

George Edward Martin – Alias Johnny (written 1963 in Kansas City Missouri)

Chapter I – In the Beginning.....

I was born April 4, 1900 at a small place, so small they did not even have a post office and was called Rosehill, Colorado about 6 miles north of Denver Colorado. Why it was called Rosehill has always and still is much of a mystery as there never was a blade of grass that had the nerve enough to grow in those old sand hills.

I was the 5th of 6 children. My father was William Albert Martin and my mother was Mary Ann Martin both from Toronto Canada. My father was an Englishman who would always say “My Father was born within the sound of the bells of London” and was truly British. My father served in the Canadian army, was well built and a master mechanic. He was a devoted Christian.

Mother was Irish on the paternal side and Scottish on the maternal side. Her parents were very fine and substantial citizens of Toronto. She was a talented musician and a real Christian in actions and in words. She lived her religion. Her nickname was Polly. No one I have ever known gave of herself for others as did my mother.

In the year of 1888, Polly and Will were married in Toronto Canada. It was a lovely family wedding with all the plush decoration you would find in a wedding of that day. Will was a

master mechanic. He could build anything from a violin case to a large bridge.

As soon as Polly's and Will's wedding reception was over they took a hack (horse drawn carriage) to the depot and left for Buffalo N.Y where Polly's first child was born a baby girl. Both of them being adventurous they left Buffalo N.Y. for Denver Colorado. They were five days on the train landing in Denver. They were met with a sight to behold....a western booming town and for almost a year they went through some hardships, finally securing enough money to buy a two room old house in Rosehill with five acres of ground for \$112.50. No mortgage that day but the plumbing was not to hot – none at all. Water was carried from another place a quarter of a mile by bucket. Will bought an old horse named Charlie which he rode to Denver each morning and home at night. He worked all day. 10 hours was a day's work then and long after dark he and Charlie came to the humble place we called home.

Mother planted a garden and took in washing to buy a calf for \$1.50. It took her two weeks to do it. Then she gave piano lessons for 25 cents an hour on their piano.

Soon the little shack began to look like a house and it was there that my sister tells of my brother and I being born. Mother had me without any aid as she did with 3 of the other children. What a brave and beautiful soul. Only a faith in God could survive the coyotes, rattlesnakes etc that was so plentiful then.

My first recollection and possibly my only recollection of Rosehill were the sandstorms of summer and the deep snows of winter banked against the windows and blowing under the door. Old Charlie was our white horse and when Pa would hitch him to a democratic wagon (not political party) connection but a wagon all could ride in regardless of how many. It had 4 seats and 4 adults could sit in each seat and the kids on the floor among the human feet.

When I was four Will and Polly made a move down to the Brighton Road, a road fastly developing to the north of Denver. My father and mother together with many others started Adams City as a town site. It was here my father built a brick grocery store. It was a fine home built of brick; a groom house and the Adams City Grocery came into being. By the time I was 8 years old, Polly and Will had a grocery, coal and feed store, lumber place and dance hall. Mother was elected to the school board and a new school was on the way. Mother ran the whole works and my Father began building bridges that took him from one end of the country to the other and from San Diego to British Columbia. The Martins were really someone at last. Mother worked so hard baking 40 loaves of bread , making sun bonnets and doing all the work of the store. She finished the work of the week playing the piano in the dance hall from 8PM to 2AM on Saturday night. She

also played the piano for church and Sunday school on Sundays.

Chapter 2 - "The Mystery of my Life"

Life has always held many mysteries for me and I guess it does for most people but Will and Pol, as he so often affectionately called her, were to have a divorce. I was eight years old or there about and when Mother told us. She called us into the parlor and told us they were being divorced and we were not to discuss it as a divorce was not a noble thing but a thing that sometimes happens as the one solution and it was never discussed by any of us. Will went out on a big project in the mountains and Mother went on operating the store, feed store, dance hall and coal yard. My Father Will never married again. My Mother did marry sixteen years later but I will always believe the love they had when married remained all their earthly days. From time to time, Will would come home to see us and he always would say..."Your Mother is the finest woman on earth and my Mother would say "Will your father is a grand man and respect him always".

In those days there was no such thing as child support or government aid etc. So we banded together in an organization by necessity...." All for one and one for all". In plain words the Martin clan was born with Ma in the driver's seat where she always lovingly remained until God called her home.

Bill was the oldest, a short little fellow, 5 foot 6 inches, with coal black hair and deep brown eyes who was all muscle and nerve.

He entered the World War and enlisted in the air corp. He flew those orange crate types of airplanes all over Germany. He was shot down twice. He had one son named Bill who is with the narcotics division of the U.S. government. Bill died of wounds received in the war and is buried at Crown Hill Cemetery.

Bird was next and words cannot describe Bird. She was a beautiful young girl and graduated from St. Joseph Hospital in Denver. She married Dr. Michael James Keegan and had a daughter who is a graduate nurse. She helped to start St. Dominic's Clinic for poor children and lived a busy life.

Danny was the third in line. He was a good man and raised three lovely children. He was in the wholesale vegetable and fruit business in Colorado and later in northern California. He married a beautiful and sweet girl named Myrtle Dow who we nicknamed "Dowdy". Bill "the second" (a Pearl Harbor Survivor), Phyllis and Betty were all fine American citizens.

