

Earl⁶ Skinner (Warren⁵, Harry⁴, Richard Jr.³, Richard Sr.², John¹):

HARRY EARL SKINNER

"Earl"; "H. Earl" in written form [KDS]

b. May 17, 1901

Born while parents lived at Parrish Street, Phila., PA [HES]

Living 1966, Haney's Mobile Homes, Box 424, Thorofare, NJ

Living 1975, Tahiti Dr., Sanibel, FL

d. April 19, 1990, age 88, Wiley Retirement Community, Marlton, NJ [AES]

Died at Wiley Health Care Center, Marlton, NJ; services at Wiley Church; handled by Davis Funeral Home; buried Eglington Memorial Cem., Clarksboro, NJ, lot 39D - south half, sermon on the mount [AES]

m. June 10, 1927 Norwood Methodist Church, Norwood, PA [AES]

w. LILLIAN CHARLOTTE SHOWALTER

"Lillian"; For some reason, she also called herself "MiMi" [KDS]

b. Dec 7, 1903 Fairmont, W. VA [Lillian]

Living 1995 Wiley Retirement Community, Marlton, NJ

d. Apr 22, 1996, age 92; cremated; graveside service in which the urn was buried attended by the family, cousin Dick Hughlett, the funeral director, and probably a minister. At my father's request, I turned on a tape recorder sitting on a car seat for a pre-recorded rendition of "Amazing Grace". [Annette]

CHILD:

1st Lt. DAVID EARL SKINNER

b. Nov 8, 1929 Taylor Hospital, Ridley Park, PA

d. living 1995 73 N. Childs St. Woodbury, NJ 08096

m. May 17, 1952 Presbyterian Church, Woodbury Heights, NJ by Rev. Ernest C. Enslin (pub. May 20, 1952 Woodbury Daily Times)

w. ANNETTE (originally ANNA) ELIZABETH FREDERICK

Only child of Frank Gerhard Frederick and Marie Elizabeth Ackerman

b. Feb 1, 1930 Underwood Hospital (Dr. Underwood), Woodbury, NJ [Annette]

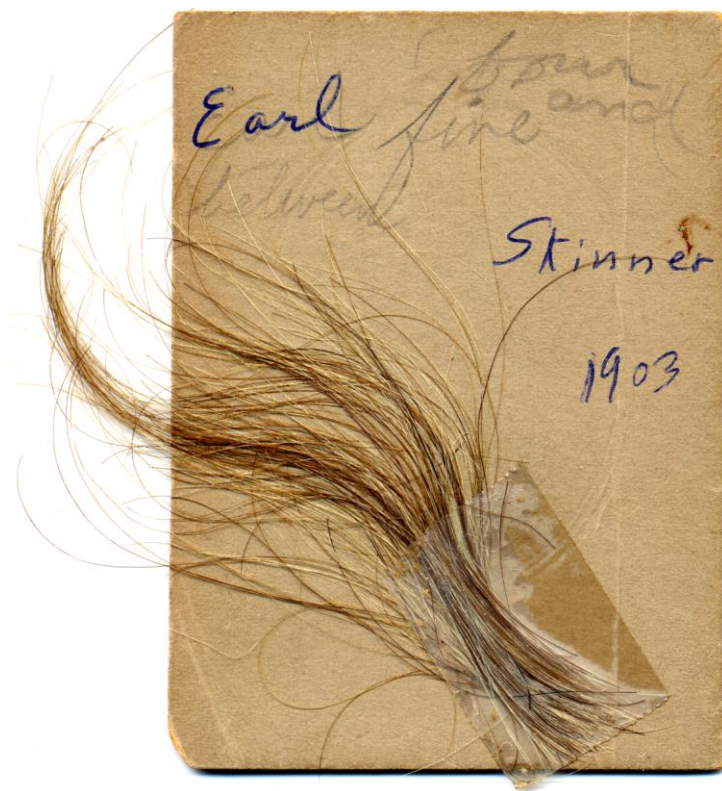
Children:

1. Kevin David Skinner

2. Susan Lynn Skinner

Ref.: Mrs. Gladys Hughlett, 611 Orchard Way Lansdowne, PA

All above per 1/24/1966/VEM and 1/17/1975/VEM, except as noted otherwise within brackets [].



Earl's DNA

KDS COMMENTARY – Lillian and Earl Skinner

Background

Earl's parents, Warren and May Skinner, were married in November of 1900. They lived briefly at a home in Sewell, NJ and then moved to a rental rowhome on Parrish Street in North Philadelphia. May was working as a sales lady at a Philadelphia 'Notions' store, a job she had commuted to as a single girl living in South Jersey. Warren, who had worked at an amusement park in South Jersey in the summer of 1900, found a job as a clerk in Philadelphia.

Birth of Earl Skinner

Earl Skinner was born in May, 1901 at Parrish Street in North Philadelphia. His birth and baptismal records show an address of 1419 Parrish.

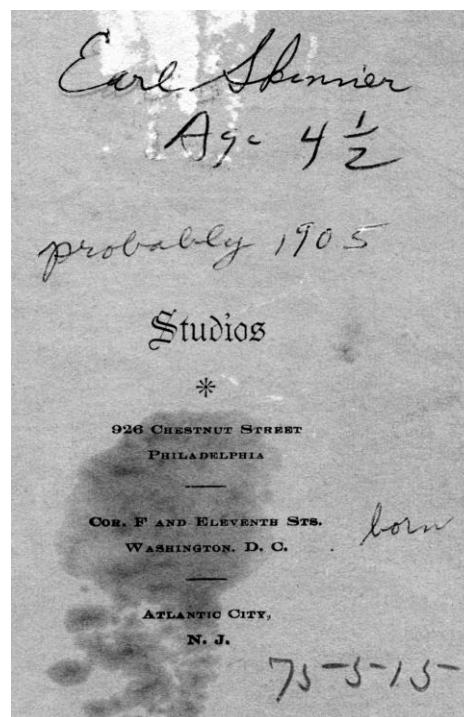
Earl was born exactly six months after the marriage of his parents.

1419 Parrish Street

1419 Parrish is just off Broad Street, about 1 1/3 mile up Broad Street from Philadelphia's City Hall. The home would have been at the corner of Parrish and the 800 block of Carlisle Street.



Earl Skinner, circa 1905



Lillian's writing

C No. **140484**HASE as "E"
End of EARL E

51345 C

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
DIVISION VITAL STATISTICS
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

FEE FOR THIS CERTIFICATE ONE DOLLAR

RETURN OF BIRTHS, in the City of Philadelphia, under
my care for the month of May 1901

Made to the Health Officer in Conformity with the Act of Assembly.

DATE OF BIRTH		NAME OF CHILD			
May 17th 1901		Harry Earle Skinner			
SEX		COLOR		PLACE OF BIRTH	
Male	Female	White	Black	Ward	Number and Street
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	1419 Parrish Street
NAMES OF PARENTS					OCCUPATION OF FATHER
George Warren & Viola May Skinner					Clerk

I certify that the above return is correct, according to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Dr. J. SeamanResidence 832 N. Broad St.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a certificate of birth on file in this office.

Date Mar. 31, 1901
filed - June 1901
mmhJohn B. McCann
Registrar.

Earl's Birth Record

His father's occupation is shown as 'Clerk'.

St. Luke's Methodist Church

Broad and Jackson Streets
Philadelphia, Pa.

REV. F. A. MANLOVE, MINISTER
2211 S. BROAD STREET
BELL PHONE, HOWARD 6786

March 26, 1943.

This certifies that the following is a correct transcript
of the Baptismal Record of HARRY EARL SKINNER as it appears
in the Redord of Baptisms of ST. LUKE'S METODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Broad and Jackson Streets, Philadelphia, Pa.

Date of Baptism: No Record. Evidently in the Spring of 1902 or 1903.

Name of Subject: Harry Earl Skinner.

Infant.

Date of Birth: May 17, 1901.

Names of Parents: George W. and Viola M.

Mode of Baptism: Sprinkling.

Place of Baptism: Home, 1419 Parrish St.

Officiating Clergyman: A. M. VIVIEN.



Pastor,
St. Luke's Methodist Church.

Earl's Baptismal Record

Earl was baptized at home by preacher A. M. Vivien of St. Luke's Methodist Church. St. Luke's was located in South Philadelphia on South Broad Street. This was several miles from the Skinner home off North Broad Street. Today, this church is gone, though the Methodist Hospital founded by the Methodist organization remains nearby.

Earl requested these copies of his birth and baptismal records in 1943, perhaps relating to his drafting work at NY Ship fulfilling government contracts.

2415 Carlisle Street

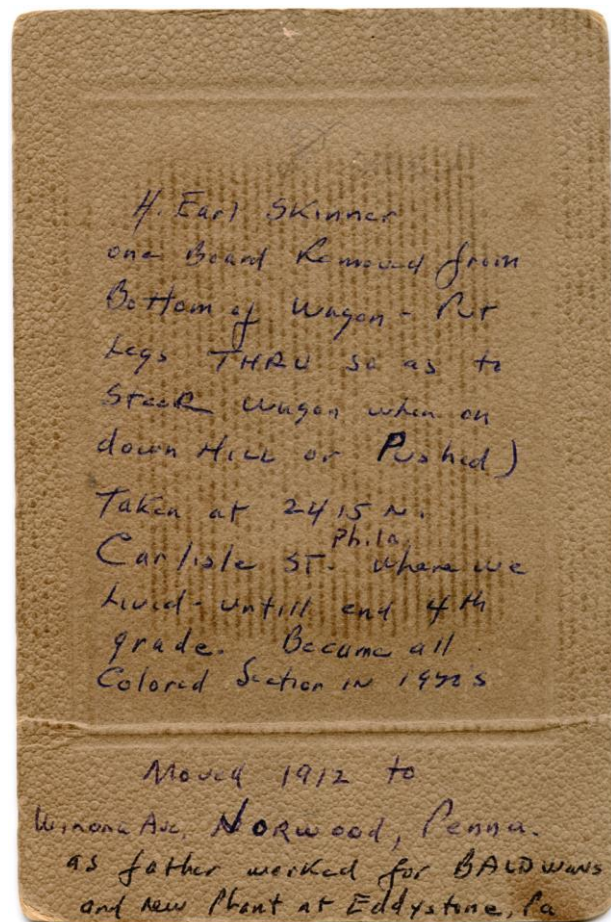
By the time of Earl's earliest childhood memories, the Skinners had moved from Parrish Street to 2415 Carlisle Street, Philadelphia. Carlisle Street runs parallel to North Broad Street (rt. 611), 1/2 block to the west. The house was on the right side of the street going north - about a block from the old Reading Main line.

Salesman

Earl would end up doing many odd jobs in his life, many involving sales. One of his first was selling his mother's baked goods out of his wagon as a child.

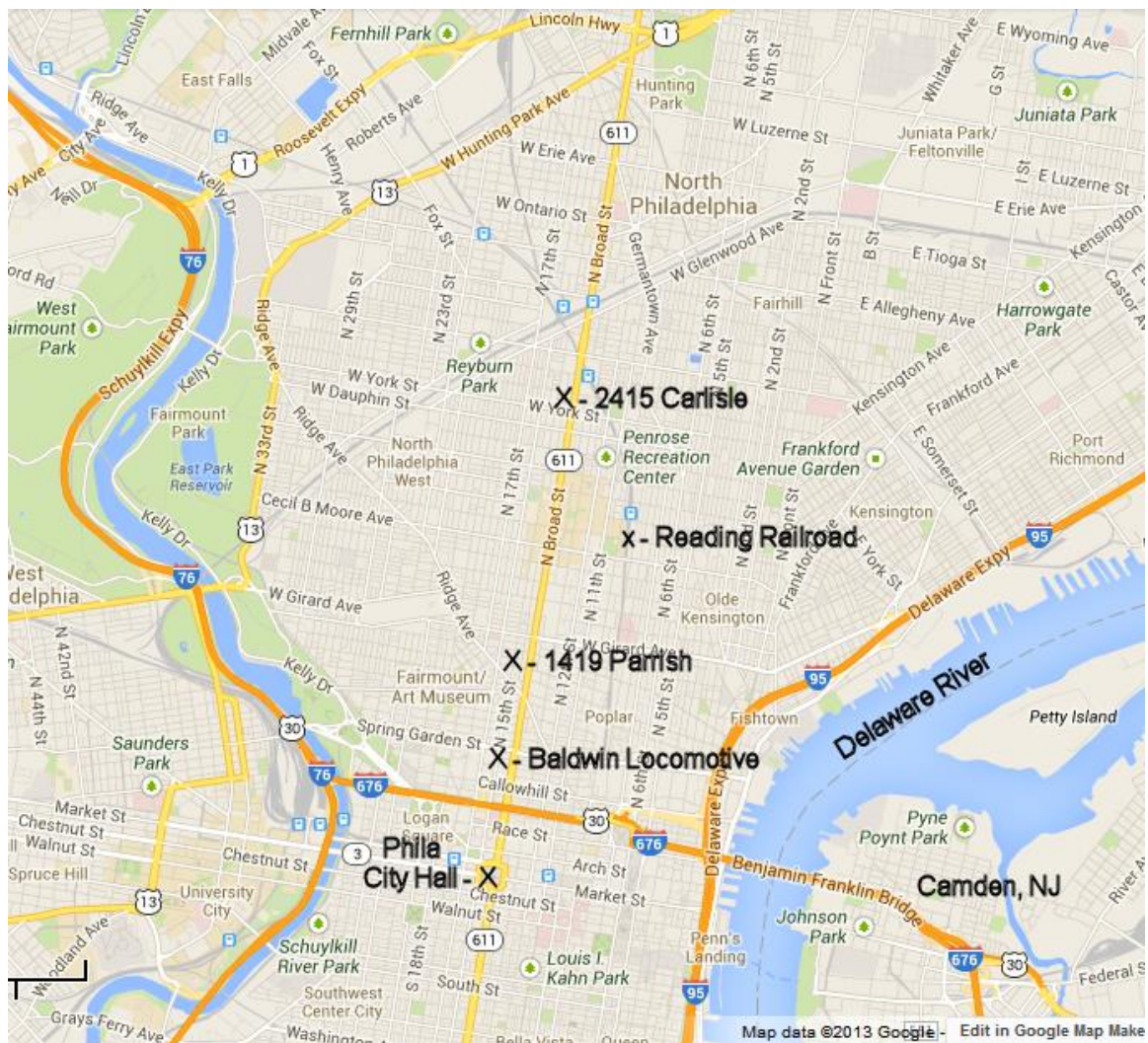


Earl Skinner
Carlisle Street, Phila



Earl's printing

"H. Earl Skinner. One board removed from bottom of wagon - put legs thru so as to steer wagon when downhill or pushed. Taken at 2415 Carlisle St. Phila where we lived until end 4th grade."



Parrish and Carlisle Streets, Philadelphia

The Skinners were living at 1419 Parrish Street when Earl was born in 1901. Earl's dad was a clerk at the time, company unknown.

The Skinners had moved to 2415 Carlisle Street by the time of Earl's earliest memories. Earl's dad worked at nearby Baldwin Locomotive for many years.

Alcyon Park, Pitman, circa 1905/1906

While living on Parrish Street, the Skinners attended a church picnic in South Jersey at the Alcyon Lake and amusement park in Pitman Grove. Three photographs survive of the event. One photograph is shown here. Two others are included in the biography of Earl's parents.

Earl appears to be about 4 years of age at the time (born May, 1901), so the picnic would be circa 1905 or 1906. Earl's parents are pictured at the picnic with the family of John and Ida Shull. Ida Shull was a relative of Earl's maternal grandmother – Mary S. Leap.



