

Many times we think that we will write a biography or an autobiography about a member of our family or about our own life, but we never do it. Perhaps, though, we jot down some thoughts, several pages. We historians who happen upon such short writings treasure them. Often they capture perfectly a moment or two of time. One of them is the several-page autobiography of Anna Young. I included her wonderful comment about living in Corral Hollow among the shepherders two weeks ago. This week I am delighted to have at my fingertips two short works by members of the Scullion family—Edna (Teddy) Scullion, Claire Scullion, and Eileen Scullion Michelis. The following quote is from *Upon These Rocks*.

“Even at age three Don was forever working on a little project. Therefore a pencil, hammer, and little pocket knife were his most precious possessions. Paper, at times, was a missing item, but he used ‘butcher paper.’ In years ago this was the outside wrapping of all meat products. No supermarkets with packaged plastic meat then. One went to a butcher shop; meat was cut, weighed, and wrapped per order. The outer wrapper was clean, large, and great for drawing and sketching. Don was forever sketching. At age six he could do any cartoon as good as the original.”

Sometimes, Don’s sisters went on to say, his sketching was inconvenient, especially when it interfered with arriving at school on time. They continued, “But not once did they think to remove the pencil from his little hand. Even then they knew he was

Do You Remember?



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Donald and Madeline Scullion

special. He graduated from St. Michael’s and Livermore High, leaving behind many sketches, in books, possibly desks, and anything else available. This did, at times, cause unhappiness between Don and some of his teachers. Graffiti was not yet the in thing.” Don volunteered for the Marines on 8 December 1941 but was stationed close enough to Livermore to attend his high school graduation in June 1942. He served throughout the rest of the war in the South Pacific, sailing from Guam to Hawaii, New Guinea, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Japan. He shared his voyages with his family and friends through his talent for sketching. He sent a cartoon to the *Herald*, showing himself so deep in reading his newly arrived copy of the *Herald* that he ignored the half-naked women walking by.

When Don returned home, he attended the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland on the GI Bill. After he had completed his third year, however, he heard from Uncle Sam, who wanted to send him to Korea. Instead, since he had his seaman’s papers from an earlier hitch with

the Merchant Marines, he worked for them for four years. When he returned home, he rented space in what is now the southern building of Blacksmith Square and set up his own business, Scully’s Signs. He stayed in business for 35 years creating signs for realtors, the rodeo, the county fair, and the school district. He did campaign signs for local politicians using the silk screen process, which he had learned at a plant in Berkeley. He painted the original Phillips gas station fiberglass figures so that they resemble cowboys; only one is left to advertise the rodeo. At Livermore High he painted the portrait of a man on a bucking horse for the boys’ gym floor, and he also

did the painting on the outside. He worked for the school district from 1977 to 1989; he retired on April 17, the anniversary of the 1906 earthquake.

Along the way, Don married Madeline Genoni at St. Mike’s in 1958, and they had two children, Jim and Ann. Don’s grandfather, John Scullion, immigrated to San Francisco from Killarny, Ireland, in 1867. He settled in the Altamont hills just to the east of Brushy Peak, where he raised horses, grain, and hay. Father Laurence Scanlon married John to Mary J. “Minnie” Flynn in San Francisco on 17 October 1869 at St. Patrick’s Church. Unfortunately, John died in his early fifties in 1906, leaving Minnie to rear their twelve children. Their ranch included a number of rock caves, and even though Don Scullion was born and raised in Livermore, he often visited the old home place.

Madeline’s parents, John and Mary Genoni, came to Livermore from San Francisco with their three children in 1924. John suffered from asthma, and his doctor had recommended that he move to a place with a drier climate.

They lived on Lomitas Avenue, where John planted a vineyard. Like her husband, Madeline attended St. Michael’s School and graduated from Livermore High. She studied accounting at the Merritt Business School and worked as an accountant for several local firms.

Returning to the tales of younger years in another little book called *Echoes from the Whistle*, we hear from Claire Scullion about her adventures with her big brother, Don. “As we matured to five and eight, we decided that anyone could have a lemonade stand, what about a newspaper? So—Don had a flair for the arts way back then before he went to college and made it his career. He did a weekly comic strip. Bud Twohey, Bud Nevin, and I were the reporters; the Henry kids, Arthur and Nancy, the proofreaders and printers. ... We charged a nickel a copy for our treasure. We reported marriages, engagements, babies sometimes before the people involved knew of this. Our paper was booming!”

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