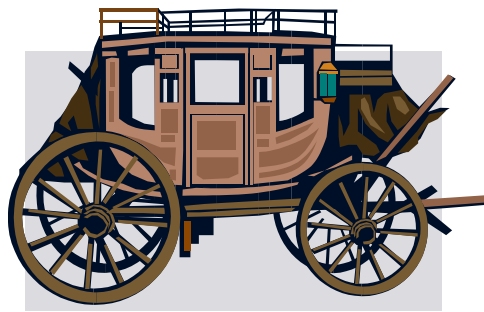


RECOLLECTIONS



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Chapter 11 – Albuquerque Roots

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From his unpublished materials and
Annual Christmas newsletters
1975 through 1987

Composited, Illustrated, and Edited By Harry Briley

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Chapter 11 – Albuquerque Roots

Master Structure

Each chapter is a stand-alone document with a separate table of contents. These mostly chronological memoirs in three sections start by recollections that set the stage for the topical chapters which follow.

Chapters:

1. Life in the Mid-West Twenties
 2. Boy Scouts
 3. College Years
 4. Magician

5. Settling Down on Highway 66
 6. Wander Year
 7. A Year in the California State Guard
 8. Advertising
 9. Books and I
 10. Stagecoach Press

- 11. Albuquerque Roots**
 - 12. UNM Press**
 - 13. Historian and Commissions**
 - 14. Bookman in London/Paris 1977**
 - 15. Antiquarian Bookman**
 - 16. The West is Wider than You Think**
 - 17. Bookman in Spain 1989**

18. Closing Shop

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CHAPTER 11 – ALBUQUERQUE ROOTS

Albuquerque Home

We put the 303 Berger Street house up for sale and at the end of January 1969, we moved to 600 Solano Drive SE, in Albuquerque. [It became our last and long-term home. A prior add-on in the rear had a steep stairway (not built to code) to the three upstairs bedrooms. A large high-ceiling two-car garage sat beneath those bedrooms. Half the garage held the mothballed equipment used in Stagecoach Press.]



Figure 1 - 600 Solano Dr (C.Rittenhouse 10/1969; S.Blair 12/2001)

At first, we rented this house, because it was in the school zone where our daughters attended Highland High School, because it was eighteen blocks from the University, and because it had the right number of rooms.

In 1971, Charlotte continued at the Technical-Vocational Institute (T-VI) training as a computer programmer and systems analyst. Charlotte put in a few weekends in 1973 doing computer work for the Dikewood Corporation when that firm got a rush job.

Unusual Purchases

We paid off major items in 1971: the grand piano, Anne's cello, and Anne's dental work,

The only major purchase in 1977 was a stereo record player and high fidelity set for the living room. [This was new for the home and Charlotte mostly used it as a radio. Harry loaned his own stereo LP system for Susan's 1974 wedding reception at the house.]

The other most interesting acquisitions in 1977 were:

- An antique carved pastry mould Charlotte got in Paris, over 100 years old;
- A mould used in England for making hand-made paper
- A Nambeware bowl
- Frames for two scarce Hiller photo prints
- Refurbished set of hand bookbinder's stamps.

Other major purchases were:

- Large color TV in 1979
- New electric typewriter in 1980
- In 1982, Charlotte got me a cordless telephone when in the basement, garage, outdoors, or at any other place distant from the [wired] telephone. I was 70.
- New microwave in 1984
- A Minolta desktop photocopier [year unknown]
- Brother WP500 word processor in 1987 (in my 75th year)

On December 24-25, 1987 while visiting Douglas on his 40th Birthday, burglars broke in a small side door. They snatched the microwave oven (1984), a black and white small TV, a wall clock, the large color TV (1979), and stereo components (1977 amplifier, turntable, and tape deck units). They took a portable typewriter (1980) from Charlotte's desk. They broke into the book room but took no books.

Household Upgrades

[As home became a business, two of the three basement rooms hosted sturdy metal library research shelving from floor to ceiling with narrow aisles. The third room was merely a large closet for camping gear. A door led down steep stairs to the basement.]

In 1979, we added an elaborate wrought-iron screen door in front [facing Solano Drive].

