

## Chapter VI

### Full House to Empty Nest

March 20, 1954 – August 18, 1954

While all of the attention focused on Janet during the month of March, there was still plenty going on. On the third Saturday, Craig and Edith came up from Blacksburg and Roger Rowan brought Wade and Read to help Sheffield with the annual round up. Janet was still restricted to the house and was unable to help, but Takara took her place.

The round up went as usual, separating the new calves from their mothers and branding them, taking last years calves to market, picking out one for the freezer and one for the church auction, and replacing two older cows with heifers from last year. When it came time to turn the bull in with the cows, Roger brought over a stud horse as well to breed with Roxy. Red and Roxy still had a lot of useful years ahead of them, but it was time to start raising their replacements. Any new foal wouldn't be ready to break until it was at least three years old. As it was, the foal wouldn't be born for eleven months after conception.

At the end of March, Sheffield's wrestling team took first place at the district tournament and was going to the state tournament in two weeks. The track season was in full swing and Janet was disappointed to have to quite the team. On the other hand, Takara was excited to play in her first high school girls softball game. She was assigned to play second base and on her first time at bat she had two strikes and one ball when she got a hit, only to be put out at third base. If its any consolation, she put two runners out to help win the game.

Now that Dr. Mendon had released Janet to go back to school, school was out for spring break the last three days of March and the first two days of April. That extra week gave her more time to get caught up with her homework before going back to school.

Now that she was free from all restrictions, except for participating in track, she was antsy to get out of the house and go somewhere. Takara had a request. She wanted to see Washington D.C.. The week of spring break happened to be the annual cherry blossom festival in the nation's capitol.

After attending church on Sunday, on Monday Sheffield, Ramona, Janet and Takara flew to Washington National Airport in the Staggerwing. At the airport they rented a car and drove to their hotel and checked in. They got a room with two beds, one for Sheffield and Ramona and one for Janet and Takara. That afternoon they set out re-exploring places that they had been to before but it was all knew to Takara.

The beauty of the city was enhanced by the hundreds of cherry trees in full bloom throughout the city. The first Cherry Blossom Festival was held in 1935 commemorating the gift of Japanese cherry trees from the mayor of Tokyo in March of 1912. The trees were donated in an effort to enhance the growing friendship between the United States and Japan. The festicval was suspended during World War II and resumed again in 1947.

On Tuesday they had just visited the Lincoln Memorial and strolled over to the Tidal Basin where the initial cherry trees were planted. A large number of people had gathered there, so they went closer to see what was going on. It just happened to be a ceremony in which the Japanese Ambassador, Sadao Iguchi, was making a presentation of a 300-year-old Japanese stone lantern to the City of Washington to commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of the first Treaty of Peace, Amity and Commerce between the United States and Japan signed by Commodore Mathew Perry at Yokohama on March 31, 1854. The eight foot lantern was made of granite and weighed approximately two tons. It was one of a pair of lanterns created in 1651, to mark the death of Tokugawa Iemitsu, the third shogun of the Tokugawa dynasty, and was formerly located at the Tōshō-gū temple, where its twin remains. After unveiling the lantern, the ambassador's daughter lit it as a symbol of peace.

After the ceremony, the Ambassador greeted those assembled and shook their hands. When he came to Takara, they carried on a conversation in Japanese in which she told him a little about herself and that she was in the United States as an exchange student and that she was going to attend college in the fall. Mr. Iguchi wished her well in her studies.

All day on Tuesday and Wednesday they toured the more important landmarks, particularly the halls of government. As their government teacher, Sheffield offered them both extra credit to give a report of their trip and what they saw and learned in their respective classes when they went back to school the next week. On Thursday, they spent all day at the Smithsonian Institute and the National Air Museum.

Since it opened in 1946 Sheffield had visited the later many times. He couldn't get enough of it. There wasn't room to display everything in the museum's inventory. Some pieces were on display in the Arts and Industries Building, some were stored in the Aircraft Building known as the "Tin Shed", a large temporary metal shed in the Smithsonian Castle's south yard. Still, much of the collection remained in storage due to a lack of display space.

