

The Claud and Lon Moyer Stories

As told by Bill Moyer

There were three brothers, Clyde, Claud, and Lon, who came to Aruba (in that order). Clyde was working in a small refinery in Arkansas City, Kansas, in 1928, when a friend saw an ad in a paper. The two of them applied, were accepted. Clyde loved Aruba and working in the refinery and spent 32 years there. In 1932 he persuaded my mother, Margaret, to marry him and join him.

Shortly after that, Claud Moyer, who had a Ford agency in Sarcoxie, Missouri, came to Aruba with his wife Ula (nicknamed "Suze"). Claud was the oldest of seven Moyer children born in Missouri and Oklahoma, Clyde was the youngest. Claud liked working in the refinery but was an entrepreneur at heart: He brought the first popcorn machine to Aruba, in partnership with Pete the Greek. He and Suze lived in Bungalow 101, east of the old Esso Club, and Claud kept cash on hand so poker players at the Club could get a "quick money" loan on the strength of a good hand, by dashing across the street. The interest rate, of course, was high.

The third brother, Lon, had been to college and taught school before coming to Aruba, becoming Superintendent of Schools in Cedar County, Missouri. His wife's name was Mabel (she was a teacher) and they had two daughters, Paula and Roseann. They came to Aruba in about 1942. I remember they flew down, but their household goods were on the Bolivar when it was shelled by a U-boat. The Bolivar survived but the Moyer's had shrapnel in their stuff when it arrived.

All three brothers were in the refinery the night of the U-156 attack. They climbed up the highest unit (the cat cracker, I guess) to try to see what was going on (I have to admit I slept through most of the attack, waking up briefly and being told it was "just thunder").

Claud was the first to leave Aruba. He got mad about some management decision, and returned to Missouri in about 1949. Lon, Mabel, and family stayed on, and we had Moyer family get-togethers at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Clyde and Lon went to all the Thursday evening softball games together. Margaret and Mabel played bridge together. Paula worked at the Army base in Savaneta after high school, before heading off to college. All three brothers were heavy smokers. Claud also took snuff. He died in his 50's of cancer in his sinuses. Lon also died young, of lung cancer. That was particularly rough on Roseann because she was about to leave for college when, all of a sudden, her Dad died and Mabel had to leave Aruba--there was no "home" to come home to, between terms. Clyde lived to the age of 80, dying in Dallas in 1985.

(Mother and Dad moved here from Missouri in 1983. Mother died of lung cancer shortly afterward.) Paula, Roseann, and I all went to Cornell, and we all live in Dallas today. Mabel Moyer lived here for many years, but died here about five years ago (about 2001).



Wartime morale booster poster.
Photograph courtesy J L Lopez family. Source unknown.

Childhood Memoirs of Bill Moyer

During World War II, we in Aruba had a minor contact with global war. A German submarine (we now know it was the U-156) surfaced one night, torpedoed several oil tankers, setting them ablaze, and shelled the refinery where my father and his two brothers were working on the night shift. We were relieved that the shelling did no serious damage to land structures, including a club house the Company had built for its employees with a movie theater, bowling alley, dining room and other recreational facilities. Not long afterward, however, we lost the club house to fire--cause unknown.¹

Lago Oil (Esso) couldn't bring in much construction material because shipping was partially cut off by torpedoing, but they did manage to assemble a structure next to the Colony commissary, by putting four prefabricated army barrack buildings together to form the outer outline of a square. One building on the south side housed a soda fountain, among other things (we had an "all the ice cream you can eat" party to celebrate its opening that I will never forget), the building on the west contained offices and the counter where we purchased paper "coupons" to use as money in the club, the building on the north housed a long bar and shuffle-board tables. As I recall, the building on the east was used for storage and possibly the public library.² In the middle, open area, was our new movie theater. It was equipped with canvas chairs. We sat in the open air and watched a movie shown on a screen mounted on the east inner wall, the picture projected from an elevated booth over the west building. Even in heavy rain, the movies kept going, and diehard viewers (which always included me) held vacated canvas chairs over their heads to keep semi-dry.

