



Clara Maude Young, September 1927, two years old.

1

In the Beginning



Growing up on a Texas farm, my world was very small. I didn't know about anything except the loop between school and home. Nearly all of my adult life was spent in Corpus Christi, Texas, and I had not seen much of the world until I was nearly 60 years old. In 1983, I went on a trip to Greece with my good friend Hazel Benton. That lit the fire, and Hazel and I made many trips together after that. In addition to a number of tours within the United States, I have traveled to Greece, Egypt, Italy, England, Scotland, Austria, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, France, Alaska, Hawaii and the Bahamas. I enjoy seeing other countries and how people live there. I went from traveling no farther than the little loop between school and home to becoming something of a "world traveler."



I was born at home in Lamar County, Texas, on April 26, 1925. My given name was Clara Maude, but they nicknamed me "Bo" after Clara Bow, the silent film star. I was the oldest of three children. Next was my sister Dorothy, followed by my brother John. I don't think that my siblings and I looked much alike, but people always said that we did. I have my dad's feet and hands, and my face and body are shaped like my mama's. My brother looked just like my dad, and my son



Mom and Dad, September 1951.

Carl looks like him too, but no one in the family has my dad's elephant ears except me.

My father, Fred Preston Young, was raised by his aunts and uncles, because his mother died when he was three months old. I don't know if he ever got to know his father. His dad remarried and had more children, so my father had half-brothers and sisters he became acquainted with when they were all adults.

When my father was a young man, it was common for boys to drop out of school and work on the farm or wherever they could find a paying job. He didn't finish high school, but I think he enjoyed school. He kept some of his schoolbooks, which I still have. I imagine there were a few girls that caught his fancy back then, because all of his schoolbooks have girls' names written in them.

Daddy had a way with animals. He hunted, but he hunted for food, not just for the sake of going out and shooting something. He talked to the chickens, and they talked back to him. One time, we were sitting on the back steps, and there were some kittens playing in the yard. He said to his dog, "Go get me that yellow cat." She went out there and got a cat, but she got the wrong one. He said, "No, get the *yellow* one." She went out again and came back with the yellow cat and was quite pleased with herself.

Dad was the real personality of the family. He liked to laugh and talk. I grew up around people who joked and teased all the time. From when I was little, I can remember being teased. It never bothered me, because it was never done in a mean way.

I don't remember my parents ever talking about values or what they expected of us. It was an understood thing that we would live up to a certain standard, which was as high as we could get. You knew you were expected to excel. Back then the men took care of their families one way or another, and my father worked hard to take care of us. We had a good relationship. One thing I admired about him was that he never said anything bad about anybody. I always root for the underdog, and I think I got that from him.