



# **The Tapestry of Life**

**Patricia Hallman**

## Chapter Four

### *The Memorable Summer and What Followed*

In 1944 we moved from Catasauqua to Tilghman Street, in Allentown. A lot went on in a short time while we lived there.

My brother Carl was in first grade, and on the very last day of school he was sent home - he was very sick. He had a fever, and then he started breaking out in a rash. Mom called the doctor (they made house calls in those days), and he came and examined Carl. Then he said that Carl had scarlet fever, and that our house had to be quarantined. Nobody could go out, and nobody could come in.

Pop was working in Allentown, and he could not come home. He had to move into his mother's house until the quarantine was lifted on our house.

The rest of us had to stay in the house. We couldn't go out. We couldn't even think about leaving the property. My grandfather used to bring vegetables and whatever was in season that week. He came in from the farm and put the food inside the front door. We couldn't even bring it in until he had left. It was canning season, and I particularly remember washing canning jars, cleaning beans, cleaning peas, and washing and peeling tomatoes. It seemed endless.



*1945 – Pat and Claire- Tilghman Street*

We were supposed to be quarantined for a month – thirty days. The day the quarantine was going to be lifted, my younger sister Barbara came down with scarlet fever. So it was another thirty days.

Actually, there was enough going on with both of them being so sick, that we didn't mind being cooped up so

much. Carl was sick enough that there were times when my mom thought he was not going to make it. Barbara wasn't that sick, but she still felt horrible and required a lot of care.

Mom was a real trooper! She had to sterilize the bedding every day. She soaked everything in Lysol, then washed it in her machine, and then hung it out to dry. All this, and she did her canning, too! But she took it all right in stride and just did everything she had to do.

Finally the quarantine came off – and Barbara and Carl came down with tonsillitis and had to be hospitalized. At the same time, Claire had appendicitis. So all three of them were in the hospital at the same time.

When they got out of the hospital and everybody was well again and we could live in our house but not have to stay in it all the time, it was almost time to go back to school. Since the summer had essentially been really lousy, Mom and Pop gave us a treat - we went on a trip to Dorney Park.

Dorney Park was an amusement park, kind of a 1940s version of Disneyland. We packed a picnic lunch, and then we took the trolley up into center city Allentown, and then a bus to Dorney Park. We had a wonderful time. Actually, Dorney Park still exists and is a very popular family park. You can see billboards advertising it on the Pennsylvania Turnpike. It's still very much like it was that summer, with the addition of a wonderful water park.

That fall, after the memorable summer was behind us, we moved to Lumber Street, in Allentown. It seems that a lot of things changed. Mom and Pop always rented, wherever we went. They never had enough money to buy a house.

It was at the house on Lumber Street that we first developed what we called "basin baths." The house didn't have a bathroom. There was an enclosed porch, and a little room had been made in a corner of the porch where there was a toilet. There was no bathtub or shower or lavatory or anything like that.

"How did you bathe?" you may ask.

Basin baths. We put water in a wash basin and bathed out of that. It worked pretty well, and we were able to keep it up for over 11 years, but it took a long time to get everything soaped, rinsed, and finally clean.

After we moved I went to a different school, of course. It was St. Francis of Assisi school. I started there when I was in sixth grade. I met a girl, Anna Marie Bacher, who became a really good friend. We see each other at class reunions and here's one of those weird coincidences – years later, it turned out her son works with my sister Barbara, at H.T. Lyons. That kind of thing hasn't happened very often in my life; maybe that's why it seems so unusual.

I stayed at St. Francis of Assisi school for three years; then I went to Central Junior High School. Our finances were such that we could not afford to pay the tuition for

Catholic schooling. So I went to public junior high school for one year, and then Allentown High School for three years, until I graduated.

Public school was nice. There was a little more freedom, and I liked moving from classroom to classroom for different courses, instead of staying in one room all day long.

Lorraine Schultz and I met in junior high school, and then we became more friendly after we were in high school. We shared a lot of the same interests, and we just had a lot of fun being together. We were best friends right up to the day Lorraine died, in 1998. I enjoyed school – there were different activities, plays, dances, that sort of thing. I dated here and there, but never really had a steady boyfriend until I met my husband.



*1991 - Jennifer, Stephanie, Lorraine and Bobby Schultz*

I don't remember having a lot of trouble as a teenager. And I certainly didn't get in trouble in school. If you ever got in trouble at school, you were in trouble forever. I think I was what you might call an average student. I got good marks, and stayed out of trouble. I was involved in school activities, but not overly so.



