

KWAJALEIN ISLAND

***How My Family Came to Live There and
How the Big Bombs Came to Blow***

Jean Barrett Holloway

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Jean Barrett Holloway

To military families



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On the Way to Paradise

When we navigate

do we move
toward the island
as it waits guarding its western tree
reaching up through drooping fruit
with all its moving creatures waiting
for dominion and for names
beyond the gates of its jeweled reefs
behind the apron of its sand?

Or do we paddle
in the center
of the still pool of the world
balanced on our watery beam
breadfruit tree between our thighs
as the island slides
along the fixed road of its stars
straight to our prow?



P R E A M B L E

My mother spoke of growing up on her family's Texas farm and loving the land, picking its prickly cotton rows, as she followed her mother and listened to her tell stories. The Jones children had to hurry to finish that row and start a new one to hear the next episode. My mother, a child of the Great Depression who often closed her eyes to the evil that men do, perhaps just to live through it, wrote of herself:

I was born on a farm near Temple, Texas, about milking time on a warm evening in May... There were still a few late bluebonnets blooming on the creek branch down by the well. A mockingbird was singing on top of the chimney, the air was sweet from the honeysuckle vine growing by the porch, and the wiggle-tails were wiggling in the rain barrel under the eaves.

Of working in her father's barely profitable fields she wrote:

During the first part of the cotton harvest in late August and early September, there were lots of cotton pickers. Neighbors would hire each other to pick the fields, and there was company to talk to as you picked. But the second picking, after the stalks were dry and brown in October and November, was sparse, and we usually did that ourselves. It was even harder work than the first picking because the weather was cold, our hands were chapped, fingers cracked, and the cotton bowls were hard and prickly. To make us feel a little happier to go to work, Mother would tell us serial stories that she would make up, and we would have to keep up with her to hear the stories. They were hopeful stories, about people who worked hard and were kind and honest, and then something good would happen and their lives would be easier. There were also lots of stories

about making the best of what you had and not complaining. And rewards would come: enough to eat, enough to wear, a good place to live, and contentment.... Well, all that turned out to be true. I did work hard to make good grades... I got a scholarship, went to the University of Texas... met a handsome and wonderful pre-medical student, Ken Holloway, married him and lived happily ever after.

—Martha Holloway, 1989

Willa Cather wrote stories of how fiercely the immigrants were connected to the prairie—Europeans who had given up the old land, ravaged as it was with the wars and factions and taxes of rulers and religions. The pioneers were stunned by the vastness and beauty of the new land, and they were sacrificed before its cruelty and enriched by its fertility, and so they claimed bits of property for their families. The ancestors of the North American people living on that prairie before the pioneers came, those ancestors had walked across land bridges that have since disappeared, and they too claimed the land and sky for their tribes and locked them into their worship. Their children will always keep the old story of those who have lost the land to newcomers.

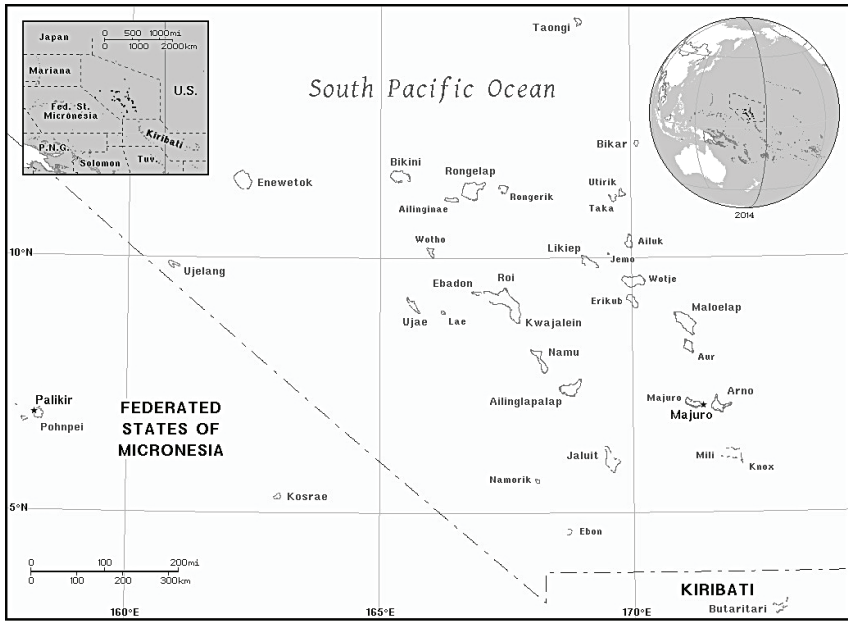
Living intimately with the land is how this love is born, and for some the feeling is contained in the word *mine*: *this belongs to me—and I belong to it*. When I was six and seven years old, I loved the grass and sitting hidden under the pomegranates in rural Norco, California, and I loved the brown river and its hot muddy banks, but it was not mine. I already knew I was a traveler who would one day be leaving this behind.

