even more difficult for her.

I recall many nights with little sleep because Peter was very restless and cried often. He gave the impression of being a colicky baby. He seemed to improve when we finally switched him from breast milk to soya milk. Beverly did not go back to work after Peter was born.



Bev & Peter at 4 weeks



Dan and Peter at 6 weeks



Peter at 3 months



Peter at one year

My job at HLK, which was now operating as a division of RC had become quite busy but it was clear that the overall commodity trading climate was gradually changing and that this created profitability issues. I was asked to do a lot of different analyses of our trading business so that the Mertons could decide what they wanted to do with the business. It therefore did not come as a big surprise to me when they told me privately that the two senior traders would soon be let go and that I should get ready to take control of the operation as soon as that happened. Once that had taken place, my instructions were to phase out the business as quickly as possible.

That was actually not as difficult as it first appeared to me since in many cases we were able to arrange a series of wash out trades which meant that no physical delivery would be taken or made and settlement would then be made for price differences only.

When in September 1957 I transferred back to the Hicksville office, the work that still needed to be done at HLK to implement a complete shutdown could be handled by the existing shipping and documentation staff. This move to Hicksville again created commuting problems for me so I decided to buy a used car just for that purpose.

Chapter 9

Second California Vacation

After almost two years in downtown Manhattan with all the excitement and energy that the trading business created, I found the Hicksville office to be very dull and uninteresting. I did take on the pricing responsibility of our bulk liquid latex sales and its related products but my mind kept going back to my first visit to California in 1956.

So we planned another trip for the summer of 1958 not just to introduce 15 month old Peter to his maternal grandparents but also to explore the job situation. In particular, I had in mind a company in San Francisco named Balfour, Guthrie & Co., Limited because I had done business with their related company in New York, Balfour Maclain Inc. My contacts at Balfour Maclain had given me the names of the top executives at the San Francisco company and that included Senior Vice President George Fortune.

So in early July 1958, we travelled to California and again stayed with Beverly's parents in Los Altos. An addition to the house had meanwhile been built so there was plenty of room.

Arriving in time to spend the Fourth in Los Altos were Mr. and Mrs. Dan Van Alderwerelt and son, Peter, from Long Island, N.Y. The Long Islanders are visiting Mrs. Van Alderwerelt's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Dobbyn, of Miguel Avenue, Los Altos.

The Van Alderwerelts will remain in Los Altos the remainder of this month before returning home.

From Los Altos News

I contacted the family friend at E.F. Hutton and asked him if he knew George Fortune at Balfour Guthrie. He said he did not know him personally but that the next week there would be Chamber of Commerce reception and he would be able to point him out to me there. So, sure enough, George Fortune was there and once he had been pointed out to me I went up to him, introduced myself and asked if I could come to see him in his office. I guess he was so surprised that he promptly agreed and I gave him my card so his secretary could call me to set up an appointment.

My meeting with George Fortune went well. He was English and therefore understood the training I had received in London. He was responsible for the several trading operations, one active in grain, one in agricultural products, one in food products and one in industrial products. In addition to the trading operations, the company had a Steamship Division and an Insurance Division. While he could not make any promises, he asked me to let him know when I had moved to California so that at that time we could perhaps discuss employment opportunities. We enjoyed the rest of our vacation and returned to New York.

Not long after our return from our California vacation, Beverly learned that she was pregnant again. We now faced a real challenge. Our choices were clearly either remain in New York or move to California. Staying in New York meant we would need to buy a house somewhere in the suburbs so that we would have enough room for the children. This would likely be very expensive particularly in areas with good schools. I would certainly also need to find a better and more interesting job. And after all that we would still be in New York's terrible climate of heat and humidity in summer and snow storms in winter.

Moving to California was important to Beverly. She would be closer to her parents and be in the area where she had grown up and still had close friends. The California climate would be very much better than in New York. I would need to find a job in San Francisco that would allow us to buy a house after our welcome at the Dobbyn house had worn out. Ultimately we made the decision to move to California, a real gamble since I was pushing 30, we had one child and one on the way and I would have to find a decent job pretty quickly.

I discussed my plans with the Mertons and they understood that I needed to make some changes as there were limited opportunities at RC now that the rubber trading business had been closed down. They offered to keep us on their benefit plans until I had coverage from my new employer, whenever that might be. This was very generous of them and solved the medical coverage problem of moving to California while Beverly was pregnant.



New York, March 1959
Peter and Dan Bev and Peter

With Beverly's due date in mid April 1959 we put our plans in motion. Beverly and Peter flew to California in mid March while I remained in New York to arrange the termination of our apartment lease, the move of our belongings, the sale of our car, etc. Beverly later told me that her flight had been very exhausting since she was 8 months pregnant and 2 year old Peter wanted to roam all over the place. At my departure from the RC office the Mertons presented me with a Gorham sterling silver tray engraved with the company logo, my initials and dates of service.



