

Arlee Claud Gowen, son of Claud Franklin Gowen and Ora Ethel Cox Gowen, was born, Friday, November 24, 1922 at Lamesa, Texas. Ora Ethel Cox Gowen was a granddaughter of James Christopher Cox, the Lampasas County pioneer.

Arlee Claud Gowen attended McCarty community school and Lamesa public schools, graduating from Lamesa High School in May 1939. For two years prior to graduation he was employed by the "Lamesa Reporter," weekly newspaper on which he worked as a "printer's devil."

What was life like in the 1920-1930 decade? The value of money is perhaps the first thing to be noticed. His first job at the newspaper paid 10¢ an hour. When he could borrow the family car for a date, gasoline was 17¢ a gallon. Before electricity came in 1929, the Gowens used kerosene lamps, and kerosene cost a penny per gallon more than gasoline. A quart of oil was 25¢. A haircut was 25¢. A telephone cost \$2.25 per month for those who could afford them; my Dad said we couldn't.

We produced our own meat, eggs, vegetables and fruit. Three pounds of rice cost 18¢; a gallon of milk 12¢, and eggs were 22¢ a dozen. An apple pie at the bakery was 10¢, and two loaves of bread were 10¢. Brown sugar was 7¢ a pound. A quart of ice cream cost 20¢.

The doctors would make a house call for \$2 and deliver a baby at home for \$10.

What memories stand out for a youngster growing up on a farm in the "dirty thirties?"  
What poignant recollections of youth remain from over 70 years ago?

"Having my own tin dinner plate when I became old enough 'to come to the table.' The tiny plate, embossed with numerals and the letters of the alphabet around its circumference, would make the kid a 'man of letters,' according to Cousin Guy Rotan who was the donor of the treasured tin ware.

Receiving a bright red coaster wagon for Christmas that would allow you to transport all your dogs and cats in one trip.

Drawing straws with my grandmother to see who had to go outside on a cold, snowy day to winnow the chaff out of the popcorn before we made popcorn balls.

Watching a sandstorm that looked like a wall 3,000 feet high roll onto the farmstead out of Lynn County during the dustbowl days.

Sitting on top of a packed ice cream freezer while Dad turned the crank and contemplating the ecstasy of that ambrosia crossing the palate as my rump slowly turned numb with cold.

Shelling peas in a washing machine wringer and watching the legumes emerge like machinegun bullets, when the family undertook a mass-production canning effort to supply the food co-op during the depression.

Slipping our feet into the fluoroscope in the shoe department at Collins Department Store when trying on new brogans. You could see in the x-ray image where the toes were pinched, and with it probably came enough radiation to see your feet glow in the dark.

Firing up ready-rolled Chesterfields pilfered from Uncle Elmer's pack by Cousin Dorman. When he caught us, he put us in the cab of his pickup, rolled up the windows and gave us the whole pack to smoke non-stop.

Chopping cotton in the summertime on the Sellers farm at 20 cents an acre for the first money I ever earned. The most disagreeable parts of the job were (1) the gnats that swarmed into the shade of my straw hat and (2) the water bucket was always at the other end of the field.

Substituting at right end and catching the touchdown that won the intramural championship.

Riding away from Montgomery-Wards on the first all-aluminum bicycle ever seen in a town of 4,000 envious people. It wasn't long before the aluminum fenders, the light, the bell and the 'longhorn' handlebars were stripped down and stashed in the "car shed."

Riding the go-devil cultivator behind two obstreperous little mules who delighted in walking on the rows of young cotton rather than on top of the soil bed the minute you began to day-dream.

Climbing the city water tower at night with a bucket of paint on a dare and having Fire chief Luther Standifer turn on the ear-splitting city siren immediately below us.

Pulling bolls for 'a dollar a hundred' and thinking that there must be a better way.

Sleeping out under the grape arbor in the summertime and watching the stars peep through the Concord vines and in-variably getting purple stains on the pillowcase to Mother's chagrin.

Sitting atop a runaway horse and holding on for dear life to the hames that were pumping like pistons on a racing locomotive. That skittish stallion shied at a tin can in the row while I was riding him to 'scratch' cotton. The scratchers were cedar posts with headless 16-penny spikes driven into them that were dragged along the row, breaking the crust to help sprouting cotton plants emerge. I could have bailed out any time in the soft plowed ground, but those cedar posts were flailing the air behind me like machetes. The trace ropes pulling the posts broke when he jumped a 10-foot ditch onto the county road-bed, but then the surface was too hard and he was running too fast. He covered the half mile to the house in record time, and approaching the horse lot gate, planted his front feet in a dead stop and watched me sail over his head and over the old top-rail in the middle of the cow lot.

In September 1939 he enrolled in Texas Technological College at Lubbock. During his undergraduate days he was employed as a printer at Wood Printing Company and Texas Tech Press. Later he was a sportswriter on the "Lubbock Avalanche-Journal."

His best memories were: was rounding the Administration Building circle in the slickest, reddest Ford roadster that 3,500 envious Texas Tech students had ever seen.

