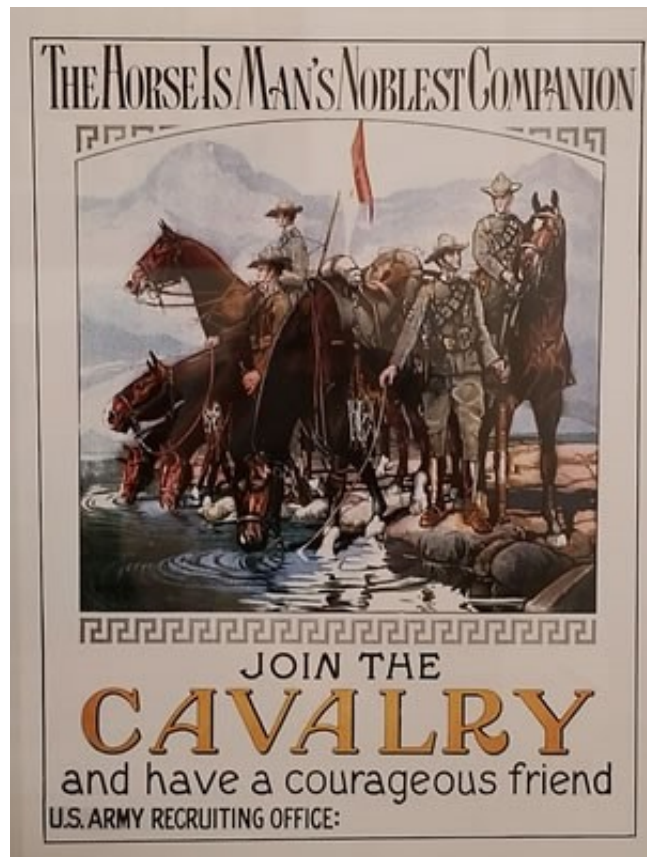


**PART TWO: THE MAN WHO WROTE THIS STORY**

**by Felicita Trueblood, March 2017**

So, who was Cavalry Captain Wallace Hamilton? Handsome, standing only five feet six inches tall, always smartly dressed and always a gentleman. There are stories to save for another time, among them a train trip from his home in Indianapolis in 1897 with his Aunt Gene, to her home near Boise, Idaho, during which my 7-year-old dad claimed to have encountered Buffalo Bill Cody. There are also his days in the horse Cavalry in San Diego and Imperial Counties, World War II in the jungles of Trinidad, and many more tales of adventure.

Coming from a family of accountants, Dad made his first trip to California in 1913 at age 23 to work for the San Francisco office of the Remy Electric Company. I can think of no worse fate for my father than a desk job in accounting. In 1914, a call went out to join the U.S. Cavalry under the command of John J. "Black Jack" Pershing, who amassed a 12,000-fighting force to



Cavalry Recruiting Poster 1914

stave off the advances of Mexican revolutionary and folk hero Francisco “Pancho” Villa. This must have been much more to his liking because he signed right up. He knew how to ride a horse and must have loved the idea of an outdoor job. Dad enlisted on December 15, 1913 and was sworn into First U.S. Cavalry Troop B at the hospital on Angel Island in San Francisco Bay on February 8, 1914. He later wrote an article for the San Diego Union newspaper on April 17, 1932, describing his arrival in San Diego in August of 1914, writing *“It was a provisional squadron of the First Cavalry that San Diego entertained within her fair borders in the years of the Exposition, Troops A, B, D and M. The officers and men arrived on the old army transport Bufford, having been lightered aboard at Monterey, California, Regimental Headquarters [on August 2, 1914]. Civilian Pack Train No. 12, reminiscent of the old Indian fighting days, and the troop horses came by train. The outfits rode to San Ysidro, then but a quaint village in the Tijuana River bottom and made camp.”*



Christmas Card to Family from Cavalry Camp, 1915

Before the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition opened, Dad’s Cavalry regiment marched into San Diego’s Balboa Park to occupy a model camp, to be observed “in action” by Exposition visitors. Dad continues, *“Many will remember the parades, reviews and escorts of 1915. That one for Admiral Howard [Navy Admiral Thomas Benton Howard, March 7, 1915] when the Cavalry galloped up Sixth Avenue from Laurel to Upas while the mounted First Cavalry band sat their quiet steeds opposite the distinguished reviewers seated in cars. G. Aubrey Davidson [Exposition president] in a high hat stood beside the Admiral. The amusing part was General George Van Horn Moseley, the Captain of M Troop, felt the review should be rehearsed. The Cavalrymen were ordered to put on their best clothes. The rehearsal was not so hot. Horses ran away and got out of hand to break formations. Rain had fallen during the night and there was mud. The galloping horses in front plastered the succeeding ranks with slime. It was a wrathful bunch of Cavalrymen that pounded past the reviewing party in the afternoon, their*



