

# Growing Up in Arlington, Virginia

## (Part 2)

BY CHARLES F. SUTER

### *The 1920s*

I delivered milk around the neighborhood by pony cart and later by auto. The first pony cart was a one seater, with space for two passengers. I managed to go too fast around the curve in Glebe Road in front of the Weaver farm, between 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Streets. The right wheel went off the hard surface and into the ditch, breaking the axle. The cart was wrecked and another used one bought. This had seats for four, two on each side. You entered from the back. I would call on some of the local girls and take them for rides.

I often rode with Betty Rose Sutton, whose home is now the monastery at the east end of 25<sup>th</sup> Street North, named Missionhurst. It was then Lyonhurst, named by Frank Lyon who named many places after himself! Betty Rose had a palomino pony. Her cousin, Elizabeth Gideon, who lived on Glebe Road where the Ballston Common shopping center is now located, had a horse and sometimes joined us. My best friend, Turner Smith, often borrowed a small horse from Tom Weaver and rode with us. We rode all over the area north of Lee Highway, including Franklin Park and Chesterbrook.

When our cow needed to be bred, I would lead her behind the pony cart up Little Falls Road to what is now Lexington Street, then called Blue Stone Road, and across Lee Highway to the Lothrop farm on Wilson Boulevard. At other times I would lead the cow only as far as the Saegmuller farm on Little Falls Road. Both farms had Jersey bulls. A day or two later I would reverse the procedure and lead the cow home after the farm superintendent had phoned to say that the cow had been bred.

When either Twilight or Prince had to be shod, I took them to the blacksmith shop near the Falls Church. After I had gone away to college Twilight was put to sleep because of her advanced age.

In addition to riding Twilight, I rode my bicycle all over North Arlington. There was a small store near Walker's Chapel and I'd ride the mile or so to buy a stick of candy or to the Country Club Market to get a soft drink, usually Lynola, or a penny's worth of licorice. Once Turner Smith and I rode Glebe Road to Chain Bridge, Canal Road to Key Bridge, and Lee Highway and Glebe Road to our homes, about eight miles, I think.

When I was ten or twelve I sold the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Country Gentleman* and *Ladies Home Journal*, all well known magazines published by the Curtis Publishing Company. I delivered the magazines to my customers each week, either

by bicycle or pony. I also sold seeds for the American Seed Company, of Lancaster, Pa., for five cents a packet.

We had happy family picnics near Chain Bridge, where Pimmitt Run empties into the Potomac River, and also at a place on Kirby Road where the road forded a small creek which was fun to wade in. Once in a while my father took us to Ft. Myer

to watch a polo game. Ft. Myer was a cavalry post and there were always horses there. Occasionally, I would watch with awe as a mounted cavalryman or two would ride down our road. Usually, they were searching for prisoners who had escaped from the brig at Ft. Myer or from the Arlington County jail.

Throughout my childhood I did many things because my brother, five years older, did them. That applied to collecting stamps, a hobby which we both continued throughout our lives. It is a very educational hobby. From it I learned a lot of geography, the monetary units of various countries, something about their famous men, and even a few words of many languages.

Merle had a Lionel electric train, which I eventually inherited. In addition to having an oval track on which the train ran around, often we ran the track all over the second floor from room to room. We used spools as people and colored them to indicate men, women, children and soldiers.

Another game Merle invented involved our making railroad cars and people out of paper. We had a paper car for just about all the W&OD cars, numbered the same as the real cars. We did the same for Pennsylvania Railroad cars. On my trips to New York and Dorset [Vermont], with my aunt I would write down the numbers of cars and locomotives and the names of Pullman and dining cars I saw. When I returned home I would make cars for those I had seen on my trip.

