

FROM COTTON PATCH TO **PARADISE**



A LOVE STORY



By Bill Renfro

Acknowledgements

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My son Darryl Renfro, and Ann Kelly.

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The Purpose of this Book

If you have read this book, I hope that you did not miss the point at which a small town country girl connected with the key to eternal life and therefore achieved the promise of an eternity in Paradise.

At age 10, she accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. You ask how can a child of 10 know that the Bible is true?

God made his message so simple that even a child of this age can understand. He sent his only Son to die for our sins through His death and resurrection, and through these simple acts, our acceptance of His free gift we instantly have our names written in his Book of Life. We are assured of our eternal salvation and will walk on Streets of Gold and forever be with the Lord and our loved ones who have gone on before us. Blessed be the Name of the Lord.



A Word from the Writer

I am Bill J. Renfro, age 88, and the husband of W. L. (Babe) Renfro, my wife of 70 years. I have written this book in loving memory of her, in order to let her friends and loved ones, who have never known her in her early life, know how she became the elegant and godly lady that she was. It is a story of two people who loved each other, who began life together, and started a family when they themselves were more children than adults. It is a story of their times of joy and their times of grief.

I hope that this book will show you the Babe Renfro we all knew and loved, that it will inspire you, bring a tear now and then, and help to keep her memory alive in all our hearts. She is alive and well for she has achieved her goal in life, and will live for eternity in the presence of her God. As for me, there is a void in my life that can never be filled, but I worry not, for I know the One who holds me safely in the palm of His hand.





From Cotton Patch to Paradise

A Love Story



The Beginning

In the beginning, a Babe was born to a family of sharecroppers, deep down an unpaved and dusty back road leading to the simple, rotted out old farmhouse, which sat at the front of a long burned-out old farm.

The baby girl was born in the kitchen, atop a cheap and old wooden table, with the help of a midwife who lived down the road.

The Babe had been born into a family of your then everyday country folk who were fighting to stay alive in the midst of the Great Depression. She was born also with an older sister. The family eventually grew to four girls and one boy.

The family survived from the small crops produced from the worn out old land, raising their own fruit and vegetables, milk, and eggs.

The Babe grew, learning to help with the never-ending chores of farm life. She learned to feed the chickens, learning where not to step while doing so, watching them grow while not knowing which would soon be producing their breakfast eggs or those who would become Sunday dinner.

She learned how to hoe the hard black clay dirt that wanted to hold on to each plant caught in its evil grasp. She learned to follow a Dad, whom she dearly loved, into the barn rather than stay in the kitchen

and do housework. Once inside the barn she followed her dad around, watching his every move, doing as he did, talking to every animal by name as he fed them. As she grew, she followed him to the fields where she labored alongside him, working daylight to dark, under a blistering, hot, relentless Texas sun.

She pulled corn, one ear at a time, and then threw them into the wagon. She hoed weeds from around the growing cotton plants while she sang. She picked the cotton while pulling a cotton sack hung from her back until it was so full she could barely pull it along. Her Dad would come and carry it off to be weighed and added to the ever-filling load bound for the cotton gin. She didn't seem to mind because she was close to a Dad that she adored.

Her dad was a man who, like most of us, had wasted most of his early life before he found the Lord. He then almost instantly became a Godly man, who, in a room dimly lighted by a coal-oil lamp, led his family in worship and devotion, teaching each of his children how to pray and worship their creator.

I believe this early training was what led Babe to become the Godly woman prayer warrior that she was. She accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior at about age 10, in the small Baptist Church of Shiloh.

The old wooden Church was built on a site located at the corner of a dirt road that led all of us country people to the small town of

Dawson, Texas where we all went on every Saturday to get groceries, visit, and hob-nob with the city folks.

Near the site also was the Methodist Church of Harmony, which my family attended. The two churches shared most activities, including “all day singing and dinner on the ground”. These were always held at the Baptist Church and were always fun, because the children between the exempted from the singing and could run and play, chasing each other between the rows parked cars, old Ford model “A”s or whatever vehicle one could afford.

Sometimes we chased the girls – not yet knowing why – just that it was fun. Little did I know that one of those silly girls would become the woman who shared my life, bore my children, and was my wife for 70 years. When she became school age, she was enrolled in a small country school several miles down the dirt road that ran past the family farm.



Starting School

The school building was a small white wooden two-storied structure, set back from the dirt road. The school taught grades one through six only. After her Dad had delivered her and made sure she was in the proper place, she settled in to what was to become a lifelong love of learning. She soon became the “teacher’s pet” (still disputed by some). Her favorite subject was English and she would have become an English teacher (had I not married her and ruined her life).

