

# Autobiography of Charles H. Heinbockel

I was born April 9, 1911, son of Charles H. Heinbockel and Anne Heinbockel. They resided at that time at 78 Downey St, in the south of Market Street area. Upon my birth, my grand mother, Margaret Daniels, born in Roscommon, Ireland, referred to me as "Sonny" which stuck to me forever. This was evidenced all during my high school and college days when at football or baseball games my mother consistently would scream out, "Sonny", "Sonny". As to residences, the first one I remember was a house on Castro Street at 17th St., and Market across from the Castro Theatre. It was in an area just south of where the Bank of America is on the corner and set way back. It was about 1917, at which time the Twin Peaks Tunnel was completed. We then moved to 187A Henry Street, which is in the area of north of Market Street and comes in to Castro Street. At this time my father was a bar-tender at Noe and Market Street. (Ron has a picture of this). It was at this time I really got to know my grand-father, George Daniels, who was born in Oslo, Norway, and was raised by a cruel minister. I can still picture him as a kind and gentile man. He was a stevedore and I remember nights looking out the window waiting for him to come up the hill. (At times he had a few too many and I went to meet this fine old gentleman and got him in to the house). He told me of almost being "Shanghai'd" in the now Broadway, North Beach Area -- Where ship captains attempted to get you drunk and put you aboard his ship.

Our next move was to 60 Ramona Street, between 14th and 15th and Gurrero and Dolores Streets. I have many remembrances

- (1) Horse drawn fire engines**
- (2) Fond memories of Marshal Grammar School during World War I**
- (3) The dreaded and serious Flu Epidemic. All S.F. residences had to wear masks. I was the only family member who didn't get the flu. Our neighbors, McDevitts would bring down bread pudding and I would feed the family.**
- (4) The McDevitts, my Mom and I would attend mass every Tuesday at St. Boniface Church on Golden Gate Avenue. Had to take street cars and be there for an 8:00 A.M. mass. At the time our family was very active at their fairs.**
- (5) Initial interest in baseball. My dad was an old time ball player in New York and had many friends ending up in the old Pacific Coast League, after having spent time in the Big Leagues. They were now playing at old Recreation Park, Valencia at 15th Streets. (Now a housing project which is dope ridden). Among them were:
  - a. "Rube" Oldring who played in the 1911 and 1913 World Series with the Philadelphia Athletics.**
  - b. Oscar Stanage, played with the Detroit team.**
  - c. Oliver Mitchell.****

**After the ball games they all enjoyed coming up to the house and partaking of my mother's beer (Home Brew). Remember, -- this was prohibition days**

- (6) Xmas Time: Happy to get my first pair of Union Hardware**

skates! In those days one gift was it!

- (7) I remember playing hockey in the streets with palm tree limbs.
- (8) My Dad, during his one week vacation, collected metals, bottles and papers in a cart, wheeling these to a junk yard for what few bucks he could get for the value, -- he walked for blocks.

Our next move was to Shotwell Street, about 1922, between 17th and 18th Streets, -- St. Charles Parish. Became a member of the Boy Scouts, Troop 64. located at the French Church on Bush St. and Grant Ave. Remember: Any traveling around S.F. was done by street car, -- we had no car!

A family argument with the owners (Ganley's) resulted in them raising our rent, -- hence our next move to 504 Shotwell Street.

Here a few memories remain in my mind:

- (1) Started taking violin lessons at the Community Music School at 544 Capp Street. This developed my interest in music. We went to Lagunda Honda and the Jewish Community Center and played for the elderly. This led to my playing the violin and viola in the high school orchestra
- (2) Started selling newspapers, 1st at 17th and Mission and then at 19th and Mission Sts. We then had three afternoon papers:  
Call  
Bulletin

## Daily News

I remember waiting for the papers reporting the results of the Dempsey-Firpo and Dempsey-Carpentier fights. You must remember we had no radio or T.V. at the time. I, with my papers, was the first word of the fight results. At times, I brought home \$0.30 and this was all we had in the house.

