

WEST EDWARD MOREAU LIFE HISTORY

One of the biggest mistakes Roger and Joe ever made was when they asked me to record a tape about my life; however, THIS IS MY LIFE.

The first part that I want to discuss is the Moreau family history which I know very little about. I only had the opportunity when I was a small child when we made two trips back to New Hampshire from Wyoming to ever meet or to see one of my grandparents which was my Mother's Mother. I don't believe I ever did meet or see my Dad's Mother. Very little history of the rest of the family I know because they never discussed this with me at any time. The only thing I do know is that my Mother was born in Francistown, New Hampshire and that when she was a young lady, she had to walk three miles to go to work in a textiles mill. My Dad and two of her brother's worked for the Boston-Maine Railroad in Concord, New Hampshire. Two of my Mother's brothers were killed working on the railroad. At that time, I think my folks decided that that was no place for my Dad to be working, so they went on to a little ranch, little farm really, in New Hampshire which was really a pile of rocks, I believe, from what I saw when I was a little kid.

The next step that I know was they had gone to Wyoming--the only way I know they went out there was due to the fact that they had some shirttail relations with the Farlows in Lander whom they became associated with. My Dad first worked as a shepherd in Lander. That's what he was doing when I was born. During that time, the Farlows apparently helped him become established in the sheep business and he was in that until I was old enough to go to school--six years old. We lived out on the prairie there in Wyoming from early Spring until Fall in a sheep wagon. My Dad had approximately 3000 head of sheep which they took care of during the early Spring and through the whole summer.

My Mother used to cook for about ten Indians who would come out there in early Spring to shear the sheep, and I have often thought of all the discomforts that woman must have gone through during those years and that period of time living out in the boonies in the sheep wagon till they returned to a ranch in the Fall where they farmed the sheep out to be fed through the Winter.

While we were on the range with the sheep, it was quite a job to take care of them. Coyotes were bad--they had to put lanterns around the sheep beds at night and red flays. My Dad ran a coyote trap line and at that time the bounty on a coyote was \$10. So you could make money trapping coyotes really.

In the early summer, they would move the sheep from around Riverton over into the Bighorn Mountains where they summered there in the meadows with the quaking aspen trees and the beautiful streams. It was just great to be there during that whole summertime, because it was cool and we lived on wildlife, really--sage chickens, cottontails, trout. Then in the Fall, they brought the sheep back to Riverton.

We used to ford the Big Wind River when we would come into town in a buggy--scare the death out of my Mother. This was a raging torrent, and when you went in at one place, the horses swam across the river and you came out about 100 yards down the stream on the other side. It was a real experience for her, and I can see why.

When I became old enough to go to school, my Dad sold the sheep and we moved into Riverton where he built a garage. He built this garage at two different periods of time. At one time, it was the largest garage in the state of Wyoming. As I grew up there, I eventually became a paperboy selling papers on the streets of Riverton. Riverton was a town of about 1500 people. There were two paperboys. I had one side of the street and the other boy had the other side. This was during the war--1917-18. We would get those papers from the train--the Northwestern Railroad train came in in the afternoon about four o'clock and we would get the Casper Tribune and the Denver Post and we could sell those things just like hotcakes because of the war. And, as you know, in those days, there was no radio. The only way they got any information was either by telegraph or by a newspaper, which was a day and a half old when I got them.

On the side of the street I worked, there were two saloons, and I can remember very vividly going into those saloons. I could see the big free lunch they had up there on the counter for the customers in there. I could walk in the back where the guys were playing poker. But you didn't dare say a word back there--you just

walked around, and if they wanted a newspaper, they bought one; if not, you just went on out. Also, when the war was over, they got out the local hearse and they tied a dead dog on the back of it and drug it through the streets of Riverton--a big celebration.

During this period of time, too, we had a little basketball team. My Mother would drive us over to St. Michael's Mission, about 8-9 miles outside Riverton, where we would play basketball with the Indian kids over there. And I still have pictures of that team and of the Indian boys we played with.