Silver Tray

Around the end of March 1959 I followed Beverly to California really wondering how everything was going to work out. I much later learned that Hooker Chemical Company, a division of Occidental Chemical Company, purchased Rubber Corporation of America from the Merton family in 1965. At that point the liquid latex business had declined so much that it was now practically totally a chemical company, which would not have been the right environment for me.

Chapter 10

A busy time!

We moved in with the Beverly's parents and while waiting for Beverly to show signs of approaching labor, I called George Fortune at Balfour Guthrie. I had written him from New York so he was expecting my call and now turned me over to Martin Skewes-Cox, the company Secretary, for "processing". The very first thing they wanted done was a session with a psychiatrist in Berkeley who produced an evaluation of me for the company. Apparently that report read okay because sometime later I was called in to be interviewed not only by George Fortune but also in a group format by the individuals in charge of the various operations. While waiting for the outcome of all this, Janice Ann was born at Stanford Hospital on April 9, 1959. Beverly's instructions were that she wanted her father to drive her to the hospital fearing that I would not know the way and would not drive fast enough!! Registering Beverly at the hospital was an amusing episode. As usual they wanted to know where I was employed and when I told them that I did not have an employer, I got that strange look from the registration clerk! Good thing we still had our medical coverage from New York.



April 1959
Jan 3 weeks old



August 1959
Jan 4 months old

My final interview with George Fortune took place not long after that and it was agreed that I would start in the agricultural products department on Monday April 22, 1959. There was not really a specific job for me but the company had decided to hire me thinking that something would eventually open up for me and in the meantime they could get a reading on my usefulness. As it turned out, in spite of several changes in ownership and company name, I remained with that organization until I retired on January 1, 1991.

Balfour, Guthrie & Co., Limited was started in San Francisco in 1869 as a trading house buying grain from farmers and selling equipment to farmers and miners. The Balfour Group had its headquarters in London. Our office was in the Balfour Building at 351 California Street at the intersection with Sansome Street. In those days that building was not air conditioned so we often had the windows open, frequently with the result that papers flew all over the place from San Francisco's afternoon breezes.

Even before we left New York, I had been warned that pay scales in California were substantially below those in New York and that was certainly true! I believe I started out at \$600 a month, which indeed was low and explains why we were broke from the very beginning!

At a much later date I learned that the psychiatrist's report had been very positive and had described me as very intelligent and confident. That is interesting because I did not feel that way at all. In fact, while I may have been somewhat of a perfectionist, I generally felt far from sure of myself.

The advantage of staying with Beverly's parents was of course that they were able to help Beverly look after 2 year old Peter and new born Jan. Meanwhile, I had bought a used car to drive to the Mountain View train station and joined the steady stream of commuters on the SP train to San Francisco. Not only was that a fairly long train ride but the SP station in San Francisco was at 3rd and Townsend Streets which meant either a long walk or a bus ride to downtown. The walk along 3rd street was something else. At that time the area was very neglected and full of homeless people and drunks and sometimes one just had to step over them. The evening return trip was always a hassle as one needed to leave downtown sharp at 5:00pm to catch the 5:20 train and thereby getting home at about six. If one missed that train the next choice was the 5:45 which stopped at every possible place along the way so arrival at home was closer to seven.



Four generations!
Great Grandma Davis holding Jan,
Grandma Dobbyn, Beverly and Peter.



May 1959
Grandpa Dobbyn with Jan and Peter



Peter on his 2nd birthday
April 16, 1959



Beverly enjoying the summer in Los Altos

Riding the train gave me a chance to see something of most towns up and down the Peninsula. I observed that in Belmont there was a small development within walking distance of the train station. That certainly had some definite appeal as it would involve a much shorter train ride. So we started talking with Beverly's parents about a move and as they clearly would like us to move out they offered to give us the down payment to buy a small house. In much later years when the financial situation of Beverly's mother became difficult, I repaid that money plus interest and provided further financial assistance to her.

And so we purchased 316 Hiller Street, Belmont, a small 3 bedroom, one bath, living/dining room and kitchen house. I believe we paid something like \$14,000. Bill Dobbyn and I painted the living/dining room and generally cleaned up the place before we actually moved in September 1959. I gradually painted the entire inside and outside of the house and did the front door in dark red so that we would look a little different from the rest of the otherwise unremarkable houses on that street.

At Balfour Guthrie I had been given a desk in the traffic/documentation section of what had become known as the Trading Department which focused mainly on agricultural products. I reported to Werner Trueb, the traffic/documentation section manager. Since he was Swiss we got along quite well. There were perhaps a dozen individuals in that section whose responsibility it was to handle all the shipping, delivery, documentation and billing details of the transactions entered into by the three traders who were separated from the traffic/documentation section by a glass wall. Years later, Werner told me that he had been instructed to find out if I was actually as smart as the tests had indicated. So he loaded me up with any number of contracts for all very different products about which I really did not know anything at all. These were contracts for tallow, yellow grease, fishmeal, peanuts, bone meal, cottonseed meal, sesame seed and so forth. Some were import transactions, some were for export and others were domestic trades. Fortunately my colleagues were more than willing to help me out and from the very beginning I joined them for their usual and very reasonable lunch in what was then the warehouse district of San Francisco, more or less where the Embarcadero Center is now. The personal bonds I made with these individuals, including Werner Trueb, would serve me well throughout the years, particularly about 11 years later when I was asked to take over as Manager of what had by then become known as the Trading Division.