The light and heat of the yellow sun, too powerful to be looked at directly, the liquid sounds of mockingbirds, the scent that rose from the dusty earth as water spilled onto it from my garden hose—all these things seemed numinous to me as I stood outside, alone. What was god, I wondered. Once, thinking I was alone with the eucalyptus trees, I remember singing opera in a newly minted language that imitated the wavy sounds that came from my father's Klipsch horn speaker in the evening. My older brother Charles was the villain who jeered at my primitive aria, but I kept the song inside. It was as if I had an intimation of some grand thing I had never seen which I wanted to celebrate.

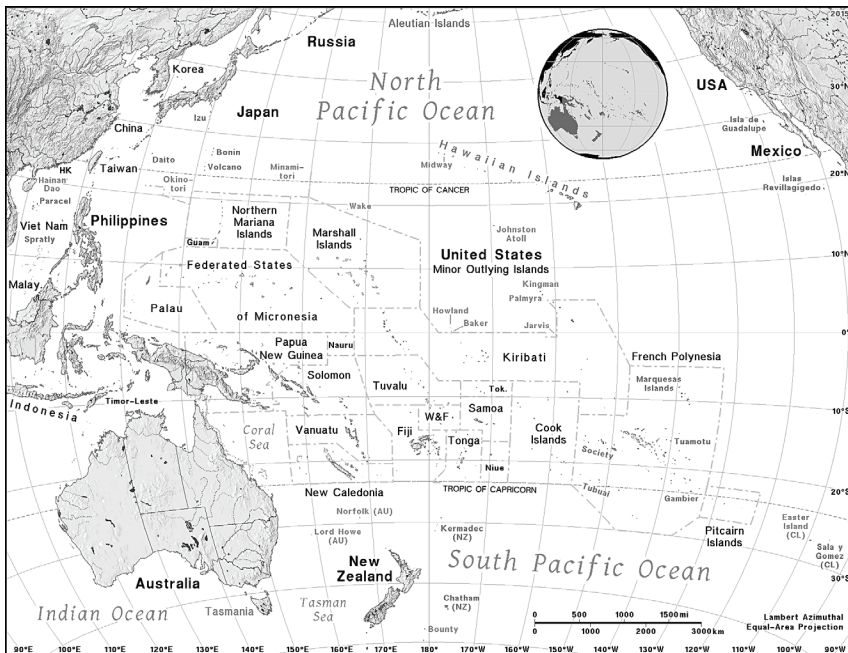
*The grand thing, grander than a farm,
grander than a prairie, came soon.*

It was the ocean.





MARSHALL ISLANDS



OCEANIA • Océanie

Part One:
An Adventure of a
Navy Childhood





In 1955 when I was eight and Charles was ten, my father got orders from the Navy to another post. We gave away Vanilla the cat, and I left behind my friend Judy Warner and the first wonderful teacher I had, Mr. Woodmancy, who helped me in the third grade with the first thing I could not understand in school (subtraction, where you have to borrow numbers). From him I learned to write in cursive script, and under his kindness I began a novel, plagiarized from all the horse books I was reading.

Charles and I, having already driven up and down the Pacific coast of North America and across to the Atlantic coast and back, were experienced passengers. We sat in the back seat of one or another of our Ford cars named Blackie or Bluey, our legs sticking straight out in front of us, resting on the quilt laid on top of the boxes and bundles which filled up the floor of the car. My father preferred to clock 500 miles a day, but once when we were some hundred miles out from our starting point I said, "Where's Mary?", for I could not find my doll. I had a series of Tiny Tears baby dolls all named Mary, and this one I had left behind. There was a pause, and then my father turned the car around and we went back and got her.¹

Charles and I played twenty questions on the road with our parents and sang songs and read the Burma Shave signs and wiggled our stiff

¹ This incident was echoed years later as I drove my 84-year-old mother from a nursing home, which we ended up calling "Evergrim", to a more hopeful assisted living apartment. We were almost at our destination when she said, "Where's my little round pillow?" The little round pillow was the only thing that could bring a big smile to her face as she eased her humped and fractured back down to rest in bed. "Where's Mary?" I said, and we turned around, went back, and got it.

knees. Little girls have small bladders, and my father called me the Queen of the Bathrooms; sometimes, hideously, I would have to go by the side of the road, my mother protecting me with her skirts.

This is more or less how we drove from Norco to San Francisco to meet our ship, the converted minesweeper United States Navy Ship Morton, which was to take us to Hawaii, and then on to the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, to the Marshall Islands within that, and finally to the U.S. Naval Station on Kwajalein Atoll, eight degrees above the equator, where my father was to be the senior medical officer at the station hospital.



In my memory there is a gap as to where we stayed in noisy, honking San Francisco—probably at the Marines Memorial Club where we also stayed when we came back. Mama and Charles and I had our passport picture taken together in the first week of July. Mama's hair is cut short, perhaps inspired by the gamine cut of Audrey Hepburn in the movie *Sabrina* from the year before. But, as I look at the photograph now, my mother's smile and hoop earrings bespeak a fire and verve far more sensual than Hepburn could raise. Fashion-model slender, thirty-six years old, she wears a stylish wide-collared dress of beige raw silk with a tiny red figure worked through it. Her mother-in-law Suzy, my grandmother, once a professional dressmaker, had whipped it up from a Vogue pattern while on a visit from Houston.