The four buildings were mounted on frames that lifted them about three feet above the ground, for circulation, but this area was blocked off

¹ *It was always my understanding that the clubhouse was a victim of friendly fire, namely a casing from a shore battery.*

² *I seem to recall a barbershop was included in one of the rooms closest to the street. I vaguely recall the shop moved to the Jr. Esso Club area.*

by lathwork or latticing (kids still managed to squeeze through occasionally for a free movie, but openings were quickly spotted and repaired.) There was one entrance door to the movie at the southwest

corner, and James or Shorty or some other club staff member took tickets.

The American Army sent a detachment of Coast Artillery troops and a squadron of anti-submarine airplanes--A-20A's and P-39 Airacobras--to guard Aruba after the submarine attack (First we had Dutch marines, then Scottish Cameron Highlanders, then Americans). My cousin Paula worked as a secretary on the American base, and we got to go to movies there sometimes, and to see USO shows with live entertainment. The United Service Organization was, of course, intended to elevate troop morale by putting on wholesome entertainments at overseas bases, but they didn't object to letting us civilians be entertained, too. I loved the shows, and still remember songs like "Let Me Call You Sweetheart," sung enthusiastically by the crowd along with some entertainer up on stage, leading the way. Most of the USO talent was good, and one name comes along: Like Al Jolson.

AL JOLSON ME

Al Jolson was a negative. I still remember "Is It True What They Say About Me" more a story of a dog my Uncle Orlan Oranjestad from "Blackie", had followed everywhere. He followed the game or the movie were blacked out from shining toys had walked a long way to carry the dog by show up, waggling location after a long out of range, but sharp in guarding again, and then s

³ Please see at the ex-patriot's pets.

Jolson had people pleaded with him to come to our Colony to perform for the U.S. civilians in addition to his show at the Base, which he graciously agreed to do. We went with great expectations, although I, for one, was disappointed at his boastfulness and exaggerated showmanship as he sang songs he had made famous such as "Mammy" and "Sonny Boy." His voice must have been past its prime, because



Al Jolson at Spritzer & Furman Jewelers, 1940. That's Mr. Furman himself behind the counter. Photograph courtesy Paria Allen Kent collection.

impression was s recordings like Aruba, though, is "Colombian Spitz" that had sailed to ter our first dog, he followed us y to go a softball War when houses to prevent lights and, but after we e time to drag or d "mysteriously" st discovered our would keep just nes wasn't really art in, disappear movie.³

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impressive.

His greatest problem that night, however, was Whitie. Whitie had decided to follow us to the show again that evening, and had succeeded in slipping between the legs of people entering the theater door, although Dad and I had thrown rocks at him as we proceeded along the road and thought we had deterred him from coming. Whitie had a habit of barking a long, husky bark, followed, if encouraged, by mournful howls which he emitted with his nose toward the sky like coyotes do. Something in Al Jolson's technique inspired the worst in Whitie (or perhaps the best from Whitie's perspective). Jolson sang for a while and then Whitie started to bark. Al handled it well at first, joking: "That must be an Aruban canary!" The crowd applauded, and Al Jolson beamed. James or some of the other club staff members tried to catch the dog, but he eluded them, dodging among chairs, and they desisted rather than add to the disturbance. My parents and I tried to look nonchalant as if we were wondering whose dog that could be--we certainly didn't show any sign he might be ours.

Jolson started to sing again, and after a bit, Whitie not only chimed in with renewed barking, but this time he was inspired to give Al a selection of his best, most mournful howls, muzzle to the sky (just as he would for one of his favorite girlfriends when she was in heat). Jolson bore it as best he could, then lost his aplomb. He stopped and shouted, "Get that goddamn dog out of here!" This time the club staff (again unassisted by noncommittal Moyer's) chased Whitie around until they edged him toward the door. They had learned from previous encounters that he was a biter, so they didn't try to grab him, although one or two of them aimed kicks his way. He eluded the kicks but decided discretion was the better part of valor, and finally ran out the theater door into the night and rejection. By the time we got home, however, he was in high spirits again, and delighted to see us as if we had been on a long trip.

