

Memoirs of Clifford West Murphy, Jr.

arranged by his eldest son

James R. Murphy

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there is no adequate way to thank my father for his being who he was. a first baby step might be the labor involved in turning his communications during his late life into this manuscript.

a little aside about names

my father was the third son of his father but was named as junior. the old man did not want him called clifford as would have been expected of a clifford west murphy, jr. so it was decided to call him buster. but buster quickly became booster and then settled in to his family nickname boostie. he was my father.

i was his first born and my mother loved english history. her favorite part was king richard the lion heart. so she decided to name her first born male (me) after her favorite king. but she also was enamored of the story of the magna carta and especially the signature of the king James I, james the king. so i was named james richard murphy and called richard (never a diminutive!!) and was expected to sign my name james the king murphy.

my brother, the second child, was named charles roger murphy, charles the king, but always called roger.

margaret ann murphy the third child was named after her aunt, sula margaret. then finally came the fourth child clifford west murphy iii (a third child namesake like his father) who was always called clifford.

grady, my father's younger brother married ruth, but i couldn't (as a small child) wrap my lips around the th sound so i called her rudy and so did everyone else.

my mother's youngest brother was a namesake of his father, floyd s. shipp, jr., and we always called him junior when i was growing up. but he resented this loss of individuality and insisted on being called floyd in his later life.

there are many gaps left out of these words of my father. i was his eldest son and was privy to his musings as we worked around our various houses and within the houses of our neighbors. my father helped everyone, especially the extended families of his own relatives and the relatives of my mother gladys thelma shipp. the following is a skeleton of what i know of his life.

he was born in paris, arkansas and his father moved to east texas shortly afterward to become a welder in the oil boom town of desdemona, texas, commonly called hogg town since it was situated on hogg creek.

the family followed the oil business in texas until the work petered out in odessa. my grandfather then took his two oldest boys troy and roy with him as the head welding team for the big inch pipe line from texas to new jersey.

they eventually went on up into massachusetts before that massive building project was finished.

meanwhile my father graduated from high school into the great depression and was unable to accomplish his fondest dream to go to college. instead he ended up in the east texas piney woods as an adze man building wooden bridges with a construction crew for the civilian conservation corps.

at night he studied surveying and electronics. when he helped me build a crystal radio set when i was seven he talked about how he first heard radio with his crystal set built in one of the classes he attended.

the next year he spent in arizona surveying much of the state for the federal government in another c c c effort. on his way home from this job he worked for a time in a silver mine to save up some money to get married with.

the rest as they say is history, and i will let him tell it in his own way. it is a bit disjointed but whose memory isn't.

i will point out that when we began our lives in austin, texas (where i was born), my father bought and renovated several houses which he then flipped in order to make a bit of money for the family on top of his meager pay from the jack mckay lumberyard, or brown and root, or the telephone company; all of which he worked for and was laid off from. his job listed on my birth certificate was day laborer since he was showing up every morning with his brother grady accepting whatever construction work was available for a man willing to work all day in the hot texas sun for dirt wages.

the chinese say that when one sees a man of worth look to his father for the reason. i think myself (richard), roger, margaret, and clifford are all persons of merit and i point to my father as a primal reason for our success. and my father would hastily demur and point out our mother is the root cause of his and our successful lives. his love for her shines throughout this document.

THE MURPHY HEGIRA

At the present time we can trace the Murphy clan back to W. R. Murphy and his wife, Smoke(?). The question mark indicates that Smoke has not been verified. We know not if that was a family name, a given name, or what. We strongly suspect she was a Cherokee Indian. The present time mentioned is July 25, 1989. W. R. and Smoke are my great grandparents. We found this information on my grandpa W. R. Murphy's death certificate. Grandpa W. R. was born on 3 Oct. 1861 in Augusta, Ga. He married Rachel Ella Smith, presumably in Augusta. Their first child, Harry Grady, was born in Atlanta, Ga. on 25 Apr. 1886. So WR and Rachel might have been married in Atlanta. Their second child, CW SR, my dad, was born on 30 Oct. 1888, in Augusta. Their third child, Patrick W. (Edgar) was born on 7 Aug. 1895 in Marshall, Searcy county, Arkansas. So that move occurred between 1888 and 1895.

Our next information is the marriage of CW SR and Sula Jane Gateley on 28 Aug. 1907, in Centerville, Ark. I will call them dad and mom in this journal since that sounds a little better than Poppy and Maumee, which is what we called them when we were children. Their children were:

Roy Albert B. 22 Aug. 1908 in Centerville, Ark

Troy Odell B. 29 Apr. 1910 in Centerville, Ark.

C W JR B. 13 Sep. 1913 in Paris, Ark.

Grady Lawrence B. 7 Jun. 1916 in Paris, Ark.

Sula Margaret B. 22 Jan. 1922 in Desdemona, Tex.

In about 1917, we moved from Paris, Ark. to Treece, Kansas, where dad worked in the coal mines. We got the birth certificate for Troy, which showed that dad was the Superintendent of the water works in Dardenelle, Ark at the time (he was 23). Between 1910 and 1913, evidently they moved to Paris, Ark. and from there to Treece. We scanned

the census film for 1900 on Yell County, Ark., which includes Centerville and Dardenelle, and found grandpa Cary Woods Gateley's family, including Sula Jane, aged 10. We found no Murphys, so they were probably still in Marshall, Ark.

There was no census film in the Temple library for Searcy county for 1900, so we will have to tie grandpa WR in later. When we find him, we will get the birth years for Reedy, Randy, Doc and Bob, hopefully.

Well, back to the immediate family. We moved from Treece, Kansas to Desdemona, Texas in 1919. We lived there until 1927, when we moved to San Angelo, Texas. I went through grammar school in Desdemona, or Hogtown, as it was called. I went through the 8th grade in San Angelo, then we moved to Stamford, Texas, where I went through the 9th, 10th and 11th grades, graduating in June, 1931. If you are counting, I made the 11 grades in 10 years. I'll cover that more thoroughly in the Memory section.

I worked for the Western Union in Temple for about a year, delivering telegrams on a bicycle. I signed up for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1933. They sent us to Woodville, Texas, and I was there for 13 months. Back to Temple, and Troy, Dad and I spent quite a while on the Colorado river between Austin and Bastrop. We gathered mussels and sold the shells for \$10 a ton. Troy and I could gather a ton a day. We would have had it made, except the button factory up north was on strike about half the time. Then we fished, did plumbing in Bastrop and ran a truck garden farm at various times. I signed up for the CCC again in 1935.

This time they sent us to Clifton, Arizona, where we built contour dams to control water erosion. I left the CCC in late 1936 and went to work in the copper mines in Bisbee, Arizona, helping the miners and mucking ore. Mostly mucking ore. The mine I was working in shut down in

March, 1937 because of poor ore. I got a letter from Mom in Waco saying that Grady had got a job with the telephone company, and to come on home as I could work for them, too. I immediately hopped a freight train, and went home. On reading this over, I noticed I said home...Hell, I didn't know where home was by this time. Anyhow, I went to work for SW Bell on Apr. 1, 1937. By May I felt fairly secure in my job, so Gladys and I got married on 21 May, 1937.

I was on floating construction, and boy, we floated. We stayed in Waco about two weeks, and they sent us to Big Spring, Texas. We had a trunk and a suitcase, which we loaded on the construction truck. I rode the truck with three other hands, and Gladys rode with George Stegal's wife. George was one of the linemen. After two months there we were sent to Monahans, thence to McCamey, thence back to Monahans.

There was a recession in 1938, and I was laid off in March, 1938. We had made a down payment and two payments on a 1934 Chevrolet, and Gladys was pregnant when I was laid off. We loaded up the trunk and suitcase, and took off for Austin. I wrote the finance company and told them I was laid off, where we lived, and they could pick up the car. I also told them I would like to keep it and make arrangements to pay it off when I got a job. I got a real nice letter from them, telling me to keep the car, and pick up payments when I could, that they appreciated my letter so much that they would not charge me for late payments. I wish I had kept that letter. Needless to say, we did not lose the car, nor the baby, but I want you children and grandchildren to tell old grandpa and grandma about hard times...

MURPHY GENEALOGY WORKSHEET

Grandpa William Robert Murphy:

From 1900 Census, Red River Township, Searcy County,
Arkansas:

Name	Rel	Age	Born	Where
Murphy, William R	Head	39	Oct 1860	S Carolina
Eleshere	Wife	39	Sep 1860	“
Clifford W	Son	12	Oct 1888	Georgia
Harry G	Son	9	Sep 1890	Georgia
William E	Son	7	Aug 1892	Arkansas
Reedy D	Son	4	Jan 1896	“
Randy J	Son	4	Jan 1896	“
Everett R	Son	1	May 1899	“
Evan H	Son	1	May 1899	“

The Census also stated that W R and Eleshere had been married for 15 years, and she had borne 8 children, 7 of them living! I believe Eleshere is our true Grandmother.

We got the death certificate for William Edgar (Rev. Pat) from Oklahoma, which listed his mother's maiden name as Rachel Ella Smith. She is buried in the New Hope Cemetery outside Dardanelle, Arkansas next to the grave of W R. Her tombstone says Rachel B. 1861 D. 1911. Ella could be a contraction of the Eleshere in the 1900 Census, and this could be our Grandmother. Otherwise, Rachel could be a second wife and a stepgrandmother.

Maumee and Poppy were married in 1906 in Dardanelle, Arkansas, so Grandpa W R moved there between 1900 and 1906.

Roy was born in 1908 in Dardanelle. Maumee told Gladys

one time that when Roy was born, she went to her mother-in-law's for the event. Troy was born in 1910 in Dardanelle. His death certificate stated that Poppy was Superintendent of the Dardanelle Water Works at the time.

Grady said that Grandpa W R said that his father was also named William Robert.

On Sat 21 April, 1990, I researched in the Dallas library, and found W R Murphy in Dardanelle in 1910. The family is listed below:

Age Mar. Born
Murphy William R 49 24 S Car
Rachel 49 24 S Car
Harry G 19 Geo
William E 16 Ark
Reedy D 14 “
Randy J 14 “
Evans H 10 “
Evert J 10 “

This information was in the 1910 Arkansas Census, Dardanelle County, page 12B. The Census was dated 4 Apr 1910.

On page 15A was listed Clifford Murphy, 21, an engineer in the light plant, boarding with the Coy Busby family.

On page 3A was listed the Gateley family, as noted:

Age Mar. B FB MB
Gateley Cary W 52 32 Ark Tenn Tenn
Martha J 52 32 Miss Geo Ill
Avo 7 Ark

H Basil 13 “

H Guy 10 “

Murphy S J(dau) 20 3 “

Murphy Roy(Gson) 1 7/12 “

Well! It looked like Poppy and Maumee split the blanket! But hold on! Look at the date - 4 Apr 1910 - Troy was born on 29 Apr 1910! So, Maumee went home to Grandma Gateley to have Troy! Grandma only lived 7 miles from Dardanelle, but travel in those days was by horse and wagon, so Poppy could not commute, and had to board out! 7 miles, yet! We lived 25 miles from my office and were still in town!

One thing this Census tied down definitely: Rachel Ella Smith (Eleshere) was my Grandma!

I REMEMBER HOGTOWN

We moved to Hogtown in 1919, when I was 6 years old. At the time, we were supposed to start school at 7 years old. School started on Sept. 1, and I was seven on Sept. 13. Therefore I was nearly 8 when I started on Sept. 1, 1921. However, since I was preternaturally precocious, ahem, I made the 3,4 and 5th grades in two years. I have always wanted to use those two words. Actually, I think they wanted to catch me up with my age group. It did take some dedication and application to keep up. I remember when they moved me from 3 to 4. It was almost midterm. They had a test that afternoon, we had to write the nines multiplication table.

Like I say, being smart-aleck, I just finger counted right on through $9 \times 12 = 108$. The next day the teacher passed our test papers out to us, but kept mine. She made me stand up in front of that class, held up my paper with a big red 100 on it, and told the class how smart I was, just over from the 3rd grade, yak-yak. I could have scalped her with a dull knife. She could also have told them how red my face was.

My early memories of Hogtown are of muddy streets, horses and wagons, old autos, general confusion, wood sidewalks raised about 8 inches, and crowds of people. Housing was very tight. I remember we first lived in a tent. Dad built a wooden floor about 28 feet square, with a 3 foot wainscot. We had a peaked top tent that fitted the floor, with the tent flaps tied down on the outside of the wainscot. Very neat and snug. I remember the neighbors envied us.

We had a coal oil cookstove and lamps. Dad later built a house on some acreage back of Dr. Snodgrass' home. It was a shotgun house at first with a screened-in front porch. Later, a Tee addition went back to a large kitchen, then an Ell back to a large bathroom. It was all finally piped with

water, gas and electricity, but we had quite a spell of coal oil lamps and cookstove. We had to build a wood fire under an old cast iron pot that had three iron legs, and held about 35 gallons of water. Mom would boil the clothes in this, with the old lye soap, then we would wash them in a regular No. 3 washtub with a rub board. We would rinse them in another No. 3 washtub. I didn't really care for wash days.

When we got gas later, Dad piped the gas into the yard, and put a gas burner under the wash pot...real modern. The funny thing was, the neighbors thought we were uptown. Come to think of it, we did,too. Naturally, we had the old Chic Sales outhouse about 80 feet from the house. So did everyone else. Their own, I mean, not ours.

Us boys always spent a lot of time on Hog Creek, which was about 1/2 mile back of our house. We went fishing, crawdadding, swimming, squirrel hunting, grape picking, pecan gathering, or watermelon swiping. The farmers always knew, and didn't care, but always told on us. Dad told us to always go to the farmhouse and ask, but dern it, that took all the fun out of it.

In the Spring, we were always bringing home baby squirrels for pets. Dad built us a squirrel house about 4 feet square, two stories, with a regular pitched roof. One side of the house was completed with hardware cloth, so we could watch the squirrels all over the house. He built a small squirrel cage, and they would spin that thing all the time. The cage was in the front yard beneath an old oak tree. Lots of fun.

When we went serious fishing, we went to the Leon river. The road to Gorman -about 7 miles away- crossed the Leon about 4 miles from Hogtown. We would take all kinds of provisions, and stay all night. I remember one night in particular, it came up a Norther, and was very cold. We were not equipped for that. We built a very big fire against

an old fallen tree, and huddled around it all night. It's severe trials like that, that stick in your memory.

A pleasant memory, or memories, were the coon hunts, usually close to the Leon, in heavy woods. We would build a good fire, turn the coon hounds loose, and sit around eating hot dogs or whatever, until the dogs treed a coon. Then we would grab the flash lights and lanterns and take off. When we got to the tree, we would surround it, shining the lights up in the tree. When we spotted the coon, his eyes would shine like headlights, then some one would shoot the poor devil. Down he would come, and the dogs would tear him up. It's funny how your idea of fun will change over the years.

Hogtown was a big oil boom town, there were wooden oil derricks, or rigs, all over the country. There were some right in town. The rigs were about 100 feet tall, and we boys thought it was a very smart thing to do to climb an unattended one. You could see for miles. I don't know how we all grew up to be adults. Each rig had a slush pit beside it where they pumped the bad oil that first came up. It had a lot of water in it. The oil would rise to the top, and you could dip it off. It was a thick sludge, but it would burn fiercely. We took old Log Cabin syrup cans, and made furnaces of them. They were built like a log cabin, with a spout at one end that was shaped like a square chimney. We would cut a square hole in the other end like a window, and fill the bottom with the sludge. We would start the fire with paper, and when it got going, boy, it would roar. It would get so hot the tin cabin would turn red and then melt. Beautiful..

As I have remarked, it is the things that impress you that sticks in the memory. One time there was a kind of gathering at our house, everybody visiting and having fun. Uncle Reedy was teasing Mom, and he picked up a pistol, and was threatening her (I thought). When he laid the

pistol down, I picked it up, and was waving it at him, telling him to leave Mom alone. Dad was across that room like a shot, grabbed the pistol, slapped me down, and fired that pistol over my head into the kitchen floor. Mom picked me up, my nose was bleeding all over us...Yeah, I remember that little traumatic incident...For years after, the slightest lick about my head would bring on a severe nosebleed. As the sage said “into each life some rain must fall.”

When Dad was mayor of Desdemona, or Hogtown as it was called, in about 1920, we were deep in prohibition. Everybody and his dog brewed home-brew. That was

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When Dad was mayor of Desdemona, or Hogtown as it was called, in about 1920, we were deep in prohibition. Everybody and his dog brewed home-brew. That was the game!



grady



grady,boostie,big margaret,maumee



grady, boostie



boostie

CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS CCC

I enrolled in the CCC in Temple, Texas on 30 May 1933 and was discharged at the end of my enrollment period on 30 June 1934. I would have stayed longer but we were not allowed to stay but one enrollment period. My company, CC8 891, was stationed at the city park in Woodville, Texas, which was on the edge of town. We did forestry work, consisting of road building and fighting forest fires. We were working in virgin forests, the pines and oaks were all about 100 feet tall or over. We would clear about 30 feet for right of way and grade a 20 foot road, no topping, just a dirt road.

We had a Caterpillar 20 tractor for the grading, but cleared the trees by hand. We had 9 foot crosscut saws, 2 and 3 pound axes, steel wedges, sledges and foot-adzes, and of course picks and shovels. Now that adze was quite a tool. It looked like a small grubbing hoe, but the blade was thinner, more curved, and sharpened to a razor edge. The blade had a single bevel, unlike the double beveled axes. A very dangerous tool, and we were trained very carefully in the proper use of them, as well as in the use of all the tools. Our supervisors were all older men hired locally, and were experienced foresters. It was quite an experience to fell a 120 foot pine, making it hit a small stake the boss had set, where he wanted it to fall. All in all, I really liked that forestry work.

I didn't care too much for the forest fire fighting. The local yokels periodically set the fires to burn off the underbrush, so grass would grow for their stock. The sad part was it sometimes got out of hand and burned the trees. The government made it a severe penalty to set the fires, and came out with an extensive educational program demonstrating the futility of that kind of firing. I don't

know how they ever made out, for I was only there for 13 months.

When we built the roads, we found out that there were more creeks in that country than the law allows. Every time we hit a creek, we had to build a bridge. That was an art form! We hand dug trenches on each side of the creek about 60 inches deep, to hold a 20 foot log about 2 feet in diameter. We took an adze and flattened the top of those logs a small tad for 2 feet on each end and in the center. This was to hold 3 stringer logs, kinda like building a log cabin. The flattened places would be only about 12 inches wide. We would then cut 3 logs about 14 to 16 feet long, depending on the width of the stream, adze a small place on each end, and lay them on the buried logs. We then adzed off the top of the stringers, to make a flat surface about 12 inches wide. This would hold the bridge bedding.

To make the bedding, we would fell an oak that had about 60 feet of trunk before the first limb. If we couldn't find one, we would take a 40 footer, but it had to be 4 or 5 feet in diameter. We cut the sections 20 feet long, then split them with the axes, wedges and sledges, splitting the log like cutting a pie. When finished, each pie wedge would be 4 inches thick on the outer edge, tapering to 0, and 24 to 30 inches wide. We would split out the heart to where the inside edge was 2 inches thick. We would then take the adze and take an inch off each side of the thick edge, making a flat surface about 8 inches wide. Thus we had a board about 2 inches thick and 14 to 16 inches wide. We laid these solidly across the stringers, making the bed level with the road, and nailed them with 20 penny nails. A work of art...

Of course, we made a hand rail on each side, mostly for show, using long straight limbs. You can see that we had all kinds of logs running out our ears. We man-handled them with lug hooks or cant hooks, but the bedding logs we

split out where we felled them. We weren't about to pick up a four foot thick log!

The worst job we had was grubbing out the stumps. We had to trench down around the stumps about 4 feet deep, and cut the tap root. The trench had to be big enough for work room. The Cat would drag it off into the woods for burning.

That CCC was a godsend for our country, and especially for us buckledy headed boys. We were roughly 18 to 25 years old. The local yokels hired to train and supervise us were about 30 to 45 years old, usually family men in need of the job, but highly qualified. Those old boys were highly skilled artisans in forestry, carpentry, painting, whatever. It was no fun to be bossed by them, but we were very fortunate to be trained by them.

The CCC camp was on the order of an army camp, with the exception that we did not salute, nor did we have to march. We did have to fall out for reveille and police the area. Boy, did we police the area! That will cure you from littering! We ate in the mess hall, all of us had messkits, which we had to wash up. We were paid \$30 a month, of which we had to send \$25 home. I had mine sent to Mom and Margaret. Our allowance was \$5 a month, the first of the big time spenders! We played poker for matches! And boy! Did I learn the hard way!

The boss man was a Regular Army Captain, our resident doctor was a Captain. We had 3 or 4 lesser officers. The mess was run by a cadre of Army mess sergeants. Eventually they trained some of our boys to take over. The Mess sergeant made \$45 a month, the cadre under him made \$36 a month. All of us old boys were K.P.s on a rotational or a penal basis. I managed to stay off the penal basis, and boy, did I hate that K.P. business. I bet I peeled a truck load of spuds, and scoured a jillion trash cans. That was a damn sterile camp. There were 209 boys in our

camp, of which about 80% were high school grads. 18% were College Grads!! This country was in a damned Depression, and don't you forget it! Old FDR picked this country up by it's bootstraps, and set it on the road to recovery! This country was much closer to revolution than the history books indicate.

Life was pleasant in the piney woods. Lots of weekends a group of us would go fishing on one of those streams. They weren't wide but were usually 5 to 8 feet deep, and full of 3 to 5 pound catfish. A GI truck would take us out to the place we had spotted to camp and fish on Friday afternoon, and pick us up on Sunday afternoon. The kitchen gave us anything we wanted, and all we wanted. I was partial to canned red sockeye salmon and canned pineapple. Some idjit was always wanting spuds, bacon and eggs! There was a theater in town, so we had a pretty good time off. All in all, I was sorry when my time was up. They trucked us back to Temple and dumped us.

Then followed the period when Troy, Dad and I were on the Colorado River between Austin and Bastrop, gathering mussels, fishing, farming and plumbing. I cover this fairly well in the Memoria section. Then came the call for CCC enrollees in Bastrop. So we hied ourselves to town and signed me up, on July 24, 1935. I was 21 at the time. I served until January 16, 1937. It is interesting to note that on my discharge the first time in 1934, I was shown to be 5 ft. 9 1/2 inches tall. My second in 1937 I was 6 ft 0. They don't mention my weight, but I think it was about 145 in 1937. Old skinny.

They shipped us by train to Clifton, Arizona, picked us up and took us by truck to camp, about 11 miles out of town, on the old Diamond X ranch. The ranch headquarters was about a mile from us, but we never saw anything about ranch life, nor any cowboys. Looking back on it, that seems strange, but nary a cow nor a boy. The camp was on

a flat hill about 100 feet above the Gila River. You could stand on the edge of the hill not far from camp, and chuck a rock in the river. The river was not very big, but it had several good swimming holes. The fishing was no good. The camp was in mountainous ranch country, and we were doing contour work for soil erosion.

When we were first brought to camp, we lived in tents, and we had to build the barracks, mess hall, headquarters, and all other buildings, including the latrine. So, I learned carpentry and painting. The local experienced men who supervised us were experts, and sticklers for perfection. You would have thought we were building the Taj Mahal.

Now, this was three years later than the first hitch, and the clientele was changed more than somewhat. The high school grads were sparse on the ground, the college grads non-existent. The Educational Advisor, an Arizona high school teacher, interviewed a few of us high school grads for an assistant. Sensing a sinecure, I stressed my scholarly prowess in business arithmetic, algebra 1 and 2, plane and solid geometry, and trigonometry, with Honor Roll status. Well, this old blind hog came up with another acorn! I ended up teaching English, reading, writing, and anything else anybody wanted. Some wanted to take typing, so my boss ordered 6 typewriters, training manuals, and scads of paper. So I taught typing... I also took typing...