Gunpowder Art, Cavalry Camp, 1917

*clothes dirty, but in as sweet an alignment as was ever maintained at a gallop and despite that the citizens of San Diego, assembled in rows beneath gently swaying Cocos Plumosa palms fringing the lip of the park, waved umbrellas, handkerchiefs and what not, shouted lustily within inches of the flanking mounts of the column-of-platoon formation.” “Theodore Roosevelt, though no longer president, was the only man for whom the Cavalry ever turned out in full dress uniform during the Exposition years. It was “blues” that day and willingly for “Teddy”.*

On August 24, 1915, Dad’s regiment moved further east along the Mexican border. In 1916, he became a Sergeant Major with the Southern California Border District in Calexico and was appointed Corporal on February 9, 1917. His regiment remained guarding the border while General Pershing launched his “Punitive Expedition” into Mexico. Having fallen under the control of the California National Guard, his regiment was moved from Calexico on April 4, 1917 to the National Guard Armory in Exposition Park in Los Angeles. On April 6, the day President Woodrow Wilson declared war, many soldiers, my dad included, volunteered for





Army Commission, Second Lieutenant of Cavalry, August 5, 1917

overseas duty with the Army and Navy. He volunteered for the Regular Army, his desire to go to France to fight the “Huns”.

Shortly after volunteering for duty in Europe, during his very brief stay with the National Guard in Los Angeles, Dad met a young lady named Alta McCrea, who was studying at the nearby University of Southern California. Alta’s father, George, was a banker in the “Orange Belt” in Ontario, California. Dad must have advised his parents that Alta was “the one”, as he

mentions her constantly in his letters home. He refers to her as "*Princess Laddie*", fully expecting to marry her upon his return from the war.

By Presidential proclamation dated June 3, 1917, the California National Guard was drafted into Federal service effective August 5 of that year. Dad became a Second Lieutenant and then a First Lieutenant, with those June and August dates reflected in his documents. On his way east, he spent July 15 to September 15 at the U.S. Army School of the Line at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas as part of the Second Cavalry headquartered in Ft. Ethan Allen in Vermont, and the month of October with the U.S. Army School of Fire for Field Artillery at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. The first letter I have from him, written to his mother on November 5, 1917 from Richmond, Virginia, recounts that he was [as part of the 77<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery from December 1, 1917 to March 1, 1918], following the coast route, expecting to pass through Columbia, South Carolina, Atlanta, Georgia and Birmingham, Alabama. They were headed for Camp Shelby at Hattiesburg, Mississippi, their ultimate destination being Camp Greene, near Charlotte, North Carolina.

This is where the next letter finds him on March 10, 1918, where he has been assigned as Exchange Officer, putting his accounting skills to work. Reassigning him to desk jobs would become the unfortunate pattern of his relatively short military career. While at Camp Greene, Dad visited his cousin, Charles Hamilton, at the "*old Hamilton place*" in Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties. "*In a little church yard called Ramah, which Cousin Charles keeps up, are buried six generations of Hamilton dead. At the home of the Wallace's...I saw several pictures of Hamilton's who have the same long Thespian chin that I boast. Cousin Charles is about my size and build with the same general cast of countenance.*" That "Thespian" chin continues to be a family trait.

On February 19, 1918, Dad became a Captain of Cavalry, retroactive from August 5, 1917. All wartime commissions were considered "temporary", as his documents show. He finally left for France in May 1918, along with a great wave of American soldiers, arriving in Bordeaux later that month. In a letter to his mother, back home in Indianapolis, written on September 11, 1918, he recounts, for the first time, an overview of his adventures since finally arriving at the Front in August of that year, by which time the Germans had advanced to the Marne, within 50 miles of Paris. Giving his family details of his Overseas Courier Service activities was not allowed: "*Of course, you are wondering what kind of a soft job I have found here to jump from Paris to London, etc. I haven't explained very full to date, I admit. However, forgive me, and I shall herein reveal the entire story. I was in the Marne pocket between the Oise-Aisne and Rheims when I received my orders to report back to the Services of Supply in Tours. As we were*

*right in the thick of the fireworks, it was a bit hard to have to go back. I stalled around up there as long as I could but finally had to travel. It seems that I was sent back because I did not successfully pass the examination at the Artillery School at Saumur, soon after arriving at Bordeaux. In addition to running the battery, I had two jobs to worry about. I didn't have time to study and I knew all the time I was slipping a little but was unable to be relieved from my extra duties. The queer thing is, my superiors didn't care whether I got by or not. When General Preston left the outfit, I fear I lost my standing. He, having at last approved of me, would most certainly have given me a fair trial. I didn't get it after he left. But I am not worrying. I'll get a chance later on to get up in the fighting live. When I reported at Services of Supply headquarters in Tours, I asked that my case be investigated. In the meantime, I was sent to the Overseas Courier Office of the Military Postal Express Service at SOS. The day after reporting, I was sent to London. The officers I am now associated with are the first [Cavalry officers] I have met up with since Cavalry Colonel Wilder and Captain Moyhier. Captain (later Major) Peaslee is one fine chap.*