Charles sits close on Mama's right, slightly buck-toothed and jug-eared, hair parted on the side and not altogether successfully slicked down. The collar points of his rumpled shirt reach almost beyond the span of his prepubertal shoulders. The flesh just below his eyebrows slants down toward the edges of his face, creating triangular-shaped eyes, like his father's—blue eyes, like his father's. Charles is smiling, but seems distracted by something just out of frame.

Suzy's little-girl dress for me has a round collar and short sleeves. My face is still a child's chubby face, my features somehow slightly squashed together or compressed. I have the same brown eyes as my mother and I smile directly at the camera as the photographer no doubt requested.

My brows are still straight, not yet curved, and my hair is tightly braided into two long red-brown braids with big bows on the ends. Bangs, home cut, wave across my forehead. Charles and I each started life with blondish hair, his very blonde, mine with blonde streaks, and each of us darkened with age.²

My father had long had his own passport, starting with active duty in the Pacific during World War II, and then as a general surgeon attached to the Marines in 1950 in the Korean War. Tall, slim, dark-haired, blue-eyed, he had a mind and hands able to understand and fix anything mechanical. All appliances, plumbing, electric wiring, roofing, flooring, doors, windows, clocks, radios, watches, jewelry, cameras, toys, lamps, cars, and bicycles in our house worked. “Daddy, can you fix this?” was simply a rhetorical question followed by a session in the garage and the return of the sometimes ingeniously repaired item in question.³ He was a dead shot with a fly swatter at the breakfast table. My mother fed him Southern things like slimy okra, which we children would not eat, and he alone of all us drank buttermilk. He looked handsome in or out of uniform and was thirty-six years old when we began this journey. Years later, when he was in his seventies, he wrote some stories of his own about what this time was like:

I had been stationed at Naval Hospital, Corona, California, for about two years. I was assistant chief of surgery, and I had become certified by the American Board of Surgery in 1954. I was well on my way to completing the work and experience needed to qualify me as a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. These are the two main qualifying goals of every general surgeon.

Life at Corona was peaceful and full of happiness for us. Martha and I had mostly forgotten the treacherous experiences of the Korean War a few short years back. We lived in a little stucco

2 Once when the end of my braid lay on the top of a table I noticed that my hair was the color of wood. Only after my brother's death at age sixty-two did I realize that as adults we ended up with exactly the same hair color, and when my mind let that in, I wept.

3 I have with me now in my jewelry box a reminder of how muscular his hands were—his wedding ring of 55 years of marriage is too big to fit even my thumb.

house on Detroit Street in Norco, about 3 miles from the hospital, and the children, ten and eight years old in 1955, were in school there. We acquired a dog, a cat, and a canary. The children loved these pets and took good care of them. Martha was delighted with our little house with its long back lot and a back yard made spectacular by a lush green lawn and an absolutely gorgeous coral tree. We went to concerts and the L.A. Philharmonic in Riverside, fourteen miles away through the lemon groves.

Naval Hospital, Corona, was a virtual oasis in the Southern California desert of irrigated lemon and orange plantations. It had once been the Norconian Club, an eight floor luxury hotel and spa, a favorite spot of the fancy Hollywood stars set back in the twenties. The Navy bought it during the hard times of the early thirties to be ready for future wars. Later, it was used to provide medical care for the L.A. and Long Beach areas when the old Naval Hospital at Long Beach was taken over by the Veterans Administration. There was a nine hole golf course, an Olympic pool, a landing strip, a fishing lake, tiled baths, and elegant rooms, all done in handsome Spanish-style architecture and appointments.

I was just finishing my surgical schedule for the day at the hospital when I received a phone call from Paul Rucci. He was an OB/Gyn surgeon, a few years senior to me, and he was on duty in the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Washington, D.C.

He said, "How would you like to have duty in Kwajalein?"

"Kwajalein?" I asked. "Where is that?"

He said, "Well, if you go about five thousand miles west of San Diego and turn south to eight degrees above the equator, you'll just about be there. It's an important Navy refueling station for trans-Pacific military air traffic. There are about three thousand Navy personnel and their dependents there. It's in the Marshall Islands. It's only for a year. You'll love it."

Kwajalein didn't sound so great to me as I looked out of the window of the surgeon's dressing room and admired the clean blue water of the tiled Olympic-sized swimming pool on the elegantly landscaped hospital grounds a few floors down. But these were orders that I could not very easily turn down or modify because before I came to Corona, I had completed a rare and prized set of Navy orders to the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Surgery, which was an especially valuable fifth year of training in general surgery for me.

"Can I take my family? OK. When do you want me there?" Paul said, "We can put you and your dependents aboard a Navy USNS transport out of San Francisco this summer when school is out. You will be the only surgeon between Honolulu and Agana, Guam. Good luck."

—Charles K. Holloway, Jr., 1993



Somehow we boarded the Morton. I was once again forgetful of a toy child—I had left my panda bear behind in my motel bed near Monterey. (Later my mother and I wrote a letter, and the nice owner found my bear and mailed him to me.)

However, my next memory picture that floats up is worthy of the great landscape artists of the Americas. Hurrying through our commercialized lives, we see their images in museums as large, old-fashioned canvases that no one looks at much, and we stride past to find Matisse and Picasso. But artists like George Catlin, John Frederick Kensett, Frederick Edwin Church, and especially Maynard Dixon tried to capture an unrivalled purity of land and sky. I always long to enter these paintings of a sublimely empty new world, to stand on the bluffs above the vast plain and see the roll of clouds begin to move in the blue, to feel a wind that could make the huge trees, dwarfed by the enormity of the horizon, begin to wave their branches.