Babe had never known that her given name was Wilma because all she had ever heard was “babe”. Upon the first day at school, when the teacher called the roll and asked Wilma Pool to raise her hand and answer “here”, Babe remained quiet. “Aren't you Wilma Pool?” the teacher asked. “No ma'am”, she answered, “I'm Babe Pool”. Throughout her life, she was always “Babe” to her friends and family.

Country children never had much to play with, so they had to use their ingenuity in devising ways to play such games as “Red Rover”, “dodge-ball”, and “baseball”. One such occasion was the day that the big boys threw the school nerd down into the boy’s toilet tank. He walked home, while frightening all the skunks along the way, and the school principal never found the one who pulled off his diabolical stunt.

Changing Schools

At the time she finished sixth grade, all the local country schools were merged into the larger school in Dawson (population of 1,037 living souls). Dawson was a small country town like many in a farming community, lively on Saturday but dead the rest of the week.

One of the rumors that I had always heard was that one of the farm workers from nearby had done something that he shouldn't, so Mr. Billy, who was the constable and also worked for one of the grocery stores in town, was told about this crime. Instead of going out and arresting this guy, do you know what he did? He sent word by the next person going out that way to tell the perpetrator to bring himself to town and go put himself in the jail cell and stay there until he was told to leave. The rough concrete jailhouse was at least 8 x 10 feet with a small bed built into one end, and with open steel doors that locked as if to hold Bonnie and Clyde. This door had a huge lock but no one had ever found the key. These were the times we lived in. The desperate criminals did as they were told because Mr. Billy ran a tight ship.

School there did provide pickup and delivery service, depending on the condition of the dirt roads. She and her siblings did have, however, to walk several miles to a pickup spot at the main road.

Finally, the School Board decided to build a small wooden shelter from the weather for the kids to wait in until the school bus arrived. Well, this is where I got into trouble. It seems that one day my younger

brother and I (who lived just down the road in the opposite direction) arrived at this shelter some time before Babe and her siblings did.

On this particular day, my brother and I took over the shelter and began throwing rocks at them as they approached (according to her). Well, this was an accusation that I had to firmly deny in order to save my reputation in the community. She, however, held on to her ridiculous claim and vowed that she would never, ever like me under any circumstance (I think that God may have laughed at this).

Her family lived down the road about three miles from where the school bus would pick them up, and when it had rained, the road was a sticky black mess that could only be traveled by horse or on foot. Since the family had no horse, they would put on their mud shoes and struggle their way to the pickup point. On dry and sunny days the walk was fun, laughing and playing with each other and enjoying the bus ride to school.

Beginning life in the big city school was a challenge that Babe was ready to start. She enjoyed learning and always found a seat close to the front of the classroom and as close to the teacher as possible. She was an “A” student and especially loved English.

Babe was always the first to volunteer for what was called “county meet”, where each school in the district would send their best students to compete in many academic games. Babe always entered any

category that involved speaking. She particularly liked “recitation” in which she recited poems. I think her favorite one was “Roofs” by Joyce Kilmer. The teacher was always reminding her that it should be “Roofs”.

She won many awards in these games over her High School years and was always proud of them.

She was also very good in all High School sports and was a cheerleader for the school’s football Pep Squad. But most of all she loved any activity that allowed her to speak.



First Notice

I had never really noticed her from the time we were in sixth grade until, one day when we were in our junior year of high school, she turned and looked to the back of the classroom where all of the boys sat. She suddenly looked at me for some reason, and being the macho football player that I was, I winked at her, and much to my surprise, and she winked back. Suddenly I panicked, not knowing what to do. I had to be cool, as was expected from a dude like me. I sent a message up through the students between the two of us, asking her if she would like to go to the movie with me the coming Saturday night, thinking she would certainly say NO. To my shock and utter surprise, she said YES!! (It was also a shock to her then boyfriend).

Well, as you may know, the weather in Texas can be totally unpredictable, and so it rained that Saturday and my Dad said that I couldn't walk up the muddy road to the highway where a friend could pick me up. Well, there went my movie date with her, now suddenly a cute young girl who once swore to never, ever like me. Boy, I must really be cool. Well, the next morning the sun came out and I was allowed to walk to the highway and was picked up by my friend who lived in town. As we drove back, he informed me that Babe, knowing that it was going to rain, had stayed in town with a girlfriend so as not to miss our expected date. I must say that I was very happy that she did, and was expecting us to pick her up.

Love on First Date

My friend, his girlfriend, and myself picked her up at her friend's house and as soon as she entered the car, I grabbed her and kissed her. Boy, what a start! She seemed as pleased as I was. As we drove around that day, I kissed her as many times, as I thought I could get away with, and she seemed to not mind. I shall never forget that day because that day I fell in love with her, and she with me.

