

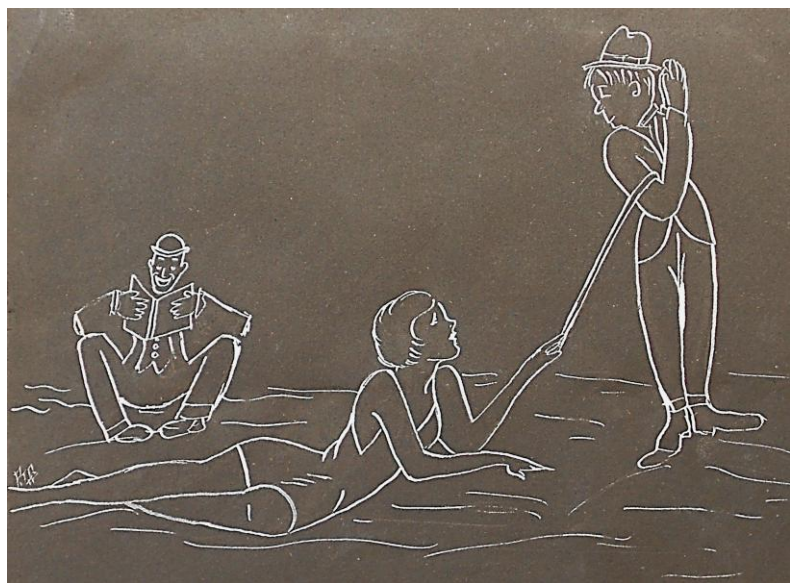
The Soldiers Wife

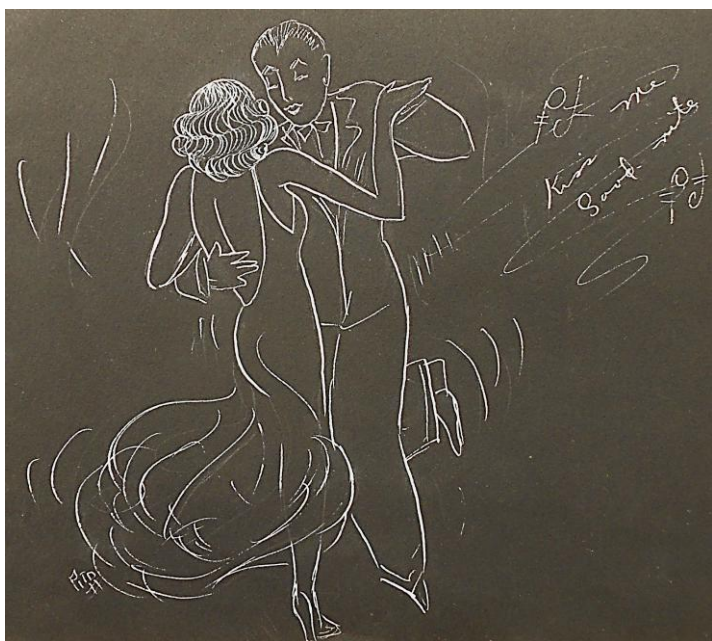
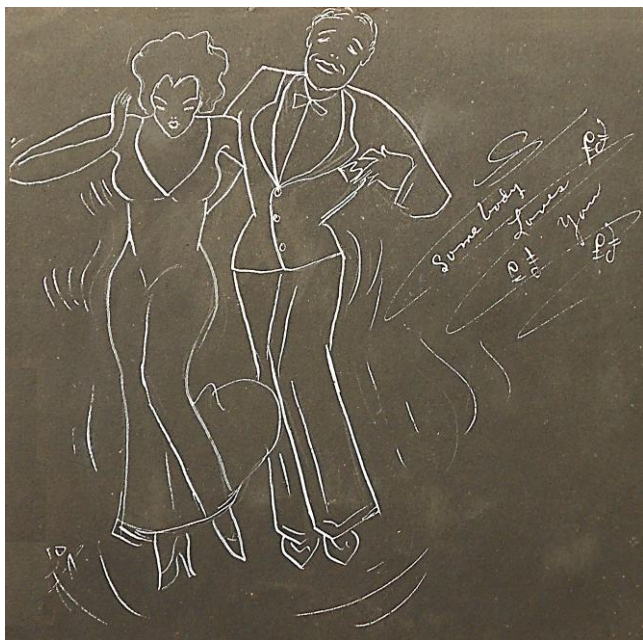
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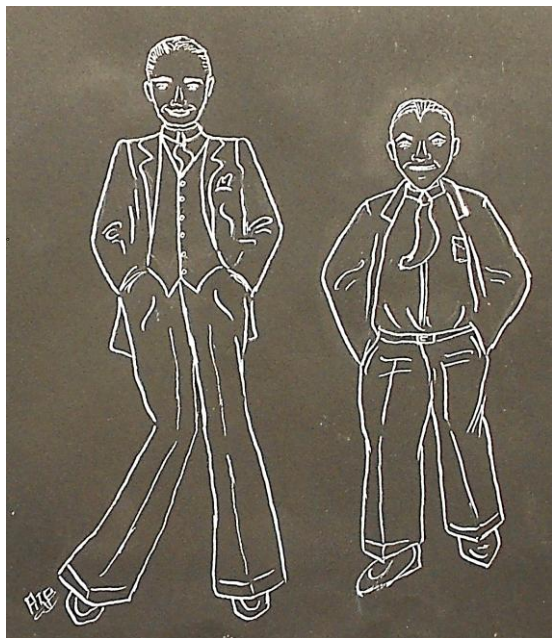
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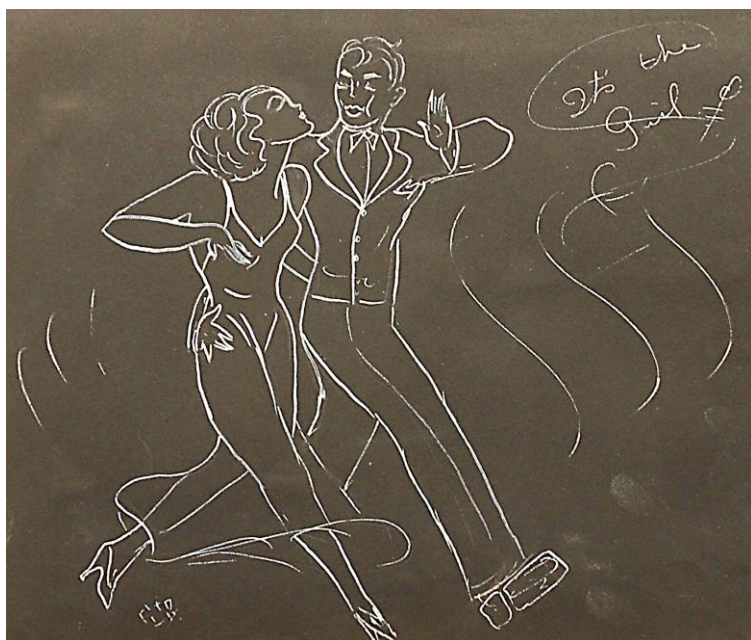
Back in San Antonio Pito, Vera, and Cookie had many common friends. It was 1931 and Pito had just finished high school. The friends would spend their times together at the many entertaining places in San Antonio; there was Woodlawn Lake, Brackenridge Park, Randolph Air Field, various restaurants and movie theaters. And on occasion a trip to Eagle Pass or the Valley and across the border. Pito would make sketches and place them in her photo scrap book as a keepsake of those days.