*8th Grade Graduation in 1949*

I belonged to the Junior Red Cross. I went to the high school concerts – we had a band, and an a cappella choir which I loved. I liked music a lot. I never played an instrument, but I liked to listen to music. I liked singers, especially the Andrews Sisters. I liked popular music – “jazz,” as we called it - and dance music. I liked classical music, too. I really enjoyed any music I listened to.

Of course I went to the ball games – football and basket ball. There was usually a dance after the basketball games. I especially remember the Canary Cavaliers – that

was our school band - would play for the dances after the games. Then, of course, we had a curfew: ten-thirty. So if the basketball game was over around a quarter of nine, and I had to leave enough time to walk home – thirteen city blocks – that didn't give me much time to stay at the dance.

I was a business student. There was no question of my going to college; we just didn't have the funds for that. So I knew I needed to be prepared to get a job as soon as I graduated from high school.

The things I remember most warmly from this time in my life are centered around my family. As a teenager, I wasn't alienated from Mom and Pop; we got along together wonderfully and we had a good time together.

Some nights we would play cards. We played two- or three-handed pinochle. We played canasta. We still listened to the radio on Sunday nights. Then Pop's mother and father got a television set. We all used to go to their house on Tuesday night and watch Uncle Miltie – Milton Berle.

(By the way, we finally got a telephone when I was a junior in high school and when I was a senior, we got a television set of our own.)

We visited back and forth with my Pop's folks, and with his sister and her boyfriend, and with my other aunt and uncle. It was kind of an exchange thing, without ever being formalized. One time they would come to our house; the next time we'd go to theirs. We would get together for lunch or dinner, and play cards, and have a grand time.

Mom was a really good cook. She'd had to learn on the firing line. Her mother had not been one to give over the kitchen easily. So Mom landed in a new marriage with a family of four children and had to – not learn to cook, but start cooking. She was really good at it. She learned what she needed to know. She was very inventive and creative; she could take two chickens and make them seven different ways, seven days of the week. She would put out a small garden. Not a whole lot of stuff; just a few tomato plants, peppers, yellow beans, maybe spring lettuce. I do remember that we had a lot of beans for supper.



1951 - Claire, Barbara, Betty, Carl and Pat (left to right)

I have always had a very close relationship with my family. I always felt close to Mom and Pop and my brother

and sisters. I think that the family gave me a certain kind of stability; again, I was content. I know that I owe that feeling – and the ability to have that feeling – to my family.



*1955 – My grandparents and their grandchildren –  
Mabel and Howard Bleam, Pop's mother and father*

## Chapter Five

### *Work . . . and Happily Ever After*

I went to work right after I graduated. I started as a secretary at the Second National Bank in Allentown. I had ambitions; I didn't want to be a secretary forever, and I knew that there were other people in the bank who had worked their way up into quite responsible jobs. The chairman of the board had started as a page boy, or a message boy – I forget what that was called. It was not lost on me that he ended up on the top.

Actually I was not, strictly speaking, a "secretary." I was in the instalment loan department of the bank. I interviewed people for loans, closed loans, things like that. It was a great job, and I really enjoyed it. The only fly in the ointment was one of the assistant cashiers. He was just one of those people who rubbed almost everybody the wrong way. It wasn't personal with me; it was just the way

he was put together. A lot of the people in the bank had trouble with him.



*High School Graduation in 1953*

I had made friends with a girl named Christine, who was the secretary for the executive vice president. When he wanted information from our department, Christine would call me; I would get the information together and take it up to her. We worked together very well, and became pretty good friends.

At that time (the early to middle 50s), a lot of women worked outside the home. But, if they got pregnant (married, of course!), they had to leave as soon as the pregnancy started to show. I don't know why – whether people were scared, or curious, or scandalized, or what but that's the way it was.

Well, Christine got pregnant and when she told me that, and that she would be leaving her job soon, I said, "Be sure to recommend me for your job!" I was just kidding (kind of), but she took me seriously and recommended me to her boss. I got the job.

That's how I moved up to the Executive floor. My boss was Walter Snyder. He was just terrific. He was one of the people at the bank who had come up through the ranks. The chairman of the board, the president, the executive vice president – they all started as young men and worked their way up. Because of that, I guess, they weren't jealous of other people who worked in the bank. They wanted to see people get ahead as much as possible. They were very understanding and helpful.

I'm kind of proud of the way I worked at the bank. I had gotten the pre-standard certificate in banking (with honors); I had the standard certificate in banking; and I was working on my graduate certificate in banking. I was affiliated with the American Institute of Banking, and was elected chairman of the women's committee of the Lehigh Valley chapter of the Institute.

But I'm kind of getting ahead of myself.