In 1980, we had a double wrought-iron screen door custom-made where the French doors [facing Burton Street]. We had mineral wool insulation blown into the entire attic. One level of bricks on the Burton street side was plagued with several loose bricks; we had a mason remove them and replace the mess with a nicely laid section of new brick.

In 1981, we added a new ironwork gate on the patio, had several large elm trees cut down in the back yard, graveled the front and side dirt driveways, and put gutters along the eaves. We planted a young sycamore tree on the Burton street side of the house, replacing one that died.

Charlotte placed sod in the back yard in 1982 and had a new kitchen sink counter installed, including a sink and [our first] Sears electric automatic dishwasher.

In 1983, home upgrades included much needed:

- Wall-to-wall carpeting laid in the living room, dining room, entry, and hall
- Installed a refrigerated air conditioner in the window of my first-floor office
- New composition shingles put above the living room and dining room, where leaks had occurred. Cost: \$417

Tent Trailer Camping 1969-1974

We had taken a family trip to Chihuahua City in the fall of 1967 and often went on other trips [as a family]. We made two summer family trips in 1969 with a newly acquired camper trailer:

- Yakima, WA and down to San Francisco
- Gallup and Monument Valley

For a 1971 weekend, we took with our tent camper trailer to Ouray and Silverton, Colorado. We spent one night at Chama and one at Ouray; it was a short but delightful trip. We visited the ghost town of La Liendre.

In June 1972, I was part of a seminar instruction staff. We gave a seminar on Western American literature at the Utah State University in Logan, Utah.

We took the tent camper trailer and went up to Fort Collins, Colorado for a few days [for the Western American History Conference. Our planned itinerary:]

- I-25 to Santa Fe; US60 to Taos; State Road 3 to Fort Garland, CO; east on US50 to Walsenburg; I-25 to Colorado Springs at Golden Lane Travel Trailer Park, possible evening with Gilbert Campbell, Palmer Lake
- I-25 to Denver bookstore of Fred Rosenstock, I-25 to Fort Collins; Arr. KOA Campground at LaPorte. May spend evening with Michael Koury in Ft. Collins.
- In Fort Collins, at Colorado State University, attend Western American History Conference in the Student Center. Banquet in evening.
- At Student Center until noon; I-25 south to Pueblo KOA.
- I-25 to Walsenburg; US 50 to Fort Garland; NM 3 to Taos; US 64 to Santa Fe; I-25 to Albuquerque; ... or Pueblo to Trinidad on I-25; stop around noon with Morris Taylor in Trinidad; I-25 through Raton, Las Vegas, Santa Fe, to Albuquerque.

The Dodge Dart family car bought in 1968 showed signs of trouble after 97,000 miles, and so we traded it for a brand new four-door 1972 Dart.

In November 1972, in my 60th year, the *Santa Fe Trail Bibliography* brought an Award of Merit from the *American Association for State and Local History* [AASLH]. In November, we went to El Paso for a weekend, where I gave a talk at the Westerners.

I drove to a university press conference in Austin in late spring 1973 and while there visited my son Douglas briefly. In June, I went with Treadwell [of UNM Press] to the *American Booksellers Association* [ABA] convention in Los Angeles.

For July 1973, while the girls worked in Albuquerque, Charlotte and I took off alone in the Dodge Dart with the camper trailer to Lake Powell in Arizona, to Rainbow Bridge, the north rim of the Grand Canyon, to Bryce Canyon, Navaho National Monument, and Monument Valley.

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In August, Charlotte, I, Susan, and Anne took one final tent camping trailer together to Mount Rainier, described in a separate account [below]. In a camp shelter high on a slope of that mountain, we spent our last night camping out as a family. I knew as we started the drive home that this wonderful pleasure would never happen again, with both daughters off to college, and my eyes were full as we started down the highway.

A year later, over the July 4 weekend [before Susan's wedding], we took a trip alone to Creede, CO for about five days visiting Pike's Stockade and going over the mountains around Creede. On this trip, the tent-camper trailer was wrecked. A spring shackle became bent. A tow truck hauled the trailer into the next town for repair. While towing, the trailer flipped over and was damaged beyond repair. The insurance company made a spot settlement, and we continued our trip without the trailer.