Seriously, though, I did the most good teaching several illiterates how to read and write. The schools were taught for usually 2 hours in the evenings, so I had the days off. So, I was delegated to take care of the Reck hall, sweeping, dusting, mopping, and caring for the game equipment. Since the cooks were off more than they were on, there was always enough around during the day to gather up a good pool foursome. So...I learned to shoot pool. I was also in charge of the gasoline pump on the water well off down the hill close to the Gila River. The water was pumped up to a

water tower in the edge of the camp. I would go down and start the pump, and take a nap in my easy chair until the water tank ran over. Then I would cut the pump off and go looking for a pool game. Blood, sweat and tears, that's me.

Since I had plenty of spare time, and money, since I was making \$36 a month and kept \$11, I looked around for some lucrative sideline. I had already graduated to penny ante. We had no canteen, so I wrote off to the Agfa Anasco company, asking if I could purchase some film and act as their agent in the camp. Boy, I got back a pad of order forms, a catalogue to show, and a private price list. The markup was 100%!!! That is a 24 cent roll of film cost me 12 cents! The big stores call this a 50% markup, but they are full of baloney. I sat down and ordered 24 rolls of No.120 film and 24 rolls of No.620. Those were the two popular sizes of the day. There was no 35mm then. Well, those films lasted almost two weeks, because of the newness of the supply. It tapered to a steady business, and then I got a bright idea.

On my next order I ordered a 120 and a 620 camera, then let it be known that I would sell them film and LOAN them a camera. Business immediately tripled, and stayed high. I had to order 2 more cameras! This didn't take much time, so a good friend and I decided to go into the tailoring business. His dad was in the business, so he contacted a firm in New York that his dad recommended. They sent us order forms, with measuring instructions. Old friend Joe was an expert at that. So we set up shop, with me handling the paper work, securing money orders, etc. The suits cost \$35, pants \$15, tailored shirts \$4. We got about a 35% markup on that, but if we sold three suits, we got one free, 3 pants, one free. We actually sold two suits, he bought one and I got the free one by paying for half of his. We both got free pants. I did like their shirts.

I do remember my pants were 30-34 and my coat 40 long.

My shirts were 14 1/2 by 33 1/2. My suit was charcoal gray, my extra pants were light gray, mix or match, boy, was I a dude! I have pictures of me standing by the barracks in that suit. I was just looking at those measurements and sadly laughing. My coat is now 44 long, my pants 40 by 33, my shirts 16 1/2, short sleeve. I am now 5 feet 11, I have stooped an inch. That is pronounced stooped, not stoopid! I also weigh 195! Grandma is a fine cook!

Unfortunately, our camp moved to Tucson about this time, and we abandoned the suit business. I also abandoned the film business. We were too close to town. So I prospected for something else. One of the cooks and I decided to go into the laundry business. We went down town and paid \$5 down and \$5 a month on a Maytag washer with a wringer attached. We set up, with the Captains consent, in the wash room, where they had 3 or 4 tubs on rollers. We would fill the machine, wash the clothes, wring them out into a rinse tub, souse them, wring them out into a second rinse tub, then wring them out and deliver them wet. All we would do was wet-wash. Pants 5c, shirts 5c, socks 1c, underwear 3c each, all on credit.

We would be at the head of the payroll line with plenty of change, collecting. We would collect between \$45 and \$55 a month! The GI yellow lye soap cost us nothing. It also cost the rest of the gang that did their own washing nothing. It gives me pleasure to remember that I took in washing to pay for Gladys' rings! They closed down our schools for lack of interest, since trucks were always going to town. They put me out in the field (for the first time) to run a survey crew.

We were still doing contour work, but in the desert and saguaro cacti. My job was to run Stadia Traverses of work areas that had been completed. These traverses were then plotted on maps and sent in to Conservation Headquarters

for permanent records. The traverse went around the work area (usually 6 to 10 square miles), touching any known survey stake in the area.

I had a regular surveying instrument, and the stadia rod was about 10 feet tall, 1" by 2", with painted triangles all up and down the side. The rodman would go about 1000 or 1200 feet, and hold the rod up. I would focus the instrument on the rod, and with the cross hairs and the triangles, I could tell how far he was away. I would usually jockey him back or forth to make it an even 100 feet. This made for easier plotting, and more accurate shots, since I didn't have to estimate a part of a triangle. The boss liked that! I had 2 rodmen, fore and aft, a stake man and an axe man for any stray brush. I would set the instrument on the stake, swing the instrument and shoot the back stake, note the number on the vernier, unlock the vernier, swing the instrument, shoot the forward stake, note the number on the vernier, note the compass heading, lock the vernier and proceed to the forward stake, everybody moving.

The double shots were for safety, to prevent any goofs, hopefully. Now, that job I really enjoyed. I just noticed I left out a shot. The double shot I mention, when I shot the back, then the fore, I would proceed to do both of them again. The vernier changed every time, so I wouldn't know of a goof until the office plotted it. I only had to go back and reshoot one shot. One time the plotting lad told me we closed out on a 12 square mile traverse within 15 feet... It was usually 40 to 70.

One time the powers that be set up a track meet for three CCC companies, to be held on the track field of the University of Arizona. There were over 600 of us there. Our company had had no notification in time to practice, but we didn't care too much. We just enjoyed it. Our coach asked me if I could run, I told him yes so he entered me in the mile race. Now, I had read many sports stories, and I

knew that the best way to win was to pace right behind the leaders until the last half-lap, then kick in the after-burners, if any. So, we started loping around the quarter mile track, with me just keeping up. Our camp had an Indian, about 6 foot 2, and he moved out in front-way out. I found out later that he was the last years high school state champion miler for Arizona.

I didn't worry about him, I just stayed with No.2. We loped around 3 laps, and I got my second wind. As we turned the last corner, I moved out from behind No.2, and tried stretching my stride. Man, it worked! Old No.2 began to slide back of me, I was exhilarated! The adrenalin flowed like wine, and I took off. I could hear No.2 pounding on my heels as he cut in his afterburner, but I wasn't about to be caught! The Indian had come back to the finish line and caught me. We bear hugged and did a stomp dance right there. One of life's finer moments! I later took second in the long jump, and third in the hop-skip-and jump, but nothing touched that Mile!!!

We made many excursions while we were in Arizona. They would load us on the back of a GI truck and take off. The one I remember the best was up the Coronado trail, through the switchbacks and the Needles eye. I have pictures of these somewhere. We were always going in to Clifton on Saturday night. There was a saloon that was dug out of the rock mountain. About 3 rooms, with a long bar, and candles and lamps. You talk about atmosphere! We would get a bottle of wine, and raise old Ned just like grownups! We were late one night getting back to the truck, and had to walk 11 miles to camp. Stone cold sober, we wuz! We never missed another truck!

Gladys and I went through Clifton and up the Coronado trail on one of our trips. We drove out to the old camp grounds, completely bare, then up the street to the cave saloon. It was locked up, and the people told us it was only

used for catered parties. We didn't even get to see in it!

A group of us boys were always packing a knapsack, and going mountain climbing. We would go to the kitchen, and they would give us anything we wanted for our knapsacks. I guess you know, I got red sock-eye salmon and a can of sliced pineapple! We were not scaling cliffs, just climbing steep peeks. Sometimes we could catch some wild donkeys and ride. Slow but fun! We were always going swimming in the Gila river. We never stayed out over night, just all day. I still love red salmon and pineapples.



in my working clothes



with a slithering critter



with a more colorful, though equally deadly critter



the happy go lucky man

I REMEMBER STAMFORD

We lived in Stamford, Texas from 1928 to 1931. I was 15-16-17 years old. I went through the 9th, 10th and 11th grades there, graduating in June, 1931. I had a Collie dog named Fritz. I was always taking him out in the country, hunting rabbits, squirrels, ducks on the lakes, or anything else handy. There were three lakes close to Stamford. College lake was one mile east, Three-mile lake was three miles west, and Five-mile lake was, naturally, five miles west of town. The lakes were good fishing, and very good swimming.

The only drawback was the mode of transportation. Since no car was available, we walked. And walked. And walked. I think that is where I built up the stamina that stood me in good stead the rest of my life. Or maybe the exercise patterns were deeply ingrained. Every time we came in from Five-mile lake I was bone-weary and dog-tired, usually carrying a syrup bucket full of wild plums, or maybe Bull-frogs. I had an old 22 Winchester pump with a 27 inch octagonal barrel. That would be a collector's item, now. Man, I would sure like to have one now, to hang over the fireplace, and take out target practicing occasionally. Old Dead-Eye Dick I once was. I loved to pitch small bottles or cans in the air and take snap shots at them when they were 15 to 18 feet in the air. I usually had a respectable percentage of hits.

One time in Austin much later I hit two nickels in a row in the air. Luckily, I had three telephone buddies with me at the time. As I had been hitting cans repeatedly at the time, and shot the coins on a dare, my reputation spread rapidly. (I quit while I was ahead.) But, back to Stamford... I always had pigeons, bantam chickens, rabbits or some other livestock. I also usually had a garden. The old Methodist church had a bell tower that was infested with pigeons.

Some of us boys would sneak up there late at night and catch a townsack full. We would pluck some of the main feathers out of one wing, grounding them. By the time the feathers grew out, they would be acclimatized to plenty of food, water and good company.

Hen scratch at the time cost 25 cents for 25 pounds. The only trouble was I had to walk about 15 blocks to the feedstore, and carry that 25 pounds home.

Again, back to the Bull-frogs. There were reeds and cattails growing about half around Five-mile lake, usually in about 4 to 6 inches of water. I would wade in the reeds, which were about 6 feet tall and working alive with Bull-frogs. I would pot them with my trusty 22, and cram them in the syrup bucket. Well, one day I had killed about 6 or 8, when a big old water moccasin came swimming over to see what all the racket was about. Man, I took very careful aim and blew his cotton-pickin' head off.

I stood there, very carefully looking in all directions, and sure enough, here came some more. I killed 7 or 8 before they quit coming. I waited, very quietly, for quite a while to ascertain if there were any more idiots in the crowd, that is, besides me. Finally deciding that was all, I tippy-toed to hell out of there and went home. That was the end of my Bull-frogging for quite a while. However, I still love chicken-fried Bull-frog legs. One of our neighbors one time traded me a real good pocket knife for three Bull-frogs.

I was always doing a real good business with all the other buckledy headed boys, trading pigeons, chickens, rabbits, golf balls, marbles, or whatever. Do you know, one time Mom wanted to fry some of my chickens! The very idea! Why, I remember one time in Hogtown our milk cow had a calf. When that pet calf got about half grown, Dad butchered that calf! Us boys wouldn't touch those steaks!

One time, out on College lake, I came sneaking up over the earthen dam, and saw a flock of Mallard ducks about 50

yards off shore. I had a bright idea, and snuck down to the edge of the water. Lying on the ground, I held the gun about 6 inches above the water. I aimed directly at the ducks, allowing for no bullet drop, and shot. There was no wind, and the water was smooth as glass. That dang bullet hit the water about 30 yards out, and splatted about 5 times like a rock skimming, then whapt into the ducks. All the ducks but one flew off, and I had to go swimming for that dang duck. After all this, Mom wouldn't cook that duck for me. And it was late fall. AND that water was cold as ice. Man, I felt like eating that duck, feathers and all...I was proud of that dang duck.

Actually, what gave me the idea for skimming that shot was an experience I had on the golf course. We were playing golf one afternoon on Caddies' Day, and I had a lie right by the pond. I had a brand new Dunlop golfball and had to shoot over the pond. I hit that ball hard, but got no loft on it. It hit the water about the middle of the pond, and skipped about 6 times and went right up the other bank. It was real funny...after it was over.

Hunting Jack rabbits with Fritz was a lot of fun. The woods were all mesquite and scrub oak shinnery. When Fritz jumped a rabbit, I just sat at the base of a tree and listened to the music of the chase. Rabbits, and most wild animals, will run in a large circle when chased. They would come to within 20 or 30 yards from me on their circle. That rabbit would be idling along about 30 or 40 yards ahead of Fritz. He wasn't overly perturbed, he hadn't even worked up a good sweat.

I would wait for a clear shot, and plow down on him. I had a long barrelled 410 gauge shotgun, single shot, full choke and used No.4 chilled shot. He would tumble for about 10 yards, and Fritz would be on him. Man, he would tear him up. He thought he had done it all by himself!

Grady and I would caddy out at the Country Club on weekends. There was a pond on the fairway that was a regular ball trap. When there was no one around, we would go swimming, and retrieve golf balls. We wound up with a 5 gallon bucketful, then started selling them. The golfers would buy them for 10 or 15 cents apiece. That was good money in those days.

There was a creek in a small valley back of our house. We built us a 5 hole golf course, carrying sand from the creek for the greens, with tomato cans for the holes. We were very popular with all the neighboring kids. We also went Craw-dadding on the creek. We used a slice of bacon on a string. You had to bring them up to the top very slowly and carefully, then come up under them with a sieve. This worked fine until Mom found out about her sieve. I still think Margaret told on us. Such was life in the Old West. We had no TVs, VCRs, PCs, or even an automobile, but life never seemed to get tedious. We always figured out something to do, even if it was slightly wrong. But, you know, it never seemed to be wrong...or hardly almost always never...

One time, when we were living in Hogtown, and I was about 10 years old, Uncle Pat and Aunt Clover took me home with them to Ranger, Texas. I spent about a week with them. I remember that week very well. It had a very great impact on the rest of my life, on my outlook on life, and I firmly believe, on the shaping of my character. Clover introduced me to her library, filled with fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen, Grimm Bros., Mother Goose, Aesop's fables, and books on King Arthur's court, with tales of Knight Errantry, Derring do, and days of old when Knights were bold.

My ideals were set, my aims were high... Unfortunately,

life has knocked some of the loftier ideas skywaddling, but I like to think that some of basics stuck. I yearned for fair maidens to rescue. In Stamford, we lived three blocks from the Carnegie library, and I continued my reading. Boy, did I continue reading. I went through all the Tarzan books 4 or 3 times, Gulliver's Travels, P. G. Wodehouse...

I'll never forget Bertram Wooster and Jeeves. Jeeves was the classic butler and valet. He was the original. His name is now synonymous with the atypical English valet, who knows all and guides his master surreptitiously. Them thar two bit words are thrown in to let you know my reading was not wasted. Wasn't it Aladdin who used a Roc for a taxi? Naw, that was Sinbad. Aladdin had the original Genie.

Another favorite author was Peter B. Kyne. On rereading some of those old books, I find that my taste has changed somewhat. I am more into Westerns, Science fiction, mysteries, detectives, and Mama's romances, all of which are escapism. I don't need nor want any teenage problems, drinking or dope problems, old age problems, middle age problems, youth problems, etc.etc.etc...One of my favorite authors was Damon Runyon. He wrote Guys And Dolls, along with a lot of other classics. He damn near corrupted the English language of his day. We quoted him more than we later quoted the Cajun Gourmet. I gaur-on-tee.

In the middle of our golf course, there was a small hill, or mound, about the size of a house. It had a slightly round, bare top, so we took our pick and shovel and dug some trenches in it. The trenches were about 3 feet wide and 3 feet deep. We piled the dirt carefully aside. Overall the trenches were in the shape of an H, and about 8 feet by 8 feet. The bottom of the right-hand trench was extended to

the edge of the mound, to form an entrance.

We salvaged a lot of corrugated iron from an old shed up the valley. We crisscrossed the trenches, covering all except the entrance. Then we covered it completely with about 10 inches of the dirt. We had a dandy cave for secret meetings, cabals, and plottings. We also appropriated some candles, and held picnics there. Like I said, we were very popular with the neighborhood kids. We always had something cooking, except when I was in the Library.

Lets talk about rubber gun battles. We chose up sides and had regular gang wars. The guns were works of art. The pistols were sawn in the shape of a pistol, with an 18 inch barrel, and a slightly sloping rectangular handle, out of any good wood. They were sanded smooth, and a clothes pin mounted on the handle end. The ammunition was rubber rings cut from an inner tube. We usually garnered the tubes from filling stations, and they were hoarded like gold. We had favorite filling stations where the owners would save them for us.

We would take a rubber ring, fold it flat, and put one end in the clothes pin. The other end was stretched over the end of the barrel. When the pin was pressed, the released band would fly for about 35 feet. With the rubber band loaded, a second band was stretched from the outside of the pin to the end of the barrel, making it a two-shot pistol. The first shot was fired by rolling the rubber off the clothes pin with the thumb, the second by pressing the pin open. Us Macho Guys had two pistols, and sometimes a spare.

Now, the machine guns were something else. You take a piece of 1X6 centermatch and saw it out in the shape of a rifle. The groove in the centermatch was on the top of the

barrel. The last 6 inches towards the butt were notched with 6 notches, about an inch deep. The front side of the notch was straight down, the back side sloping. A stout cord was fastened to the front of the barrel so that the cord would lie in the groove. The first rubber band was stretched from the front of the barrel to the first notch, with the cord UNDER the rubber. The second band to the second notch, and so on.

The bands were fired by pulling up on the cord to pull the band out of the notch. With practice, the bands could be fired one at a time, with a delicate touch, or in salvo with a fierce yank. Needless to say, these guns were also sanded and polished to a high gloss. If we had had some enamel, these guns would have been something else.

You know, it's the little things that really stick in the memory. In one war, I was hunkered down behind a shrub, with one of the enemy about 10 feet from me, behind a 4 foot fence covered with honeysuckle (the fence, not him). We were at stalemate, and he started jumping up and hollering Boo!. The only thing wrong, he was jumping in a rhythm. On about the fourth jump, I aimed where his face would be, and shot early. Sure enough, he got the band right in the face. That boo was more of a Squall!

Memory is a peculiar commodity. We tend to remember the pleasant things, or times when we were done dirt, but the way we remember them is what is peculiar. In reminiscing sometimes with Troy or Grady, I have noted serious discrepancies in their slightly fallacious tales and my true facts, and that is a fact!

I have also noted that events which were slightly embarrassing, or maybe even shameful, are not a part of my repertoire...I have a memory like the Sundial—I record

only the sunny hours. So, when you children read over these old memories, if indeed, you do read them, take them with a large dose of salts. These events are somewhat, most nigh, just about what happened, maybe enhanced a wee tad to make them more entertaining. However, none of them are exaggerated. NONE!

Anyway, forgive an old man (75) his ramblings in the dead leaves of the past. I used to love to rake and burn leaves. Can't say I care for that much anymore. However, the pleasure of writing this is all mine. I write a paragraph, or an event at a time, as they recur in my faulty memory. This epistle thus far has taken about a week, writing when the mood strikes me. To me, this is a great catharsis, leaving me much more that somewhat damn happy with our life, in spite of minor aches and pains. I have always maintained it's a great life if you don't waken...(to reality).

Anent my reading (now that's a 15 cent word), I had a Junior and Senior year English teacher by the name of Margaret Crockett. She taught us to love poetry. She broke it down to its essentials, explaining iambic pentameter, alliteration, stresses, and most important, lyric quality. I can still see her standing in front of the class, waving her hand in rhythm as if she were conducting an orchestra, and quoting: "Double, double, toil and trouble, Fire burn and cauldron bubble...".

She was an elderly lady, very plump. I remember her name so well because she told us she was the Granddaughter of Davy Crockett. We figured up the years (she was about 70), and decided she was his Granddaughter! After that she was the highest rated teacher in that school... at least by all us buckledy-headed boys.

There was another small incident that had a lasting, and very beneficial effect on my life. One Thanksgiving morning, Grady and I were playing in the park with a

couple of neighbor girls, sisters, and Grady pulled out a plug of Brown Mule chewing tobacco. Of course, all of us had to bite off a big chaw, and see who could spit the farthest. I didn't know you were not supposed to swallow any of the juice...Boy, did I get sick. Ruined my Thanksgiving dinner...well, it didn't ruin it, I just passed it up. Also supper. It was a day or three before I saw daylight at the end of the tunnel. To this day, I do not like the taste of tobacco. Like I said, very beneficial, but I can't say I would recommend that method of abstention. But it is effective. Very effective.

Right after I graduated, I got a job with the Uncle of a neighbor. He was going to Weatherford, Texas to take over a filling station. He was to pay me \$10 a month and found. Found meant that I ate well and slept dry. This was in the summer of 1931, the middle of the Depression. It only took him 6 weeks to go broke. He said he was sorry, but he couldn't pay me a cent. I told him that was OK, that I enjoyed it. He did give me a pocket knife, that had all kinds of blades.

The only thing I really remember of this little episode was the day an old farmer came by in the late afternoon. He was on his way home and had a wagon load of watermelons that he hadn't been able to sell in town. He told the boss he didn't want to haul them home, as he had plenty more at home. There was a bumper crop that year. He said he would take a dollar for the load, and the boss told me to unload them. There were about 98 melons on that wagon. I could have said 100, but I wouldn't lie for 2 melons.

The boss went to town and bought a 100 pound block of ice (20 cents, as I recall). I cleaned out the old wooden soda pop case, filled it half full of water, chunked in the ice, and filled it up with melons. The next day we stuck a sign out, Watermelons 5 cents, ice cold 15 cents. That was

one of the few profitable deals we pulled. We also ate melons for a week. But I still like them.

We used to go hunting a lot with slingshots. At least, that's what they call them nowadays. We called them something else, I disremember what. You make a slingshot by cutting a fork of a tree limb that is about 3/4 inch in diameter. Cut the fork out of the limb, with the bottom of the fork about 4 inches long, and the tops about 3 inches long. Oak or hickory is the best. Peel the bark and cut a groove about 1/2 inch below the top forks. This is to hold the string. Cut two strips of rubber from an inner tube (that's what once went in tires) and tie one end of each to the ends of the fork, stretching the rubber over the end and tying them with the string in the grooves.

You then cut an oval about the size of an egg out of old shoe leather. Punch holes in the ends of the oval, and fasten them to the rubber with pieces of cord. You then place a rock, about the size of a marble, in the leather pocket. Hold the pouch in one hand, the fork in the other, stretch the rubbers as far as they will go. Release the pouch and the rock will be projected sharply, hopefully to its intended target. Which, hopefully, ain't the neighbor's window.

We had to create our own diversions in those old days, and one of my favorite ones was with the slingshot. I would shoot a rock straight up, quickly reload and try to hit the first rock as it came down. I had some very close misses, but I don't recall ever hitting one. I did develop some quick physical responses, tho, as well as the ability to judge the parabola of the rock, speed, and how much lead to take in my aim. Probably as beneficial as the modern electronic games.

The true slingshot is what David used to konk Goliath. We used these, too, but could never develop any degree of proficiency with them. They were just as dangerous to the

guy behind you as to the guy in front. Nothing to fool around with.

We lived in the block next to the grammar school and were always playing touch football on the playgrounds. One afternoon after play, I started up the alley going home. Two of my chickens were out in the alley, someone had left the gate ajar. One was a banty hen, the other was her one remaining chick. The chick was a Rhode Island Red, as big as her mother, but still a baby.

I picked up a rock about the size of a hen's egg, and threw it down the alley, intending to scare the chickens back into the yard. I threw it very high, and about half a block. The hen must have seen the rock in the air, for she squawked and spread her wings. The baby squatted and tried to get under her mother's wings. That damn rock came down on them, and killed them both. I still don't understand how. The odds against that are terrific. You can't imagine how badly I felt. I gave them a mournful funeral.

If I may digress, I wish to include a tale that happened many years later. This is at the special request of Margaret Ann. It was in 1938, I was working for SW Bell. We lived in MacCamey, Texas. I was on a construction crew, we were building a telephone line out to one of the ranches. As we were digging holes and setting poles, the boss went off down on a creek to answer nature's call. A short time later, he came running back up the rise, his pants at half-mast, yelling bloody murder.