*The day after my return from London, Captain Peaslee decided that I should see the Paris office. We motored up from Tours that afternoon. I can think of nothing more beautiful than this auto trip of the Valley of the Loire through Orleans. The rivers over here are more like our creeks but how beautiful they are. Houses, lawns, vineyards and gardens and old chateaus crown the banks, giving them a finished look, not necessarily formal like Fall Creek but complete and picturesque. Nothing uncouth or inharmonious. In Orleans, I saw the statue of Joan of Arc and bought some postcards depicting the episodes of her tragic and eventful career.*

*At Etampes, where there is an old ruin which I sketched, we stopped for dinner. The hotel was very prettily furnished. We drove in the courtyard and unpacked the car. As we passed in the dining room, I caught a good glimpse of the kitchen. How tidy and tempting it looked. I noticed too that the kettles were all made of copper and were of various sizes, from quite small to very, very large. To possess them would delight any American housewife's heart. It is so pleasing to be treated so politely and hospitably as is the custom of the French, especially outside of Paris, in the country and smaller towns. The dinner was excellent, and we were prone to linger over it.*

*We reached Paris at a quarter to eleven. And as we felt our way along the St. Germain in the Foire Quarter, the "Alerts" sounded. Never have I heard such a riot of offensive sound. Stationary sirens and moving sirens filled the night with their frightful shrieks. The Huns were somewhere overhead on a bomb dropping run. A Gendarme directed us to an "Abri" and thus we*

*waited (outside of it) for the fireworks to end. The "All Clear" did not sound until about two o'clock a.m. and in the mean time we went on to the hotel and to bed. I was too tired to worry about bombs, for I had made an auto trip from Le Mans to Tours the evening before, which allowed me just three hours sleep in 48. And besides, the trip from London had fatigued me.*

*Since that time, I have been stationed in Paris and have an office in the hotel which the Postal Service has taken over. Our business is to collect dispatches going to Washington and nurse the Overseas Couriers along. I have with me a Lieutenant of Engineer named MacCurdy and he is one fine Scotsman. Also, I have two enlisted men in the office, one of them is named Poors and he, before being drafted, was a poet but I find him very useful. The "muse" doesn't hinder his work.*

*I suppose I should rave over being stationed in Paris. Next to being up Front, I'll admit it is a wonderful fate. Paris is undoubtedly fascinating and beautiful. I am making the most of my time and see as much of it as possible, lest I depart soon.*

*But I like London too. I have made two trips over and may go again soon. But when I go, I am there but a few days. In the evenings, I visit the theatre. There are many fine shows to be seen in London and there are none here that appeal to me, although the Follies of 1918 from New York open up here in a few days. It will be fine business to see an American show.*

*I see the Allen's quite often. They are at the Christian Science War Relief and Reading Room at No. 3 Avenue de l'opera. They are my sweet people. I dropped in to see them yesterday and met Miss Siler, the harpist who knows Taiche (Dad's sister) and who is one of Mildred Dilling's (Dad's adopted cousin and renowned harpist) friends and pupils. It was quite a reunion. Later in the evening, at the University Union, I met Ray Bonsit, an old Shortridge High School athlete whom Taiche will know. Miss Siler asked why Taiche didn't join the YMCA and come over here and sing for the Americans. I told her she couldn't prove it by me. There are lots of American women over here, but they are nurses and homely as Sam Hill."*

*Dad also mentioned the difficulty staying in touch with Alta. "It is surely trying to love to wait so long for mail". He had been on the move all during 1918 and, as he notes in his story, the Military Postal Express Service had a tough time keeping up.*

*In a letter to his mother from October 1, 1918, Dad has this to say: "Received a very interesting letter from Dad yesterday, found it waiting for me when I returned from London. Bless his heart he seems to have his hands full at the bank with his help! I guess it is pretty tough*

*having to break in a new lot of help continuously. But after while he will get used to it. It is hard for me to appreciate the changes that have taken place in the States since I left in May. I suppose when I return, I shall find conditions much the same there as in England and to see women working at almost everything. Still it is surprising how many men one sees.*

*On the way to London and over there I meet many British, Canadian and Australian officers. I like them tremendously. Sunday, I met a Colonel in the British Army who has been on active service 27 years! He has been through most of England's campaigns and has been fighting in this war since 1914. I'll say he was interesting. He was on his way home to the North of Scotland.*

*Last Friday, while strolling along the Boulevard des Capucines here, a very charming young woman stopped me on the street. "Surely I know you!" she exclaimed. Can you imagine my surprise – it was Mrs. Maeve Cosgrove (was Beryl Hewler Jones) who I almost fell in love with in San Francisco six years ago. I was surprised to see her. I saw her last the day she got on the boat at San Francisco bound for Honolulu. It seems she returned to Toronto, Canada and married an old sweetheart who is now a Colonel in the Canadian Army. She had been in the South of France along the Riviera for several months but came to Paris that day. She expects her husband here soon on leave. It is strange, but I am continuously meeting people over here in an unexpected way. Great city, Paris."*