[A hand-written page enumerated the 44 towns and nights spent in the tent-camper trailer, covering many vacations (1969-1974) before its demise.]

We finished paying off the 1972 Dart in 1974. Charlotte, I, Anne, and one of Anne's classmates, Heidi, went away on a two-night trip to Mesa Verde, camping in [ordinary fabric] tents.

The Family

The girls matured and married in the mid-1970's.

In June 1973, Anne received a ten-speed bicycle as a high school graduation present. She joined St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The only theft in 1974 was Anne's [new] ten-speed bike, taken on August 19 from the garage when the door was left open, although people were inside the house,

In September 1971, Susan entered New Mexico Tech [in Socorro]. On several weekends over the next two years, the house often filled with college friends. Anne started at New Mexico Tech in September 1973.

The most significant event in 1974 was Susan's wedding on August 26 to Dennis Blair, followed by Anne's announcement that Christmas that she might be married by the end of 1975. Charlotte had only two weeks' vacation as a teaching aide at TVI, which she took for Susan's wedding.



Figure 2 – Susan's Wedding – Albuquerque, NM 8/1974

L-R: Jack, Charlotte, Susan, Dennis Blair

There was truly a full house on Solano on Christmas day 1974, with Charlotte, I, Susan, Anne, Dennis, Douglas, and Harry all on hand.

On 5/24/1975, Anne married Harry Briley. So, as the fall term 1975 began, we had four students at Tech: Susan in her fifth year, Anne in her third, and both Dennis and Harry were completing their full four years. Our daughters were fully launched on their own.



Figure 3 – Anne’s Wedding – Socorro, NM 5/1975
L-R: Jack, Harry Briley, Anne, Charlotte

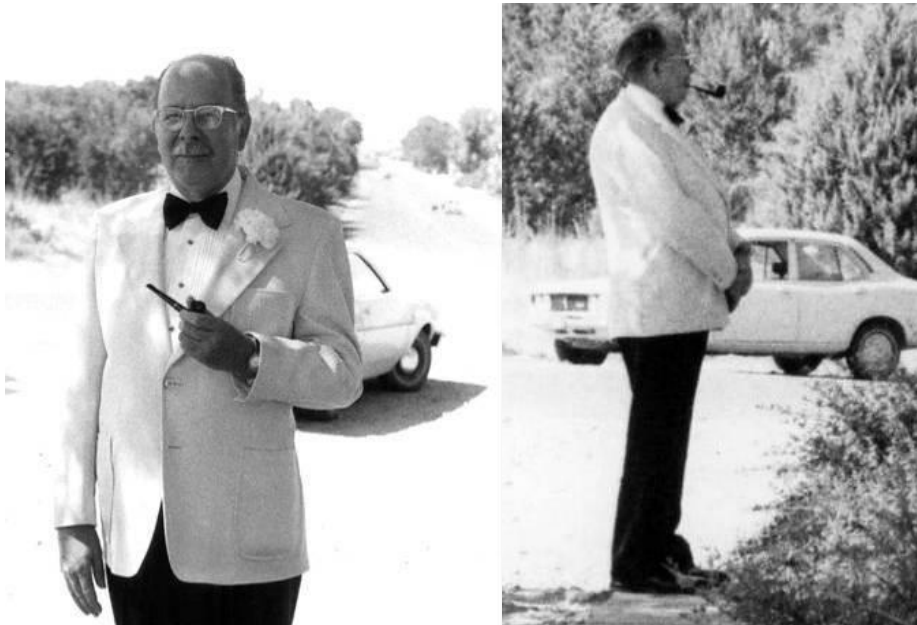


Figure 4 - Father of the Bride – Socorro, NM (T. Asher 5/1975)

Christmas 1975 was also a peak event. On December 24-25, Douglas, Susan, and Anne were home, with Dennis and Harry, and we had seven around the big table. Anne and Harry set out for California to visit his parents.

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In 1975, we lost our fine old gray tomcat, a magnificent part Persian, who was with us for nine years. About six weeks later, an orphan young female, whose color and form indicated that she certainly was a daughter of our old boy, came to the door gaunt and hungry. She is now a fat little companion named Contessa and owns the house.