We grabbed our shovels, ready to do battle, but could see no enemy. The boss finally calmed down and told us his story. As he was in the brush, tending to his business, a lizard about 9 inches long came around a big rock. He saw the boss and came to attention. The boss picked up a handful of gravel and tossed one of them at the lizard. He said the lizard raised up about an inch off the ground, and started swelling up. The boss, not being an old country

boy, kept throwing gravel, finally hitting the lizard. That lizard swelled up about twice his normal size, raised up about 4 inches off the ground, and **CHARGED AT THE BOSS.**

He took off... We went back down to the arena, and found and killed a big old Mountain Boomer, a large lizard noted for its pugnacity, and not to be fooled with. His head is the largest part of his body, and looks like, and is shaped like the head of a rattle snake. He is said to be slightly poisonous. I have killed them in West Texas, but was never bit by one. I never chunked no gravel at one, neither!



high school yearbook



my sister sula margaret and me
you might note my resemblance to richard

MEMORIA

The above title is a slight misnomer. I use it in the somewhat abstruse sense that this document is a monument to the old dead and gone, but not forgotten days of yore. I am putting these memories in a separate package, all their own, for they will relate to no particular time frame, or geographical area. Instead, I will write these memories up as they recur to me. I found, in writing the Stamford and Hogtown memoirs, that other unrelated memories would come crowding in. Therefore, come one, come all, line up and take a number, may the fount never run dry...

This first one is, again, by request of Margaret Ann. Dad, Troy and I were camped on the Colorado River above Bastrop, Texas. Since the button factory up north was on strike, and we could gather no mussels, we were busy contracting plumbing in Bastrop, installing bathrooms. One weekend Troy and I were running some trot-lines, and we were rowing a boat up the river, quietly. We passed under a low hanging limb, about 5 feet above our heads. When the limb was over the middle of the boat, Troy, sitting in the front of the boat exclaimed "Hey! There's a snake on that limb."

Without thinking, as usual, I raised my oar and whapt that dang snake. I knocked him clean off that limb, and, of course, right in the middle of that boat. We stood not upon ceremony, Troy went off the front of that boat, and I went off the back. We raised a froth on that water getting to shore. Troy had a few choice words for me after we got on land! And he's my brother, too! Well, that danged old water moccasin roamed up and down HIS boat for a while, then decided to go off down river somewhere. It was decided, by a majority of one, that I had to swim out and retrieve the boat. I also kept Phylbert, our collie dog, company for a few days.

Margaret requested this one, also: We were living in Austin, about 1948. I decided to go fishing one day, and three of my brothers-in-law were going with me. One was J.T.Shipp, one Jerome Porter, Nova Lee's husband, and one Ed Snyder, Juanita's husband. We went to the Colorado River, about 300 yards below the Austin Dam. We rented a boat from a rental agency on the river. There were rapids between the agency and the dam, about 40 feet wide, very rapid, and with a few big boulders protruding at intervals. We eased down stream to calm water, crossed the river, and rowed back up the other side in calm water to the island just below the dam. We eased along the lee of the island to the edge of the rapids, moored the boat, walked over the island, and fished below the dam.

When we were ready to go home, we went back and loaded the boat. Now, we were up the rapids about 60 yards above the rental agency. Since I was in the back of the boat, I was considered Chief Oarer, Rower, and Flunky. Also, since I was and am a lazy type character, and since I had learned a few things about straight lines in geometry, I whapt that old boat out in the rapids, dodged a few boulders, and we were unloading in 2 minutes flat. Nobody said a dang word. In fact, nobody said a dangword all the way home. In fact, nobody was speaking to me. I never heard anything for about a week, and that was second and third hand. Actually, I was glad it was second and third hand, for I might have been a wee tad resentful. I disremember how many fish we caught- that was not memorable...Come to think of it, that boat was about 14 feet long, 4 feet wide, flat-bottomed and about 12 inches deep. With us 4 hefty boys in it (without life preservers), the river came up the sides purty far, and those rapids were rough. I'll have to admit we shipped a small tad of water coming down those rapids. Mayhap those buckledy headed boys had a slight reason for their erroneous slant on things.

There was another fishing trip that was memorable. This happened much later, when my sins were forgiven (but not forgotten). We went down river several miles this time. We set out our trot-lines, baited up, went up to camp, built a fire and ate. On the way to the place, we had noted a few jack-rabbits on the highway. Well, sitting around the fire, someone had the bright idea of foraging for a few jacks for fish bait. We were in J.T.'s salvaged army ambulance. The windshield would crank out and up to the roof, parallel to and even with the roof, giving us a full field of view ahead. We had a single barrel 12 gauge shotgun, and we took off, roaming the back roads at about 40 MPH.

All this was taking place about 10 o'clock at night. One would drive, one would ride shotgun, and the other three in the back. Troy was with us that trip. The rules were, we would take time about riding shotgun, and you had to shoot the jacks on the run. Well, Troy was riding shotgun, and we had already killed 3 or 5 jacks, when one us boys in the back, I disremember which, got a bright idea.

We tied a dead jack around the belly with a 4 foot cord, tied the other end to a stout fishing cane. I climbed out the open back door, up on the rounded roof of that van, and got into position. My cohorts passed me the pole, and I swang that old jack across the front of that truck, about even with, and just above the radiator cap. Well, all Hell broke loose. Old Sarge, the driver, jerked the steering wheel, heading for the ditch, I dropped the cane pole and clawed steel. Sarge straightened up and got back on the road, and somehow or other, I had held on. Troy had thrown the gun up, but had no time to shoot. And you know something, that dang brother of mine Talked To Me Again!...My Own Beloved Brother!...Wal, I never woulda thought it!

Now, I cannot vouch for the veracity of the following saga, since I was not there. Also, as I have mentioned before, I have found, in reminiscing with my brothers, that

their slightly fallacious recollections do not entirely jibe with my true facts. However, I have never doubted that they firmly believed that their slightly erroneous recomembrances were absolutely true. Anyhoo, Troy, Dad, and Grady were camped on the Colorado just above Utley, Texas. They were on a high bank, just above a big, deep hole in the river that was supposed to have some big cats in it. Grady rigged up a special line, using 1/4 inch nylon line, and a fish hook about 6 inches long that a blacksmith had made for him. He baited it with a redbird he shot.

They had a boat, and he rowed about 40 feet down river from the camp, where some small willows were hanging over the river. He stripped the limbs off one that was about 1 1/2 inches in diameter and 8 feet long. He tied the line securely at the base of the willow, and threw a clove-hitch about every foot to the end, tying it securely at the end. He dropped the line with baited hook in about 25 feet of water. He then tied a cow-bell on the end of the willow. This was about sundown.

That night about 11, they were sitting around the fire battling the breeze. It was a very still, quite night, when all of a sudden that cow-bell went JANGLE JANGLE JANGLE BLOOP... Well, they grabbed a lantern, piled off down the hill, loaded into the boat, and hauled it for the scene of the action. It took them a while to find it, because all that was left was some fresh dirt. That willow had been growing on the very edge of a small, black dirt ledge, which had caved off, with the Monster taking hook, line, sinker, tree, roots and all with him. He must have left for parts unknown, for naught was ever heard from him since.

Now, that was the topper, until Grady related this one to me: They were living in Corpus Christi. Grady had been doing some pretty steady pier fishing, and one day an adjacent fisherman hooked a big one. It went out to sea, taking the old boy's tackle with him. It seems that fish had

been hanging around that pier for some time, tearing up tackle. No one was able to even head him. Anyway, that fisherman swore vengeance, saying he would be back next week with some real tackle.

Naturally, Grady showed up, too. Sure enough, Our Hero showed up with a deep sea rig normally used for tarpon and sailfish. It took about three weekends for him to tie into Old Eber again. There were three other fishermen hanging onto Our Hero, but it was the same story again. If he hadn't released his rig, he would have wound up in Cuba. He said that now that did it, he was really sore. He would be back.

The following week he showed up. So did quite a rooting gallery. He came in his pickup, unloaded 8 truck inner tubes, a coil of nylon rope about 1 inch in diameter, and a special fishhook about 12 inches long. He doubled a tube around a piling, doubled a tube through that tube, doubled another, and so on, until he had all 8 tubes lined out. He tied the rope securely through the last tube, tied a steel cable on the rope, and tied the cable to the fishhook. He slit open an 8 pound carp, and sewed the hook in it. He threw the carp out as far as he could, unloaded his chair out of the pickup, sat back and lit up his pipe.

Well, it took him about 4 weeks to tie into Old Eber, but he finally hooked him. There was quite a gallery there by this time, including a newspaper photographer. Old Eber swallowed that bait and took off. Grady said his first sortie stretched the tubes about 6 feet before they headed him. He backed up and really hit for Cuba, stretching the tubes about 10 feet. Grady said he looked around and that pier was empty, so, feeling lonesome, he eased off up the pier and joined the crowd.

To make the story short, Old Eber fought those tubes for better than two hours before he gave up. Our Hero had plenty help hauling him in and loading him in the pickup.

It was a Sea Bass, commonly called a Jewfish, and weighed around 670 pounds. The story was in the paper, complete with a picture of Our Hero and Old Eber. Grady cut it out and saved it for years. I never saw the clipping, as he finally lost it. But the story was too far-fetched to be unbelievable.

Troy, Dad and I were camped on a hill at Utley, under a large oak tree, where a steep path went down to the river. One night Troy had a nightmare, and he raised up and saw me sleeping innocently on my pallet. The moon was shining brightly, there was a slight breeze, causing the leaves to cast a speckled moonlight pattern on the ground, and incidentally, on me. Troy said later he thought something was crawling across my face...yeah, any old excuse.

Well, he grabbed his overalls, fortunately by the bib, and whapt me about three times across the face before I got fully motivated...I woke up about half-way down that steep path, still in high gear. I barely stopped before I took a bath in the river, and then I went back up to that camp and **THAT TIME I TALKED TO MY DEARLY BELOVED BROTHER!!!** Boy, I Talked! I then moved my pallet to the far side of that tree and went ungraciously back to bed. Such was life in the Great Southwest.

Several times I have mentioned mussels. It's about time I covered that phase of our operations. On one of our fishing trips, we ran across a family gathering mussels and selling them to a lad out of Bastrop. Dad got to talking to him, and made arrangements for us to gather the mussels, also. That lad was the son-in-law of the owner of a large department store in Bastrop that carried clothing, a hardware store, and a grocery store. Boy, our credit was good! It was through the hardware that we later got into plumbing contracting.

The lad furnished us with a large boat, about 16 feet long, 6 feet wide, 18 inches deep, and squared on both ends. He

outfitted us with oars and 5 gallon buckets. We christened her Old Lady Austin. Later he brought us another boat about 14 feet long. When we put the second boat in the water I christened her Thelma, after Gladys Thelma Shipp. The next morning, when I checked the boats, Thelma had sunk, and was laying on the bottom of the river. Well, I drug her out, dried her out, and caulked up some cracks, and launched her again. Everything was lovely this time. No parallels intended...

When we got into full operation, we hired a black lad to cook out the mussels. Wade Hodges was about 6 foot 6 and weighed about 300 and all man. He wasn't fat, just big. He was elderly, and white kinky headed, but was still in his prime. Our boss furnished us a cooking vat about 4'X8'X12". Wade would fill it with river water, and build a fire under it. Troy and I would bring in a boat load of mussels, and grab the other boat and take off. Wade would unload the boat with a 5 gallon bucket, carrying them from the boat and dumping them in the vat. No lost motion, just damn hard work.

We paid Wade a dollar a day, and he was glad to get it. That was good wages in those days. We worked 5 days a week, and then over-supplied the market. The boss would come out about once a week with a couple of hands in a dump truck, and shovel our pile of mussels into the truck, and take them in to town to weigh them. He paid us 10 dollars a ton. Troy and I could gather a ton a day. Boy, we would have made a killing, except the factory up north would take only a limited amount. Sometimes the factory went on strike, too. The mussel shells are called nacre, or mother-of-pearl. The factory made pearl buttons of them.



cw, sr., troy, boostie, grady in camp



cw, sr.



troy



boostie with fish



lots of fish

When the factory went on strike, we went fishing, or in to town to install a bathroom. Never a dull moment. The gathering of the mussels was quite interesting. We would prospect up and down the river, looking for beds of mussels. We usually cleaned out the river for a couple of miles in each direction before we moved the camp. The boss would arrange for entree on the farms. We loved to find beds in rapids or shallow water. We could anchor the boat, sit in the water and chunk the mussels in it. The biggest and heaviest mussels were in deeper water, and that took some doing. We would have to dive for the shells, sometimes in 10 to 25 feet of water. We would take a 5 gallon bucket, dive down and fill the bucket.

In deeper water it would take 2 or 3 dives, leaving the bucket down until it was full. When it was full, we would grab it by the bail, sight the boat, and give a tremendous jump, shooting up beside the boat and grabbing on. Then heave the bucket aboard with one hand, holding the boat with the other. We could stay down for 2 to 3 minutes on a dive. That was no job for smokers. It was funny, but in the middle of July, with the weather at 100 degrees, we would

become chilled in the deeper water and have to take a sun break. We would lie out on that hot white sand and actually luxuriate in the heat. We baked brown.

At the time I was courting Gladys on odd visits to Temple, and she told me some of her girl friends wanted to know why she was going with that Mexican. I often wondered that, also, but thank God, she put up with me...for 52 years now in the year of our Lord 1989. Back to the mussels, a bed of mussels in 4 or 5 feet of water felt like walking on a cobble-stone street, they were solid. You know, mussels are really good eating, sliced in thin strips and fried. You can now order them in some restaurants. It's a shame we didn't know that then, we would have waxed fat.

Wade cooked the mussels until they popped open, separated the meat, putting it in a 5 gallon bucket. We would use it to bait fishing holes. Wade also picked a lot of pearls out of them, most of them misshapen. When he had filled a pint jar, we took them to town and sold them to a dentist for 1 dollar an ounce, which we split with Wade. The dentist would grind them to a powder and use them in fillings for teeth. I'll never forget, one night a possum or coon came into camp late at night. Wade took his 45 cannon and BLOOM BLOOM BLOOM, he took out after the varmint. We didn't even know he had a pistol! We thought WW11 was upon us. Troy and I were sleeping in hammocks, and mine was unfortunately on the edge of a hill. Naturally, I got out on the opposite side from the shooting, and rolled down that hill, almost to the water... However, NOBODY, not even my dearly beloved brother, talked to Wade. We just commiserated with him for missing the entree for our sweet potatoes.

You know, that Wade would have made a helluva good Dallas Cowboy. We found out from the boss that Wade was noted far and wide in the county, and when he attended a Colored dance and picked out his sweet patootie, nobody

discussed the situation with Wade. It was said he had killed one lad that had displeased him. As far as we were concerned, though, we were buxom buddies. When we seined for fish, Wade was always hauling off a load of carp, alligator gar and mullet. He loved them, and since we had a 4 inch mesh single wall seine, he always got big ones.

That seine was 8 feet deep and 110 feet long. Troy and I would pull that seine upstream through a long hole, between rapids, and come out with 5 to 15 big buffalo fish, as well as a big haul for Wade. We would stake the buffalo out over night in the river, and next morning wet some tow sacks and spread them in the back end of our Model T pickup (home-made bed), cover them with wet sacks, and take off for the sawmills over towards McDade. We sold those fish to the mill hands for \$1 each. They went like hot cakes.

We always saved one for old man Erhardt, who ran the drugstore in Bastrop. We came by and gave it to him, for he was always saving us the outdated magazines he was supposed to throw away. He would tear the front page off, for credit with the company, and give us the books. All kinds, I mean, man, I kept up my reading. Those fish always weighed from 12 to 28 pounds, out net couldn't hold anything smaller. Dad taught us how, and the three of us knitted that net.

Dad went in to the game warden, and told him what we planned to do. The warden asked him a few questions about what we were doing, and Dad laid it out, about our shelling, plumbing, etc. The warden told him to go ahead, the net was legal, and if anyone questioned us, to refer them to him. He never even came out and inspected us, nor did he make us get a license. He said that anyone doing what we were to stay alive, and off the dole, deserved a helping hand, not a heavy hand. When the call came out in Bastrop for the CCC, we had to go over and sign up for the

dole, in order to get me in.

I'll never forget one fishing trip, neither will Gladys. We had a beautiful camping place, the factory had curtailed our activities, we had money in the sock, so Dad took off to Temple and brought Mom, Gladys and Sula Margaret down to spend a few days with us. Everybody was having a good time. About the third morning, Gladys put on her shoes and found a big old hoppy toad in one of them. She squalled bloody murder, pointed a finger at Troy, and shrieked "you did it! you did it!" She is firmly convinced to this day of his guilt. That was poetic justice for all the unwarranted, totally uncalled for Talks that I had suffered in the past. Of course, the poor toad was only looking for a home, no one was guilty, no one, of course not.

This next one is by special request by Roger. Dad came through Dallas on his way to East Texas in about 1956. He and Della, with Braddock and Judy, were camped out on Lake Texhoma, and invited us up for a weekend of fishing. We packed the necessary, and went up. We really enjoyed the weekend. Dad had a large tarp spread, and we had our cots and pallets. The weather was fine.

The first night Braddock, Richard, Roger and I decided to go fishing. We loaded the boat and went up the slough, anchored the boat, and cast out our lines. Nothing was stirring, and about midnight the bull-frogs started belling. We decided to go bull-frogging, so went back to camp to get a spotlight and a gig. The gig was one that had a trigger in the center, and when you speared a frog, it would snap the jaws on him without hurting him. So we started out, rowing quietly. There was not a peep from the frogs. Well, old smart-aleck grandpa got a bright idea and started making a noise like a full-growned lovelorn bull-frog. Hark! I got an answer! We quietly rowed toward Old Romeo, and soon spotted him in the reeds on the bank. Braddock speared him, and we stuffed him in a wet sack. We rowed

back out in the slough, and I started serenading again. We gathered 4 or 5, and then called it a night.

Next day, Dad was real happy about the frogs, and volunteered to clean them. He took a hammer and nailed one of them to a tree, driving the nail through his head, and almost all the way up. He turned around to get a knife, and when he turned back that darn frog had put his front feet to the tree beside his head, reared up, and pushed his head off that nail. The nail went through his head. Dad said he was so dumbfounded, he could only watch him. The frog fell to the ground and started hopping off in the weeds. The weeds were about 2 feet high.

The boys and I were coming up from the lake, and all we saw was Dad hopping through the weeds like a jackrabbit in tall cotton, whapping the ground with a 2X4 every other jump. Well, he got that frog just before he hit the lake, but the boys and I took quite a while to recover. I have often thought that a video camera that day would have paid for itself.

Well, Roger called today, Aug 17,1989. Everything OK, he just wanted to pass along a request from Laura for old Grandpa to stir up the cobwebs a little, that she was awaiting impatiently for some more senile meanderings through the "Good Old Days!". Good old days, my Aunt Fanny! I'm here to tell you good people THESE are the good old days...you'd better believe it! Sure, these memories are amusing, but they don't tell the full story. Nor am I going to dwell on the full story. I do NOT want nor do I need any sympathy nor pity. Gladys and I have lived a full life, a reasonably happy life. We have scratched most of our itches. Sure, there have been traumas, the very worst of which was the loss of Chuck. I thought at the time "Why not me, Lord, my race is run?" But we have no control of Destiny. The moving finger writes, and that's the ball game.

stalk.

The corn was still green, and they would cut the stalk just above the topmost ear of corn. They would drop the top and go on. My job was to gather the toppings, tie them in sheaves, and stack them. We would later gather them in a wagon and haul them to the barn, store them in the loft for use as fodder.

One day, with no work to be done, Troy and I rowed up river about a mile, setting out a few trotlines. We came upon a farmer up on the bank firing a whiskey still. He casually picked up his rifle, and invited us up. We came, very carefully. After properly identifying ourselves as good old country boys, we made ourselves useful, chopping wood, tending fire, sampling the sour mash, and getting acquainted. When we went back to camp, he gave us a half gallon of white lightning, and a chunk of charred oak to put in it to age it. Well, we aged it over night, and brewed up a pot of coffee for coffee royals, figuring that anything good enough for Royalty was bound to be OK.

We helped him out a time or so after that. A short time after that there came a hellacious rain, and the river rose about 8 or 10 feet, out of banks. There were trees and debris coming down river. Having been fortified with coffee royals, Troy and I decided to amble off up river about 5 miles, and catch the tree express back. Which we did. We drove the Model T up and parked it, and we hopped a great big tree that had very few limbs. Now that was a bus ride. We had to work a little when it hung up, but all in all it was memorable...Very...We had enough coffee that our fears were allayed, or something.



grady, boostie, troy on leon river

Talking about prices, any of the farmers around were glad to sell us eggs and milk. We usually bought 5 dozen eggs at a time, for a quarter! A gallon of milk was a nickle, furnish our own bottle. Hey, I just had a thought... I disremember how we got that Model T back to camp. Oh, well, I'm reasonably sure we did... I think.

When I was growing up (still am, for that matter), I never did care for cabbage. BUT...one time Troy, Grandpa and I went out on the Leon from Temple, to camp out and fish a while. We went out late one evening, seined bait and set out trotlines. Dad was supposed to come out early next morning, bringing provisions. Well, he hadn't shown up by noon, and us old boys wuz getting lank. Grandpa said to start a fire, and he would see what he could find in his larder.

He had a Model T with a homemade camper built on it. He was about 50 years before his time. He came up with a lard bucket of bacon grease, a small sack of corn meal, and a large head of cabbage. He had a big old iron skillet that he set on the coals, put about 1/2 inch of bacon grease it, and let it get hot. He chopped that head of cabbage up,

washed it in a bucket of water, then picked it up in handfuls, not shaking the water off of it, and dropped it in the hot grease. Meanwhile, he had made some hot water corn bread, he called it Dog Bread, and fried it in another skillet in bacon grease. There will never be a meal to equal that one... Ambrosia for the gods... I still love cabbage, in any form.

Let's take a little trip to Spur, Texas. I was the only telephone man in town. My title was Combination Man, which described me exactly. I installed phones, repaired them, shot cable trouble, worked on the switchboards-trouble, that is , not operating. There were about 10 operators and 6 switchboard positions. I ran the jumpers on the main frame, and did the janitor work. Also provided a lot of customer relations.

When I went to Spur, in 1940, the town had a magneto system, with the old crank phones. They cut over to common battery, where you lifted the receiver, the operator said Number Please, and connected you to the number on the switchboard, and rang it for you. After the cutover, I had to change out EVERY dang phone in that town. To top it all off, I did not have a company car, I had a two wheel pushcart with pneumatic tires, that looked like a tamale wagon.

Hey, I guess you kids don't know what a tamale wagon is. It looks like the hot dog wagon in the old New York movies. Anyhow, when I joined the Knights of Pythias, my dear lodge brothers carried me high about it. Anyway, I repaired a lot of magneto phones for the farmers who owned their own lines and phones. That was a private sideline.

Which gets me to my main story. One day a rancher came in from the Swenson ranch west of town, and wanted me to come out and work over his line from his main ranch house to his bunk house in the south pasture, about 5 miles. The

house was for his sub-foreman and his family. He described his trouble to me, and I knew about what I needed. I loaded up a cable repair bag, about the size of a bushel basket, of heavy canvas, with a couple of canvas handles, about like the handles on a No.3 washtub. I put in a sleeve roller, with 3 sizes of sleeves, a pair of open wire come-alongs, some emery cloth, phone cords, transmitters, receivers, and other goodies that I might need.

I loaded up the old 1934 Chevrolet on Saturday morning and took off. Well, when I got there one of the men got in their pickup and accompanied me down to the south pasture. Now, that road did not follow that telephone line. In fact, a car could not follow that beeline telephone line, which I sadly pointed out to the cowboy. "No problem" he sez, "we got cowponies for that", he sez, "kin you ride?" "Why, shore" ,sez I. So he ropes up a pony for me. But before I started out, I went in and replaced the transmitter, receiver and cord, and batteries, cleaned it all up, checked the inside and outside wires and the ground connection. Also I poured some water on the ground connection, and told the Missus to water it sometimes.

Then I hung my diddy bag on the saddle horn, nonchalantly swang aboard Old Paint, and rode off into the sunset. That line was on cedar poles about 12 feet in the air. the poles were about 50 feet apart so the line wouldn't swag down and catch a cow. The line wouldn't hurt the cow, but it would probably spook the cow, which would promptly take the line to the north pasture. When I came to a pigtailed splice, I would stop that pony, stand up in that saddle, put the come-alongs on the wire, pull up some slack, cut out the pigtail, clean the wire with emery cloth, put on the steel sleeves, androll them with the roller. I don't know how they trained that pony, but he was ideal for the job. It was like working from a platform.