On Friday they flew home to spend the weekend before going back to school and work. Sunday was Fast Sunday and Janet took the opportunity to express her gratitude to still be alive and how the experience that she had gone through had strengthened her faith.

Craig and Edith were up for the weekend and came for Sunday Dinner, Stirling and Mary Ann came over as well and they all celebrated Little Geannie's first birthday, which was actually the next day but she didn't seem to know the difference, she just enjoyed all of the attention that she was getting.

Janet was a little nervous about going back to school on Monday after having missed five weeks. She had worked so hard to get caught up and still had a few assignments left. But it was more than just making up the missed assignments. A lot can change in five weeks. She felt a little lost having missed out on what was actually discussed in her classes, but she also felt left out socially as a whole. Fortunately she had

Beverly, Olivia, and Takara to help her ease back into the flow of things. That week, she also went back to her job at the BookEnd. They had been so kind to keep it open for her.

Sheffield accompanied the Magicians to the two day state wrestling championships in Richmond at the end of the week. The team finished second, while some of the team members actually finished first in their weight brackets.

By then there was only six and a half weeks left of the semester. That meant six and a half weeks until graduation. Due to her accident and being restricted from competing in track for an entire year, Janet did not get the athletic scholarship to Ricks College that she was hoping for, but she did a scholarship available to the children of retired naval officers.

Takara's worries were laid to rest as she received enough in scholarships and grants to cover her tuition, books, and room and board. Her spending money was running low since she wasn't tending the Cooke children any more. She decided she would have to see if she could find someone that she could work for during the summer.

The next four weeks flew by and graduation was fast approaching. Janet had managed to catch up and meet all of the requirements for graduation. For her composition class, she wrote all about her experience and how much more appreciation she had for life, for it can be taken away in an instant. She said that she had a second lease on life and intended to live it to the fullest. During that time, her hand continued to heal and she had been receiving therapy for it on a regular basis.

Takara had enjoyed playing on the girls softball team even if they got knocked out of the district championship. She indeed had experienced what it was like to be an American teenager. She was relieved to not be returning to Japan with nowhere to go once school was out.

During April, Takara celebrated her nineteenth birthday. She had never really had a real birthday party before. In fact her birthday often went unacknowledged and was never celebrated. This year it was different. She had a party complete with gifts from her surrogate family and her friends and a birthday cake with nineteen candles to blow out and ice cream too. She was more excited than a five year old as Beverly and Olivia came over to celebrate with her.

Sheffield was excluded from the main event, as Ramona lead all the girls, including Norma, out to her bathhouse and locked the door behind them. The six of them removed their clothes, rinsed off in the shower, and piled into the ofuro to enjoy a relaxing soak. They laughed and talked and sang for more than an hour. Ramona didn't know if Beverly and Olivia had ever told their mothers about the fact that they actually took off all of their clothes to fully enjoy the experience. After all, some people wouldn't react favorably to such a practice.

Ramona had enjoyed teaching health at Hollins. The course had covered a host of health related

topics from basic anatomy and physiology to physical, eye, dental, emotional, and psychological health. She covered basic first aid, nutrition, and personal hygiene. Other topics included the harmful affects tobacco and alcohol, even though general public was not very well aware of the risks. The media didn't help that perception, especially in the movies which glamorized smoking and drinking.

The recession that had limited her business had eased and the economy was beginning to move ahead again. During that time, she looked the situation over closely and decided to make an adjustment in her investment strategy. Rather than strictly buying houses to resale or to rent out, she saw a big opportunity in buying land. She had dabbled in land a little, but now she moved more aggressively in the direction of buying up farmland. The first was forty acres just south of the city limits.

Buying land required her to keep it longer than she would keep a house, but with rising land prices, there was the potential for a greater return. In the meantime, she leased it out to a local farmer with land adjacent to it. She sold a couple of her rentals and used the money to buy another one hundred and twenty acres, which she also leased out while holding on to it.