Receiving the president's gavel to add to my fraternity pin in my senior year and seeing it wind up on the sweater of the 'prettiest girl in Tech.'

Spending the year of 1941 in organizing a treasure-hunting expedition to Cocos Island and in securing permission from the government of Costa Rica to embark, only to have it all go up in the flames of Pearl Harbor on December 7.

He was graduated in June 1943 with a BA degree in journalism.

In the Navy Day parade down Broadway on October 27, 1942, the band was playing, the flag was waving, and he got that tingle down his spine—and he saw how the pretty girls swooned over those white dress uniforms and their gold braid. He signed up on the spot!

He volunteered into U. S. Naval Aviation as an aviation cadet and, prior to reporting for active duty, was employed on the flight line by Breedlove Aerial Service, flight training contractor for U.S. Army Air Corps. His naval training began at University of Texas where his physical training officer was "the meanest man that ever walked the face of the earth," Coach Lt. Paul "Bear" Bryant, who was later one of the winningest coaches in college football at Texas A&M University and University of Alabama.

He was assigned to the USS Randolph (CV-15) as its construction was being completed. As a "plank owner" on the new aircraft carrier, he was aboard on its shakedown cruise to Trinidad. Following refitting and renovation the USS Randolph joined the Fifth Fleet operating in the Pacific theatre, arriving on station there via the Panama Canal, San Francisco and Hawaii.

The USS Randolph joined the fleet in the island anchorage of Ulithi atoll and participated in the war against Japan until its conclusion, taking part in the Battles of Bonin Islands, Iwo Jima, Iwo Shima, Okinawa and the Philippines and air strikes on Tokyo, Kyushu, Minami Daita Jima and the Nansei Shoto, operating with the Fifth Fleet, the Third Fleet, Task Force 58 and Task Force 38.

He was awarded four battle stars and six campaign ribbons for service in the Atlantic, Pacific, Arctic and Mediterranean theaters. He was cited for "conspicuous gallantry" by Adm. Mark Mitscher in an attack by enemy aircraft at Ulithi when his ship was hit and severely damaged by Kamikazi aircraft.

In December 1945 Lt.[jg] Arlee Claud Gowen received a transfer to Naval Air Transport Service and was stationed successively in Norfolk, Virginia; Patuxent River, Maryland; Olathe, Kansas and Amarillo, Texas.

On February 16, 1946 he was married to May Belle "Bonnie" Bonner, daughter of Joseph Drew Bonner and Alice Belle Hestand Bonner in Crane, Texas. She was born Friday, September 11, 1925 at Breckenridge, Texas. May Belle "Bonnie" Bonner Gowen had

graduated from Texas Technological College in June 1945 and was a teacher in Phillips, Texas High School at the time of their marriage. After a honeymoon in New Mexico the couple lived at Pantex, Texas near Amarillo Army Air Base where he was stationed. He was separated from naval service June 6, 1946 at Galveston, Texas, and they moved immediately to Lubbock where they had met in college.

In 1946 Arlee Claud Gowen assisted in the organizing and founding of "Southwestern Crop and Stock," a farm magazine. He was named editor of the publication which printed its first edition in January 1947. May Belle "Bonnie" Bonner Gowen was a teacher at Hutchinson Junior High School in Lubbock at that time. In 1955 he became a deacon and a bible school teacher at Broadway Church of Christ.

In August 1956 he assisted in the organization of High Plains Credit Corporation and was named executive vice-president of organization while continuing in the publishing business. In 1959 he established a wholesale electronic supply which became known as Electros, Inc. In 1961 he purchased a farm in Bailey County, Texas. Forty-five years later he continued to operate it.

He had become interested in family history research in 1941 and continued to pursue that interest for many years. In September 1986 he entered a manuscript, "The Widder Dyches" in the Texas Sesquicentennial competition. It was adjudged first place winner and was displayed in the Hall of State at the State Fair of Texas alongside the original Texas Declaration of Independence. In March 1987 he was named to the board of directors of the South Plains Genealogical Society. In the same year he was appointed to the board of directors of Texas State Genealogical Society. In 1987 "The Widder Dyches" received first place in Texas State Genealogical Society competition. In 1988 an account of his fifth-generation grandfather, "Matthew Morgan McCall, M. D, Alikchi Chukma of the Choctaws" again took the TSGS award.

In 1989, he received a visit from a cousin, Miller Abbott "Bud" Gowen of Geneva, Switzerland who proposed that they organize Gowen Research Foundation to make a study of the family history. Arlee Claud Gowen was elected president of the organization which he continued to head in April 2006.

In June 1997, he assisted with the organization of The Brandywine Crucible, a heritage society composed of the Cox family researchers and others. He was named a director of the organization and continued on the board in May 2006.

Two daughters were born to Arlee Claud Gowen and May Belle "Bonnie" Gowen: Bonnie Lee Gowen, born December 16, 1951 and Connie Louise Gowen born July 3, 1954