My picture is the wide circle of the earth as I stood on a small ship, the 360 degree horizon line of the surface of the Pacific Ocean meeting

the Pacific Sky. No matter where I turned my head, the blue expanse above and below me was empty and untouched all the way around, and I could see that I was on a round planet and that I belonged there. I lost my heart to it like all the rest of those travelers before me.

Sometimes color alone has any chance to convey a feeling. Just as Laurence Sterne suddenly put into *Tristram Shandy* a death page of solid black ink—such a funny shock to the reader!—so I would wish, could I only find the right photograph, to have a page of solid ocean-and-sky blue be the next thing to meet my reader's eyes.

The Journey Out

Flashes from over 60 years ago aboard the USNS Morton, which my father called an old rust bucket, but which the rest of us found excitingly strange. We passed slowly under the Golden Gate Bridge on a bright blue day, and then the city of San Francisco gradually became smaller and smaller and at last sank below the horizon. We four slept in a tiny cabin in bunks hung from the walls—I had an upper and Charles a lower, a change from the side-by-side twin beds we'd had since I was born. Under those beds had been the hiding place for Halloween candy on which we feasted in secret after Mama turned out the lights. This vertical shipboard sleeping arrangement, and our separate bedrooms soon to come, ended forever our shared sibling space, and also resolved Charles's complaints about my nighttime ritual of wiggling my feet and rustling the sheets to let go into sleep. You can't make somebody want to be with you.

I loved that the curve-cornered doors were raised up above the deck so we had to step over a curb to pass through; it was like walking on the ceiling. I read a lot and drew in coloring books. There undoubtedly were other passengers, and my father's ever-present camera took slides I still have of them, but I don't remember playing with any other children or really socializing with anyone at all besides our own family.

This was a transport vessel, and carrying troops and military dependents was her duty. There was a steward who would walk up and down the gray painted corridors with a little xylophone on which he would play the call to meals, a delightful ritual. We sat in deck chairs or strolled

around. The sailors sometimes chipped paint in the never-ending battle against rust. We walked along the rail and looked at the blue ocean on the side, we walked to the stern and looked at the white wake of the ship where we had come from, and we walked forward to feel the wind and look down the steep prow to the white wave heading toward the unknown. Sometimes we saw flying fish or dolphins along the side.

They showed movies down below decks at night for the crew and whatever passengers there might be. I felt quite superior when Charles got seasick and could not stay to watch while I had never a queasy moment. We had new clothes stored away, and books. Coming along, too, was a collection of classical records and tapes and an old upright piano, so that I could continue the lessons I had glumly started to take from a teacher in Norco who had all the divine fire of a graham cracker. She had dutifully written out a series of lessons for my mother to teach although my mother did not play a note.

A week's sail brought us to Honolulu. I think in those days there was a lot more fuss made about ships coming into or out of port. We were greeted with music and waves and calls from people—strangers to me—wearing leis as they stood on the dock. We walked down a long gangplank to get off the ship, and I felt my sea legs roll under me on the amazingly stationary land. We took a hot taxi in the brilliant sun past Waikiki Beach, and people rushed up to us at street corners to sell fragrant flower leis, and I was given one. I don't remember much else about what must have been a brief stop in Hawaii—though my father's slides show gorgeous flowers and a looming Diamond Head—and soon we resumed our pleasant shipboard boredom for another week at sea, sailing west.



Not long ago, as I dug through old slides and talked to my mother, she mentioned that she had kept a shipboard journal of our voyage from San Francisco to Kwajalein.

Here it is:

Trip to Kwajalein: A Journal

by

Martha Jones Holloway

Boarded U.S.N.S. Gen. C.G. Morton

1230 6 July 1955. Cabin 36, E Deck.

Description of cabin: 4 double deck bunks, 3 port holes, 4 lockers, chest of drawers, lavatory & medicine cabinet. Share head with Cdr. & Mrs. Kendall and 5 yr. old Dudley (who said in a grown-up manner, "Although I'm aboard a large transport and have been for only 5 minutes, I'm already a bit bored.")

Went to find our life boat station and met the Whites: Cdr. Dan White and his wife Elsie and children, 7 yr. old Benny and 5 yr. old red-haired Carol Ann. Cdr. White is to be the dental officer at Kwajalein. Seem like very nice people.

All children are fed at the first sitting & parents with them—30 min. limit for meals. Dining room & lounge both on our deck.

Stewards not permitted to touch personal things so all these must be picked up before steward cleans room.

Time aboard: divided into watches thus: 4 watches of 4 hours each. One bell + bells for preceding hour rings at each 1/2 hour.

9:30 = 3 bells, 10:30 = 5 bells, etc.

NAVY TIME

800	=	8 AM	=	8 bells
900	=	9 AM	=	2 bells
1000	=	10 AM	=	4 bells
1100	=	11 AM	=	6 bells
1200	=	12 NOON	=	8 bells
1300	=	1 PM	=	2 bells
1400	=	2 PM	=	4 bells
1500	=	3 PM	=	6 bells
1600	=	4 PM	=	8 bells, etc.