*On October 12, Dad shared with his dad an assortment of news, seeming to have no idea that the Armistice was just weeks away: "Mother reminds me to get the order for my sox and cap. I have just learned that an order will not enable me to get these things sent over, for no packages are being accepted. As I told you in a recent letter, provisions are being made so that every soldier and officer in the AEF may receive a small Christmas package this year. I advised Alta that I would send my permit to you and for her to send something to go in the box with your things. The package must be small, 9 x 4 x 3, and not much can be sent. I really do not need the sox and the cap, so I suggest that you give these to the Red Cross or to some soldier that really needs them.*

*I'll try to think of what I need most and advise you later. I do need the little "housewife" that Alta has made for me. I sent her an order signed by the Assistant Chief of the Postal Express Service but nevertheless they may not let her send it on that authority. If not, and it is not too large, perhaps she can send it over with the Christmas things. The shops and stores in Paris and*



*London are so wonderfully well supplied that I can get almost everything that I need without trouble. Were I at the Front, it would, of course, be quite different.*

*While I think of it, I subscribed for the Stars and Stripes for six months and ordered it sent to the Colonade [Library] for the benefit of the family. I suppose you have read this paper, if it is available in the States. When it begins to come regularly you all must read it from cover to cover. I am quite sure you will not have to be told to do so a second time, for it is undoubtedly the most American paper we have. It fairly breathes the spirit of the American E.F. and is delightful reading throughout. I generally find time to read every word of it. As you know, it is printed over here in Paris [established February 8, 1918]. The circulation jumps so rapidly they can hardly keep up with it.*

*Just as soon as I can make arrangements to have it packed suitably, I shall send you a [German] Boche helmet. I picked it up in a forest about 15 miles north of Chateau Thierry from which the Huns had been driven a day or so before. The forest was littered with their stuff and I never saw so many shells in my life. I gathered in a rifle too. Some Hun hound of hell must have dropped it in his hurry to get away from the Americans. Or maybe he was buried near there and not deep, for the woods were far from fragrant. Of course, I can't send this home but perhaps they will let me bring it. They didn't take time to bury the Huns very deep. I remember one grave of a Hun machine gunner who tried his darndest to hold up the American advance from a commanding position above the road. His hand from the wrist up was sticking out. At another Hun grave, the whole leg was sticking out in a most grotesque manner and some animal had been making a meal of the flesh. Sweet thing, a battlefield."*

In addition to being grateful that Dad was forced to leave the Front before he could be part of the battle, I am grateful, as I imagine Dad observing all the misery of war, that he did not have to kill anyone. He talked tough, but I know he wasn't.

Dad continues, *"I am sorry about that promised allotment in favor of the little mother. I made it in good faith. I expected to go to the Front where I could not spend any money. It would have been easy to make an allotment in this case. But after being ordered back into the Services of Supply, the aspect of things changed. Living and traveling expenses are heavy. I shall send Mother a money order for as much as I rake together the first of November. Also, I shall send some money from time to time so that she can get her teeth fixed. I hope I didn't disappoint her too greatly. I think the money I shall send will reach her sooner than the allotment would have. I had a uniform and a pair of boots made in London recently and also, I bought some other things*

*that were badly needed. These purchases put quite a dent in my purse. Also, I have to watch myself carefully for I find that I have extravagant tastes which I am prone to indulge. I hope when I am married, the little lady will have the effect of keeping the brakes on in this respect.*

*I am living at a YMCA hotel which stands on the bank of the Seine, in other words, the Quai de la Conference. Not far from me are the Grand Palais, Alexander III Bridge, the Hotel des Invalides, Eifel Tower and just behind is the Champs Elysee. The Place de la Concorde, at one end of the Champs Elysee, and the Arc de Triumph (L'etoile) at the other, are nearby. The street the hotel faces is a very beautiful one. All the buildings are stunning and, between the aged-darkened masonry walling in the Seine and the buildings, is a long, narrow plaza studded with trees laid out with symmetrical precision. The name of the hotel is the Du Palais. It was taken over by the Y shortly after the AEF came over. It costs me just about \$100 a month to live and board there. The French hotels would cost me about twice that much. The food is quite good. The dining room is well appointed and the service good. My room is quite comfortable. Lt. MacCurdy, an amiable Scotsman from Kansas City who is with me at this office, shares the room at the hotel with me.*

*My office in the hotel taken over by the Postal Service is quite pleasant. I have Lt. MacCurdy and two privates with me. Although we are properly a part of the Postal Service, our line of work is somewhat different. I am not free to explain it to you, but it is of the utmost importance and must be carried on with speed and intelligence. I do business with some very interesting and important people here in the AEF. I like the work and I like Paris but after being with troops for five years, it is hard to have to sit at a desk in an office while the fighting goes on all around me. I am about fed up on it. I want to get back to the Front. I have had so many special duty jobs in this man's army that I am rapidly forgetting all I learned about soldiering."*