We were together as often as possible, in school and out, summer, winter, spring, and fall.

As we began our senior high school year, we realized that we were going to be married and would need a wedding ring. Being the smart 16 year old girl and 17 year old guy that we were, we came up with the brilliant idea that if we each saved part of our lunch money each day, that by the end of the school year, we would have enough to buy a small ring set. But, being young and in love, we had no idea what the cost would be. We nevertheless began working our plan.

Each day after school, Babe would take our money home with her and put it in an old Mason jar, close the lid tightly, and hide it from her childish sisters and brother. Before the end of the school term, we felt that we had saved enough (she always said that she saved more than I had, well maybe I did cheat a time or two). The next Saturday my cousin and I headed to Waco, Texas, to see what fine gems were

available. We finally found a set that was priced at \$100.00 and was just the amount we happened to have.

As you can imagine it wasn't the largest stone in the shop, but it would serve the purpose. Well, at least you could see what appeared to be a stone. Nevertheless, she appeared to be pleased, so we were officially engaged. She wore it to school the next day but couldn't tell if all the laughter was from joy for us or the size of the diamond. We were married with this set and the Preacher didn't seem to mind.

Several years later, when I could afford it, I bought her a much larger one to ease her embarrassment. The original wedding set this day has an honored place in my lock box of treasured memories.

We were married shortly after we graduated high school, in a love that lasted for 70 years.



Building a Home

For the first three months of our marriage, we lived with my parents in a 100-year-old, two-story house with back-to-back wood burning fireplaces that warmed the two downstairs bedrooms.

These rooms still had the old gas lighters located in the original places, as a reminder of a forgotten time, of a man who built this once-elegant home for his family, of a home that once stood out in contrast to the smaller, less opulent country homes that surrounded it. Now with a leaking roof, sagging floors, and painted a country red to hide the decaying exterior. The home had a large front porch with a swing in which my family, and later Babe and I, would spend lots of memorable hours after supper laughing and loving each other's company. It was a time to be remembered.

After about two months of living with my parents, a neighboring farmer, whose land adjoined my dad's, bought a farm within sight of ours, with a nice little house longing to be lived in. The new owner allowed Babe and I to move in rent free, charging only for the upkeep on the place.

This was the start of our life together. I continued to work the farm with my Dad, who gave us some of his land to work as our own. I worked the land each day, and Babe was the homemaker. My Dad found a good used 1941 Chevrolet for us and an Oliver tractor. We felt we were now in "Tall Cotton".

Because Babe had spent most of her life in the fields while her sister was in the kitchen, needless to say, our supper menus were rather limited. She tried her best, but I remember eating lots of fried potatoes, mashed potatoes, stewed potatoes, potato soup, and potato pie. I must say, however, that she was very good at making coffee and frying bacon. All this was really a great feat considering she had an old used kerosene stove to cook on.

I remember a game we used to play at the supper table in order to make sure there were no leftover potatoes. We called it “which one am I looking at?” If you guessed which one the other was looking at, then they had to eat it, but if you were wrong then you had to eat it. It was fun for us both anyway.

The house was heated with a kerosene heater in one room, and the stove in the kitchen. One day, the heater in the back room malfunctioned and sent black smoke all over the house, causing us to have to wash every piece of cloth within the home and scrub everything else. Another fun thing we had to do was each night, after we had gone to bed, was to lay and listen to the rats running back and forth in the attic above the ceiling. After a while, we could tell by the sounds they made which ones were large and which were small. Thankfully, we never saw them, nor did they ever come near us.

We lived there about a year before Dad bought a home in town and we moved back into the old red house. But first, let me tell you about the furniture this teen aged couple bought before moving into our first home, the rent free house provided by our generous neighbor. We went to a furniture store in Corsicana and bought an old used kerosene kitchen stove, a refrigerator (we did have electricity compliments of the Rural Electrification Authority), a small breakfast table, a mattress for a bed (no headboard though, that cost extra!), and a cloth living room set with large, bright pictures of everything any rodeo cowboy would die for.

Not only were these prints in living color, they covered the couch and the easy chair. The coffee table, however, was adorned with a red leather style top surrounded with silver nails to hold the upholstery in place. I would bet the furniture store employees were laughing themselves to death for having found the only two country bumpkins who would even look at a 20-year-old piece of merchandise. We, however, thought that we had made the purchase of a lifetime and proudly showed it to anyone who came to visit. In later years, we tried to give it away but were even refused by the Salvation Army.

One Christmas I did make her mad. It seems that for months, she had been hinting for some girly thing and I hadn't picked up on it. So I gave her a nice set of copper bottom cookware, which are still used to this day. Just goes to show how practical men can be, but she put up such a fuss that the next Christmas I bought her a washing machine.