We are fed breakfast (1st sitting) at 700, lunch at 1100 and dinner at 1600. Ken wears uniform only at dinner. Tonight we had roast beef, turnips, mashed potatoes, celery, olives, pickles, bread & butter; calva [a coffee substitute], tea or coffee & ice cream & fruit cake. Chas. ate most of his meat and all potatoes and then retired to cabin feeling ill.

The sea is very rough. Waves look 10 ft. high & ship rolls steadily at about 100 to 150 . Difficult to walk. Heavy fire screen doors must be carefully secured, for a slamming door can take off fingers. Children not permitted to go about ship unless accompanied by adult. We have all felt just a little uneasy, but Chas. feels really sea-sick. He lay on his bunk at once & hasn't up-chucked. Has had bonamine, dramamine, milk of mag. & a sleeping pill & is now asleep (2200).

Jean seems fine. We found 2 pianos & had a little practice tonight & she's reading in her bunk as is Ken.

Had a fire drill & abandon ship drill. Life jackets under bunks.

7 July 1955

Ship rolled on rough seas first half of the night but morning found sea much smoother, air a little warmer and everyone down to breakfast. We find ourselves now placed at 2nd sitting.

This morning I put my name on the laundry list for 9 to 10 AM tomorrow. There are 2 Bendix washers and 3 ironing boards for passengers to use. No laundry service is furnished. Water is distilled & requires only tiny amount of soap.

We have passed a tanker and a submarine.

A little more piano practice this morning and did first lesson of theory course. Visited in passageway with Whites. He plays piano & sent out an old one to Kwaj. Also he is a skin diver & sent out aqua lung.

Leaving S.F. (I call it the alabaster city) we watched the hills covered with white houses and buildings disappear with less emotion than I thought we might. Familiar landmarks went by as we sailed under the Golden Gate Bridge from the sheltered bay to the ocean: Nob Hill, Coit Tower, the Exposition Bldg., Cliff House, Seal Rock. In a year those sights will be most welcome. Now our excitement will be the first landfall of the Hawaiian Islands.

Our last night ashore was spent with Charles & Elise [relatives of my father] and Elise's sister, Mrs. Hoag (Edna). Otani, their Japanese servant who has now been with them 25 years, served us a fine dinner—broiled chicken, great fat strawberries. Each of us was given a parting present: lock-spray atomizer filled with Coty's L'Origan; Scout knife; story-book doll; and box of cream mints. The Beatties wanted to see us off, but the best information we could get gave sailing time as 1630 (4:30 PM) and actually we sailed on the dot at 2:30 PM with Army Band playing on the dock as crane lifted gang plank and 2 tugs pulled us away.

About 15 min. out our pilot left by rope ladder & returned to Ft. Mason. Later by about an hour a 2nd pilot boat came to pick up our harbor pilot.

This ship [the Morton] is manned by civil service personnel, not Navy. A minimal Navy crew is aboard: captain in charge of military personnel & passengers is a line officer, L.Cdr.—also exec., doctor & staff & chaplain.

There is a play room on 3rd deck but not very well equipped with play things. The library has a fair number of permanent books and some free pocket book editions. We are taking Hoyle's Rules of Games, The Sea Around Us, The Universe and Dr. Einstein, and Sweitzer's Out of My Life and Thought.

On deck this PM it was nice—smooth, blue water and not too cold. Dinner was good: roast pork, mashed potatoes, corn, red cabbage, green salad, tomato soup, ice cream & Boston cream pie. Nearly all the stewards are Filipinos. We have a smart, quick waiter.

Last night we set our watches back one hour. Tonight we set them back 30 minutes.

Morning begins with prayer by chaplain over speaker system. At sunset the bridge calls out over speaker: "Sunset! Close all water tight doors below 2nd deck." We're on second deck, just below main.

8 July 1955

Sea still smooth, sky cloudy—cool on deck but slept without blanket & with port holes open. Have seen no porpoises or flying fish yet. Some gulls & an albatross or two are following ship.

This AM there is to be a Bible story and song period for the children. Chas. & J. think this will be very dull, but we want them to go and see if

they can stand it, because there are few diversions, and the days can be pretty long and all same-same. The movie last night was so poor that all of us left after 5 min but Chas., who thought it was fine—bloody pirate story.

The children have read a lot. Ken is reading Einstein and did 3 French lessons. I did French and am beginning my \$13.50 book on The Life of Bacteria. In the library I found a book called Adventures With a Texas Naturalist by Roy Bedichek. I can't recall just how this name is familiar to me but seem to remember Daddy's mentioning the Bedichek name. This is published by Doubleday, copyright 1947.

After getting into this book I find it not outstanding but rather interesting.

July 9, 1955

Jean wouldn't even go down to the movie last night because she was fairly certain it would be poor. It was, but not as bad as the night before. Chas. left after a third of it and Jean came down in a little while to say Chas. was sick. I came up and cleaned up the mess with the aid of the chief steward. Ken gave Chas. a sleeping pill & this morning he was much better, but thought he ought to stay in bed. Edna, the blond stewardess, brought him tea and toast and he's going to try lunch. Don't know whether it's mal de mer or scallops for supper or the heat of the movie. Probably a combination. Chas. is an unstable emotional type & subject to such attacks.