Janet and Takara were not the only ones anxiously anticipating graduation. Craig would be graduating from Virginia Tech with a bachelors degree in aviation mechanics. He was in the process completing an internship at Woodrum Field and had been offered a job upon graduation. He could start when he returned from his summer reserve drill at the end of June. He and Edith had arranged to buy one of Ramona's rentals located at 485 Parkdale Drive in Salem. It was only three and half miles from the Two Star Ranch and six miles from the airport. They had already moved in and were renting it from Ramona, but upon graduation, the remainder of the money that Samantha had set aside in his name would be released to him. Their plan was to use a good share of it for a down payment and finance the remainder from the bank, rather than buy it on contract from Ramona. Everyone felt it was better that way.

Wade too would be graduating with his bachelors degree in veterinary science. Naturally he would be working the ranch with his father and uncle. With his training and education, he would handle the majority of the health needs of their own livestock. He and Norma had picked out a piece of property on the ranch where they planned to set up a mobile home and eventually build a permanent home someday.

During the last two weeks of school, Ramona taught the most challenging part of her health class; sex education. Having all women in her classes made it easier to discuss without the presence of their male counterparts, reducing the possibility for embarrassment. Some of the young women were married and therefore experienced, as were a good number of the single women. Ramona was hopeful that the rest had maintained their virginity. Even though there were no men to complicate the presentation of the material, the challenge was to teach something to those who thought that they knew everything there was to know about the subject.

She began with the sexual development for both boys and girls from childhood through puberty and adolescents to sexual maturity. It was the next part that drew the most interest from her students, the mechanics of sexual intercourse. There were a lot of comments from those with experience and a lot of questions from those who had very little or no experience. Ramona asked them to keep their comments and questions out of the gutter and she would be open and frank in her responses and answers. She did a good job of handling topics ranging from sexual arousal to orgasm and conception.

She also included in her lesson plan some topics that the textbook glossed over, just as it had the risks of tobacco and alcohol. She wanted them to understand the risks of venereal diseases such as syphilis, gonorrhea, genital herpes, and others. She told them that as a navy nurse that she had first hand experience in treating such things and painted an ugly picture of the consequences. Not only that, but she talked about unwanted pregnancy and told them about the horrible consequences of illegal back alley abortions.

At first the students in her classes were somewhat flippant in their attitude toward such things. The number one comment was, "Oh that will never happen to me."

She came right out and said, "Sexual intimacy is more than being physical. It is also emotional and spiritual. The other two must come first before you're ready for the physical aspect. If not, the result is often heart break and regret. In my opinion, abstinence before marriage is best, but I know many of you will ignore that advice. So if you're going to be promiscuous, for heaven's sake use some sort of protection. Remember, its not only the guy you're sleeping with, its all of the women that he has slept with before you, and the men they were with before him, and on and on. The thing is, you can't tell by a pleasant smile or a gentlemanly demeanor."

By the time she was done, several young women approached her privately with concerns or questions. For some, her advise was to see a doctor immediately. Others thanked her for the advise because their boyfriends were pressuring them to be intimate when they didn't feel that they were ready.

To finish the section on sex education, she covered pregnancy and delivery, something that she admitted she had never experienced first hand.

The long anticipated day arrived. Wednesday May 26<sup>th</sup> was a very significant day in 1954. For starters, it was Norma's twenty first birthday and Craig and Edith's third wedding anniversary. Those events were duly noted and celebrated, not to be overshadowed by graduation day.

It was a full and busy day. First on the agenda was Craig's graduation from Virginia Tech at ten o'clock in the morning. Sheffield, Ramona, Norma, Janet and Takara drove down to Blacksburg where they met up with with Stirling and Mary Ann. Craig's cheering section, including Edith and Little Geannie occupied

a block of bleacher seats in the gymnasium. With the announcement of "Craig Taylor Brason" he proudly walked across the stage to receive his diploma. Afterwards, Sheffield treated everyone to lunch.