We cut paper into little squares and marked a stripe across the top of each them with crayon to indicate man, woman, child and soldier. On the soldiers, we marked chevrons and stars to indicate their rank. A red stripe across the top indicated an artilleryman, a yellow stripe a cavalryman, a blue stripe an infantryman, using the actual colors that these types of soldiers wore on their real uniforms. Sometimes we would put these "people" on our paper cars so they could travel. At other times we would line up our soldiers in formation. I spent hours and hours playing with the paper cars and people. After I had left them all over my bedroom and the upstairs hall floor for a couple of days, my mother made me pick them up.

We also had a few outdoor wooden and metal trucks which we played with in and near the sandbox in the backyard. We had no radio or television to

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amuse us so most of our play involved games we made up. We did have plenty of reading materials, books and such magazines as *St. Nicholas*, *The National Geographic* and *Boy's Life*.

My Uncle Charles played golf as young man. He gave me a hard rubber tee which was used to tee up your ball on the bare clay tees of 1920s golf courses. In those days, there was a bucket of wet sand at each tee for the golfer to use in making a mound on which to tee up his ball before driving it. The rubber tee was an alternative to making a sand tee. Uncle Charles also gave me two golf balls which I treasured for years. Instead of the dimples golf ball covers now have, one had little knobs covering its entire surface. The other had little squares instead of dimples. I don't know what became of those balls.

Among my prized childhood possessions were a collection of baseball cards with pictures of famous players of the 1910-1930 period, including Babe Ruth, Tris Speaker, Ty Cobb, Rube Marquard, Everett Scott, Honus Wagner, Ed Roush, Lou Gehrig, Stanley Covaleski, Joe Judge, Sam Rice, Walter Johnson, Firpo Marbury and many others. They would be worth a small fortune today. I read recently that a Honus Wagner card had sold for \$1.1 million!

I also had an almost complete collection of Indian head pennies. I think my mother gave away my various collections when I went away to college.

I think the same can be said for a small blue hardback book which had been given to me by Uncle Charles. It was titled "The Story of King Alfred." In the front there was a chart showing Alfred the Great's descent from Adam. My uncle had extended this to show my descent from King Alfred and also from Charlemagne and Rob Roy MacGregor. This descent was indicated by lines he had drawn which indicated the number of generations between the persons listed. I do not know where Uncle Charles obtained the specifics of this chart but it was interesting. I wish I still had it. I used to brag to my classmates that I could trace my ancestry back to Adam!

In the 1920s we took family vacations to Mt. Sterling, Pa. in the Pocono Mountains, Dorset, Vt., Berryville, Va. where my father was born, Larchmont, N.Y., where Uncle Charles had a pastorate before he went to China, the Sesquicentennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1926 and the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad Centennial in Baltimore, which I think was a year or two later. I remember being very thirsty at one of these expositions. There were no water fountains. My father finally bought me a "near beer," 3% alcohol beer that was available during Prohibition. I didn't like the taste but it was a pretty good thirst quencher.

About 1926 my parents built a tennis court for Merle and me on the front portion of what had been the barnyard. We were responsible for the court's maintenance—keeping the lines marked with lime, the net slack when it was not in use, and removing the weeds as they grew. We had several neighborhood friends who

came to play with us. The big problem with the court was that the area was not quite large enough. The backstops were too close to the base line so that balls hitting near the line would bounce over the top of the backstop into the street or the barnyard.

Merle and I slept on the sleeping porch at Sunnyside, now 4903 N. Rock Spring Road. In the winter, we slept on feather mattresses covered by a down quilt known as a "duvee." Our mother would warm our beds before we got into them by means of "pigs." These were glazed pottery containers which were filled with hot water though a hole on the side which had a rubber stopper. They were pushed toward the foot of the bed, between the feather mattress and the duvee, to warm the place our feet would be. The pigs would stay warm for several hours. That was good sleeping!

Merle caddied occasionally at the Washington Golf & Country Club nearby. He once caddied for President Woodrow Wilson. Several boys we knew who lived farther away from the club used to ride to our house on weekends and leave their bicycles while they caddied.