We remembered to bring fruit to our rooms and enjoyed oranges & bananas. Fruit is the only food one may bring from the dining room to one's room except on the order of the med. department.

I saw cartoons with Jean this AM—they were fun. A good short on Hawaii.

Had a good shower in this distilled water after ironing 2 shirts and pressing a few things. It has been overcast & cool. At noon of the 3rd day out we are 1153 miles from S.F., 929 miles to Honolulu. Average speed 15.79 knots. Distance traveled last 24 hours = 387 mi.

For dinner tonight we had roast beef & chocolate pie. I'm going to have to start doing exercises if the food and my appetite both continue so good.

Ken paid the purser today. For J., Chas. & me it is costing \$40.35 to go to Kwaj. Since K. is traveling on orders it costs him nothing.

Tonight we shall retard our watches 30 min. as we have each night except the first, when we set them back 1 hr.

The movie, "Rogue's March", was good enough to keep all but Jean from walking out. Chas. left a little before it was over because the room was getting hot. Chas. & Ken played chess for a while and Jean played dolls with Dudley Kendall. Cdr. Kendall has just finished 3 yrs. at M.I.T., Boston, studying electronics. He's now going to Pearl for 3 yrs.

10 July 1955—Sunday

The days run into each other so that it's hard to tell what day it is. I put on a dress this morning instead of slacks or pedal pushers in honor of the day. At dinner we always dress.

The sea is rolling a little today and the sky is still overcast—weather cool & pleasant. We are beginning to make plans for our few hours in Honolulu. This time, according to the stewardess, we will dock at Honolulu, not Pearl, and will have about 5 hours ashore.

No flying fish, no whales, no porpoise so far. Captain's Dinner tonight—steak & curry, strawberry shortcake.

There was a Bingo game tonight, and our neighbors, the Kendalls, won a travel iron.

Chaplain O'Kelly—looks Irish Catholic but is Arkansas Baptist. Has Billy Graham approach to the Lord and says Amen with a long A.

11 July 1955

We had to slow down from our usual 83 r.p.m. to 61 r.p.m. [revolutions per minute of the ship's propeller] because we are ahead of schedule & it is not permitted that we be more than 50 min. ahead or behind schedule. The receiving port would be all fouled up & we'd have no assigned pier.

This ship has 2 steering points besides the main wheel so that in case the bridge is knocked out, we can still steer. She is a C-4 type transport, carries no armament but is wired for it. At intervals she is checked out to see that the newest type of guns will fit. They are mounted, fired and dismantled.

The fire protection system seems adequate. In the bridge house there is a box with tubes leading to all spots in the ship not regularly tended, such as store rooms. If a fire breaks out, smoke is drawn through the corresponding tube and a photoelectric cell turns on a light, rings a bell and the smoke is also drawn into the wheel house so that through sight, hearing and smell the officers on watch are aware of a fire. This cabinet tube-device also indicates how much CO₂ is required to control the fire.

We have been guided by Laran [a navigation system] so far, having no stars at night on this trip. Sky has been continually overcast. The deck officer said he sometimes went from S.F. to Yokahama without seeing sun or stars.

This AM laundry quite busy with people getting clean for debarking tomorrow. Ken & Chas. saw 2 flying fish at the bow before breakfast.

Jean practiced scales on the poor, sad piano in 5th deck lounge—out of tune & some keys don't play but got a little finger exercise anyway.

Galley tour at 9:30 AM showed us the very large facilities for cooking for many passengers and troops. We have a full load of cabin class passengers but the troop load is light & we all eat together. The stoves are electric. There is one galley with big oil stoves—huge cast iron monsters that must make furnace-like heat. On this trip they aren't used. Also on this trip they are carrying bread from shore but have brick lined ovens capable of almost commercial bakery capacity. A dough mixing machine is big as a cement mixer & there is a humid warm place for bread to rise. Down below are dry storage areas, cool rooms at 90% humidity for vegetables, deep freezer for meat & ice cream. \$250,000 of food is loaded on at the beginning of trip. None is bought at Honolulu as I found when I asked if we'd have papaya after we landed there. The steward said he could not buy such perishables with such limited appeal. He might have to throw them overboard when the inspector got on before they landed at San Francisco. Any fruit bought out of U.S. cannot come into Calif.

All galleys are stainless steel and beautifully clean—cleaner than any housewife's kitchen I ever saw.

2nd movie tonight was on deck, but people said they couldn't hear for the noise of the blower. Ship has own ventilating system—sucks in fresh air and blows out old. There's a fan in every cabin, too. We're traveling with the wind on this trip and not much wind blows into port holes. It

isn't too windy on deck either as it was coming out of S.F. where the wind blew inshore. No nights have been hot—or days either.

12 July 1955

Everyone stirring about in the night with “channel fever”—pre-debarkation excitement. We ran thru a rain squall & sea was rough for a while. I woke in the night thinking I smelled plumeria and I heard a gull cry—the first sound I've heard them make.

About 5 PM I looked out of the port hole and thought I saw the outline of Molokai. I'm sure it was too steady for a cloud bank. Everyone up an hour earlier & breakfast over so they can get baggage out on deck & ready to go.