- (3) Still prohibition days! My dad had a good friend, Tim, who knew how to make "booze", so a still was set up on one of our closets, at 504 Shotwell St, S.F. When it blew up one night , needless to say, my mother said, "Get it out of here"!
- (4) At this time my dad met another of his old time baseball friends, Bob Geary. He was the ace of the S.F. Seals. He took me under his wings and I was agast! As opening day pitcher he took me in as his guest at the old Recreation Park, -- At 15th and Valencia Sts.
- (5) By this time I was attending Mission Grammar School, (Mission Street between 15th and 16th Streets). Still taking violin lessons and selling newspapers.

Here in the 7th grade an incident occurred which really influenced my life. My friend Jon Gilmour put a tack in my seat resulting in my screaming. My teacher "Skinny" Noon never forgave me and failed me!! This being left back meant that I would never have made a friend of Louie Hass at Mission High School, who talked me in to going out for football at

M.H.S. For some unknown reason we moved again to 17th and South Van Ness above the grocery store (S.E. corner). Still taking violin and viola lessons. About 1925, my aunt Addie, Addie Ross, my dad's sister encouraged my parents to purchase a home at 575 Jersey Street. She arranged the loan through her husband. Cost of the house was about \$4000 with payments of about \$30 per month.

Many memories of 575 Jersey Street.

- (1) Started Mission High School, -- 18th and Dolores Sts.
- (2) Had an A.M. Examiner Route (paper) for two years. Up every morning at 4:30 - 7 days a week. Pay : \$15 per month.
- (3) During '28 and '29 worked at the Examiner Friday and Saturdays.  
In those days the Sunday paper had to have all sections manually inserted . We worked Friday nights from 6 p.m. to 2 A.M. and then came back on Saturday and worked from 2 P.M. to midnight. Pay was \$0.50 per hour.
- (4) Just prior to darkness I used to assist in "Lamp Lighting". We had no electric lights, -- only gas lights on a pole. Carried two extension poles, -- one to open light plate the other was a torch which flame would light the gas light. In the A.M. I went around and extinguished the gas flame.

The summer of '29 our Phys. Ed. teacher Mr. Wieland took ten of us up to Feather River Inn. Here we caddied and I also worked in

(page 5)

the laundry. Took time to ride freight to Reno with Jack Baat and Louie Hass and was also called out to fight a forest fire. At the end of the summer my pay amounted to \$100 which I turned over to my mother. This was a huge amount at that time.

- (5) On Sundays I played Semi-Pro baseball for several teams, and later, while at Saint Mary's. The teams included:
- a. FRATERNAL ORDR OF EAGLES
  - b. Cartman Tires
  - c. Fosters Lunch: This was in the Industrial League and we played S.F., Santa Rosa, Santa Cruz, Felton and all military bases.

(6) Football at Mission High School:

1927: 130# team: Championship.

1929: AAA Championship. 1st for Mission High School

I was voted unanimous choice for All-City End.

- (7) Played 2 years of baseball at Mission High School. Had one great game, -- 2 Home runs in one game against Galileo H.S.
- (8) Dec. '29 Graduation I gave the graduation speech "Ideals In Athletics". At the graduation I was also in the orchestra playing my viola!

In January 1930 I entered Saint Mary's college on a football scholarship including Board-Room-Tuition. At that time S.M.C. was all male with about 300 students, -- 80 of whom were on football scholarships. I had a great frosh year including Captain for the California-S.M.C. game at memorial Stadium at Cal. My roommate was "Dutch" Beader.

During summer and Xmas vacations George McKeever, an alumnus of Saint Mary's and top man at Barret and Hilp Construction firm, put me to work on jobs at Homestead Bakery, California Ink Building and the Golden Gate Bridge.

As a sophomore, while scrimmaging on the Jim Smith Field I broke my leg. I lost a full semester, since in those days a broken leg incapacitated one for months. This took care of my football days at Saint Mary's.

Saint Mary's, in those days was not Co-Ed. Further, -- no liquor in room whatever! Can still see Brother Henry finding some port wine in our room and pouring it down the sink. Remember, -- those were prohibition days. Also, being male only--no females in your room whatever. Even on a Homecoming Day when my Mother and sister were there, you had to leave the door open.