As an adventurous young couple, we sometimes grew tired of Dawson social life, limited mainly to Saturday nights on the town. In search of a more thrilling nightlife, we would sometimes venture over to Corsicana, the nearest larger town nearby. There we knew of a street vendor who parked his horse drawn wagon in the same location on a back street each night. He would sell a dozen homemade tamales for \$1.00, wrapped inside a page of the previous day's newspaper. We would sit nearby eating our tamales, washed down by a big "R C" Cola. You haven't lived unless you have tried that! Don't tell me that country folks don't know how to live. We loved it because we were together.



A New Beginning

After moving back to the old red house, we became the proud parents of our first child, a son. Two years later Babe lost the loving father that she adored. Her family moved to Houston, after all the crops were harvested, where her mother had family. We also moved to Houston later to find our fame and fortune in the big city. I went to work for Montgomery Ward's in the service department at a whopping \$1.50 per hour. Boy, had we reached the big time or what? If you really think about it, that wasn't so bad. When we had left in 1953, farm wages were \$3.00 per day. Yes, that's right, \$3.00 for a day that lasted from daylight to dark. That was an average of 25 cents for an hour of back breaking work. Well, that meant that I now would be making \$60.00 for a 40-hour workweek instead of the \$15.00 a week that farm workers made. Boy, I had hit the mother lode!

I'm not sure, however, that I realized that big amount of money would not go too far in the big city, and I began to look for a better way to supply the needs of my growing family, which now included a daughter named Ronda. I had taken a nighttime course in drafting and accepted a job with a three man engineering firm. Here again I started at \$1.50 an hour. Several weeks later, as happens in smaller offices, work slowed down and they had fired two recently hired employees. Well, as I sat at my desk, my brilliant mind came up with an idea. As I told it to the guy sitting next to me, he began to tell me what an idiot I was, and to move away from him! My idea seemed God sent to me, and was this: since the boss had fired all the draftsmen, and didn't have

anyone else to do the work, I would go into his office and ask for a raise. Brilliant, no?

Well, as I eased into his office, I said in a slightly quivery voice, Boss I need a raise ! After getting up off the floor when he had said “OK, how about 50 cents? That would bring you up to \$2.00 an hour”, I thanked him and started to walk backwards, bowing ever so slightly as I left his office. All I could think about was getting home to tell Babe what God had done in our lives.

Needless to say, she was thrilled. This modest raise would cover the cost of our mortgage payment, the utility bill, and the car payment. Boy, what God can do!

Our new life in the city brought new challenges and had to be blended into our country habits and routines. One example was that now we had corn bread with our dinner and supper (these are the equivalent to uptown folk's lunch and dinner). I don't know the difference, they still taste the same to me! I guess it made city folks feel superior in some way to the likes of us. I still like my cornbread and sweet milk (yum yum!).

To our way of thinking, all this fancy cooking is just a lot of wasted time. Why take two hours to cook a meal that you can eat up in ten minutes? Enough of that though, this is making me hungry!

At first, we couldn't believe that city folks went to work at 8 o'clock when the sun had already been up for at least three hours! How in the world did they expect to get in a day's work like that?

We slowly adapted, however, and learned to sleep as late as they did. Until we moved to the city, we had never eaten a pizza, tasted real Chinese food, tried Mexican food, or seen sweets made by a bakery. I remember on one of our visits to Houston I asked a lady what she was eating and she said, "It's a cream horn". Well, we just had to have one of those. We found a nearby bakery and bought up a dozen and ate until we almost popped, they were so good (I still love them to this day). The move to Houston would have been worth it for the food alone. Boy, we thought these city folks may be on to something after all.

We soon settled into this city life stuff and became as worldly as the next guy. We stopped going to church regularly and soon stopped going at all. I know it because His blessings were soon cut off. One Easter Sunday the only thing we had to eat was a bowl of boiled rice with sugar on top. However, we gave thanks for it, and once our stomachs were full, we didn't know the difference. God is good all the time.

Our first home was an 800 square foot house, with the newest type of siding, in an area of homes built for the veterans returning from World War 2. The houses were nice and almost new. The area was

filled with friendly people. We had made the down payment with a loan from my Mom, and made monthly payments to the real estate agent for the original owner's equity. After seeing me every month for two years, the real estate agent and I became friends. The last I heard of him, he had become president of US Homes.

As our family grew larger, our house grew smaller until we were forced to move across town to a larger one. The subdivision and the houses were all new. All we had to do was to add the plants Babe and I liked and to put up a cedar fence around the swimming pool I had insisted upon (to let others know that we had arrived, I guess).