TOMMY TUCKER

Tommy Tucker (In our Lago Colony Newsletter he is sometimes referred to as "Sonny Tucker"--his mother did always call him Sonny) was an interesting kid, older than I was, who led a small gang of younger kids. He always seemed to think of interesting things to do, had insightful opinions on unusual things, and told strange stories. For example, he and his family kept marmoset monkeys in a cage in their back yard. You could go back there and watch them, and Tommy took ~~them out and played with them. - They were nasty things, as I recall,~~ quick to bite the unwary, but clever in acrobatics.

Tommy was interested in medicine and seemed to know a lot about it. For example, he told a story about how a man had been found drowned on a beach somewhere, and people tried artificial respiration and were about to give the man up for dead when a knowing individual

stuck his finger up the man's ass, whereupon the supposedly dead man "crapped all over the beach" and--voila!--miraculously recovered. The triggering of this one natural reflex, Tommy Tucker explained, had started the man's other vital functions going again! That was the sort of arcane knowledge we younger boys marveled at. I still believe the story about the amazing cure for drowning but worry that I might be too squeamish if called upon to treat such an emergency myself.

You never knew what Tom was going to do or say. He was brave, too, as he demonstrated on a Boy Scout trip to Palm Beach. We normally went for Boy Scout outings to beaches on the rugged, rough side of the island, like Boca Prins or Fontein. One time, though, we went all the way out to Palm Beach. This must have been soon after the War--maybe 1946--because Palm Beach was an almost deserted area. All the beaches on Aruba were public property, so you could walk along the shore anywhere, or swim, but the adjoining area of sand going inland could be private. Most of Palm Beach was blocked off from public roads in those days by tall fences of cactus, with private roads leading down to clubhouses along the water, the entrances blocked by locked gates. On one occasion, our scout leader or someone had arranged for us to use the facilities of one of the clubs--perhaps the Dutch Police Club--so we were driven in past the cactus and thus allowed access to the whole sweep of the beach. We were having a good time exploring, and swimming a bit in the shallow water, when someone noticed a big shark fin protruding from the water offshore. It was pretty far away--perhaps 100 yards--so not an immediate threat, but naturally we watched it nervously as it swam, always ready to retreat if it approached us. Strangely, however, it seemed to remain almost in one place, just moving with the waves. Then Tommy Tucker said he would do something about it.

He clenched a knife in his teeth, just as Tarzan did in the movies, and began to swim out to the shark, with strong, steady kick and strokes. Tom was an excellent swimmer, but I had never realized before that he had this much courage. We all edged back out of the water and watched to see what would happen. Tom didn't flinch--just kept swimming steadily. Then he began thrashing around the shark, lifting his arm up and down to stab it, throwing his feet out of the water and, altogether, putting on quite a show. By then it dawned on us, however, that the action was all one-sided, and the "fin" was protruding too far from the water as Tom began to tug it toward shore. It soon became evident that our "shark" was a big branch or frond from a coconut palm! The broad base had been protruding from the water, displaying a triangular shape.

Did you ever know anyone who could fold his eyelids in half? Tommy Tucker did that. He took the bottom of the lids, holding on to the lashes, and folded them upward so that only half a lid was left. The exposed part was normally the inside of the lid, of course, so it was pink,

and looked ghastly. Below the lid was the bottom half of his eyeball, showing only white. Ugh! It got a great reaction of disgust from the other kids, inspiring Tom to walk like the Frankenstein monster and hold his arms out stiffly in front, grabbing anyone he could. He was quite a showman.

Tom Tucker didn't like me much. He was civil to me, but no more than that. He was older than I, and tough, so I was a little apprehensive. The only time it every amounted to anything, though, was when I was learning to drive. After World War II there was a big shortage of cars in the U.S., and even more so in Aruba. On our vacation in about 1947 Mother, Dad and I spent a few days as usual in New York City, and while there we looked for a car. The only new ones in supply were Kaisers and Frazers, built by Henry J. Kaiser, who had grown rich during World War II making "Liberty Ships" (freighters) out of reinforced concrete! The Kaiser was the less expensive, as I recall, the Frazer more luxurious. One place we looked, however, had not only new Kaiser-Frazers but also a few used cars including a Dusenbergs that made my eyes pop, and a green Cadillac Fleetwood that also seemed spectacular but was more affordable. Much to my delight, Mother and Dad decided to splurge and buy the Cadillac! The law in Aruba was fairly relaxed about minimal driving ages, and it wasn't long before my folks taught me to drive and even began to let me drive on my own (at age 14) although I had to be especially careful, not having a license. That didn't stop me from taking friends for drives in the evenings, and giving rides to girls, although I was a relatively careful driver.

