

Sept 11, 1983

Raymond Gideon Conant

Born - May 30, 1912 in a log cabin in a small community in Rural Arkansas by the name of 'Oak Grove'.

There was no electricity, radio, telephone or running water, and it was 10 miles to the nearest town.

The reason we lived in this place was because of my dad's health. He had worked in a bank in Little Rock, Ark. and my mother had been a secretary. The doctor advised my Dad to move to the country because he had ulcers very badly and needed fresh air and different food, so he bought a small farm in the country.

We raised most of our food. The only food we bought was coffee, sugar, salt and flour.

We had a herd of 'Wild hogs' called Razor Backs.

They stayed in the mountains near our farm and each Fall my Dad rounded them up for our winter supply of meat. These hogs were very dangerous and would attack without warning, so we used a horse to get them back to a pen to fatten them up.

All meat had to be salt cured as there was no refrigerators. Then they were hung in a 'smoke house'.

Schools.

I attended a one-room school and there was only one teacher to teach all the children. We went to school 3 months in the winter.

and 3 months in the summer. We had to walk a mile to school on very muddy roads and it was very cold. This school only taught until the 6th grade. Then we went to a high-school in Bigelow, Ark. by wagon. The only kind of clothes I wore was overalls, except on Sunday when we went to Church, we had one good set of clothes.

Our Church was also held in the same building where we had school and we had a circuit-riding preacher who came on horseback to preach when possible.

Recreation

There was very little time for recreation as we had to work in the fields to help my Dad. When the weather was bad we had to pick off peanuts, shuck corn, and cut fire wood for heat.

The only games we had were shooting marbles and playing base ball and swimming in a creek. We had no toys except the ones we made such as sleds, wagons, bean fligs. We had no bicycles, but we did have a horse to ride.

Moved - When I was 13 years old we moved to a small town where my Dad bought a grocery store and we all worked in the store, as well as in the cotton fields.

Medicine - There was no doctor or hospital or drug store so we used natural herbs and plants for our medicine which were very effective. We were healthy children.

I attended high-school in Bigelow and was on the basketball team and on the track team as a runner and was quite good at both sports.

When I was 17 years old I went to New Orleans to live with my cousin and to go to a 'Trade School' to learn to be an electrician and a mechanic. I also worked there and attended school at night.

After marrying Violet Kreigh we moved back to Bigelow, Ark. where I built a garage and made a living as a mechanic.

During World War 2 - I got a job with the Government and worked in Little Rock, St. Louis, and Bynum, Ala. While in the Civil service I was supervisor of from 500 to 600 men working on Army tanks, trucks and other vehicles.

I also made many trips to different schools and earned 20 certificates and awards. I also traveled to Greece and to Taiwan to instruct the people there on the use of U.S. vehicles.

Hobbies. My favorite hobby for several years was riding my horse, whose name was 'Major'. I also did gardening, and wood-work. Also for about 10 years my wife and I traveled across America several times in our travel trailer 'seeing and enjoying ^{our} beautiful Country. We also went to Canada and to Germany.

Interesting People - 'Buffalo Bill' whose real name was Bill Cody was a relative of my mother's, but I did not meet him. I saw President Eisenhower at our oldest son's graduation from West Point.

Family Customs - All the children were required to work in the fields to help our parents.

Receipts - My mother made home-made bread and rolls and canned all our vegetables and meats. We raised pigs, rabbits, cows and chickens for food. We also hunted for turkeys, quails, squirrels, ducks and deer to help with our food supply. I learned to hunt at an early age.

Community activities - In Alabama where I settled with my family and built our home. I was active in many projects

I was President of the Lions Club

President of our Saddle Club

Trustee in our Church

Worked with Boy-Scouts

Worked in a Children's Camp for

poor children in Tenn. building cabins.

My wife and I celebrated our 50th Wedding Anniversary Aug. 5th. We have had a good marriage and have three fine children, 9 grand-children - and 3 great children.
God has Blessed us and our family.

Raymond B. Casant