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## CHAPTER VIII

### FAY IVAN FERGUSON

My Father, Fay Ivan Ferguson was born 10 Dec 1896. He did not attend school until his younger brother, Dewey, could also attend, and they completed the education available to them at New Edinburg, AR., in 1915, when he was 19 years old. During these years, he and Dewey walked nearly three miles to school. He often talked about how cold that walk could be during the winter months.

He graduated from Tyler Commercial College on 27 Jun 1916, and started to work for I E Moore, General Merchant, in Rison, AR on 1 Jul 1916, at \$35 per month as a general clerk.

On 1 Sep 1917, he went to work at the stout Lumber Co at Thornton, AR as subsidiary ledger bookkeeper. They had a number of Hispanic forest workers at that time and he began the study of the Spanish language.

On 27 Aug 1918, he entered the US Army at Camp Pike (now Camp Robinson) AR, near Little Rock. He was honorably discharged from that service 17 Mar 1919, to accept an appointment as Army Field Clerk per telegraphic instructions from the War Department, and was honorably discharged from that position 4 Dec 1919.

On 14 Jan 1920, he was employed by the Democrat Printing and Lithographing Co. in Little Rock, as a subsidiary bookkeeper at \$100 per month. In May of 1922 he was promoted to assistant cashier, and by January 1926 was earning \$175 per month. By 1949, he was Credit Manager and Corporate Secretary and was earning \$375 per month, and retired in December 1961 on his 65th birthday.

I particularly remember what his salary was in 1949, because I had just accepted a position as Assistant Professor at the University of AR in Fayetteville at the same salary. He and Mother thought I was really doing alright to be making the same salary as he was after he had worked for the same company for 29 years! I learned then that it is not wise to compare earnings between one generation and the next.

On 16 May 1920 he married Emma Vivian Greer. They had met while he was at Camp Pike and she was living at the YWCA in Little Rock and working at the Federal Reserve Bank.

Vivian (she hated the name "Emma", and never used it except on certain legal documents) was born 23 Mar 1904 in Greenwood, LA, to John Wiles Greer and Thomas Loreta (Reta) Watson Greer. Her father was a farmer and blacksmith.

The Greer family consisted of the following children who survived past infancy:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Birth</u>	<u>Died</u>
Walter Gilbert	Aug 1895	12 Aug 1943
Annie Irene	30 Oct 1897	7 May 1985
Mary Elizabeth Gertrude	17 Jan 1900	4 Dec 1991
Margaret James	13 Oct 1902	Jun 1978
Emma Vivian	23 Mar 1904	8 Jun 1993
Arthur Wiles	16 Nov 1908	15 Jul 1954

Shortly after her birth, her father moved the family to Karnak, TX where he owned a number of wagons and mule teams and hauled lumber from the forests to the lumber mill. The mill burned, and they moved back to Greenwood, where he farmed and did blacksmithing.

Her mother died on 20 Sep 1916, after suffering for several years with "female" cancer. Vivian and Arthur were the only children still at home.

Her father became (if he hadn't been previously) an abusive alcoholic, and Vivian was sent to live with a Mrs. Wallace who ran a boarding school in Shreveport, LA. In 1917, Mrs. Wallace moved to Jacksonville, AR and opened a boarding school there, taking Mother with her where she completed the eighth grade. Sometime in 1918, Mrs. Wallace decided to return to Shreveport, and Mother refused to go with her. She went to a judge in Little Rock and borrowed money to attend Draughan's Business School. She lived at the YWCA.

After completing her studies she was still only 15 years old, and falsified her age in order to obtain a job at the Federal Reserve Bank in Little Rock.

When she and Fay married, she again falsified her age since she was not yet of legal age to marry without parental consent. I was never told, and have always wondered if Fay knew her true age prior to their marriage.

They had two children, Martha Geneva Ferguson, and myself. Martha was born 15 Oct 1921, in Little Rock, and I was born at home (2022 N. Hayes St. - now University Ave.) on 29 Jan 1925. They had purchased this home in 1922 and made the down payment with the Postal Savings Bonds which Fay had purchased with the gold coins given to him by his grandfather Gallion in 1916.

Mother was assisted at my birth by a nurse, Mrs. Lewis, who lived up the street from us. Mrs. Lewis gave me her gold nurses pendant watch, which my wife, Delane still wears.

In 1926, Fay took a course in Higher Accountancy through La Salle Extension University, and was awarded a diploma.

In late 1926 they joined Pulaski Heights Baptist Church. Fay joined by transfer of his membership from the Baptist Church at Toledo, AR, and Mother by profession of faith and baptism.