Alcyon Park Boardwalk, 1906
[<http://amusementparknostalgia.com/indal.html>]

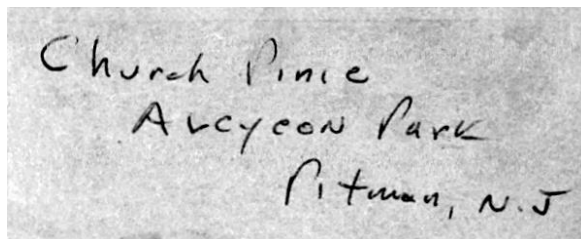


Church Picnic, Alcyon Park, Pitman, NJ, circa 1905/1906

Upper Left – John Shull, Warren (hidden) & May Skinner

Second Row Left – Ida Shull

Bottom Row Center – Shull's son, Ruth Shull & Earl Skinner (b. 1901)

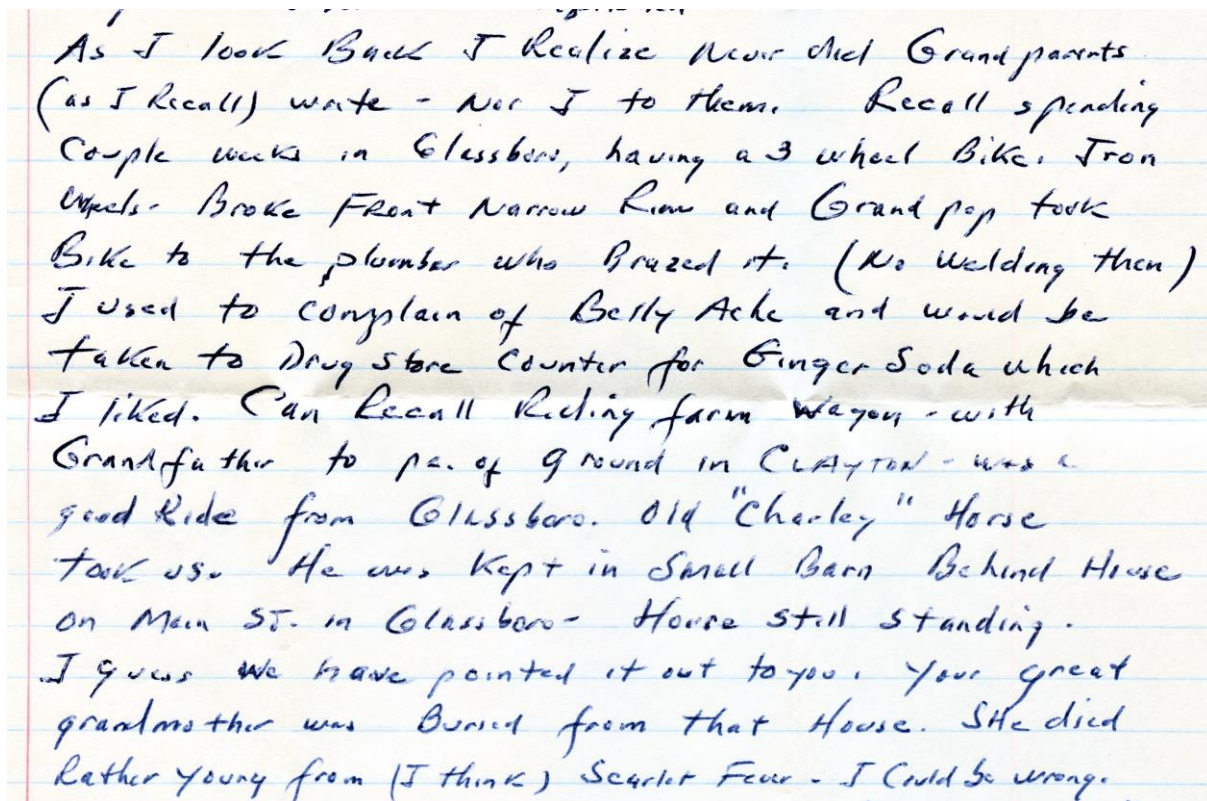


Earl's printing & on photo, above

Harry Skinner

Earl (Harry Earl Skinner) was buddy-buddy with his grandfather Harry Skinner (William Harrison Skinner), for whom he was named. On Saturdays, Earl's parents would take the family on the ferry from Philadelphia to Camden, NJ and then take the train to Glassboro where grandfather Harry lived with his wife, Lizzie, at 66 Main Street in a home that still stands today.

Grandfather Harry and his Horse



As I look Back I Realize never did Grandparents (as I Recall) write - nor I to them. Recall spending couple weeks in Glassboro, having a 3 wheel Bike. Iron wheels. Broke Front narrow Rim and Grand pop took Bike to the plumber who Brazed it. (No welding then) I used to complain of Belly Ache and would be taken to Drug store counter for Ginger Soda which I liked. Can Recall Riding farm wagon - with Grandfather to pc. of ground in Clayton - was a good Ride from Glassboro. Old "Charley" Horse took us. He was kept in small Barn Behind House on Main St. in Glassboro - House still standing. I guess we have pointed it out to you. Your great grandmother was Buried from that House. She died rather young from (I think) Scarlet Fever - I could be wrong.

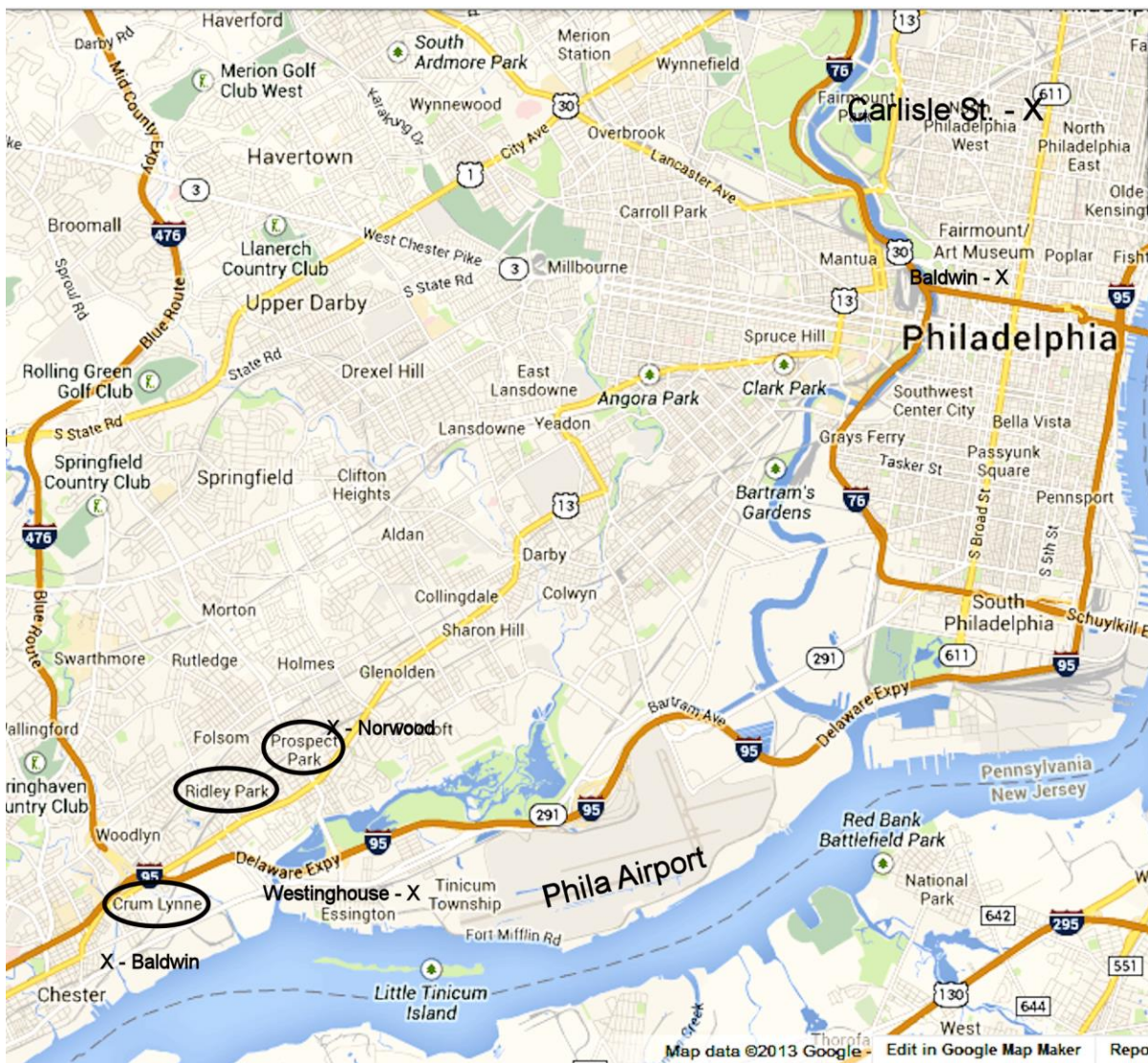
Correspondence From Earl Skinner To Me, 26 June 1979

'As I look back, I realize never did grandparents (as I recall) write – nor I to them. Recall spending couple weeks in Glassboro, having a 3-wheel bike. Iron wheels. Broke front narrow rim and grandpop took bike to the plumber who brazed it (no welding then). I used to complain of belly aches and would be taken to drug store counter for ginger soda which I liked. Can recall riding farm wagon with grandfather to piece of ground in Clayton. Was a good ride from Glassboro. Old "Charley" horse took us. He was kept in small barn behind house on Main St. in Glassboro. House still standing. I guess we have pointed it out to you. Your great grandmother was buried from that house. She died rather young from (I think) scarlet fever – I could be wrong.'

Norwood, Delaware County

In 1911, Baldwin Locomotive transferred Earl's father from Philadelphia to a new facility at Eddystone, along the banks of the Delaware River in Delaware County, south of Philadelphia.

In 1912, the year Earl turned age 11, the Skinners moved from Philadelphia to 40 East Winona Avenue in the town of Norwood, a few miles up the Chester Pike from the new Baldwin facility. Earl says they moved after he completed the fourth grade of schooling.



Delaware County, PA and vicinity – southwest of Philadelphia

1915, Grammar School Graduation

Earl graduated from the Norwood, PA grammar school in June of 1915. Presumably this is the year he moved from the sixth to the seventh grade.

1917, End of Schooling

Earl told me he quit school after the 8th grade. The year would be 1917, assuming he had graduated from the sixth grade in 1915. Elsewhere, Earl wrote that he quit school after two years of high school, which also translates to the 8th grade being his final year of schooling. Completing the 8th grade in 1917 does not quit fit with Earl previously writing that he had finished the 4th grade in 1912 when his parents had moved to Norwood.

Earl then began working a series of jobs as a teenager, working for the John Wanamaker's Department Store and the Pennsylvania Railroad.

An interesting program has been arranged for the closing exercises of the Norwood Grammar School, to be held on Monday evening, June 14. The exercises will be featured by a one-act playlet entitled, "Bargain Day at Bloomstein's," by the members of the graduating class. The graduates are: Margaret Barr, Stanley Carver, Viola Davison, Annetto Emgarth, William Hagerman, Samuel Hayes, Margaret Hedden, Chrissie Jenkins, Harry Kennedy, Ruth Matthias, Jack McLellan, Marty McFarlin, Sarah Mecouth, Alice Ockolman, Thelma Potts, Harriet Rodenbough, Earl Skinner, Miriam Tindall, Anna Trout and Anna Wolfe. The program will comprise the following numbers:

Song, Lullaby from "Jocelyn," class; monologue, "A Morning Ride," Annetto Emgarth; piano duet, "Faust Waltz," Sarah Mecouth and Harriet Rodenbough; class history, Harry Kennedy; song, "The Lonely Rose," class; class prophecy, Thelma Potts; class presentations, Chrissie Jenkins and Martha McFarlin; song, "Birds in the Night," class; presentation of diplomas, Dr. Henry C. Dooling; play, "Bargain Day at Bloomstein's", class; school song.

Clerk, Wannamaker's Department Store, circa 1917/1918

Earl got a job as a young clerk at Wanamaker's Department Store in Philadelphia. This was likely Earl's first 'real' job. I am guessing he was age 16, circa 1917-1918, presumably after he quit school. Earl often spoke of this job, but I don't think it lasted long.

Wanamaker's was located in the heart of downtown Philadelphia, just across the street from City Hall, at the corner of South Broad and Market Streets. This is now the home of Macy's Department Store. Young Earl would have taken the Pennsylvania Railroad from his parents' house in Norwood to Philadelphia's Broad Street station, located next to City Hall.

Earl recalled meeting Mr. Wanamaker (1838 - 1922).

For the rest of his life, Earl took great pride in meticulously wrapping gifts, an art he learned as a clerk at Wanamakers.



JOHN WANAMAKER
1838—1922



Wanamakers, completed 1911
Market Street (left) and South Broad (right)
[image per www.byrnmawr.edu]

Wanamaker's, along with Gimbels, Lit Brothers and Strawbridges, were the destination department stores in Philadelphia when I was growing up. Those were the same stores where my grandparents had shopped before I was born. And Wanamaker's was where I went to see Santa as a kid.

The rise of the suburban malls brought an end to the Philadelphia department stores. Wanamaker's had ushered in the age of the 20th century department store and survived the longest, disappearing circa 2000. The store is now part of the Macy's chain, and the building, with its 7-story atrium and organ, is still impressive.

John Wanamaker

John Wanamaker did not invent the department store, but played a key role in pushing the art forward. Wanamaker had purchased a large tract of land in the heart of Philadelphia, the site of a former train depot. In 1877, for the National Centennial, Wanamaker's opened a huge, sprawling outdoor market, organized by departments, on the site. In 1911, he opened the building now standing, which occupies just a small fraction of his original land. The building includes an interior 7-story tall atrium featuring the famous Wanamaker Organ.

The Wanamaker Organ

[Per freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~apassageint]

The Wanamaker organ was built by the Los Angeles Art Organ Company for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.

In 1909, John Wanamaker purchased the organ for his Philadelphia store. The Grand Organ was first heard in the 7-story atrium of his store in 1911, at the moment when England's King George was crowned. Later that year, it was used when President Taft dedicated the store.

The tone of the organ was judged inadequate to fill the huge store atrium. As a result, Wanamaker created an organ factory in the store attic to expand the organ's size.

The number of pipes was eventually increased to 28,500. The largest pipe is made of Oregon Sugar Pine three inches thick and over 32 feet long. The smallest pipe is a quarter-inch in length. The massive organ console has six ivory keyboards and 729 color-coded stop tablets.

The world's finest organists have performed at Wanamakers during the lifetimes of John Wanamaker and his son Rodman. This organ was played by Earl Skinner's niece - Connie Hughlett (daughter of Gladys Hughlett, Earl's sister), in the 1970's. I sure recall Connie playing the organ at her home when I was growing up.

The Wanamaker Organ is of the American Symphonic design, which can play the great organ masterworks as well as the entire range of orchestral literature. The organ is now a National Historic Landmark.

The Pennsylvania Railroad, 3 to 4 Years, circa 1918-1922

Earl has always told me that one of his favorite jobs was working for The Pennsylvania Railroad. He worked for the railroad for 3-4 years. Don't know if Earl's interest in the Pennsy Railroad was influenced by his uncle Charles Sheppard. Charles spent most of his life working for the Pennsylvania Railroad sorting mail in mail cars.

Working for the Pennsy Railroad was the formative job of Earl's life. While working for the railroad, he was able to learn drafting skills and to move to a drafting career, which then led to jobs with two later employers – O. W. Ketcham and The New York Shipyard. And Earl's travels with the railroad, the result of free passes that came with the job, cemented his travel bug and interest in traveling the United States.

Earl began with the Pennsylvania Railroad as a 'Messenger' with the Treasurer's Office of the railroad, carrying railroad correspondence and packages around Philadelphia by foot.

Per letter from Earl in 1978 – *"Started at the Penna RR in Treasurer's Office as a Messenger. Used to make a trip each day by foot to Front and Walnut Streets at the [Delaware] River with a couple of stops along the way. One stop I recall was around 9th and Chestnut Streets at the Lehigh Valley Railroad office."*

Earl was likely based at the headquarters of the Pennsylvania Railroad in the old Broad Street railroad station. The station was adjacent to Philadelphia City Hall and the Wanamaker's Department Store.

The station is long-gone today – it was torn down after a massive fire destroyed the train shed in 1923. The station was rebuilt a few blocks away at 17th street where it stands today.

Night Drafting School, Drexel Institute

The head of an engineering department at the Pennsylvania Railroad also taught mechanical drawing (drafting) in the evenings at the Drexel Institute (today Drexel University). As a result, Earl began three years of night school at Drexel to learn drafting. and was encouraged by his instructor to move from the Treasurer's Dept, at the railroad to the Engineering Dept. I recall Lillian telling me that Earl may have gone to drafting school in Philadelphia at some point in time.

Along the way, Earl's drafting instructor encouraged Earl to move from the Treasurer's Office of the railroad to the Engineering Dept. Earl drew railroad right-of-ways from field notes, and drew freight yards with all the trackage, including a yard at St. Louis. That drafting role lasted about a year before downsizing cost him his job with the railroad – a job that brought Earl a drafting career and much fun travel around the eastern half of the country.

Per Earl *“Started going to Night School, Drexel Institute [today, Drexel University], for mechanical drawing. Teacher there suggested I get transferred from the Treasurer’s Office [of the Pennsylvania Railroad] to his department – which was drawing railroad right-a-ways from field notes. Also freight yard layouts and all the tracks. So I did.”*

“After 3 years with the railroad got laid off. Force of 18 was cut to 8. So there went my railroad passes and \$190/month job. Wish I had kept data on my age at that time – 21 I think.”