From Blacksburg, they had to rush back to Victory Stadium in Roanoke for Jefferson High School's graduation at two o'clock. The same cheering section, minus the Stirling and Mary Ann, was joined by Wade, who had one last final exam that morning, and Grandma Brason, who wasn't able to make the trip down to Blacksburg.

With a graduating class of over three hundred, the ceremony lasted two hours. The graduates in their caps and gowns got quite warm seated on the turf of the stadium for so long with afternoon temperatures in the mid eighties. Being arranged alphabetically, there was a big gap between Brason and Yamashita as the continuous stream of students filed across the stage to receive their diplomas.

Afterwards, there was another family get together. Later in the afternoon, Craig and Edith left Little Geannie with Ramona while they went out to celebrate and Norma and Wade went their own way. Beverly and Olivia came out after celebrating with their families for a graduation party with Janet and Takara.

The four girls headed for their favorite place to hang out, the bathhouse. They were sitting around talking with their sodas at the edge of the tub relishing in their accomplishment and looking forward to their adventure together in the fall.

All of a sudden, their party was interrupted by an intruder. A fruit bat had somehow found its way in and had been hiding in the rafters. Without warning it swooped down on the the unsuspecting girls. The fact that hat they were naked was the least of their concern at the moment as they ran screaming from the from the bathhouse, onto the porch.

To Sheffield, it sounded as if someone was being murdered and came running to see what was the matter. When he rounded the corner, he got more than an eyeful of the four young women. Still screaming and dripping wet, they realized that they were naked and attempted to hide themselves with one hand while pointing into the bathhouse with their other, to hysterical to even speak.

Sheffield went in to see what was the matter. The bat was desperately trying to find its way out and Sheffield attempted to help it by shoeing it with his cane. After a moment it found the open door and flew out, and over the heads of the four terrified girls. They instinctively covered their heads with their hands, leaving what they had been attempting to cover completely exposed.

Sheffield made his get away almost as quickly as the bat. The girls dashed back in long enough to grab their clothes without even attempting to put them on. They ran from the bathhouse into the house where Ramona had been tending Little Geannie. They streaked through the back door and dashed up the stairs where they put their clothes back on. After adjusting their hair, they decided on an alternate party location and left.

When Beverly and Olivia dropped off Janet and Takara later in the evening, they went up to their rooms and avoided Sheffield altogether for the rest of the evening. They continued to avoid him the next day at Wade's graduation and for the rest of the week, including during the annual Brason Memorial Day activities and picnic which was held on Saturday, since Memorial Day was actually on Sunday.

Even on Sunday at church, not only Janet and Takara avoided him but so did Beverly and Olivia. With Sheffield seated on the stand with the rest of the Branch Presidency, none of them would look up for fear of making eye contact with him. It was equally difficult for Sheffield. He couldn't look at them either without that image of them coming into his mind. It was an image that haunted him and made him feel guilty and sick inside. He was afraid that they all thought he was some kind of a perverted peeping Tom.

Neither the girls nor Sheffield would talk about. Ever since Wednesday, the tension had been so thick it could be cut with a knife. Finally, Ramona had had enough and had to do something. After Sacrament Meeting she personally invited Beverly and Olivia over for desert that that evening.

"Will Brother Brason be there?" they wanted to know.

"Yes. As a matter of fact he will be. We need to talk about what happened. This has gone on long enough."

Reluctantly they accepted the invitation and came over. Ramona sat down with the four girls and Sheffield with a round of banana splits.

"Alright." Ramona said. "I want you each to look at him and tell me what you see. Janet, lets start with you."

"I see my dad."

"And what else?"

"The kindest and gentlest man I know. The man who took me in and loves me as his own. Someone who has done so much for me and I know would do anything for me."

"Very good. Okay Takara, what do you see?"

"Someone I look up to as if he were my own father. Someone who invited me into his home and taught me to drive and so much more. Someone without any bad feelings toward anyone."

