

4/10/2026b

Chapter-1

SUMMARY– MARRIAGE and HOW WE GOT TOGETHER

1950-1959

Patterson kids Went to Challis for high school. It was a 110 mile roundtrip bus ride every day. My best friend, Richard, went to Salmon where his parents had a house. I could board with him and his mother, so I went to Salmon. I would not have met LaRue otherwise.

The Girl Encounter (1950)

We did a lot of ice skating on the city outdoor pond in the winter and hung out at the teen center that had a roller skating rink. There were no girls in our life in Salmon. I was seeing a girl, Glenna, in Patterson.

There was slight contact with a girl when I was a freshman in 1950. Richard and I were roller skating and there was a blonde girl with pig tails flyng around the rink. She came up behind me and shoved me out of her way. By the time I got going again to get even she was long gone. I never saw her again at the roller rink. However, that brief encounter caused me to keep a lookout for her. *It* would change my life forever.

The Blond Freshman Girl (1954)

This happened near the end of my senior year while boarding with Olga and Clarence Smith. The last school prom was coming up May 8, 1954. Since I was a senior and the last prom I thought I should attend. However, there were no girls I knew available that I was interested in. I had been noticing a blonde freshman girl, LaRue Gibbs, walking from school through town and up the hill to where she lived, which was about two miles. I thought she might be the girl that shoved me on the roller rink when I was a freshman. However, she was much more mature looking, I thought it was understandable given the time that went by. I was interested and wanted to get acquainted. Giving her a ride would work, but I didn't have a car.

One day Olga was quizzing me about going to the prom and we discussed various options for dates. I mentioned the blonde girl, LaRue, and she knew who she was. She said, "go call her". I wasn't very brave and kept putting it off. One day Olga said, "you know a girl should have two weeks to get ready, so you better call her today". I summoned the courage and did. She knew who I was and accepted with no hesitation. She sounded kind of excited about it. LaRue was among the oldest in her class at 15 and I was the youngest in my class at 17. I didn't feel I was robbing the cradle.

Shortly after making the prom date with LaRue I was riding around with Larry Fisher one evening. He had to go by the high school and pick up his girlfriend, Renee, after a school function. Renee and LaRue came out together. I gave up the front seat for Renee and got in the back seat. To my surprise LaRue got in with me. That was good as we had a couple of things to talk about. She confirmed she was the girl that shoved me on the roller rink. We discussed it and moved on to the prom date. She was outgoing and talkative, so it was easy to continue getting acquainted. We clicked and the ride turned into an impromptu double date. We continued to get together after that. Before this I was attending the prom with a girl I didn't know. Now she is my girlfriend. The prom date would be much more relaxed now.

Olga was pleased and Clarence razzed me about dating a freshman girl.

The Prom 1954

My folks thought I should have a car for the prom. They came to Salmon for the night. I think their motive was to meet my date and pass judgement. I went to pick up LaRue in the Oldsmobile "Green Hornet". She was not ready and I was invited in. That could have been a scary situation as her dad was rather gruff. By now I knew him and it was normal. A couple was there visiting and everybody gave me a hard time until she came out. We then went to introduce her to my folks and Olga and Clarence. I could tell everyone liked her. We had a great evening. We liked each other and would continue getting together.

Summer 1954

I worked at the mine that summer until I reached the cutoff point for income tax deductions. I was going to the University of Idaho in the fall so the folks bought a used 1953 Chevrolet 210 four door sedan for me. It was white with a red top and stood out. Every weekend I would be in Salmon to see LaRue and would stay with Smitty and Olga like I was part of the family. LaRue came to Patterson that summer with a couple of friends for my 18th birthday. I toured them around and that put an end of seeing my Patterson friend, Glenna.

A would be competitor surfaced that summer. He came to LaRue's house late one evening. It was strange as he was my friend and had a steady girlfriend he was totally committed to. He got nowhere. We continued on as usual, and he eventually married his girlfriend.

The AIR FORCE 1954-1958

. I found I was not ready for college. The Korean GI Bill was ending in January 1955. I decided I should go into the military by going on active duty through my Salmon National Guard unit. I would qualify for the GI Bill, and then go to college. Then I got impatient and was lured into the Air Force for four years. While in basic training LaRue wrote that they were moving to Laramie, Wyoming and would not be in Salmon when I *got home on leave*.

I was going to Biloxi, Mississippi for 6 months advanced training after basic. I decided to drive my car to Biloxi and stop in Laramie to see LaRue.