Grandpa Dobbyn with Peter and Jan
Christmas 1959



Jan one year old, Peter three years old
April 1960



Christmas 1960

Gradually we started to meet people and joined several groups. One group of people would periodically rent a small hall in Belmont and put on a dance. Someone would bring a record player to provide the music and everyone would contribute to a well stocked bar.

We also joined the Crippled Children Society and worked on their fund raising, which included annual casino evenings where I found myself in charge of the black jack tables. People could buy chips to play with and if they accumulated any winnings they could cash them in for merchandise that had been donated by local merchants.

I apparently proved my value to the Trading Department as, early in 1961, I was moved from the traffic/documentation section into the trading room. There I joined Vice President and Department Manager William J. (Bill) Mulcahy Jr., John Glascock and a Dutchman named Jeff Haentjens. The fact that we were both Dutch did not in the least make us like each other very much; we were just from totally different backgrounds. Bill Mulcahy was originally from Texas and lived in Atherton. John Glascock was fluent in Spanish as he was born in Mexico City when his father was the U.S. Ambassador there. That helped a great deal in our efforts to increase our trade in Mexico and Central America.

Certainly in the beginning, potential trades that the others could not be bothered with were tossed in my direction. I was clearly again being tested. It took time but by working hard and listening closely to what was going on around me I was able to get into several markets, particularly tallow and fishmeal and later soybean meal and sesame seed.

Good relations with various steamship companies were important for both our export as well as our import business. Their sales representatives called on our office frequently and at times would invite us to functions. One such event in 1961 or 1962 was when American President Lines invited Beverly and me, as well as other people, to sail on one of their ships from San Francisco to Los Angeles.



On board APL ship

The real prize came when Bill Mulcahy decided to let me handle, under his supervision, the peanut trade which involved buying very large quantities of crushing grade peanuts from the Commodity Credit Corporation (USDA) at their weekly auctions and selling them to oil mills in Europe. I became a real “expert” in this and we dominated that very profitable trade for a number of years.

On some commodities I dealt with the San Francisco offices of some of the large Japanese firms such as C. Itoh, Mitsubishi, Toyomenka, etc. I recall having lunch at a Japanese restaurant with the man from C. Itoh who had only recently arrived from Tokyo. Since we had already done some business together he seemed to be quite willing to tell me his story of trying to get his family settled in San Francisco. We remained good friends and periodically had lunch together until he was rotated back to Japan.

I had become aware that Bill Mulcahy was a heavy drinker which often resulted in him coming back late from a wet lunch. John Glascock frequently joined him. They could be difficult to deal with at such times. Then one fateful day in 1962 the two of them did not come back from a lunch at all. That afternoon I dealt with the routine tasks fully expecting them to be on deck again the next day but they did not show up the next day either.

That evening the company President, Jack Saunders, telephoned me at home and questioned me about what was going on. Clearly he had heard some rumors. I had no choice but to tell him what had occurred and I assured him that I was covering the bases as best I could. It was interesting that he had called me and not Jeff Haentjens who, based on seniority, could be considered number three while I was number four.

The following morning the announcement came out that Bill Mulcahy had been terminated and that John Glascock had been appointed Department Manager in his place. When Bill Mulcahy came in a few days later to clean out his desk, he called me in and proceeded to blame me for having caused his problems by having gone to the President. I told him in no uncertain terms that the President had called me and that it was not the other way around. This was of course a very unpleasant conversation. He was clearly an alcoholic who needed to blame someone else for his problems. Needless to say these were stressful times for me. I actually went to see the local Cargill, Inc. trading manager to see if there would be anything there for me in that world wide organization but that did not result in anything.

Just prior to Bill Mulcahy's departure the company had moved from the Balfour building at 351 California Street to a fairly new building at 255 California Street. We were still on California Street which was home to most other trading companies as well as shipping and insurance companies.

Our decision to buy that small house on Hiller Street in Belmont had been a good one. We were walking distance from Peter's elementary school and many young children lived in the neighborhood. There were therefore usually playmates around for the kids and Halloween was always a very busy but nice evening. One negative was the fact that in winter the back yard would change into a swamp because of inadequate drainage.



Hiller Street backyard 1961



Jan 2nd birthday 1961



San Francisco zoo July 1961



Christmas 1961

We quite regularly played bridge with the Bealls who belonged to one of the same groups we belonged to. Ed Beall is the person who introduced me to fly fishing. He patiently worked with me on small streams and once I had the hang of things he took me up to the Rising River Fly Fishing Club outside the small town of Burney in Shasta County. Ed was a member of this club which held the fishing rights on a beautiful section of the Rising River flowing through an eighty acre ranch above the point where the Rising River joins Hat Creek. It was strictly catch and release fishing in extremely clear water that mostly needed to be waded. While the club had some restrictions concerning guests I had the great pleasure of fishing there many times. Ed also taught Peter how to fly fish at the Rising River.