The resident family became smaller on New Year's Eve. Only Charlotte, I, and a new little gray cat were in the house. [New Year's Eve] was the bluest family event of 1975.



Figure 5 - Siblings: Jack, Marie, Howard – 11/1978

[Two rare full family visits was Christmas 1977 and October 1980.] In 1977, Susan and Dennis came up from Socorro, and Anne and Harry arrived from California for a brief visit during which a family portrait could be taken.

During the first week in October 1982 [tenth anniversary of the Mustard Seed Coffee House held at New Mexico Tech and near my 70th birthday], Susan, Dennis, Elizabeth Anne, together with Anne and Harry, all came at the same time for a visit. The old house was jumping again with people.

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At almost 70, I flew to Chicago on October 23-26, 1982 to attend an auction of books from an estate. While there, I stayed with David's family.

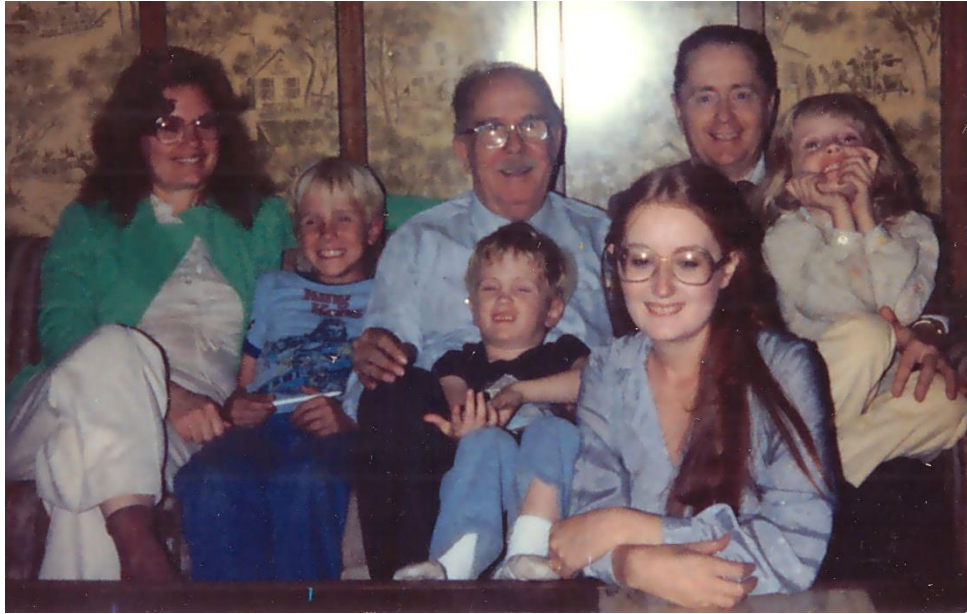


Figure 6 - With son, David Rittenhouse family – 1982

There was quite a family reunion for my 75th birthday in 1987. Anne and Harry, with [adopted children] Karen and Anthony, drove east from Livermore; California. Susan and Dennis, with [daughter] Elizabeth, drove down from Blaine, Minnesota. All stayed several days.

Stairway Accident

In the spring 1973, I started work on a book dealing with law cases concerning lost property, including "lost treasure". I was moving along well with it until an accident occurred. [The thick manuscript, while with significant progress, was never completed. It remains in an estate file drawer in the Briley home.]

Early in September 1973, both girls went to New Mexico Tech in Socorro - Susan to start her third year and Anne to start her first.

An accident occurred on October 7, a Sunday. Just before dawn, I arose from bed to go to the bathroom. Only half-awake, I went through the wrong door and pitched headlong down the flight of [steep] stairs, sustaining a Collis fracture of the right wrist and breaking my left shoulder blade.

Anne recounted her faith transformation that very morning (edited):

My boyfriend [John] told me about [walking] forward in church and being saved. This was how I thought one became "saved". On Sunday morning [10/7/1973] in my dorm room, I found how much easier it was than that.