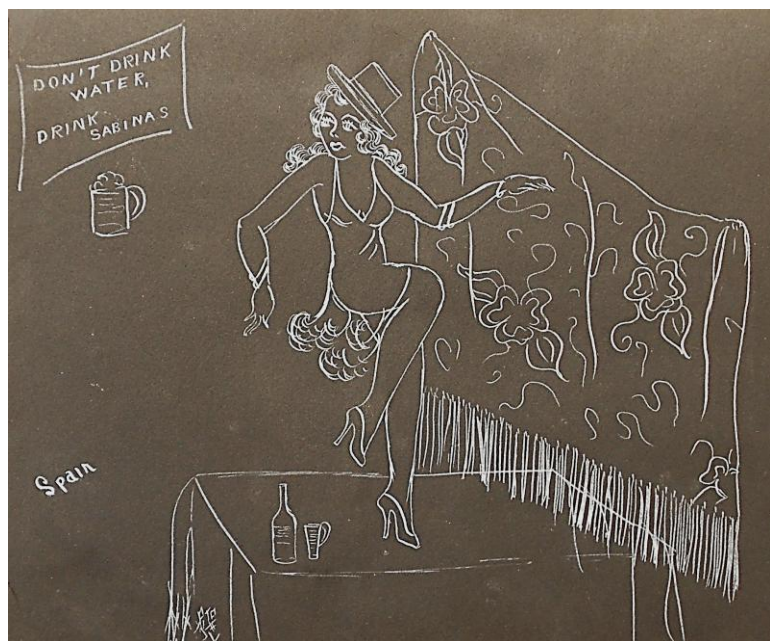
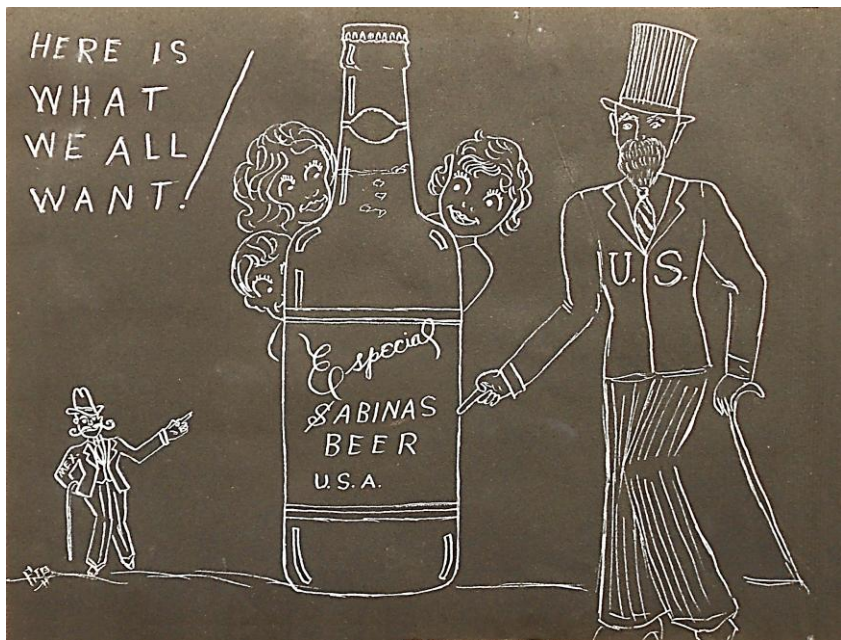


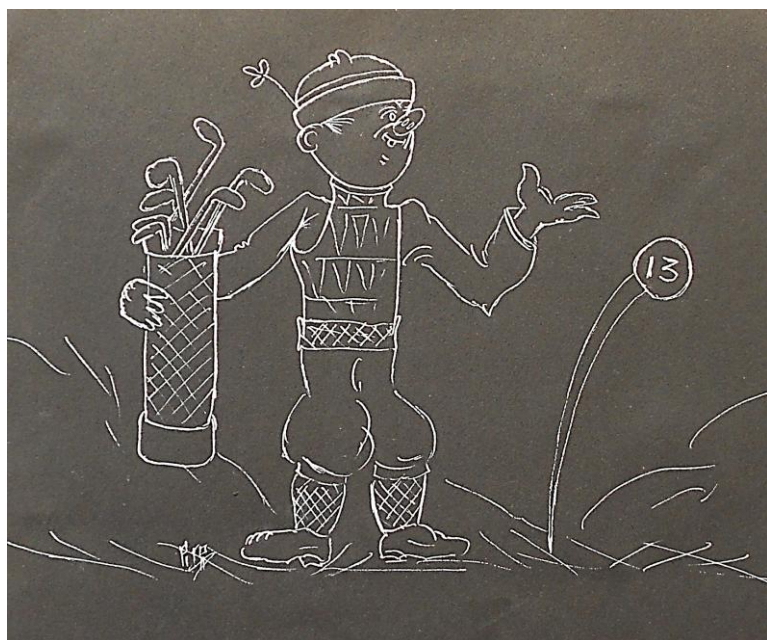
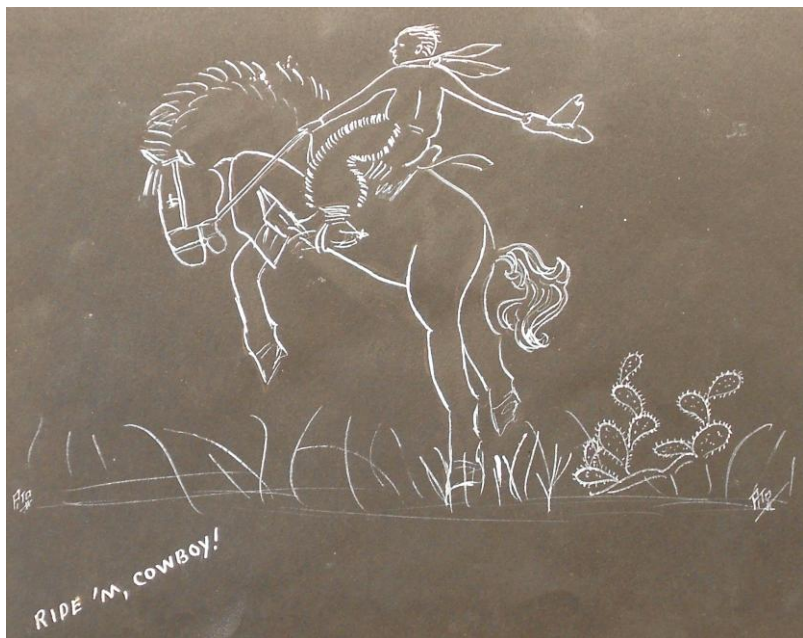