### *Friends School*

When I was attending Friends School, my aunts Mary and Fanny Suter lived in an apartment at 1800 Eye Street, NW, diagonally across the street from the school. Sometimes I would visit them on my lunch hour or after school. I remember being taken to their apartment after having had my tonsils removed at Children's Hospital. They had a "player piano" which played music recorded on paper rolls with holes in them which produced the different notes. (This is not a technical explanation, of course.) I liked to pump the pedals and play classical music, especially that which had storm effects.

I knew quite a few children whose fathers were diplomats from other countries. I remember two sisters whose father, Mr. Sze, was the minister from China, which did not have an ambassador at that time. Another girl was the daughter of the ambassador from Japan, Mr. Matsudaira. Good friends and classmates were Ricardo Pueyredon and Fred Wroblewski, whose fathers were the ambassadors from Argentina and Poland. I remember going to play at the Argentine embassy one afternoon after school. I have often wondered what became of them in view of the political instability in their countries. I was impressed with the autos which arrived after school to pick up Friends School students—Packards, Pierce Arrows, Rolls Royces and one electric car. My family had a Ford.

### *Dorset*

From the time I was eight or nine until I was sixteen, I spent my summers in Dorset, Vt. with my mother's older sister, Elizabeth Carhart. During the school year

she taught French at Central High School in Washington. She owned three cottages in Dorset and rented two every summer, living in whichever one she did not rent.

Getting to Dorset from Arlington was quite a journey. The train ride from Washington to New York was hot and dirty. This was before the days of air conditioning, so the car windows were open to let air in. They also let in cinders from the steam engine, so you were pretty grimy when you got to your destination. It was a great day when the Pennsylvania Railroad was electrified from Washington to New York and you did not have to contend with the cinders.

After Aunt Elizabeth and I arrived in New York after a 5½ hour train ride, we took a taxicab from the Pennsylvania Station to the dock of the Hudson River Navigation Company, I believe at the foot of Desbrosses Street. The boat would leave about 6 PM, sail up the Hudson River to 125<sup>th</sup> Street to pick up additional passengers, and then continue on to Albany, where we arrived in the morning. We had breakfast aboard while the boat continued on the few miles to Troy. We then took another cab to the Rutland Railroad Station. I think the train ride to Manchester, Vt. took about two or three hours. We were met there by Charlie Wade, a Dorset man who operated a “jitney” service. After a stop at a grocery store in Manchester, Mr. Wade drove us the seven miles to Dorset and to Aunt Elizabeth’s house. The entire trip took more than 24 hours and all the forms of transportation then in use.

My first driver’s license was issued by the state of Vermont. Aunt Elizabeth had a friend who owned a LaSalle sedan (made by Cadillac). She had no regular driver in the summer, so when I was 13 or 14, this lady paid me fifty cents to take three or four ladies for a one or two hour drive about once a week. None of the ladies knew how to drive, so I obtained a Vermont driver’s license, without any test of any kind. Later, when I applied for a Virginia license, I did not have to take a test because I already had a license issued by another state.

### *The Teens*

When I was 13 or 14 my mother arranged for me to take dancing classes at the Neighborhood [House] just down the street from our home. On the first day another boy and I jumped out the window. Unfortunately, I never went back. By the time I was a junior in high school I often wished that I had had dancing lessons.

While I do not remember when I learned to drive an automobile, I know that it was our family’s Ford that I first drove. The early Fords had three foot pedals. The left was the clutch that had to be pushed in to get the car in gear to move. When you released the clutch the car was in second or driving gear. The middle pedal put the car into reverse. The right pedal was the brake. There was no accelerator on the

floor. You pulled down on a lever on the right side of the steering column to “give it gas” and pushed it up when you wanted to slow down. Before accelerators became standard equipment, sometime in the mid-1920s, it was possible to have a foot accelerator installed but I don’t believe we had one until they became standard.

Some of the neighborhood boys, including Merle and I, used to play ball in the field behind our property. At one time we buried a coffee can and used to hit golf balls toward a makeshift green, alternately hitting from our yard and from that of the Byrnes family who lived across the tracks.