I was sitting on my bed writing a letter. I especially remember how sunny the room was, how green the tree was outside, and how lively the record on the stereo [radio?] was. God used all of these things to get me to accept Him. It all happened very quickly and almost unexplainably, but God poured out his love to me. I remember looking out the window, seeing an invisible wall of God's love come through the window, and feeling that wave engulfed my body. Jesus Christ, God the Father and the Holy Spirit had chosen to manifest themselves to me in this manner. I knew, absolutely, that this was what I was searching for. Jesus was so real! I was ecstatic.

I had my first [faith] trial that evening. I went to [the Socorro Episcopal] church at 5pm as usual; only this time the minister told me that my father had a serious accident that very morning. He fell down a flight of stairs [at home] and was knocked unconscious for a little while. He was in the hospital with a broken wrist, a shattered shoulder blade, with possibly a broken rib, and a concussion. I was stunned. I cried but could now turn my grief over to Jesus. I felt comforted and made plans to visit my Dad the next weekend.

Charlotte called an ambulance and got me to the Presbyterian hospital, where Dr. James Weaver did a good job of setting the wrist bones. I was in the hospital until Saturday and then was at home for a week before going back to work [at UNM]. My arm was splinted for four weeks and then in a cast for another four weeks. The shoulder blade was only bandaged and healed quickly. By Christmas, with only a stiff right hand remaining, I worked to loosen the finger joints. The affair caused me to lose both weight and strength, which gradually returned. By the end of 1974, I had almost complete recovery from that broken wrist of late 1973.

Retire?

An amusing strange modesty manifests itself in such words as “retirement” and “private means”. Now when one reaches the age of sixty-five he “retires” which means he stops reporting to his regular job but in no sense means that he can continue his lifestyle.

When I was a boy, “retirement” meant amassing so much wealth, that one never had to work again. You could retire only if you were rich. The only people who had pensions were a few veterans, some schoolteachers, and railroad workers. Even then, the word pension came usually accompanied by the adjective “small” or “miserable.”

Along the years since, I heard that people thought that from somewhere I had “an independent income,” as though I got dividends from some stocks somewhere or was bequeathed a large sum. This always amused me and it did no good to deny the rumor.

Until well past the age of sixty, I never had enough cash in the bank to meet living expenses for three or four months. However, I always kept my credit clear, and even in 1960 still had a good Dun and Bradstreet rating [for my businesses].

I often heard it said that So-And-So has “private means”, indicating that he was left the income from some business, owns lands and buildings from which rents flow, or is married to someone whose family regularly sends a fat check, or has a hundred thousand dollars cached away. I found [this myth] flatly untrue and even heard suspect of me.

Yet every man builds an estate, some little equity in a house on which the mortgage is not fully paid off, some [portable asset] (books, paintings, furniture, jewelry) that might be sold in an emergency, or some other gain. All of this could be wiped out instantly by an accident leading to a lawsuit, by an illness beyond all insurance coverage, or other family problem. My income remains quite adequate, barring some catastrophic illness or some big lawsuit arising from an accident.

We now save a good portion of the income, because our needs are not what they were when creating a home and raising a family. We have almost every essential appliance we need. We needed only to secure replacements. The house was bought when the market was low; its current tax appraised value is almost three and a half times what we paid. We could pay off the relatively small remaining mortgage from our savings.

Side Studies

I became a member of an informal dinner-discussion group in 1974 known as the *Quien Sabe Club*, which met at members' homes, and in the late spring, I had them to the house one evening.



Figure 7 - On Acoma Pueblo Mesa – 1977

In 1980, I did some research to write up the story of First Lt. Benjamin Franklin Rittenhouse, who commanded Battery D, 5th US Artillery, on Little Round Top in the battle of Gettysburg on July 2, 1863.

On May 11, 1984, we wanted to hold some sort of an open house affair to commemorate the 50th anniversary of my first salaried job in the book business, back when I worked at the Smolin bookshop in New York City. About thirty people came to the house.

Travels With Charlotte 1975-1987

Charlotte and I went to Europe: 1977 to London and Paris; 1983 to London, 1985 to London and Amsterdam, [and 1989 to Spain. Two of our trips to Europe appear in the chapter *Bookman in London/Paris 1977* and the chapter *Bookman in Spain 1989*.]

