

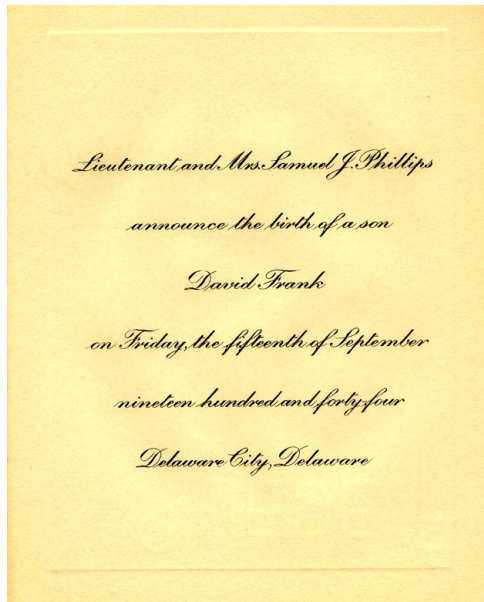
## Chapter 1: War Baby (1944-45)

The major sin is the sin of being born.

Samuel Beckett<sup>1</sup>

When I was born I was so surprised  
I didn't speak for a year and a half.

Gracie Allen<sup>2</sup>



I was born in Wilmington Memorial Hospital, Wilmington, Delaware, at 1:07 AM Eastern War Time, September 15, 1944.<sup>3</sup> My birth certificate (with a picture of the hospital) appears as Document 1-1. I will never see six pounds 8½ ounces again.

My mother's confinement started during a hurricane.<sup>4</sup> My father told me that at the moment I was born, he woke up suddenly in his army quarters in South Carolina (where he had been sent temporarily), hearing a baby's cry.

I was circumcised (on the fifth day rather than the eighth, my mother later told me) by Dr. Spencer, the (non-Jewish) obstetrician who delivered me. I was named *David* after both my dead grandfathers, my father's father David Frank Phillips and my mother's father David Lazarus Rubinstein. As I was given exactly the same name as my paternal grandfather I became *David Frank Phillips II*, a style I proudly used as a child and revive on the title page of this memoir. *Frank* was a mystery for years – why *Frank*? But a visit to my grandfather's tomb revealed that the Hebrew was *Ephraim*, an Old Testament name.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview in *Vogue*, December 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Gracie Allen (1895-1964) was a vaudeville, radio and television comedian. She projected a genially airheaded, scatterbrained *persona*.

<sup>3</sup> *War Time* was the same as *Daylight Savings Time*, except that by Act of Congress it lasted all year.

<sup>4</sup> My grandmother went from New York to Delaware to help my mother during the confusing time around my birth. A letter she wrote to her son Roy, my mother's brother, recounting some of the circumstances, will be among the Supplementary papers I will send up to Yale with this memoir.

My parents (right) were New Yorkers. I was born in Wilmington rather than New York because of World War II. My father had been conscripted into the United States Army in 1942, the year of his marriage. At the time of my birth he was a lieutenant stationed at Fort Dupont, Delaware. Delaware was not



my father's first or last wartime stateside posting, and my mother moved with him wherever he was transferred until he was posted overseas. He told me that the main reason he became an officer was so he could live with her off-post. When I was born they lived in a small apartment in the nearby town of Delaware City, Delaware, in the house

shown above left. Pictures of their apartment, and material on other aspects of their wartime life, are preserved in the Phillips Family Papers.



I don't know if I was exactly *intended*, given the unsettled circumstances of the war, but I have no reason to doubt that I was welcomed as a child. Pictures of me as an infant with my parents show them obviously pleased to have me around, and acting affectionately toward me. There would not have been



nearly as many pictures of me if this were not so.



Although my father was well off, there were no regular servants I ever heard of during this period, and the accommodations in these wartime apartments were spartan. We later moved to Creedmoor, North Carolina, when my father was transferred to Camp Butner. Pictures of the Creedmoor apartment are also in the Phillips Family Papers – the house, a disused former post

office, is shown above.

My father was a cryptographic officer in the U.S. Army Signal Corps. I know very little about his actual service because I did not inquire very deeply while he was alive, and his

military records were destroyed in the catastrophic 1973 fire at the Army Personnel Records Depository in St. Louis. His own copies of some of his records are in the Phillips Family Papers.

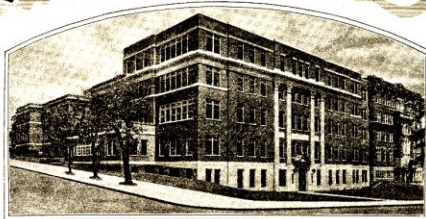
Sometime in 1945, my father was sent to Germany, and my mother returned to New York with me. We settled in Apartment 6-C at 1136 Fifth Avenue, at the corner of 95th Street, where we stayed until 1955. See Chapter 2.

For those who care about such things, I reproduce my horoscope as Document 1-2. Despite my disbelief in astrology, I have nevertheless shown many of the traditional characteristics of the Virgo personality (fondness for order, scrupulous punctuality, pleasure in collecting information, etc.), and the startling concentration of the signs in one corner of the horoscope is consistent with a personality not equally developed in all sectors.



DOCUMENT 1-1: BIRTH CERTIFICATE

# Certificate of Birth



This Certifies that a Male Child, *David Frank*  
was born to *Hina David Rubinstein* wife of *Samuel Joshua Phillips*  
at **THE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL** in the  
City of *Wilmington*, State of *Delaware* at *1:07 A.M.*  
on *Friday* the *Fifteenth* day of *September* A.D. 1944



In Witness Whereof this Certificate has been signed by  
the Attending Physician and by the Secretary of the  
Board of Trustees, who has caused the Official Seal to  
be hereto affixed.

By *A. M. [Signature]* Secretary *F. J. [Signature]* Attending Physician



Right Footprint of Baby



Right Thumbprint of Mother



Left Thumbprint of Mother



Left Footprint of Baby



### Family History

Father's full name Samuel Joshua Phillips  
Birthplace New York City Date April 4, 1916  
Mother's Maiden name Mina David Rubinstein  
Birthplace New York City Date August 5, 1917  
Place of marriage New York City  
Residence at time child was born Headquarters 22nd Corp, Fort Dupont, Del.  
Sex of child Male Weight at birth 6 lbs. 8 1/2 oss.  
Color: White

This Certificate of Birth should be carefully preserved as record of value for future use.

1. To establish age to enter school.
2. To establish age when applying for working papers.
3. To establish legal age for rights of franchise.
4. For jury and military service.
5. To prove citizenship.
6. To obtain passports for travel in foreign countries.
7. To prove rights to inheritance of property.

Official registration at

State Board of Health, Dover, Delaware

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF THE CENSUS

## Notification of Birth Registration

*This certifies that the following Record of Birth is registered and preserved in the office of the State Registrar of Vital Statistics at* Dover, Delaware

Name David Frank Phillips Sex male No. 4193

Date of Birth September 15, 1944 Place of Birth The Memorial Hospital

Name of Father Samuel Joshua Phillips, Fort Dupont, Delaware

Maiden Name of Mother Nina David Rubinstein

*J. C. Capt, Director of the Census.*

*Mildred Spencer*  
Special Agent, Bureau of the Census.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1943—O—526486

DOCUMENT 1-2: HOROSCOPE