Anyway, one night I was driving along with four or five others in the car--maybe Gleb Aulow, Bob Drew, Polly Mingus and others, although I don't remember for sure. The thing I do remember is that, as we were driving along just north of the softball field at the "Junior Esso Club", a car full of rowdy, older boys pulled up alongside and hurled taunting remarks at us. The Cadillac was powerful, and I lazed along, preparing to zip ahead and surprise them when they got too close. The right time came, and I stomped on the accelerator, kicking the car into passing gear, and it roared off. As we started, though, I got a strange sensation of something going on close to my left ear, followed by a bumping sound and shouts as we left the other car in our dust and it fell out of sight in the rear view mirror.

There was a party that night at Betty Ann Binion's house or maybe Murray Jennings'. We snuck around a while to see if the car of older boys was still looking for us, and made clever maneuvers like going around the block with the headlights off and without touching the brakes because that would have turned on the rear brake lights (Did I say something about being a "careful" driver? Well, there's careful and there's careful), but when they didn't appear, we stopped at the party.

Once inside, I noticed Tommy Tucker standing near me, looking at me with a strange expression. He was all scratched up. I wondered why. Later someone explained that Tom had been in the back seat of the other car (Roy Burbage's, I think) and, for some unexplainable reason, decided at the last minute to throw a proper scare into us by extending himself through the front window of the car in which he was riding, to grab me by the neck. He surmised correctly--it would have scared the Hell out of me. The only problem was, his outstretched hands were just inches from my neck when the Caddy took off, causing him to catch the window framing instead of me, with the result that he was pulled out of his slower-moving car like a champagne cork popping out of a bottle, stretched out horizontally and then, when he managed to let go with his hands, his body bounced off the rear side of my car, ricocheted off the other car, and ended up on the ground. It was a miracle that he wasn't hurt worse. Why he didn't retaliate by hitting me the first chance he got, I never knew. He may have been too badly bruised, or just embarrassed. Tommy Tucker was also the one who discovered the old shipwreck in the channel into San Nicholas Harbor. Who else would have thought to look there, or to swim there at all? The harbor at San Nicholas (at the western end of the Big Lagoon, but partly blocked by reef on which a lighthouse had been constructed to guide ships) had been created for tanker loading by the Company, which used dredges to deepen that end of the lagoon and dig a channel through the barrier reef into the ocean. Big ships passed back and forth through the channel and it was "off limits" to small boats. Other than that, the harbor was dirty with sewage, with oil spilling from ballasts of tankers and from the loading pipes, and since ships dumped garbage there, there was also, I supposed, more than the usual danger that sharks would be attracted for scavenging. So I never thought of spear-fishing or snorkel-diving any where near that area. The one time I caught a barracuda just east (upwind and up-current) from that area by trolling from a boat with bait, and cooked it for dinner, the fish tasted oily, so that was just one more reason to look elsewhere for interesting things to do. But not for Tom: He looked everywhere.

Right after I left Aruba to go to college, Tom Tucker and other divers ventured into the area of the reef offshore from the lighthouse, where the channel entered San Nicolas harbor. They found an ancient wreck lying on the bottom. The next time I came home to visit, the Aruba Esso News was filled with pictures of Tom and a large cast-iron (or bronze?) cannon he and others managed to bring up from the wreck. It wouldn't surprise me a bit to read some day that Tom has gone back there with a full expedition and uncovered gold or other riches. He is the kind of adventuresome spirit who could do it.