Family Group

Chapter 11

The Traveling Starts

The unexpected departure of Bill Mulcahy led to a reshuffle of duties. John Glascock moved into the corner office as Department Manager. Without much discussion it was decided that he quickly needed to get me up to speed as his number two. Jeff Haentjens was not a candidate for that as he had no interest in Central America and was fully occupied with his substantial business of importing frozen meat from Australia and New Zealand.



Birthdays April 1962



Christmas 1962



Christmas 1962



Beverly soon became involved locally. An example of that was the following item from the San Mateo Times dated November 5, 1962:



In July 1963 I accompanied John on my first trip of many to Mexicali where several oil mills were located. These firms extracted oil from cottonseed either by means of a mechanical press or by a solvent extraction process. Our interest was the cottonseed cake or meal that was left over after the extraction as we had ready outlets in northern Europe for this as cattle food. During the next few years we bought large tonnages of this material from the Mexicali mills, moved it in railcars to Los Angeles harbor where we accumulated it in large elevators for subsequent loading on freighters for shipment to Denmark and several other North European countries.

In 1963 we joined the Cotillion, a group that put on formal dinner dances. Member's children, if they were old enough, could attend and thereby learn how to dress, eat and dance in a more formal setting. Our kids were not old enough to participate but we attended regularly. We made some very good friends during that period. However, it did strike me at times that the alcohol consumption in the groups we belonged to was getting to be quite considerable. There were no real major problems and nobody was ever stopped for DUI but looking at it now it may well be that it contributed to later problems.



Cotillion 1963



Christmas 1963



At one of many business functions;
John Glascock with Japanese guest, two shipping people and I

Beverly and three bridge playing friends certainly made headlines on September 14, 1963 when they were dealt an unbelievable bridge hand:



In 1964 and later there were many more trips to Mexicali, often with a stop in Los Angeles to see people operating the port elevators. To get to Mexicali you fly to El Centro, California, rent a car there and then cross the border at Calexico/Mexicali. At the end of the day we would come back to Calexico on the American side where we stayed at a motel. If you were a tourist it was easy to cross into Mexico but if you were doing business in Mexico you would technically need a business visa and sometimes even have to pay tax on the business you had concluded. We always pretended to be tourists but on one trip that did not work out. We were stopped at the Mexican border and the Mexican border guards searched our car. Of course they found our brief cases in the trunk and we were promptly taken to a nearby police station and locked up in a cell. John's fluency in Spanish now paid off. He was able to convince one of the guards to let him use a telephone and he called the freight forwarder who handled the border crossing of our rail cars loaded with cottonseed meal. After several hours we were released and

on his next bill to us our freight forwarder included the bribe he had paid to win our release. He nicely described it as “special services”. On one of the several Mexicali trips that I did on my own, I ran into a problem coming back into the States. I was detained by a U.S. Customs officer because my rental car, which was brand new, lacked plates and more importantly lacked some of the needed paper work. They suspected that I was trying to bring a new car into the States for resale. Eventually a number of phone calls to the rental agency solved that problem.

Unfortunately, John’s problem with alcohol, which was always in the background, manifested itself more than usual on one trip to Mexicali when he simply disappeared one evening. When he had not returned to the motel the next morning I drove into Mexicali on my own and kept the appointments we had made. He eventually did get back to the motel with a major hangover. I was not pleased at all and told him so.

In 1964 we were able to buy a huge quantity of cottonseed meal from the oil mills around Ciudad Obregon on the West Coast of Mexico. The volume was such that we chartered an entire freighter for the trip from Guaymas to several Danish ports. This was such a large transaction that John and his wife and Beverly and I flew down to Ciudad Obregon and when the ship arrived in the port of Guaymas we gave a reception on board ship for our suppliers as well as the local dignitaries. It was a German freighter with a German crew who did not speak Spanish but they were put to work serving drinks and catered food. We were there for several days observing the loading which consisted of the bags of cottonseed meal being brought on board and then emptied into the hold of the ship. You can well imagine that this was a very slow process but it was the only way to get it done as there were no elevators in that port. We also visited with the owners of the several cottonseed mills. One of them, Cesar Estrada, presented me with John Gunther’s book “Inside South America” which he had inscribed with the message: “Para mi bien Amigo, muy conoedor del Mercado”. They presented Beverly with a hand decorated oval ceramic platter some 26 inches in length which we then had to hand carry all the way back to San Francisco. I still have the book and the platter.

Not only had things changed drastically in my work but there had also been changes at home. We really wanted a better house so Beverly went house hunting with a real estate agent. She did not like what she saw until she was shown a brand new house on Windsor Drive in the San Carlos hills. The builder, a father and son team had built it on spec and the only thing that still needed to be done was the driveway. That house was financially really out of our reach but our real estate agent prevailed on Bell Savings and Loan to give us the mortgage we needed. We sold the Belmont house and moved into the new house in January 1964. Both the elementary and high schools were within easy distance so it was a good location. We lived in that house for 25 years until 1989.



