Born to Play Guitar

MY HUSBAND, Arthur Sewell, started playing the guitar as a young boy. Before he had his own, he'd sneak out his sister Bessy's guitar and play it in the alley behind the outhouse.

When he was yet a boy, he traveled with a medicine show in a covered wagon. The lady who ran the show made him practice playing and singing for hours, which Arthur later admitted was good for him.

When Arthur (right) was 18 in 1935, he combined with Nolan Boone and George Edwards to win the Old Fiddlers Contest in Moberly, Missouri. Arthur was all dressed up with his bell-bottom pants, made by his mother, and two-toned shoes.

In 1939, when Arthur and I met and got married inside of 3 weeks, he hocked his guitar to pay the preacher and buy a ring—an investment that lasted 60 years. When he finally bought his own Gibson guitar, in the '50s, we had music in our home many times when family and friends gathered for singing and good food.

—Pauline Sewell, Nevada, Missouri