And then ahead loomed Koko Head & Makapuu point. I remember how thrilled we were on the plane when the pilot pointed out these land marks. [My parents had taken the first vacation of their lives to Hawaii for a medical conference not long before.] And then to port bow was Diamond Head, black and towering against the dark silhouette of Oahu. Until you are closer no green shows but the islands look velvet dark.

Of course we knew we'd make it here. We knew where we were going & what to expect & the days on the ocean with nothing even in radar distance didn't worry us. But think of those who sailed these seas uncharted for months and saw nothing. It must have been the most wonderful sight to see land, even a tiny spot of it—something still and dry to stand on and the vegetation and animal life that make one feel at home. But the sea is wonderful, too. It is soothing and exciting and fearful, I guess, in a storm—never the same and never boring. The ship seems alive and powerful and it's very restful to roll along on the miles of liquid under us.

When you see a child go near the rail & bend over, though, a chill goes through you, because the sea would swallow him and every living creature in the world and never change its face. It would take at least 30 min. for the ship to turn around and get a man overboard & probably no child would last that long.

A little past Oahu Waikiki comes into view and by this time we are near enough to see the pink Royal Hawaiian and make out the Holekalani, Moana, Surf Rider and the new Princess Kahuilani. The Aloha Tower is close on our starboard side as we pass through the channel with the aid

of a pilot who has come aboard from the tug, *Makaala*. In a few minutes we dock at Pier 40A at the Army-Navy dock, and the 264th Army Band greets us with *Aloha Oe*. No hula girls or divers for pennies such as greet the *Lurline*.

After all the Hawaii bound passengers & their baggage are off, we who are going on with the *Morton* get our liberty passes and go ashore, buy plumeria leis at 50 cents each and breathe deeply of this island fragrance that is fleeting and indescribable and so filled with magic that it brings tears, almost, without quite knowing why. This is a place so beautiful that we are determined it shall not be spoiled by any of the gross characteristics of the human race. It is as commercial as anywhere. Its taxi drivers as eager for fares, its business section as bustling, its poor as down trodden. But there is such a balminess that all is softened and the things that grate are dimmed and bad moods go as quickly as they come. In our minds only the paradisiacal elements remain.

A huge Filipino, Tommy, is hired by us and the Whites as our driver for \$20 (haggled down from \$24, \$1 for lunch and a \$2 tip) to be ours alone till 3 PM when we must be back aboard. The Navy is prompt. If we are to be underway at 4, promptly at 4 we leave the pier.

First Dan and Ken wish to get a few Navy business contacts made, so out to Pearl we go. Tommy, not knowing whether we're acquainted with the islands or not, begins to sing *Aloha* in Hawaiian, and then he says the words to a little song the school children always sing and one we learned in Scouts:

"*Aloha* means good morning, *aloha* means good-bye. It means until we meet again beneath a tropic sky. *Aloha* means farewell to this and always to be true. But the best thing that *aloha* means is I love you."

(What a diary—tenses & persons change without reason. But some of the details of the trip are there & that's what makes a log.)

We saw Jimmy Smith whom we knew in *Corona* & whom we saw again in the fall out here. Then Capt. Stephens, Dist. Medical Officer whom we met in the fall. He is going to Annapolis in August. He was up at Tripler, the Army's pink palace—a gorgeous hospital, unnecessarily built but beautiful nonetheless. The old Navy Hosp. was simply closed & remains unused.

The children were getting irritable & hungry by this time, 11:30 (we'd had 6:45 breakfast & gotten off ship at 9:20), so we had hamburgers at Kelly's and Tommy (age 67—11 children—7 grandchildren) took us downtown to Liberty House. It was nice to be let off in front of the places we wished to go without worry of parking & be picked up just when we wished.

Ken bought 2 prs. of cotton dacron cool, lightweight slacks @ \$7.95 a pr. at Andrade's & one cool cotton aloha shirt. I got Jean a darling plastic rain coat—blue with "balla-raina" skirt & elastic waist & hood. She wanted some Pikake cologne & an atomizer & we got that & dashed across the street to Woolworth's for a quick look. A sign by the escalator at Liberty House was interesting: "Customers with bare feet or wearing go-aheads or sneakers please use elevators." This is a lovely store comparable to a big stateside dept. store, but dress in Honolulu is casual. I did note that most sales people wore hose. Go-aheads (Japanese name is zories) are barefoot sandals with a strap that goes between the big toe & second toe and comes around the arch of the foot on each side. They go ahead fine, but they come off in any other direction.

After our 30 min. of shopping we drove out to Waikiki, stopped at the Royal where Ken & Dan photographed the royal poinciana. We walked through the lounge to see their always beautiful flower arrangements and on out to the terrace & the lovely white sand beach. Back in the car we drove up as far as Queen's Surf and back Ala Moana road to a skin-diving shop where Dan bought a depth gauge for his wrist.

For the last part of our drive we went up Nuuanu Road to the Pali. On the way the upside down falls performed beautifully for us, the wind blowing upward with such force that the falls is unable to fall, but instead is blown upward.

Pali means cliff, I think. Anyway, it is a 2000 or so foot high division of Oahu from windward to leeward. Kaneole is on the windward side, Honolulu on the lee. With such force does the wind blow up there that it is difficult to stand or walk. Convertibles might well lose their tops.