Per letter from Earl 4/25/1976 – *“When I worked for the PRR one was allowed a pass each month either on PRR or some other line or Boat line. Had an annual pass Phila. To Wash. Used to swap with a friend for his Phila. To N.Y. Even one time got the friend to give me a pass in his name for Buffalo by way of Pittsburgh. My father and I went to Niagara and back no trouble. In those days Pullman was the thing. R.R. employees got 33% off. Meals were reasonable in the diner. I went everywhere the Penn. had tracks or leased.*

Started to work in the Treasurer’s office as a clerk and went to Drexel three years at night for Engr. The teacher was head of an Engr. Dept. for the R.R. Suggested I get transferred which I did. Recall making [drafting] a very large lay out of freight yard in St. Louis and taking same there. You know I quit High [school] after two years. Sure glad you are acquiring a good education.

You should see the falls area [Niagara Falls] during a cold winter. Every blade of grass is coated with frozen mist. Walking thru they break with the sound of glass. The RR job ended like this. The dept. I was in had 18 employees. After one year in that dept. the powers to be decided to save some money and cut down to six. All together I spent 4 yrs. with the outfit. All were lots of fun.

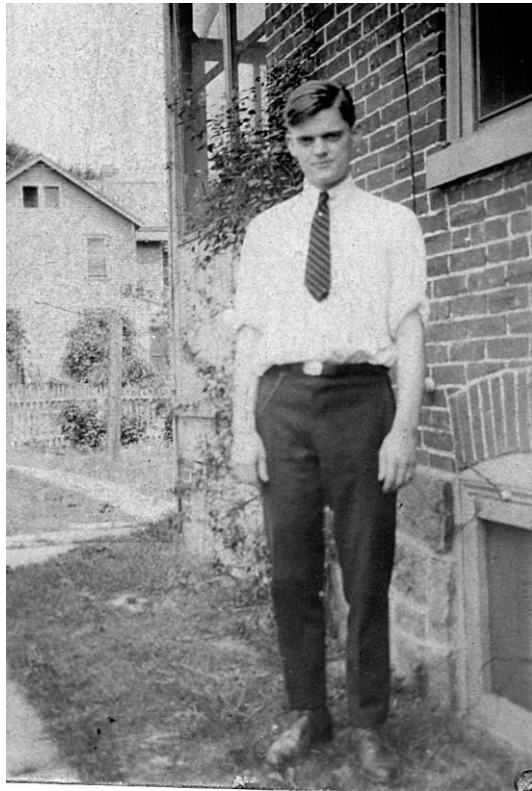
Many times I left the office at 4:30. Had dinner on the fly at Automat [Horn & Hardarts] – you put your coins in, opened a glass door, and pulled out a sandwich or complete meal] across from Wanamaker’s (was downstairs) then right in the same block went to the Globe theatre, movies and live show. Caught a 10:10 train to Norwood. In those days it was Broad St. Station at 15th not as now at 17th. So much for my reminiscent. Sign of old age.”

1920 Federal Census

The 1920 census recorded Earl Skinner, age 18, as being a “Clerk, Railroad”.

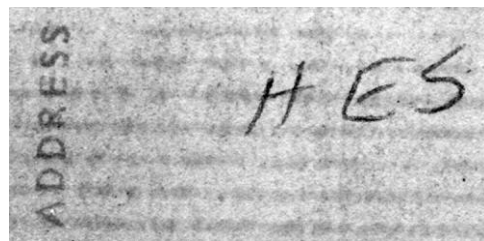


Earl Skinner
40 Winona Avenue, Norwood
Looks like age 18, circa 1919

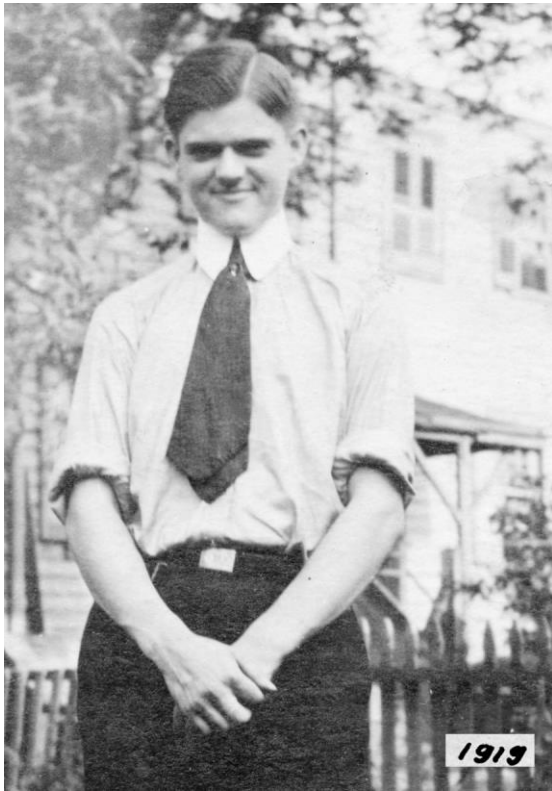


Earl Skinner
40 Winona Avenue, Norwood

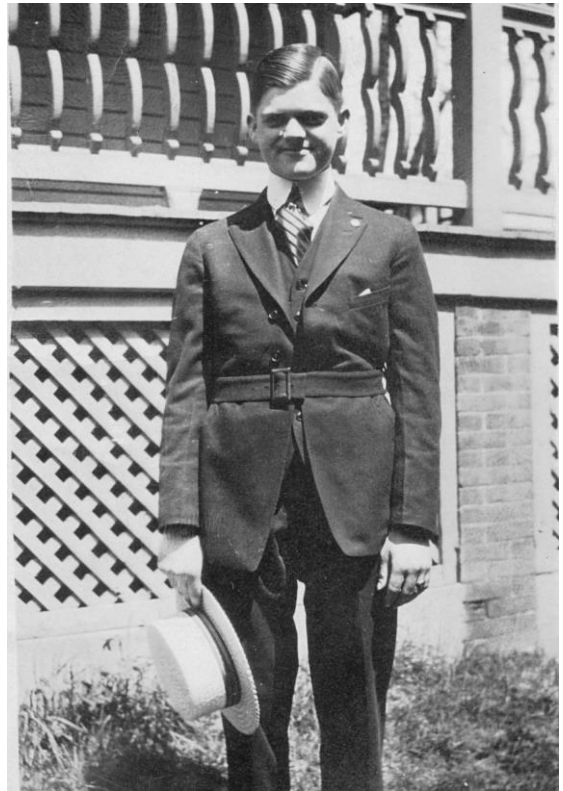
Harry Earl Skinner
Born 1901 May 17.
This picture 1919 or 1920
Norwood Pa.



Earl's printing



1919
Same belt as previous photo

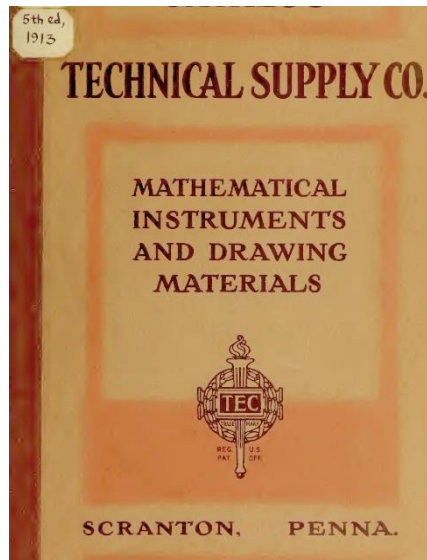


circa 1919
Dressed for the railroad?

Earl's Drafting Tools



Earl's drafting tools, likely of the 1920 time frame



"TEC" BRAND
The Highest Grade Drawing Tools

700

These instruments are made from hard rolled German Silver and English tempered tool steel. The material, together with the extreme care used in manufacturing, combine to make "Tec" Brand the best instruments for high-grade work.

"Tec" instruments carry Micrometer Adjustment for all needle points, Patented Straightening Device on Compasses and Bows, and Patented Release Spring on Ruling Pens.

700. Containing

- No. 501 Ruling Pen, ebony handle, 5 inches.
- No. 545 Steel Spring Bow-Pencil, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, metal handle.
- No. 546 Steel Spring Bow-Pen, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, metal handle.
- No. 571 Plain Dividers, 6 inches.
- No. 585 Compass, 6 inches, with fixed needle point, pencil and pen point and lengthening bar.
- Box of Leads.

Per set	\$18.75
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705. Containing same as No. 700, but with Hair-Spring Dividers 573 instead of 571 Plain Dividers. Per set.....

.....	\$20.00
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Above with Bow Instruments with side screw instead of center screw at same price.

66

1913 Drafting Tool Catalogue showing drafting tools similar to Earl's set

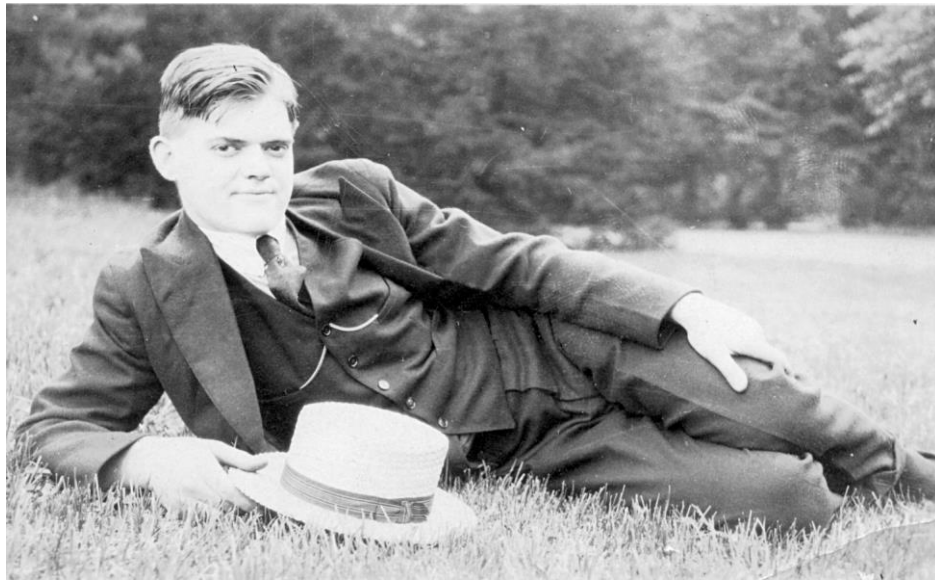
Early Travel Bug

Earl always had the travel bug and took full advantage of the complimentary railroad passes that came with his job with the Pennsy Railroad.

Per correspondence from Earl, circa 1977 – *“Have not seen Niagara Falls for numerous years but was there seven times. – 3 by train when worked for the RR. One of those trips I managed to get my father a free trip. Friend of mine got a pass and my father used it. We made the trip by way of Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and north. Return normal by Harrisburg. No “Trip” up. [a play on words] In those days, brakemen and conductors paid little attention to pass holders – one glance and walk on. In those days, I rode everywhere the Penna RR went + some passes on foreign RR’s and a boat line. The latter from Cleveland to Detroit (at night). So your Grandpa had the travel bug many years.”*

One of Earl’s early trips to Niagara Falls was in his father’s 1919 Model T Ford – probably done with his sister and parents. In the 1930’s, Earl began having fun with airplane trips.

Per letter from Earl, 1976 – *“My total trips to Niagara by train, car, and plane are seven but none since about 55. First in a 1919 Model “T”. Few times when your Grandma went to Lancaster [her sister’s] for the week and I over-tempted to take a short flight, usually she never knew. I recall one day went to Phila. Airport and asked at counter if there was a flight to Buffalo that stopped few times? Reply – one leaves in 10 minutes (DC3) with a look to me of what kind of nut do we have here. I was the only passenger until Williamsport. None on at Reading [Pa]. Had lunch together with the hostess. Business picked up some at Elmira, Corning and at Rochester. Came back on DC6 one stop, Rochester, that night.”*



ABT 1921
Note Vest & Watch
Earl Skinner

Niagara Falls,
circa early 1920's.
[Earl's printing; Lillian's writing]



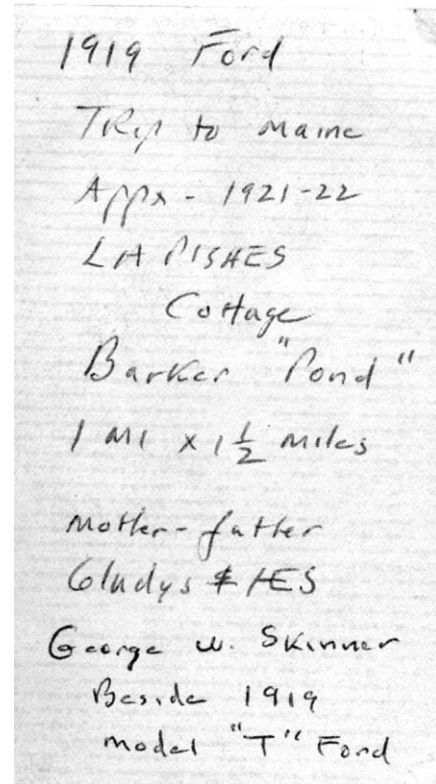
I think Niagara F.
A.B. 1924?

Circa 1921/1922

Earl accompanied his parents and sister on a vacation drive up to Maine. They stayed for some time at 'La Pishes' cottages on Barker's Pond in the middle of nowhere in Maine, just inland of the town of Bangor. Can only imagine the bumpy ride on primitive roads in the father's 1919 Model T Ford with the parents, son Earl - about age 20, daughter Gladys - about age 12, plus luggage.



Father Warren Skinner reading the map



Earl's printing

Philadelphia Electric Company, circa 1922

Per Earl "Got a job at the Philadelphia Electric Company, Chester plant as Assistant Yard Master. Kept track of how many tons of coal were in the yard and in the 4-story tall bunkers. Furnaces were gravity-fed. After a year, quit that job."

Per my father - A guy shoveling coal deep in one of the huge coal bins quit, and Earl was asked to go down into the bin to take his place. Earl declined the invitation and quit.

Philadelphia Electric was located on the banks of the Delaware River south of Philadelphia at the city of Chester. Coal was off-loaded at the plant from ships on the river. The building is still standing today and is just south of the Commodore Barry Bridge.



Philadelphia Electric
[wilimedi.org]

4-story coal towers at each end of the building.

[blank]

O. W. Ketcham – 11 ½ years; Circa 1922-1934

Earl began working as a draftsman "drawing what's necessary" for the O. W. Ketcham Terra Cotta Works. He worked there 11 ½ years. This job came as a direct result of his drafting education at Drexel and his drafting work with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

O. W. Ketcham was located in Crum Lynne, Pa, a few miles down the Chester Pike, and down the tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad, from Norwood where Earl was living with his parents. Crum Lynne was one town north of Eddystone, where Earl's father was working at Baldwin Locomotive.

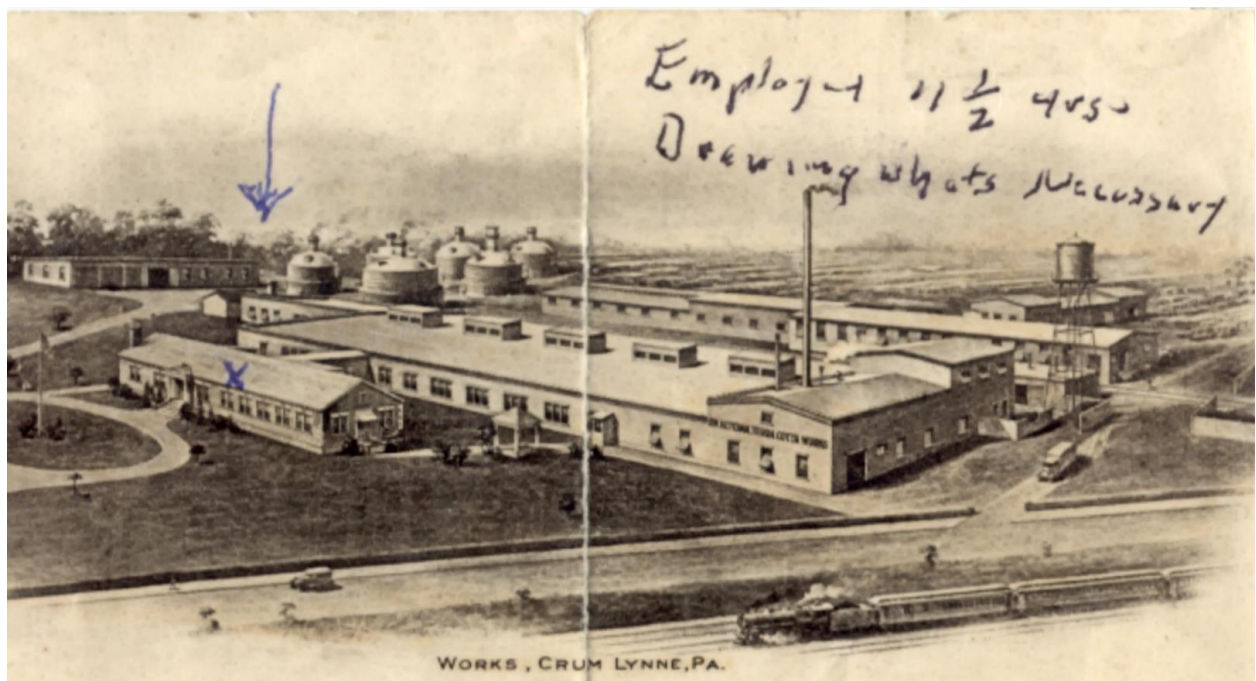
O. W. Ketcham worked in conjunction with building architects, designing the exterior building trim utilized to adorn the brick skyscrapers and other buildings built in the early years of the 20th century. The company was small, but known around the country for its use of fired clay products covered with colorful glazes, manufactured in kilns at its site in Crum Lynne.