*And in the same letter, written on October 18: "I am often tempted to resign my commission and go to the front as a buck private. My fortune since coming to France has been beaucoup rotten.*

*Mother sent me a clipping from the paper which I enjoyed. It related the occasion of a celebration in Monument Circle in honor of the first touchdown on the Marne. The enthusiasm of the American people in the conduct of this war is certainly an inspiration to the soldiers. We love the way you do things over in the good old USA.*

*I am sorry you have not had time for a vacation in two years save for those days spent at home coincident with my brief stay in Indianapolis last September. Perhaps you will be given a long rest when the pressure gets easier later on. Perhaps when the time finally comes for you to have a vacation you will be allowed twice as long. I hope so. Yes, I suppose the new draft will cut into the personnel of the bank to beat the mischief. But business will have to worry along as best it may for a time, at least until we have the necessary manpower to whale hell out of Germany. That must be done for, should we fail, we would very likely have no business at all. As a result of your experiences as boss of a goodly number of women, you will emerge from the chaos caused by their advent a savvier and wiser man. I hope, however, that these women will not be permitted to conquer your proud masculine spirit. Be brave, Dad, be stoical. It can't last forever... You should thank heaven that your female clerks are not cursed with the tea habit, as is the case with the English women employed as clerks in England by the AEF. They will have their tea at four thirty, God willing, and let the war wait. So perhaps you are more fortunate than you realize.*

*I hope you were not forced to listen to "Uncle Josephus" [Josephus Daniels, President Wilson's Secretary of the Navy] speak when he was in Indianapolis on Labor Day. I listened to him for five minutes once at Camp Greene. That cured me of any further desire. His style of oratory makes you think that a pulpit is in front of him and an altar with candles burning behind him. The illusion is so real that you instinctively put your hand in your pocket and look about for the man with the donation basket. You know, that harrowing ministerial singsong that is supposed to register religious fervor.*

*Perhaps Taiche will be successful in her effort to connect with the YMCA for an overseas job. I hope so. The Y is always staging an entertainment somewhere on this side of the water and the Yanks like it. I should think the cost of living would persuade Taiche to stay away from New York this winter. I understand that it costs more to live there than it does over here, which is going some.*

*Were I to live fifty thousand years, I think I should always forget the birthdays of you and Mother. I know they occur in the fall sometime but that is as close as I can ever hit it. I asked Taiche to tell me in one of my letters to her several years ago so that I could put it down in a book. But she failed to tell me. So, I have been forced to wish you and Mother happy returns of the day every day for the past two months. Well, I think about you always with love and gratitude, so perhaps you will forgive me. I bought Mother a little vase which I am sending over*

*by mail. I also expect to get something for you too. I have it picked out. Of course, they are but little more than souvenirs to convey love. I am afraid to trust anything very valuable to the mails.*

*It was good of you to invite Mr. McCrea [Alta's father] to stop with you for a few days on his return from North Dakota and I think he appreciated it very much. It is very likely that he did not come for his trip was more or less of a flying one, in as much as he had to get back to his bank. I guess he has his help troubles also. Alta is working there now and will continue to until February when she will return to college to finish her schooling and graduate. The McCrea's have built a new home not far from their old one and are probably in it by now. Alta described it to me in one of her letters and I gather that it will be very attractive. For economic reasons, they are furnishing it with their old things. The old house was a frame structure and pretty shaky during the last earthquake. I think Mr. McCrea wanted to get into a more stable dwelling, in the event that subsequent tremors occur.*

*I have made six trips to London and am about due to make another one. It is a pretty hard trip this time of year. French trains are not heated, and the Channel is rougher than Sam Hill. I like London better each trip. But there is no city like Paris. It is the master city of them all. I know you would love it. Not parts of, but the entire city is beautiful. It is so perfectly proportioned, and its parks are geometrical dreams."*

*On October 30, Dad wrote again to his father: "Your letter written October 8 came to me this evening and I am answering it before the deadly germ of procrastination lays hold of me. That is pretty quick time for a letter to make it between here and the States but a letter that Alta wrote me on the same day as yours reached me on the 27<sup>th</sup>, just nineteen days after it was mailed in California. That is going some, what?*

*The Colonel in command of the PES sent for me three mornings ago, [October 27], and informed me that I should set about taking over the management of the entire courier system of Paris. So, I have been rather busy. I once had one officer and two enlisted me to assist me but now I have two officers and about forty enlisted men so that you may know I am sort of branching out. I am associated with officers whom I like very much.*

*The so-called Spanish Flu seems to be a common topic of conversation. And the papers harp on it a lot and describe all the symptoms. It is pathetic that people do not understand the result of making mountains of molehills, of gossip and chatter. I dodge this topic in conversation and generally speak right out when it is necessary and declare that it spreads because it is*