Now, they had told me to come up to the main ranch for

dinner at 12, so at 11:30 me and Old Paint dropped that diddy bag and took off down that beeline phone line like we were headed for the Last Roundup. That dinner was an experience for this old country boy. The table was about 25 feet long, on a screened in porch, and loaded down. About 12 or 14 cowboys came in about the time I did, and we stood not on ceremony. About every 5 foot on that table, there was a huge platter of steaks, there were platters of biscuits, bowls of gravy, mashed potatoes, and several vegetables. There were several pounds of butter-home grown- up and down the table.

Now this was about 1942, the War was on, everything was strictly rationed. If you think this old country boy pigged out...you right. I will have to admit those cowboys put me in the shade. Those cowboys were something to behold. They washed up, but their clothes were dusty and sweaty, they didn't bother to take their chaps off, they were the dyed-in-the-wool real McCoy. I finished that line late that afternoon. I thought later that I should have taken two Saturdays on the job. Oh, well, as it was I was ashamed to take pay for the job, I should have paid them. In discussing this item with Laura, she wanted to know what a cowpony was. I carefully explained that a cowboy was a boy that herded cows, also that a cowpony was a pony that the cowboy used to herd cows. All the horses you see in the Western shows are cowponies!



gladys, richard, margaret, roger
spur



grady, boostie, richard, roger, and patrick

One time in Dallas, I took Grandma shopping, to a big Drug Store that had everything. Not being interested in shopping at the moment, I hung around the pay-out counter to do the honors when Grandma did her thing. Idly gawking around, nothing on my mind, I happened to notice a round mirror, about 12 inches big, set up on the counter with a row of color bullets with it. It had a small, discreet sign, saying to feel free to sample a streak in your hair. Now, Grandma had been telling me for years that if I didn't hurry up and cultivate some gray hairs, she was going to anoint my head with flour some night.

Well! I casually looked around to see if Grandma was otherwise pleasantly occupied, and the Coast Was Clear. I picked out a silver gray bullet, and proceeded to acquire a very distinguished silver sideburn. I was just putting the finishing touches on the first one, when Someone grabbed my elbow, hissed in my ear "PUT THAT DOWN!!!", and propelled me out the front door. The only reason I didn't get TALKED TO AGAIN, Grandma wasn't speaking to me. She was still hissing slightly, though. Sometimes I feel a strong empathy with Ol' Charlie Brown... Why is Everybody Always Picking On Me???

I think I have made the point that I was dedicated to working my tail off to do a better job, and to secure my position. I was presented with a 25 year pin for no absenteeism for any reason. In sickness and in health, as the book goes. Also I never refused a single hour of overtime. The first time I was absent, I would now like to tell you about.

I developed a small knot, about the size of a quarter in my right shoulder in about 1961. Since my brother Roy had died of cancer, the Doctor suggested we take it out. So I went into his hospital after due preparation, and the family was gathered around when they prepared to put me on the delivery cart. I was dressed in their Dior gown, and the

nurse came in and gave me a shot in the arm. There were visitors in the room for the other patient, including his Baptist preacher. Me and the preacher was carrying on somewhat, and I was beginning to feel no pain.

I lay back on the cart, and asked the preacher to hand me a flower from a bouquet. Being quick on the ball, he jumped and got me a big white mum. I took the flower, folded my hands on my chest, and held the flower just below my chin. The ward man wheeled me out and down the hall. I found out later he wheeled me on a detour past the nurses station, for the grand tour. By that time I was half drunk. I don't know what is in those shots, but I would like a case of it. I had my eyes closed, trying to look peaceful. He stopped for the elevator, and I heard some whispering and giggling. I opened one eye, and saw a young couple, looking at me. I said, "Don't he look natural?", closed my eye, and didn't even know when we got on the elevator.

I woke up back in the room in bed under the sheets, and still about half drunk. Everybody was laughing at me, and the first thing I said was, "Where's my flower, I lost my flower!" Gladys said, "Look at your chest." I jerked the sheet down, and there was the flower, about 4 inches under my chin, peeking out from under about a half acre of tape. That dang Doctor had put tape down my chest for 12 inches, and out over my ribs, about 1 1/2 square feet. I had hell getting that tape off.

I didn't know the full story until that night about 12, I woke with a headache, and wandered out to the nurses station for a couple of aspirins. The nurse said, "I don't know if I can give you any medication, what is your room number?" I told her and she checked the book, then looked up startled, and said, "Oh! You're the Flower Man!!!" Then she looked flustered, and gave me the aspirin, so I said, "I guess I am" and went to bed. I've often wondered what the Doctor thought when they wheeled me in, but I'm

afraid I know, alright.

Me and the hospitals seem to have some kind of an affinity. I was operated on in the Scott and White in Temple on Feb. 17, 1989 for prostate problems. They used the rotorooter, went in and burned out all the unwanted tissue, flushing it out through the rotorooter. That dang thing was smaller than a pencil, and had a water tube, drainage tube, electric wire for burning and some kind of TV circuit to see what they were doing. They gave me the shot again, but this time it only made me drunk, so I heckled them during the festivities. The Anesthesiologist was sitting at my shoulder, and they had a sheet up so I couldn't see, so I carried him on high. I asked if he was sure the Doctor was actually there, or was he on a coffee break. I told him I was drunk as a tree full of boiled hoot owls.

I asked him to show me a rotorooter. He ignored me, even tho I was speaking loudly, so I raised my voice and asked if he was sure the Doc was still there. He said he was, so I said again that I wanted to see a rotorooter. The Doc must have given him an OK, for he got one and held it for me to inspect. That was a cute gadget. It looked somewhat like the old atomizer, with connections for two tubes, and other connections. Satisfied, I lost interest in the proceedings and went to sleep. Unfortunately, next morning I remembered everything, so when the Doc came by at 7 to check on me, I apologized profusely. He laughed and said, "Forget it, I enjoyed it. I told my wife when I got home that that was the first time I had operated on a drunken Irishman on Saint Patrick's Day!"

I would still like to have a case of that...

Back to that trip we made to Arkansas, that was about 1922, so I was about 8 or 9. We went in the 7 passenger Packard open touring car. It had a canvas cover that would fold back to the back. It also had side curtains of canvas,

with mica windows. They snapped on up and down the sides, making it fairly rain proof. The back bumper extended for about 3 feet, and had a trunk mounted on it. The trunk was identical to the old fashioned trunks, about 2 feet by 2 feet by 4 feet, and of course weather-proofed.

I remember several things about the trip, most notably a dance held in Grandpa Gateley's home. I remember sitting out on the rail of the porch, listening to the fiddle, guitar and mandolin. I think that's the real reason I still like old time fiddling. The next day they decided to have a fish fry, so dad went down to an old fisherman on the Ouachita river and came back with a 45 pound catfish. He hung it in the old oak tree in the front yard and butchered it. That impressed me more than somewhat.

We visited Uncle Ezra over on his farm, and he was butchering hogs. He had a big barrel hung at about a 45 degree angle, filled partway with boiling water. They would douse the dead hog in the water several times, rolling him over, then pulling him out on a table and scrape him to remove the hair. After he was clean, he cut him up for processing, grinding the sausage, preparing the hams, bacon and whatever for the smokehouse. That most nigh turned me off pork, especially the way they made the sausage. They cleaned the small intestines and used them as casings for the sausages! Everybody did back in the old days!

The next thing they did was really OK by me. They built the fire up under the old iron washpot, it also had 3 iron legs like ours, filled it about half full of water, got it boiling, and filled it with corn on the cob, husks and all. After it was done, everyone had to shuck their own corn, then anoint it with salt, pepper and gobs of home-grown butter, of which there was a plethora, and Go To Town, devil take the hindmost! Back in the old days they roasted green corn by scraping hot coals back in the fire place, or

out in the yard, laying a bunch of corn with the husk on it, and covering them with hot coals, leaving them for a time, then peeling and eating them with butter, salt and pepper. They were called “roasting ears”, or roast-n’ears for short, one of the staples of life!

I remember over at Grandpa Gateley’s house, there was a creek on one side, about 40 yards from the house. Across the creek there was a field that was full of cantaloupes, looking like yellow pebbles on a beach, solid, man. Well, they turned us old boys loose in that field and said eat all you want. I disremember how many I ate, but it was a long, loong time before I wanted any more. We also helped load a wagon with them, and went in to Centerville with them. Everybody had loads of cantaloupes down at the train station, selling them to someone that had tables set up and women crating them for shipment. That was a bustling sight to behold.

I also remember Uncle Guy playing the piano with one hand. He had been quite an accomplished pianist, but was mugged one time and placed on a railroad track. He came to enough to crawl almost off the track, the train got one arm. But he could romp and stomp on that piano with one hand. This old buckledy headed boy was really impressed, although I felt like crying about his arm...

The time we were over to Uncle Ezra’s we went down to the Ouachita river, about half a mile back of their house, and went swimming in their big old swimming hole. That was a big river, and there were huge trees lining the banks. They had long ropes tied to the limbs out over the water, and we played Tarzan. There was a railroad trestle across the river, and the rails ran through Ezra’s field about a quarter mile from their house. Man, I thought that was the height of something, to have your own railroad going through your back yard.

Two of Ezra’s boys, Chet and Lamar, took us exploring

up and down the river. They cut some cane poles, about 2 inches in diameter, and 2 or 3 feet long. One end was cut off just below the joint, so you had a hollow end. You found a smooth round rock that would go into the hollow with a very tight fit. Using the cane as an extension of your arm, you could whip that rock from here to yonder! When we found a tree of green walnuts, we really went to town.

We found a hornet's nest in a ditch in the field, and nothing would have it but we chunked rocks and tore it up. We also tore up the scenery vacating the premises. Roy was evidently a tad slow, for a hornet popped him on the forehead and knocked him flat. Boy, his face swelled up like a toadfrog. Such was life in the old homeplace. I'll have to admit that was a tad more foolish than chunking pebbles at an old Mountain Boomer!!

One time when we were visiting Roger, Laura came in all dressed up for a date. Man, she looked like a million dollars. I noticed the discreet mascara on the eyes, and teased her about "being in the lamp soot again". I was explaining for 30 minutes just what lamp soot was, and that girls in the old days that had no access to mascara, used the soot on the inside of coal oil lamp chimneys to shade around their eyes. They had to turn the lamps up too high to make them soot up! By the time I was through explaining, I heartily regretted teasing her, but she thought it was funny, and told me today to enter this little item in the chronicle. Oh! Well!

C W Murphy, Sr.

Margaret Murphy Stone called yesterday, and in the course of the visit, she asked if I would write her and tell her of all my recollections of Dad! Well, now, that is a large order. She said she had little or no memories of him, as he and Mom split up when she was about 6 years old. This chronicle will fall well within the scope of these Memoirs, but will be most difficult to write. Old painful and bitter memories will be recalled, but my memory, as I have mentioned before, is like the sundial, it records only the sunny hours. I will try to gloss over the more painful ones.

My earliest memories of Dad are in Hogtown, welding and working the monster lathe in the machine shop. Hogtown was an oil boom town, and Dad did a lot of contract work for all the oil companies and the wildcatters. He would re-flue the huge boilers associated with the oil rigs, putting in new 3 inch pipes that held the water and steam. He also contracted and laid pipelines through the country-side between rigs and storage tanks. This is where he would use the portable welding rig he made, with me as the automatic control!

Roy and Troy were inducted into the shop early, and learned to weld. Grady and I were too young, but we got to scale those flues! When he replaced a set of flues (about 30), we would hammer and rasp the scale from the outside of them. Now that was a chore! I don't recall those chores with any pleasure whatsoever! He made a lot of money, but he and Mom could spend it faster that he could make it!

Dad was just a male American human being, not outstandingly good nor particularly bad. He had only a 7th

grade education, as I recall him telling it. He was some kind of a mechanical genius, for he could make any kind of parts with the welding rig and that lathe. His downfall came with the depression. Hogtown went bust before the depression, and we left in 1927 with a lot of people and oil companies owing Dad a lot of money (uncollectable).

We moved to San Angelo, where he, Roy and Troy had a short job. Grady, Margaret and I started to school. Their job played out, and they got their next job in Chillicothe, Texas, piping the town for gas. Mom refused to go with him, and we stayed in San Angelo, with Dad, Roy and Troy all sending her money. We stayed in San Angelo a year, then moved to Stamford, where they had a short job. When they went on to another job, we again stayed behind in Stamford. I think this is where Mom and Dad really separated.

I was in my junior year in 1930 when Mom told me they were divorced. It hit me very hard, and I'm sure it did Grady and Margaret, too, but we never discussed it. Mom was very bitter about it, and spilled over on me about it. I was young and naive and I grew quite bitter towards Dad. It was years and years before I grew to realize that it was the depression and forced separation which had really caused the split.

Dad continued to send her money for years, as best he could. We were sending her money when we were doing the mussel diving and plumbing in Bastrop. When I went in the CCC, I sent her the \$25 a month. When Gladys and I got married, we continued to send her \$25 a month until we got laid off in 1938. Mom was then working in the Austex canning factory, and I went to work for Jack McKay lumber co. for \$12 a week. It was 2 years before I got back

on with the telephone co. at \$3.20 a day! \$16.00 a week!
Hog-rolling rich!

My most vivid recollections of Dad are of the times when we were living in Temple, and living on the river in Bastrop, before and between my CCC tours. I had had no fatherly supervision through high school and during the CCC tours. Needless to say, I felt absolutely no need for any! But as far as Dad was concerned, I was still "hey, boy!" This caused quite a bit of contention, and I'm sure he would have liked to take a two-by-scantling to me lots of times. He was a hard man, came up in a hard school. Yet he had a good sense of humor and was quite a talker. That is, he was quite good at shooting the bull!

He and I had very little rapport, and were never at ease with one another. I was very definitely not one of his favorite children. Again, it was because I had no male supervision from the age of 15 through 20. I realize now that he was trying to break me to the halter, but I had shed that yoke years before. I considered myself a grown man, but he considered me a boy with no voice, no opinion and no say in the day to day living. I think this had a lot to do in instilling a lot of bull-headed stubbornness that I was to keep the rest of my life. (Just ask Gladys and the children!) We literally honed our wits on each other, and I think it put the steel in my spine that carried me through the trials and tribulations of my career, and made me study and persevere. (Like a boy named Sue!) I could not have held the responsibility that I did, nor have done so well without it.

I know that Gladys had to have the soul and the patience of a saint to put up with me all those years. Sometimes I wondered how she put up with me, and sometimes she told

me!! However, the steel and determination was stamped in and forged tough. In my later years I have mellowed more than somewhat. Instead of a steel rod, now my backbone is more like an overripe banana.

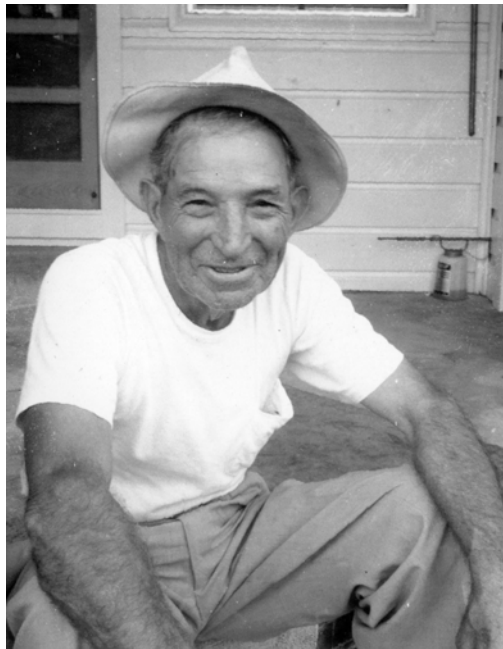
Yet, I held the old man in great esteem, and considerable affection. Even respect! I heartily wish now that I had told him so. I think maybe we could have established a much closer relationship, but then again, maybe not. Who is to say?

There were many times we sat around the campfire on the river, battling the breeze. Dad would get to talking about his early life on the farm in Arkansas. He loved to talk, and I would listen and dream about the old times. He and Troy would reminisce about the construction jobs they had been on, the Big Inch pipeline up the east coast and on to Maine. They would tell tales about the damyankees. His tales of the trials and tribulations that he and Mom went through stuck with me. Mom was 18 and Dad 19 when they married. They never looked back. I felt deeply for them but I still thought I was a grown man! And in need of no supervision! Ah! Well! We lived through it...

Looking at the years from 1927, when we left Hogtown, to 1937, when Gladys and I were married, those 10 years were tough. There was no sense of security, money was scarce, times were rough. In 1937, I was 23 years old, Gladys was 20. I was making \$3.20 a day, about \$65.00 a month, of which we sent Mom and Margaret \$25.00. Compute that to your present pay. That was 40 percent of our gross pay!

But back to Dad, I remember he used to raise birddogs, training them for hunts and field meets. He always had several guns. One was an automatic 12 gauge Winchester

shotgun, a beautifully embossed showpiece. The bird dogs were white with brown spots, pointers, and were beautiful dogs. Of course, us old buckled headed boys would take them out rabbit and squirrel hunting. Dad never could understand why those dogs would break a point and go chasing a rabbit! Dad also loved skeet shooting and would attend all the meets. He was very good at it.



in east texas on his farm



the old man with his youngest four boys



squatting on top of grady's hill



in hoggtown with grady, boostie, margaret and a horse



the old rogue with troy and roy, his eldest

8-14-1991

These old memories are coming in fits and spurts, so the narrative will necessarily be jerky and disconnected, but maybe I can finally get the job done. These three pages have taken about 3 months....but what is time to a hog!

I remember one time Dad ordered a couple of Kentucky Blue Tick coon hounds. Paid a right smart price for them, too. One time I was playing with one of them in the road beside our house, and a car came speeding around the corner, catching me and the pup unawares. I dived out of

the way, with a fender catching my hip and helping me on my way. The pup was not so lucky, and was killed. I was scared witless, for I realized how near I had come to be lying there with that pup. Mom phoned the shop, and Dad came tearing home. I tried to explain what had happened, but Dad grabbed his big razor strop and tanned me good, sore hip and all. Boy, he was mad. And boy! I was sore and bawling bloody murder and Mom was yelling at Dad, which made him madder.

Years later, at 721 Genoa in Dallas, I was puttering in the garage, while all the chillern and the neighborhood kids were playing baseball in our front yard. Roger came running around the house bawling, and my heart fell to my boots. He said, "Daddy, the bat slipped out of my hands and busted the windshield out of our car." "Anybody hurt?" "No, sir." "To hell with the windshield, I'm just glad no one is hurt." I don't know if Roger remembers that little incident, but I sure do. It is a horrible feeling when one of your kids may be hurt. When that happened, I suddenly recalled the time of the dead pup and the fender bruise. Now, I ain't no angel, but damned if I'd beat on a kid with a fender bruised hip. A deliberate parallel here is definitely intended. My relationship with my father was established over the years by several incidences of similar nature. Naturally, I was always at fault, and I do mean that, but I feel that a tad of patient forbearance would have worked wonders. Recalling this has kinda steamed my bile a mite, so I'll get back to this later.

TRIVIA

This Chapter shall contain small extraneous events or facts that may or may not be of interest. The major earthshaking events have been covered, now to the nitty gritty.

Dad told us one time that grandpa W R Murphy, in his younger days, was an ordained Baptist Minister. In the early days of World War 1, he preached against war, and our involvement. Feelings ran high, and he really thumped the pulpit and chewed the scenery. It split his church, and they ended up kicking him out. I don't know where the church was, and I don't know much about afterwards. I do remember that he and Doc ran a barber shop at one time. I remember him giving me a haircut. I don't know where or when.

Grandpa told us boys one time that he left Georgia in the front of a posse. He let us stew about that for a few days, and then told us the truth. He was having some trouble with a family that had a slue of big strapping boys, and he felt that the climate would be more clement elsewhere...anywhere elsewhere! He didn't say what the trouble was, even after we asked. Presumably he went to Marshall, Arkansas, since uncle Edgar was born in Marshall on 7 Aug 1895. Since Dad was born on 30 Oct 1888 in Augusta, Georgia, the exodus must have taken place within that time period. I wonder how they travelled?

Uncle Edgar was the preacher at the New Hope Baptist church in his earlier days, between Dardanelle and Centerville. He gained quite a reputation as an evangelist and as a preacher. Grandpa told us one time that a delegation from the First Baptist church in Tulsa, Ok, came to interview him. They offered him the pastorship of the First Baptist church, with a good bit more money, and, according to Grandpa, "The Lord called him over!"

He gained quite a reputation in that church and served one

term as President of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was later sent to form the White City Baptist church in a ritzy suburb of Tulsa. His flock there presented him with a 4 seated Piper Cub. As he was a pilot, he flew to all the conferences. He flew in to Austin one time, called me from the airport and I picked him up. We put him up for a few days, and he took Gladys and the children for a ride in the Piper. I think he also took Rudy and her children for a ride. I was working and missed it. Another time he flew in to Dallas and stayed with us while he attended a conference.

Uncle Pat, the eldest, achieved notoriety of a different kind. Gladys, Alice and I went to Cisco and Ranger to research Uncle Pat for the genealogy. We visited his and Aunt Clover's graves, getting the dates from them. We went to the local paper and viewed the microfilm for the obituaries. Back in those days they did not have obituaries, but we found a write-up on Uncle Pat on the front page! He was a past Commander of the American Legion Post and was very active in the VFW. He and a partner owned radiator repair shops in Cisco and Ranger.

In his youth he had signed a contract with a Major League baseball team, the paper didn't say which one. He almost immediately went into the army for World War 1, and served as an ambulance driver. He was severely wounded and came out unable to fulfill his baseball contract.

Dad was telling us about a church they attended in his youth. The preacher was of the fire and brimstone, give 'em hell variety, and his favorite subject was the Wandering Tribes of Israel. His favorite protagonist was Old Eber, a patriarch of the tribe who lead them out of the wilderness, with God's help, of course. According to the preacher Old Eber was the wisest, strongest, kindest, profoundest, deepest, the mostest and bestest leader ever! Dad and his brothers became heartily sick of Old Eber. They started tabbing anything outstanding as "Old Eber". The biggest

melon in the patch was Old Eber. The biggest fish of the catch was Old Eber. The Hero of any yarn was Old Eber. Needless to say, us boys just had to carry on such a noble tradition! You might even run across a mention or two of Old Eber in this Marvelous Saga!!

Dad and his brothers were playing with a pistol, firing at a target and cans. They ran out of bullets, except for one that wouldn't fire. They kept snapping it, but no fire. They retired to their playroom in the house, one of them carrying the pistol. They had named that pistol "Big Magic". In the room, one of them was waving that pistol in a circle and chanting "Round and round, roared Big Magic" and snapping it all the time. On one circle, as he was pointing at the ceiling, that dud bullet fired! Scared the Bejabbers out of all of them! Also made Christians and Good Gun-Handlers out of all of them!

Grady said Grandpa W R Murphy told him one time that his dad was cornered in a field by an old bull. His dad was also named W R, and he had lost an arm. The bull cornered him against a fence, and was butting him, when he pulled out his pistol and shot him between the eyes. Killed him daid. That's all Grady could remember of the tale. It's tantalizing little tidbits like this that make me wish some of those old boys had kept diaries!

Last week I was researching our old bank statements, pinning down the time frame of some of our moves. I ran across an old letter from Richard dated 11-27-1980. In it he asked if I would make some tapes, just talking about me and our life, about all the family. He especially wanted to hear about Grady and I, and why we called each other "Chumps". I had told him the story, but he wanted it on tape!

Well, Richard, I'm finally getting around to doing something about it. Several times I considered tapes, but that is highly unsatisfactory. Extemporaneous speech is

OK, but you cannot go back and edit it, rephrase it, add to it or shift it around. Old Wordstar 2000 is ideal, but even with it I have been on this saga for 8 months now, and still no end in sight. Think of the problems I would have had on tape! But all is not lost!! I plan on sitting down to a tape recorder when this gets a little farther along, and reading this into the tape, enlarging and commenting as I go. The future progeny will then have the dubious honor of hearing my mellifluous tones recording these marvelous, madcap adventures. The only drawback I can foresee is that their stereos, or whatever, will still have volume controls!