While living here, all was well in our world. Our son graduated high school and started college. We thought that he would be a lawyer, because he had wanted a small motorcycle to ride to school each day. Of course, both his mother and I were against the idea, until we began to see motorcycle pictures all over the house. Night and day they appeared. In the closets, kitchen cabinets, and laundry room, no location was off limits. The day that I found one inside an overhead light fixture, yes, you guessed it, he got his motorcycle. A man needs to know when he has been outsmarted, no?

We lived happily at this location until Babe discovered that one day, as she took out the trash, that a child had followed her out the back door and fallen into the pool. She found him floating in the water and that night we decided to sell the house and move.

A Move to Pecan Grove

God has said that the number 7 is the number of a new beginning. Our lives sometimes bear this out. It seems that our attention span was exactly 7 years.

We finally landed in a subdivision outside Richmond, Texas called “Pecan Grove Plantation”. We enjoyed our time here, in a spot not city and not country. We had good and friendly neighbors. The neighborhood was full of children who ran and played up and down the street. They soon got to know Miss Babe and spent much time at our house. We joined the neighborhood Church. This is when Babe really began to shine. She had always read her Bible and prayed for guidance in keeping me straight. Having worked at a Bible College, she soon was the one to answer all the questions and was the one most called on to pray. She arose from bed each morning about two hours before I did, reading her Bible and praying for her friends, her family, ones she knew needed help, her Church and her country. This side of Heaven, we shall never know how many people were impacted by these simple loving prayers that were heard by the Father and acted upon.

While living in Pecan Grove, we were asked over to dinner by a young couple from our Church. He had just started his own contracting business and they were expecting their first baby. The dinner was very sparse, but I felt they had spent all they could afford to prepare it because his business was almost non-existent. Before we moved to

Dallas some years later, we had given them food from our freezer and most of the food from our pantry. As we said goodbye, they both cried as we drove off we handed them a check for 2,000 dollars.

It seems that each time that we moved, we had found a new church to attend. The last two that we had joined, Babe had adopted an older single lady, who lived by themselves and had few friends and no family living nearby. We would pick them up at home early for Sunday school and morning worship. We also took them to lunch afterward, unless someone had invited them earlier.

The first lady was named Ruth. She had lived in most parts of the world when her husband had worked for the U.S. government, traveling around teaching countries how to farm and better support their own people. Ruth loved to talk as much as Babe did. I mostly listened while they talked about her travels, unless the subject of politics came up. Now it was my turn to talk. Ruth watched television most of the day and knew what was going on around the world, so we had lots of lively discussions. Ruth loved Mexican food, so that was our choice of cuisine most of the time. She was a wonderful person and a joy to be around. I hope that our love and attention brought as much light into her life as she brought into ours.

The last one was named Florence, and she had studied music at the Stamps School, was a retired music minister, and widow of a Baptist Preacher. We took her with us everywhere, since she lived by herself

in a small apartment and was always lonely. She especially liked Kentucky fried chicken. If we were out by ourselves, we would stop for some chicken to take home to her, and she would somehow make it last for two meals.

We took her shopping, we took her to her doctors, we took her to dine out, we took her to church, we even took her out of town with us when there was a hurricane that had entered the Gulf of Mexico and appeared to be headed in our direction.

We had chosen to take this little old lady under our wings because she had a need for someone to care. We all grew to love each other, she had become family, but I believe that Babe and I had received more than we had given.

It was in 2005 that our only daughter had a return of breast cancer that later took her life. Our daughter was named Ronda and was Babe's best friend. Babe was by her bedside, helping and taking care of her each day, early to late, in what I called a heroic effort. Babe herself was a cancer survivor, having been diagnosed with breast cancer in the year 2000.

I shall never forget the day her friend Ruth and I had taken her to the hospital for a biopsy. Her friend and I waited nervously in her room until she was brought back, still slightly under sedation. We talked to her as best we could, as the door suddenly opened and the

doctor walked in. She slowly turned her head toward him and gazed into his eyes as she received the dreaded verdict of “Mrs. Renfro, it’s cancer”. Not turning her head or making a sound in what seemed like two minutes, Ruth and I looked at each other, wondering if she was still sedated or just not hearing what the doctor had said. Then without any emotion, she said “Doctor, do you know Jesus?” This was the woman she had become!

We remained in Pecan Grove for several more years, helping raise our grandchildren, working at our church, attending church functions, and enjoying our friends.

After the death of our daughter, our grandchildren grew up, graduated high school, and moved off to college.



The Move to Dallas

We began to feel another emptiness in our lives so, with much regret, we decided to move to Dallas, Texas, where our son had gone to work. So we packed up and moved to Dallas.