In its simplest form, terra cotta consisted of decorative figurines and trim made of porous, fired clay, same as would have been used several thousand years ago in Greece and Rome. With the advent of brick skyscrapers, large sections of thin, light-weight terra cotta trim (architectural terra cotta) were used to give a distinctive look to the entrances, windows and other points of interest of the otherwise plain buildings. Metal supports and pins were used to secure the terra cotta pieces through the brick exteriors to the metal frames of the buildings.

Earl did drafting for Ketcham, and in addition, was responsible for taking photographs of the clay models that the company worked with. He also made field trips to inspect the progress on buildings under construction, requiring him to clamber in and outside of buildings.

Per my father, it was probably on one such visit to the upper stories of a Philadelphia building that Earl photographed a major fire at the Broad Street Reading train terminal. I have not found any of the photos taken by Earl. There is a chance my father may be referring, not to a Reading Terminal fire, but to the well-known fire that destroyed the Pennsylvania Railroad's Broad St. Station in 1923.

In his spare time, Earl used O. W. Ketcham's large-negative cameras and studios to take photographs of himself and his girlfriend Lillian Showalter.



O. W. Ketcham, Crum Lynne, PA; Artist's Sketch

Earl placed an 'X' on Ketcham's front building, just to the right of the front door, denoting where he did his drafting. This front building is still standing today. The rest of the complex is gone.

Earl worked at Ketcham's from (roughly) 1922 to 1933 - 11 1/2 years. He later wrote in a start date of 1918 and end date of 1931 as seen above – those dates are not accurate.

The above sketch shows the Chester Pike and Pennsylvania Railroad as being parallel to each other (in foreground). The Chester Pike actually runs parallel to the front building and crosses the rail line in the foreground.



Earl Skinner w/1928 Dodge in front of O. W. Ketcham, 1930

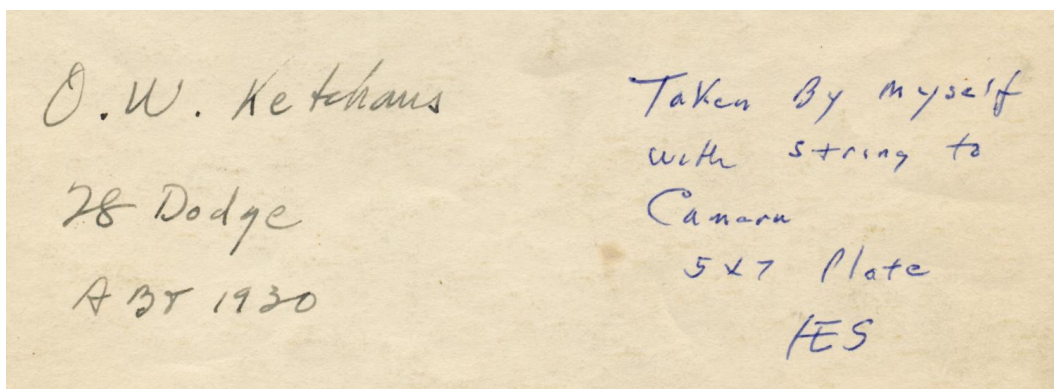
Photo taken by Earl pulling on a string attached to the shutter.

Earl used one of Ketcham's cameras with a large 5x7 negative.

Ketcham's main administration building (rear, right) is where Earl did his drafting.

The main building, as well as the side building (rear, left), are standing today.

The kilns and numerous other buildings of O. W. Ketcham are long gone.



Earl's printing (rear of photograph)



Earl, Close-Up

O. W. Ketcham
Terra Cotta works -
Taken By myself with string to camera
ABT. 1930 - 1928 DODGE CAR
I did the Photography at the Plant - of Modeling - in CLAY
with 5x7 Camera & 8x10 Camera.

Earl taped this two-sided note to his photo.

HES Employed O.W. Ketcham Terra Cotta Works
Crumlynn, PA. (Below Norwood where lived)
Employed 11 yrs. till early 30's. Terra Cotta
Bldg. TRAM went out of style. (DRAWING)
one of the Last jobs is Bldg. Across of Wanamakers
in Phila. on Market St.

Earl's printing – the building 'across of Wanamakers' is still standing today.



Abandoned main administration building of O.W. Ketcham, yours truly, 3 July 05
Earl did his drafting just to the right of the front door.



Wonderful drafting logo
O. W. Ketcham

This building, formerly part of O. W. Ketcham, sits to the left of the main administration building and partially appears in the photo of Earl and his auto.



O. W. Ketcham Drafting,
undated

[philadelphiabuildings.org]



**Fig. 3. Shows a Corner of the Drafting Room, Giving an Idea
of the Congenial Working Quarters in All Parts
of the Works.**

O. W. Ketcham Drafting
Room, 1918 –
Several Years Before
Earl Arrived

[Brick and Clay Record,
Vol. 53, Google ebook]



O.W.Ketcham Fabrication Shop and Terra Cotta Still
[www.philadelphiabuildings.org]

Home of John and Mable Ringling, Sarasota, Florida

While with O. W. Ketcham, Earl worked two years drawing up the details of the home of John and Mable Ringling (Ringling Brothers Circus) in Sarasota, Florida.

Per letter from Earl, circa 1978 – *“Went to work at O. W. Ketcham terra cotta works, stayed 11 ½ years drawing up many famous places, such as Ringling home at Sarasota – 2 yr. job.”*

Mable and John Ringling named their home Ca' D'Zan'.

History of Ca' D'Zan [www.ringling.org]

The Inspiration

The Ringlings had been traveling throughout Europe for nearly 25 years, acquiring circus acts and art. They both greatly admired the architectural style of Venice's Ducal Palace, Ca' d'Oro and the Grunwald Hotel. When they decided to build a home in Sarasota, Florida, where they had been winter residents for a number of years, The Ringlings took these palazzi as their inspiration – and Sarasota Bay as their Grand Canal.

Building Begins

The Ringlings hired the famous New York architect Dwight James Baum, to design the home and Owen Burns to build it. However, Mable, who had kept an oilskin portfolio filled with postcards, sketches and photos she had collected during her travels, oversaw every aspect of the construction, from the mixing of the terra cotta to the glazing of the tiles. Indeed, so great was her involvement that the original architectural plans called it “The Residence of Mrs. John Ringling.”

One of America's wealthiest couples, the Ringlings started building Ca' d'Zan in 1924 and completed it shortly before Christmas in 1926 at the then princely sum of \$1.5 million. Sadly, their happiness there was not to last, for only three years after its completion, Mable died from Addison's disease and the complications of diabetes.

The House

The 36,000 square-foot house sits on a waterfront site 1,000 feet long and 3,000 feet deep. It is five stories tall and has a full basement. Constructed from terra cotta “T” blocks, concrete and brick, it is covered with stucco and terra cotta and embellished with glazed tile. Decorative tile medallions, balustrades and ornamental cresting in soft red, yellow, green, blue and ivory highlight the pink patina of the stucco and terra cotta exterior.

Originally roofed with 16th century Spanish tiles imported by the builder, the bayfront terrace was made from domestic and imported marble. Ringling kept his yacht, Zalophus, docked there and often entertained celebrities of the Roaring Twenties, including comedian Will Rogers and New York Mayor Jimmy Walker. Today, the terrace hosts weddings, corporate parties and a number of popular gatherings like Yoga on the Terrace.

Restoration

John Ringling bequeathed the property to the state of Florida. After decades of decline, the property underwent a massive rehab that was completed in 2002.



CA' D'ZAN
[www.ringling.org]

Drexel University Expansion

One of Earl's assignments with O. W. Ketcham was to measure existing architectural details on the cornice (upper overhang) of the main building of Drexel University, so that matching details could be fabricated for a planned building addition. Drexel is where Earl had previously attended night school for 3 years to learn drafting.

Per letter from Earl, January 15, 1980 – *“Keep up your engineering. My diploma came from Drexel Institute of Engineering – 33rd & Chestnut Streets. Many years later, I went there and from a special scaffold, I measured – drew full size - the large cornice projecting over Chestnut St. so it could be matched. Bldg. addition. Terra Cotta.”*



Drexel University,
Terra Cotta Cornice copied by Earl to Create Matching Cornice for Building Addition
[google street view, 2019]

Ruptured Appendix, circa 1924

In March, 1924, at age 22, Earl Skinner was admitted to Taylor Hospital for an emergency appendectomy, his appendix having ruptured. It was a Saturday night. Taylor Hospital was located in Ridley Park, two towns south of Norwood where Earl was living with his parents. The towns were small, so it was a short drive of just a few miles.

Earl's medical emergency turned out to be a life-changing event. During his recovery, he took a special interest in nurse-in-training Lillian Showalter. Lillian and Earl would marry three years later in 1927. As for the operation, Earl had a scar that was barely visible in later life.

Lillian Showalter, born 1903, West Virginia

For detailed information concerning the childhood of Lillian Showalter and the background of her parents, reference to the family file entitled 'Showalter'.

Lillian Showalter was born in Fairmont, West Virginia, in 1903. She was 2 ½ years younger than her future husband Earl.

Growing up in Fairmont, Lillian was surrounded by her mother's side of the family - grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Lillian's father had been raised in Huntingdon County in southwestern Pennsylvania, several hundred miles to the northeast. Fairmont and Huntingdon, though far apart, were in the same coal-rich mountain ranges that run up thru West Virginia into western Pennsylvania.

Move to Pennsylvania, 1911 or 1912

When Lillian was about 7-8 years of age, her father, struggling to find work in West Virginia, relocated the family to Huntingdon, PA where he had been raised. Lillian was about 7-8 years of age at the time. In western Pennsylvania, her father eventually found steady employment with the Harbison-Walker Refractories Company, where he was responsible for doing quarry blasting, and later, supervising quarry operations.

Downingtown, circa 1918

By 1918, when Lillian was age 14, Harbison had transferred Lillian's father to new quarries in eastern Pennsylvania. The family settled in at Downingtown, a distant suburb of Philadelphia.

This move, from western to eastern Pennsylvania, would bring Lillian into contact with her future husband Earl Skinner, who was raised near Downingtown at the town of Norwood. Norwood was just a short distance from Taylor Hospital where Lillian would spend four years in training to become a Registered Nurse.

[blank]

LILLIAN SHOWALTER - NURSE'S TRAINING

Lillian left home and went into Nurse's Training at Taylor Hospital, Ridley Park, PA September, 1921 just before her 18th birthday - youngest girl in training. Lillian entered training six months after the death of Mr. Taylor, the hospital's founder, but knew Mrs. Taylor, who ran the hospital after her husband's death.

"Enjoyed it so much and felt it was the best time of life." [Lillian]



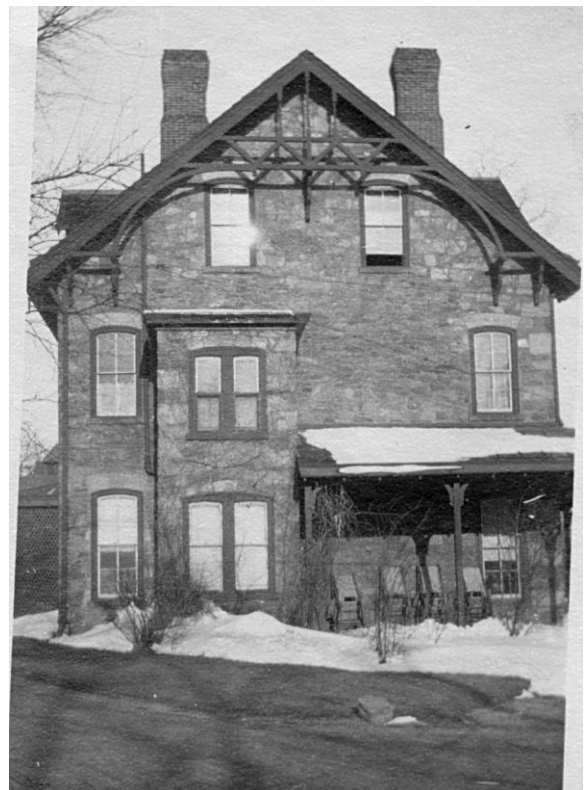
Lillian Showalter
'Taken by Dr. Rodgers after lab, Mar 1st, 1922'

Lillian lived nearby in a home that would be her favorite place she ever lived – winding staircase, four porches, but old.



Sue & Rose McCafferty, Lillian and a professor

Sue + rose
McCafferty
a prot.



The Mansion House ?



Lillian - 18 yrs.
 Downingtown
 home on vacation
 from nursing school
 parents' new home
 1921

March 22, 1924
 final wallhour
 How I look
 fierce

"final wallhour (timed exam?),
 Don't I look fierce."

Home on vacation, 1921

Her parents had just moved into a new home in Downingtown Pa that her father, as a carpenter, had helped to construct. Note lumber on ground.

Taylor Hospital, Ridley Park, PA

Dr. Taylor originally ran his practice out of his home, where he had installed a few beds for overnight care and recovery. In 1909, he purchased an estate at 15 Dutton Street that included a large home, called the 'Mansion House'. The home was outfitted with ten beds and became Taylor Hospital. The home occupied at least three floors and had winding staircases, so may not have been an ideal hospital. In 1912, a new hospital was built on a large plot of land on neighboring Felton Street. This new facility had 29 beds.

Dr. Taylor died young in 1920 and wife Katharine took over. She had always been his assistant and had served as his early anesthetist (ether). Taylor Hospital underwent a major renovation in 1925, while Lillian Showalter was studying there, a fact that she made note of. Today, the hospital site is home to the Chester-Crozier Burn Center.

Lillian Showalter began her nursing training in 1921 and graduated May 23, 1924. She passed the state boards the following year becoming a PA Registered Nurse on July 17, 1925.



Rose McCafferty and Horace Taylor, the son of the late Dr. Taylor and wife Katharine.



The Hon. Dr. Clark
Decline Stull, he did
not know it was taken
until I showed it to him.
then he raved.

Dr. Clark Decline Stull was a surgeon at Taylor Hospital. His father, George Stull, was a bigwig in the Wanamaker Department Store organization and had been on the Board of Directors of Taylor Hospital for many years.



Reid-Shawatts Singers



1925; my guess – Reid, Mae Singles, Lillian, Rose McCafferty





The nineteen hundred and twenty-four Class
of the

Nurses Training School of the
Taylor Hospital

Requests the pleasure of your presence
at the Graduation Exercises

Friday Evening, May the twenty-third
nineteen hundred and twenty-four
eight-thirty o'clock, daylight saving time

The Auditorium

Ridley Park, Pennsylvania



Assume this is Taylor Hospital's 1924 graduation class

Courtship of Lillian and Earl

Lillian and Earl met at Taylor Hospital in March of 1924, where Lillian was a nurse-in-training and Earl had been a patient. They dated for three years before marrying in 1927.



Lillian Showalter & Earl Skinner
Earl resembles me.

Earliest photo of Earl & Lillian,
but unlabeled.



Earl Skinner w/Ethel, Lillian's sister.
Per Lillian - "Never really friends."

Showalter home, Downingtown, PA.
Note the driveway, stakes and planter (Ethel's left
hand) common to both photos.

*Ethel. & Earl
Downingtown
Courtship days.*

Earl's writing

O. W. Ketcham Photos

Earl photographed girlfriend Lillian at the studios of O. W. Ketcham where he worked as a draftsman and had access to their photography equipment.



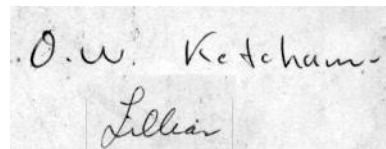
Lillian, circa 1925-1927

Taken By Earl
Studios of O. W. Ketcham



Lillian, circa 1925-1927

Taken By Earl
Studios of O. W. Ketcham



Earl's printing, Annette's writing



At left, Lillian Showalter
Taken By Earl
Studios of O. W. Ketcham?



Lillian Showalter, undated
Resembles my sister Susan.



