

Cynthia Patton

BOND STRENGTH

A Father Remembered



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A Father Remembered

By Cynthia Patton

Page 1: The Foundation of Thirteen

They say some men are built from the ground up, but you were built on a specific foundation. You were the first to teach me that the number thirteen wasn't a symbol of bad luck, but the very bedrock of our freedom. You showed me the Great Seal and explained that the thirteen original colonies were just the beginning - a sacred number woven into the arrows, the leaves, the stars, and the stone steps. You taught me that order and purpose matter, and that a strong nation, like a strong family, requires a resilient foundation to stand on. Furthermore you explained Numerology to me in stating that 13 reduces down to 4 as it's whole number and anything on 4 legs is going to be a strong foundation. You always made perfect sense.



Page 2: The Tour of Duty

Before you were a blacksmith, a mechanic, or a father, you answered the call of the Nation. You served your Tour of Duty in the United States Navy, carrying the flag across the waters and learning the true meaning of discipline, grit, and sacrifice from being the Captain's Steward. You walked the decks of massive ships, a young Patriot absorbing the vastness of the World, but there was no place like home and anchoring your soul in a deep love for the country you would spend the rest of your life building and improving.



Page 3: Nevada Roots and the Pull Home

When your Naval tour was done, our story officially began at the Naval Hospital in Nevada, where I was born. The endless horizon called, but a deeper purpose pulled you back to your roots. You chose not to re-enlist because you had a life to live and a little girl to raise. You traded the Ocean for the steady ground, deciding that your most important mission wouldn't be on a Naval vessel, but right here at home - shielding, teaching, and guiding the daughter who looked up to you as an absolute hero.



Page 4: Return to the Valley

With the Navy behind us, we moved back to your hometown near the warmth of the Rio Grande Valley. It is a place where the earth demands hard work from anyone who walks it. I will never forget the summers we spent picking peaches as a family to earn extra money, working sweat-soaked and proud right alongside the migrant workers in the orchards. You taught me early on that honest labor holds a sacred dignity, and that no matter how hard the sun beats down, a family stands together, works together, and pulls through the harvest as one.



Page 5: The 1958 Panhead Twin

Of all the engines you ever tamed, your absolute passion lived on two wheels, born the exact same year I was: a 1958 Harley Davidson Panhead. It wasn't just transport; it was your Iron Horse, a rolling declaration of independence. When you fired up that awesome machine, it breathed out a thick, billowy smoke that carried the rich, heavy perfume of oil and gasoline. I absolutely loved it. If Fabergé had bottled that scent into a fragrance, I would buy every single bottle on earth just to make sure I had enough to last me for the rest of my life. To me, that odor wasn't exhaust; it was the smell of adventure, the scent of freedom, and the very aroma of my father.

I will never forget the feeling of being a little girl, tucked safely right up front on that massive bike. I was far too little to ride on the back - I would have fallen right off, - so you placed me right between your arms, shielded by your strength. As the engine fired to life, I could feel that thunderous, powerful rumbling vibrating through my tiny body, holding on with a mix of thrill and absolute trust.

Mom stood on the sidelines during those motorcycle rides, her hands wrung with worry, loudly declaring that she did not want her little girl riding on that dangerous machine. But you just flashed that trademark grin and deployed the ultimate piece of classic dad logic: "Don't worry, it's safer than being on a horse!"



Page 6: The Government Contracts

Opportunity called us north to Oklahoma. The Government was giving out infrastructure contracts to civilize the rugged, untamed frontier, and you proudly secured a contract for Grandma's Mountain. Part of my childhood was spent wrapped in the ancient peace of that sacred land, preserved by her Cherokee Tribe, filled with the whispers of ancestors and the shadows of soaring Eagles. When we arrived just outside of Tahlequah, there were no apartments to rent or hotels to stay in.

You managed to secure an old building that the owner had been using to store hay for his cattle and horses. It was a simple, windowless shack, but Mom went straight to work with her own brand of magic, hanging beautiful curtains against a solid, blank wall to give the illusion of a view. Together, you and Mom turned a rustic hay barn into a home filled with warmth, love, and laughter. The Owner came by one day and asked if we had done some remodeling...



Page 7: Bringing Light to the Mountain

You looked at that dark, rugged mountain and decided that your family and the community deserved a future. Along with the other men in our family, you set out to fulfill the government contract and develop the area. You climbed the ridges and worked the rough, unyielding terrain, stringing electrical lines and telephone wires all across that mountain. Because of your sweat and labor, modern light and reliable heat finally flooded into homes that had only ever known the dark.



Page 8: The Sorceress and the Waters

On that mountain, finding water wasn't just a chore; it was a community lifeline. Mom didn't like getting it out of the stream across the road. Too many wild animals drank from it and they could be diseased. Our entire family came up for the event. The Old Timers fashioned a Divining Rod for me out of a forked willow branch, placing it in my ten-year-old hands. They said I had a "spark".

When that Willow branch trembled violently, and pointed downward, carrying a raw energy that blew everyone's minds, I didn't know what to think but Dad trusted me and chose that exact spot. Shovels were useless against that mountain; it took a modified oil field rig to pummel through the stubborn slate and stone. For three or four grueling days, the drilling pounded on. Money was running dangerously low, and Dad feared everything would be lost - and if we found nothing, the blame would rest on me.

