

# My Two Brothers

## PART ONE

James Virgil Taylor was born June 4, 1916, Charles Edward followed on October 26, 1918, and I, William Lloyd, arrived on July 12, 1928. My use of our full names is to indicate that our parents called all three of us by our middle names. We followed this practice throughout our lives, which occasionally presented minor problems in legal situations requiring our full names, or the common sequence of first name, middle initial. Our only sister, Mary Ann, joined us on April 1, 1931.

With Virgil and Ed just about 12 and 10 years older, I was truly the baby brother. I began first grade in 1934; the same fall they began their senior year in high school. They both had wavy hair – mine was straight. But I grew taller than they did.

My brothers were born in rural Winn Parish in central Louisiana. Our folks moved from the farm to the city of Shreveport in 1921; so the public school years for all four of us were in Shreveport,, the Caddo Parish school district.

Virgil had difficult early years: a high fever as an infant affected his eye muscles, so that his eyes did not track in perfect unison. Also, he apparently had an early low tolerance for milk, resulting in vitamin D deficiency rickets that caused some misshaping of his rib cage and spine. As a sickly child, he grew slowly; so he did not start to school until Ed did. Thus they were together in the same grades throughout their school years.

Ed became an outdoorsman: fishing and hunting with Dad, playing baseball in high school. Virgil was more the homebody and gadgeteer. If it were today, I am sure that Virgil would be a computer geek. He was fascinated with radio, had a short wave receiver, and placed an antenna wire all around the roof line of our house on Barbara Street. I remember his excitement in picking up a signal from South Africa one night.

They had guitars; Ed also played mandolin and Virgil harmonica. For a while they had a weekly 15-minute program, pickin' and singin' on radio station KWKH. Their theme song was *Down Yonder*. Some other titles that come to mind were: *Life Is*

*Like a Mountain Railroad, Silver Haired Daddy, Put My Little Shoes Away, Nashville Jail, and Empty Saddles*. In college Ed bought an accordion and learned to play and sing with it.

After graduating from high school, Ed worked for three years in a grocery store to earn money for college. In September 1938 he entered Bethany-Peniel College where he was active and popular, and the bass singer of a quartet with Bill Fisher, Allen Miller and Roy Parks. In 1942, his senior year he married Elaine Ramick, of El Dorado, Arkansas, shortly before being drafted into the Army Air Corps. His earnest hope was to enter pilot training, but he could get no birth certificate to prove that he was under age 26 when inducted. Instead he became a tail gunner and, later, Radar Countermeasure Operator in the B-24 heavy bomber. From bases in East Anglia, England he flew 36 missions over Germany – number 13 was their first to Berlin.

Meanwhile, Virgil was the janitor of our church and active in the NYPS (Young Peoples' Society). He tried desperately to enter the military service or some auxiliary arm of it, but could not qualify physically. It seemed that he had no other future.

It's an ill wind that blows no good. So goes a familiar saying. With the total mobilization for the war, Virgil did get a job with a local metal-fabrication firm involved in war projects. His duties included personnel and payroll records. He proved adept at this and fit well in the work force. There he learned of and qualified for a state rehabilitation program that encouraged and financed educational opportunities for persons with physical limitations.

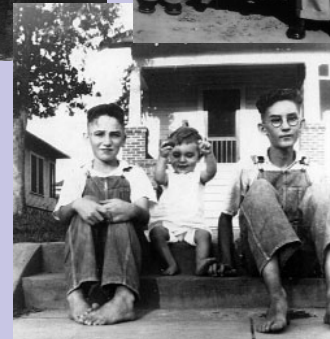
So Virgil and I left home for college, traveling by train, west to Fort Worth and then north to Oklahoma City. Ed met us at the station and we rode to Bethany on the

famed *Interurban*, a light rail car that ran through Bethany and on west to El Reno.

Thus, in gracious Providence, that September 1945 found the three of us enrolled in Bethany-Peniel College. Ed, at age 27, returned from the war to complete his degree; Virgil, at 29, and I, at 17, were freshmen.

We'll look into things there next time.

by Lloyd Taylor



Published by  
THE CENTER FOR LIFESTORY WRITING:

COVENANT GROUP

October 27, 2006

College

Church of the Nazarene  
Olathe, Kansas

66062

All rights reserved by the author.  
© Copyright 2006