The story of King Kamehameha is always connected with the Pali. Kamehameha, in his last great battle to put down lesser kings and unify the islands, drove his enemies up to the Pali. No road over existed at that time—only a sheer drop. Rather than be captured the enemy chose

to jump, and all perished in the fall, leaving Kamehameha to rule all the Hawaiian Islands and they prospered with the cessation of fighting between many small rulers. Tommy, our driver, said that 2 wks. ago a Hawaiian jumped off the Pali and committed suicide.

With only a half hour of liberty left, we rode by the Dole pineapple works and went in to drink juice from their fountain. Dan & Ken took a picture of the arrangement of heloconia in the lobby. The receptionist had 3 huge golden hibiscus against her dark hair.

The Army Band was playing at the pier as we went aboard and promptly at 4 PM the deck officer called, "All ashore that's going ashore", and off we went with the band playing Aloha as it marched to the end of the pier, and everyone tossing at least some of their leis overboard.

As we went in to 4:30 dinner Oahu was already getting hazy, and the Morton pointed her prow south-southwest for Kwajalein.

13 July 1955

Clocks retarded 30 min. again last night. It was quite warm but not uncomfortable; the beads of perspiration stayed on my upper lip and sides of my nose for the first time on the voyage. We had the movie in the main dining salon since there are so few of us now, and it's hot on 5th deck with no portholes.

Mr. Brown, the exec., has set up a nursery watch and put all adults on it. There are only 15 children aboard and I doubt if the nursery is used, but it's open.

Chas. put on his shorts today for the first time. I did a little pressing before we dressed for dinner. We brushed up on cribbage rules and started a game.

14 July 1955

Saw several flying fish this AM Apparently our gulls stopped off at Hawaii. We see none following.

Mr. O'Kelly, the chaplain, held rosary service for about 3 people at 9, and then Dan played the piano for the protestant worship at 9:30 while

we sang the Navy Hymn; In the Garden; O, For a Thousand Tongues, and such old ones. I think 10 of us were there.

15 July 1955

Forgot to mention that we were moved from our nice #36 cabin with 3 port holes to a much smaller one with 1 port hole—#26. It's pretty hot, but with a fan going & the door partly open, we don't suffer. The crew has started chipping paint and the noise is terrible.

The ship went through a mine drill today. They dropped some smoke pots so many minutes apart and then turned and wove back and forth through them. Ken says this drill is useless because today's mines are much more clever than floating pots, and this old tub wouldn't have a chance.

Because we are ahead of schedule again, we slowed down and in doing so hit the critical speed of the propeller which caused a terrific vibration all afternoon and half the night.

16 July 1955

In the laundry with its heat and the noise of paint chipping with air hammers we felt like we were in Dante's Inferno. Couldn't even have church for the noise.

It has been overcast all day.

In children's Bingo yesterday Chas. won a nice sewing set & gave it to Jean—paper cards full of holes to sew with large needle & wool thread to look like cross stitch samplers. Tonight at the adult Bingo after the movie Chas. won a pigskin wallet & I won an automatic electric percolator. Dan played the piano while we sang some of the old songs everybody knows.

17 July 1955

We thought there'd be no pneumatic drills chipping paint on Sunday, but there are—even thru church service.

It is raining hard enough for the ship to blow its fog horn regularly. Last night we had a darken ship drill.

19 July 1955

Having crossed the International Date Line we missed Monday 18 and caught the first view of Kwajalein this Tuesday 19. Charles was the first of us dressed at 5:30 AM and went with his telescope on deck. Even without the telescope we could make out the curved and tiny outline of Kwaj—only a few trees visible—can see water tower and a little later an airplane on the landing strip.

Then we left Kwajalein off our starboard stern and came around thru a small pass between 2 other islands to get into the lagoon. We seemed almost to touch the beach of one of the islands as we came thru the pass, which proves how great is the drop off to deep water from the islands.

A pilot boat and the Navy barge, Mary Ann, came to meet us—also the Captain's gig, the Kwaj, with Dr. Olechowski aboard. We walked down the ladder onto the barge and over into gig, feeling pretty special as we waved good-bye to the Morton, since this was the first time that Captain M.A. Nation had sent his personal boat to meet anyone.

In a few minutes we were ashore, still feeling the land rocking under us.

[End of my mother's journal]



After my epiphany of ocean came a second epiphany about perspective: land is very small within the vast surrounding water. All the passengers and crew were to some degree fixated on our destination, and each day some reference was made as to how far away we were now, how long it would take now. The first much-anticipated sight of land was of a tiny black line on the horizon, or perhaps it was the shadow of a cloud on the surface of the water— a tiny low line which never ever got big, and only seemed like land when we got very close, close enough to see palm trees. Then we could see more than one island, for that is what the lines turned out to be. The trees were exciting since they matched my movie fantasy of a green jungle on a white beach, and since we had not seen any trees for so long.

In reality, Kwajalein was almost devoid of tall palms, all but four having been blasted off by the fierce battle that had taken place there

eleven years earlier during World War II. The island survived among its green neighbors as a two-and-three-quarters-mile long, one-half-mile wide, flat stretch of blinding coral shaped like the letter C.

