

Method Three - Memoirs

My oldest daughter Rochelle was eleven when she read *Boyhood Musings*. Stories about growing up in rural Mississippi transformed her granddaddy into a mischievous boy playing with clothespin pistols, picking blackberries and attending revivals in the Deep South. He told of bootleggers, swiping watermelons and his family as one of the first in the community to get a toilet that flushes. Rochelle was accustomed to popular movies with sequels and she wanted to know, “When is Granddaddy coming out with *Boyhood Musings Two*?”

Years later when he wrote about the second chapter of his life, *My Life as Preacher, Teacher and Writer*, it provided insight into how his life evolved from his plan to God’s plan. Had he not written his story, it’s not something I would have thought to ask, at least not until it was too late.

Once Upon a Farm is another memoir on my bookshelf written by Fern Harrington Miles and her siblings. I came to know Fern when she was in her late eighties. Their book is another perspective of growing up in the Midwest during the same era as my dad.

My favorite book by Fern is *Captive Community*. Living in Japanese-occupied China, she and the other missionaries, teachers and laborers were sent to the Philippines for safety, only to be taken prisoner by the Japanese. Horrific living conditions, torture and hunger were daily challenges that plagued them. I never looked at Fern quite the same after reading about them eating an unsuspecting fellow prisoner’s cat to avoid starvation.

Fern wrote of her self-pity and questioned why God would send her to China and then allow this to happen. Feeling abandoned by God and her country, her spirit was weakened. Falling for the Deceiver’s lies Fern determined everything she had believed about the existence of a God was a lie. One lonely evening while watching the sunset God revealed Himself to Fern fulfilling His promise He would never leave Fern nor forsake her.

Fern returned to the States after the war and later returned as a missionary to the Philippines for 35 years. Fern lived out her life with courage and faith. Her words confirm we are all tested, but God is forever faithful.

Writing about your own life is entertaining, enlightening and encouraging to future generations. Bob Greene and D.G. Fulford in their book, *To Our Children’s Children* presented it this way, “If you had to write a note—one note—and leave it propped against the sugar bowl on your kitchen table for generations to read, what would you say in that note?” There are numerous books on the market to help you preserve your family history. In the Appendices you will find a list of my favorites.

Your memoir doesn’t have to be a book – write a note.