"Okay. Now Beverly, its your turn."

"I see Brother Brason, a member of the branch presidency and my government teacher. He's a close friend to my father. Someone who has been nothing but kind to me.

"Olivia?"

"Mostly what Beverly said. I see someone who would do anything for me or anybody else. Someone who is a hero, and not just because of fighting in the war, but because of the way he stands for what he believes in and isn't afraid of anyone."

“Did you hear that, Sheffield? Olivia said that your not afraid of anyone. So why are you all of a sudden afraid of these four sweet girls? Even your own daughter.”

“Because of what they must must think of me.”

“And what do you think they think of you? You just heard each of them say what they think of you.”

“I'm afraid that they think I' a dirty old man.”

“And why do you think that?”

“Because of the way I saw them.”

“And just how did you see them?”

“I saw them naked and its hard to get that image out of my head. Thats why I can't look at them.”

“Take a good look at them, right now, and tell me what you see.”

“I see four very lovely and virtuous young ladies who are full of faith and light. Four girls who always try to do what's right. I see four very intelligent people with bright and promising futures.”

“Do you girls think he's a dirty old man?”

“No. Not at all. He's nothing like that.” Janet said.

The rest all agreed.

“Now let me tell you what I think.” Ramona said. “This whole thing was an accident. The four of you are innocent and so is Sheffield. He wasn't sneaking around trying to get a peek. He's not like that at all. He heard you screaming bloody murder and came to the rescue like the hero that Olivia said he is. He has never backed down in the face of danger or in this case embarrassment. He sized up the situation and took care of the matter and got rid of the bat didn't he.

“So what if he saw your naked bodies. It's not like he had never seen a woman before. They're just bodies and that is all he saw. He didn't see you as anything but what you are, only without your clothes on. Am I right Sheffield?”

“Thats exactly right.”

“Now Janet, when a house full of people live together, these things are bound to happen. I'm surprised it hasn't happened before now. The rest of you just happened to be caught up in it. As far as I'm concerned, there is nothing for any of you feel ashamed of. Am I right?”

“I suppose.” one of them said.

“Can you all, just chalk it up to an innocent encounter and nothing more? One day you'll all look back on it and laugh. In fact, I think it is hilarious.” At that Ramona burst out laughing. One by one Sheffield and the girls joined in.

“Do you parents know about this?”

“No. I don't dare tell them.” Beverly said.



“Me either.” Olivia agreed.

“I’m not usually one to suggest hiding things from your parents, but maybe this time it’s best. I don’t want it getting all blown out of proportion. Do they even know that you use the bathhouse naked?”

“My mother does.” Beverly said. “Jolene told her about the first time we did it.”

“What did she say?”

“At first she didn’t know what to think. Then when Jolene told her that it was no different than showering together in PE, she wasn’t so concerned, as long as there were no boys around. In fact she said that she would like to try it. She told us about how she and her girlfriends used to go naked at their secret swimming hole.”

“Well then, maybe I’ll have to invite her over sometime.

“Olivia, what about your mother?”

“I don’t think she would understand. She’s kind of funny about things like that.”

“Okay, can we put this whole thing behind us and get on with things as if nothing ever happened, because that is exactly what happened, nothing. Now I want each of you to look him in the eye.”

In turn, each looked him in the eye and he them. Janet went first. “I love you Dad.” She said and got up and gave him a hug and kiss on the cheek.

“I love you too, Sheffield.” It was the first time that Takara had told him that. She too gave him a hug, but not a kiss on the cheek.

“I’m sorry for avoiding you, Brother Brason. I think you’re swell.” Beverly said as she reached across the table and shook his hand.

“I feel a lot better now.” Olivia admitted and she too shook his hand.

“Well. I’m glad this is settled.” Ramona concluded.

“Me too.” Sheffield agreed.