Lillian, Nursing Outfit
Taken By Earl



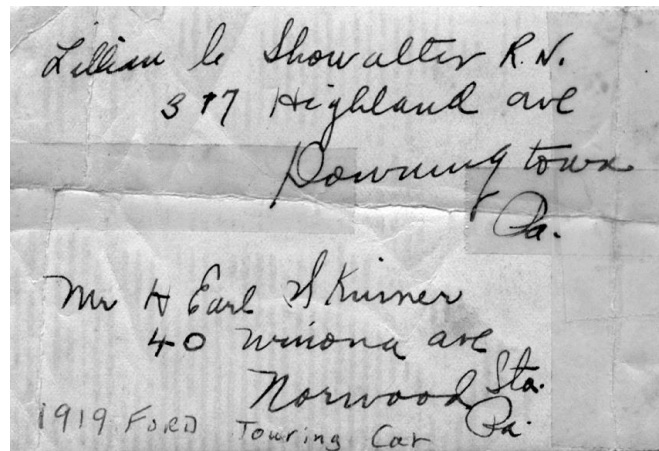
Earl's father, Warren, reading the map
next to his 1919 Ford Model T,
Maine, supposedly 1921-22.



Earl driving his father's Model T
with the top down, circa 1925.



Earl Skinner, Close-Up



Lillian's writing; Earl's printing

Dating Days – circa 1925. Earl was photographed in his father's Model T. On the back of the photograph, the handwriting of his girlfriend, Lillian, lists their respective addresses – not sure when or why.

Registered Nurse

Lillian completed the nursing program at Taylor Hospital in May of 1924 at age 24. She says she was still taking courses until January, 1925 and that she stayed a longer time, until March, to take the State Board exams. Lillian passed the State Boards in March, 1925, and became a Pennsylvania Registered Nurse (R.N.).

Registered nurses were typically sent to Philadelphia hospitals – Pennsylvania Hospital (University of Pa. Hospital?) for Medical or Philadelphia Children's Hospital for experience there - as Taylor Hospital, Ridley Park, was mostly surgical and accident cases. Lillian returned home to Downingtown after graduation and went to work for a hospital on a hill above Coatesville. Her sister Ethel, who also lived in Coatesville prior to a divorce, occasionally visited.

Lillian also worked briefly for doctors in the vicinity of Taylor Hospital, taking care of sick patients in their homes, or working at Taylor Hospital, a few weeks at a time, to fill in her schedule. She recalls disliking hospital work - sore feet from standing and walking all shift long.



Lillian's Pennsylvania Registered Nurses Pin
PA Registered Nurse #740

Time Together

Earl's estate includes a beautiful pocket watch given to him by Lillian. The watch was made by the Springfield Watch Company. The model name was the Marquis Aristocrat. The serial number of the movement indicates it was manufactured in 1925.

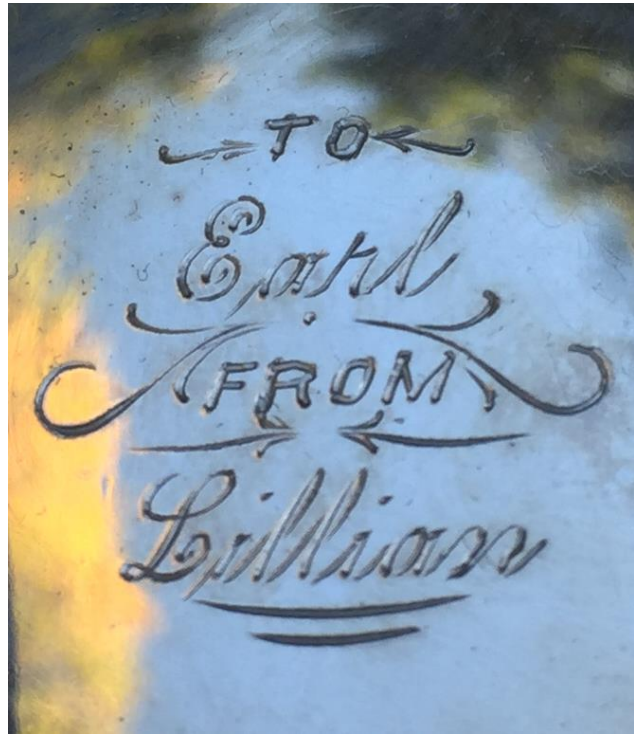
The watch case has two rear covers. Earl's initials are on the outer cover. When the outer cover is opened, the inner cover is revealed with an etched inscription 'To Earl From Lillian'.

Opening the inner cover reveals the watch movement. The back side of the inner cover indicates that the case of the watch was made by the Keystone Watch Case Company with its own serial number. Off to the edge is some etched signature or quality notes of the maker.

The watch should only be be opened with a fingernail or plastic tool. The edges of the rear covers are slightly wider where the finger or tool should be placed.



Illinois Watch Company Pocket Watch



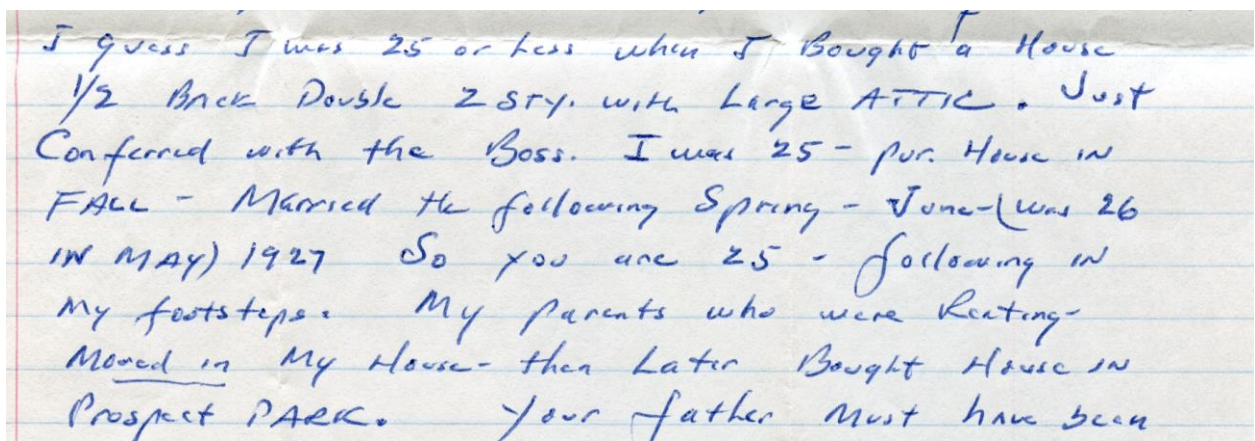
36 Garfield Avenue, Norwood – Earl's First Home

Earl had been living with his parents while working at O.W. Ketcham and dating Lillian. His parents had been renting at 40 Winona Avenue in Norwood since 1912. On December 8, 1926, Earl Skinner purchased a home a few blocks away at 36 Garfield Avenue. The home was one-half of a twin. As was common practice at the time, Earl put one dollar down with a mortgage covering the rest – total purchase cost unknown. Earl was 25 years of age. The home purchase was made with Lillian's consent – they would be married 6 months later.

Earl's parents moved into the small house with him, as well as his young sister Gladys. No doubt rent from the parents played a role in Earl's purchase decision.

The Chester Times, Wednesday, 5 Jan 1927.

News and Notes From Norwood – *"Warren Skinner and family, of Winona avenue, have moved to Garfield avenue."*



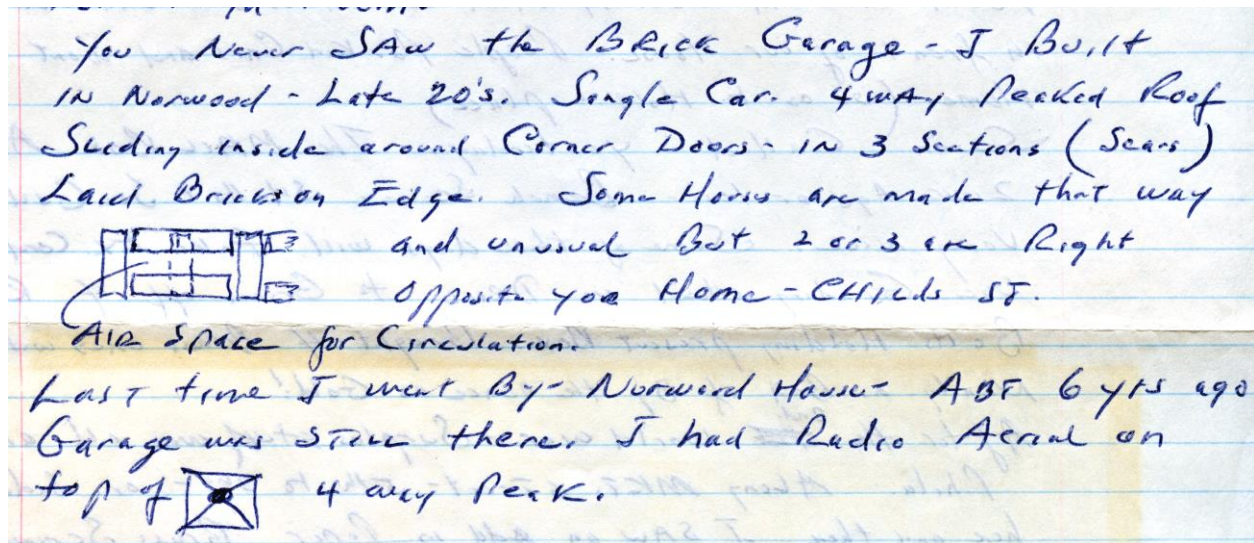
I guess I was 25 or less when I Bought a House
 1/2 Back Double 2 sty. with Large ATTIC. Just
 Conferred with the Boss. I was 25 - pur. House in
 FALL - Married the following Spring - June (was 26
 in May) 1927 So you are 25 - following in
 my footsteps. My parents who were Renting -
 Moved in My House - then Later Bought House in
 Prospect PARK. Your father must have been

‘Conferred With the Boss’ – Lillian!

1979 Letter From Earl to Me

Garage By Hand

Earl, always a handyman, built a garage behind his house.



1979 Letter from Earl to Me

I looked for the garage in 2019. It was gone.

Marriage of Lillian and Earl

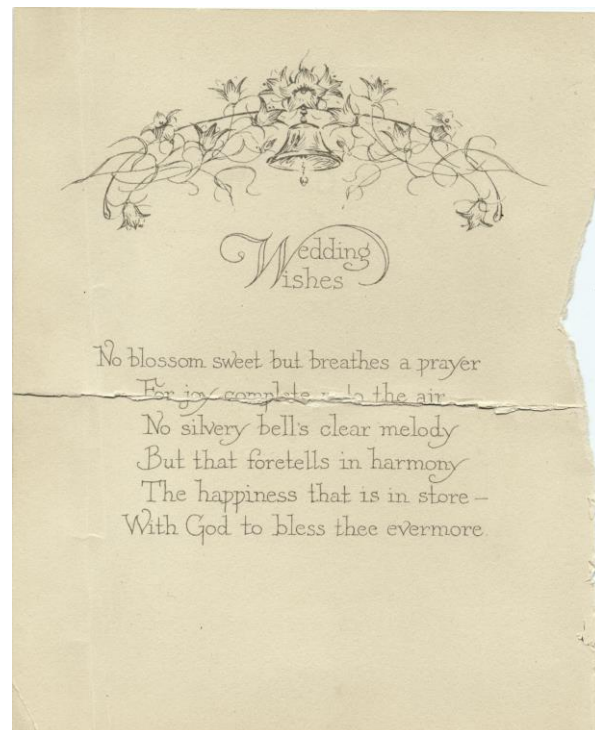
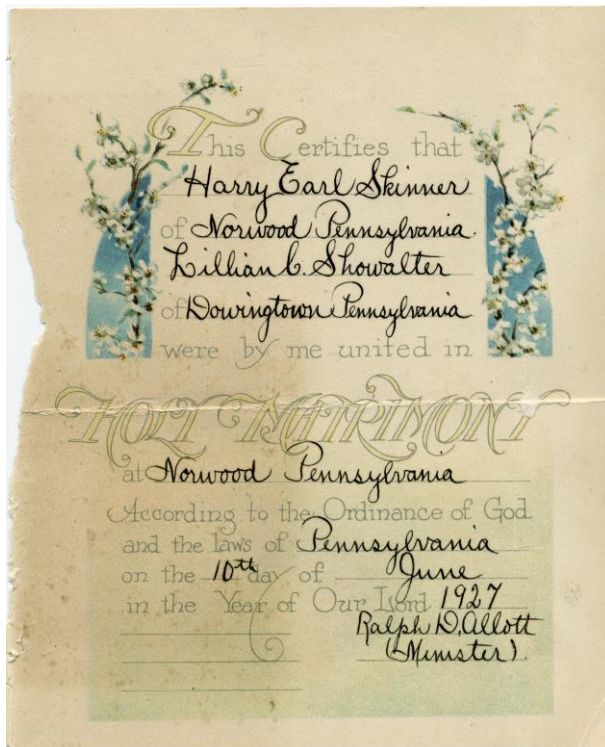
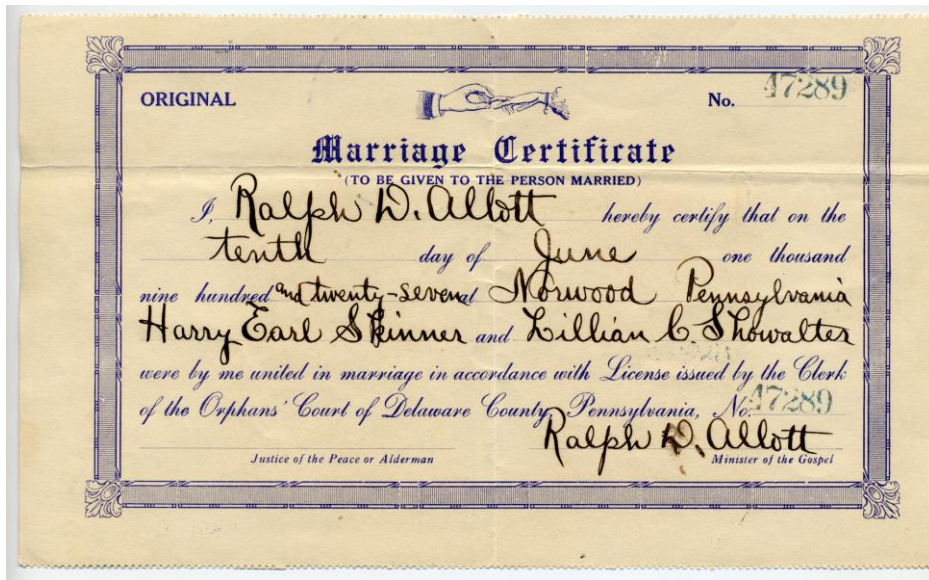
Lillian Showalter and Earl Skinner were married June 10, 1927 at the Norwood Methodist Church, the church of Earl's parents. Earl was 26 years of age; Lillian was 23. They had dated for three years. I never asked them about their marriage nor do I know any details. I am not aware of any photographs.

Lillian's beloved grandmother – Alice Dodd, attended the wedding, with husband William Dodd. The Dodds, originally from Fairmont, WV, were living under the care of their daughter Ines in Ohio, Ines being a sister of Lillian's mother. Alice Dodd died two years after the wedding. William Dodd lived a long time, dying 11 years later in 1938.

A decorative metal plate, embossed with the names of Lillian and Earl, commemorated the marriage. My father used the plate as raw material for the construction of one of his early scratch-built HO model railroad cars. The model is still in existence, and he displayed it at his 2009 KADE Railroad Open House.



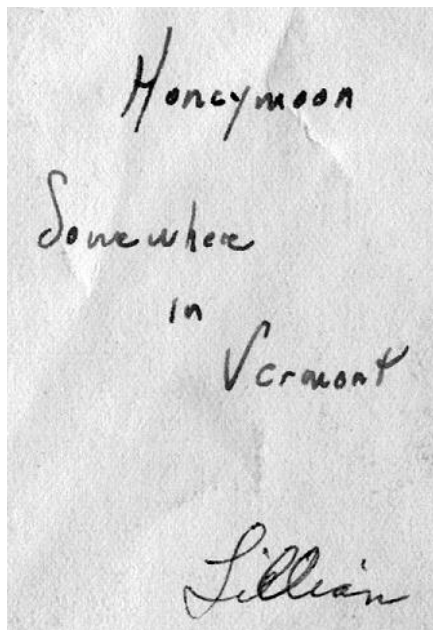
Chester County Times





Honeymoon. Lake Champlain maybe? – Appears to be a person standing on a fishing pier.