We rented an apartment close to our son, adjacent to a golf course and across the railroad tracks from shopping, fast foods, a bank, grocery store, and what was to become our Church, complete with Church family and friends.

It is here where Babe entered into Paradise on December 13, 2018. It is where she enjoyed Sunday school, Worship Service, visiting with friends, and mainly, telling anyone who would listen, about a loving Savior named Jesus who loved them. One of her favorite places to witness was our local Walmart, where she found people of all races and backgrounds, starting conversations with anyone who slowed down enough. She was friendly to everyone, knew their names, and could tell you those who were already believers and those who she was still working on.

One day she stopped to talk to a lady who was passing out sample food to shoppers, she found a girl who was single, did not earn enough to rent a place to live, and had been staying with a lady Church friend for the past two years. After we left that day, she told me the story, and we then decided to help her, for Scripture says if you see a brother in

need, if you have the means to help them but don't, then you have committed a sin.

We gave her money for food, to gas up her car for work, and to help pay for computer school so she could build a better life. She now has a good job, a place of her own, and has now moved on with her life.

This is the woman Babe had now become. She is gone but not forgotten. The souls she saved for Jesus Christ will, one day be in Paradise, look at her, and thank her. As the Bible says, “it is not for us to convince each person we tell, for that it is the job of the Holy Spirit”. Our job is just to tell the story.

The earthly life of Babe Renfro has ended, but the story that she told will live on through an eternity.



Is There a God?

“Is there a God?” You asked. Yes, there is, and I will tell you for certain how I know by the examples we have experienced in our own lives.

Fact 1

One day as Babe was picking up items at a local shopping center for her boss at the Bible College where she worked, a voice loudly spoke in her mind as she was leaving the mall. “Go back, you have left you billfold!” In her own thoughts, she said to herself “I didn't use my billfold” “Go back, you have left you billfold and I am saving it for you”. Partially convinced, she turned around and went back to the store where she had made her last purchase and made her way to the checkout counter. Pushing her way through the line of shoppers waiting to check out, she asked the clerk if she had seen the billfold she had left. “Ma'am”, the clerk said, “there is no billfold here!” Babe persisted and began running hands along the counter in front of the waiting shoppers. Suddenly she pulled out the missing billfold, which she thought she had never used. The voice she had heard had to have been from God. She praised him all the way back to the school, where she told the story.

Fact 2

On this occasion, my wife and I were out looking for a place to live. We had looked all morning in an area we liked, but had found nothing. We stopped for a well needed lunch break. As had gone to pick up our order and was returning to our table, a loud voice spoke audibly to me in my mind: “If you do not move back into the townhouse, you will never hear the last of it”. Knowing that the words were not my own, we quickly made arrangements to move back into a townhouse we already owned.

Fact 3

While living in the town house, our son, who was away at college, called to say he was bringing a girl home with him for the weekend. On the day before they arrived, we began to smell a powerful odor that smelled like a dead rat coming from his bedroom. I sprayed with all the chemicals we had, no success. I cut holes in the walls and sprayed, no success. The odor then seemed to come from the air vent so I sprayed inside it, no success. I then turned to the Lord for advice. I went around the room, verbally casting out any unclean spirit. On my second walk around the room, the odor suddenly stopped and went away leaving no smell anywhere in the area, as if it had never been there. This could only have been a God thing.

Fact 4

Once while we lived in Pecan Grove, Babe and I were sleeping. In the middle of the night, not moving at all, I opened my eyes and there stood what I thought to be a man at the end of the bed, looking across the end of the bed at Babe. At his sensing that I had opened my eyes and without looking at me, he slowly vanished. I recognized that I had just seen my Guardian Angel, because my heart had not skipped a beat or sped up. I believe that my spirit knew him, and knew that he had always been there, so I closed my eyes and went back to sleep, without any words.

The Bible says that at the moment we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, God gives each of us an Angel to guard over us lest we fall. This experience alone tells me that God's word is true and also that I am saved.

Fact 5

In the 55 years I spent in the field of commercial engineering, we had a problem on an under construction project that no one could figure out. This night I had a dream about the answer. My dream showed the cause to be in a pressure reducing valve. My dream not only showed which valve it was, but an inside view of the manufacturer's drawing of this product. Well, I couldn't wait to get to the office catalog library the next morning. When I saw the very same drawing that I had dreamed of the night before, with instructions that

the valve had to be turned in a counter-clockwise direction instead of the usual clockwise operation, I went to the job site and solved the big mystery. Everyone thought I was a genius, not believing that God had given me the answer in a dream.