May slipped into the magical month of June and there wasn’t any more avoiding each other. With school out, Janet put in a few more hours at the BookEnd to earn some spending money to take to with her to school. The burn on her hand had healed, but she still needed therapy to regain its functionality. Takara found a job picking cherries at an orchard out in South County that typically hired undocumented workers and paid her under the table. Craig and Edith were settled in their home and he had gone to Norfolk for his summer drill. Wade got busy preparing a place for he and Norma to live.

Now that graduation was over, planning turned in earnest to the upcoming wedding. Ramona invited Chantell and Jolene over to figure things out. Chantell was brought into the sisterhood as she, Jolene, Ramona and Norma talked about their plans while soaking in the bathhouse. It was going to be a double

wedding all the way around. Norma and Wade and Sedric and Jolene would be married the same day in the Idaho Falls temple and they would have a double reception in the Brason's yard. Sedric and Jolene would have a separate reception in Moreland. Wade was apprised of the plans and went along with them. Sedric was away in the Mediterranean and was told all about it in a letter. He wrote back and agreed with whatever was decided.

June was over in a flash and Craig returned from his summer drill. Because he now held a degree in aviation mechanics, which fit right in with his rating, he was promoted from airman to Aviation Machinist Mate Second Class, skipping a rate. As a petty officer, he was put in charge of a crew of other airmen. At one time he had considered trying to become an officer, but now with only two years left in his commitment, he didn't see the point.

When he returned from Norfolk, he went right to work for the Roanoke Regional Airport Authority at Woodrum Field as an aircraft mechanic. Because of his experience in the navy reserve, he was hired on as crew chief, very similar to his position in the reserve. In his spare time, Craig did some overdue maintenance on the Staggerwing. Craig and Edith enjoyed being close to their families again, even though they hadn't been very far away when they lived in Blaksburg. Both Ramona and Mary Ann were glad to have Little Geannie closer.

Like Memorial Day, the Fourth of July was on Sunday so the Austin/Brason celebration at the cabin was held on Saturday the 3<sup>rd</sup>. A couple of days earlier, Joseph and Rhonda flew up from Denison to bring Ruth Ann's kids to spend the summer with Shenan and Emily. They were growing right up; Anna was seven and Paul was five. Joseph had remarried about a year ago and Rhonda was good to the kids. Joseph felt that it was important that they maintain a relationship with their grandparents, after all it wasn't their fault that Ruth Ann had ran out on them. Joseph had gotten over her and moved on, but Shenan and Emily were still heartbroken. No one had heard from her in four years, except for Sheffield and Ramona's brief encounter with her on the MGM lot in Hollywood.

July was all about getting ready for the wedding. Sheffield worked on sprucing up the yard for the reception. Wade had the lot for their mobile home ready and together he and Norma went house shopping. They found a brand new 1954 eight by forty five foot coach built by the Rollohome Corporation in Wisconsin. With two bedrooms and one bath, it was considered roomy and luxurious compared to models from previous years. The exterior was of rustproof galvanized aluminum and insulated with celotex fiberglass. The trailer was constructed with house-type electrical wiring and had factory-installed telephone and TV antennae connectors.

It was also the very first laundry-equipped trailer house. It came out of the factory with an automatic washer and dryer combination. Other inside amenities included a thirty gallon water heater, a 7.1 cubic foot

refrigerator, a mahogany Duncan Phyfe-style dinette, full a size sofa sleeper and Birch wall paneling.

Once it was moved onto the lot and hooked up to the well, power, and septic system, Wade went ahead and moved in. Piece by piece, Norma began decorating and furnishing it to make it ready for when she moved in after the wedding.

Norma and Ramona turned their attention to sending out wedding announcements. They sent one to everyone on Ramona's Christmas card list, everyone in the branch, as well as other friends and neighbors. Ramona suggested that they send some to Norma's natural relatives. Norma reluctantly agreed since she hadn't heard from any of them since her grandmother's funeral.

During July a string of visitors stopped in, Quinn was discharged from the Navy during the second week of July and he and Bonnie came through and stayed a week with her parents, Tom and Eve Rowan. While they were in the area, they came out to see the Brason's. After collecting the rest of Bonnie's things, they headed for Utah and settled down in Tremonton.