Graduated June '34. Jobs were scarce. One couldn't even get a job as a bank messenger @ \$65 per month. A friend, Bob Taylor, got me a job with Safeway--drove around in a truck and helped keep signs in order. About this time the Olympic club approached me to play for their '34 football team made up of all former college players. We played a full schedule including Stanford, Santa Clara, Army and other top college

teams.

About June '34 went to work on the Golden Gate Bridge for the cable outfit of Roebling Bros. I had worked previously on the bridge during the summer of '33. At that time I worked on the Anchor Blocks and Pylons on both the north and south towers.

'34: Towers were being prepared for stringing the first "cat-walk" cable. My job included fire-proof painting huge planks to be used as flooring a-top the towers. Also had to install a 12'x12' wooden rubbing block on shelf of the north tower to preclude cat-walk cable from rubbing on steel shelf. (Had to hang over the side 900' up and secure blocks from underneath with huge bolts screws). Was scary, although my safety belt was secured to the tower. During this time I was assigned to work with Charles Lindros and Chris Anderson as a crew-team. Both of these men were swept out to sea, along with 8 other men on February 17, 1937 when the safety net collapsed and wound around them with no chance of freeing themselves. This was the only fatal accident on the G.G. Bridge construction.

In the summer of '35 I was talked into going back to school by Charlie Schefflin and getting my teaching credential. A great friend he was,--financed my full year at University of Southern California. No way could my parents help me. I enrolled at U.S.C. with three other S.M. football players. Room and board at this time was \$30 per month. Having finished by the summer of '36, "China" Lang and I hit out for Lake Tahoe and went to work at Cal-Neva. At that time Cal-Neva was the #1 casino on the Lake. We did everything there,--parked cars,

(page 8)



worked in the casino, even filed fish for the Chef, and I even worked as a dishwasher. During the mornings I had a job driving a dry cleaners truck to Reno each A.M. Learned to play the crap table at this time and couldn't lose! Was just beginners luck I am sure , since in these later years I can't come out ahead ever!

Summer of '36 I was hired by the Maxwell Union High School District @ \$1800 a year, average pay then. Then I bought my new Chrysler Royal for \$1100. So you see,-- \$ is relative. My coaching duties included football, baseball, basketball, and speedball. Also had to teach typing , bookkeeping and shorthand. For shorthand I had taken a crash course at one of the business colleges. Upon finishing I had the answer book to the shorthand text. Later on this helped Kay in her attempt to learn shorthand! Maxwell was great duck, pheasant and goose country! Encouraged by the natives to become a hunter, I went and bought my first and only shotgun,-- a double barrel Ithica. We could go out and get as many as 100 frogs per night. Being the great cook that I was, Al Heame, my principal and roommate, and I, would have all the single female elementary teachers to dinner which included: Frog legs

Duck

Pheasant

While frog hunting one evening we were fired upon: The individual who fired upon us thought we were hog rustlers.

#### 1941-THE WAR YEARS AND MEETING KAY

I started my football officiating career at this time,--refereeing Colusa, Yuba City, Williams, Oroville, Sacramento and Willows. April 12, 1941! My roommate at SMC, "Dutch" Beader coaxed me down from Maxwell and fixed me up with a "Blind Date", who happened to be Catherine McCarthy. We had a great night at the then "Bal Tabarin" at North Beach. THIS WAS IT! Sent roses the next day!

May 20, 1941: Received Induction Notice from President Roosevelt in the form of "Greetings" to report for duty with the U.S. Army. Lucky me: The District Intelligence Office, 12th Naval District, sent memo to all school superintendents that they were enlisting H.S. graduates for Yeoman Ratings. Being a typing teacher I immediately applied and was given a Chief Yeoman Rating. Career U.S.N. Chief Yeomen resented those of us who were given this rate and referred to us as "Slick Arm Chiefs",--no 4 year hashmarks on our sleeves. I always felt that I should have been commissioned Ensign at the time in view of my college degree. It so happened that the personnel officer Stan McMaffery seemed to hold the commissions for Stanford and Cal grads. He was from Cal and later became a good friend of mine. I subsequently applied for a commission with the Tunney Program,--an athletic program. The officer in charge was CDR Aroff. A few weeks later his aide called me and said, "How did you expect to get a commission from him with your German name." Subsequently CDR Aroff was court martialed for selling commissions. Among those involved in his favoritism was Chief Tony Martin (known as Al Martin while attending Saint Mary's College during my frosh year). He was married to CYD Charise, famous Hollywood dancer. Tony was released

from the Navy and inducted into the Army.