In 1923 Merle won a Ford touring car at a raffle conducted in connection with the sale of building lots about a half mile from our home, in the area which came to be known as Garden City because there had been two nurseries in the area in earlier years. Since Merle was not old enough to drive, my father sold the car for him for \$350, its retail value.

Merle built the first radio our family had and, with a little help from him, I built one which won me a suit as first prize in a contest sponsored by a Washington men’s clothing store, Parker Bridget & Co.

About 1927 Turner Smith, Bob Beck and I organized the Jewell Athletic Club. Besides “the triumvirate,” as we called ourselves, the members included Kenneth Byrnes, Jack Williams, John Busick and a few others. I became a dealer for the Draper-Maynard Company so as to be able to buy our basketball uniforms at the dealer’s price, 50% of retail. I think we had about seven boys with uniforms. We had no court on which to practice but we somehow got permission to play at the American University gymnasium in Washington. We played a few other groups of boys and also played the McLean High School team at their gym and Washington-Lee High School at that school. When we played the high school teams we brought in a ringer, either a fellow who was on the Western High School team or one who was the best player on the W-L team.

We played baseball in the field opposite the Country Club Market against a couple of teams from other parts of the county. For baseball, we had to recruit enough players for each game. Sometimes they came from some distance away and were quite a bit older than our Jewell A.C. members.

To raise money for our uniforms we held dances at the Neighborhood House. We paid a four piece combo \$12 for playing three hours. I don’t remember whether we paid anything to the church for the use of the building. A neighbor on Rock Spring Road, John Ransdell, owned one of the largest printing companies in Washington. Somehow I had the courage to ask him to print tickets for our first dance. When I received them I was surprised at how nice they looked—heavy blue stock with gold flecks. He had no children and never charged us for tickets that his company printed, very small jobs for a large company.

A couple of times the Rock Spring Road Boys, which included those in the Jewell A.C., played the boys from Franklin Park in football. The latter team included the two Hunter boys, Jack Burns, Ted Rohrer, two Sweeneys and I don't recall who else. There was a story about Ted Rohrer who lived next to the Hunters in Franklin Park. It seems he asked Richard Hunter to lend him some tennis shoes. Richard replied that he had lent him some the year before. Ted's reply was that those were worn out.

### *High School*

During summer vacations from high school and college, Merle and I both worked as house painters for various friends of our family. It took all of one summer for both of us to paint our parents' house. If we heard fire engines nearby, we put down our paint, jumped in Merle's car, and rushed off to see where the fire was. The Hall's Hill Volunteer Fire Department, made up of black men, usually reached the fires ahead of the fire departments from Cherrydale and East Falls Church. Once, Merle and I arrived at a blazing house in Chesterbrook right on the heels of the Hall's Hill firemen and before the other fire departments. There wasn't much any of them could do except watch the flames and keep the fire from spreading.

I think that it was in 1928 or 1929 that two friends from Arlington, Turner Smith and McLean Smith (no relation to Turner) drove to Dorset. The three of us then drove to Montreal. When we started back the next day we had with us several bottles of Canadian beer which we had purchased perfectly legally but which we were concerned about having because of the prohibition of alcoholic liquors in this country. We put the beer under a tarp below several rolls of toilet paper so that when the customs agents inspected our car they would see the toilet paper first. They passed us through without any questions.

Our next stop was Mt. Mansfield, the highest mountain in Vermont. We spent the night at a shelter near the top. There we met several fellows who told us about a nearby cave. The next day we were part of a group of five or six who explored the cave. We had to make ladders out of pine trees to get down a couple of levels. The Burlington paper carried a story about us the next day, identifying us as three fellows from Virginia, "Turner, Mac and Charlie." That was a fun trip. We hiked a couple of days before heading home to Virginia.

In the summer of 1928, Turner Smith invited me to go on a double date with him to play tennis with two girls he knew, Mary and Peggie Fitch, who lived at Hickory Hill in Langley. My first date with Peggie did not go well. Neither of us cared for the other.