Almost my earliest memories are of our church. We were there both Sunday morning and Sunday evening, as well as every Wednesday evening. I recall that at evening services, Mother was at one end of the pew and Daddy at the other end, with Martha and me stretched out napping with our heads on one of their laps.

During my youth, almost all of our social life was church related - picnics, pot-luck dinners, game nights, etc. Of course, no one had much money, so these activities served many people very well.

Daddy was a Deacon in the church for as far back as I can remember, and was still an active Deacon until just prior to his death.

Mother was the disciplinarian of the family, and never said "Wait 'til your Father gets home!" Fay's discipline was through example, unwavering love and forgiveness. He only spanked me once, and I was extremely ashamed that I had, in fact, forced him to do it.

Fay bought our first car in 1930. I can remember only two "vacation" trips we took as a family. One was to Dallas to attend the TX Centennial State Fair in 1936, and a trip to Caddo Gap (near Hot Springs) for a few days of fishing and swimming, about 1937.

Fay only made \$13.50 per week during the depths of the Depression. That was much, much better than many people experienced. He was able to refinance our home when FHA became available in 1934, and we never lacked basic food or other necessities. During these years, Fay also held a second job. Mr. Mitchell who owned Democrat Printing and Lithographing Co., also owned the "AR Travellers" baseball team. It was a minor league team in the Southern Association. He kept books for the team, after regular work hours. On several occasions he missed the last street car (at midnight) from downtown Little Rock, so he had to walk home, a distance of about 6 miles. I remember attending ball games several times during this period and getting to sit in Mr. Mitchell's box seats. Quite a thrill!

He and Mother devised a very simple budget procedure. He brought his pay home in an envelope full of coins. They had a shoe box which contained envelopes for each of the basic items of expense - there was an envelope for bread and one for milk, etc. The coins were divided among the various envelopes, and when an envelope got empty, no more of that item was bought.

From the perspective of a young boy, I felt no pain from the Depression. Everyone else was in the same predicament, so when I had to cut card board to fit inside my shoe to keep the hole covered, it was no big deal. Same way with having to use adhesive tape inside the seat of my pants because they were thread bare.

Mother went to work managing the school cafeteria in our neighborhood about 1937. She continued in that position until about 1942 when she became the school secretary. She held that position until 1966 when Fay became quite ill, and she retired.

In 1950, they built a new home not far from their original place. Mother insisted that it be "built to last". Such things as stud spacing, rafter size and spacing, foundation depth and width, were all increased beyond the standards of the day. It had plaster walls and ceilings versus the sheet rock which had become popular. The home is in a beautiful wooded setting, on a street with a cul-du-sac at the end, so there was little traffic, and although the homes in the area are modest, the area is considered one of the most desirable in the western part of town. When Mother put it on the market for sale, it was snapped up the first day - at a price higher than the listing price! A realtor bought it for his own house, and didn't want to take a chance on someone else getting it. The listing price was higher than any comparable sale in the area, so her steadfast insistence for quality when it was built paid off handsomely when it was sold.

After their new house was built, Fay and Vivian took a number of trips, and enjoyed the fruits of their long lives of work and frugality. They visited Washington, DC, the Smokey Mountains, the Seattle World's Fair, San Antonio, San Francisco, New Orleans, Cuba and other attractions as well as visiting us when we lived in New Jersey and seeing that historic area and New York City.

Both of my parents loved to fish, and for a number of years they did so regularly at Lake Maumelle near Little Rock, and Lake Catherine near Hot Springs.

Daddy was a Mason, and in addition to "Blue Lodge", he became a Knights Templar in the York Rite, serving as an instructor throughout the state for several years. He "raised" me when I became a Master Mason in 1950.

Daddy often told me of a severe storm that occurred when he was a child. It blew out the windows of their farm home and the wind blew the rain into the house and everything was soaked. It made such an indelible impression in his mind that in the hours just prior to his death when he was in a near coma, he repeatedly asked Mother and me to please shut the window because his room was getting wet.

He also related to me that the first time he saw a train, he, Dewey and Grandpa had gone to Rison. As they neared town, a train was approaching and blowing its whistle. The whistle "spooked" the horses and they bolted, upsetting the wagon and scaring all of them mightily.

Fay decided early in life that he did not want to be a farmer. He disliked that kind of physical activity intensely, to the point that in later life, he found no pleasure in such things as yard work and gardening.