My Home Leave and Trip to Biloxi, Mississippi 1954

I departed Patterson on a dismal winter day. I had never driven more than across Idaho, but I was full of confidence. I did fine, but it was long way across Wyoming in a snow storm.

I drove all the way to Laramie arriving in the early morning and got a room in a downtown hotel. Then I was up early to see LaRue before she went to school. We had a great time for two days. Then it was time to say goodbye to LaRue after school and head for Biloxi.

After my training in Biloxi I *had orders for England for three years after 30 days of home leave*. LaRue had written that they had moved back to Salmon.

Home Leave – 1955

Two buddies were riding to Salt Lake with me. We departed **Biloxi** in the afternoon and drove straight through. We only stopped for gas and to change drivers. *It is a long way across Texas*. After about two and half days we arrived in Salt Lake in the early morning. I dropped them off and headed north to Idaho. There were two ways to Patterson. It was through Arco, Mackay, and Challis on highway 93 or through Idaho Falls, Leadore, and Salmon on highway 28. I chose the later, for good reason. I could stop and see LaRue. I would stay a couple of days with the Smiths before going on to Patterson.

It was a great 30 days. I turned 19 and brought LaRue to Patterson for my birthday party. We bought matching shirts and wore them often. Mom went to Cambridge to visit her Mother, and later Dad was flying the plane to Cambridge. I wanted to see my grandparents and Uncle Donald and Aunt Mary, so LaRue and I went in my car. It annoyed me that she would sleep in the backseat while I drove.

While we were gone Larue's sister and brother-in-law, Loa and Max, arrived in Salmon on vacation. They couldn't believe that she was allowed to go to Cambridge with me. LaRue was sixteen (seventeen in November) so her parents must have trusted us. However, if we sat outside in the car too long after I brought her home the porch light would start flashing on and off.

We got back to Salmon and the time came to say goodbye. Three years is a long time and LaRue still had two more years of high school remaining. We made no commitment to each other except to write often. I wondered if she would still be around when I returned. It was a long drive back to Patterson that night.

I got to England and was sent on to Scotland.

Scotland 1955-1957

LaRue and I wrote regularly. It tapered off by the end of 1955 and there is no recollection of any correspondence during 1956. She was busy in high school and had other obligations. I heard she had moved on with a new boyfriend, Dave. I knew him to be a jerk and couldn't understand the attraction. Then we resumed writing in April 1957 as she had dropped Dave, was excited about graduating, and thinking about her future. LaRue's letters ended again the summer of 1957. I learned later that after graduation she worked as a telephone operator then went to live with Loa and Max in Walnut Creek, California in December 1957.

The tour of duty in Scotland was three years. It was likely that young airmen would meet a girl and get married. The marriage rate was 80%. Only Ed Smith and me escaped from our group that was sent to Scotland. I didn't want to bring a Scottish wife home. I wanted to be available just in case.

After 2 years I was contemplating volunteering for a transfer to Samsun, Turkey. A call had been put out for volunteers. It was a remote assignment for one year and you received per-diem of \$6 per day to live on the local economy. I heard through the grapevine that you could save the per-diem. It would make a nice nest egg to reenter civilian life with (That proved to be true).

I had met a girl at my friend's wedding. She was an attractive tall blond that stood out among the short Scottish girls. None of us single guys had seen her before, and we all took interest. She rebuffed us by saying she was not

interested in yanks. I found out she was a movie fan and eventually got agreement to attend a movie. We attended a few more movies together.

She had everything going for her in the looks department, but was short on personality. She was also very secretive and mysterious. Her address turned out to be a commercial building near the theater, and that was where I was to meet her. She wouldn't share anything about her life. I knew her as Terry White, but that may not be her real name. I could not find a home address. I had my doubts about her.

That summer we were meeting for a movie. I rode in on our bus that unloaded at the West End Cafe. That is where the girls meet their guys. She was among the girls. Was I surprised! Returning to the base that night I decided not to see her again. She was starting to act interested and it was time to get out of there.

I decided to go to Turkey. I would get out of Scotland and the girls looking to marry a yank and a ticket to the United States. I would walk away from the girl I was seeing.

Before I left there was a Halloween party at the base. A bus brought the girlfriends to the party. I was shocked when she got off the bus. It was totally out of character. At least I got to tell her I was leaving.

I departed mid November 1957 for a year in Turkey and never looked back.