Birthdays April 1964

We were severely shocked when Beverly's father, Bill Dobbyn, suddenly died from a massive heart attack on April 28, 1964 at age 68. Beverly had always been very close to him and he and I had become very good friends.



Bill and Grace Dobbyn shortly before his death

The task of dealing with his estate fell to me and from then on I handled Grace Dobbyn's finances, etc. At that point I also started paying back the down payment they had given us in 1959, plus interest. When her financial situation became even more difficult we provided financial assistance to her until she sold her house. The proceeds from that sale put her in a much more comfortable situation until she passed away in 1983 at age 86.



Summer 1964



Christmas 1964

Beverly heard from a friend about a family camp that was operated by the City of Berkeley. Residents of Berkeley had preference but there was usually space for a few non residents. This camp was located on Echo summit between highway 50 and Echo Lake and consisted of tent cabins, a central dining hall and a swimming pool. We went there several summers and enjoyed the people we met there most of whom were connected to U.C. Berkeley. It worked out well as it relieved Beverly from cooking meals and other household chores and there were camp aids to work with the kids. We rode horses, hiked and Peter caught his first trout in Echo Lake.



Tent cabin at Echo Lake Camp



Pool at camp



Christmas 1965

The year 1966 turned out to be a very busy one. In May my parents arrived after having visited Washington, D.C., New York and Boston. They had then flown to Denver and there had boarded the California Zephyr to travel through the desert and the Feather River Canyon to the San Francisco Bay Area. We showed them around different parts of California, including the Monterey Bay area, Yosemite, Lake Tahoe and the Berkeley camp site on Echo Summit, etc.



On the Tioga Pass



San Carlos back deck

We arranged a visit to Beverly's mother in Los Altos and we had an outdoor party at our house at which they met many of our friends. They went many times into San Francisco on their own, getting lost in the city a few times! This was the first time that Peter, then 7, and Jan, then 5, met their Dutch grand parents and all went reasonably well. They stayed with us for 6 weeks but that was really too long and it was a lot of work and pressure for Beverly



In San Carlos



San Carlos

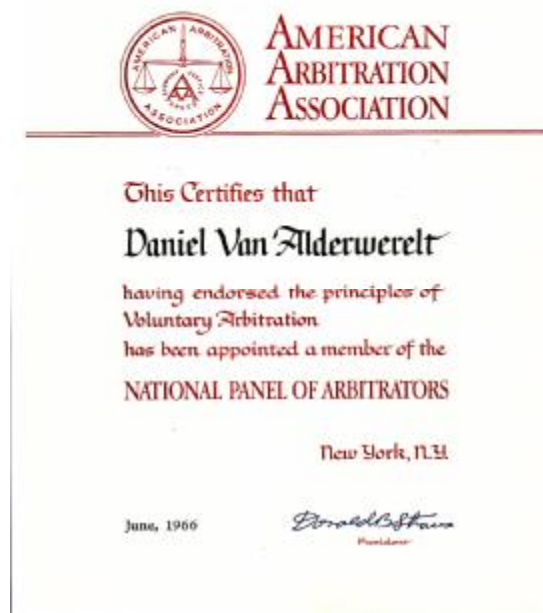
Ship's departure



Ship's departure

They returned to Europe on board a Holland America Line freighter which they boarded at Oakland harbor. The ship made its way down the California, Mexican and Central American west coasts then went through the Panama Canal and across the Atlantic Ocean to Rotterdam. My good friend Henri Blok, who at that time worked for the Holland America Line in San Francisco, had alerted the captain that my parents were among the passengers and I heard afterwards that they were treated extremely well during that long voyage.

In June 1966 I was appointed as an Arbitrator for the American Arbitration Association to serve in contract disputes involving the commodities we traded in which at that time included copra from the Philippines. I served on a number of very interesting cases, usually as part of a team of three arbitrators.



In December 1965 I had been on a short introductory trip to Guatemala. Additional trips to Central America were postponed until my parents had left to return to Europe and then travelling started in earnest; one week in July and three weeks in August 1966. The focus of these two trips was primarily Mexico and Guatemala. Following my appointment as Assistant Manager of the Trading Department in October 1966 I went on a longer trip to meet more people we were doing business with in Central America. This time I flew down to Panama City, then to San Jose, Costa Rica, Managua, Nicaragua, Tegucigalpa, Honduras, San Salvador, El Salvador and Guatemala City, Guatemala. This was one of those three week trips that totally exhaust you, particularly when you do not know your way around or the language or most of the people you need to visit. There followed by many more such trips over the next 10 years.