Daddy's disdain for physical activity was complemented by the fact that he was a very fastidious person. He was always "properly dressed" for whatever the occasion was - even fishing. He was totally non-athletic. I recall one church picnic where after supper, with a big campfire burning, the men decided to play "leap-frog". I must have been 7 or 8 years old at the time. When Daddy's turn came to run and leap, he ran very stiff legged, and the boys my age were shouting, "Look ---- there comes old man Ferguson - he'll never make it!" I think I was embarrassed!

Fay was a Christian Gentleman in every respect that the term applies. I never heard him swear, or say a harsh word to, or about, anyone during his lifetime --- even me, when I certainly deserved it.

He died 8 May 1968, at the age of 72, after suffering several heart attacks and strokes.

After Fay's death, Martha became ill with cancer of the lymph system. She had always been frail, suffering from asthma and various allergies. Mother devoted herself completely to Martha's needs.

Despite Martha's illness, Mother and Martha took a trip together to Italy and France on their own - that is without tours, etc. Later, Mother spent a month with Martha in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.

Martha's death 18 Oct 1972 was devastating to Mother, coming so soon after Fay's death. She visited us often while we lived in New Jersey and Connecticut, and we always went to visit her at least once each year during that period. I was often there on business between these family visits.

Vivian was a strong person, both physically and emotionally, and a very independent person. She attributed her independence to her experiences as a child and young woman.

Vivian sold her home in August of 1992 and moved into an apartment at Presbyterian Village at Little Rock. It was a very emotional decision for her, but she realized that her health, at 88 years of age, was finally failing. She died 8 Jun 1993 from congestive heart failure.

It may be of interest to relate here the saga of a small piece of land in East TX in which Mother owned a one sixth undivided interest. That land provided both of us some interesting experiences for a number of years.

#### "THE EAST TEXAS LAND"

Shortly after the Civil War, a young Confederate Veteran, David Watson (c.1843 - c.1899) and his wife Mary Louise Delay (Feb 1846 - ?) bought a 130 acre farm on the south bank of Cypress Bayou in Harrison Co., TX.

Cypress Bayou was the famed waterway from the Red River to the port of Jefferson, TX, which was the largest inland port in the country until the railroads came. Much has been written about its history.

David and "Mollie", his wife's nickname, had seven children of whom six survived to adulthood. Thomas Loreta Watson, their eldest child (a daughter, in spite of her name) married John Wiles Greer in 1892.

John Greer and Loreta ("Reta") had eight children, six of whom survived to adulthood. Emma Vivian, their seventh child (1904 - 1993) married Fay I. Ferguson in 1920.

On 17 Jul 1912, after Mollie Watson's death, the 130 acre homestead was divided between her six children. Loreta Watson Greer was awarded 21 acres.

The story picks up in 1941, when Mary Tucker (a daughter of Loreta Watson Greer) found out from an attorney in Longview, TX that there was a problem. I don't know what had happened from 1912 until 1922, but from 1922 until 1933, Lula Burk one of the daughters of Mollie Watson had paid the taxes on the property for the family. In 1933 she went to see Judge Scott to help her divide her share among her heirs. He told her she had no title to the land, and a few days later, he and a man named Judge Lindsay filed on her land as well as that of Loreta Greer and had paid the taxes from then until 1941.

Loreta's family sued in 1942 and the first suit ended in a hung jury. The second trial was before the judge without a jury, and the judge awarded 19.6 acres to the "squatter" and only 1.4 acres to the family.

At this time, East TX was booming with oil "wildcatters" and the land was thought to be very valuable.

In any case, Aunt Mary was named Trustee for Loreta Greer's heirs and over the years had "managed" the property - paid the taxes, arranged oil exploration leases, etc.

Aunt Mary really wanted the entire tract. She got Uncle Arthur and Aunt Annie to deed their shares to her at no cost. Uncle Walter died in 1943 intestate, so nothing was ever done on his share. About the time Daddy died (1968) Aunt Mary was really "bugging" Mother to sell her share. Mother had never really understood what had happened in the past and Aunt Mary really wouldn't explain it, so they got into a protracted "disagreement", with Mother refusing to sell, because she thought there might be "some oil wells" being drilled and thought Aunt Mary wanted it all for herself (and that is perhaps true).

In any event, Aunt Margaret (No. 3 sister) finally deeded her share to Aunt Mary in 1975, leaving only Mother and Walter's heirs holding out.

Meanwhile, Mother was continuously telling me all about it and staying upset because she didn't know any of the details about why 21 acres was now 1.4 acres and all that had transpired. I suggested that she contact a lawyer in Marshall and have him look up in the court and deed records all that had happened. She did so and I paid 1/2 of the \$200 fee in 1974.