CAPTAIN BAILEY

After the submarine attack on Aruba, my parents thought it would

be a good idea for my mother and me to retreat to Missouri, she to help her father operate his newspaper after his linotype operator had been drafted, and I to attend the Missouri Military Academy at Mexico, Missouri (near Columbia, west of St. Louis). The school looked nice in the catalog, but it was Hell. Those uniforms looked pretty, but felt stiff and uncomfortable to a nine-year old boy. We drilled one hour every midday, did one hour of calisthenics every afternoon, and in between stood inspection, cleaned up the building, and were fussed at for not folding our bedclothes just right or hanging the clothes in our closet just so. The best part of the day, in fact, was class. The school was a good one, and the curriculum more varied than what I was used to in Miss Olson's 4th grade in Aruba. The teachers were all men, and some were rather stern in their military uniforms. By comparison, Miss Olson was young and pretty. I liked her better, and was delighted to go back to Lago Colony after one year.

Fairly early in the year, I fell, while running for a base in a game of "hide and seek", and broke my left arm at the elbow. What a disgrace breaking an arm playing "hide and seek!" It probably was another reason I didn't like military school, because my activity was even more limited than usual after the break. The arm was in a cast for a while, and when it came out, remained in a bent position. I couldn't straighten it at the elbow. That's when Captain Bailey took over. He was one of our school officer/teachers. He made me a brick with a rope handle, though, to carry around campus and on our daily marches, so that it gradually straightened out my arm. To make the situation more bearable, he wrapped the brick in brown paper and wrote things on it. "This little brick works like a charm, to help me straighten out my arm. If I don't tote this brick about, Captain Bailey will bawl me out!" was the main message. It also said "Irish Confetti". People stopped to read my brick, and his clever solution made me proud to carry it instead of ashamed. My arm recovered fully, and straight, thanks to Captain Bailey.

TOM EASTMAN: "MR. HYDROPONICS."

Some time in the late 1940's a young agricultural scientist named Tom Eastman persuaded Standard Oil of New Jersey to let him try raising fresh vegetables for the workers at Esso's Aruba refinery. His wife and little daughter came along. He built a series of concrete beds, lined with tar, and enclosed in a greenhouse. In a small office next door, he stored his chemicals, including potassium nitrate, sulphur, and a number of others. He blended these with water, every day running the solution into the beds. In them he grew green peppers, lettuce, turnip greens, and tomatoes. The Eastman's lived about a block away from our house, in a house on top of a small cliff line, and our family got to know them fairly well. They paid me to baby-sit for their infant one New Year's Eve, I believe, and I remember a chrome-plated 50 caliber shell, complete with bullet head, that they had as a souvenir. It had holes

drilled in its side where the powder had been let out. I was fascinated by bullets at that age.

My Dad, who grew up on a farm and loved farming (he even raised chickens along a windy cliff in Aruba in the 1940's), volunteered to engage in hydroponics gardening with the help of the young scientist. Dad built a raised (standing on stilts) bed of wood, lined with tar and gravel to hold water. With a drain plug at one end, it was same as the larger hydroponics garden the Company owned nearby. Tom Eastman gave Dad chemicals free, and we mixed a solution each week in an old 50-gallon oil drum Dad turned on its side, braced between concrete blocks, to be filled via a cut in the upside and drained from a spigot at the end. Every day we filled several buckets and poured solution in our gravel beds, and grew fresh vegetables such as Big Boy tomatoes and Firesteels. They were wonderful, much superior to anything shipped from the U.S. by tanker or by sailboat from South America.

FIREWORKS

A fringe benefit for me, as a curious kid, was that I could take saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal, and make gunpowder, which I did. Never in big quantities, because my chemical supply was modest, but I tried all sorts of firecrackers. They weren't packed tightly enough to explode (not that I would have minded their exploding, if on cue, but I didn't learn how to pack the powder tightly, and was cautious enough not to tamp it hard), but they made a beautiful hiss and a great cloud of smoke that gave me and my friends many hours of forbidden pleasure. We set them off all over. Even under the Junior Esso Club on one occasion, which was really stupid, because of the fire hazard, and which got me a sharp rebuke from James, the white-haired old black man who operated the club for us kids. I had to admit James was right. The club building was made of wood and stood on cement oil-pots intended to keep bugs out. It could easily have been set afire.⁴