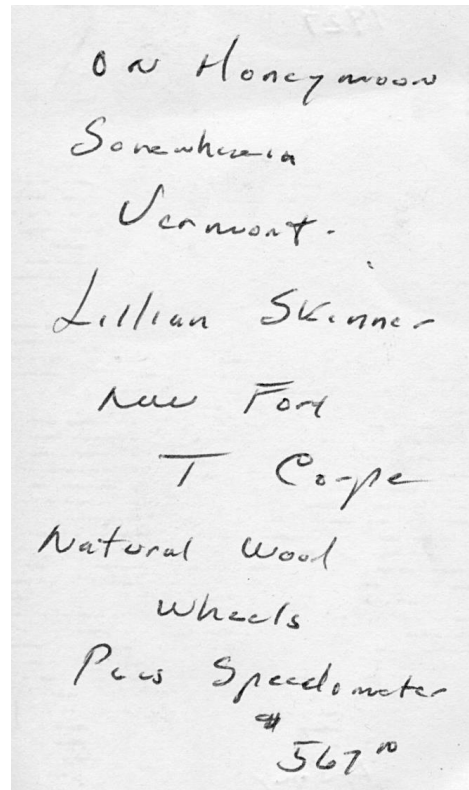
Earl's 1927 Model T is not the same auto
as his father's 1919 Motel T that Earl was pictured in earlier.



Earl's printing; Annette's writing



'Honey Moon'



But who is the woman?

Don't try like your father to see how easy
 can Skid around a Corner! Many years Ago
 we bought a new Ford Coupe- Model "T" Came down
 a short Hill in DARBY PA. Car Had New LINED
 Emergency Brakes instead of Cast IRON. So I tried them
 as was Approaching Chester Pike - also a Hill down,
 Well we turned around 3 times in Light Snow -

MIMI Yesling - opening Door - guess
 she was going to Jump out. Came out onto
 Chester Pike and Lucky No one Coming down
 near us. Car had 12 miles on it as was
 driving it Home from Phila. dealer. \$560⁰⁰
 Equipped with Natural wood wheels and Speedometer.
 Best of everything to you for the Coming year.
 DADA

Snow Performance of the 1927 Model T
 Letter from Earl to Me, 1970's

King, Queen, Full House

After their wedding, Lillian moved in with Earl at his house at Garfield Avenue. Earl's parents and younger sister were also living there.. Lillian told me that she recalled living with Earl's parents 'for a time' after the wedding. It would actually be many years – 1927 to 1931.



Lillian Skinner, circa late 1920's
36 Garfield Avenue, Norwood, PA



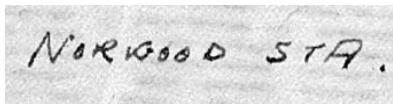
36 Garfield Ave
Norwood, Pa
Ph. 1848
Lillian

Earl's printing, Annette's writing



Earl Skinner, circa 1930

Dressed for Ketcham's;
Similar appearance to 1930 photo of Earl and his
auto in front of Ketcham's,
as presented many pages earlier.



Earl's printing;
Norwood Station, Pennsylvania Railroad



Wedding Band



Nice!



Norwood, Prospect Park and Ridley Park

Philadelphia is to the north up Rt. 13;
Chester, PA and Wilmington, DE are to the south down Rt. 13

Earl & Lillian lived:

Garfield Ave, Norwood [**G**], 1926 – 1936.

Mitchell Ave, Morton [**Morton**], 1936 – 1938.

Maryland Ave, Norwood [**M**], 1938 – 1939.

Gladys (sister to Earl) and her husband Bill Hughlett lived:

Pennsy Ave, Prospect Park [**P**], 1949 – 1965.

Warren & May (parents of Earl and Gladys) lived:

Winona Ave, Norwood, [**W**] 1912 to 1926.

Garfield Ave, Norwood [**G**], 1926 – 1930 or 1931.

554 Ninth Ave, Prospect Park [**N**], circa 1930 to 1963.

David went to school [**S1**] kindergarten and first grade while living on Garfield, later at the town of **Morton** and later at [**S2**] while living on Maryland Ave.

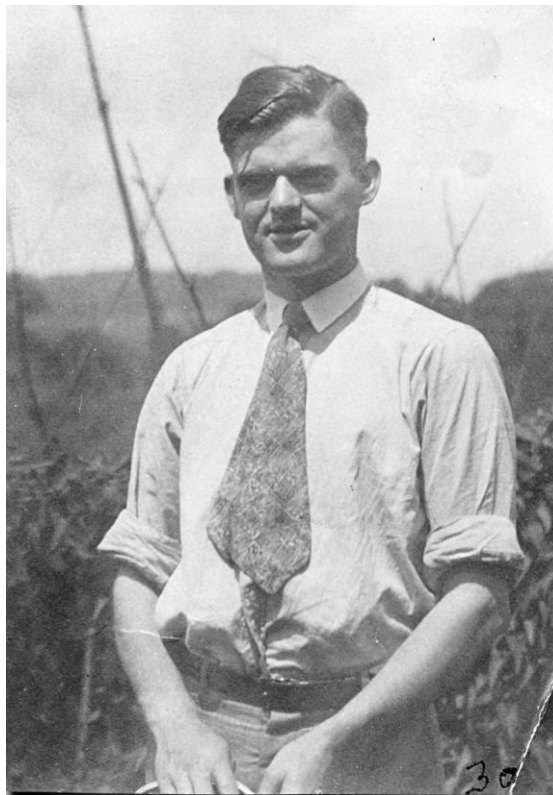
Birth of David Skinner

David Skinner was born November 8, 1929, two and a half years after the marriage of Earl and Lillian. David was born at Taylor Hospital, Ridley Park, the same hospital where his parents had met following his father's appendectomy. Years later, David would also have his appendix removed at Taylor.

David appears in the census of April, 1930 with his parents. David was named after a blond grandson of a paternal aunt of Lillian - Julia (Showalter) Banks.

Lillian had wanted additional children – Earl did not due to the Depression years. Earl got his wish.

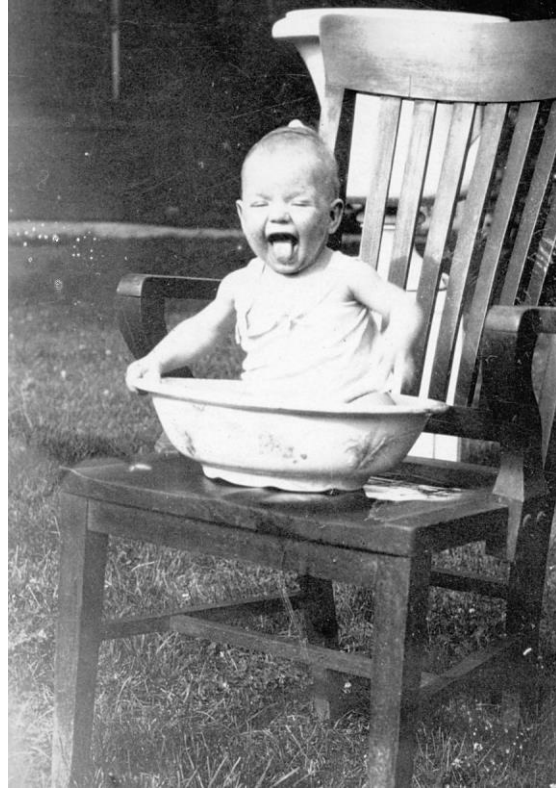
Young David attended his first year or two of schooling on East Winona Avenue in the center of Norwood. The building is still there today.



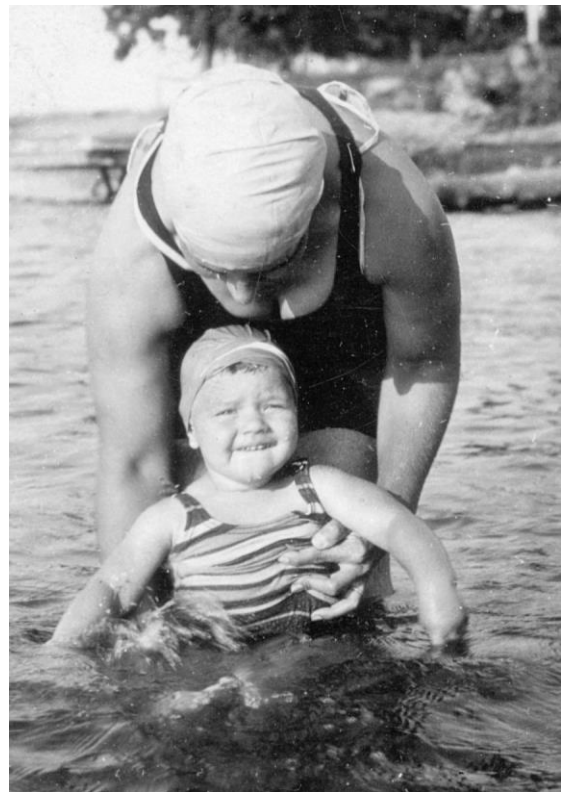
Earl Skinner, 1930



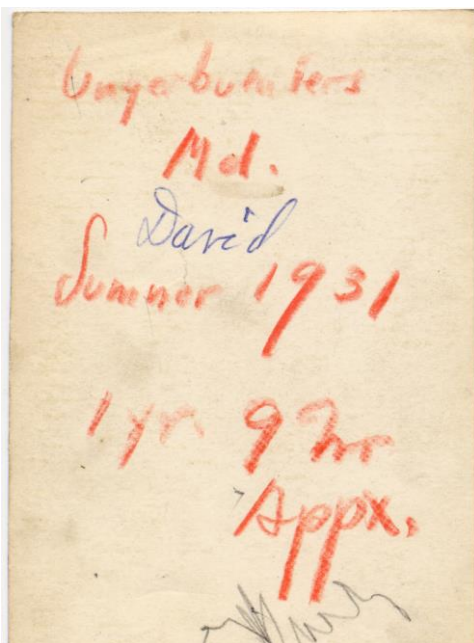
David, 1930, 7 months, Garfield Ave.



Lillian w/David, 1930, 5 months



Earl in bathing suit w/David, 1931



At a lake near a Ungerbuehler
relative in Maryland



Earl, 1933



Lillian w/David, 1933

1930 Census

The census shows Earl as the owner of 36 Garfield Avenue. He appears with his wife and new son David. Earl's parents were still living there as renters along with his sister Gladys. Earl's occupation was draftsman for the 'terra cotta works' (O. W. Ketcham). The census indicates that Lillian was no longer working as a nurse. She now had her own new-born son, my father, to attend to.

Bye Bye to Parents

Sometime between March, 1930 and August 1931 [per the Chester Times], Warren, May and daughter Gladys moved out of Earl's home at Garfield Avenue, Norwood. They had been living with Earl since Earl purchased the home in late 1926. Had they known how serious the Depression would be, perhaps they would have shared the home expenses together for a few more years.

The Depression Years

The Depression technically started with the collapse of the stock market in 1929. However, the real impact did not spread around the economy until the 1931-1933 timeframe, when bank closings and unemployment reached their peak. It lasted a long time - the military build-up of 1939-1940 started to turn the tide.

The Depression years had a big impact on the Skinner family. Earl's father lost his savings during the Depression when his bank abruptly closed.

Earl lost his job at O. W. Ketcham's, probably in late 1931. Earl would spend eight years trying to find comparable work, work that only became available with the advent of WWII. In 1935, Earl lost his Garfield home to the bank.

Another casualty of the Depression was the size of the American family. In 1991, Lillian told me that Earl did not want to have any additional children, other than son David, due to the Depression. Earl got his wish.

Lillian, who was not working in 1930 per the Federal Census, got back into nursing during the Depression years. Her typical job involved helping ill people at their homes. Her favorite shift was to work 7pm to 7am. Though tough on the marriage, it enabled her to be home in the morning to send her young son David to school and home in the afternoon when he returned. During the height of the Depression, the nursing work ran out. Lillian made cakes and sold them. Taylor Hospital offered free food to their former nurses, but Lillian was never that desperate.

Demise of O. W. Ketcham

Earl lost his job at O. W. Ketcham, probably in late 1931. Don't know how long the company survived after that. Earl had been working at Ketcham's since 1920 or so. The labor-intensive, ornate terra cotta building trim fabricated by O. W. Ketcham went out of style by the time of the Depression. And the depression years saw a decline in the construction of new buildings.

When Earl had started working at Ketchams, he was a single teenager living with his parents. When he lost his job, he was married with a two or three year old child. Earl recalls that one of the last buildings he worked on was across the street from the Wanamaker's Department Store in downtown Philadelphia:



Market Street National Bank, 1319-1325 Market St., Phila., completed 1930
Across the street from Wanamakers and adjacent to Philadelphia's City Hall

Colorful terracotta trim designed and fabricated by O.W. Ketcham.

Most of the Ketcham buildings and stills at their headquarters in Crum Lynne, PA are long-gone. But the administration building in which Earl did his drafting is still standing and is on a list of architecturally important buildings. The building is closed, but I was excited to discover it with my father on 3 July 2005. The building is constructed of very ornate Ketcham brick with terra cotta details adorning the window frames. Today, the remaining archives of Ketcham are held at a library called the Athenaeum in Philadelphia [reference Ketcham Collection at philadelphiabuildings.org.]

Nash Suits and Odd Jobs

Earl did odd jobs following the loss of work at O.W. Ketcham in 1931. My father and his cousin Dick Hughlett recall that Earl worked many years for the Nash Company, measuring people for custom-made, mail-order suits. Nash was a well-known suit manufacturer headquartered in Cincinnati. Earl would walk the streets and stop passers-by to pitch the suits. He showed sample materials from a book, took people's measurements and then ordered the suits through the mail. I recall Earl telling me stories about measuring people for men's suits out on the city sidewalks.

My father believes Earl sold Nash suits for most of the 1930's. He continued that work on the side in the 1940's, selling suits to people he worked with during the war.

Cousin Dick Hughlett says that Earl worked for a WPA street crew for a while. [Per Wikipedia] – the Works Progress Administration (WPA) was the largest of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal agencies, employing millions of workers on public works projects, including the construction of buildings and roads.

Earl's relatives helped out during the Depression. Uncle Franklin Ungerbuehler hired Earl to help move his garage. And Uncle Charles Shepherd hired Earl to help him with some painting. Both uncles lived at Wilmington, DE.

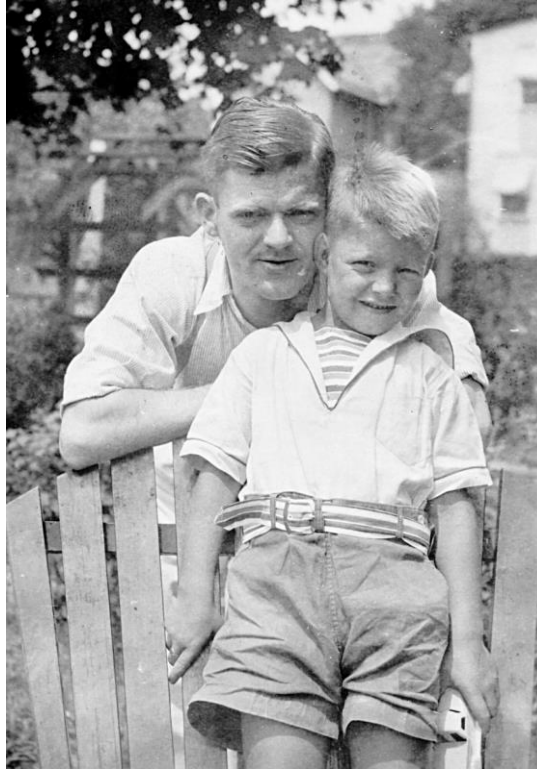
Earl was always a handyman. During the Depression, he made tables and chairs for the Sunday school of the Norwood Methodist Church.

Flip This House, 1931

On October 7, 1931, Earl and Lillian sold their home at Garfield Avenue. This may mark the timing of Earl's loss of a job at Ketchams. On the next day, however, Earl repurchased the home from the seller. Not sure what happened. The home was sold and repurchased with a mortgage of \$3000 plus a building association mortgage of \$2000. Sometime later, Earl took out a mortgage with Delaware County Trust and paid his other loans off in full.

Loss of Garfield Avenue, 1935

In late 1934, the Delaware County Trust Company filed suit against the Skinners for non-payment of the mortgage associated with Garfield Avenue. On March 2, 1935, the sheriff of Delaware County turned the property over to the bank. Don't know how quickly the Skinners had to move on.



David, 1934, chair and trellis in left rear

David, age 6

All photos Garfield Avenue, previous to loss of the home in spring, 1935

916 Mitchell Avenue, Morton, PA, 1935 - 1939

In the spring of 1935, Earl and Lillian lost their home on Garfield Avenue in Norwood. They moved a few miles away to 916 Mitchell Avenue in the town of Morton, PA. My father (born 1929) recalls that they moved when he was in the middle of kindergarten or 1st grade – good memory as he was in kindergarten at the time. This was the only time the Skinners would move in the middle of a school year.