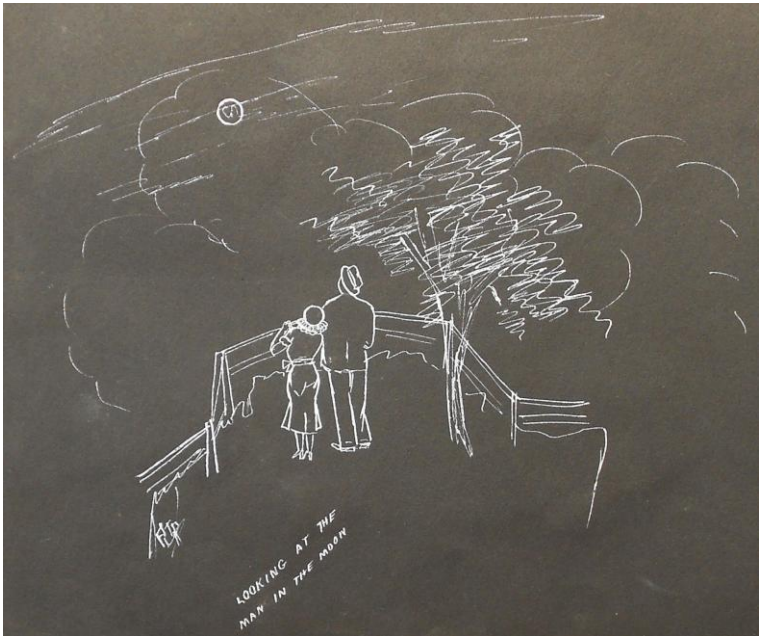














It was at a downtown movie theater where Pito met a young man by the name of Stanley Labutis. He was originally from Chicago and very outgoing. Stanley's job was delivering film to the various theaters in San Antonio and surrounding areas. On many occasions he would take Pito and Vera along for the ride in his REO Speed Wagon delivery truck.

Stanley had an acquaintance from Chicago who noted Pito's art talent and offered to help her attend an art school out east. It would be a fulfillment of her childhood



dream. However, due to the hard times, Pito's father would not allow her to leave San Antonio. Pito had great respect for her father and honored his wishes. Still she enjoyed drawing and held on to her dream, even though it would never come to fruition. But she had other dreams that would.

Stanley became enamored with Pito and wanted to marry her. Although Pito was very fond of Stanley, she just wasn't ready to take that step. Stanley was a little heartbroken but they remained very good friends.

It was not the same for Vera. When Pito introduced her to Stanley's older brother Ralph, they got along splendidly. Vera was a little naïve and Ralph was patient with a wonderful sense of humor. They developed a romantic relationship and got married in late 1932. Pito was so happy for her sister.

Ralph and Vera made their home in San Antonio as did Sarah, who married just a month earlier. Guio, who had gotten married in 1930, was living in Eagle Pass where her husband worked for the Mexican Consulate.