BALFOUR, GUTHRIE & CO., LIMITED

ESTABLISHED 1840

255 CALIFORNIA STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94111

830
17

October 13, 1966

Mr. John R. Glascock
Vice President and Manager
TRADING DEPARTMENT

Handwritten initials

Dear John:

I am pleased to confirm that the Board of Directors has approved the appointment of Mr. Don Van Alderwerelt to the position of Assistant Manager of the Trading Department, effective immediately.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of G. D. Wolcott
G. D. Wolcott
Senior Vice President

GDW:lmh

My Dutch passport did make it easier to travel in that area as I did not need a visa for any of the Central American countries in contrast to people travelling on an American passport who at that time needed a separate visa for each country. Not needing a visa meant I could leave on very short notice and change my itinerary along the way.

Many of the ports in Central America were fairly simple. Ships would drop anchor at sometimes considerable distance from shore and cargo would be loaded or unloaded using barges. If you needed to go to the ship, you would go to the pier and get on the barge. When it was alongside the ship you would climb up a rope ladder to reach the ship's deck. I recall one time I went on board one of the freighters at San Jose de Guatemala for a simple lunch and drinks. When climbing down the rope ladder to get off the ship it was very, very scary because the wind had come up which made the barge and the ship move around a lot. This is one time when drinks do not help!!



Dan on the pier at San Jose de Guatemala
with freighter in the background

Also in 1966 Dalgety, Limited in London acquired Balfour, Guthrie & Co., Limited but that change in ownership did not result in any immediate change in our operations or company name.

My Aunt Willemine, my father's oldest sister, came for a visit in May 1967 and so again we toured the usual sights but her visit was relatively short which made it a lot easier. While they were very different from each other, it turned out that Beverly and Aunt Willemine were able to have long conversations together and for a time were writing each other regularly.



Aunt Willemine with Dan and Jan



Christmas 1967



In September 1967 I again made the trip to Mexico City, Guatemala City, San Salvador and Managua. It was slowly getting a little easier for me to make these long trips and I started to make some friends among the people we dealt with. One individual who became a very close friend is Luis Kong in Guatemala City. He had studied at San Jose State and U.C. Davis so his English was excellent. He operated a winery called Bodegas Carlos King S.A. using various locally grown fruit, including oranges, as grapes do not do well in that climate. Through his contact with farmers who grew sesame seed in addition to fruit, he was well positioned to originate substantial quantities of sesame seed.

John Glascock had initiated the original contact with Luis and we traded with each other at arms length. In a short time I developed a more personal relationship with Luis and that particular business became my responsibility. I was able to work out a long lasting partnership with Luis. It was his responsibility to consult with us about prices to be paid to the growers and quantities to be purchased. Then they would clean and bag the seed and store it until we gave them shipping instructions. It was our responsibility to provide him with the needed funds through a letter of credit, negotiate overseas sales, give him shipping instructions and collect the funds from our overseas buyers. We shipped to Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Japan and New York. This worked extremely well for a long time until in the late 1970's it was no longer a profitable venture and we both withdrew from that business.



Sesame seed being cleaned



Bagged seed being stored

Over time I got to know his family quite well and was invited to many of their usual Saturday afternoon family gatherings. His mother was French and his father was Guatemalan. Neither one spoke English but other family members were always more than willing to act as interpreters. His wife is from Barcelona, Spain and they have two children. They often came to California and we are still in touch with each other.



Marie Antoinette and Luis Kong and children
on a visit to San Carlos

Luis took me through many very interesting parts of the country. There are many villages in the mountains where native dress is still worn and native customs are still practiced. One of these is Chichicastenango with its Santo Tomas church where on the steps of this Catholic Church locals still make offerings to their gods often accompanied by small fires producing lots of smoke.



On the steps of Santo Tomas Church, Chichicastenango, Guatemala

That same year the major decision was made to enter the cotton business. The plan was to buy cotton from growers in Central America and Columbia and sell it to Japan and Europe. Tom Carney, who had traded cotton for many years, joined us to head up the newly formed Cotton Department. In order to attend to the sampling, classification and shipping details we opened an office in Guatemala City under the name Agrovita S.A. with Otto Tinschert, a retired German U boat commander, as manager. Not long after that we opened a similar office in Managua, Nicaragua with Tom Stewart as manager.

The purchase of cotton from growers often involved providing financing secured by some form of collateral, usually the crop and real estate. Our financing was not necessarily confined to cotton but could also involve cottonseed meal and other agricultural commodities. In a sense we were therefore also acting as bankers.



Otto Tinschert in front of our Agrovita S.A. Guatemala office.



Otto Tinschert showing Dan cultivated fields in the high country

Beverly had been depressed over the untimely death of her father in 1964. My long hours in the office and lengthy and frequent trips had been difficult for her as it had left her alone a lot of the time to raise the children and deal with all the household matters. And so she had turned more and more to alcohol to try to find some relief. However, in March 1968 she took the courageous step of joining AA.

Beverly had always been a good bridge player and she taught me how to play. To me it was strictly a social game but she took it seriously, played duplicate and played in many tournaments accumulating points. By 1967 she had reached the rank of National Master in The American Contract Bridge League.