By the time I graduated from high school and started working, Mom and Pop were financially strapped. There just was not a whole lot of money. I lived at home, and gave them my paycheck as soon as I got it. I started at the bank in 1953, and we got paid twice a month – on the 15<sup>th</sup>, and on the last business day of the month. My pay was \$75.00 each time. I handed my pay home until I was twenty-one years old, and Mom gave me an allowance all that time.



*Easter 1958 - Me, Mom and Barbara (left to right)*

This was an arrangement that worked really well. I didn't have a lot of money, but then I didn't need a lot. We lived close enough to the bank that I walked to work. Allentown was a fair-sized town even then; the population was probably something around 98,000. But, almost anywhere you wanted to go, was near enough to walk to; and if you couldn't walk, you took the bus or the trolley.

My friend Lorraine and I used to do things together. We went to the movies, or to concerts, or to Dorney Park. In the spring and summertime there were picnics and softball games.



*My 21st Birthday Party*

I always had enough money to buy records. I still loved music, all kinds. Country music. Dance music. Classical music (Strauss waltzes are what I listened to most). Of course the Andrews Sisters and other vocalists. My idea of heaven was to sit down, put a record on, grab a book, and sit and read. The records were the old long-play vinyl records; I think I still have a lot of them upstairs in storage. I still like the same kinds of books, too – mystery stories. John Grisham is one of my favourite authors.

I learned to drive shortly after I was twenty-one and I had bought my first car – a 1948 Nash Rambler station wagon. My sister Barbara and I laugh about it now, but I

paid \$400 for it in the early 50s and it ran pretty good. It had a new motor in it, and I had asked one of my uncles – one who was really into cars – to check it out. He said it was terrific. So I had the Rambler for a while, and then I traded it in on a '53 or '54 Mercury. That car got traded for the Impala I was driving when I got married.

Well, anyway. We had moved again, from Lumber Street to a house on North Eighth Street. It was a real nice house. It had a bathroom. It had hot and cold running water. It was heaven to be able to get in the bathtub and soak in hot water for a while. I didn't realize how much I had missed that until I got it back again. (A couple of years ago we decided to remodel the bathroom in our house. And, of course, we could not use the bathtub or the shower, so we had to go to the powder room downstairs and take – guess what? – basin baths. I begged the contractor, "*Please!* I don't care about anything else. I don't care if I have to walk downstairs in the middle of the night for a whole year to go to the bathroom. Just – *please* – get that tub finished so I can put a shower curtain up and use the shower!" He must have thought I was a little cracked, but he did get the shower working right away. I was really grateful to that man.)

I met Linford Hallman in the late summer of 1965. We started going out in October, got engaged at Christmas time, and were married in June. We bought a house, and we have lived in it ever since. 107 North Third Street, Perkasio, Pennsylvania. How's that for happily ever after?

I think my Pop was worried that I was going to end up being an old maid. I was twenty-nine years old, and I

kind of liked being as independent as I was. I don't think he understood that. "Well," he used to say, "are you going to get married?" When we announced our engagement, he said, "Well, are you getting married in the Catholic church?"

When we moved to North Eighth Street, one of the couples who lived near us – actually, only two houses down from us – was Lin Hallman's Uncle Bill and Aunt Louise. At the time, of course, I didn't know Lin Hallman from Adam but it seems that Uncle Bill thought I might make Lin a good girlfriend, and he tried a couple of times to introduce us, casually.

One time was so casual that I wasn't even there.

Lin and his brothers were going to vacation at Harvey's Lake, a beautiful area in Luzerne County, about seventy miles north and west of Allentown. They were going to take Uncle Bill's boat with them, so one night in late August they went to Uncle Bill's house to make arrangements for picking up the boat. Uncle Bill said he had some film he wanted to show them, but his projector was broken. He came to our house, knowing I had a projector, and planning to play Cupid while they watched the film.

But I wasn't home. I had gone to a bridal fashion show with a friend of mine who was getting married. When I got home, Mom said, "Bill came over and wanted to borrow your projector. I looked for it, but I couldn't find it."



*1960 - Lin's Parents: Howard and Anna Hallman*

“The reason you couldn’t find it,” I said, “is because it’s in the trunk of my car.”

We both thought he could maybe still use it, so I took the projector over to Bill and Louise’s house. Lin and his brothers were still there, we were introduced, and – well – that’s how we met.

A few weeks later Uncle Bill was at our house and he said to me, “Louise and I are going down to the horse races at Liberty Bell Park in Philadelphia. Do you want to come along?”

I wanted to go, but the races were on Thursday night – a night when the bank was open and I might have to work. I checked the schedule and found that I was free, so we decided to go. They picked me up at the bank after work, and we started off for Philadelphia.