But, back to the Two Chumps! Grady and I were always having Serious Discussions in our youth. Especially between High School and Marriage. In one of the more serious, we were settling the problems of the country, our future, the problems of life in general and ours in particular. We came to the question of Conformity. Should we or should we not, that is the question! We decided that the way of the nonconformist was haaard! He might dine sumptuously on soul satisfaction, but the bread on the table would be moldy crumbs. As one pundit said, "He who takes on a wife and children gives hostages to Fortune." And we definitely intended to take on wife and children!

So Grady looked at me and said, "Shall we be nonconformists, or shall we be Chumps with the rest of them?"

I said, "Hi, Chump!"

He said, "Hi, Chump!"

So mote it be!



chump number two



chump number one

At various and sundry times, come a time to eat, we made a habit of stopping in a small grocery store and picking up a bite to eat. One of our regular choices was a handful of sharp cheddar cheese, a handful of peppermint or peanut stick candy, and a handful of crackers! Ambrosia! That was a favorite of a lot of the oldtime country folk. Mom was the one who introduced us to that little delicacy.

Before you turn up your nose and snort, just consider—you can order a slab of hot apple pie topped with a slab of cheddar cheese in most high class restaurants. Very little difference!

A present day snack I love is the old standby, peanut butter and crackers. One night I got a brainstorm and tried peanut butter and Fritos! That is an improvement! As a lad, I would take a bottle of Coke and pour a handful of salted peanuts in it and sipple on it, getting a few peanuts and some coke on each draught. Nowadays I just sip the diet decaffeinated coke along with the peanut butter and Fritos...And they call this Progress???

Another snack I swear by is red sock-eye salmon right out of the can, sprinkled with pepper sauce or vinegar and finely chopped onion, eaten with crackers. Ideal bachelor food, easy to fix and very little cleanup. Or good sardines ditto. Kippered herring not bad. Dang, I think I'll go have a plate of left-over barbecued beef sausage and pinto beans, excuse me...

In Bastrop one morning, we had 8 or 10 Buffalo fish that weighed from 12 to 28 pounds. Most of them about 16 or 18 pounds. We geared up the old Model T with wet towsacks and took off for the sawmills over around McDade. We pulled up by one about 4:30 PM. They shut down at five. We parked just off the road and arranged our fish for display. An elderly black gentleman came along and looked the fish over. "How much is that old Big One?" He asked.

“One Dollar” Dad replied.

“Well, I think he is too big, his meat will be too coarse. How much is this little one?”

“One dollar” Dad said, “They are all one dollar apiece.”

“Well...Hmm...” He pulled his pocket book out and carefully fished out a dollar bill. He gave it to Dad and said, “Well...I think I’ll take one...Hmmm...Yeah...I just think I’ll take that old Big One!” Yea! Man! Right on...

At 5 O’clock the rest sold like hot cakes...

In Hometown one time a group of us boys were playing on Hog Creek, about 1/4 mile upstream from the bridge in town. There was a big pecan tree growing on a cliff, overhanging the creek. We tied a rope on a limb about 10 feet out over the creek, hanging down a bit below the cliff, about 12 feet over the water (from the end of the rope). We would get a big run and swing way out over the water and hopefully up on the bank on the other side. One time I didn’t run hard enough.

I hit the cliff on the far side with my chest. My arms, shoulders and head was above ground. It knocked the breath out of me and stunned me. I fell into the creek and lay there a while getting my breath back. For the next 6 weeks I went around hump shouldered, hardly daring to take a deep breath. I was sore, and afraid to tell anyone lest I somehow be taken to blame and punished.

About 2 months later I was playing in the front yard. Our old flat bed Model T truck was parked under the old oak tree. The bed was about 4 feet off the ground, and I found a limb just right to swing up and hook my heels on the bed of the truck. Stretched out parallel to the ground, I would swing up a storm, lots of fun...Yeah, until that little old limb broke! I fell flat on my back, and that time I couldn’t get up. I couldn’t get enough air to yell loud, but Mom heard me and had a fit. She called the Doctor, and after examining me he asked:

“Well, lad, when did you break these ribs?” Ribs? What ribs?

“These three right here” Ouch! You mean those ribs?

“Yes, and you have cracked them again!”

Well, I had to tell them all about it, Mom scolded me for not telling, and the Doctor taped me with a yard or two of tape, and I went around for quite a while not breathing much a'tall. I still wonder how we attained adulthood. I have always had to comb my hair straight back. I had 5 big scars on my head, and when I tried to part my hair the part would wander off over yonder! Oh! Well!

LIVING IN THE DAYS OF YORE

At last I have some feedback! I have been going at this somewhat like a blind hog going after acorns, feeling my way, more or less. I have studiously avoided any dark cloud weeping and gnashing of the teeth, recording, like the sundial, only the sunny hours. It has been suggested that I cover more thoroughly the living conditions, trials and tribulations, as these would more accurately portray life as we lived it. So, here it is, because

YOU ASKED FOR IT!!!

When we lived on the river, gathering mussels or whatnot, we had a tent that was fairly weatherproof, good beds with plenty of quilts, coal oil lanterns, and a homemade grill to cook on. It was a trade-off, Dad did the cooking, and Troy and I did the mussel gathering, wood gathering, dish washing and camp policing. Many times Troy and I would read magazines until 12PM or later, by lantern light! Dad had built the grill out of secondhand bricks we scrounged during our plumbing. It was very similar to the one on our patio now, about 4 feet high, with a wall around the firepit, complete with a chimney. Over the firepit, Dad put a cast iron boiler plate, oval, about 1 inch thick, 24 inches wide, and 36 inches long.

When the plate got hot, he would cook bacon and eggs, steaks (rarely), pancakes, cornpone, fish, rabbits, stews and anything else that wandered by. He always had a large pot of pinto beans back by the chimney, keeping warm. A big bowl of beans with a chunk of cornpone, an onion and a cup of hot coffee was hard to beat! Cornpone, for you ignorant chillern, is a kind of cornmeal pancake, and soul satisfying! I remember a large cast iron skillet, a large cast iron pot, a large cast iron Dutch oven, and 3 or 4 damn good butcher knives. That Dutch oven was a large cast iron pot with a lid that had a handle, and a ridge around the top

of the lid that would hold a shovelful of coals. You put the pot on the coals, the lid on the pot, filled the lid with coals, let them get hot, and baked biscuits in it!

We drank river water or coffee. We had canned milk for coffee or gravy, which Dad was good at. There will be no more gravy as good as Dad made, for he used plenty of bacon grease, and that is now a nono. I was always using extra milk and sugar in my coffee. When Troy fussed at me, I told him I couldn't stand the taste of coffee! That holds true to this day. One of my fondest memories is that big frying pan half full of bacon grease, filled with fish filets, served up with hot cornpone... Lord have mercy! Like that ad says, hit just don't git no better than this!! Come to think of it, this is not all a jeremiad...

Now, that tent was not exactly a tent. We went out to a cedar sawmill just out of Bastrop, and hauled off a lot of shavings, which were free. The shavings were the first cut on the cedar log, thrown aside and later burned. They were usually about 12 inches wide, and 3 inches thick in the middle. We would cut the sides with an axe to a uniform width, and use them for siding. We also used them for framing and rafters. We had a 14 foot tarp that we spread over the rafters for a roof. The beds were cots with good cotton mattresses, I don't remember where we scrounged them.

Our mode of transportation was a Model T Ford Coupe, with the trunk taken off, and a pickup bed built on. We have an old picture of that Model T with the back end full of buffalo fish. One time the lights were not working, and we needed to go to town at night. Dad hung a lantern on the radiator cap and we took off. The reason I remember it so well, we met a car that had no lights, on a curve. Well, Dad dodged and so did the other driver, and we did not hit. Just as we passed the car, Dad stuck his head out and yelled "TURN ON YOUR LIGHTS!!" Troy and I nearly

collapsed. And us with a Lantern!!!

We put in three or four bathrooms in Bastrop. Put them in from scratch, so to speak. We had all the tools, pipe vice, pipe cutter, dies for threading the galvanized pipe, you name it, we had it. Why not, we were working out of a hardware! We used galvanized pipe, as nobody ever heard of copper tubing in those days. Dad did all the inside plumbing, with Troy and I working the cutter and threaders. Troy and I dug the septic tank, which wound up 6 foot cubed. We mixed concrete and poured a six inch floor, built forms and poured 6 inch walls, and then built a form and poured a 6 inch divider wall, making two compartments 3X6X6ft. We used syrup buckets in the forms to make holes in the walls for the sewer pipes. One hole about a foot from the top in one chamber for the entrance, one in the other chamber for the exit, and one in the center wall about a foot from the floor.

We laid the sewer pipe from the house to the tank, then laid another from the tank exit off about 40 yards. There we dug a well about 3 1/2 feet in diameter, down to gravel, about 25 or 30 feet. We then bricked it up with loose brick, no mortar, laid in a circle, very tight, to the top, where we ran the sewer pipe through the wall, and put a concrete cap over it. We put a 6 inch concrete top over the septic tank, leaving a 3 foot hole, centered over the dividing wall for entrance to the chambers, if necessary! Over the hole, we laid a loose cap about 4 foot square and 6 inches thick.

Digging that well was a chore. We used a short handled pick and shovel. One of us (Troy and I) dug while the other pulled the dirt out with a rope and bucket. That's where I discovered that I am not afflicted with claustrophobia! Anyone tries to tell you how cold a well digger gets in North Dakota is full of baloney. It gets plumb warm in that well, even in winter! That's where I learned plumbing... I already knew pick and shovel, also

concrete mixing. I did learn plumbing by helping Dad in the pipework. I really remember going down to town on the lunch hour and getting a “hot gut” with brown beans and crackers and a tall Knee High orange soda pop.

That hot-gut was something else! A beef sausage nearly a foot long and 1 1/4 inches thick, cooked in a barbecue pit. It had some good seasoning in it and a tad of red pepper!. As I recall, the sausage was 10 cents and the Knee High was a nickel! I have taken Gladys by the same place several times on some of our trips, and it was still outstanding, but did not quite measure up to the memory. I finally figured what was wrong... I should have dug a well before going by! Oh, well, So mote it be!

One spring we moved into an old farm house, and put in about 5 acres of tomatoes. 5 ACRES! Now, that is more than a tad! That is a squadrillion! Troy and I were the hoe hands and general roustabouts. When those tomatoes got green, Dad introduced us to fried green tomatoes, also chow-chow. That chow-chow went real good with the beans. He battered those tomato slices and chicken fried them! Pure Ambrosia, served with cornpone. The house had an old wood cookstove, and a well! And we didn't have to dig it!!

We nearly wore that Model T out hauling tomatoes in to the cannery buyer. We also gave truck loads to the landlord. We had tomatoes 3 meals a day, and for snacks! J.T. came down about that time and spent 2 or 3 weeks with us. He loved Dad's tomato preserves! That was for breakfast, on hot pancakes! We also had tomato soup, tomato soup with onions, tomatoes in our inevitable pot of pinto beans, tomato salads, sliced tomatoes, tomatoes with anything we could think of. One of my great pleasures was to take a salt shaker down in the tomato patch, and pick and eat to satiation and then some! Ah! Well! It wasn't all a vale of tears. I still love tomatoes, except mayhaps I

overshot the runway on tomato preserves! Also it takes a very few pancakes to satisfy me nowadays. We stayed in the farm house that winter, doing plumbing. We were still there when I signed up for the CCC. The farm house had no electricity...we had to watch TV by lamplight! Rough, man, rough!

One thing I forgot on that grill and on that farm stove... coffee! Dad made coffee in a gallon coffee pot that tapered and had a spout and a lid, like you see in the old westerns. Not a percolator, you just boiled the water, then dumped in the coffee and set it back against the chimney to keep warm with the beanpot. After a while, it was considered brewed, and Dad put some egg shells in the pot, to settle the grounds. Usually the grounds were used 3 or 4 times, just adding a tad of fresh each time. The residue was called the "mother". When the "mother" was discarded, and the pot was all fresh, we sat around and had 2 or 3 cups apiece!

The coffee was "Arbuckles", bought in the bean and ground in the store. That was the cheapest on the market. I remember years later when they came out with "Vacuum packed coffee" in a can that you opened with a key, like a can of sardines! The only meat we had was cured, as we had no ice and no refrigeration. We bought bacon by the side, sugar cured and smoked, no refrigeration needed. The sausage was in skins and smoked, almost like salami or pepperoni. No beef, unless some friends were butchering. As I recall, bacon at the time was selling at 10 or 12 cents a pound. Eggs a nickel a dozen. I don't know what bread was selling for, as we never bought it. Nor did we buy sandwich meat. Nor cakes, nor cookies, nor a heluva lot of other things. We did eat squirrels, rabbits, fish, quail, doves, but no mussels, tho, dernit.

Back in the earliest days of my memory, back in Hogtown, we always had a cow, chickens and a garden. Plenty of milk, eggs, butter and vegetables. We had an ice box, the

top lid opened to an ice compartment, the door opened to a storage area. We had a kitchen “safe” that looked like a chest of drawers with a bookcase on top. The top had screen doors. All the non-perishable food was stored in this safe, corn meal, flour, sugar, salt, bread, also the chinaware. We had a churn and made our own butter. We always had plenty of it. Mom had a butter mold, a small wooden box that held one pound of butter. The lid pressed the design of a flower on the top of the butter! Up-Town, man!

I did a lot of the churning, and remember Mom taking the butter out and kneading it in a large bowl to get all the buttermilk out of it. We liked it better when she left a little milk in it, making it “puffy”, but tasting a little like buttermilk. One of the best things I liked was breaking hot biscuits in my plate, and spreading clabbered cream on them like gravy! Boy! That would be a real NONO now in the cholesterol diets! You still can’t beat hot cornbread and buttermilk! An auld country boy, dot’s I’m!!! Gladys and I had a cow and chickens in Spur, and a cow in Austin for a while.

A quick pick-me-up snack lunch that was popular with a lot of country folks was cheddar cheese, crackers and stick candy. I liked peanut stick candy, but preferred peppermint. It tasted better with cheese. If you ain’t tried it, don’t knock it! And before you sneer at it, think of the people that put a slab of cheese on a hot slice of apple pie! What’s the difference? And, if you think that’s odd, how about a Baby Ruth candy bar and a handful of salted peanuts? Pure ambrosia! If you think that’s off the wall, please don’t buy a Payday candy bar, for it’s loaded with salted peanuts!

One of our milder idiosyncrasies was to pour a handful of salted peanuts in a bottle of Coke. As you sipped on it, you got a blend of the two! One of my present day fancies is

peanut butter and Fritos! Another is Brach's candy with salted peanuts! Live it up, man!! Try some sardines right out of the can, sprinkled with vinegar and eaten with crackers. Some finely chopped onion on them makes them better! Even better is red sockeye salmon eaten the same way. Apples picked off the tree almost ripe and sprinkled with salt is gourmet fare!

Excuse me, I'm going to the kitchen on a foray.

It was a custom, in our family, to go out in the country and gather our own Christmas trees. I would take the four children and make a days outing of it. In Austin we usually went out on a friend's ranch out in the cedar breaks. We always scouted all over the place to find the most perfect tree. Much circling, looking and debating went on before a final decision was made. Everybody had a vote. I would then chop the tree with an axe and load it up. We did the same thing for 3 or 4 more. We would take all of them to town, line them up for Gladys to make the final choice, then pass the rest around to any of the neighbors wishing one. They went like hotcakes!

On one of our trips, I took a 22 rifle along, in case we ran across any squirrels or rabbits. Well, I spotted a redbird in the top of a tree about 50 yards off, and plowed down on him. He exploded in a shower of red feathers, and Margaret Ann burst out in tears!

"Daddy, you shot the pretty redbird!"

Well, uh, yes I did.

"But he was so pretty, Daddy, why did you shoot him?"

Well, uh, yes he was.

"But, Daddy, Why?"

Well, uh, I guess I did.

Well, uh, I could have walked under a snake with a tall silk tophat on....Come to think of it, I don't believe I ever saw a snake with a tall silk tophat on....Oh, well, I can say to you, Margaret Ann, I have not shot another creature to this day.

However, I have slayed a great slue of fishes, heh, heh, heh.

We had an old 1938 4-door Buick Century, a long green one that had two well fenders on the front with spare tires and chrome covers in the wells. That would be a classic now. It had a straight 8 “L” head motor, and got about 9 miles to the gallon, but what the heck... Gas was 16 cents a gallon, sometimes 12. That car was a roadhog, smooth riding, and would cruise all day at 75 mph! We were always going somewhere in it.

When we lived on Newning in Austin next door to Pappy Shipp, and across the street from Grady and Rudy, nearly every weekend in summer I would gather up our 4 chillern, Donald Wayne, Patrick and Michael, Bill Charles from next door, and any of their friends who happened to be there and take off to Big Stacy or Little Stacy swimming pools (free). We were about 10 blocks from them. I was always taking a bunch of them fishing on the Colorado. One time I had a bunch on the river, and Clifford was about 15 feet up river from me, fishing with a cane pole (the universal favorite). The bank sloped straight into the river, and was covered with a slick mud.

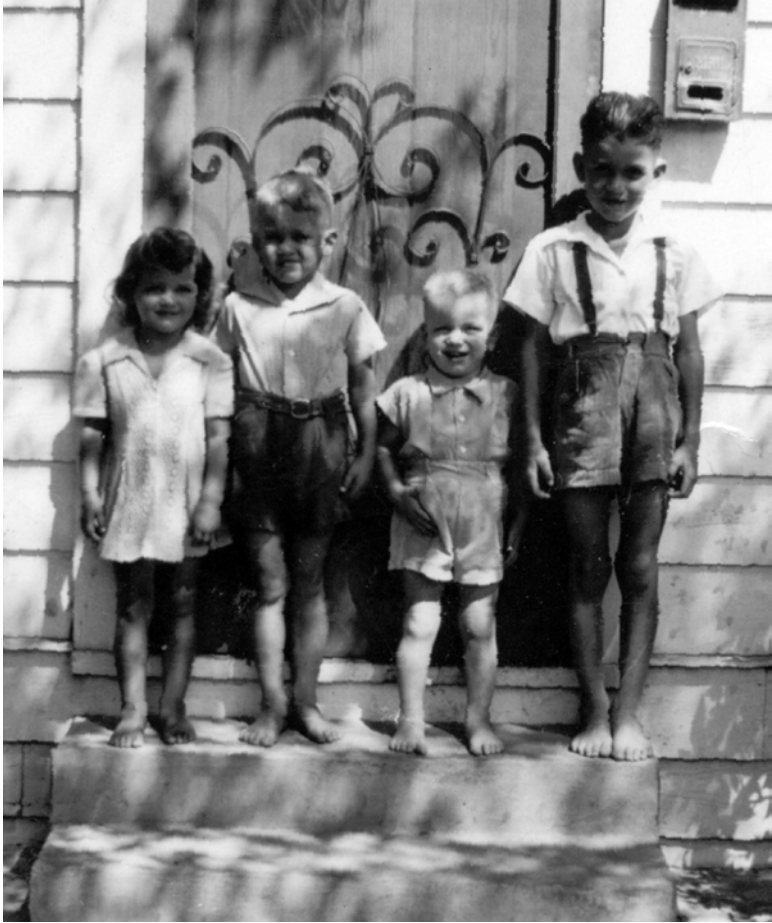
Well, he let out a yelp and I looked around, He had hooked a good one and it was pulling him, sliding standing up, down that slope. I caught him at the edge and pulled him back up the bank. He held on to that pole and pulled the fish out. It was a Rio Grande Perch, and weighed a good pound! The state had stocked the river with them, and they were fighters! I don’t know if Clifford remembers that, but it tickled the hell out of me when I saw him being pulled down that slope!! It also tickled me when he held on to that pole!



all the kids sitting on the bulldozer j t used to level the lot
for our house

bill charles, roger, margaret, donald wayne, patricia
margaret, patrick, big mike, richard, michael, clifford







1611 under construction

One time I took the kids out to Mountain Creek Lake in Dallas. We were fishing by a small bridge, and set our poles out. Margaret hooked a big one that took her pole out in the lake! I had to strip down to my shorts and go swimming after it. I got the pole OK and the fish was running circles around me. The water was about shoulder deep. It was a bright moonlit night, and I saw several water moccasins swimming around me, trying to join in the festivities. I got to heck out of there, taking the canepole and a 5 pound channel cat with me. FIVE POUNDS!!! That called a screeching halt to all activities! We loaded up and went home...by way of the drive-in grocery to weigh old Eber! We had a celebration when we got home! Gladys had to Oh! and Ah! over old Eber! Sometimes I think them dang Chillern were worth all the heartaches and pangs, but then I take a couple of Excedrin and them spells go away!

I have related several items that tended to shape my character and place their stamp on me. The following sad little tale did nothing to stamp my Id, but it did stamp itself

indelibly on my memory banks. I am relating it here simply in an attempt to purge it. In Hogtown, in about '24 or '25, when I was 11 or 12, we had an old cat that hung around the cow barn, living on rats and scraps. We liked that old cat, but she came up with about 6 kittens, and Mom said they had to go. I don't know why I was chosen, but Mom put them in a shoe box and told me to take them down on the creek and shoot them. I protested, to no avail, so I took the 22 rifle and took off.

I found a steep high cliff on the creek. I laid one of the kittens about an inch from the edge, walked back about 15 feet, laid down on the ground, took careful aim, shut my eyes and pulled the trigger. When I opened my eyes, the kitten was gone. The kittens were only a few days old, and couldn't even crawl. I crawled up with the second one and carefully placed it, taking good care not to look over the cliff. When I took aim that time, and the rest of the times, I had to clear my eyes of a torrent of tears before I could pull the trigger. After the last one, I rolled over on my back and let the tears flow. All I could do was lay there and think what a damn sissy I was, and how glad I was that none of the boys were there to witness my shame. Gals, please don't ever make your 12 year old son shoot some kittens. I think maybe I ought to delete that little tale...I'll think about it.

Let's take a quantum leap back to Bisbee, Arizona, when I was working in the copper mines. I was mucking ore on the 300 foot level. We rode the lift down, grabbed a tram and pushed it on rails down the drift to the particular stope we were assigned to. The mucker shoveled the ore from the previous days blast, pushing the full trams out to the lift and bringing an empty back. We were required to muck at least 18 trams a day. The tram was about 2X2X4 feet, and held 16 cubic feet of ore, AND that copper ore was heavy, heavy, heavy. We flat earned our pay.

I would muck the ore while the miner drilled the face of the stope for the next shots. He drilled three rows of holes, four holes in a row. The face of the stope was about 10 feet square. The holes were about four feet deep, and the miner tamped in 5 sticks of dynamite in each hole. The center stick held the cap and fuse. The shots were set off at the end of the work shift. I would help the miner light the fuses, then we would get the hell out to the lift, yelling "Fire in the hole".

The blasts would go off as we were waiting for the lift, and the miners would stand at the mouth of their drift, counting the shots. No mucker or miner wanted a dud left in the muck pile! As the stope was drifted back for about 20 or 30 feet, the miner was moved to another stope, and the timber men came in and built up the timbers out close to the face, leaving room for another blast. The timbers protected us from cave-ins. Just before we lit the fuses, I would move the muck sheet up to the foot of the face of the stope. The muck sheet was an 8 foot square piece of 1/4 inch plate steel, which made shoveling that muck with a square-point shovel much easier.

One time I was assigned to clean out an old muck pile in an old stope that hadn't been worked in some time. The stope was about 6 feet higher than the drift, and had a hopper built to facilitate loading trams. I would fill a wheel barrow in the stope, trundle it to the hopper, which would chute it in the tram. I would then push it out to the lift and get an empty. That muck pile was old, and had set up. I had to loosen it up with a pick. The work was very hard and monotonous.

That is, it was monotonous until I slammed that pick in the pile one time and pried up on the handle. The point of the pick came out of the muck, moving sideways, with a stick of dynamite skewered on it, and with the fuse trailing out of it!! The point had missed the cap about an inch! When I

saw the dynamite, I froze, and just stood there. I have heard of your life passing through your mind in times of stress, but I can tell you, all I had in my mind was a series of clear pictures of blasts scattering rocks, dirt and old Cliff all over that stope.