The following illustrate her progression to that rank:



Our good friends the Bloks introduced us in 1967 to Lake Almanor in Plumas County between Lassen Volcanic National Park and Susanville. This lake is great for swimming, fishing and boating and there are several golf courses in the area. Not a summer went by that we did not go up there for at least a week but often longer. In 1989 we took the major step of buying a house in the Lake Almanor Country Club.



Lake Almanor 1969

Chapter 11

A time of more changes

There had been discussions in our office that I needed to go to Europe to visit with some of our very important buyers, particularly in Denmark and Sweden. When the discussions focused on an August 1968 trip I suggested that I take some of my vacation time while in Europe so that I could spend some time with my family in the Netherlands. Since Beverly was feeling much better we subsequently enlarged the plans to include her and the kids. We left in the middle of July and upon arrival in The Hague we moved into a house my parents had rented for us within walking distance from their apartment. The house had a resident cat and behind my parents apartment was a park with a large pond. Peter tried his fishing skills and caught a fish which he offered to the cat.



Rugier and Peter at pond



Peter offering fish to cat

We were soon reminded that the Dutch weather can be cold even in the middle of summer. Our house was within walking distance of the beach but if I remember correctly the kids only went there once or twice as it was always foggy and windy. Nevertheless we enjoyed ourselves as tourists and visited relatives. I called on some customers in the Netherlands and then flew to Copenhagen where I met up with our Scandinavian broker. We called on most of our Danish customers and flew to Stockholm to visit with a major buyer there. The way I was received everywhere showed me that we had a very good reputation in the market place. I had arranged that Beverly would fly up to Copenhagen when I returned there from Stockholm and we spent a delightful time with our broker Tage Bundgard and his wife. One evening Beverly and I were the guests of honor at a dinner party given by one of the major Danish importers of cattle feed. They teased Beverly that she was not drinking any alcohol but she got through that evening okay.

When I was occupied with business, Beverly needed to do the driving, shopping for household supplies and trying to arrange baby sitters for the kids. That was not easy for her. In 1968 there was still very little open discussion of AA, particularly in Europe, but fortunately she did find support at a few small AA meetings in The Hague and Amsterdam.

We did tourist things like a boat ride through the canals of Amsterdam.



We would frequently eat dinner at my parent's apartment and this brought with it some amusing situations. One evening my mother served calf's tongue, i.e. the whole tongue which my father then carved at the table. When he offered Jan the very tip of the tongue she burst into tears and said: "I want a cheese burger" Considering that Peter was 11 and Jan was 9, they both did very well.



Visiting with Dan's parents

On the third of August my parents arranged for a dinner for the whole family at a restaurant called "Duinoord" located in the dunes along the coast north of The Hague. The group consisted of 18, namely, my parents; Rugier and Iet and their daughters Sophia and Anna Henriette; Frits and Eve and their children Willem and Henriette; Dan and Beverly with their children Peter and Jan. Everyone signed the back of the menu. Some pictures of participants are below.



Dan's father with Eve



Rugier and Bev



Eve and Dan



Dan's mother

On one of our days out in the country, we stopped at the Castle Zuylen near Utrecht. The foundations of this castle date back to the 13th century but what you see now dates back to the 18th century. This is the home were Aunt Jetske was born and grew up as a youngster. Aunt Jetske married Chap, one of my father's brothers, and she is the mother of Daan de Roo van Alderwerelt who lives with his family in Tervuren, near Brussels, Belgium.



Castle Zuylen



Daan, on left, with our family

More visits with my two brothers and their families.



Frits, Henriette, Willem, Eve



Rugier, Iet, Sophia, Anna Henriette

On our way back to the States we stopped in London for several days and while I had to see the people at our parent company, Dalgety, Limited, we had the rest of our time to ourselves. For me it was very nice to be back in London again and for Beverly and the kids there were more new things to see!! The unbelievable thing is that in the London subway Beverly bumped into a family friend who with her two daughters lived in London at that time. Of course we visited with them at their home in between our sightseeing trips.



On London Bridge



In Kew Gardens

We finally got back to San Carlos on August 14 having left our home on July 2.

Our business continued to do very well but before 1968 came to an end I yet again went down to San Salvador and Guatemala City. While the timing of that trip was good because that was harvest time in Central America, it meant that I did not get home until just a week before Christmas without having done any meaningful Christmas shopping.



Peter as Boy Scout and ready to go backpacking



Swimming at Lake Almanor



Jan October 1968



Peter painting Grandma's fence

A press release was issued accompanied by this publicity photo:



Balfour, Guthrie Promotes Trading Division Aide



van Alderwerelt

Daniel van Alderwerelt, assistant manager of the trading division of Balfour, Guthrie & Co. Limited, has been appointed an assistant vice president of the company, it was announced by O. D. Wolcott, president. Balfour, Guthrie, marking its 100th Anniversary this year, has a history closely interwoven with that of the West. Van Alderwerelt joined the company in 1959, serving in various capacities in the trading division, and was appointed assistant manager of the division in 1966. Before joining Balfour, Guthrie he was a trainee in merchant banking in London and an import trader dealing in Far East rubber in New York.