Former Girlfriend Resurfaces - Turkey1958

I was in Samsun, Turkey a while when I received a well traveled envelope with a card in it. It had gone to my former address in Scotland and my forwarding address had expired. My old buddy George Page was still there. He was still handling the mail and had saved my address in his address book. He sent it on to me or I would not have gotten it. It was from Larue and had a Walnut Creek, California address on it. I was quite surprised and happy as I had not heard from her for months. I had heard through my contacts in Salmon that she had graduated from high school and went to California.

There was a card with a guy at one end of a long table, a gal on the other end of the table, and a candle in the middle. The wording was, "is there still a flame between us?" I thought it was appropriate and answered quickly to get it on the boat when it came back down the coast in 3 days. We only had mail service once a week when the boat came through. I wanted to get my reply to her with no further delay.

As I had heard she had gone to California and was living with her sister, Loa, and brother-in-law Max. I knew both of them. She was working at the Bank of America in Walnut Creek. I assumed that since she sent the card she might be unattached. I wrote back that I had extended my overseas tour, was now in Turkey, and would not be back until late December instead of August. Maybe we could get together when I get back. We continued to correspond the rest of my time in Turkey. In one of her last letters she and her sister Loa extended an invitation to come to Walnut Creek. It was looking like we would see each other again after all.

My Discharge and reunion with LaRue 1958

I was discharged in South Carolina December 15, 1958. My family was living in Guatemala. I was in no hurry to go there after just returning to the United States after three and a half years overseas. I felt totally lost. The only thing I planned to do was start college next fall. In the meantime I would head towards Idaho where I was born and raised. I planned to see LaRue eventually as I had an invitation to visit. I would do that later when I go to Guatemala. Through a stroke of luck we had reconnected via letters while I was in Turkey.

I decided to fly to Salt Lake City and look up my old Air Force buddy in Scotland, Ed Smith, and buy a car. Then after a few days make my way to Salmon and Patterson to pick up stuff and leave uniforms. Then go to California and on to Guatemala. I found a used 1956 Ford and paid cash for it using my Turkey per-diem checks.

I headed north from Salt Lake in my 56 Ford around December 20. I got to Salmon late and got a hotel room. The next morning I went to where I boarded in high school to see Olga and Clarence Smith. They took me right in.

It was Sunday and I was talking to Olga and Clarence about my future plans. LaRue was mentioned and they knew she was working in California. I told them I called her twice when I got back to the states, but she was always out for the evening. So, I quit calling. Olga said, "it is now afternoon in California and you should go right in there and call her." She was persistent. (Olga always thought we should be together and encouraged our first date in 1954 for the prom). I summoned up courage and we finally connected. I had no idea what her commitments were but thought it would be fun to see her again. I told her I would be going to Guatemala to see my folks. I might drive down and fly from San Francisco. I could pass through Walnut Creek and see her.

The Reconnection with LaRue

I was restless Christmas day.. *It was a beautiful clear day and* I decided to leave in the afternoon and drive part way to California. My plan was to drive to Winnemucca. I got to Winnemucca, had a steak, and decided to keep going. Next it was Reno and over Donner Pass to Sacramento about 1am. No use stopping as I was not tired. I proceeded on to Walnut Creek. I arrived about 4am and got a motel room.

I had no idea how seeing LaRue would go and had no expectations. It could be hello, how are you, a short visit, and continue on my way. She could have obligations. I hoped at least I could leave my car for a while when I went to Guatemala. My backup plan in case things didn't work out was to visit Uncle Jim and family. He was a professor at the University of Nevada in Reno and they lived in Sparks, Nevada.

I was up early and called the house, hoping to catch her. Loa answered and said LaRue had gone to work at the bank. I walked into the bank and saw LaRue walking behind the teller cages. She was a more mature version of the high school girl I last saw over three years ago. She saw me and ran out into the lobby causing everyone in the bank to take notice. We could not talk long. I came back, picked her up, and we went to Loa and Max's for

lunch. Loa invited me to stay with them and said I could have their son David's bed. I was all set for what I figured to be a couple of days before I moved on.

Max was home from the firehouse that night and we all gathered in the living room. It was a strange feeling being reunited with LaRue.

Max and Loa were having a martini and asked if I would like one. Knowing LaRue was against alcohol I declined. I had been wondering how I would handle this issue. Then she said she would have a drink! I was surprised and backtracked in a hurry.

We were very reserved that evening. She sat on the couch across the room and we all sat around and visited. I wondered if this was how it was going to be. I might not be here long and started thinking about moving on.

I brought in my slide projector and slides and gave them a slideshow on Scotland and Turkey. My reception was good, but LaRue and I were somewhat distant. We did get a hug in later in the evening when we all hung it up for the night.

