

## Gwen Cook Cotton My Story



### **1961 to 1976**

After graduation, Larry Templin and I moved to Upland, California. While there, we had a daughter, Teri, and a son, Randy. After being there for about four years, Larry was transferred to the Santa Barbara area and we lived in Solvang. Solvang is a nice Danish town.

I worked at Birkholms Bakery, starting out behind the counter and worked my way up to manage the coffee shop. Later I was promoted to manage the plant, producing bakery products for Alpha Beta Markets and most of the hotels in and around Solvang. Teri and Randy finished school at Santa Ynez High School. I continued to live and work in Solvang after my divorce from Larry Templin in 1976.

### **1980 to 1988**

I started dating another Larry three years later -- must be something to the name. I moved to Bakersfield, California and married Larry Cotton, who was a Warehouseman with Texaco. Along with my two kids and his three kids, the house was full of teenagers; but, we lived through it. I started working for Redman Pipe and Supply; then, I worked for Frito Lay in Quality Control testing products.

In **1988**, Larry was transferred to Ventura. We lived in Fillmore and I got a job at Egg City in the lab testing product for companies like Hagen Daz, General Foods, Best Foods, and also making vaccines for the chickens.

In **1991**, Larry was transferred to Colorado. I worked in retail for 2 ½ years, then retired.

**July 1, 1994** we were transferred to Kuwait and stayed for six years. During this time, we started traveling the world. While in Kuwait, we lived in a villa on the beach. I was a member of the American Business Council. We went to parties at the American and British Embassies, met many friends of different nationalities, and were privileged to have U. S. troops over for dinner and swimming during U. S. holidays. I registered people for Fourth of July parties at the American Embassy. I did a lot of shopping and took 30 days vacation to the U. S. each year.

**The first year** we vacationed in Greece and the Greek islands. Later that year we toured the Italian cities of Rome (Sistine Chapel), Florence (David), and Venice (boats). We also toured in France for a week.

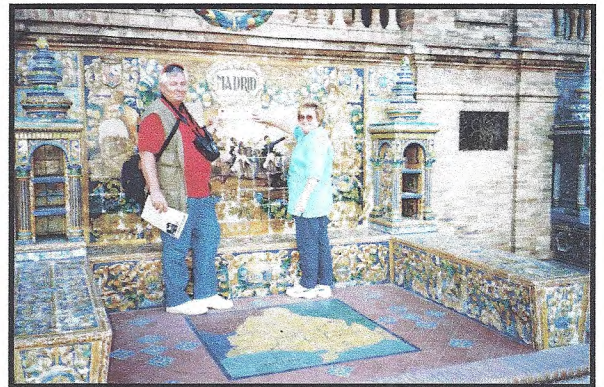
**The second year** we did an around-the-world trip stopping at Singapore, Japan, Hawaii, over to California, and then back to Kuwait. We did a four-day trip to Dubai, to see the Desert Classic Golf tournament and a lot of shopping.



**The third year** was two weeks in Spain (photo at right), a week in Portugal, the islands



of Majorca, and Ibiza. Later we did a four-day trip to Bahrain. Later in the year we toured Istanbul, Turkey where we went shopping in the Grand Bazaar, toured the Blue Mosque, the underground ancient water storage, and visited Mary's home from where she ascended to heaven. In the photo (left) Gwen is wearing a million dollar necklace – just another fun shopping day! We also toured ancient Roman city ruins and through several more cities.



**The fourth year** we toured Thailand, Bangkok (rode water taxis and saw sites), Chiangmai (rode elephants and tut tuts, climbed the 600 steps to a holy temple). Several trips to the UAE (rode the sand dunes, rode a camel, and watched them build the island for the future Sail, in Dubai).



**The fifth year** we toured the UK, England, Scotland, and Wales (shopped at Harrah's, toured London, saw all the famous sites (Saint Andrews), drank Scotch whiskey at a distillery in Scotland, ate haggis, and we saw a little of Wales).

**The sixth year (2000)** we rented a car and did a driving tour of both Ireland (stayed in bed & breakfasts, went to Waterford to buy crystal, danced in Dublin, kissed the Blarney Stone, got drunk with the locals in Northern Ireland). What a gorgeous Emerald Island.

**July 1, 2000** I went to our house we bought in 1998, in Colorado. Larry went to Aksai, Kazakhstan until retirement. Our last foreign trip in February 2001 was to Finland for a month.

We have been traveling the U.S. in a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel, then in our motor home. I really think that I have been blessed with a good life. I have great kids, grandchildren, and, most of all, a great husband. Can't wait to see people at the reunion.

Gwen Cook Cotton