

## **FROM HARD KNOCKS TO HARD ROCKS: A JOURNEY IN MY SHOES SYNOPSIS OF BOOK ONE**

Join me in my journey through a lifetime of challenges and adventures as a poor kid from the Ozarks became a mining engineer and went on to see much of the world. At times the story will make you want to laugh and at other times, cry.

The journey will be hard and tough going at times, especially during and right after the Great Depression. Sometimes it will be a happy excursion, as we talk about the pranks and fun that “boys will be boys” had during their grade school and high school days. Sometimes the journey will be slow—unhurried as the life of the Ozark hill folks and in the small Ozark town of Houston, Missouri, where I spent most of my formative years. Sometimes the immediate objective of the successful journey’s destination will be clouded and in doubt, like when I struggled with three part-time jobs to get through my studies at Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy and was not sure whether I would make it, either academically or financially. This was a time when the student population went from a few hundred to 1600 returning war hardened WWII veterans enrolled with 700 naïve kids just out of high school; and there was not enough of anything available, but some wild stories came out of this dichotomy mixture of students.

You will enjoy sharing the pride that I felt from the Viburnum, Missouri experience, where we built an entire town and mining–milling complex from scratch in the wilderness of the Ozarks and the Clark National Forest, at a time just before the eco-activists were stopping all mining progress. Yet the area has not been harmed one bit in the last 40+ years.

Traveling with me (and my Guardian Angel) through my career as a mining engineer will be interesting, and at times even exhilarating (if not downright scary). I’ll take you to many places in the United States as well as many other countries. To name a few, there were the snow avalanches while we were perched on the side of Battle Mountain in Colorado, and there was the hike across Death Valley one August night. Then there is the excitement of the evaluating a newly discovered bonanza gold mine in the Andes of Chile. These are just a few of the places and stories that will keep you fascinated!

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