The Morton home was a rental, but very spacious. The home was a two-family with the Skinners occupying the second floor. My Dad had a bedroom in the third floor attic. There was a barn in the back that has since been torn down.

My Dad learned to swim nearby at a local pool that was fed by a spring. A swim club is still there today. Dad's small elementary school at Morton is now the Calvary Baptist Church.

Young David Skinner was a very allergic child for Earl and Lillian. Lillian recalls he had asthma as well as a bad case of eczema on his face and head. Lillian thinks it was the cow's milk. Like his father, David's appendix was removed, though it had not ruptured – circa age ten – Taylor Hospital.



David Skinner with Sam, 1938
Barn at rear of 916 Mitchell Avenue, Morton,
Pa

Sam was too vicious with the mailman and was
given away.



David (b. Nov, 1929) and Lillian
Easter?, circa 1937



Earl and Lillian with son David, circa 1938



916 Mitchell Avenue, Morton, PA; 3 July 2005
Dave Skinner, at right, with property owner.

Death of Joseph Showalter

In April, 1939, Lillian received a telegram from her sister, Ethel, informing Lillian of the death of their father – Joseph Showalter. He died in a doctor's office.

The telegram was addressed to Lillian at 68 Mitchell Ave. (toady it 916 Mitchell Ave.) in the town of Morton.

THE COMPANY WILL APPRECIATE SUGGESTIONS FROM ITS PATRONS CONCERNING ITS SERVICE 1204

CLASS OF SERVICE This is a full-rate Telegram or Cablegram unless its deferred character is indicated by a suitable sign above or preceding the address.	WESTERN UNION R. B. WHITE PRESIDENT NEWCOMB CARLTON CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD J. C. WILLEVER FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT	SIGNS DL = Day Letter NM = Night Message NL = Night Letter LC = Deferred Cable NLT = Cable Night Letter Ship Radiogram
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The filing time as shown in the date line on full-rate telegrams and day letters, and the time of receipt at destination as shown on all messages, is STANDARD TIME.

Received at MORTON PENN

2 P 8

HUNTINGDON PENN 1010AM MAY 9 1939 FJ

MRS H E SKINNER
 68 MITCHELL AVE
 MORTON PENN

DAD DIED SUDENLY THIS MORNING. COME AT ONCE

ETHEL

1027AM

Age 67

THE QUICKEST, SUREST AND SAFEST WAY TO SEND MONEY IS BY TELEGRAPH OR CABLE

New Opportunities, circa 1939

The Depression era finally began to come to an end. The recovery of the US economy was helped by the military build-up of the country that began in 1939.

After years of unemployment or under-employment, Earl got a job at the Heintz Manufacturing Company, probably in 1938 or 1939.

Heintz Manufacturing Company

Heintz Manufacturing was at the intersection of Front and Olney Streets in the Olney section of Northeast Philadelphia, about four miles north of Philadelphia City Hall. I assume Earl did drafting or design-related work at Heintz.

The firm produced a wide range of sheet-metal products, especially as a subcontractor to automotive and railroad manufacturers.

Per Earl – "After a lapse of hard times, got a job at Heintz Mfg. Co., North Philadelphia. They made auto tops, pans, wheels, Navy boat hatches, etc. They lost a contract with Budd Manufacturing Co. so I got the axe. However, this was good as my boss gave me good recommendation to New York Ship and Newport News Shipyards."

Budd Manufacturing was a well-known manufacturer of rail car bodies, and other 'pressed' sheet metal products. Earl lost his job with Heintz when the company lost their contract with Budd.

1940 Federal Census

The 1940 census shows that Earl worked 32 weeks in 1939, so I am guessing that some of that represented his time at Heintz Manufacturing. The census, taken in March of 1940, shows Earl working at his next job at NY Ship.



Heintz Manufacturing
[digital.librarycompany.org]

652 Maryland Avenue, Prospect Park, 1939 - 1940

In mid-1939, the Skinners moved from the town of Morton a few miles back to the Norwood/Prospect Park area, renting a small house at 652 Maryland Avenue, Prospect Park. They lived at Maryland Avenue during son David's 1939/1940 school year (fifth grade).

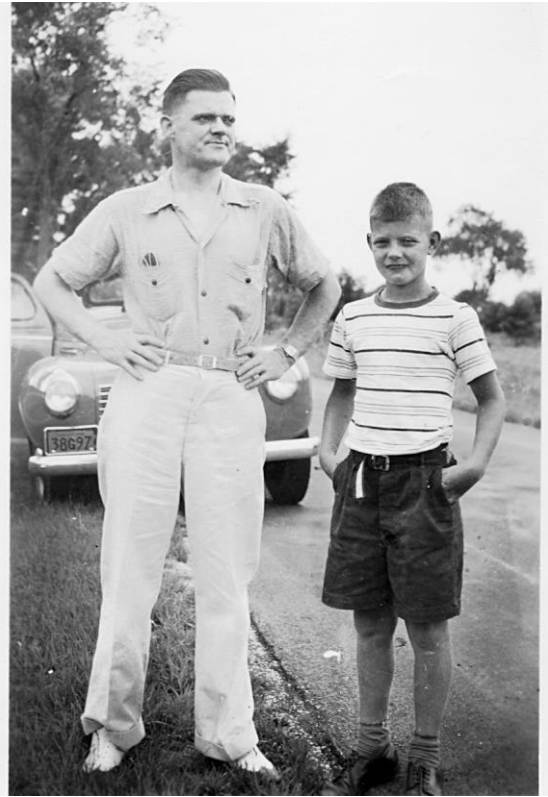
The move to Maryland Avenue was likely done to put Earl within walking distance of the Pennsy Railroad tracks for a commute to his job at Heintz Manufacturing.

Maryland Avenue is a small lane with a few homes on one side and railroad tracks on the other. The tracks were the heavily traveled, mainline tracks of the Pennsylvania Railroad (formerly the Maryland Division of the P. B. & W. Railroad) that ran between Philadelphia and Wilmington, with connections to all major cities from there. The tracks also saw heavy commuter service with local trains servicing towns between Philadelphia and Wilmington. Today, the tracks are part of the high-speed Amtrak corridor up and down the east coast of the US.

The Skinner home was a short walk from the Norwood railroad station. A chicken in the back yard helped put food on the table.

My father, 10 years of age at the time, had a bedroom in the second floor attic. Christmas saw the arrival of his first Lionel train set, which he set up in his bedroom. His life-long hobby of model railroading had begun.

Dad attended the 5th grade at the school at the end of Ninth Avenue in Prospect Park. The school was several blocks past 554 Ninth Avenue - the home of his grandparents, Warren and May Skinner. He walked by their home each school day.



Earl and Coleman, circa 1940

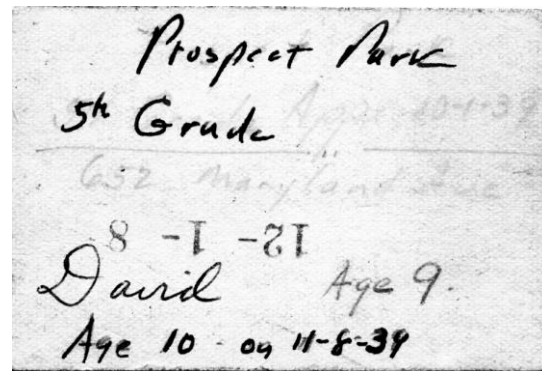


Photo taken approx. 1 Oct 1939; David turned age ten 8 Nov. The family lived 652 Maryland Ave., Prospect Park where David attended 5th grade.

Newport News Shipyard

Earl's boss at Heintz Manufacturing gave him a good recommendation that landed Earl a job as a draftsman at NY Ship along the waterfront of the Delaware River in Camden, NJ.

NY Ship had to await the completion of a new building to accommodate the hiring for the war build-up, so Earl was sent to the massive shipyard at Newport News, Virginia for his first three months of employment.

Camden's NY Shipyard

Earl began doing drafting work for New York Ship some time in 1939. He worked there until the massive layoffs at the end of World War II in 1945/1946. He worked many late evenings to support the war effort.

The name - New York Ship Building Corporation, was a misnomer as it was not in New York. The shipyard occupied a large stretch of the Delaware River in Camden, NJ, across the river from Philadelphia, situated between the Walt Whitman and Ben Franklin bridges. New York Ship was one of the nation's 'Big Five' shipyards at the start of WWII, and employed as many as 30,000 people during the War.

1940 Census

The census of April, 1940 shows the family living at 652 Maryland Avenue, Prospect Park. Earl was age 38, Lillian was age 36, and son David was age 10. Earl's occupation was draftsman – shipyard. Lillian was not working.

Miscellaneous information included in the census shows that Earl had been employed for 32 weeks in 1939. As a result, I am guessing that 1939 represented some months of unemployment ending with a job at Heintz Manufacturing and followed a month or so later by steady work at NY Ship..

The census also asked where people were living 5 years earlier in April of 1935 – the Skinners had been living in Norwood [Garfield Ave].

The Candy Man

Earl was always a salesman. He would keep candy in his drawer that he purchased in bulk from Philadelphia. His fellow employees would take the candy and leave change in the drawer. Earl would also hold raffles in which the winner would win a Nash suit. Of course, there was a profit involved there as well.

SS America, 1941

In 1941, NY Ship assigned Earl to do drafting work associated with the world's largest passenger ship - the 'SS America'. The ship had been brought into dry dock at Newport News, Virginia, for modification to support the war effort. Earl did his drafting work at his desk at NY Ship in Camden, NJ, but made inspection trips to Newport News to review the ship. Newport News, like NY Ship, was one of the 'Big Five' shipyards of WWII, cranking out a massive amount of ships and ship conversions during the war.

The SS America had originally been built and launched at Newport News in 1939. Eleanor Roosevelt had christened the bow. The ship would be the largest passenger ship in the world for several decades. However, in 1941, the US government took temporary control of the ship in support of the war effort. The ship was returned to Newport News for conversion to a troop-carrying ship and renamed the 'USS West Point'.

As a part of the conversion, the passenger capacity of the ship was increased from 1200 to over 5000 persons. Other changes included the covering of the windows and the addition of armaments.

Earl did drafting work associated with a portion of a floor two or three levels below deck. He made several trips to Newport News where he inspected the ship in dry-dock. My father recalls that Earl took him along on one of the trips for a walk-thru of the ship. Earl showed him some of the improvements that had been implemented as a result of his suggestions. My father was sometimes confused, as it seemed Earl was documenting work that had already been done. Perhaps Earl's work included the preparation of 'As-Built' drawings.

Over the next four years of WWII, the USS West Point saw service all over the world and carried more than 500,000 troops. It was occasionally a target of German aircraft.

In 1946, the ship was again returned to Newport News for conversion back to a first-class passenger ship. In the 1950's, a sister ship was built at Newport News called the SS United States. The SS America and SS United States would be the most impressive passenger ships in the world until the rise of European ships, like the Queen Elizabeth, in the 1960's.

The SS America ran aground in the Canary Islands in 1974 and has been sinking into the sand ever since. Little is visible today.

The drawings created by Earl were huge in size – not something that would fit on a desk. My dad saved some of Earl's drawings which were stored in long cardboard tubes in the attic of our home at Clements Bridge Road. The drawings were eventually discarded.

The drawings had a high linen content and contained a blue dye. Lillian washed some of them to create handkerchiefs for the family.



Earl's WWII-Era Tool Chest
Built By H. Gerstner & Sons, Dayton, OH

Earl and later, my father, stored drafting tools in this chest so the tools themselves would be of mixed vintage.



SS America



USS West Point

564 Salem Avenue, Woodbury, NJ, 1940 - 1941

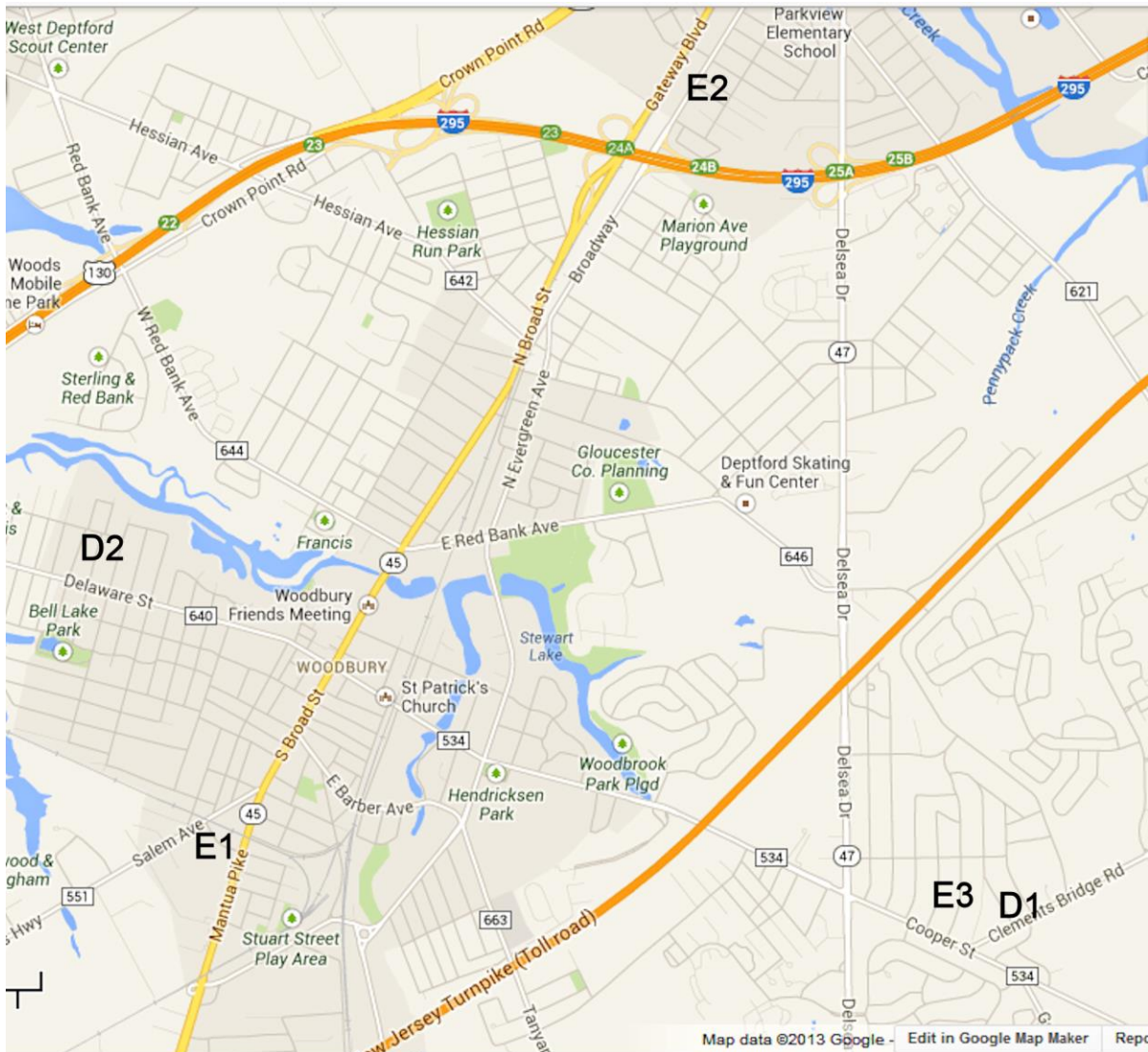
Earl spent a year commuting to the NY Ship in Camden from his rental home on Maryland Avenue in Prospect Park, PA while son David completed the 5th grade in 1940. At the end of the school year, the family moved to a rental home in Woodbury, South Jersey so that Earl would be a short drive away from the shipyard at Camden. The rental house was located at 564 Salem Avenue in South Woodbury, and the family stayed there for about a year while David attended the 6th grade in the Woodbury school system.

This was now the Skinners third rental home – Mitchell Ave. in Morton, Maryland Avenue in Prospect Park and Salem Avenue in Woodbury. They remained at Salem Ave. until the owners of the property wanted to move back in.

Report cards show that son David spent the sixth grade (1940/1941) in the Woodbury, NJ school system.

Son David had moved from Lionel to HO trains creating an HO train layout in the basement. HO trains would remain his principal hobby for the rest of his life.

Not knowing any doctors, Lillian thought she would not be able to do any nursing work in NJ, but recommendations from a friend got her assignments at clinics in South Jersey supporting Camden's canning factories – testing the workers for venereal disease and the like. She also ended up working for a Dr. Tapper in Camden for quite a while, somewhat bored with staying at home.