Relations warmed up quickly that weekend. We were happy to be together again after three and a half years. I had planned to stay in Walnut Creek a couple of days, but I was easily convinced to stay over New Years. Max and Loa were great hosts. I knew them since the summer of 1954 when they were on vacation in Salmon. I felt they liked me and were promoting this reunion.

On Sunday I suggested the two of us go to Reno for New Years. I wanted to visit my uncle Jim and explore college ideas as he was the Dean of Men at Nevada. I conveniently left that out. LaRue said, "to get married or what?" It totally surprised me hearing "married". We had talked before I went overseas about getting married some day, but that was ancient history. We had gone our separate ways as she had 3 more years of high school and I was going overseas. We did not go to Reno.

After I took her to work Monday morning I started thinking. We were back to where we were. Both of us by now felt we were meant for each other. We both had over three years to explore life. We were back together again. I would be leaving soon to go to Guatemala and then to college. I felt we needed to have a commitment to each other. A ring might be in order. I was not thinking any further than that. Tuesday, I started shopping for a ring. I found nothing in Walnut Creek and ended up at Samuels, a well known jewelry store in Oakland on Wednesday, the day before New Years. I picked out a ring, and paid cash for it. That used up my remaining per diem checks and some of my savings that I had with me.

I needed to get a ring size and they would size it Friday morning. That was perfect as LaRue had to work Friday. I could get it sized and present it that evening.

I showed the ring to Max and Loa to clue them in and they were supportive.. I had Larue's niece, Maxine, get a ring of LaRue's out of her jewelry box so I could get the new ring sized. Now the family was in on the plan, and anxious for the big moment.

I took LaRue to work Friday morning and went to Oakland to get the ring sized. I would spring the surprise that evening after she got off work.

The family was gathered in the living room. We entered the house through the garage into the family room. As planned nobody was there. I stopped LaRue and nervously got the ring out. She was totally surprised, but there was no hesitation on her part. I had stopped to say hello and hopefully leave my car and we were engaged! This was a huge fork in the road and totally unplanned. I would go to Guatemala, come back, and we would figure out the next move.

Guatemala 1959

I had sent a telegram saying that I would arrive at 6am, January 6. Mom, Garry, and Bev met me at the airport. Dad was out in the jungle working. Mom sensed that I had something to tell her and was not surprised when I gave her the news. She said, "Why didn't you bring her with you?" She said

she expected LaRue to get off the plane with me. They would run into each other in Salmon while I was gone, and mom always liked her.

I went to Guatemala thinking that I would stay two or three months. LaRue and I were exchanging letters almost every day, and we were not happy being apart. We were anxious to get on with a life together. A lot of decisions had to be made about getting married, getting a job, and where to go to college. She was wanting to know what we were going to do and when we were going to do it. At this point I had no idea. She wrote that she was acquiring dishes and stuff for married life. She even asked what kind of pillow I like. I wrote back, "it doesn't matter as I am not used to having a pillow." I never had a pillow in Turkey.

My Return to the United States from Guatemala

I arrived in San Francisco at 4:30am Friday, January 23, 1959.

Dad had told me to call his old boss, Tony Mecia. He was now the President Of Utah Construction based in San Francisco. Tony had told dad that if I needed a job when I got out of the Air Force that he would have one for me. I called Tony. He was in a board meeting but came out of it to talk to me. Utah Construction had a project in Rock Springs, Wyoming. All I had to do is show up and I would be put to work. I had been spending a lot of money and figured this was the best thing to do until I could start college in the fall.

We planned to get married as soon as we could work it out. Since her folks were in Salmon we felt we should get married there. We decided that LaRue would quit her job and we would move her back to Salmon. I would go on to the job in Rock Springs. LaRue and her Mother would get the wedding planned and I would return from Rock Springs. That was the plan.

Back to Salmon

We headed for Salmon about February 9th rather late in the day. Everything fit in the back of the 56 Ford. Even her large portable record

player that took up the backseat. We got to Salmon and stopped first to see Olga and Clarence Smith where I boarded in high school. They had seen our engagement notice in the paper and were thrilled we were together again. They gave me my old bedroom for as long as I wanted to stay. I told them I would not stay long as I had to get to the job in Wyoming. We then unloaded LaRue at her place. They had no problems with us getting engaged and married. Her parents had always liked me (I think).