*circulated and impressed so vividly on the human mind. I have even heard the theory that the Germans spread the germs throughout the world but if that is true, they forgot to immune themselves against it, for they are suffering as much as any other nation, probably more, due to their condition of malnutrition. Pretty soon the doctors will say that they have it under control. The topic will soon cease to be popular; papers will discontinue their alarming articles, whereupon the people will cease to fear it. After that it will be forgotten just as the other maladies that have come and gone.*

*Mignon McGibbeny was here in Paris and may be still but so far, I have been unable to locate her. She is with the YMCA. I met Miss Chamberlain, the grand opera singer, who is at the head of the entertainment work over here and I told her my sister is a songbird and wants to come over. She told me to tell Taiche to keep after her application because singers are needed badly."*

*On December 10, my dad wrote to his mother: "My work and responsibilities are constantly increasing – particularly since the war ended, for we are now functioning for the diplomatic as well as the military people. The entire liaison work of the peace mission and much of the embassy liaison is now in the hands of our organization, of which Major Peaslee is the head and with me as his assistant. You need not be surprised to receive letters marked in Rome or Berne, Switzerland or even Brussels and The Hague, as I expect to be moving around some. It looks as though I will be busy until March or April with the Peace Mission and after that is over I am going to do all I can to get home. Being in the Regular Army makes the outlook unpromising. Where I think too fondly of the little witchery wife-woman waiting for me to come back to her, I feel that I should rather be on the outside earning fifteen dollars a week than in the Army in the present circumstances. But I mean to hang on until I see something snappy in civil life to tie to.*





Italian Cavalry Officer,  
Rome 1919



Italian Artillery Officer, Rome 1919

*Thanksgiving Day I was busy yet found time to visit my hotel for a huge turkey dinner served with music. It was quite splendid and surprising. Last Thanksgiving a year ago I had dinner at Booneville, down in the boondocks of Arkansas. Quite a difference. It has been a long time since I enjoyed having Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner at home, isn't it, Mother dear?*

*Laddie was very much worried for fear her gift would not reach you in time to go in the little box. She couldn't help with delay and she hoped you wouldn't hold the package because of her desire to participate. But since the time was extended until the 30<sup>th</sup>, I imagine she got the gift to you in time.*

*I hope my Christmas letter to Dad arrives safely. It should reach you before Christmas. I notice that the USS Mongolia, which carried most of the Christmas packages, has arrived at Brest and today our trucks are busy hauling mail, so it may not be long until I have my package from home."*

*And, on December 27, in a letter to both parents: "The Christmas package reached me yesterday. Although the postal men worked day and night after the Christmas mail arrived, they didn't quite get finished. My package was in one of the sacks on the bottom of the pile. No doubt it lay here in the post office for over a week. But I got it, and that is the main thing. I didn't in the least mind waiting for it. I certainly thank you very much for the Craig's candy. It was in good condition when it arrived and is now just about gone. I was hungry for good candy, for one can't get it here. There is plenty of chocolate, but it is not of the best quality. When I make a trip to Switzerland, as I expect to soon, I shall bring back some milk chocolate with me. Thanks too for the handkerchiefs. They will come in handy. White ones are expensive over here. I have been using the O.D. ones to be had at the commissary. I worked most of Christmas Day but took enough time off to enjoy a good dinner at my hotel. On Thanksgiving Day, we had an elaborate turkey dinner. On Christmas, we had a great goose dinner. Some spread. I thoroughly enjoyed it.*

*Laddie's pictures were so sweet; I loved them. And the little leather case is a pretty and useful thing. It was sweet of her to send me this present and I appreciate it. She does not take the best picture in the world. But the character in her lovely face always shows, and the sweetness of her. Her features are as delicate and finely chiseled as rose leaves, but in her photographs the beauty and delicacy does not show up so well. But I love these miniatures of her.*

*We in Paris also heard that McCrea Stevenson was reported missing and one of the fellows inquired about him through the Central Records Office. The report is that he was shot down while flying over Metz and died shortly afterwards in a Metz hospital. But you will know this by the time this letter arrives."*

*Finally, the last letter I have, from February 27, 1919, to my grandmother: Returned from Rome this morning and I wish to say that it is the most interesting city in the whole world! Oh, how I wanted to stay there longer. I was there a day, a night and another day – just long enough to realize how wonderful and lovely the city is. This is just a hasty note, written in lieu of a longer letter which I hope to write soon – when I have made up for the time lost during the five days away.*

*Perhaps it will not be long now until I can tell you with my own lips all of my adventures over here for I think I have seen the way unfolding to come home – I am praying God with all my heart that my desire may be granted and today the answer seemed to be coming. Oh, if it can only be – I have waited so long for the opportunity."*