Map of Woodbury, NJ area

Earl and Lillian lived:

564 Salem Ave (1939-1941) - 'E1'

27 Walnut St. (1941-1955) - 'E2'

62 Walker Ave. (1955-1966) - 'E3'

Son David and wife Annette lived:

Corner of Clements Bridge Rd. & Lewis Ave (side street) (1954-1964) – 'D1'

73 N. Childs St. (6/13/64 – present) – 'D2'



ANNIV. 1941
Salem Ave.
Woodbury -
Moved to
Rented House
from
Penna.
Lived about
1 yr. or more
Here - Then
for Home
27 Walnut St
Westville
N. J.

14th Wedding Anniversary, May, 1941





Bertha and daughter Lillian, 1941

1941 Salem Ave.
Woodbury, N.J.
Bertha & Lillian

1941, Salem Avenue

Earl's printing; Annette's writing



Picture Day
Dave, Lillian and Earl Skinner, 1941, Salem Ave., Woodbury, NJ

Same dress as previous image.



Picture Day

Not sure what the occasion was, but this is one of my Dad's favorite photos, and the photo has always hung on the wall of Lillian, and later David.

Summers At The Jersey Shore

Earl and Lillian enjoyed spending time at Atlantic City, much as Earl's parents had enjoyed Atlantic City for many decades. Around 1938, the Skinners started renting at Atlantic City for extended vacations.

Son David recalls a rental home on the bay, looking across at Atlantic City's municipal airport. One of Lillian's favorite activities was to take son David to Atlantic City's famous Steel Pier. The pier contained 6 or 7 movie houses at the time, and the two would spend all day at the movies!

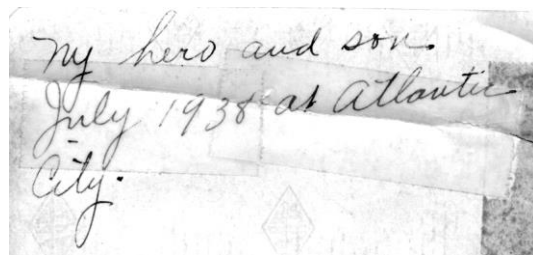


Atlantic City

The Skinner rental looked over at the airport, per my Dad. The Skinners were photographed on the beach in front of a business called Seidel's Rolling Chairs, which helps pin down the street that the Skinner rental was likely on.



Earl w/ son David, 1938, Atlantic City



Lillian's writing – 'My hero and son'



David w/grandparents Warren and May and mother Lillian, 1941

Seidel's Rolling Chair Company is visible in the rear of this image. It was located at 3100 Atlantic Avenue, the intersection of Atlantic Ave. with Morris Avenue.



Example of a rolling chair

Wildwood

The Skinners also enjoyed spending time in Wildwood by the early 1940's and would later purchase a summer home there.

My father recalls visiting Wildwood when he was too young to drive, returning home to his parent's house in Westville on a late night, hitchhiking on a milk train out of North Wildwood. The train stopped at every town, swapping empty milk cans for full ones, so the trip ended up taking seven hours!



David at Hereford Inlet?



Lillian and David; June, 1941
Probably at Hereford Inlet, N. Wildwood

27 Walnut Street, Westville, NJ

In 1941, Earl and Lillian moved out of their rental house on Salem Ave. in Woodbury and purchased a home at 27 Walnut Street in Westville, NJ, just to the north of Woodbury. The home was a small, 3-bedroom bungalow. Earl's drafting job at New York Ship was paying off.

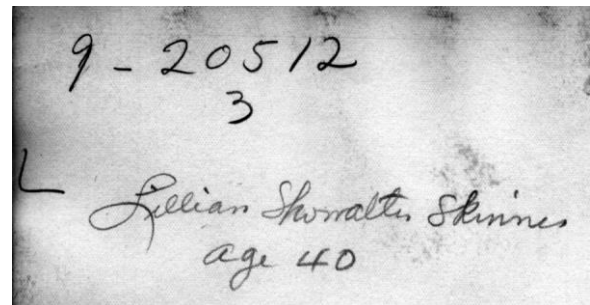
The purchase of a home meant that the tight purse-strings of the Depression were over – a Depression that had cost Earl his drafting job with O. W. Ketcham way back in 1931, a Depression that had caused Earl to sell his Garfield Avenue home in Norwood, PA circa 1935, and a Depression that had resulted in Earl and family relocating four times in the following ten years from 1931 to 1941.

Son David attended the Westville school system in the 7th and 8th grades (1941/1942 and 1942/1943). He was then bused to the Woodbury school system for all of his high school years, beginning with summer school at the end of the 8th grade. Annette Frederick, Dave's future wife, was also bused to Woodbury High School from her home in Woodbury Heights.

Madeline and Larry Doe lived behind the Skinners in Westville, and two generations of the Skinners and Does would become friends, with the friendships lasting into the 1970's. Stephen Doe contacted me in 2012.



Lillian's 40th Birthday
[hand-colored]



Lillian's writing

Grassy Sounds

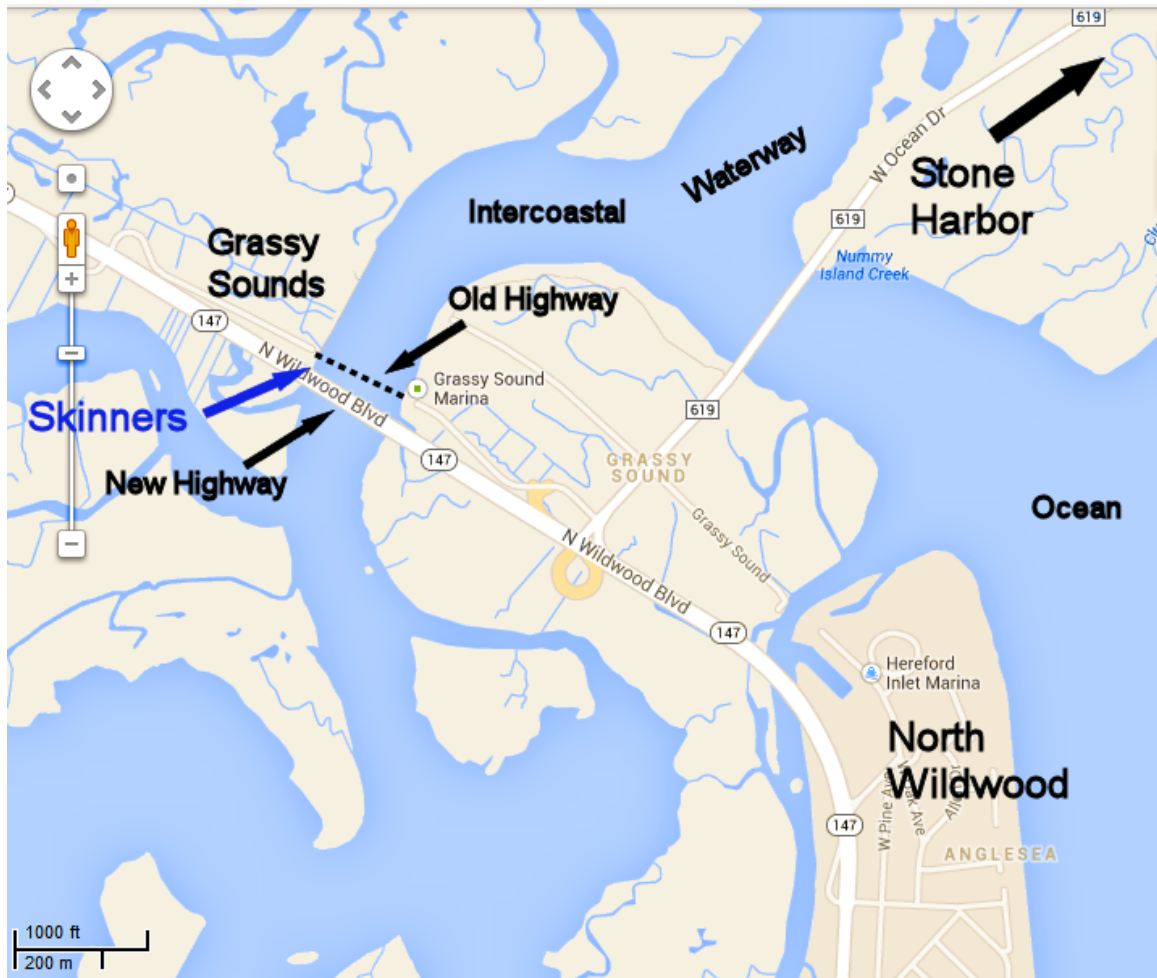
In the mid-1940's, one of the draftsman that Earl was working with mentioned that he wanted to sell two homes and a garage located outside the beach town of Wildwood, NJ. Earl and Lillian took a look at the properties and decided to make the purchase – yet another sign of the money coming in from Earl's drafting job.

The Skinners owned the homes about five years until 1950 or so, despite the fact that Earl lost his drafting job at the end of the war in 1946, not long after purchasing the homes. The properties consisted of two adjacent summer homes in a small community called Grassy Sounds, located in the long stretch of grassy marshes between the mainland and North Wildwood. The homes sat on the intercoastal waterway and were the third and fourth homes south of the drawbridge that led into North Wildwood. The homes were accessed by walking on a series of boardwalks over the grasses from the main highway. The rear of the homes sat on the intercoastal water channel. The homes were small and crude - the toilets dumped into the water below. The properties included a 2-car garage located some distance away on the main road.

My father has many fond memories of summers at Grassy Sounds as a teenager, as did his dog "Fletcher". Fun place to show his girlfriends in the summers of 1946 and 1947 following his junior and senior high school years. The family had a small boat – a rowboat with motor. Grandfather Warren Skinner, an avid fisherman, visited often. Warren showed up one day with a brand new motor for David's boat, but it had way too much horsepower, and David raced across the bay with the nose of the rowboat pointed straight up!

My father recalls time spent with a girl named Lillian, whose family lived in the first house north of the bridge to Wildwood. Her father was the Bridgmaster, ensuring that the drawbridge was raised for boat traffic. Lillian's family was related to the owners of the nearby 'Dad's Place' marina, which remains little changed today. My father also spent time with the daughter of the grocery store located in a small home down the street. Grassy Sounds also offered a chance for my father to invite female friends from back home in Westville. After graduating high school in 1947, my Dad was able to return to Grassy Sounds for occasional weekend outings during his first couple of college summers, and sometimes used the homes as a sleeping place for fun times in Atlantic City.

Another tale - My father recalls that Earl once ordered a bunch of wooden posts for the purpose of constructing dockage or bulkhead protection for the homes. He and Earl had to float the poles to the property from the road where they had been delivered. Each pole was then hoisted into a vertical position using ropes. The poles would quickly sink into the mud below the water. My father would then use a mallet to drive them deeper.



Grassy Sounds, NJ, just outside North Wildwood

Earl's two small homes sat on the intercoastal waterway that runs behind Wildwood and Stone Harbor.

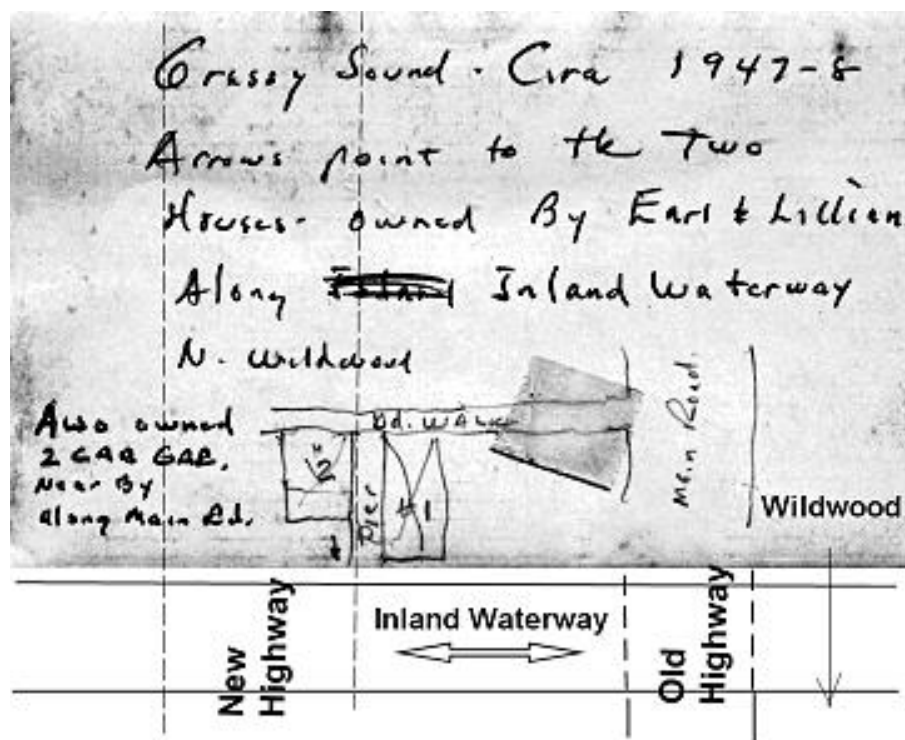
The New Bridge

The Skinner homes remained unchanged long after they were sold by Earl and Lillian, surviving into the 1990's. In 1995, a new road was constructed from the mainland to North Wildwood. The new road was elevated high in the air over Grassy Sounds. The original road was maintained to provide access to the cottages of Grassy Sounds, but the old drawbridge to Wildwood was removed. Part of the bridge on the Wildwood side was saved to serve as a fishing pier.

The Skinner homes sat in the path of the supports for the new bridge and were removed. Only the first home south of the original highway remains today. If you stand at the highest point of the north side of the new bridge and look straight down, you will see remnants of the pipes that sat under the Skinner homes.



View of Grassy Sounds from the Wildwood side of old highway bridge (bridge just off picture to right) showing the two Skinner homes. [Earl's printing]



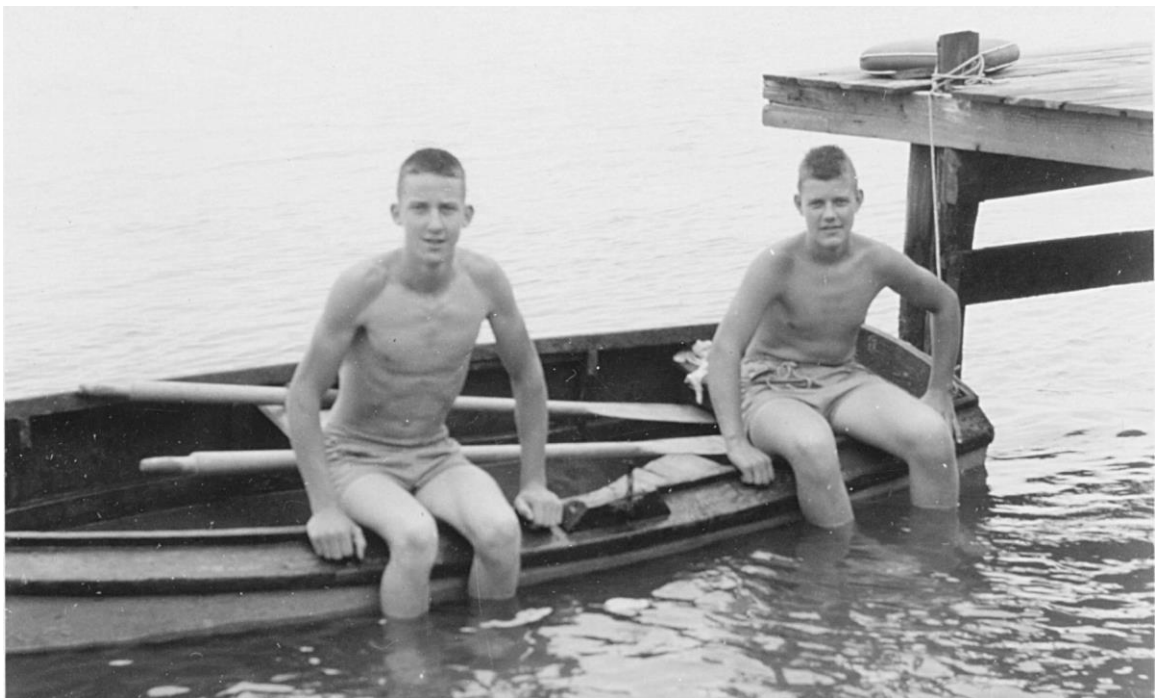
My notes superimposed over Earl's notes



View from the water – Lillian, Fletcher
and the two Skinner homes.



The boardwalk to the homes.



Friend Mort Olsen with David Skinner; Aug, 1945 at the dock



David w/Fletcher; Aug., 1945



Warren Skinner (Earl's father), Lillian and David at the dock.

The main road and bridge to Wildwood is in the rear,
as is the home of the family of the Bridgemaster.



View from the dock
The summers of '46 and '47 saw female guests for David at Grassy Sounds.



Another view from the dock
The main road to North Wildwood until the mid-1990's.

[End of Part A – Continue to [Part B](#)]