Our Big Decision 1959

I dreaded going to Wyoming and hung around a few more days than I had planned. I decided I had to get going the next day which was Valentine's day, February 14, 1959. We had settled on a wedding date of April 14 as that was the day of our first get together in 1954.

We went to a basketball game at the high school and then stopped at the Crescent Club to talk. The evening wore on and LaRue said, "why don't we elope tomorrow. It's Valentine's Day". That was a stunner. It sounded good to me, and I would not be leaving her behind again. We rationalized that it would be hard for my folks to come to a wedding from Guatemala, and we didn't want to burden her folks with the expense. Eloping would be a good way to go.

I dropped her at her folks and went to Smith's with a lot on my mind.

I woke up the next morning thinking about what I had agreed to the night before. I thought I would sleep longer as I was not sure if this was for real or not. Maybe LaRue changed her mind. I knew she was not an early riser. I heard the phone ring and Olga soon yelled, "LaRue is on the line". I knew then that it was for real and got moving.

I believe Olga and Clarence knew what we were up to as I was packed up, and in a hurry to get out the door. They probably heard me on the phone, and I had dropped a hint or two. They were all smiles.

It was Saturday and getting married that day seemed impossible. I picked up LaRue and she had her bag with her. Her parents had gone somewhere that morning so there was no problem there.

We had to get a marriage license, a blood test, and get moving. My friend Denny Hawley's mother worked at the court house, which was closed, and she was off. We went to see her at home. She agreed to go to the court house and issue our marriage license. Pat Skinner's stepmother was a head nurse and she agreed to come to the hospital and do our blood test. There was normally a three day wait for the results. Somehow she got it accomplished.

Pat Skinner was going to college at Idaho State in Pocatello. LaRue called her to see if she could line her bishop up to marry us that evening. Pat would work on it.

The next stop was to get money out of my savings account at Idaho First National Bank and visit Colvin's Jewelry next door to pick out and purchase wedding bands. By 1pm we were on our way to Pocatello.

We did not have time to eat anything so we stopped at the little store in Leadore to get some snacks. I was longing for shrimp and we got canned shrimp, a big package of Oreo cookies, and Cokes. The lady in the store found a can opener and opened the can of shrimp, and we were on our way again.

We arrived in Pocatello around 6pm and called Pat Skinner from a pay phone. She said we were on for our wedding. We had time to find a motel and change clothes. I registered nervously as Mr and Mrs expecting to get challenged, but nothing was said. I figured I would have the paper to prove it later that evening.

. I changed into a gray suit that was one of two tailored suits that I bought in Scotland. I chose it because it travelled well with no wrinkles. LaRue changed into a white dress. It looked like a short wedding dress to me. I asked her if she bought it with getting married in mind. She said no. It was

because she liked it. (Our grand daughter, Summer Redd, tried it on in 2024. It fit her perfectly, and still in new condition, so LaRue gave it to her.)

We found the bishop's house near the campus. Pat Skinner was there and had her brother Reed with her to stand up with us.

The bishop of the college ward was young, and it was his first wedding. His name was Glen Marshall. He was nervous and we were nervous. I was repeating the vows and said, "I LaRue take Harry to be", and that loosened us up a little. It didn't take long and we were a married couple. LaRue was 20 and I was 22. It was nearly five years from the time we met in high school.

A lot of water had passed under our bridges. We had withstood the test of time and distance between us. We absolutely felt that it was meant to be. We still feel that way after 67 years.

Afterwards we took Pat with us for a nice dinner at the Bannock Hotel, which was the place in Pocatello for social functions and fine dining. We had Manhattan's before dinner and then prime rib. Later we went by the telegraph office and sent telegrams to her folks and my folks. It was quite a day and a major fork in the road.

Our Next Decision

We spent the next day in Pocatello deciding what to do next. We felt we should drop by her brothers in Ogden, Salt Lake, and Springville, Utah to apprise them of the fact that we were married. The first stop was Gail and Carma in Ogden.

Gail asked me what I was going to do with my life. I said I was going to college but did not know where. He informed me Weber Junior College is in Ogden and they were on break between winter and spring quarters. Would I like to look them over. I didn't think it would hurt and away we went.

Weber had just moved the campus from downtown to South Ogden. Gail knew the registrar, and we went straight to his office. We talked and toured the buildings. I ended up enrolling for the spring quarter starting in a few days.

We never considered the job in Wyoming after that. It was a good decision that brought resolution to all the questions we had been asking ourselves. I was starting college much sooner than I thought possible.

I also would meet a fellow student that told me about his job with computers. That caused me to end up with a career in computers.

End of chapter