Later in the month Mace and Pat came for a visit. Mace had finally retired from the Navy when his last assignment ended. Sheffield had invited them to consider settling in Roanoke but since they had spent a good number of years in Washington D.C. off and on, they had decided to move to Arlington. That was close enough that they could easily stay in touch.

One day in late July Sheffield came in from out side just after Norma got home from working at the record store. He found her listening a record on the phonograph player. "What on earth is that?" he asked.

"Why that's 'Blue Moon of Kentucky'. Don't you recognize it?"

"I recognize the lyrics, but who the devil is that?"

"Its from someone new by the name of Elvis Presley. Its a big hit and we can't keep it on the shelves."

"Well, he sure has ruined that song. I remember when the Blue Grass Boys came out with it just after the War. Your Mom and I used to dance to it. How are you supposed to dance to this? I'll take Frank Sinatra over this any day." The song ended and Sheffield went on to ask, "So what have you decided to do about your job at the record store after you're married?"

"I think, I'll keep it until after I graduate next year. Then we want to start working on having a family."

"It sounds like you've got it all figured out. There are only three more weeks, are you nervous at all?"

"Not in the least. I've been looking forward to this for so long, I can't believe its almost here."

"I'm going to miss having you here."

"Oh Wade and I will come over quite often."

"I know, but it won't be the same around here without you." Sheffield said and gave her a kiss on the forehead.

During the first week in August, Sedric returned with the Reprisal and was discharged from the navy and came through on his way home to Idaho. He stayed with the Brasons for a week while he was brought up to speed with the wedding plans and spent most of his time with Jolene, only showing up to sleep.

Both couples just about had everything figured out. Sedric left after a week to go home and get things ready for his new bride by finding a place to live and job. Norma was slowly moving some of her things into their trailer house as she got it ready. Her plan was to come home from the wedding and their honeymoon and simply go home with him and begin living together.

The days passed quickly. Norma wasn't the only one getting ready. Both Janet and Takara had let their employers know that Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup> would be the last day that they would be available. Janet went through her things to decide what to take and what to leave at home. Takara did the same. She didn't really have much, except for what she had brought with her and the few things that she had acquired over the last year.

Sunday was their last day they attended the Roanoke Branch before leaving. They said their goodbyes to the rest of their friends who were remaining behind for either school or work. On Tuesday, Janet, Takara, Beverly, and Olivia enjoyed the use of Ramona's bathhouse one last time. The experience with the bat had not deterred them from the sisterhood.

On Wednesday morning, Janet and Takara finished packing the last minute items that they were taking with them. Norma had completely moved out of her bedroom the day before and had only what she was taking with her for the wedding. They each carried what they were taking with them out to the hangar for Sheffield to put into the Staggerwing. The storage compartment had about all it could carry without being overloaded. After helping Sheffield push the plane out of the hangar they all went back into the house for one last look around

"Is that everything?" Sheffield asked.

Everyone concurred and Ramona said, "Well then lets get going. Its going to be a long day."

"It seems strange to have the entire upstairs empty." Sheffield said.

"I know." Ramona lamented. "They all came at once, and now their all leaving at once."

"It's not like its for good." Sheffield consoled. "Craig is still around and Norma won't be far away and Janet and Takara will be home for Christmas and next summer."

They closed the door behind them and all five walked out to the plane and got in and took their seats.

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The Cherry Blossom Festival and the stone lantern are as described. The lantern was unveiled on March 30, 1954.

The National Air Museum was as described. It was later renamed the National Air and Space Museum and opened in its present location in 1976.

Until the 1990s, Sexually transmitted diseases were commonly known as venereal diseases.

Elvis Presley's first single released on July 19, 1954 featured "That's Alright Mama" and "Blue Moon of Kentucky" on the flip side.

In 1954 an 8 by 45 foot trailer house was the largest made and was considered to be quite spacious. The Rollohom Corporation was a real company.