How it appeared in the Daily Commercial News
on November 13, 1969

By this time our office had moved to the Alcoa building at One Maritime Plaza. This caused a bit of a stir. How was it possible that Balfour was no longer on California Street? Maritime Plaza was part of the new Embarcadero Center in an area previously occupied by warehouses and was two blocks from California Street. People soon got over that. John Glascock had the somewhat grandiose plan to have a fancy brochure produced highlighting who we were and what we did. That did not go any further than having a professional photographer take some pictures in our office, of which I rescued one.



Trader Chris Thompson reviewing loading plan
for one of our chartered ships.
Dan in the background giving instructions
to the telex operator.

In March 1970, the Trading Division held the usual annual strategic planning and budget meetings, this time during a long weekend at the Sonoma Mission Inn in Sonoma. For a trading operation this is always difficult but to do so for the newly combined businesses was a real challenge. Again John's problems came to the surface as at the final meeting on the last day he delivered a closing speech in which he expressed his view in no uncertain terms that senior management did not know what it was doing. How he could say that when only five months earlier we had been given the approval to merge two operations into one potentially very profitable enterprise is a mystery. It is amazing what alcohol can do.

I do not know exactly how but the day after we returned to the office the story of John's behavior at our meeting had found its way around the company. So I suppose I should not have been surprised when that evening I received a telephone call from Oliver D. Wolcott, then President. His message was very brief: "Effective immediately you are in charge of the Trading Division as John has left our employ". That last phrase was of course a euphemism for having fired him.

A letter went out to the trade over Wolcott's signature. It was certainly short and to the point. A press release was also issued. Both documents, a copy of a newspaper article and a publicity photo are on the next three pages.

I had been frustrated with the way things had been going, but I did not look forward to taking on the job of managing the Division. That job involved everything from budgeting, personnel and reporting to the Board in person in addition to all the travel. Strangely enough, while I now had the title of Division Manager, I had not been upgraded from Assistant Vice President to Vice President nor had my compensation been increased. The compensation issue was gradually taken care of but the Vice President title did not come along until 1977 when at the same time I was also made a Director of the company. More about all that in the next volume entitled Recollections III.

BALFOUR, GUTHRIE & CO., LIMITED

ESTABLISHED 1888

CABLE ADDRESS
"BALFOUR"

ONE MARITIME PLAZA - SAN FRANCISCO
MAIL ADDRESS: P. O. BOX 3883 - SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94119

TELEPHONE
397-2000

Date

Addressee

I regret very much having to tell you of the resignation from the Company of Mr. John Glascock, for personal reasons. John had been with the Company for many years and all of us here wish him every success in whatever he chooses to do in future.

Mr. Daniel van Alderwerelt has been named Manager of the Trading Division with immediate effect. Dan is well qualified, having joined the Company in 1959 and served in various capacities in the Division until his appointment as Assistant Manager in 1966. He was appointed an Assistant Vice President in October, 1969 and he will continue to hold this office.

It is intended that the policies and operations of the Trading Division will continue unchanged under the new head of the Division.

Yours very truly,

BALFOUR, GUTHRIE & CO., LIMITED

O. D. Wolcott
President

BALFOUR, GUTHRIE & CO., LIMITED

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"BALFOUR"

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TELEPHONE
397-2000

March 31, 1970

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Daniel van Alderwerelt, Assistant Vice President of Balfour, Guthrie & Co., Limited, has been promoted to Manager of the Trading Division, it was announced by the Company's President, O. D. Wolcott.

Balfour, Guthrie, marking its 100th Anniversary last year, has a history closely interwoven with that of the West. The Company has a wide range of export, import and offshore trading activities, coastwide steamship agencies, a poultry growing and marketing operation, a metals warehouse in Los Angeles, and steamship terminal operations in Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Mr. van Alderwerelt joined the Company in 1959, served in various capacities in the Trading Division, and was appointed Assistant Manager of the Division in October 1966 and an Assistant Vice President of the Company in November 1969. Before joining Balfour, Guthrie he was a trainee in merchant banking in London, England, and an import trader dealing in Far East rubber in New York. Mr. van Alderwerelt resides at 406 Windsor Drive, San Carlos.

O. D. Wolcott
President

Carlos Man Is Promoted

Daniel van Alderwerelt, assistant vice president of Balfour, Guthrie & Co., Ltd. has been promoted to manager of the trading division.

Balfour, Guthrie, marking its 100th anniversary last year, has a history closely interwoven with the West. The company has a wide range of export, import and offshore trading activities, coastwide steamship agencies, a poultry growing and marketing operation, a metals warehouse in Los Angeles and steamship terminal operations in Los Angeles and Long Beach.

Van Alderwerelt joined the company in 1959, served in various capacities in the trading division, and was appointed assistant manager of the division in 1966 and an assistant vice president of the company in 1969. He resides at 406 Windsor Drive, San Carlos.