Having been sworn into the Navy I was assigned (Undercover) to the American Tel. and Tel. Co. overseas building on Grant Avenue. Here we intercepted and recorded all telephone calls between the Japanese Embassy in Washington and Tokyo as well as all civilian calls to or from Japan. We had broken the Japanese code so all calls we recorded were sent on to Washington for decoding.

Feb. '42 Asked Kay to marry me and she accepted. We became engaged and celebrated it on Valentines Day. We set our date for the wedding,--May 30 and sent out the invitations.

SURPRISE! Approximately May 15, I was commissioned Ensign and ordered to report to Northwestern University, Chicago on 22 May, for Officer Indoctrination and future assignment. I didn't want to tell Kay and have shock set in, since they were having a shower for her that evening. So I went to see "Dad" McCarthy at his Internal Revenue Office. His response, "Great,--a honeymoon on the Navy". Phyl Murtagh came to the rescue and called all who had received invitations to tell of the change,-- wedding to be held May 19. Kay's dad volunteered to go to the city hall and get the marriage license. The clerk thought Dad was the groom at which he had to inform him that he was her Dad! It was quite a hassle getting my physicals, shots, uniforms, blood tests, etc. Wedding came off without a hitch and we were off to Chicago. That evening we took the ferry over to Oakland and boarded train for Chicago at 2000. Why train? Those days there were few airlines. All those who didn't attend the wedding came over on the ferry to see us off. For the whole trip we were consistently letting the rice (flow) from our clothes. We arrived May 22 and Kay

checked into the Maryland Hotel. I was billeted in Abbott Hall,--given liberty of one hour each evening and some week-ends off. Fortunately Kay was only a few blocks away.

In August '42 I received orders to Amphibious Landing force, Atlantic Fleet, Norfolk, VA. and assigned to the USS Harry Lee for Amphibious Training. I went to sea and Kay went to New York and stayed with my Aunt and Uncle Ellerbusch and their daughter Dorothy. In late July we came in to port at Norfolk for some repairs. I called Kay to come to Norfolk for the week-end. After the weekend Kay went to the train station and I went back aboard the Harry Lee. SURPRISE! the Exec. Officer called me in to his quarters and informed me that I had orders back to the Twelfth Naval District, Intelligence Office. Fortunately, Kay was still there (long wait). We both went back to New York to the Ellerbusches and after a few days entrained for San Francisco. Reason for the change in orders? Captain Offley requested me back because of experience in the intercepting procedures. We took up residence at 250 Lobos St., where, on October 29, 1944, Bob was born at Mary's Help Hospital, which at that time was located on Guerrero St. at 14th. Arlene was also born on Lobos St. on June 8, 1947 at St. Lukes Hospital. We later bought and moved to Bixby St. But after about one year the property was taken by Eminent Domain for a playground. We moved the house to 385 Monticello St. (1949) having purchased the lot. The house movers almost lost the house as they maneuvered it down some hilly streets. Ron was born here on February 4, 1950 at St. Lukes Hospital.

With the war ending in late '45, I decided not to go back to Maxwell

(page 12)