However, several months later my Aunt Mary, my father's older sister, who was active in the local chapters of the Daughters of the American Revolu-

tion and the Colonial Dames, drafted me to dance the minuet with other teenagers in a program sponsored by the Colonial Dames. Peggie's grandmother Parham drafted her for the same purpose. When we met for the second time, we had something in common. We both were unhappy with our elders. Neither of us relished putting on a colonial costume and dancing with kids we didn't know. Since neither of us knew any of the other members of the cast, we became friends. We drank Coca Colas together in the balcony of the Washington Auditorium (at 19<sup>th</sup> & New York Avenue, NW) while other parts of the program were being rehearsed.

From that time on, we dated all through high school. Peggie attended Western High School in Georgetown, from which both her parents had graduated, while I attended Eastern High School at the opposite end of the city. I was excused from the last class period because I lived so far from school. I took the streetcar from its Lincoln Park terminus to the other end of the line in Georgetown, about a half hour's ride, then walked down the steep hill on 36<sup>th</sup> Street to M Street. I met Peggie at Moskey's Drug Store in the 3400 block of M Street, opposite the end of the Key Bridge. We shared 5 cent Cokes while we waited for her bus to take her to Langley. If my bus came earlier than hers, I usually waited for the next one to leave after hers had departed.

Our dates were movies, high school fraternity or class dances, high school football, basketball and baseball games, or double dates at some friend's home where we would dance to records or play bridge. After dances we usually ended up at the Hot Shoppes to get a "frosted A&W," which was a float made of ice cream and A&W root beer, sold only at the Marriott Hot Shoppes. Sometimes we went to Child's Restaurant at 14<sup>th</sup> & New York Ave., where we were sure to run into others we knew.

When there was snow on the ground, I borrowed my father's car and drove to Langley to pick up Peggie. Then we would go sleigh riding at the Washington Golf & Country Club. Frequently, half a dozen of us would end up at the Sutton's house for cookies and hot chocolate.

### *The Depression Years*

The stock market crash of 1929 did not affect my parents greatly but it affected their brothers and sisters. My mother's sister, Elizabeth, had lived with us for several years. At one time she taught French at Central High School in Washington. I don't know why she stopped. While living with us, she did private tutoring. Among her students were the teenage sons of President Coolidge and General Pershing, our top World War I general. These young men would arrive by chauffeured limousine for an hour's tutoring. The drivers would remain with their cars in our driveway. I would admire the cars.

Some time after Aunt Elizabeth came to stay with us, my mother's younger sister, Anna, came also. At times she also had been a tutor. She had been employed for quite a few years as a full time church visitor by a large Presbyterian church in New York City. She had lost most all of her assets in a bank failure. Uncle Charles was retired and had lost a substantial portion of his assets in the stock market crash in 1929 but he helped out both of his unmarried sisters. He apologized to me that he could not give me the trip to Europe as a college graduation present which he had [more or] less promised when I was in high school.

Along about 1930 my father's brother, Uncle Alex, lost his job as manager of the Jefferson Hotel in Washington. He came to live with us while his wife and daughter went to live with Uncle Charles and Aunt Alfreda in Chevy Chase. So, while my parents were sending me to college, they had three extra people to house and feed. The two aunts had their own bedrooms but Uncle Alex, Merle and I shared Merle's room and slept in what we called "the dormitory," a room on the back of the house which originally had been an open porch. Of course, part of the time Merle was away at college and then in the fall of 1930 I left for college. Eventually, the aunts were able to move out and Uncle Alex's wife, Aunt Mabel, got a job managing an apartment house. Aunt Elizabeth was still living with my family when I was married in 1933, however.

Ford Shroder, who had become my close friend during my summers in Dorset, lived with my family during the 1929-30 school year. He had attended the Hoosac School in New York State but his mother thought it would be a good idea for him to spend a year with us and bring up his grades before going to college. He attended Western High School.