When I was about 11 or 12 years old, I had been playing in the snow all day long with one of my friends. I came home and had a terrific gas pain. My Dad called the doctor, and he checked me all over and said, "Well, I think he is going to have to have his appendix out. You better get him to Casper as fast as you can on the train." So they took me to Casper and I was operated on. My appendix ruptured while I was on the operating table. They put a tube in me to relieve all the foreign matter in there. I was in that hospital for 30 days. I can still see the sagebrush out of the hospital window rolling across the vacant lot in Casper. I missed school, as a result of that operation, about 60 days.

Also, during this period of time, they had the great influenza panic that razed the country; so they closed all the schools there, and as a result--My Dad was hauling cottonseed cake in his truck out to a big sheep ranch. I rode with him every day, and that way I never did get the influenza, and it worked out great.

The winters there in Riverton when I was a kid were very severe. It would get down to 40 below, but that didn't affect us any. They always flooded the city block for ice skating, and they built a big bonfire at night. So we'd go out at night and ice skate and play with our sleds during the day even in this forty-below zero weather and you never thought anything about it.

Another thing, during this period of time, when I was selling the newspapers, the Federal Government started a big reclamation project out of Riverton where they dammed up Wind River and were building a lot of ditches to handle this water.

The man who was in charge of this project used to buy a paper from me every night. One day he asked me if, when school was out, I would be interested in going up to this project and working for the summer as a water boy with a crew of workers--take care of a crew of the workers, which I thought would be great. And I did. I went up and stayed for, I didn't stay for the whole summer, but I stayed for about a month. It was quite an experience living in a bunkhouse with those guys. I would go on a truck with them early in the morning. They had a barrel of the truck with water, and I had my bucket. I would walk around all day long just doing nothing but supplying those guys with water.

It just so happened--a coincidence--when I finished the 8th grade, my parents decided to move to Ft. Collins, Colorado. My Dad was driving his own truck for the Union Oil Co., and they were going to drill some wells in Ft. Collins, which turned out to be quite successful. So we moved to Ft. Collins that Spring. During that time, the Union Oil Co. also decided to drill a well in Vermayo Park, New Mexico which was just across the Colorado line in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains east of Trinidad. We went down there and I worked as a swamper with another boy. There were two trucks. We had to go up over an 11,000 foot height to get into where they were drilling this well from where we picked up all the casing, all the building materials to build a complete camp and the rig to drill this well. Our job was when the truck would stall, from going up this 11,000 foot climb, we had a big block we would stick under the rear wheels until they could get the truck powered a little more, and away we'd go till it stopped again. And eventually we'd get over the top that way.

That job lasted all summer and it was a great experience for me. After we hauled in all of the necessary material for drilling the well--all the pipes to go into it, and they built the buildings and everything--I worked the rest of the summer in the kitchen as a helper. And then, I returned that Fall to Ft. Collins to go to school, which was a great experience, too.

One little experience I had during this period of time, I laid out of school for one quarter. I was going with a girl whose Uncle had lost both arms in the war. He had artificial arms that he could put on. My Dad still had this truck, that he

wasn't using at that time, so this guy suggested that we bug a truckload of apples and go up to Cheyenne and through the dry land country and Kimball, Nebraska selling apples. Which we did. It was a very successful trip except for the fact that this guy never used his arms and I had to take care of him just like a baby. We'd go into a restaurant and I'd have to feed this guy and the waitresses would stand there and cry, because in those days you never saw anybody crippled like that. And this guy was real smart in one respect. We'd pull in and he'd go into a store, but he'd be real careful to wait before he'd ask the manager to buy any apples. He'd wait till the manager was waiting on a customer, when he'd ask the guy to buy the apples, the guy couldn't turn him down because the buy had no arms. Anyway, we sold all the apples and returned to Ft. Collins and that was a real experience.

