

Muriel Louise Marvel [61334(10)711]



Muriel at Merville, Flanders, France

Muriel (Marvel) Smith [61334(10)711] dictated the following account: "When I look back on my life I was raised in the best and the worst of times. In 1935 the nation was still in a deep depression and I lived in Weldon, Illinois, a village of 500 poor but proud people. I was born on July 15, 1930 and was five years old when my Father, Dr. Wiley Robert Marvel [61334(10)71], set up practice in Weldon. My life was ideal, I played, went to Sunday school, attended Weldon Grade School and knew everybody in town. Our big old house gave me much room to explore when compared to the apartment in Memphis, Tennessee where dad had taken his internship. Of course I missed Rose, who had been my colored Nanny while mother worked but now, both Mother and Father were home most of the time because Father's office was on the second floor of our home. In the summers I would regularly make the trip to Chicago to visit my Grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. W. J. Marvel. I also made occasional trips to Kansas City, Missouri to visit my mother's uncle, Dr. and Mrs. Will Gist. My Mother had lived with the Gists while she was training to become a nurse.

Mrs. Cassie Reeves was my first and second grade teacher; Mrs. Hazel Wene my third, fourth, and fifth; and Mr. Earnest Wene my sixth and eighth. My seventh year was spent in Alahambra, California because Dad, who had enlisted in the Army Air Force Medical Corp, was in training. Sara (born in 1939), Mother and I had driven there to be with Dad. We moved in with my Aunt Virginia, Mother's sister, and lived there until Father was sent to the China-Burma-India (CBI) area. Then we drove back to Weldon which was an exciting experience considering the rationing of gas and tires and the age of our automobile. Soon dad returned to Weldon and was practicing medicine again. He had build a big house before leaving for the war and it was nice to be home again. In the summers the Weldon merchants would sponsor free movies every Wednesday night and on Saturday night a band concert would be held on Main



street. These were well attended by the local people and were great fun for a little girl.

I loved Nixon Township High School, and had a great time being a cheer-leader, working at King's grocery, dating, and taking piano and voice lessons. My college career, at Millikin in Decatur, was interrupted by my marriage to Robert Smith on October 2, 1949. Bob and I began our married life on a farm four miles west of Weldon and one-half mile north of route 10. We left farming and moved to Clinton early in 1953 where both of our children were born. Bob started to work for the University of Illinois as an electrician in 1958 and we moved to Champaign in 1959 and I returned to school. I received an Associate Degree from Parkland Community College and spent several years working for the Unit 4 School district in administration and in teaching. Robert's profession included considerable travel so I resigned from teaching so I could travel with Robert. We have been in every State in the United States and all of the Canadian Provinces boarding the United States, plus the Yukon. We have also visited the Marvell home place in Meldreth, Cambridgeshire, England, and the Marvel homesteads in Indiana, Kentucky, and Delaware. I have also visited the holy lands including Jordan and Egypt." Muriel was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Baptist Church.

Robert LeRoy Smith was born on November 13, 1926. At that time his parents were living with his grandmother and her husband on a farm located north of Argenta, Illinois one-half mile north the Shiloh School. His parents divorced and he was placed in the Bloomington Baby Fold when he was three years of age. He was taken to be raised by Frank and Martha (Tuggle) Reed. They lived on a farm two miles west of Birkbeck, Illinois. Robert attended Barngrover Grade School (one room), and Clinton Community High School. After the death of Martha, Frank remarried and found it necessary to return Robert to his natural father in 1941. He separated from his father during the summer of 1943. Robert graduated from Nixon Township High School in 1944. He enlisted in the Navy and became an Aviation Ordnanceman Third Class and was assigned to a PBM Squadron. He was discharged in July 1946. Returning from the navy he rented a farm belonging to Frank Reed. This farm was located one-half mile north of the state route # 10, four miles west of Weldon. Muriel joined him on the farm in 1949. The farming venture was unsuccessful and they moved to Clinton, Illinois in 1953. Robert was employed by several construction firms then began work in Decatur as an electrician. He was employed at the University of Illinois in 1958 as an electrician. Given the opportunity for education he started work towards an engineering degree but transferred to education. Robert passed the Professional Engineers exam in 1969 and received a Bachelor of Science degree in 1972 and a Master of Education degree in 1991. He began an academic career in 1975 as an Associate Professor of Architecture teaching lighting design. He retired in 1992. Many of his former students came to Champaign to celebrate his teaching career and presented him with a glass plaque etched with the following inscription:

As our teacher, you opened our eyes to knowledge and the opportunities it offers.  
As our friend, you shared the vision of our lives.  
As our leader, you gave us strength of character.  
As our mentor, you motivated and challenged a generation of light.  
We and countless others stand proud as a living testament to your  
accomplishments.  
We honor you with our commitment to reflect the light of your knowledge for  
generations to come.

A similar plaque was presented to Muriel for her important contribution.

Robert was an active member of the Illuminating Engineering Society of North America, serving on several national committees and a two year term as Regional Vice President, He received the award of Fellow in recognition of his contribution to the Society. He was a thirty-second degree Mason. Muriel and he were members of the Order of the Eastern Star. They compiled this, 1994, version of the Marvel History.