The depression brought a major upheaval in the life of the Fitch family. After World War I Charles W. Fitch had gone into the real estate business with his wife's uncle, Frank Lyon. The firm of Lyon & Fitch developed Lyon Park and Lyon Village in Arlington. After living in Lyon Park near his office, in the early 1920s the Fitch family moved to Hickory Hill, an historic house at Langley, near McLean. In early 1930 Frank Lyon told Mr. Fitch that the business could no longer support two families.

Using his World War I contacts, Mr. Fitch obtained a job as Assistant Director of Exhibits at the Chicago World's Fair, named "A Century of Progress." The president of the fair was Rufus Dawes, whose brother, Gen. Charles G. Dawes, had been Vice President of the United States under President Calvin Coolidge. The general manager, Maj. Lennox Lohr, the Director of Exhibits, Col. John Sewall, and Col. Fitch all had served in the U.S. Army in Europe under Gen. Dawes. At the fair they all were addressed by their military titles. Col. Sewall's wife was the former Agnes Lyon, sister of both Frank Lyon and

Mary Lyon Parham, Mr. Fitch's mother-in-law, so the Fitches had both military and family connections to the top management of the fair.

In the spring of 1930 the Fitches set off by car for their new life in Chicago. Ford Shroder and I drove the two girls, Mary and Peggie, as far as Rockville, Md., where they transferred to the family car for the rest of the journey.

For the next three years Peggie and I wrote letters to each other almost every day.

Merle graduated from Washington & Lee University in 1930 with a degree in electrical engineering and soon thereafter went to work for the General Electric Company in Schenectady, N.Y. After his graduation, my mother and father and I drove about fifty miles from Lexington to Bedford, Va. where my father had lived in his early teens. We stayed a night or two with the Nichols family on their farm. The father, Rob Nichols, had been my father's best friend when my grandfather was rector of the Episcopal Church in Bedford. The Nicholsons had at least four children, two boys and two girls. The daughter my age was my guest at a W&L football game and dance a couple of years later. Ford Shroder and I visited the Nichols girls once or twice while we were at W&L.

### *College*

When I graduated from Eastern High School in 1930, I received a \$100 scholarship to Washington & Lee University. I believe every accredited high school was allowed to offer such a scholarship in those days. I do not know whether Merle received one also. It was helpful in paying the \$325 annual tuition, which was raised to \$350 in my second year. At the end of the second year I was awarded another \$100 "departmental scholarship." Each department gave one. I thought I might get the one awarded by the Political Science Department because I had all As in that subject and was on very good terms with the department head, so I was surprised when I learned that I had been awarded the Spanish departmental scholarship. I learned that the Spanish Department was senior to the Political Science Department so I was awarded the scholarship of the first department which had selected me.

I believe my parents sent me a monthly allowance of \$60 to cover my meals, room, laundry, books and incidentals. It was adequate although I certainly wasn't "rolling in money." I know it was a hardship for them to come up with the \$100 needed for my fraternity initiation fee. I became the treasurer of the local chapter of Pi Kappa Alpha. I think that gave me a free room. My friend, Charlie Pritchard, was house manager. We had some kind of deal where we shared the financial benefits of our offices.

In the summer of 1931, I painted houses in the daytime and attended summer school at George Washington University from 5 to 8 PM, taking courses

in Ancient History and Economics. The next summer, in 1932, Peggie's father, who was Assistant Director of Exhibits at the Chicago World's Fair, arranged for me to have a job as a cashier at the fair. I was one of seven young fellows who were stationed at the three entrances to the fair grounds to collect a 10 cent admission fee from every person entering the grounds who did not have an employee pass. The idea was for people to see the World's Fair under construction. Some of the buildings were far out architecturally for that day. One day I thought I was going to be mobbed by a threatening crowd of unemployed men who wanted to apply for jobs. They were incensed at having to pay 10 cents to get into the grounds to go to the employment office to apply for a job. Many didn't have 10 cents in their pockets.

I was fortunate in having Peggie's parents allow me to stay at their apartment during both the summers of 1932 and 1933. Her grandmother, Mrs. Parham, went away in the summer and I occupied her room.