During those high school days in Ft. Collins, our little school there had a coach who was one of the greatest in the country. I was real fortunate to be a part of all this. In fact, we had won the State track meet for about 18 years straight. And they won the state football championship about every third or fourth year. About my 2nd or 3rd year in school, I wasn't on the track team at this time, but they went to Chicago to Alonzo Stagg's University of Chicago National High School Track Meet, and they won 1st place there. I was on the track team eventually and I put the shot and threw the discus. In the Spring of 1928, we went to Chicago. This old coach would go around to the automobile dealers in the Spring and he'd say, "I've got a bunch of kids that I'm going to take to Chicago to this track meet and I need some automobiles." So they would give him some of their old touring cars that were about to go to pieces.

About six of us would pile into a car and put all our luggage on the funning boards and we'd take off for Chicago. And we had real good luck doing that. It worked good. They had some flat tires and they had some bearings burn out, but we got there.

In 1928 we won the National Championship again--that was the third time we had won it. I got 4th in the discus. They were so proud of us in Ft. Collins that

instead of making us come back in the cars, they had us come back on the train--paid our way. And then they had a big celebration for us.

The next year, my senior year in school, 1929, we went back there again and I broke a record in the discus throw that stood for 18 years. Also, I was selected to be on the Scholastic All American Track Team for high schools. If you could get a 1929 Spaulding Athletic Almanac, you could see where I was listed in there on a half of a page.

During the summer of 1928, the year before I graduated from high school, after we got back from Chicago, a buddy of mine decided to go back up to Lander, Wyoming, which is where I was born and where the Farlows lived, who I knew so well. We went up there and went to work on Ed Farlow's ranch pitching hay. We worked there all summer. Farlow had been very active with the Indians in the movie industry. He had taken a group of Indians to London and to Paris for six months each to advertise the promo to (the movie) The Covered Wagon, which was a big deal. These Indians he took had all performed in Hollywood making The Covered Wagon. He decided that summer, while we were working there, he had a secretary who was working for him, come to visit from London and he decided he wanted to take his whole family, which comprised about four grandchildren and his wife and his daughter and this secretary of his, through Yellowstone Park. He had my buddy and myself drive a truck with all our camping equipment on it as we made this trip through Yellowstone.

Farlow enjoyed talking, so every night at these campgrounds, they would always have a performance and asked for volunteers for anybody who could add something interesting to make a pleasant evening. So Ed, whenever we camped, volunteered to talk about the Indians. And he had all the necessary regalia--the big headdress and the armbands and all that. He would dress me up in that outfit and I'd stand up there on the stand with all this junk on while he gave the talk about taking those Indians to London and Paris. And I'm telling you, those people would sit there in the audience with their mouths wide open because this guy was real good at it. He would show them how the sign language worked and everything and it was real interesting. That was a real experience for me.

Another experience I had while living in Ft. Collins, which I should have mentioned earlier in this narrative about when I was in high school in the first year or two we were there. Through the association with the Union Oil Company, I became acquainted with the athletic director of the Colorado Aggies, the local college there, and he asked me if I would be interested in being a ball boy for the football team, which comprised taking care of all the equipment on the field during football practice every night at the college--taking care of all the sweatshirts, balls and helmets and everything they needed. There were two of us ball boys. The team would practice after it got dark. On the grandstand, they had lights, and we had to run those lights on the team while they were out there practicing. That was very interesting; and as a result of being a ball boy, I got to make two trips with the team on the train to two different places where they played. One was Colorado Springs where they played Colorado College, and one at Denver to play Denver University. That was an interesting experience.

In the year 1929, the year I graduated from high school, I went up to Cheyenne, Wyoming and worked for the Cheyenne Air Service up there and took some flying lessons and soloed during that summer. And then, in the early Spring of 1930, I came out to California and enrolled in the Boeing School of Aeronautics. That was the beginning of my twenty years in the aviation business, of which I'm not going to go into to any extent except to mention two different items. I don't want to go into this too much because it's just regular work.