Charlotte was at T-VI, doing more and more substitute teaching, and with only two weeks' vacation in late August 1975. We could get away for only one-week's travel, so headed up to:

- Aspen, CO
- Rifle, CO
- Park Service camp at Lodore on the Green River in Dinosaur National Monument
- on through Brown's Park to Rock Springs
- west through Green River (stopping at the island where John Wesley Powell launched his boats on their epic trip [through the Grand Canyon]),
- Fort Bridger
- Jackson Hole, WY
- Grand Tetons, WY



Charlotte - 1977

We carried our Mt. Rainier tent and sleeping bags and camped out, with a couple of nights spent in motels to rest our stiffened bones. On the way back, we stopped for dinner at the Broadmoor Hotel outside of Colorado Springs.

We visited the Great Sand Dunes on a trip in March 1975, partly through that same country, when I represented UNM press at a booth at the Denver Book Fair. We stopped at Buena Vista and then up through South Park. Charlotte stayed for a couple of days in Denver and then flew back to Albuquerque, while I stayed until the end of the Book Fair.

The high point in 1977 was our trip to Europe in my 65th year. We took a 17-day package tour of Trans World Airlines [TWA, now defunct] the last week of March and the first week of April, spending about one week in London and one week in Paris.

We enjoyed it immensely, although I had the grandfather of all colds that hit its peak when we reached Paris, so that Charlotte did most of the sightseeing. I spent a great deal of time in bookshops in both places and wrote a [chapter] of that experience.

In late spring 1977, just after the trip to Europe, we went to El Paso and then to Fort Davis, Texas, to visit Ed and Sophie Bartholomew. On the 4th of July long weekend, we went up to Salida, Colorado, and took a jeep tour of some nearby ghost towns, then went to Gunnison, Montrose, and back home through Ouray and Silverton.

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In 1980, we drove to Los Angeles to attend an antiquarian book fair.

- Drove old Highway 66 via Flagstaff, Needles, and Barstow to Tustin, California
- In Los Angeles, we saw where we once lived on 59th Place near Normandie. The old small house was gone and a similar one was built at the front of the lot
- Returned via Indio, Blythe, Wickenburg, Phoenix, Tucson, Tombstone, Deming

We repaired the 1972 Dodge Dart rather than buy a new car, because we could make repairs at intervals for cash and could not afford a new car. We had some dents removed, a door replaced and the car painted in a slightly darker gray than the original color. We bought a new set of tires and then new tie rods (in fact a fully new front-end) put in. We had the front seat reupholstered, where a bad split had developed. We had a new manual gearshift linkage installed. The motor needs some work, but the car at 110,000 miles is otherwise quite good.

The major purchase in 1981 was a used 6-cylinder white Dodge Dart four-door car, bought for full cash. It was a 1974 model with some mileage left, so that between both the 1972 Dart and used 1974 Dart we might expect perhaps another ten years' driving.

We took a few 1981 trips, all by auto,

- Santa Fe (several times)
- Canyon de Chelly [Navajo Nation]
- Tucson, AZ
- Farmington, NM where I gave a talk for the Friends of the Public Library;
- Portales, NM to attend a library dedication
- Las Cruces for a meeting at New Mexico State University

In 1982, the new *Albuquerque Museum of Natural History* organized its first field trip, a busload to the [Bosque del Apache] bird refuge below San Antonio, New Mexico. We had a pleasant day.

We made another trip to London in 1983 via TWA airlines from Albuquerque to Dallas and then non-stop to Gatwick airport with a short train ride to Victoria station. The first week was spent at book fairs and at the major bookshops of Quaritch, Maggs, and others. We bought few books, most of them in the price range of \$100-\$800, and were unable to spend all our funds! The books were that scarce in our field of Western Americana.

We took some side trips visiting

- Cardiff castle and Caerphilly castle
- Canterbury to visit the cathedral,
- York to visit all bookshops
- bus tour of the hill country celebrated in the books by James Herriot

In 1983,

- I gave two lectures to an evening class on Western American literature hosted by the University of Albuquerque.
- Roswell to speak at a writers' forum sponsored by the public library

By 1984, our oldest Dodge Dart, bought new in 1972, was having many annoying small breakdowns, being 137,000 miles "old." Therefore, we got a brand-new 1984 Honda Accord 4-door. We put on a crash program of [Antiquarian Book] work, got out Catalog #60, and with the receipts paid cash for the car in August. We sold the old 1972 Dart for \$300 but kept the 1974 white Dart [which we bought used in 1981].