The craziest thing we kids did, however, was steal small quantities of gasoline from a tank stored outside the hydroponics garden (to power the pump motors inside). We put the gasoline in bottles, stuffed the tops with oily rags, lit the rag-fuses with matches, and then threw the "Molotov Cocktails" to get a really dramatic effect of bursting flame. Not exactly an explosion, but close enough. We threw them up against a cliff for safety reasons, but one time I almost got badly burned. Just as I raised my throwing arm over my shoulder, the fuse blazing and the bottle full of gasoline, the fuse (rag) fell out and the flaming gasoline ran all over my right arm and side. Fortunately, I was able to pat the fire out quickly and deliberately, and was saved from injury. It just scared the

⁴*We also looked up how to make gunpowder in our encyclopedia and purchased the necessary chemicals at the pharmacia in Barrancabermeja, Colombia. They didn't recognize things like H₂SO₄*

but they did things like Manganese Sulfate (It sure burned a pretty color). Production of gunpowder ended when the next door neighbor kid was using a Mennen spray deodorant bottle to dole out the gunpowder and re-sprayed some where he already had. He thought the embers were out but the resulting explosion was heard for miles and nearly blew his hand off. We were using it to blow up or burn out ant hills.

We noted that you could take a firecracker and break it in half. Then when you lit it would blaze out the break like a roman candle. Also you could jump the gun on mom's rule about setting fireworks off before a reasonable hour. You used the fuse-like string that tied all the fireworks fuses together: It was tied to the end of a fuse, extending it and burning much slower, and lit it off. Then you'd go inside and pretend to be reading a comic when it went off later, lamenting that some people had no respect for the early hour rule.

hell out of me. Not enough to make me smart, though.

A few days later, we discovered we could get a more impressive blaze by throwing the Cocktails inside a nearby cave. It was really exciting, in the dark, to see the flames flash out all over. One time, though, I threw the bottle, it burst, but the rag went out while still in the air, so there was no fire. What does a boy do in such a situation? He throws matches where the bottle landed, so as to not waste the explosion! In this case, when the flash came, it came right at me, because part of the gasoline had run along the cave floor to where I was standing! I turned, ran, and forgot there were stalactites in the neighborhood, getting a good braining as a reminder. I guess we finally figured out this wasn't such a smart thing to do, because we gave up making Molotov Cocktails--or maybe the manager of the hydroponics farm discovered his loss of gasoline and put a lock on the tank.

PATTY LYKENS & BEA BALDWIN

Patty Lykens is the first I can remember having a crush on, pre-school in Aruba. She was cute and blond. Then there was Bea Baldwin, in third grade, for which I had a "curious" interest. I even tried to feel her bottom once, during a Flash Gordon matinee at the old Esso Club, but she pushed my hand away. Bea liked Tinker Baggaley best, but that was pretty much the story with girls in Aruba--they all liked Tinker best! Bea's parents left Aruba, and Tinker and I tried to find a suitable going-away present, not the easiest thing in the world to do when you're in the third grade and don't have any money. We cut off the tip of a century-plant, which consisted of a lot of concentric cones, one inside the other. A puzzle--she'll love it! we said as we walked across the coral to her house. She didn't, but thanked us anyway. Then we tried to kiss her goodbye, but she'd have none of it! That was the end of that romance.

SARAH BOWN

Sarah Brown was one of the first “women” in my life. One old family movie shows a young, thin black girl standing in front of a wash tub, looking back over her shoulder at the camera while her arms are supporting a little white boy baby standing upright in the tub. I don’t remember Sarah that way at all. She may have been only about 20 when the picture was taken, but my earliest memories of her are as a more substantial woman. Sarah was from the English-speaking island of Grenada, located on the eastern side of the Caribbean, and how she arranged to travel all the way to Aruba, maybe 500 miles to the west, I have no idea. The Dutch Government, which controlled Aruba, did not let people come there to live on the government dole, so somehow she must have obtained a work permit. She lived in San Nicolas with several grown-up brothers and did housekeeping for them, as well as for our family: maybe one of the brothers got a job in the refinery and gradually obtained work permits for the rest of the family. Sarah rode an old-fashioned bus into Lago Colony five days a week (showing her special pass that was required for all people entering the Colony), and rode home again in the evenings--about a 30 minute ride each way. Our town had about 1000 families and most had day-maids like Sarah, so the bus traffic was quite lively. The busses were also used as school busses, and of course had no air-conditioning (nothing did in those days), but the open windows allowed a nice breeze to pass through. We Colony kids used to ride the busses, too, when going to St. Nicolas to shop at Aruba Trading Company or Nick-The-Greek’s, or to have some fresh popcorn at a luncheonette nearby.⁵