First, when the Japs attacked Pearl Harbor, they closed us down there at Oakland, and they wouldn't let us continue our flying schools. As a result, we moved down to Douglas, Arizona and I operated out of there for about a year and a half. The whole family moved down. Donkeys were running free down in that country--they were just like wild horses. We got a donkey and we lived out on the edge of town--we had a little corral there. We kept the donkey in the corral, and the kids used to ride it around, if they could get it to move. We'd go to the show once in a while, and when we came home, the donkey would always bray because he was tickled to death to see us come home.

The only other experience I want to mention is--this was an unusual circumstance--I had come home from the airport one evening, and in those days I was doing charter work. I had the beech craft. I got a call from San Francisco wanting me to come over to San Francisco airport and pick up a passenger to fly him to Los Angeles. So, by the time I got over there, it was just dark at night--probably about 8 o'clock. It was just a beautiful night, and when I got up to 10,000 feet, I could see that whole San Juaquin Valley, all the towns all lit up and the sky was so clear that I could see the glow of Los Angeles showing up over the Tehachapi Mountains, which were still 300 miles away. Anyway, I landed at Burbank Airport about midnight, somewhere along there. I asked the guy (my passenger) "What's your problem, how come you had to get down here so fast?" He said his mother had passed away. So anyway, I wanted to gas up and take off and fly right back home; however, when I checked around the airport there, they said all the gas pumps were closed. I wouldn't be able to get anything till 4 o'clock in the morning. An airliner came in about that time, so they opened them up and I could get gas then.

So I parked the airplane and the beech craft only had a door on one side. So I got in and laid down in the back seat and laid with my feet toward the door. While I was laying there, all of a sudden, I could feel the airplane kind of start to move, and I noticed the door open and someone started to get in the airplane. Well, just as they got about halfway in, I raised my legs up, pushed their body, pushed them right out, then I jumped up and looked out and I never could see who it was. The only thing that was foolish about that was I could have pushed them onto the edge of the wing there and if he had fallen onto the wing, he could have damaged it and I could have been laid up there two to three days getting it repaired. I think it was some young kid who had sneaked in there and he wanted to climb into an airplane and probably just sit there and work those controls and imagine he was flying. But that's that--that's the story.

I will now record the most happening events that occurred during my lifetime.

In the Fall of 1930, I had obtained an airplane in which to build up some flying time. At that time, I decided to make a trip to Ft. Collins to spend Christmas with my little girlfriend, Beth Sarcander, and Gordon Furnish. Two of my friends

in the Hayward area decided they wanted to go to Omaha to spend Christmas. So they decided to fly back to Denver with me and then they would go on to Omaha from there.

We arrived in Denver just before Christmas, and I spent a very happy Christmas holiday with little Bethie and Gordon Furnish. As a result, I was suppose to return to the coast shortly after that and bring these two people (my passengers from Hayward) back. However, due to real bad weather, several storms over a long period of time, it was not safe for flying. So I abandoned that idea and stayed in Denver and Ft. Collins.

In March of 1931 on the 17th, St. Patrick's Day, in the morning, little Bethie and I were married. We took off about noon that day for Albuquerque, New Mexico to spend our honeymoon. A friend of Beth's brother, Keith, wanted to come out to the coast due to the fact that he was going to be a cadet in the Air Corps, and he had to be out there to check in. So he flew out there with us. We arrived in Albuquerque and spent our wedding night there. The next day, we took off to come to the coast. During that period of time, the weather was real clear, but the wind was blowing, and I drifted quite a bit off of my course. Finally, in looking around, I couldn't even see a road anyplace to make any point of location, except that finally I located, I saw a little airport with no hanger, and no town around. I went in there and landed. There was one little airplane there that had a licence on it--Prescott, Arizona. Prescott was the town that was located near this airport, but you were unable to see the city because it was over a high layer of rocks and there was no civilian life distinguishable at all.