I stood there for a few minutes, considering alternate careers and life styles, then I thought, What the hell, it missed, didn't it! So I took the dynamite out to the lift, and took it up to the boss, showed it to him, and told him I could use a cup of coffee. He promptly provided it, and asked me what I was going to do. I told him there were four more sticks in that muck pile, and I had better get back to it. He told me to be careful! Hah! I went back and dug those sticks out by hand, like the college boys do when digging for precious artifacts. If I had had a whisk broom, I would dang sure have used it! That work had done quit being monotonous, in fact it was plumb tedious! Yeah!

I forgot to mention we wore hard-hats with the little carbide lights hanging on them. Working in the back of a deserted stope with the only light a tiny flame hanging over your forehead is kinda eerie. Kinda, hell, it is damned EERIE. At least, digging those wells in Bastrop, we had plenty of light.

MY TELEPHONE CAREER

In January, 1937, I was working in the copper mines of Bisbee, Arizona. The mine I was working in shut down because of the poor quality of the ore. I put in my application with the Phelps Dodge mine, and hung around with the hopes of getting on. I painted the landlady's house for a month's room and board. During that month, I got a letter from home saying that Grady had got on with the S W Bell, and to come on home, as I could also.

I packed up my GI trunk and shipped it home. I dressed in my OD wool pants, shirt, long-handles, OD overcoat, and OD cap. Then I hopped a freight train in Bisbee, heading for El Paso. We came in to El Paso about dark, and I hopped off the train as it came in to downtown. I rode a streetcar downtown, ate and got a flop house. Next morning I rode a streetcar to the edge of town and tried hitch-hiking. I caught one ride, out to Ysleta, about ten miles, then could go no further. The railroad ran along the highway, and I was even with a water tank. About 11 O'clock a long freight pulled in to water up, so I piled over to check an empty boxcar.

There were some guys in it that I had ridden in with the day before and they recognized me. They asked me where in the hell I went the day before, and I told them. They said that when the train pulled in to the yards, it was surrounded by the FBI, state, county and city police. They escorted everyone down town, processed them, juggled them for the night and turned most of them loose. It seemed that one of the 10 Most Wanted guys had escaped from the Federal pen at Yuma, Arizona the day before and they had road blocks everywhere. Man, I crawled on that train promptly, then asked where we were going. San Antonio, was the reply, which concerned me not at all, since I was headed for Waco. That was the nearest I EVER came to spending a

night in ANY jail.

Some time out of Ysleta we lost the boxcar and I ended up in a reefer, or the empty ice compartment on one end of a car full of lemons. I was sound asleep along about 12 when I woke up with a flashlight shining in my face. The train was stopped, and the brakie told me I had better come out, as he had to shut the ice compartment to keep the lemons from freezing. I thanked him, and he told me there were no empties or gondolas available, also we were miles from any town. I asked him if I could try the top, he said good luck and to take care. In those days a heluva lot of people rode the rails, and the railroad people were damn nice about it. Every freight train you saw was loaded with people, some times whole families, babies and all. Man, that was a damned DEPRESSION. This country was a lot closer to revolt than history shows. Old FDR picked this country up by the bootstraps and put it on the road to recovery, and don't you forget it!

Well, there I was, the middle of January, somewhere between El Paso and San Antonio and cold as a by-gum. I pulled that GI cap over my ears, pulled the great lapels of the coat up until only the tip of my head showed and buttoned it. I lay down on top of the car, next to the catwalk, just behind the trap door for the ice compartment, which stood up about 10 inches, and made a heluva good wind break. The catwalk was made of 2X4s with an inch space between them. I took my GI belt and wrapped it 3 times around my upper left arm and the first 2X4, snugged it up good, and WENT TO SLEEP. I slept all the rest of the way, as snug as a bug in OD wool. I woke about daylight rolling in to SA. I highwayed on to Waco with no further memorable adventures.

My first day of work was April Fools Day, 1937. We were repairing the damage done by the Sleet Break of January, between Waco and Troy. I worked for April and half of

May, then asked my boss if my job was secure enough to warrant getting married. He said as far as he was concerned it was permanent. So, Gladys and I got married in her home, at 12 N 6th St in Temple on 21 May 1937. As we had no car, we rode from Waco to Temple with friends, married, and took Gladys back with us. We lived in the apartment with Mom and Margaret for two weeks, and the company sent us to Big Spring. We had 2 weeks work, then the company sent us to Monahans. We would pack my GI footlocker and Gladys' suitcase and load them on the construction truck with the gangs' cases. Me and 3 of the gang rode the truck, Gladys rode with one of the gang's wife.

We were stationed in Monahans about 6 months, putting up poles, cable, open wire, whatever in Monahans, Wink, Pyote, Wicket (which was not sticky, old chap), Kermit and a few small places. I was making the minimum wage of \$3.20 a DAY, but we were also getting B&L, about \$23 a week. We scrimped and saved money hand over fist, and paid \$200 down on the old 34 Chevrolet, payments were \$20 a month. When we were in Monahans we lived in a tourist court, two doors down from Jimmy Ivey and his family, who was on our gang. It was Mrs. Ivey that Gladys rode out with. We were then sent to McCamey for about 6 weeks work in McCamey and Big Lake, also Iraan. (That is not a typo). It was in McCamey that the old Mountain Boomer attacked the boss.

Then back to Monahans, where I completed the first stage of my telephone career. I was laid off in March, 1938. It was the 3rd cutback the company made. Grady went on the second, as he wasn't married. When I went some men went with me that had 5 years service. (I had only ten months). That was no big consolation, tho. Laid off is laid off, regardless of the company you keep. We went back to Austin and moved in temporarily with Mom and Margaret

on 908 Ruiz st. Grady and I signed up for workmen's compensation, about \$15 a week, and signed up with the Texas Employment Commission in the same department.

We were interviewed by another Irishman, who wanted to know what kind of work we would consider! Hell, Anything, we said. He said he was always getting calls for construction workers, but the hangers on around there couldn't stick it, or at least, wouldn't. We told him we would like to try. Two days later he sent 6 of us out on a construction job, wheel-barrowing concrete. Two black lads didn't make the day, and only 3 showed up the second day. Me, Grady and a big old country boy about 6 feet and 260, corn fed and stout as a bull. We three finished the job, about a week, then reported back to TEC. After that the three of us went out on any and all calls. The Irishman, I forget his name, told us later that he got complaints from the other workers and he read them the riot act. He said we were the only ones that never turned down a job, and were never sent back by the contractor.

We worked out of there for 3 or 4 months, and I drew only one compensation check (for 3 days pay), when they sent us out on a job for Brown & Root, unloading light poles from 55 to 80 feet long off of double flat cars up at Marshall Ford Dam. Well, Brown & Root was starting construction on a highline from Marble Falls to Marshall Ford Dam. Realizing the possibility of extended employment, we worked our tails off, and made the grade. We moved Gladys and Rudy to Marble Falls, working from there on the entire line.

When the job was over, Brown & Root sent us to Coushatta, Louisiana on an REA job. We were there for several months, and then went back to Austin. We had one more small job to do before we went back. After the line was finished the REA people refused to accept it until ALL the limbs over the line was trimmed. Grady and I, with 2

other linemen were sent to trim them. We had regular linemen's hooks, which have shorter barbs than tree hooks, with more danger of cutting out. Now, you talk about hairy jobs, that was one! Imagine climbing 30 to 60 feet in a 120 foot tree, and sawing off big limbs. That was one job I was glad to see the end of.

We were all spread out, sometimes miles apart. Grady said one time he sawed off a huge limb that fell on the heavy EL wires, sagging them to the ground. The ground crew had to saw it in two to get it off. One of the old country boys had hold of the wire when it came loose and he HELD ON. Grady was about 30 feet up the tree, and he said that old country boy floated up even with him, his eyes as big as saucers, went back down, and had sense enough to turn loose at the bottom. He wasn't hurt, but he quit then and there.

When the job ended, we went back to Austin, and shortly after that I went to work for Jack McKay lumber company, \$12 a week, as yardman and delivery man. That was nothing but long hours and hard work. I finally got back on with the telephone company in 1939. I went to Fort Worth, signed up, passed the physical, and they sent me to Lubbock. I was on construction, but our crew was located in Lubbock. Again I worked my tail off, determined to make them keep me this time.

After about 6 months, they took 4 of us from different gangs, put us through a 1 week school, and put us out on pushcarts, changing every phone in Lubbock from common battery to dial. We went to every home and business, mounting dials on the phones, and wiring them in. I got to where I could do it in my sleep. That is also where I learned to shoot trouble on phones. They then sent me to Spur, Texas to be the Combination Man. Again I had to change out every phone in town, this time from magneto to common battery. I cover that in Memoria.

The only thing that happened that was really memorable, I signed up to join the Sea Bees. We had been in Spur for about 2 years, I was making only \$6 a day, and was getting sick of it. The Navy Recruiter came around once a week. The war was looking bad for our side, I told Gladys I would rather fight over there than over here, which looked like might happen. I went in to see the recruiter, and he filled out all the papers, and told me to come on to Lubbock next week, ready to ship out. I was to get nearly \$400 a month, Lord have mercy! (at the time I was making about \$125 A MONTH), and they would ship the family to Austin.

Then came the fickle finger of fate. When he started to put down my qualifications, I told him what all I did in my job. He said Hold on, threw my papers in the trash can, and told me to come on up to Lubbock Monday, and he would fill out a different set of papers, qualifying me for a better job. I forget the title, but he said it corresponded to Top Sergeant in the Army. I told him it didn't make that much difference to me. He grabbed his pencil and went to figuring, with my dependents, it would amount to about \$650 a month.

Well, now, that do make a difference! So I went home happy. Gladys wasn't all that pleased, but bless her heart, she went along with me. In fact, She has gone along with me all our lives, on any decision on our work. A Jewel, that gal is!! That was Thursday, and on Friday the President issued a proclamation freezing all enlistments, as too many men were volunteering from essential jobs. I immediately called the recruiter in Lubbock, and he told me no soap. If he had kept the papers we filled out, I could have gone in. Maybe the Good Lord was watching over me...

In 1943, I told the boss that I didn't think I was getting my raises, and I wanted to transfer out. He more or less

laughed at me. So I went home, sold our milk cow, sold our chickens, and told Gladys to start packing, which she did. Back at the office I typed a letter of resignation, stating that my hayfever mandated a move-which it did. When the boss got that letter, he hit the ceiling, he really Talked To Me. I told him I would give him a month to get a replacement, then I was leaving. I didn't hear from him for about a week, and we had already made arrangements with a trucker to ship our goods to Austin.

The boss said he had talked to headquarters in Fort Worth, and they had agreed to a transfer, would I like to go to Lubbock. I told him no, that I had to get out of west Texas. He said how about Fort Worth (the Mecca for all west Texas telephone people). I told him no, thanks, and he said Just Where would I like to go. I told him on the coast, Galveston or Corpus Christi. He said he would see. He called me next day and said there were no openings there, so I said how about Austin. They finally arranged that and we moved to Austin.

Now, I don't recommend that as a way to get a transfer, for they put me out on a cleanup crew, trimming trees, replacing bad telephone wires, and any dirty job that came along. I kept my nose clean and again worked my tail off. After 6 months they put me out as repairman. I forgot to mention, while in Spur, I contacted the telephone library, and got a course in basic telephony and basic electricity, several books, one at a time, they paid postage both ways. After clearing these I went into basic radio, then telephone switching systems. These courses continued on in to Austin. The library is in St. Louis, and still offers this service, I think. I was always studying to improve my knowledge, on the job or off.

My job was Exchange Repairman until 1949, when I requested and received a transfer to Dallas. (There is quite a story behind this transfer, but I won't bore you with it).

My title was Exchange Repairman there, but I spent a lot of time shooting cable trouble and PBX and Key equipment repair. In November 1949 they opened job bids for 29 Switchmen in Dallas, so I bid on one and got it. I went to a step-by-step switching school for 3 months, with the rest of the 29, in 3 different schools. We studied basic electricity for 2 weeks, then Step-By-Step switching for 10 weeks, 40 hours a week! They put us in switchrooms on special routines and modifications for 3 months, then selected a group of us to go to an A4A Crossbar switching school.

That school lasted 8 1/2 months, 40 hours a week. We studied every single unit in the entire office, Markers, Senders, Controllers, Trunk link frames, Sender link frames, Trunk relay units, Multi-frequency current supply, the whole ball of wax, and each individual circuit in every unit. After we graduated we went into the A4A switchroom that Western Electric was installing at 4100 Bryan in Dallas, working with the installers, and making acceptance tests as they turned the equipment over to us. We cut the crossbar into service in 1950.

In 1951, I was made Chief Switchman, first line supervision, and put in charge of the evening and night crews. I was 39 years old, and the bloom of achievement did not flush my rosy cheeks. In fact I viewed the situation with jaundice, for I was put in charge of my old gang on the evening shift of the 4A, also the night shift. I worked from about 2 PM to midnight or later. I was also put in charge of the conversion on the A4A office from A4A to 4A. This was a tremendous conversion, changing the old Markers to a combination of marker and decoders with card translators, and speeding up all the rest of the equipment, all done at night. Incidentally, we went thru a 3 months school on the conversion from A4A to 4A. All told, I feel that I received the equivalent of a college education in telephone switching. The modification took almost a year.

That was a hairy old time, and we nearly lost the office several times.



the i d phot for the new supervisor



seemingly at work at a corner desk

Shall I digress, and tell a few funny things that happened??? Yea, I shall digress. Now, Old CW was always stirring things up, to make life more interesting, and people usually reciprocated in like kind. One afternoon Fred Daugherty, a WE foreman and a damn good friend and a damn good technician, stopped at my desk and asked, “Murph, do we have XY or XZ option in this office?” Now, it so happens that there are thousands of options in all of the equipment. Those options could have been anywhere in the office. It also so happened that I had been chasing a case of trouble in a marker the night before, and had had occasion to check options XY and XZ. So, being a smart-aleck, not even looking up from my paper, I casually replied “XZ” and went on working.

Well, that put the monkey on his back. He fidgeted for a few minutes, then couldn’t stand it. “Are you sure, Murph?” I did it up brown, turning to him in my swivel chair I said, “You’re in the Marker, right?” He agreed, so I said, “You have XY option if you have subtending Panel

Offices, which require DC outpulsing. We have no subtending Panel Offices, so we use XZ option.” He looked kind of funny, like he had to swallow some naughty words, said thank you and took off.

Another time a WE foreman came to me for help on a peculiar case of trunk relay trouble. The trunk was prematurely disconnecting. All trunk relay units of the same type had the same trouble. I immediately suspected a design problem. The lad said he had checked all options and wiring, having worked on it for two days. Now, the trunk relay is released by the firing of a cold cathode tube, and the tube is fired by applying a negative 85 volts DC on the grid of the tube, which ionizes the gas in the tube, allowing it to conduct. I looked the situation over and saw that the tube was mounted immediately under a Polar relay.

Suspecting that the magnetic field of the Polar relay was partially ionizing the gas in the tube, I asked the lad to unmount the tube, pull it out back of the rack, but not disconnect it. In that manner, the relay passed the test. I had him remount the tube, then went around to the front of the rack and clamped my hand around the tube. This effectively shielded the tube from the magnetic field, and again the relay passed the test. I told them they could get a bunch of empty round snuff cans and put them on the tubes and clear the trouble. He wanted to know what the hell the trouble was, so I spelled it out to him about the voltage, ionization, and the magnetic field, very concisely (also smart-alecky), and he said, “godam, Murph, I knew you were smart, but I didn’t know you were that godam smart.” Well, even a blind hog sometimes comes up with an acorn... Actually, I wasn’t obviously smart-alecky, I was just precise and exact, like a professor. heh heh heh...

It took us over a year to convert the office. In 1952 AT&T requested a man to work with Bell Labs, writing Bell System Practices on A4A, 4A, 4M and No. 4, all toll

crossbar switching systems. No. 4 was the original, only one was left, in New York City. 4M was No. 4 Modified, A4A was Advanced 4A, 4A was the latest. Later we got 4ESS, the Electronic Switching System. The boss called me and old Curtis in and told us of the request, said we were both qualified, and who wanted to spend a year in New York? We both did, so he said flip a coin, which we did and I won. I spent a year in New York on the flip of a coin!!

My job was to update existing practices when the equipment was modified, which was constantly. The practices covered the routine testing and clearing trouble on all the components of the systems, and the same on new equipment. This involved finding out how the equipment worked, and determining how to test it... Yeah! This involved countless hours with the eggheads in Bell Labs, for every test had to have their OK. Them thar wuz the hard headedist old boys I ever tackled, and boy, did I tackle them. They were the most single minded, head in the clouds, vague scientists I ever saw. It was almost a crime to run them ragged like I did, but I figured them fair game... We finally parted with mutual respect.

According to my contract, every 6 weeks I flew home for a week. The boss suggested it, so I flew home when school was out in 1953, packed up the old green Dodge, loaded up the family, and drove to New York, up through the Shenandoah Valley. We stayed in an apartment in Brooklyn Heights for the summer. My contract was up at the end of August, so we loaded up, and drove home. That was a memorable summer. The children and I would load on the subway (one nickel apiece), and ride all over that area, transferring free from line to line, subway, elevated and street level.

The children would study the maps in the stations, and take turns plotting our course. We did the tourist bit over

the whole country up there. In New York we did the Museum of Natural History, Museum of Art, Bronx Zoo, Brooklyn Zoo, and everything else that we could think of, like the Empire State Building. When we came home, we left at midnight to get out of that congested area with light traffic. The children were pushing for rapid transit. We hit the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and spent the first night in Terre Haute, Indiana, some 800 miles down the road. We spent the next night in Oklahoma... We would have made it home, but we ran into the biggest, blackest storm...even the kids were anxious to stop. We made it home without further mishap.

One thing of interest happened before I left. About a month before my time was up the boss called me in to Talk To Me! He said, among other things, that I had caused him to revise his opinion of Texans! Well! He wanted to know if I would accept my assignment on a permanent basis, with a raise and a promotion! Hail, yes! OK, he would talk to my company. You know, this is getting to sound like an Ego Trip. Getting swell headed, ain't you, Buster? But how in the hell do you tell about an old buckledy headed country boy that goes from digging holes in West Texas to working with Bell Labs, without sounding egotistical? And you know something...it gets worse from here on. So, if you are getting nauseated, chunk it and have a beer on me, and no hard feelings. To tell the truth, it kind of nauseates me.

Anyway, the boss called me in 2 days later, and told me the SW Bell wanted him to put it in writing, go formal. He was irked, but did it. He called me in two weeks later, and told me my &*#@&*@ company turned down the request, said they needed me on a program... So I went home on time... Of all the words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been... but who is to say, mayhaps the Good Lord was watching over me again! I might have

turned into a damyankee!!!

The company sent me to St Louis for 4 months, to write a training manual on Crossbar Tandem, to use teaching school in Amarillo, Texas. I came home on weekends, riding the Texas Special train down on Friday night and back on Sunday night. Spent a lot of time in a Tandem office in St Louis, and spent 2 weeks on one in Chicago, getting familiar with the equipment. You know, that was damn funny, for I didn't know a Crossbar Tandem from Adam's off ox! However, it was very similar to the 4A, so all I had to do was study the discrepancies!!! Hah! So I completed the manual, and went to Amarillo in January, 1955, set up the school, ordering all the drawings and prints, and other material, interviewed the prospective students, and started the school.

I taught the school for 5 months, 40 hours a week, mostly studying in my spare time to keep ahead of the class! Then we moved in to the switchroom, where WE Co was installing the equipment, and I set up all the acceptance tests for the equipment. It was the first Toll Crossbar Tandem in the system, the rest were local Tandems, and vastly different. I had a lot of headaches digging out the differences, and teaching the school. However, the system was installed and cut into service in 1956, very successfully. The family had moved out to Amarillo early in the game, and the children went to a full school term in Amarillo, under protest, I might add. They had to suffer some trials in my career moves, but I think all the travelling had some beneficial effects, also. Kemo Sabe???

Back to Dallas, and the company put me out as a Repair Foreman for 6 months. You talk about a letdown, I was deflated. They told me nothing. I dug in, determined to be the best repair foreman they had. I taught my crew to read detached contact schematics, sequence charts, helped them on Key equipment and PBX troubles, training as we went,

and keeping my nose clean. One thing it did for me, I had thought when I was a repairman in Austin that the ultimate job was Repair Foreman... Well, scratch that idea... I was really happy when they called me in and sent me to Sweetwater to set up another Crossbar Tandem school, with one of my Amarillo students as teacher. I helped him set it up and ordered all the school materials, then helped him any time he was in trouble. I moved into the office and set up all the tests for the new system.

When the system was well under way, and the students moved in to do the testing, I commuted to Lubbock, setting up a school there, with the teacher from Sweetwater officiating, and set up the tests for a new system going in Lubbock. I spent about 6 months commuting, since the two systems were being installed simultaneously, with the family living in Sweetwater. We cut the Sweetwater XBT in late 1956 and the Lubbock XBT in early 1957. Just before the Lubbock Cutover, the company told me I was going to Abilene to teach a No. 5 Crossbar school, and handle the cutover! Here we go again!!! So I moved the family, long suffering ones, to Abilene, and continued to cut over Lubbock.

The day after the successful cutover, I received a call from Dallas, to come in to Dallas for an interview for a new job. They didn't tell me what, and not to ask questions or talk about it, since several guys were being interviewed. Well, here I come. The General Traffic Manager interviewed me, and I got it. I was moved to the Traffic Department as Assistant District Traffic Manager, in charge of the traffic administrations of my old Dallas 4A, and traffic administrations of all the 400 Traffic Operator Toll switchboards. The old gang in the 4A carried me high.

I soon found out that it was not a piece of cake! I had about 12 clerks that handled the 4A assignments and the switchboard multiple assignments, no sweat there, they

were well trained, and trained me quickly. No, the sweat came in on controlling the flow of the toll traffic. Dallas was the Regional Center, serving as a switching hub and control center for Texas and Oklahoma. I was the Major Domo, the Traffic Controller that everybody and his dog took potshots at if their little dab of originating traffic didn't get triple X priority! All I had to do was to keep ALL the traffic moving as smoothly as possible

This was not too bad, barring cable cuts, etc. But when it came to Mother's day, Christmas and other holidays, it was Katy bar the door! But even they didn't compare to hurricanes, tornados, disasters, and stuff like that. The day Kennedy was shot was a nightmare! Traffic snarled the network. Our Toll operators answered calls from nationwide, the other operators would curse them out, asking what was the matter with Dallas. Many of them left the board in tears. I would work day and night during those little peccadillos. There were 10 regional centers in the USA, and 2 in Canada. We were Dallas, St Louis, Chicago, Pittsburg, New York, Denver, Sacramento, San Bernadino, Philadelphia and Atlanta. The two in Canada were Montreal and Regina.

The Regional Center Managers were responsible for the flow of traffic in the USA and Canada. We played it like a railroad grid, complete with traffic signals, delays, controls and derailment! We had to gather all the data from the peg count and usage registers, and hold a posthumous analysis of the performance of the network after each holiday or disaster. That was a Nervous Nellie hotseat that I sat on for 12 years.

There were some slight compensations, tho. Every 6 months we would hold a Regional Center Managers' Conference, to hash out our problems, and figure out better controls. I forgot to say, Long Lines was the master controller, with the control center on the Avenue Of The

Americas, in New York City. They also hosted the RC Conferences. The best thing about it, the conferences were held in the Regional Centers. The conference was for one week, with one day set aside for local sight-seeing. In the one in San Bernadino, we stayed at the DisneyLand Motel, and were treated to a tour of Disney Land. There were two I enjoyed most, Montreal and San Francisco. We made them all in the 12 years, most of them twice... Not all Blood, Sweat and Tears!!