During her spring vacation in 1932, Peggie came to Arlington to visit. I took her to Lexington where we attended a W&L dance. My landlady provided her a room. By this time we were much in love and both assumed we would be married as soon as I finished college. I don't think I ever proposed marriage. It just seemed inevitable to both of us—and I think to our parents also!

I did not attend my college graduation ceremony in May 1933. I had my diploma mailed to me because I had a job waiting for me at the World's Fair, which opened in the spring of 1933. I was a sightseeing guide. I spent the days on open-sided, tractor-drawn buses which traveled through the fair grounds. I pointed out each of the buildings and told something about the exhibits in each. Many famous people rode my bus that summer, including several movie stars that I recognized. I made a game out of guessing from their accents what states my riders were from. By the end of the summer I was pretty good at distinguishing a Texas accent from, say, a North Carolina accent. I learned that summer that when someone asked where I was from I had to say Washington, D.C., not just Washington. Otherwise, they thought I was from the State of Washington.

That spring my friend Charlie Pritchard and I went to Chicago before classes were over to line up jobs. I learned that there were going to be jobs pushing sightseers around in wheel chairs and was able to arrange for Charlie Pritchard to be the supervisor of "chair guides" for the Daggett Wheelchair Company. When we returned to Lexington we recruited about six other members of our fraternity as chair guides. Several of them bought an old touring car for \$12 and drove it to Chicago, where it was stolen off the street within a couple of weeks. Ford Shroder was also a chair guide. His car was stolen that summer, too.

Peggie and I had a good time that summer. She worked at the fair selling souvenirs for a concessionaire. When our off hours coincided, we changed into

our swim suits, went down the back stairs of the apartment building, through an alley for a block or so and emerged on the Lake Michigan beach at 56<sup>th</sup> Street and South Shore Drive. In those days, all along the Chicago south shore there were beautiful beaches enjoyed by a lot of people but never overcrowded. It seemed fantastic to me to be able to be on the beach an hour after leaving work.

One day, when we both were off from work, we took an excursion by boat from Chicago to Benton Harbor, Michigan. While we were wandering around Benton Harbor killing time before the boat departed for the return trip across Lake Michigan to Chicago, we passed a jewelry store which had a display of engagement and wedding rings in the window. Peggie said "Let's go in." We ended up buying a wedding ring for \$5.00. When we got back home she put it on her finger and showed it off to her parents. They weren't sure whether we had eloped that day or whether she was just teasing. Before the end of that year she was wearing it all the time!

I read a few years ago that President Lyndon Johnson had paid \$2.00 for the ring he gave Ladybird when they were married, so I was a big spender compared to him.

### *Marriage*

I stayed with the Fitch family until I returned home in September. As soon as I got a job, at Julius Garfinckel & Company's store, Peggie and I made plans to get married. We were married by my uncle, Charles Carhart, at the Club of the Colonial Dames on New Hampshire Ave., NW, on the evening of November 25, 1933. Those attending were our parents, my Carhart aunts, Alfreda, Elizabeth and Anna, Peggie's two grandmothers, her aunt and uncle, Keith and Emily Parris, my brother, Betty Rose Sutton Menges, Peggie's best friend and matron of honor, and Ford Shroder, my best friend and best man.

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Charles F. Suter lived almost his entire life in Arlington. He was a charter member of the Arlington Historical Society and a member of the Arlington Chamber of Commerce and the Washington Golf and Country Club. He was a trustee and chair of the executive and building committees of the Rock Spring Congregational United Church of Christ before he moved to Charlottesville in 1994. He died there on December 3, 2001. This memoir, originally written for his children, duplicates to a large extent his oral history in the Virginia Room, Arlington Central Library. It is published by permission of his son, Dr. Charles F. Suter, Jr., who

lives and practices in Culpeper, VA. The first portion of the memoir, covering his childhood, was published in the last edition (Volume 12, No. 2) of the *Magazine*.

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