but to attempt to teach in San Francisco. This worked out well, thanks to "Dutch" Conlan and Jim Dierke, both S.F. administrators. At this time I took to officiating football again doing high school, J.C., State Univ., and worked games at Stanford and San Jose State and Pacific. Was member and served as president of Northern California Football Officers Association. I was assigned to Mission H.S. and then to the Apprentice School at S.F. Naval Shipyard. I taught Civics and History to the Apprentices (all WW II vets) who spent three weeks in the shops and one week in academics. I enlisted in the Naval Reserve (Submarine Division) at the shipyard. Interesting in that my 2 week training duty included training in Sub operations,--periscope, blowing tanks, etc. In 1951 with the Korean conflict on I was recalled to active duty with the District Intelligence Office, 12Nd. The purpose was to draw up a Telecommunications Censorship Plan for 12ND and to conduct Seminars for Naval Reservists in this field. I held Seminars in S.F., San Diego, Chicago, New York, Hawaii, and Washington D.C. About this time my rank was Commander. As additional duty I was on several occasions assigned as local aide for foreign Naval Officers who were guests of the Chief of Naval Operations (Arleigh Burke) and traveling throughout the U.S. Some included high ranking officers from Japan, Dominican Republic, Brazil, Finland and Ecuador. The Ecuadoran chief of Naval Operations liked me so much he insisted I accompany his party back to Wash., D.C. and on to Quito, Ecuador. Spent a few interesting days in his country. A beautiful jewel box is in your mother's possession a gift to Mom from the CNO of Ecuador. The Brazilian Chief of Naval Operations thought so much of me, he later

(page 13)

invited me back to Wash., D.C. for the presentation of a medal of Honor at their Embassy. We didn't go back but on subsequent visit of his to 12Nd he made the presentation at the Commandant 12ND residence. Kay certainly had a lot to do with my success in these ventures by attending formal functions with me. ATTEST TO THIS: The Brazilian CNo presented her with an Aqua Marine Stone which has been appraised at \$1800.

About May 1960 I received orders to the Pentagon, Office of Naval Intelligence, Foreign Liaison Office. In this capacity I had liaison with foreign Naval Attaches from some 50 countries. It involved approving their travel (especially the Russian Naval Attaches who were REALLY restricted), request for documents, Confidential, Secret, etc., arranging and traveling with the attaches on an annual two week tour to the Carribean or Hawaii with several stop-overs, and arranging meetings with other Pentagon officers. These two week tours were very extensive.

Example: Washington, S.F., Hawaii and on to San Diego. This one I took as the official aide. Another tour, Panama, Cuba (Guantonomo Bay) Puerto Rico and Florida. Other interesting tours I took:

- (1) Admiral Kovisto of Finland included helicopter ride out of Norfolk, landed on Carrier, Essex, stayed overnight and next day took off via plane.
- (2) Included in party to Cape Canaveral to take ship to sea and witness the first firing of a missile from submerged submarine, the SSB Washington.
- (3) Duty also involved Kay and I attending social functions at foreign Embassies and/or homes of the Attaches. This involved us going out 4 or 5 nights every week,-- including Black Tie,

White Tie, Uniform, Blue or White. (Refer to O NI Scrap Book)

- (4) Of all our social events at Embassies the one that we can't forget was the day President Kennedy declared the embargo on Russia-Cuba,--Oct. 23, 1962. (The invitation to the Russian Embassy for this date is on the board for the coffee table.) The day of the Embassy function, Admiral Lowrance, Director of Naval Intelligence, called me in and said, "Flag and Senior Officers will regret the Russian Embassy Social this evening due to the Embargo. The only U.S. Navy representation will be you and Kay." Lois Melesky (Salvia) went with us that evening. It so happened Kay and Lois were both in black and her comment was, "Should anything happen to us, at least we are in black". It was a most interesting evening with the Russians "badgering" us about the Embargo.

The billet also gave me contacts for special White House, FBI and Congress visits. While in Pentagon, we lived at 5500-9th Road North, Arlington, VA. I shutter to relive and realize the many responsibilities I had in this billet. I served under three Directors of Naval Intelligence and three Chiefs of Naval Operations, the highest position a Naval Officer can hold. My favorite was CNO Arleigh Burke (31 knot Burke). I briefed him many times and Kay and I attended many parties at his Naval Observatory residence (It is now the residence of the Vice President). While in Arlington, Bob and Arlene attended Bishop O'Connell High School, and Ron attended St. Ann's School. In 1963 Bob took off for St. Mary's. Ron had his paper route, a duck and ants. Arlene starred in High School Plays.