Back in my own Region, at the suggestion of the powers that be, we held Sectional Center conferences every 6 months, mostly in Dallas, but some in Houston, Oklahoma City, and other Sectional centers. The Sectional Centers were OK City, Amarillo, Sweetwater, (my old XBTs), Houston, Ft Worth and San Antonio. I did a lot of entertaining for out of town dignitaries from all over the country. I had charge accounts set up in the Cattlemens Restaurant, The Old Warsaw, and 3 or 4 more, including El Chicos and a black barbecue place that was out of this world. We bugged them Yankees eyes out!! Long Lines took over our 4A in 1964, and given an option, I went with it. I never regretted it. The Lone Lines entertaining ideas were a good bit more liberal than SWBs. Besides, they promoted me almost immediately to Traffic Manager, District Level, in 1964 as I recall. The living was high on the hog. The more time I spent visiting the Sectional centers about their problems, the better my boss thought I was doing the job, and actually he was right. With my extended exchequer, I was made royally welcome, and we did it up brown. But in the meanwhile, I was getting my licks in on Network Management, showing them the whyfores and whereofs, so that when I asked for controls during emergencies, I met with smooth cooperation. The boss told me one time that if I ever ran for Mayor, I'd get his vote!

During idle times in those years, I taught two 6 week schools on XBT traffic administration in St Louis, and about five 2 week schools on Network Management in New York, at various times, and to very high level management.

I think I'll digress right about here, and talk about education. This was always a sore point with me, not being able to go to college. Feeling left out, I undertook to study any and everything available. Witness the correspondence courses started in Spur and completed in Austin. Later I took evening courses for adults in the Austin High school, in radio and television operation and repair. In Dallas I took evening courses in SMU in labor relations, personnel administration and business management. While in New York, I took a course sponsored by AT&T, conducted in evenings by Toastmasters International.

Now, that was an eye opener, taught by hands-on speaking assignments and group criteria. Boy, they lowered the boom on you, it was more of a debating club than a speaking club, and this old country boy enjoyed it! When speaking naturally, I speak Texan, with a drawl, and use much idiom. When they got me stirred up, which them thar damyankees could do easily, I spoke quickly, concisely, with clean enunciation, very correct English, and with a biting wit. At least, that's what they told me in the criteria, and they wanted to know why I used the Texas Drawl? Man, that thar is my best communication tool! People seem to listen to it! If I spoke quickly, concisely and correctly in my technical schools, my students would be asleep half the time!!

Anyway, on that job I flew so much the Brannif Airlines issued me a gold VIP card, establishing full credit, and free entree to the VIP club, free drinks, and plush service. My General Traffic Manager from Kansas City travelled with me one time and I took him in the VIP club. Boy, was he

impressed! He applied for the VIP card when he got home, and they turned him down!!! Boy, did he TALK TO ME!!!

You know, there were several other times when I Gored The Sacred OX! I ran the Region as it should be run. The Long Lines idea of Supervision was “Me Talk, you listen. Me holler frog, you jump.” Now, the only way I like frogs is chicken fried. So, for 5 years my raises were minimal and far between. In 1969 my top was about \$27,000. I was making \$16,000. So, when SW Bell approached me in 1969 about transferring to San Antonio, as a Second Line engineer in Traffic Engineering, I said let’s go. When my boss called me and asked me if I wanted to go back to SWB as Second Line, I very wisely and tactfully told him that I was tired of being in this hot seat after 12 years, that I liked SA, and would really would like engineering.

I transferred to SA, with SWB paying for the move! The day I reported, I got a \$1,000 a year raise! 3 months later SWB gave an across the board raise to supervision. Mine was \$1,800 a year! 3 months more, and SWB promoted me to Traffic Equipment Engineer, District level, with a \$2,400 a year raise. When I retired in 1976, I was making \$31,600 a year, which was tops. That was the best move of my career. I feel that I finally got justice! That job now is paying around \$70,000.

My district was the San Antonio Area Toll Switching, which included the toll switching machines in Amarillo, Lubbock, Sweetwater, (my old XBTs), Waco XBT, Austin SXS, San Antonio 4A, Corpus Christi toll SXS, and all Toll SXS systems in between. We wrote the traffic order for a 4A system to replace the SXS in Corpus Christi, and the 4A for Austin. Every other year we had to write a job for each machine to cover growth. I had one Second Line and three First Line engineers that I had to train in writing the Traffic Orders. I had one First Line woman and 12 clerks to take care of programming ALL the machines for the proper

routing of All area codes and central office codes, NATIONWIDE. Boy, did we have records! Everytime any new central office went into service anywhere, we had to establish that code in all our machines.

As if that wasn't enough, I was made responsible, from an Area Staff angle, for the performance of all the machines! Well, I held conferences in the various cities, and set up reports to be made to me on all machines. That took some heavy back-up from the General Traffic Manager, my boss's boss. He was behind me in spades, and we painfully brought it off. The accounting department then invited the other departments to set up programs in their computers to help them in their analyses, forecasts, etc.

I took immediate advantage of this, going in to conference with the experts. I prepared a grid report for each machine, showing the pegcounts, overflows and usage in holding seconds on each component of the machine, comparing the data from each component with the data from the other components, showing the percent variation between the components, setting a margin for the variations, and printing out the exceptions! All of this on one page! Kind of like a football pool grid. (Since I now have a personal computer, I would now call this a spreadsheet.)

After setting this up, my first action was to call all the machine administrators, traffic and plant, and hold a 3 day school on how to read the report, the significance of the exceptions, and how to analyze their machine performance from the report, and shoot trouble. The acceptance was less than enthusiastic. My next step was to get the Division Traffic Superintendents in for the same school, along with the General Traffic Manager. I then rocked along for a month, looking at the printouts. Incidentally, each office read the registers in the busy hour, and sent the reports in by computer access daily. The input was very erratic at first, but the printouts were dramatically pointing out

trouble spots. After 5 or 6 weeks, I sat down and wrote up a complete analysis on each machine, pointing out troubles, and wrote a conveying letter for the GTMs signature. You talk about a hornets nest! My phone nearly melted. The reports improved slowly, and the troubles started clearing. Our Failures To Switch, the system wide criteria, began to improve. The GTM told me later that he had talked privately with all Division and District Superintendents, and laid it on the line, the machine performance was going on their performance report, and would affect their raises and promotions!

When I set the report up, I set it up for a daily report on each machine, and a composite report for all machines. I also set up a composite report for the month on each machine and for all machines.

The next step was a natural: a composite report on each machine for the year, and for all machines for the year. This composite report could be requested during the month for the month to date! Also for the year! Oh, but I was not exactly popular, in fact I GOT TALKED TO!

Why is Everybody Always Picking On Me???

The proof of the pudding: During my last year, 1975, I compiled manually a composite report for the area for my last 5 years (my San Antonio years.) The result was

The Bell System objective for Failures To Switch for Toll Switching Systems was 2 %. The actual System average ran around 2.8%

In 1969, the composite report for the SA Area was 6.8%

In 1970 it was 4.7%

In 1971 it was 3.9%

In 1972 it was 1.8%

In 1973 (my last full year) it was 0.8%!

Just as I had completed this report, the GTM came in my office, so I showed him the report. Boy, he got excited and asked if he could have the report. I agreed and he went and

made a full report to Saint Louis. A few days later I got a call from the Staff lad that had my job on a company level. He was all excited, and said the Traffic V.P. was really pleased with the report, and that he had questioned him as to the why the improvement? He said, "I told him old Cliff Murphy was the sole reason!" Yeah...anybody believes that, I got some stock in the Brooklin Bridge I'd like to sell him... Anyway, that didn't put any bread on the plate, I was already making the top \$31,600. But I did leave with a good taste in my mouth.

About my retirement... In March of 1975 the boss came in my office, and asked me when I planned on retiring. I told him in March, 1976, since I would be 62 in September 75 and eligible for social security, I would work pass the first of the year and take a 5 week vacation and retire. He asked me about my health, wasn't I going to the Doctor weekly for shots and medication? I told him yes, I had hayfever, hypertension, black headaches and high blood pressure, outside that I was fine, and had had no absences since my shoulder operation. He asked me if I thought my doctor would sign a request for disability. I told him I didn't know, but that I would feel odd, going on disability when I wasn't sick. He assured me that I had earned it, and he thought I should go on disability for a year, then retire on my schedule.

I again protested, then he said, "Look, Cliff, the EEOC is on our butt, and we need your position for a woman!" Well, that do make a difference! I told him I would go to my Doctor that afternoon, and let him know. I took off immediately to the Doctor's office, and found him highly in favor of it. I called the boss, and told him I was going home sick, and after 7 days of incidental absence, I was going on disability... and that was the way it worked. I came in after 7 days, bringing the Doctor's papers, and my peers carried my high about gravy trains. Later I applied for Social

Security disability, and their Doctors gave me a 3 hour thorough examination, then OKed me for 100% disability! I found out later that Social Security didn't hand out those disability qualifications lightly. I took those papers back to the office and rubbed my peers' noses in them!

About 10 months into the year of disability, the boss called me to come in and fill out some papers on retirement. After taking care of the papers, he called me in his office for a chat. He said, "Cliff, I want to show you something." He pulled out the one page composite report for the area dated that day and showed it to me. The failures to switch for the area was 0.2%!!! Man, I felt good... I said, "See, I told you you wouldn't miss me when I left." Then he said, "Cliff, a lot of our people have trouble adjusting to retirement, have you found it difficult?" I told him Yes, I did, that it took me several hours to get really adjusted!! He ran me out of his office!

And so started my retirement...

Before I get too retarded, tho, I wish to make a few pertinent remarks. I havenoticed, in reading these senile meanderings, that I have a somewhat terse mode of expression. I have also noticed that I include all related data in a very economical use of verbiage. The meanings are there, and are very explicit. I learned this lucid and precise mode of expression in my year in New York. Boy, did I learn it the hard way! As the fount of wisdom for all No.4-type switching systems, it befell my lot to answer all Field complaints about No. 4 Bell System Practices. It was mandatory that the BSP had to be lucid, explicit, precise and subject to NO misinterpretation.

If a sentence or paragraph was subject to possible misinterpretation, according to Murphy's law 13 people nationwide WOULD misinterpret it! Also all 13 would write a formal complaint to the Ivory Tower for clarification. I had to write a formal letter diplomatically

explaining the misinterpretation, and agree to reissue the practice, making it even more explicit and ironclad! This formal letter was to go out with the signature of our Vice President in charge of goofs. That letter had to be perfect!!! I usually rewrote it about six times before it passed.

Now, thereby hangs a tale, as old Willie was want to say (or is that “wont to say?”). Whatever... My immediate supervisor was a square-headed Dutchman by the name of Ed Nordstrom, and a very fine fellow was he. When I first started writing the Letters, Ed would tear them up, suggesting rephrasing, etc. I would make the corrections, get them retyped, and resubmit them. He tore them up a second and a third time, before he passed them on up. The next in line tore them up at least twice, before they finally passed. I started working, studying and concentrating to get one letter perfect that would pass on first draft. No way, Hosay! Now, this did not set well with this old country boy! I always figured I could do a fair country job at anything I really set myself to. I watched my chance, and a typical complaint came across my desk. Researching the archives, I found a beautiful letter, in perfect format, that would fit my case in hand. I copied that letter verbatim, changing only the technical terms to fit. I got the letter typed up and sent it through to Ed. As expected, he made three alternations and sent it back. Well, I gathered up my archive book and the letter and descended on him!

“Ed, I need to talk to you.” “Yeah, Cliff, what can I do for you?” “Well, I have been getting more and more frustrated, and have not been able to please you with any of my letters, so I went back to the archives to see what I was doing wrong. Here is a letter I found.” With that I handed him the archives and my letter. He started looking back and forth at the letters, and his neck started getting red. I was fascinated to see the red come up out of his shirt, past

his ears, into his hair. It was very obvious that I had sand-bagged him good and proper. You know, right then and there I began to understand Why Everybody's Always Picking On Me!

Well, Ed swivelled his chair to face me, looked me in the eye, and started grinning. "Cliff, I can understand very well your frustration, and I should have talked with you before. Man, you don't know from frustration! I have 15 of you knuckleheads to supervise. All of you are picked for your expertise in your individual fields, and all of you take care of all the technical problems that come through this office. Now, if I didn't edit your letters, what the hell am I supposed to do?" Well, that do put a different light on the subject. Again I felt like I could have walked under a snake wearing a tall silk hat... If I could have run across a snake wearing a tall silk hat.

I looked at Ed and said, "Ed, I apologize, I didn't realize the true situation, and I'll fix you up in the future!"

After that, when I had a letter to write, I called the typing pool for a stenographer, dictated the letter off the top of my head, had it typed, and sent it through. Everybody was happy, and my work progressed much faster...

I am sitting here, mulling the situation over, and thinking about that cedar shanty we built on the river. In contrast, we are now living in a 5 bedroom brick home, central heat and air, rugs throughout, two baths, two car garage that is sealed and equipped with an electric door opener. That dang garage is lined with bookshelves and books, about 3000 at the last count. It is inlaid with rugs (by me) and has two lazyboy recliners and other chairs and a Coke table (other people would call it a coffee table, but we don't drink coffee anymore). Nor do we do alcohol nor tobacco. No caffeine in anything... Gad, ain't we pure and clean... It ain't that, it's my allergies and Gladys' fibrillating heart! When Richard first saw the garage, he said, "Dad, it looks

like a cave!” Truly, with the double door open, it is an indoor-outdoor patio-den-cum-library and bird-watching station.

When we lived in that shanty, the height of my ambition was to get a steady job with money coming in regularly. Well, I held a lot of jobs before I went to work for the telephone company the second time. As I have said before, I have always worked my tail off to secure my job, and thus the future of my family. When I went to work for the telephone company the second time, my ambition changed. I thought that Repair Foreman, 1st line supervision, was the Holy Grail, the ultimate. Instead, I went in the toll crossbar as a switchman, craft, for a year. Then I was promoted to Chief Switchman, 1st line supervision! At Last! The trouble was, I had no time to appreciate it! I was put in charge of the evening and night shifts AND the conversion of the A4A to 4A! This took a year of 11 hour days, with nerve wracking Crises. Then came the year of working with Bell Labs, then the teaching (and learning) Crossbar Tandem, and the responsibility for the testing, accepting and cutting into service the three Tandems, at Amarillo, Lubbock and Sweetwater.

About a month before the final cutover in Lubbock, I was informed that I was to move to Abilene and teach (and learn!) a No. 5 local crossbar system! Sheesh!!! I was still an underpaid 1st line supervisor! Well, I moved the long-suffering family to Abilene, and started doing research on 5XB, meanwhile in the final excruciating month of the Lubbock cutover! Like I said...Sheesh!! By this time I had no further ambitions, aims or goals. I was just desperately trying to keep my nose above water, gasping for air!

But the best was yet to come. They promoted me to Assistant District Traffic Superintendent, 2nd line, shifting me from the Plant Department to the Traffic Department. I was in charge of traffic assignments, loading, balancing and

performance of the Dallas 4A, also the assignments of the trunks on the switchboard multiple on 425 switchboard positions in 3 Traffic Districts! Also in charge of network controls of the flow of traffic in Texas and Oklahoma. I was in charge of that Nervous Nellie for 5 years when AT&T took over the 4A in 1965. I had the option, and went with AT&T.

They almost immediately promoted me to Traffic Manager, District level, in the same old job. Except that they also gave me the assignments and loading of their Toll exotic 5XB systems in Ennis, Texas and in Dallas. These systems were used exclusively for exotic services: 800 No. WATS lines, 900 No. service, large corporation networks, and all kinds of secret Government networks. Now, those were headaches! I held that job until 1969, when I transferred back to S W Bell, moved to San Antonio, and became Traffic Equipment Engineer, in the Traffic Engineering Department. I was in charge of the engineering of new offices and additions on old offices.

By this time, I was the Nervous Nellie! I really had no further aims, ambitions, goals or even vague wishes! I felt like old Wiley Fox chasing the Roadrunner, when he ran past the edge of the cliff and was spinning his wheels in midair. I kept waiting for the drastic drop... I had gone so far beyond even my fondest hopes, that I felt dazed and lost, plumb empty. Of course, there was a price to pay. I retired in 1975, at the age of 61, on 100% disability, and qualified with the Social Security doctors for 100% disability. My blood pressure was 200/100, I was as hypertense as a fiddle string, afflicted with black headaches going into migraines, and all kinds of allergies. The doctor told me when I retired that I was heading for a stroke!

I fooled them, tho! I moved to Temple, Texas, went under the Scott & White hospital care, and started practicing sedentarianism. 15 years later, I now take 1 blood pressure

pill and a stress tab vitamin daily, along with my metamucil. Very few headaches nowadays, I occasionally take Tylenol (I used to eat Excedrin), my blood pressure is around 130/82, and even my eyesight has improved! No more blueprints or fineline technical journals. I can even pass the state drivers test with no glasses. No restrictions on my license anymore!

Right on! Man! Here comes age 99!!!

SO MOTE IT BE!!!

TELEPHONEY

There are many happenstances that fall to the lot of a telephone man, repairman, installer, lineman, whatever. This section shall chronical the ones I can recall, whether they happened to me or some of my compadres. I have already told of working a country line over from the saddle of a cowpony. That was probably the most unique experience I had. However, there were many more, so let's get with it...

This first one is on Grady. He was installing phones out at Bergstrom Air Force Base, in Austin. One was a key system that required inside wiring cable, about 16 pair. He did his usual neat job, wiring in several stations. Two days later he was dispatched back to the same job. The Captain had decided to move his desk, which had all the main equipment on it. He rewired the job, splicing out the cable, which left the job not quite so neat.

Next week he was sent back to the job again, with a few words from his boss about licking his calf over. The Captain had moved the desk again, cutting the cables. Fortified with the chewing out from his boss, Grady told the Captain that if he moved again, there would be a large move charge. The Captain assured Grady that that was the permanent location of his desk. So, OK, Grady went to work, moving and splicing.

While the office was empty on the lunch hour, Grady marked the six legs on the floor with a pencil, moved the desk, and bored 1/4 inch holes through the floor in the center of the marked squares. He then moved the desk back in position, gathered up his tools, and crawled under the building. He located the holes, and bored 1/8 inch holes up into the desk legs for 3 inches. He placed 6 large 3-inch screws up into the legs, anchoring them firmly. He proceeded to finish the job, and bid them adieu. He never

heard from them again.

Now, GS was an installer that nobody cared too much for. He fancied himself as a ladies man, and was somewhat of a womanizer. Anyway, he had a job putting in four lines in a garage, with key equipment and inside cable. The carbon block protectors with fuses were to be mounted on the back wall, and the cable was to be placed in the 3 foot space between the flat roof and the dropped ceiling. The cable had to be pulled from the back wall about 60 feet to the front office.

GS called for help, which he was noted for doing, and the test board dispatched old GK to help him. GK was a little elderly and a little shaky. He had suffered with milk fever some years previously, and wasn't quite playing with a full deck. All of us took good care of him when he worked with us. Except GS, of course. He set GK to pulling that cable through that hot space, and went to the back wall, set up his stepladder, and proceeded with mounting the protectors. Well, here came GK, crawling and pulling that cable in that hot attic. As he got over the ladder, his foot slipped off the rafter. He fell through the sheetrock ceiling, his feet kicking GS in the head, kicking him off the ladder, sprawling on the concrete floor. Stove him up more than somewhat. GK was still hanging on a rafter. We felt that old GS had received nothing but his just deserts. Poetic Justice, a classic case...

One time I was running down a case of trouble on a rural, open wire line. The lady couldn't get dial tone, but could get the local radio station, loud and clear. I traced the trouble to the pole. The Kearney clamps connecting the drop wire to the open wire had corroded somewhat, causing a "high" joint, or a high resistant connection. The resistance prevented the central office relay from operating, which would give her dial tone, but was ideal for bringing in the radio signal, similar to the old crystal radio set. It do

help if you understand the cause of your trouble.

But that is not what I started out to tell. While I was on the pole a scissor-tail lit in the middle of the first span of wire. For you city chillern, that is a bird with a forked tail that looks like a pair of scissors, in the flycatcher family. That span was long, high-strength steel stretched taut. I eased around the pole, under the wire, reached out far and carefully pulled the wire down without disturbing the bird. When I turned it loose a wave ran down the wire. It snapped the wire from under the bird and slapped it back up several times. The first wave caught the bird in the breast and knocked him about 3 feet in the air. He tumbled to the ground and lay there 3 or 4 minutes. I thought it had killed him, but he finally got up and staggered around for a while, then flew off kinda wobbly.

Grady went out to install a phone in a lady's house, and she wanted the wires hidden in the wall. In this case we go up in the attic and bore a hole in the plate, drop the wire down into the wall, bore another small hole where the phone is to be located, fish the wire out with a coat hanger, and place the connecting block over the hole. Of course the placing of the holes requires some accurate figuring and know-how. Grady checked the wall and found it was a single plank wall, made of 1X12 boards placed from ceiling to floor, and held in place with moldings on each side, top and bottom. He told the lady that it was impossible to fish that wall. She said, "the electrician did", and pointed to a base plug about 4 feet down the wall, flush mounted.

Grady looked at that base plug, then went around to the other side of the wall...no outlet box showing, no wires!!! He said he figured the only way the electrician could have done it was when the wall was being built. He ran the wire down between two 1X12s, sawed out a small hole, and mounted the plug in the hole without an outlet box, then they papered over the whole thing. He tried to explain to

the lady, but she said if he couldn't put those wires in the wall, he couldn't put in the phone! He said OK, goodbye, and left. She reported him, and he explained the situation to his boss. His boss was astounded, and just had to go out and look that over. Grady never heard how it came out...

This next little event happened to me, and had nothing to do with telephony, but I wanted to put it in here before I forgot it, which I'm prone to do more of here lately. I attended a Regional Center conference in Atlanta, Georgia one Spring. The meeting was to start with a Happy Hour at 6PM on a Monday, a formal dinner to follow, and the main conference to start the following morning. Standard procedure. I flew in early Monday, checked in the hotel, then eased out to do the tourist bit. Standard procedure. I was strolling down Peach Street, the main drag, gawking around. I wandered in a hole-in-the-wall pub for a prelunch glass of suds about 11. I bellied up to the bar, secured the suds, and mused on the vagaries of life, sipping the suds, at peace with my Id. I noticed a beer sign on the wall that had colored shooting stars in it. I zeroed in on it, studying it carefully. A local Redneck eased in to the bar next to me and accosted me.

“What's going on?”

“See that sign?”

“Yeah”

“There are six colored stars in each salvo, and each salvo has a different color sequence, there are eight salvos before the color patterns repeat!”

“Yeah, well, that's real interesting.”

He eased down the bar a mite, looking at me kinda sideways, looked down the bar, turned back and said, “Yeah, well, there's old Joe, excuse me, Hey, Joe, I wanta see you.”

Another local eased up on the other side and said, “There ARE eight patterns, eight wheels in the sign that are used in

sequence. I work on them. How did you know, do you work for the company?" "No, I memorized the colors in one pattern, and counted the salvos until that pattern repeated."

"Yeah....Uh...Well...Uh...Hey Joe, wait up!"

Well, it DID HAVE, so there!!

That brings to mind the RC conference in San Francisco. The Regional Center was Sacramento, but who would hold a conference there? One evening one of the local lads took some of us sight seeing in his car, and we took him to dinner, for Pie In The Sky, or whatever they call that high rise restaurant. Later he took us to a night club that had a topless girl band! Now, that was something! There was a small card on a stand on our table that said "The management apologizes, there are only five girls in the band tonight, our Bass Fiddle player had an on the job accident!" Well, now, that was easy to visualize!

On the guided tour down town, our lad drove through Chinatown. He passed the Bank Of China, which had a tremendous glass window, showing all the inside. I remarked, "Look at that giant transistorized abacus in the window!" A Bell Lab lad in the rear seat leaned over to the window, saying "Where, Where?" Then he woke up and eased back in his seat, saying "Damn you, Cliff."

I took Gladys to a high rise "Pie in In The Sky" in Dallas, the Ports of Call, on one of our wedding anniversaries. I picked her up at Titches about 5:30, we parked under the Ports of Call, walked about a block and went to the theater. We saw "It's a mad, mad, mad world" as I recall. We walked back and took the elevator to the Ports of Call. I told the maitre d' it was our anniversary, and he fixed us a table against the large plate glass, floor-length window. We could look out over Dallas, and down, way down on the street traffic going out North Central Expressway. We had a super dinner, I disremember what, but with it we had

Champagne, and therein lies my complaint.