Our 1984 trips were within New Mexico: twice to Las Cruces, twice to Santa Fe, and once to Roy, NM to pick up [my book] catalogs.

In 1987, we bought a brand new 1987 Honda Accord for Charlotte's use. The declining dollar might not have raised fares, but overseas costs for hotel, taxis, meals, and books were 34% higher. We drove to a Denver book fair in 1987 stopping for one of those memorable meals in the Penrose Room at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs.

[We toured Spain in 1989 as our last major trip, Charlotte and I were planning a long trip to Greece and surrounding islands possibly in 1990. We spent 1989 buying tourbooks and roadmaps to plan our driving schedule but health issues brought that dream to a halt.]

Comfort Food

I learned a curious thing about diet and tastes. When one has lived for so many years on beans, biscuits, baked potatoes, and pancakes, few fancy dishes can take their place.

When I yearn for a good, satisfying meal, I go back to those basics. We tried rich foods, so it is not from ignorance that we choose such [basic] fare. I am talking not of peaks. I am talking of everyday routine when I say that old, familiar things are best.

Of course, this is not to deny the pleasures of fine dining. One of our favorite restaurants is the Penrose Room atop the tower at the Broadmoor Hotel near Colorado Springs. The surroundings, service, and ambience of the Rockies seen through the windows, all add an exquisite pleasure to any meal.

In London, we enjoyed Lockett's, a very old restaurant. A skilled waiter deftly divided a Dover sole, removed the bones entire, and served the fish at our tableside, with each other dish and bit of service perfect.

Health

[Prior to 1969, most health issues dealt with our children or seasonal colds. Our annual newsletters began now to list issues that were more serious for ourselves.]

My Health

In late 1974, I had an eye examination for stronger glasses. I developed a cataract on my left eye in 1975 but decided to do nothing about it until the right eye should decline, although it is still good. By year's end, I found it difficult to drive at night. [After wearing thick coke-bottle type glasses,] I had a cataract operation on the left eye in 1978. In May 1984, I had the cataract removed from my right eye. In November, I passed the vision test for my driver's license [wearing normal glasses].

In 1975, I had a comprehensive physical examination by Dr. Armin Rembe. [Dr. Rembe had become Anne's diabetic care doctor in High School.] I had the works, X-rays, electrocardiogram, blood test, and a general going-over. Rembe pronounced me in general good health with blood pressure especially good.

However, my teeth were meeting the casualty of age, and by 1976, I took the first steps for partial plates and bridges. It became evident by 1987 that I needed full dentures.

We started energetically in 1979 but by mid-May, I fell into a lethargy believed caused by my appendix, for I had an upsurge [in energy] after my appendectomy in October.

In 1983, I had a painful swelling of the left foot, diagnosed as gout. I went back for a physical examination and blood test to see if the cause was "diabetic or chemical." The cause was too much uric acid produced and a prescription brought the uric acid down to normal. The physical showed no diabetes, no prostate trouble, very good blood pressure, and a clean electrocardiogram. The gout did not return.

Charlotte's Health

Charlotte had a left thyroid lobectomy operation in 1979 [which Anne also needed later].

In late 1980, she had an operation for a deviated septum and was home the same day. Her nose and nasal area was painfully sensitive but by year-end almost back to normal.

In 1982, Charlotte had a cataract operation on her left eye. From the March operation until December 31, she could not read well. At first, she tried a long-period soft contact lens, but minor irritation kept this lens from working well. After tests for allergies, she changed to using a lens removed at the end of each day. She got supplementary spectacles that made it possible to read. It was a long nine months.

X-rays in 1983 indicated her gall bladder was filled with large gallstones, and removal of the gall bladder was indicated at an early date. Charlotte went on a stringent diet to lose weight in preparation and awaited any further attack. By year's end, there had been no further trouble and an operation in January 1984 removed the gall bladder. She recovered readily.