July 1964: Received orders back to COM 12 (S.F.) and assigned to the District Intelligence Office, now known as the Naval Investigative Service. We sold our beautiful 5 bedroom/brick house and set out for S.F. via Lake Tahoe where we spent time with Bob who was working at one of the clubs during his summer vacation. Arrived S.F. and spent time with Frank and June McCarthy while house hunting. I returned to the Pentagon since my relief had not arrived,-- still no house. I resided in the Bachelors Officers Quarters at the Naval Gun Factory. Eventually Kay called, having found a house, 2980 Dolores Way, Burlingame, but was concerned about the ability to purchase,--almost in tears. Assured kay that the \$42,000 purchase price was no problem. Come Sept. '64 Bob at St. Mary's, Ron at Our lady of Angels, and Arlene in senior year at Mercy Hi School. I arrived back in S.F. and assumed my duties at the Naval Investigative Service. Duties again consisted of revising and bringing up to date Telecommunications Censorship Plans and conducting seminars in this field in other Districts including San Diego, Chicago and New York. In our Naval Reserve Division we had many prominent individuals like Secret Service, Bureau of Narcotics and State Prison Personnel. As a result CDR Obert and I were witnesses to two gas executions at San Quintin, (Just a side light)

December 1965: Received orders to Vietnam (MACV)--Military Assistance Command Vietnam. I was the U.S. Navy rep on a team of Navy, Air Force and Army. We were a team to plan for possible implementation of Armed Forces mail and Telecommunications Censorship. This was a high-level, secret planning group (since de-classified). We briefed the



U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Henry Cabot Lodge and the Commander, MACV, General Westmoreland. I was billeted at the majestic Hotel in Saigon, now known as Ho chi Minh City. Mission accomplished, we returned via Hawaii where we briefed Commander Hawaiian Sea Frontier. Headed for home where Kay and kids picked me up at Travis Air force Base. Arrived home about mid-night to find, to my surprise, the Murtaghs, Junge's, who with our kids had put the back yard in shape,--Cabana, concrete slabs and plants. The next day I enplaned for Washington, D.C., to brief the Joint Chiefs of Staff of our Vietnam mission. I returned to Com 12 and in July 1967 retired after 22 years active duty. After having been on military leave from the S.F. school District I was assigned to the John O'Connell Vocational High School,-- 21st and Harrison Sts. It was recognized as the best Vocational High School in California,--had 28 trade courses. I was assigned to teach Civics and made every attempt to make Republicans out of the students.

June 1976 I retired from the S.F. school District. During the period 1967-82, I served as a Director and President of the Saint Mary's College Gaelsports. During the period 1983-85 I served as a Director on the Hanna Boys Center Staff.

1987 was elected to the Mission H.S. "Wall of Fame".

1994 was elected to the Mission H.S. "Athletic Hall of Fame".

Ever since 1940 I was a member of the Old time Baseball Players Assn. and was later selected as a Life Member

Sept. 26, 1982: Was awarded the SIGNUM FIDEI award by St. Mary's College for outstanding participation in the goals of higher education, in

the spirit of the founder of the Christian Brothers, patron of all teachers,  
St. John Baptist de La Salle

### REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST

1. DEPRESSION: At times parents had but what money I brought home from selling papers at 19th and Mission St which amounted \$0.30.
2. Dr. Williams: would make a home visit and never charge my mother.
3. With no television our evening entertainment consisted of my sister Dorothy playing the piano and John and I playing our violins.
4. My usual Xmas present was a pair of Union Roller Skates. Quite different today.
5. Horse drawn fire engines with the hay in the stations.
6. Went everywhere by street car,--no automobile.

As of this time in my life (November 1996) I have been so blessed with a wonderful loving wife and dedicated mother, and our wonderful son Bob, our wonderful daughter, Arlene and our wonderful son Ron. Our daughter-in-law Chris and our son-in-law Dick have been a joy and a pleasure to be such a great part of our family.

Our life has been further enhanced by having our wonderful GRAND CHILDREN,--Jennifer, Kevin, Jillian, Anna, Cassie and Charlie. How blessed we are for having them around to give us such great pleasure with pride and joy that we treasure from each and every one of them.