Fact 6

One day as Babe sat with our daughter, while she was spending her last days at home, she had to run to the grocery store down the street, to get something for the family dinner that she made each night before returning home. This day, before she left for the store, she said a short prayer over Ronda asking Jesus to hold her in his hands while she was gone. While she was at the store, Babe forgot something she was supposed to get, so she called the house but the phone was dead. She called several more times, knowing that the phone was always located within easy reach of Ronda, but again got no signal. She then panicked and rushed back to the house, not knowing what she would find. She rushed into the house to find Ronda had been asleep. The phone was also working, as it should.

Ronda then said “Mom, when you left for the store a strange thing happened. A white light near toward the fireplace and two hands reached out toward me. The light was too bright to see the man's face. I took the two hands that were extended to me, thinking He was sent to take me to Heaven, but instead He, still holding my hands with his, came to the couch and sat down beside me. He pulled me against him,

still holding my hands and saying nothing. As he allowed me to rest against him I soon fell asleep and remained there until he heard your car enter the driveway, then faded away". They both knew it was Jesus Christ who had come to watch over Ronda while Babe was away, who had heard the prayer of a mother, and had done exactly as was asked.

Fact 7

My precious, godly grandmother, on my mom's side of the family, outlived two husbands, both God-fearing men. She awakened the night each of them passed away, and both times saw an Angel of the Lord who had come to carry them into the presence of God.

Fact 8

Our daughter had been taken to Mexico when all other forms of treatment had produced no good results. My son-in-law and I were flying to L.A. when the plane entered an area of extreme turbulence. All passengers were ordered to fasten their seat belts. I was seated near the window, and of course had to look outside. I shall never forget what I saw of God's awesome power. We had flown into an area of large thunderstorms. The plane was at an altitude of about 30,000 feet and even at that height, these had to be the largest clouds I had ever seen. I saw gigantic bolts of lightning, which came into view, burst through fearsome clouds, and blasted their way toward the earth before disappearing below us. It was at this point that I realized what an

awesome God we have, a god that encompasses the universe and can calm the storm with only His words. This night I had discovered a God who is larger than I could have imagined, and was certainly in control of all that He has created.

Fact 9

Did we get the money? Our friend Florence had passed away and left some money to the nephew of her husband. He had heard of how we had taken care of Florence and how she had grown to love us as a family. He had asked us to meet him and his wife for dinner at a restaurant near Houston. We didn't really know them, she and Babe had talked once or twice, but we accepted anyway. When we had finished eating, he handed me a check for 3,000 dollars. While I sat there stunned, he said “we want to share the money Florence has left us, for all you did for her”. This was a good thing! We had given a needy family 2,000 dollars and gotten back 3,000. God had blessed our giving by 50%. This is a lesson we all can learn, you can't out give God. I intend to pass this on to someone else and see what God will do.



Prayer Postures

by Babe Renfro

The first time I saw my father kneeling in prayer to God our Creator, I was about 10 years of age and I will never forget that memorable scene. Until that time he had not walked closely with the Lord and this day, full of youthful impatience, I had burst into the room with something to tell him. There I saw that big hulk of a man kneeling humbly on the floor before his opened Bible and I was scared and shaken.

Yet I had a special love for this man whose offspring I was, and wanting always to please him and to follow his example, it is not surprising that I trusted my life to Jesus shortly after my father began his close walk with the Lord.

After that first incident, it became commonplace to see my dad communing with God—whether kneeling, standing, sitting, or walking. Yet, in recalling that first scene of his bowing humbly before God, I sensed that I had invaded a very special, very intimate, and private part of his life. A life so real, so important to him, that during the next few years before he was called home to live with Jesus, he had a dedication so intense that he appeared to be trying to make up for the 'years the locusts ate'(Joel 2:25).



That vivid picture of my rushing into a room unannounced and finding my dad on his knees in communion with the Lord God flashed back into my mind a few weeks after being hired as office manager here at Houston Bible Institute. Needing to give some papers to one of our directors, I knocked lightly on his partly-opened door and entered without waiting for a response. There, I saw him sitting before his desk, Bible open, head bowed low over its pages—so deep in communion with God that I immediately sensed a need to retrace my steps and not invade this moment between the created worshiper and his Creator.

It seems that urgency-of-the-moment is my pattern, for less than two weeks later I walked hurriedly into the office of our other HBI director, his door being ajar, and there again viewed a beautiful picture of a man worshiping God. He, like my dad, was on his knees before a chair on which lay his opened Bible. I excused myself, went back to my desk and reflected on the blessing my heavenly Father had bestowed on me in placing me here at HBI, where He is the center and focus of all activity.

We Christians realize, of course, that everyone who worships a God is not necessarily worshiping the God of our creation. I recently encountered a man lying prostrate on a mat in a downtown Houston courthouse at noontime, facing east, in worship of a created being who has long since died and who did not resurrect on the third day!