My father remained a bachelor until, at 60, he married my mother. I had wondered about this but never brought up the subject with him. My mother told me he had a girlfriend during World War I but she had not waited for him and it broke his heart. Knowing the sensitive soul underneath the tough Cavalryman exterior, getting on with life but not recovering from a broken heart did not surprise me. The Internet has yielded the fact that a very single Miss Alta McCrea appeared in the social section of her local newspaper several years after my dad's return to California. After his discharge from the Army in San Francisco on June 15, 1919, Dad headed to the "Orange Belt" to see his beloved. I don't know if he actually got to see her. My mother told me that Alta's father did not want her to marry a military man so that is why Dad resigned his commission. A bit closer to the truth may be that Dad did not have time to study for his promotion to Major, and, since the Cavalry was giving way to mechanization, he would have had to remain in the Regular Army, with minimal prospects, something Alta's father might well have not approved of. All he had was the promise of a job on the *San Diego Sun* newspaper. The romantic in me wants to believe that Alta's father, a socially prominent, successful banker, would not let her marry him. Maybe she did turn him down. One way or the other, it would have left him heartbroken. We will never know.

Wally Hamilton carried on alone for the next 30 years, working on the *San Diego Sun* and then the *San Diego Union*, developing ranch property in Alpine in the eastern part of San Diego County, working as a dock agent for the Star & Crescent Boat Company (now San Diego Harbor Excursions) at the downtown San Diego Embarcadero and, at some point along the way, repainting the nautical figurehead "Euterpe", the Greek muse of music, on the bow of the Star of India sailing ship. In 1939, he rented a studio in Balboa Park's Spanish Village, with an array of pretty girls to model for him.

Dad volunteered for active duty at the start of World War II, but the Army had many more volunteers his age than they needed. While waiting for a military position, he accepted an assignment as a cost engineer with the James Stewart Company, which was building a U.S. naval base in Trinidad, British West Indies. He never was called up for military service, but he returned to the U.S. with paintings of life in the tropics and a taste for Trinidad's Angostura Bitters.

Passing through Miami on his way back from Trinidad in 1943, Dad took a job in accounting with Pan American Airways (which he said was building airports in seven different countries under a secret agreement signed by the Secretary of War), then moved to New York, where he had an art studio in the basement of the Metropolitan Museum. Finally returning to San Diego in 1946, he went to work for the City of San Diego, where, among many other things, he designed the prize-winning “Winged Victory” float, San Diego’s entry in that year’s Pasadena Tournament of Roses Parade. His last job was in the City Manager's office. He applied to be City Manager, but his resume was, I’m sure, too “colorful” to be taken seriously.

Themes have presented themselves while gathering this information. My dad seems to have been born with an artist's appreciation for the finer things in life. He was the only boy in his high school cooking class and approached food as just one more form of creative expression. In a letter to me away at boarding school in 1968, Dad greets me with “*Hi ya Babe*” and describes a dish he has just put in the oven: “*On each piece of breast reposes a slice of Hamilton sweet pickle. The chicken is nested in butter-fried sliced mushrooms. The yams were cooked in orange-pineapple sauce and grace the four corners of the pan topped with a maraschino cherry tooth picked in place. The seasoning is important – poultry seasoning with curry, and, of course, there would be cooking sherry added to the butter and peanut oil used to sauté the chicken. I’ll fix you one this Christmas.*” Echos of those grand restaurants in Paris that had stirred him to look at the food he was preparing as art, no matter how ordinary it actually was.

And on the subject of finer things, a photo of my dad from 1912, age 22, while working at the Remy Electric Company in Anderson, Indiana, shows him in a suit he had tailored by Pilger Brothers in Anderson. He takes care to describe the suit as “*not a check but a marvelous English-Scotch plaid*”. How fine he looked, and he knew it. In October 1918, he had to apologize to his mother for not sending money home from Paris because he had to have a new uniform and boots made in London. In the group photo of the Couriers in front of the Hotel Crillon in December 1918, Dad is standing to the left of Major Peaslee. Dad is the only one not wearing a belt on his trench coat, clearly indicating to me that he preferred the way the coat looked without one. In 1921, he posed in San Diego for Dodge automobile publicity photos with “*Fang, the champion Russian Wolfhound*.” The car, the dog and the man all look the part. I’ll bet the best thing about his job as dock agent was being able to wear a snappy officer's hat, a white suit and matching tie, handkerchief and gloves. He had returned from Trinidad with the domed military hat of a British soldier in the tropics, which he continued to wear years later. With the next era of

his life came a series of berets, complete with artist's smock and palette. And, incredibly, all of these "looks" throughout the years were captured by photographers who seemed to always be present to snap a photo of him. Lucky for me.