Fourth came George Edward named after King George and King Edward. You will read more of him as the story goes on.

Fifth was Walter Andrew. He was a very handsome fellow, very talented and had several strikes on him when he began life. First he was Mother's baby and all the love for Will her husband was transferred to Dude as we called him. He was probably the most intelligent of all, very talented violinist and a kind lovable fellow. He was confused most of his life, made some mistakes and I truly believe is finding his way and will glorify us all. He had a daughter,

Mary Ann, whom I have the privilege of raising at this time.

Chapter 3 – “After the Mystery”

Shortly after the divorce the Martin clan went into action. We all worked at every job it was possible to get...throwing papers, unloading coal on the farms and all handy jobs that kids could do. One day I was washing floors at the old Midel Hotel bar and while sweeping up the thought came to me (probably inspired by Chic Sales) to build out houses and my first business venture was launched on that day. So with rough lumber I built one hole jobs, two hole jobs and believe it or not my Super Deluxe with a seat to the side for Junior.

Of course there was a humorous side to the Adams City Martin clan. The four of us stuck together. My sister Bird as a kid was quite a character. She could out fight, out ride and out cuss anyone in the county as proved again and again when someone blamed the Martins for something they didn't do. But we were sometimes to blame.

Bill was strong as an ax and he made a good second man as Bird led the clan. Dan wasn't afraid of the devil himself and had a slogan" hit them first then talk about it". So with myself that made the 4 Martins. We never let Dude help as he was to become a violinist and must never hurt his hands.

The Bromleys were an ornery bunch of kids, eight in all and Bird's arch enemies. I recall a time when David Bromley kicked Dude in

the place no gentleman would think of and he came home yelling and screaming. The four of us went down to pay them a visit. We had a system. I'd choose one first and if I could whip him then Dan took a few swings and then Bill would take a turn and if we 3 boys couldn't whip them we would turn Bird loose and in plain words she was never whipped and was a wild cat. Well I was telling you about the round with the Bromleys and they has all of us knocked down. Here comes Bird on her horse jumping off with her black snake bull whip and the first one she wrapped the whip around his neck was Fox Bromley. She threw him 15 feet on the perpendicular , loosed her whip and let him have around the legs and jerked and Fox assumed the horizontal with Bird across his chest, hands in his hair and playing Bongo time with his head on a rock. Old man Bromley came out who was an old Kentucky colonel although we had many other names for him and he entered the fun. Bill squatted behind him to give Dan a little leverage. Dan hit him smack on the Adams apple an over Bill he went. The Dan started some fancy soft shoe dancing on the Colonel's head. Meanwhile I was entertaining Luther, the one next to Fox, holding his head in the horse trough and bring him up for air now and then.

Well so went the Martin clan of Adams City and the Bromleys never bothered Dude again. **(Thank you from Dude's future children, Al and Mary Ann).**

Although the years have mellowed all of us and we look back at those years without a Dad and left much like today we had to fight to exist. It wasn't really a live and let live, it was a fight or die

so we fought our way in old Adams City and Bill and Bird finished high school and lucky enough I was Valedictorian of my class and won a scholarship to agricultural college for four years but I wanted to be a dentist or a minister. Our grocery store and dance hall were being pushed back. The cars were here and chain stores were closing the country store so Mother, God rest here soul, sold our old home and we moved to Denver away from the Brighton Road with 5 road houses – 2 on one side and 3 on the other.

Chapter 4 – “Moving Day”

Ma had rented a small house on High Street in Denver so we had set a day to move. Dick Simons, an Indian the finest type of man, arrived early with the hay wagon, two other neighbors brought their hay wagons and we began to load. The Piano was set up first with the stool in place. I had 8 crates of rabbits and we loaded the beds with their straw ticks in too. Nothing was disassembled. The wash tubs were filled with dishes and miscellaneous. Two sets of harnesses with the horse collars were hanging off the running boards. The wheel barrow was used to clean the cow barn. The big old stone for sharpening the axes and all the things for country living were added but the payoff was when Bill loaded the hog trough Everyone was there and no one knew where anything was except the 3 dogs who ran along under the wagon. The three were Old Shep (14 years old) “The Hound dog”, Jim, and old Plain dog who could bay like a funeral dirge nightly at the moon .

Well the caravan started and one mile in route, it began one of

those sudden Colorado sprinkles. Joe Pelcher, an old saloon piano player, was sitting in the wagon playing “In the good old summer time”. The sprinkle turned into a cloudburst and imagine not even an umbrella. We stopped for a while for the rain to pass and everyone was drenched. My beautiful white rabbits I’d covered with some old paper bunting were white and blue .

As we approached York Street close to our new home, people began laughing and we boys had a hard time stopping Bird from bull whipping the crowd. She could have done it too. Well we arrived at 2519 High and unloaded everything in the front yard. It looked like the remains of a church bazaar on sale day or an AS IS sale at the Salvation Army. Next Chapter Martins land in Denver.

This is where it ends but what a treasure.

Transcribed by Mary Ann Rosas nee Martin – March 2019