We'd gone about halfway when Uncle Bill said, "Lin and his brother want me to take some money and place some bets for them. So I'm going to stop at their house." No problem. I just didn't see that it was a set-up, that Uncle Bill was still playing Cupid.

After a little talking back and forth - and oh, so casually! – Uncle Bill asked Lin if he didn't want to come with us to the races. Lin wouldn't mind. So we all went together.

Well, we had a really good time. I knew absolutely nothing about harness racing, which is what it was that night. I knew about horse racing, anybody does – some guy gets on the back of the horse and they run. But I didn't know about harness racing. Lin was very good and patient about explaining it to me. He explained about the races, and the betting, that kind of thing. He made a little money that day. I don't remember how much, but enough to make the whole thing a lot of fun. Then when we came home, he asked me to go out the first time.

We went to a movie on our first date. I don't remember the name of it, but I do know that Ricky Nelson was in it. What I do remember is feeling that Lin – although he is two years younger than me – was more mature and considerate than most of the other guys I had

dated. I remember thinking, "Gosh, I just met this guy, but I feel like I've known him all my life." I knew he was special.

Once we started going out, things moved pretty fast. We had gone to the races again, maybe a month and a half after we first went with Uncle Bill. All of a sudden he looked at me and said, "Have you ever given any consideration to getting married?"

"Well, yeah, like everybody else, I guess," I said.

He says, "Well, would you like to consider it?"

And I said, "Well, yeah. I'll give it some thought – for about fifteen or twenty seconds."

And then I said yes.

"Well," he said, "let's not do anything until Christmas."

"Fine," I said. "You start going with somebody and like a month and a half later . . . better to wait."

We waited until Thanksgiving. Then he told my Mom and Pop. I'm really happy that he did, because Pop died suddenly the Monday after Thanksgiving. I was glad that Pop went to his grave at least knowing that I was, after all, getting married – and in the Catholic church. (There was a downside to it, though; for a long time I felt cheated, and I felt Pop had been cheated from my wedding day. Here he was, having raised me from age six to age thirty –

and he couldn't walk me down the aisle. That took a little getting over.)

Lin gave me my engagement ring at Christmas. We decided to get married in June. So everybody got real busy, real quick!

You never appreciate what it takes to get married until you are either the bride or the bride's mother. What a lot of things to do!

We had a fairly large wedding. My side of the family is really big, of course and Lin had his two brothers, and some aunts and uncles that were in the area – altogether I think we had between 125 and 150 people.



*1966 – My wedding; June 11*

Mom made my wedding dress (she made my sister Claire's gown when she got married, too). It was beautiful, just perfect. It was a very narrow A-line dress, with what seemed like a hundred of those darn buttons. Mom had hand-sewn appliqués around the neckline, and all around the bottom of the skirt. Also, it had a detachable train. I still have it, of course.

Because Pop was gone, I asked my godfather, John Pascoe, to walk me down the aisle. It was a wonderful ceremony, but I'm not sure that I remember much about it. I was too happy.



*1966 - Wedding: Mom, me, Lin and Anna Hallman (Lin's mother)*

We had the reception at the Knights of St. George Home there in Allentown. My kids laugh at me now,

because we had this big reception for around 150 people, and I think the whole thing probably cost us around \$500.

We had a catered buffet – ham, turkey, potato salad, macaroni salad, baked beans, cheese, chips, pretzels – everything. Beer and soda, a six-piece band and to top it all off, we had a gorgeous three-tiered wedding cake. A friend of my sister’s was just going into the cake decorating business and she came to me and said, “I will make your cake for only the cost of the ingredients.” It turned out to cost \$25.00.



*1966 - Wedding Party: Dorothy, Claire, Sherry, Barbara, Pat, Lin, Gary, Carl, Bill, Dick and John*

We honeymooned in Atlantic City. We stayed in a really nice hotel for a week. It was terrific. Even though it rained most of the time, we didn't care. I remember that we had gone to the movies to see "The Sound of Music." When we got out of the theater, it was pouring down rain. We had to walk about three blocks up the boardwalk to get back to our hotel. Then we had to take our shoes off to get into the hotel, because the water was flooding the street.

We had bought a house a month before we got married. This is the house we still live in – forty years later. I've told everybody for years that, since I moved around so much when I was growing up, they'll have to take me out of *this* house in a pine box! And I'm only half kidding!

The house has three bedrooms and a good-size backyard. I'm glad we settled the deal on the house before we got married, because we were pretty well settled in when we got back from our honeymoon. We'd had plenty of time to clean the place, do some painting and fixing up. I had already moved everything from home except my clothes. I had been able to get the kitchen and bathroom cabinets all set up and organized.

So there wasn't much to do besides get on with our lives.