This is nothing but II Corinthians 4:4 in action...”the god of this world (Satan) has blinded them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”.

No, I do not believe God is concerned so much with whether we are kneeling, sitting, standing, or lying prostrate on the ground as we pray. Rather He cares about the attitude of our hearts.

Fellow Christians, please join me in prayer for Houston Bible Institute, these two directors and our instructors, whose greatest desire and prayer is that others come to know the God of the Bible, the One who created us to have fellowship with Him, And join with us in praying for the many in our world who are living in deception but whom God loves dearly. So dearly in fact that He died for all mankind, that we might have eternal life just by believing in Him. (John 3:16)



A Last Farewell

In the early morning of December 13, 2018, in the hospice room where I had spent the last 12 days, I was sitting and looking at Babe's still beautiful face as I had done so many times throughout my life. The nurse who had just come in to check on us switched the lights on suddenly and turned to me saying softly "Mr. Renfro, she has just stopped breathing". I went to her bedside, leaned over, and smoothed back her totally gray hair. I kissed her forehead and whispered "good bye my love". As the mocking bird mourns for the loss of a mate, I now mourn the loss of mine. However, knowing that she had reached her goal of Paradise, I realized that I wept not for her but for myself. My race is still being run and one day soon she will be there cheering me across the finish line, where we shall together walk the streets of gold in an eternal paradise.

These things I know to be true and we will all come face to face with the Lord when He will crown us all according to what we have done for Him.

We hope to see all of you there! May God's blessings be on each and every one of you!

A Time to Remember

As the wick of my life's candle is burning shorter each day, and the brightness has begun to flicker and soon must go out, I hope to add a few pictures in order for you to see Babe better. I do hope it will keep Babe's memory alive. As the bad times fade away, only the good times remain.

She was the love of my life.





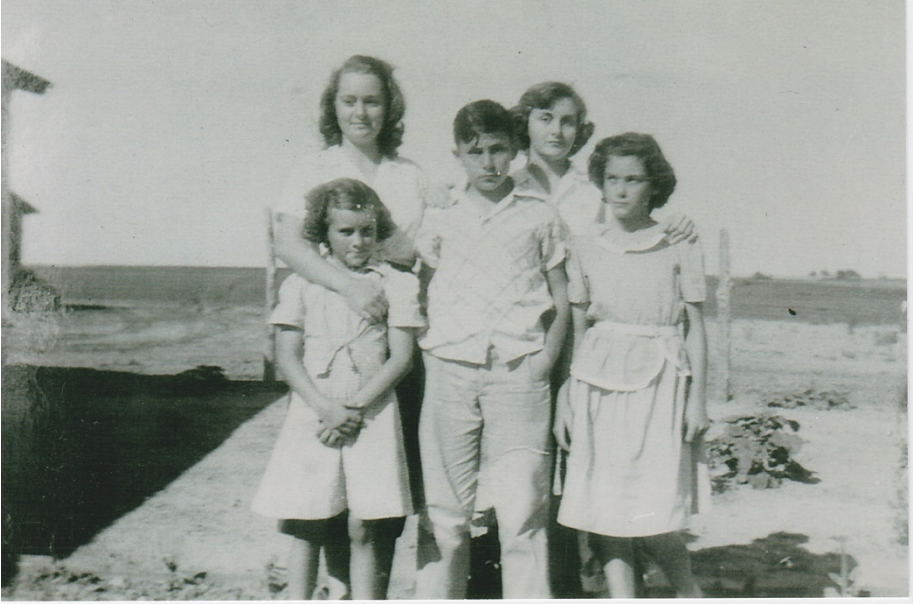


THELMA WILMER

BABE'S MOTHER AND FATHER







ALL THE POOL KIDS







THE MEMBERS OF THE “SHILOW
BAPTIST CHURCH” WHICH THE
POOL FAMILY ATTENDED







THE LADIES OF "HARMONY
METHODIST CHURCH" WHERE THE
RENFRO FAMILY ATTENDED







BILL AND BABE RENFRO







BABE AND NEW SON DARRYL







BABE (POOL) RENFRO







BABE AND RONDA







JOYCE BABE STEVE SUE MENA

BABE WITH HER BROTHER AND
SISTERS







BABE AND RONDA
“BEST FRIENDS FOREVER”







SUE

BABE

JOYCE







BABE WITH HER SON DARRYL
AND HER HUSBAND BILL







WILMA L. "BABE POOL" RENFRO





BILL AND BABE RENFRO



In Memory of

Wilma L. (Babe) Renfro
March 8, 1932 -
December 13, 2018



Ephesians 5:25
Husbands, love your wives,
even as Christ also loved the church,
and gave himself up for it;