San Nicolas was what today would be called a barrio. I didn’t realize it then, although I did sense that it was different from where I lived. Aside from two or three main streets that had shops or offices on them, much of the rest was a field covered with shacks made of sheets of galvanized tin, wood with tarpaper over it, or occasionally some cinder-blocks. The main bus went on through on the road to Oranjestad, so we kids (I remember going with Gleb Aulow at least once, to buy phonograph records) would get off and walk through the barrio over to one of the other shopping streets. As poor as the houses looked, some had carports with nice cars in them. Children played in the caliche-dirt roads between the houses, and ditches along the side of the road carried raw sewage. I don’t think the area had a sewer system, or maybe some parts of it did and other parts didn’t. The caliche was spread over flat expanses of solid, grey coral rock, so sewer lines were not easy to install.

Sarah began the morning by doing dishes, and then cleaned our house. My Mother did some of the housekeeping herself, such as making beds, and all the cooking, but Sarah did everything else. In the kitchen we had a kerosene stove, fueled from a tank on the side of the stove with about one gallon capacity. Just outside the door leading from the kitchen to a cement patio, was a larger tank which the Lago Oil

Company's "Colony Service" division filled with kerosene from time to

⁵I remember the bus. Our maid also rode it. We used to give her money to buy pigeons in town for us. We had a flock of them. When the bus made rounds for school, if we were fast of foot, we could catch it in maybe three places if we missed it in front of the house. When I got a bike, I rode it to school and home for lunch, like he said. Now I can't put my foot on the pedal, push off and swing my other leg over like I used to.

time. When our stove ran out, we detached the little one-gallon metal container from the side and took it outside to fill and then return to the stove. Near the kerosene storage tank were two large porcelain washtubs. Each was about two feet by two feet by two feet, flanging out at the top, with a drain in the bottom going to our (above ground) sewer pipe, and a faucet at the top of each tub to receive brackish water we used for washing. Fresh water was at a premium in the Colony, and was piped only to the kitchen sink. All other faucets, the toilet, shower, and outside hose connections, were fed brackish water pumped from certain areas under the coral where sea water seeped in and blended with the little bit of rainwater we received, to produce "utility" water.

It may have been in one of those wash basins that Sarah gave me baths when I was a baby. Later, when I was older, I remember seeing her (and my Mother too) wash our clothes in one tub, using Oxydol brown soap (these were the days before detergents) and a metal-on-wood washboard, and then rinse them in the other tub. There was no hot running water, so a kettle was kept on the stove, and water was boiled in it to pour over dinner dishes after washing in the kitchen, and over the clothes in the rinse tub if Mother thought scalding was necessary. Mother used Clorox on many things and bluing, too, on the whites, plus starch where needed, as her mother had done before her. Since the incoming water lines were above-ground, if you washed anything around midday or early afternoon, the water coming from the pipe was plenty hot, and I don't think the clothes received kettle water very often.⁶

Sometimes my parents had dinner parties on a Saturday, and I remember Sarah sometimes worked that evening for extra pay, or came in on Sunday to clean up. On such occasions, busses were infrequent, so we would drive to her home to pick her up and drive her home. That's when I would see her brothers, usually resting on chairs on their porch. One of her brothers worked for Colony Service as a plumber or electrical repairman (I don't remember which), so I would see him fairly often in the Colony, riding along on the motor scooter the Company provided. He was always friendly and pleasant.

Sarah was almost a member of our family, but she ate after we ate,

⁶We had a set up like this at Bungalow #366 also. We knew it as the laundry room as the washing machine was there. It was also used for