But we were not alone. While the rig hammered the earth, a massive PowWow commenced for the Sacred Waters to come forth. All day and all night, we sang and danced in powerful Ritual Patterns to bring favor from the Great Spirit, while the women worked constantly to keep everyone fed.

In the heat of that spiritual fire, the breakthrough came: the earth relented, and a spectacular water fountain that literally touched the sky erupted from the deep cavern. Right where a ten-year-old girl's willow branch had shaken, the Great Spirit gave us life, cementing an unbroken bond between our family and the mountain.

Page 9: Lone Star Steel and the Dream Grill

With the mountain civilized, the winds shifted and carried us down to North Texas, into a country town where Lone Star Steel is located. Your talents found a home there, and for the first time, Daddy, your grueling labor as a master mechanic and blacksmith was rewarded with true abundance. We finally had money for a change. You rarely, if ever, spent a dime on yourself, but you finally treated yourself to a dream: a massive barbecue grill in the backyard, hooked up directly to a gas line. Not many people had one of those Babies back then! It took a little time for a Blacksmith used to coal and wood to judge the doneness of a steak over a gas flame, but that dreamy grill meant the world to you—and watching you enjoy the fruits of your labor warmed my heart more than you ever knew.



Page 10: The Longview Sanctuary

The peace at the mill didn't last forever; Lone Star Steel went on a nasty, volatile Union Strike. To get away from the hostility and chaos, we packed up and moved to Longview, Texas. It was the best decision we ever made. We loved Longview and stayed there for the rest of your life, Daddy. In Longview, you truly solidified your reputation as a master of fire and iron, working as a Blacksmith for the Railroad. In the heat of the shop, amidst the heavy scent of coal and burning metal, you forged the very steel that kept the country moving forward, repairing the massive machines that connected coast to coast.



Page 11: The “Crazy” Dad With A Shotgun!

Mom and Dad both tried to protect me from boys as I grew into a young teen. One afternoon, just as I got off the school bus, a sixteen-year-old guy with a car pulled into my driveway to flirt with me. With Mom watching closely, I had to play it cool and wrap the conversation up quickly.

But the very next day, the same thing happened. The boy pulled back into the driveway, hoping to flirt again. This time, however, you had come home early from work to personally handle the situation. You walked straight out of the front door carrying a shotgun, pointing it directly at the guy. Needless to say, he threw that vehicle into reverse and hi-tailed it out of our driveway like his pants were on fire - spewing gravel and asphalt everywhere! From that day forward, I officially earned the reputation of having a "crazy Dad with a shotgun." I never could get a decent boyfriend after that - but looking back, I know it was just your fierce, protective Spirit keeping a watchful eye over your greatest treasure. Me



Page 12: Living on Your Own Terms

The years passed and brought their hardest health battles. When your own heart grew weary and worn, a miracle found you in the form of a heart transplant. But this miracle came with a heavy cost.

Your mother, a traditional Cherokee woman who grew up with Shamans and traveled the earth in an oxen-drawn covered wagon, could not accept it. In her world of ancient spiritual laws, a heart belonged to the spirit it was born with, and she disowned you for crossing that sacred line. That rejection crushed you deeply. Perhaps that's why you treated the doctors' strict rules like a challenge, living on a defiant mission to prove you were still the Master of your own Destiny.

After Mom passed, I moved back in with you in East Texas, and we found our own sanctuary of joy and we cried some tears. We'd slip away to that country bar for beers, laughing as I'd get completely tipsy on just a couple of drinks. It was entirely against the doctors' orders, but it was our time—a beautiful, rule-breaking slice of pure life. You refused to be confined by walls, restrictions, or heartache. You chose to live every single day exactly how you wanted, full throttle, with a cold beer in your hand and your daughter by your side.



Page 13: The Blacksmith's Legacy

When your final battle ended in Longview and you closed those fierce blue eyes for the last time, the world shifted beneath my feet. For so long, I had been your Daddy's Girl, shielded by your thunder and guided by your iron will. Standing in the quiet space left by your passing, I had to learn how to walk this earth without my anchor. But as the grief settled, I realized a profound truth: you never left me empty-handed.

Throughout every lightning storm, every wild ride on the Panhead, and every deep stone well we conquered, you were teaching me how to forge my own resilience. Today, as I look back at the thirteen foundations you gave me, I see a true American Patriot—the Navy sailor, the mountain pioneer, the Lone Star steelworker, and the railroad Blacksmith. But most of all, I see the father who made sure his little girl grew up independent, proud of her heritage, and strong enough to ride through any storm. I am no longer just a protected daughter; I am the keeper of your legacy. Your heart may have stopped, but its beat lives on in my heart. Happy Father's Day to the man who gave me life, liberty, and taught me what happiness really is. I miss you.



A Father Remembered

"A Father Remembered" is a poignant tribute to a father's unwavering strength and the lessons of courage, sacrifice, and love he imparts to his daughter. From his days as a Navy sailor to a mountain pioneer and a devoted family man, he shapes her understanding of life and resilience against the backdrop of their shared adventures. Through the trials and triumphs of their journey, she discovers the enduring legacy of the thirteen foundational moments that defined their bond and his indomitable spirit.