Indianapolis, Indiana, 1895 - 1900



Indianapolis Agent, Remy Electric Company, 1912



Dodge Publicity Photo with Russian Wolfhound "White Fang", San Diego, 1921





Dock Agent, Star & Crescent, San Diego, 1939

My dad has been gone for almost 45 years, but I am realizing that, after pouring over his manuscript and letters, my writing sounds like his, minus the artistic flourishes. This is unintentional though I seem to know how he might have expressed the thoughts I am committing to paper in 2017. I spent so many years alone with him when I was young, the years during which he told me stories, forming the person I became. On a paper I wrote about him for a college literature class in 1973, a year after Dad passed, my professor commented that *"You may feel yourself as being more like your mother, but I feel sure that you have your father's sensitivity and vision."* It is somewhat of a revelation, reading this after all these years. In that paper, I wrote *"He taught me to value the experiences I would have in my life, to reflect on them, to remember details, moments, to study things around me. As a professional artist and writer, he had mastered the ability to look deep into things and learn from them. He encouraged me to write down what I saw and to think. I could never do anything as well as he did, but I knew what an opportunity I had been given. From him I learned to daydream. Together we would make things up. He always wished he had a wigwam – he liked to pretend he was outside in his wigwam with a fire blazing, while the rain fell around it. He had lived a rough life, almost always outdoors, raising horses and Airedales, or working in the jungles of Trinidad. I found out from him all the incredible things there were in the world, how much there was to daydream*



Artist in Residence, Spanish Village, Balboa Park, 1939



Return from Trinidad, San Diego, 1943



Family Photo, Del Mar Fair Art Exhibition, 1952

*about."*

Another trait I noticed while going through letters my dad wrote to me while I was away at boarding school, was his habit of providing "background" to accompany anything I was doing. When there was a chance I would visit Scotland during a trip to Europe in the summer of 1969, Dad sent me a page taken from H. V. Morton's *In Search of Scotland*, describing the Hamilton ancestral home a few miles from Glasgow. I did not get there that summer and had completely forgotten until now that he had sent this to me. I did go there with my family in 1996, 27 years later, having had the opportunity to spend a week visiting all the Hamilton historical sites. I stood in ancient Cadzow Park, near the remains of long-gone Hamilton Palace, amidst the 1,000-year oaks, just as my father had hoped I would. In closing his letter, he elaborately refers to me as the *"curious survivor (young and beautiful) of the Norman Fitz Gilberts who fought with William the Conqueror at Hastings in 1066 and were rewarded by William with the large Cadzow estates at Hambledon in Scotland, who seeks to visit her ancestral scene."* Wow.

When I was invited home with my boarding school roommate to Wichita, Kansas over spring break in 1969, and Dad found out her family lived on Douglas Avenue, I received in the



HAMILTON  
Updating Chamber of Commerce  
map, San Diego, 1953

Updating Chamber of Commerce Map, San Diego, 1953

mail three pages of information from Dad's friend Stuart Lake's book *Wyatt Earp, Frontier Marshal*. In the book, Lake describes the famous gambling establishment "Keno House" at Main Street and Douglas Avenue. *"Along Douglas Avenue, at Horse-Thief Corner, stood the Texas House, a rendezvous for cattlemen. Nearby were the Douglas Avenue House and the Occidental. The Southern and The Empire, two other famous frontier taverns, were back on Main Street, and at the corner of Main and Third, Judge Jewett had his court room close to the scenes which provided customers"*. His closing line to me was *"Here's hoping you have a pleasant time in Wichita, and you might take a moment to remember the lawmen, who, like Earp, risked their lives to establish law and order on which to build a great city."* Again, Wow. I had no memory of any of this. Lake's book became the basis for several films, as well as the 1950's TV Series *"The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp"* starring Hugh O'Brien. Dad often lunched with Lake at

San Diego's U.S. Grant Hotel and notes that Lake was happy with the selection of Hugh O'Brien to play Wyatt Earp, as he thought Gary Cooper and Henry Fonda were too old.

Years later, not remembering that my dad had encouraged this sort of thing, I sent my third grader to her elementary school in Germany with a document detailing the lineage of the Hamilton family, which my aunt had used as part of her Daughters of the American Revolution membership application. Lisa's class was going on a field trip to the cathedral in Frankfurt where Charlemagne was crowned in 800 C.E. and I thought she, and everyone else, ought to know that this little American girl was Charlemagne's descendant. Utterly embarrassing for her, I have always felt inclined to provide her with "background" and now I know why.

Going through the boxes of Dad's papers that had been in storage, I came across an audio cassette tape he recorded in 1969. I had no memory of his voice until I heard it on that tape. He referred to himself as "Hamilton" and announced that he was practicing a song he was writing called *"My Heart's in the Ozarks"*. I also found the sheet music with the lyrics, with a note that there should be yodeling at a certain point in the song.

*"My Heart's in the Ozarks*

*Beside a blue lake;*

*My girl's in the Ozarks -*

*I made a mistake. I run*

*off and left her -*

*Because of my pride.*

*Now I am lonely*

*And hurtin' inside.*

*One day she finds me -*

*A babe in her arms!*

*I feel once again*

*The lure of her charms.*



*She says "Hold your horses*

*This here is your boy."*

*I might-nigh fainted -*

*So great was my joy!*

*Back home in the Ozarks*

*Beside waters blue,*

*My wife and I paddle*

*The family canoe.*

*The children are schoolin'*

*While we fish and farm.*

*Down deep in the Ozarks*

*Safe from all harm."*