Well, I corrected for my drift and landed at Kingman, Arizona about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The two caretakers there at the airport who helped guide me in--because the wind was blowing so hard to park my airplane--said they had to make a balloon run. They let that balloon go and the wind was blowing 50 miles

per hour on the ground and 70 miles per hour at 2000 feet. So, as a result of that, it was impractical for me to fly on to California that day, because I would have only been making 20 miles an hour at my cruising speed of 90 miles. So we stayed over in Kingman, Arizona. The next day, we took off and it was a clean,

pleasant day. We flew into Los Angeles. As we came in off the desert and flew into that valley around San Bernardino and Riverside, all we could smell were those beautiful orange blossoms that filled the air. It was just like being in a different world.

Well, we landed there at LA, and this Clifford Hoffman, who was with us, debarked and went to the military. We took off and flew on to Oakland arriving about 9 o'clock that night.

We lived in San Leandro for our early life there. In June of 1933, the stork brought us little Joey. And in August of 1935, little Roger arrived by the stork. We were living at the time in a house we had purchased on Best Avenue. This was during the depression, and a real estate lady who owned that house just couldn't get rid of it fast enough. She offered to sell it to me if I would pay \$300 down. I said to her, "I don't have \$300." So she let me buy that place for \$300 down and I paid her \$20 a month. The total price of the house was \$3500 bucks. It was about a \$10,000 house which had gone to that low price due to the depression. Anyway, we lived in that house for several year.

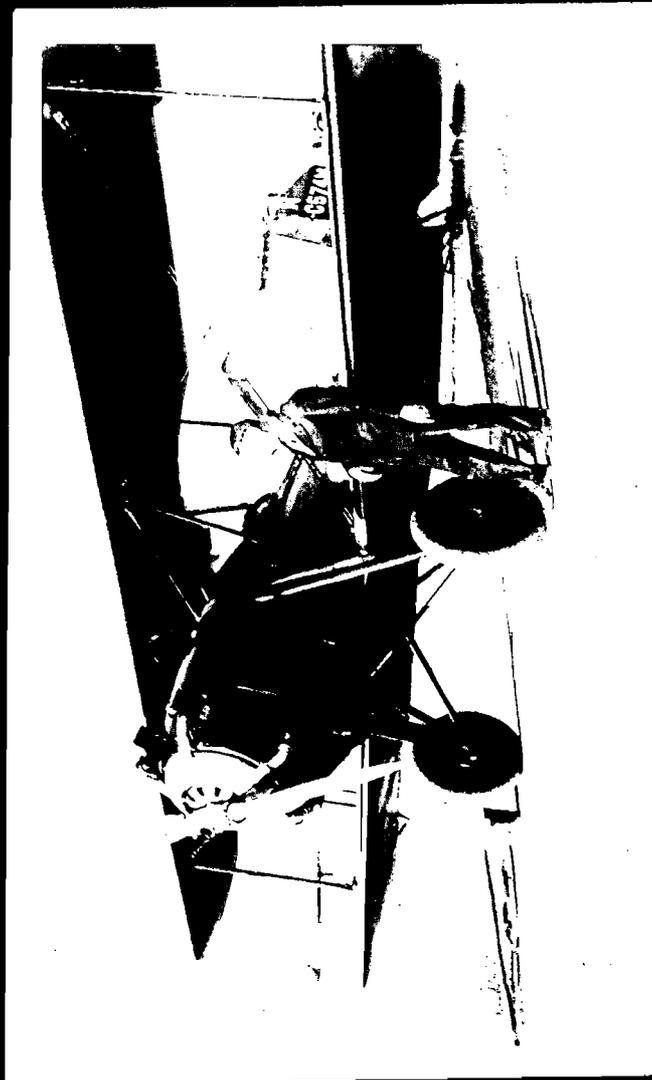
Later on, about 1939 or 40, we bought a lot out in Castro Valley to build a home and later a swimming pool. As a result of that, in 1940-41, we did build our home out there. And that's about the end of this story because little Joey and little Roger, at that time, were about old enough to remember all those days that we lived there in that house.