Mother still wouldn't sell outright, but offered to sell the land, retaining the gas and oil rights, and that really made Aunt Mary furious. There are some pretty nasty letters in the file that Aunt Mary wrote to Mother and Aunt Margaret (who always sent the ones she received on to Mother).

In any event, nothing happened and Aunt Mary died in December 1991 and Mother followed in June 1993. (the last heirs of John and Loreta Greer)

David Greer, son of Walter, myself, and Mother's other heirs, Richard Jones and Priscilla Jones, decided to issue quit claim deeds to Aunt Mary's son, Joseph Tucker, at no cost to him. The land wasn't worth over \$3,000, and to try and split it up would leave none of us anything. This was done in 1994, and Joseph then died in early 1995. I have no idea what has, or will, happen to the property. I'm just glad it is not in my estate.

And now, a few paragraphs about Fay's siblings, Dewey and Ophie.

You will recall that in the prior chapter, I related that Dewey, Fay, and their Father, Joseph, attended Tyler Commercial College in 1915/16, and that Dewey and his Father farmed near Emmett, AR during 1917 and 1918.

By 1920, Dewey was in Little Rock working for the Southern Cotton Oil Co. as a bookkeeper. He married Florence Lillian Thompson on 15 Aug 1925, and their only child, William Griffin Ferguson was born 12 Jan 1927.

About 1934, Dewey went to work for Cudahy Packing Co. as a salesman for Central Arkansas, and moved to Pine Bluff. He won many awards for meeting his sales objectives. The company was later sold to another meat packer, and Dewey remained with them for many years until his death 6 Jul 1963.

Dewey was a very outgoing, jovial man, always ready with an amusing story.

His son, William, graduated from Ouachita Baptist College and married Betty Jane Sullivan 28 Aug 1948. He became a Minister of Music, serving for many years at First Baptist Church at Amarillo, TX, before becoming a missionary to South America. He had two children, James William, and Janna Lee. James William also became a minister. William Griffin November 1994.

Ophie Ruth Ferguson's early life was told in a prior chapter. In 1934 she enrolled at the school of nursing at Arkansas Baptist Hospital in Little Rock, graduating in late April 1937. She married Herbert Roy Church 5 May 1937, only about six weeks before her father's death.

Herbert was a welder, and was often out of work. They moved around quite a bit and in 1943 were in Pasadena, TX. I visited with them at that time and it was the last time I ever saw either of them.

They had one child, Joseph Arden Church, who was born 30 May 1938.

About 1945, Herbert felt called to the ministry and though with no education beyond high school, he obtained a position as pastor of a church in Minden, TX, where he died 6 Sep 1957.

Ophie moved back to Pasadena, working as a registered nurse until about 1975. She died 16 Jun 1985 in Pasadena.

Joseph Arden died in a hotel room in Houston, TX 19 Nov 1986, under suspicious circumstances. He had served time in the TX Penitentiary for passing "hot" checks, but seemed to have gotten his life in order, and married, had one son and divorced. He remarried in Arlington, TX where he was working as an air conditioning technician, but that marriage also failed, and he disappeared. I learned of his death from an old friend of Ophie's in Pasadena, in Dec 1993, when I tried to locate Joe.

ADDENDUM

Page 1.	The Fergusons were members of the Church of England until they moved to SC where they became Presbyterians. In the 1820's they became Baptists.
Page 2.	When dates are shown such as "1682/83", it is because England did not change from the Julian Calendar to the Gregorian Calendar until 1752, which changed the new year from 25 Mar to 1 Jan. The second date is based on the current calendar.
Page 17/18.	Robert Adams, brother of Agnes, married Penelope Lynch whose father hung so many Tories that such punishment came to be known as "lynching".
Page 38.	Matthew Johnston was in the battle at Williamson's and might well have been the person who shot Col. Ferguson.
Page 39.	Mary, the Col.'s widow and two of her sons were refugees in Charleston for a period after his death, under the protection of the British and she was paid maintenance money by them while she was there.
Page 54.	John Ferguson, Esq., was the maternal grandfather of John Gaston Ferguson and William Pulaski Ferguson. He died 29 Jun 1859. The service record of William Pulaski does not show his death, but shows he was wounded near Atlanta, GA, on 22 Jul 1864. Family stories say he died in GA. While the will of John Ferguson, Esq. named both John Gaston Ferguson and William Pulaski Ferguson, only John Gaston collected his stipend, which lends credence to the belief that William Pulaski died during the Civil War.