Pito's sisters would visit on a regular basis. A generation of close cousins was being born into the family beginning with Mora's son John Henry, who was called Sonny Boy. The family would spend Christmas and other special occasions with their parents. Their residence, which was close to downtown, was first on Water Street then on Goliad Street. Pito, Cookie, and Leo lived with their parents. Mora and Sonny Boy would later be living there too. Mora took on much of the financial responsibility for the household.

It was just a few days after her birthday in May 1934 that Pito's father passed away. He was laid to rest at San Fernando Cemetery in San Antonio where Pito would often visit to lay flowers at his grave site. She would always remember him as a loving and caring father.

Shortly after, Pito was visiting with her sister Guio in Eagle Pass and met up with Arthur, whom she had not seen since moving to San Antonio in 1930. She was thrilled to see him and what a handsome young man he had grown up to be. The love that she had hidden away in her heart was wanting to flourish but the timing was not right. As they caught up with recent events she knew that Arthur was dealing with the worries of trying to earn enough money to keep the Hopedale farm running. Little did she know that her warm embrace would help Arthur persevere.

Upon returning to San Antonio, Pito began to have serious thoughts about her immediate future. Her father was gone, the economic depression continued, and Arthur seemed so far away.

After Vera and Ralph were married, Stanley decided to move back to Chicago where he continued in the theater business. Some of Pito's other close friends were Mike, Frenchie, Pura, Berta, Manuel, and Doc Stanford who was a dentist.

Mike was a tall, athletic young man with bushy hair. He would later join the Navy and be stationed in Greenland in 1942 during which he would often correspond with Pito.

Frenchie married a man by the name of John Messick. He was an enlisted member of the Army Air Corps. Pito would stay in touch with them for many years.



Pito, being a young adult, was impressed with Doc because he was an educated professional and always well dressed. He was a debonair gentleman. They began to date exclusively and Pito accepted his proposal of marriage in late 1935. It was a small civil ceremony attended by family and friends.

They lived in a downtown apartment building close to Doc's office. As it turned out the marriage would not last. In September 1936 Pito gave birth to a son and Doc just could not see himself as a father. Doc left them; never to be seen or heard from again. Although Pito was saddened by Doc's actions she was very happy to have a son and she had the support of family and friends. She named her son James and everyone would call him Jimmy.

Pito and Jimmy moved back to her mothers' residence and she found employment with an eye, ear, and nose Specialist who was willing to train her to be his assistant. Doctor Gwinn treated his employees and patients very well and Pito enjoyed working for him.



Pito and Dr. Gwinn, downtown San Antonio

Looking back, she would recall fainting at the first nose operation she saw. After that, however, she learned to pack noses, put special medication in eyes, and assist the doctor in almost everything. It was a learning experience that helped her with the care of Jimmy. Her dream of becoming an artist in a big city had faded and her desire now was to be a good mother and provide for her son.



Beginning in 1933 the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), would address the nation over the radio in what became known as fireside chats. Millions of Americans would tune in to the broadcast whenever one aired. It was the first time in history that a large portion of citizens could listen directly to the President as he presented his ideas, programs, and goings-on of the government. This instilled confidence and the people grew to trust and love FDR.

Working and raising her son became the focus of Pito's life. Mama Lupita took care of Jimmy while Pito was at work or running errands. The group of friends were moving in different directions and the concerns of things happening at home and across the ocean were in the back of everyone's mind. Pito recalled listening to the fireside chats and would always hold FDR in high esteem as he led the country through a time of turmoil, recovery, and victory.

*“Never before have we had so little time in
which to do so much”*

FDR



As the 1930's drew to a close hostilities were breaking out in Europe. In 1934 German President Hindenburg died and Adolf Hitler, Chancellor and leader of the Nazi party, declared himself Führer of Germany. Hitler sought to establish a New Order in Europe based on Nazi ideology, which included the concept of a master race. His aggressive foreign policy eventually led to the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. As a result, Britain and France declared war on Germany; WWII had begun in Europe.

On the other side of the world throughout the 1930's, Japan was engaging in hostilities with China. In 1938 The Japanese declared a New Order for East Asia which was their plans to dominate the region. As a result Japans' relations with the United States and other western nations deteriorated.