JOE, ROGER,
WEST
1936





ROGER, WEST,
JOE
1939



GEORGE MOREAU
1931



WEST, ROGER,
BETH, JOE,
ANNE MOREAU
1939



Couple marks 65 years

West and Beth Moreau recently were honored for their 65th wedding anniversary by the Edgewood Ladies Bridge Club and the Timber Cove Men's Bridge Club.

The surprise celebration took place at the Zephyr Cove Lodge, where the Moreaus have been going since 1945.

The dinner party was attended by 40 of their close friends.

Married March 17, 1931, at Denver, the newlyweds departed on their honeymoon in the bridegroom's new 1931 "Spartan" open cockpit biplane.

While West flew the aircraft from the rear cockpit, Beth sat in the front acting as a lookout and "bug deflector." West, always an entrepreneur, was able to put a paying passenger in the space next to his new bride.

The couple have been permanent residents of Zephyr Cove since 1973.

They have two children, six grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

As a surprise, West presented Beth an anniversary gift of a lightweight electric snowblower to make her job of cleaning their deck easier.

Beth said she was "thrilled."



Tribune Staff Photo

West and Beth Moreau recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary.

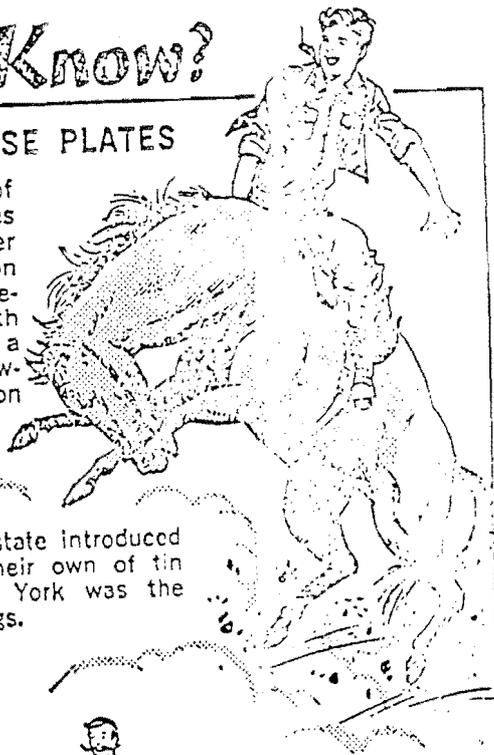
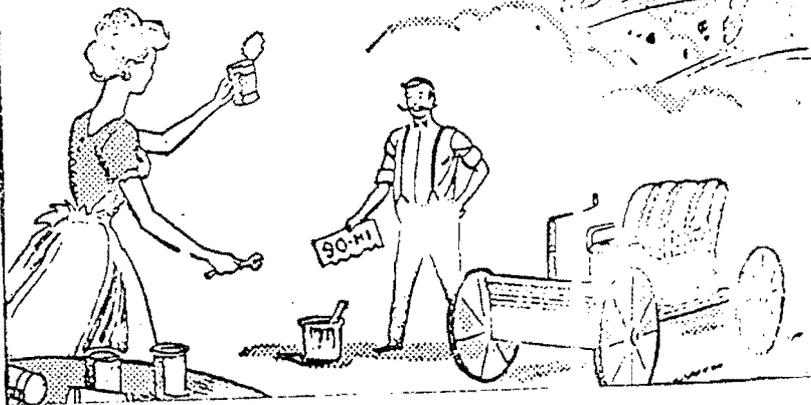
ludes & kindness

Did You Know?

FACTS ABOUT LICENSE PLATES

"Stub" Farlow is one of only five men whose faces appear on plates. The other four are the presidents on Mt. Rushmore National Memorial, reproduced on South Dakota plates. Farlow is a World War I era rodeo cowboy who rides a bronco on Wyoming plates.

In 1901 when New York state introduced plates, motorists made their own of tin cans and shingles. New York was the first state to require tags.



Stub Farlow

This a 1913 photo of "Stub" Farlow, a Lander native and relative of the Sioux War Chief Gall. This photo became the inspiration for the Wyoming license plate logo in use since 1936.