That place was decorated up like a ship, very nice. The waiters were pirates, and the waitresses were something else. At least, that's what Gladys said. Of course, I always agree with Gladys as a matter of policy, also prudence. The ceiling looked like the sky, with a thousand very small twinkling white and blue lights. After her second, or mayhaps third glass of the Vino, Gladys was looking around, admiring the decor, and That Gal Of Mine batted her big hazel eyes at me and said, "Why Haven't You Brought Me Here Before???" I could have skelped her, as the Scots say. Getting That Gal to go out on the town was like pulling hen's teeth.

I have to retract that... She went with me to most of the conference dinners with the telephone company, and that was a bundle. Her favorite was the Old Warsaw, in Dallas, and her favorite food there was Filet Mignon. She said it was braised in garlic butter, or something. Anyway, it was out of this world. I never tried it. I didn't make it out there very often, only when I wanted to impress some damyankees, so I always had their escargots and frog legs provencal, topped off with Vu Vray white wine 1957! I couldn't get Gladys to sample the French cuisine... Ah, well..

I had a Sectional Center conference group at the Cattlemen's one night. One of my guests was a Japanese lad, Suzuki Komatsuzaki, (I'll never forget him). He was visiting our Regional Center, checking on Network Management. He was from the Network Management Center in Tokyo. At the dinner one of my lads tapped me on the shoulder and told me Suzuki had had too much to drink, and was raising cain about our bombing Tokyo and killing his buddy who was working in a factory. He said, "Cliff, if you don't do something, some of our Vets are going to scalp him!"

Suzuki was seated about eight seats down and across the table. I grabbed my glass of wine, stood up and held it up, calling, "SUZUKI!"

He looked up, saw my glass and stood up, holding his glass.

"PEACE!"

"Ah, so" he says, "Peace." He drained his glass and sat down.

Events progressed peacefully, and an international incident was avoided! Next day we presented him with a white ten gallon cowboy hat, which tickled him pink, and poured him on his plane for his next stop. Incidentally, we called ahead and warned them what to expect!

GOIN' AFISHIN'

God allotted each of us a finite number of days on this earth, but He decided that the days spent afishin' would not count against us in our allotted span! They are freebies! So, chillern, get with it! Also, the tales we bring back are not counted against us, since they are not considered outright lies! When I graduated into salt-water fishin', and began to catch some fish that were prima facie lies to begin with, I bought a set of De-Liar scales to carry in my tackle box, in self defense. Now, folks, when I say I caught a 28 pound King Mackerel, or a 35 pound Drum, those babies were weighed in! Incidentally, I also have pictures of most of them and will show my fishin' picture album at the drop of a hat, usually dropping it myself!

Margaret, Anita and Joel came down last week on a visit, bless them. They brought an important message from Ronny and Marty, their husbands. Marty is now the proud owner of a 19 foot boat geared up for salt water fishin', with a 100 horse inboard-outdrive, and they are anxious to subject it to a little salt water seasoning! They would like to plan on a safari to the coast, taking old Greatgrandpa along! Of course, old GGpa understood that the invite was occasioned by his expertise in piscatorial surveying. GGpa's acceptance was considerably less than reluctant. In fact, the parable of the chicken and the June bug readily comes to mind! Actually, I accepted so fast, I forgot to point out that a fishin' guide draws down \$35 an hour, plus expenses, but I'm sure no one will question that reasonable expenditure. I'm also sure that, as the fever arises, the price will become negotiable.

Now, the only deep sea fishin' that I'm familiar with is King fishin'. I haven't done any other kind, except a little Red Snapper fishing one time with Ronny, off Galveston on a commercial boat. We caught about 100 up to 2

pounds, which we cleaned and took back to San Antonio. We were fishin' in about 50 foot of water, about 25 miles offshore, and it was more work than fun.

Back in about 1967 I bought a 19 1/2 foot boat that had a 7 foot beam and a 5 foot draft, deep V, Mark Twain, made in Kansas City, designed by and made for the Georgia Fish and Game Dept. It would make 32 knots and would make a sharp turn at full speed, which of course I had to prove. We were living in Duncanville when we bought the boat, and we made several excursions to the surrounding lakes.

Gladys and I had the boat on Lake Texoma one time, and we were trolling in a long, beautiful slough. I was admiring the scenery, when Gladys started jerking on her pole and muttering a few choice words. "My hook's caught on a log and I can't jerk it loose, here, you do it." Well, I took the pole and started pulling steady on it. The log started slowly coming in, and I kept working on it. I had worked it about 30 feet closer, when that dang log started slowly moving SIDEWAYS!!! I hollered at Grandma, and told her to take her pole, that wasn't a log! She wanted no part of it, so I finally worked it in. That was a 3 or 4 pound striped bass, foul hooked, full of eggs and fat and lazy. It was like pulling in a barn door.

She has never lived that down....Now I'll tell you one that I haven't lived down....I took Gladys, Juanita and I think Margaret out to Lake Dallas for a boating. When I dunked the boat at the boat ramp, Juanita elected to climb in the boat on shore. I backed the old Continental and dunked the boat. I braked, and got out to untie the boat, when Juanita said, "Is all this water supposed to be coming in the boat?" I jumped in the car, and pulled the boat back out and let it drain, then I put in the forgotten drain plug! Juanita still talks about that....Dang fool female!

There are two memorable fishing trips in that boat. The first one came on a trip to Houston. At one of our regular

Sectional Center conferences, I took the boat with me, and parked it in the hotel parking lot. Friday afternoon, at the end of the conference, a group of us took off to Galveston and shacked up in a motel there. Of course we had a “conference” dinner, complete with a “happy hour”. The next morning we gathered to dunk the boats. We had 4, which included a houseboat. I had two of the headquarters brass with me. Everybody advised us to eat a hearty breakfast to ward off mal-de-mer, as the French say....Well, that was a mistake! We went out about 15 miles, and the seas were fairly rough. I promptly lost breakfast, and part of supper.

When we got out to the fishing area, the three of us took time about, two fishin’ and one driving the boat. I caught a 15 pound Yellow Jack, and later a 11 pound King. The other two got some strikes, but caught nothing. The funny thing was, I let two seats down to make a bed, and caught the fish lying down! On the way in, they graciously agreed to drive the boat while I lay down. As I lay there, thinking I was dying, and afraid I wouldn’t, my erstwhile friends began to complain that their host was very ill-mannered, and had monopolized the piscatorial harvest. I took the icebag off my brow, opened one eye, glared at them balefully and declared, “Boys, if I hadn’t been so sick, I would really showed you how to catch some fish!” Now, that is the closest I ever came to taking a salt water bath 15 miles off shore!

One of the most memorable and enjoyable was in about 1967. I think Gladys was working at Jas.K.Wilson, and was just out of the hospital, so she didn’ care about boat fishin’. I had a week’s vacation, and took off for Port Aransas with the Continental and the boat. We were living on Shadowwood in Dallas at the time. I took off on Friday afternoon, and went through Austin to pick up Pappy Shipp. He didn’t want to spend a week down there, so he

had talked his next door neighbor into going and taking his car, so they could come back on Monday. We took a two bedroom cottage in Aransas Pass that would sleep 6. Saturday morning we dunked the boat and took off. I had called Grady and invited him to join the festivities, but he was working. His son, Patrick was available and jumped at the chance. He met us Saturday morning and the four of us made a day of it.

We are deeply indebted to Patrick for showing us how to rig our lines, and where to fish. I will now pass this along for posterity. The King Mackerals are a warm water fish, and migrate with the seasons. They follow the Gulf Stream, off North America in the summer and off South America in the winter. July, August and September are the prime months off the Texas Coast.

Rigging the lines is fairly simple. You can buy commercial rigs consisting of about 2 feet of steel leader with a 6-aught hook served up on the end of it. Another steel leader of about 7 inches is served up in the eye of the first hook and in the eye of a second hook. You have a 2'7" leader with two hooks 7" apart. Tie this on your line, and to bait it, hook the top hook through the head of a 12" to 16" Ribbon fish and the second hook 7" down the body, so that the Ribbon Fish looks like it is swimming when you are trolling.

Patrick's rig is slightly different. He takes a 2' leader and serves it up on an 8-aught hook. He then takes 4 or 5 more 8-aught hooks and strings them up on the first, running the barb through the eye of the next in line. You bait it as you did the commercial rig, except that the shanks of the hooks will lie along one side of the bait, with the barbs slightly protruding along the other side. Warning: This is a Lethal rig. Any King Fish even smelling this will be hooked. The odd thing about this rig, is that quite often the Kings will be foul hooked. This means that they will be hooked in the

side, back or tail. They are very difficult to land when hooked like this, as witness Gladys' tree stump!

Now, where to fish is another little gem passed on by Patrick. The Gulf Stream flows up the coast all the way to Iceland, I think, then wanders over to Europe or somewhere. Along the Texas Coast, the water near the shore is green. The water where the Stream passes is blue. The line of demarkation is very sharp, and about 15 to 30 feet wide. That line is usually about 15 miles off shore, but normal tides make it vary, sometimes farther, sometimes quite close. The line is also marked, as the passing of the Stream and the still green water usually causes the sandy bottom to roil up, with small debris in it. The Kings follow this line, feeding on the debris. The trick is to get on the line, parallel to the shore, trolling. We had a very remarkable week doing just that!

Saturday was our first day out, the four of us, and we caught about 10 Kings. All the Kings we caught all week weighed from 12 to 28 pounds. That night in the cabin, we were joined by Floyd Junior, and he didn't believe a word of it, since we had given all the fish to Patrick to take home with him. Pappy Shipp said, "Boy, I caught three of those fish myself!" That shut him up for a few minutes, then he said, "Well, I'm going out with you tomorrow, and I'm the worst "Black Cat" in the world, ain'tnobody gonna get a bite!"

Well, next morning we took out, heading for blue water. It took us about an hour to get out there, with Junior "Black Catting" all the way. I guess you can see this coming—He caught the first King! About 16 pounds as I recall. He claimed it was a mistake, but put his line back out, still Black Catting. All of us started hanging Kings, and he finally caught his second, about the same size. He was still mumbling, but with his third one, he finally shut up! We caught about 12 that day, our best day. In five days fishing,

I figured we boated about 650 pounds of Kings.

We went out one night, not knowing what to expect, and didn't do anything until I got tired of it and put a gob of Ribbon Fish on my rig, hooking them through their head, one to a hook. That was a mess of bait! I dropped it overboard, letting out line, then started trolling. Something took it and started for Cuba. I set the hook and started to reel him in...Hah! Fat chance! I had the Star drag on, but he was making that reel whine! Now, I had about 200 yards of 80 pound test line and a stout pole, and I was determined he wouldn't take my gear. I put the butt of the pole on the floor, and leaned the pole against the back of the boat. I had my feet braced on the butt of the pole. When he got about half my reel, I started cranking down on the Star drag. That pole started out bent about a foot out of line, and every crank bent it a little more, and made the reel whine higher. I never bothered him one whit, and when he reached the end, it went Ping and he was gone. I reeled in the line, and it looked like it was broken in the tie to the leader.

I told this story to some oldtimers in Port Aransas, and they said I had probably hooked a shark about as long as our boat! Oh! Well! So mote it be! I can tell you this, tho, I ain't gonna get me a big rig and go back after another! Some fish stories get plumb ridiculous!

That particular night, coming back in, Patrick and I were in the front seats, facing front. Pappy Shipp and his neighbor were in the back-to-back seats, facing the rear. The seas were running 7 to 8 feet, smooth and about 30 feet apart. I kept running up one side and down the other, when I got a bright Idea! I topped a wave and eased off on the motor, jockeying the boat to stay on the down side of the wave. We started running!

We were actually surfing with the boat. Those waves were really travelling. I fell off once, but got back on. We made it in to shore in double-quick time! There was only one

small flaw in our calculations. We came in to the Ship Channel suddenly, where the waves were about 15 feet apart, and choppy. There ain't no way you can get a 20 foot boat into a 15 foot trough. So, we plowed into the first short wave we met, actually diving through it! About 6 inches of water came over the cowling, up over the windshield, over the canvas top we had up, and shot out over the motor and back to sea. Pappy Shipp had his arm on the railing, and he got that soaked. He turned and said, "Hey, boy, what are you doing up there!" Neither Patrick nor I were able to answer him.

Pappy Shipp was 82 years old on this trip, but you wouldn't know it! I was busy most of the time, driving the boat, but I really appreciated the way Patrick took care of Pappy, baiting his hook, setting his line back out, getting him coffee and generally being "Hey! Boy". It tickled me the way he would wind on his reel when he hooked one, the reel going one way, the fish the other. He wanted no help, except in boating the fish, and Patrick was right there. Patrick would put the fish head down in the 30 gallon plastic trash can we had purchased on the second day down there. Pappy would lay down his pole, look around and say, "Well, boys, I'll have to have a cigaret after that." He would sit back and rest and smoke for about 10 minutes, then look for Patrick and say, "Well, boy, I guess I'm about ready for another!"

SCATTER-GRAZING OR GRASS HOPPER THINKING

*Day after day, day after day
We stuck, nor breath nor motion
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean*

Now, that thar is the essence of idleness, the epitome of otiosity. I am pea-green with envy, for that is the height of my ambition. But, hold! That gives me pause. If I could reach that peak of relaxation, I am afraid my friends would stand around me saying “Don’t he look natural” and then pat me in the face with a shovel... Oh! Well, so mote it be.

*Life is real, Life is earnest
And the grave is not its goal
Dust thou art, to dust returneth
Was not spoken of the soul*

Now, that one brings on more thought. Is there a life after death??? Surely, since life is so wonderful, and the soul so complicated and beautiful, the grave is not the end? I firmly believe, but cannot prove, that this is so. I have lived my life based on this belief. Yea! I have coppered all bets... I’m a good boy, I yam (with apologies to Eliza Doolittle).

Speaking of Zen and Buddhism, which I wasn’t, I am seriously into sedentarianism. However, Old Age is not for the faint-hearted. I plan on getting me a Tee Shirt printed, “Grandpas are an endangered species.” Maybe I’ll receive one for Christmas, heh heh. Actually, I feel that Old Age is really wonderful, since the only alternative scares the hell out of me.

Ah! My Love, you are the acme of femininity, the gem of

the ocean, the jewel of the universe. A loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and to hell with Old Omar. I'll never forget old What's-her-name.

Man, if I could distill this and bottle it, I'd have it made.

"All the perfumes of Arabia could not sweeten this one little hand." Ma'am, you should try Chanel No. 5... or mayhaps Corral No. 10.

Lady MacBeth: "Out, out, oh cursed spot."

MacBeth: "Dang it, Spot, ain't you housebroke yet?"

*The boy stood on the burning deck
Selling peanuts by the peck
Up stepped a girl in blue
Hey! I'm on the wrong tack,
I should be scudding downwind.*

*Hark! Hark! The dogs do bark
The larks are lurking in the park*

*Water, water, everywhere
And all the boards did shrink
Water, water, everywhere
Nor any drop to drink*

Excuse me, while I go get a glass of iced tea....

*Oh, sleep, it is a gentle thing
Beloved from Pole to Pole
To Mary Queen the praise be given
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven
That slid into my soul*

Yeah, it is about time for my afternoon nap...

*Hickory, Dickory, Dock
The mouse ran up the clock*

He probably wanted some time to contemplate his navel.

I always wanted to be a repairman for communications satellites, but it took such a loooong screwdriver.

*The Indian took me to his Teepee
Teepee that was dark and creepee
Teepee where I couldn't sleepee
Even when I counted sheepee*

Memory is a sometimes wonderful, sometimes puzzling commodity. The small verse quoted above I heard in an old movie in Stamford in about 1930. Fanny Brice, made up as a little girl in pigtails with a missing front tooth, came out on the stage and lisped the poem. I still think that was one of the funniest skits I have ever seen or heard. It surely stuck with me.

*Let me live in a house,
By the side of the road,
And be a friend to man.*

That was once my theme song...Now it goes like this:

*Gonna lay down my burden,
Down by the riverside,
Ain't gonna study war no more.*

The trouble with the Rat Race is your contemporaries.
Young men talk of girls, dates and sex

Old men talk of aches, pains and bowel movements...
At least, that's what I've been told.

More to come later when I get the energy.

One thing that has always irked me, people never listen to what you say. Communication is one of the greatest problems in the world today. Now, this thought is not original with me. I have read many articles on the subject, and sages and philosophers have held forth on the subject for centuries. Where this was really brought to my attention was when I was teaching technical schools and when I presented technical discourses to large groups for the telephone company. I cultivated the habit of making slightly snide remarks during the discourse, with no emphasis. Soon, someone would catch one and snicker. This aroused others, and I soon had everyones attention. Of course, I had to keep it up, on a small scale, without degenerating into a Bob Hope type of presentation.

One time, when my boss introduced me as a speaker at a General Managers conference, he said "All of you know old Cliff, but I just want to say he is the only guy I know that any time he opens his mouth, I don't know what the hell he's going to say." After the laughter died down he continued "Every time a letter comes across my desk written by Cliff, I have to get out my dictionary." Now, how in the hell do you follow an intro like that? I merely said, "I really thought I was the only one that didn't know what the hell I was going to say!" and went on with my presentation.

One time, or maybe I should say, once upon a time, when I was making a talk, I slipped this in, "The other day one of the field people asked me what was the function of the Staff, since the field people did all of the work? " My answer was, "when you people get into trouble, the Bible

says that Thy Staff shall comfort thee.” That brought the house down.

One time in New York, I was making a presentation on Network Management, at the biannual meeting of Regional Center Managers with the Big Brass. I was telling them about all the new fangled controls, and new fangled switching equipment coming out that was covered in the Bell Laboratorys Technical Journal. My closing statement was : “ Our switching systems and our controls are improving so rapidly, and getting so complicated that I plan on buying ten acres of black land and a flop-eared mule and letting you have it” and sat down. There was polite applause, and we went on. Well, that evening, when I walked in on the happy hour, someone shouted, “ Here comes the Flop-Eared mule!” I never lived it down. When anyone wanted Dallas on the national hotline, it was always, “Hey, flop-eared mule!”

But this is degenerating into a memory session... I’ll try to get back to grass-hopping... I was sitting here composing(?) and was just thinking. Gladys has been having a very rough time for the past two months. The eye operation was successful, but we don’t know yet how much vision will be restored. We are keeping our fingers crossed and praying. I think I have developed into a fairly competent Ladies Maid, but don’t really contemplate pursuing the avocation. However, that kitchen, dishwasher, washer and dryer are now mine. I don’t know that I will abdicate when Old What’s-Her-Name recovers. I find that I thoroughly enjoy it... Hurrah! For Mens Lib... I mean to rise to Equality.... at least.

Well. time to blow out the cat, and put the lamp out.

Another day another dollar....in debt.

This sounds disjointed and jerky, yea, even grass-hoppery. It should, for I may write a couple of lines, or maybe a half a page, then not touch it for a week. This is an open ended journal. I plan on writing “THE END” on my death bed at the age of 99. Hallelujah! My memoirs and hegira will sound the same, for I write them the same way, spasmodically.

Whatcha gonna do when the lake goes dry, honey?

That’s my trouble now, the grass-hopper font has quit fonting. I’ll try priming it with a Coke...

Well, that didn’t work. Mayhaps I should have tried a Cuba Libre..... Naww, that wouldn’t work....would it??? Quien Sabe?

WHY DO YOU KNOCK ON WOOD???

In olden days, in the Auld Country, the Wee People flourished in all their glory, in legends, stories, folklore and in the minds of the people. There were fairies, pixies, elves, leprechauns, banshees, trolls, sprites, you name them, we had them. Of course, this was a wee tad before my time, I ain’t quite that elderly. Anyhoo, among this group were the wood sprites, who lived in the tree trunks. When the trees were chopped down for lumber for homes, furniture, etc. the sprites stayed in the lumber. Now, these here sprites were very mischievous, and dearly loved to cast monkey wrenches in the machinery, so to speak. If they heard people planning a big coup while drinking coffee around the table, they would lay plans to foil the coup. Therefore, it behooved the planners to rap on the wood, to attract the attention of the resident sprite, and say in a loud voice , “ April fool, we didn’t mean it, that is not our plan at all,

forget it.” So that is why you knock on wood.

WHY DO YOU CROSS YOUR FINGERS???

In the century following the crucifixion of Jesus, the Christians were persecuted and put to death. It was a characteristic of the Christians, that they made the Sign of the Cross when faced with danger, or were in peril. This was their method of imploring for God’s help. Of course, any Roman soldier seeing one make the sign of the Cross, immediately arrested or slew one. Therefore, the Christians developed the habit of hiding their hand behind their back and crossing their fingers to represent the Sign of the Cross. We use it to ward off bad luck when we pass a highway wreck, to ward off evil spirits when we pass a graveyard, to ask for goodwill on a precarious venture, to ask for protection for a loved one in their foolishness, and many other times. We are asking for God’s help. So that is why you cross your fingers.

YOU DON’T SPIT UPWIND for obvious reasons

The four leaf clover is considered a good luck token in the land of the Eire people, or Eire Land, or Modern Ireland. Why, I do not know. If anyone can enlighten me on this, I would appreciate it. I just haven’t had the inclination to research the subject. Of course, the three leaf clover, or shamrock is the symbol of Ireland, much as the Lone Star represents Texas.

Research... What you need in this old world is a strong curiosity, and the ability to research and retain answers. Right on! Man! Y’Hear?

Also, you don’t whap your old lady unless the broom is handy, the door is open, and her back is turned... and you feel lucky.

Time is of the essence...dern, and here I thought attar was of the essence...you just never know.

A rose is a rose is a rose...except when it's Pete...

I'm dredging the lees now, so I think I'll quit and recharge my batteries. See you later, alligator.

Now, it's after awhile, crocodile...

However, the font is still dry. My mind is in it's usual coma.

There was a rumor that the Lone Ranger and Tonto broke up when the Lone Ranger found out what "Kemo Sabe" really meant. No, that's a joke. I asked a Mexican what "Kemo Sabe" meant. He said he had often wondered, himself. The closest he could translate it was "Que mas sabe", or "He who knows all." Actually, I read an interview one time, the writer and owner of the series said they had made it up as a catch phrase, it had no meaning. Like I said, Research!

*"On our way to Arkansas
To eat corn bread and possum jaw"*

Now us kids sang that little ditty all the way on that trip to Arkansas... Well, almost all the way. Mom and Dad put the quietus on us after a while. Gladys and I took David, Anita and Daniel on a trip one time. To relieve their boredom, I taught them the following ditty:

*Did you ever go afishing on a bright summer day
And see the little fishes come aswimming down the bay
With their hands in their pockets and their pockets in their
pants
Did you ever see the fishes do the Hoochie Coochie dance
Perca Deedal Dido, Tweet tweet.*

The next time Ronny and Margaret Ann took a long trip, when they got home Old Grandpa GOT TALKED TO, AGAIN!!! Like I said, Grandpas are an endangered species, and should be treated with TLC. You know, I don't believe all I read, but the other day I read that God found He was really too busy to properly look after all the children, so He created Grandpas and Grandmas!

One time Gladys and I were driving from Spur, Texas to Austin for Xmas. We were driving at night, when I ran over a skunk. Literally, I ran square over him. He was in the center of my lane, facing yonder way, with his flag flying in the breeze. I had no chance to dodge him, he was square-dab in the center of us, so not a wheel touched him. BUT, boy, did he anoint us, fore, aft and abeam. I think the muffler received the main dose. We went all the rest of the way with four windows wide open, and to heck with the winter wind. All the perfumes of Arabia would have been most welcome. That old 1934 Chevrolet was never the same again.

I read an article-Now that is my perennial excuse-about a research foundation in Florida that received a grant to research gout. They did it up brown. In looking at case histories, one bright young lad noticed a predominance of prominent people that suffered with gout. In looking back through history, he noticed that quite a few geniuses had gout. A cohort had noted that the more severe the case of gout, the higher the level of uric acid in the blood. These two bright young lads had also noted that man was the only

animal with uric acid in their blood.

They wondered, not unnaturally, if uric acid had anything to do with intelligence. Now, theoretically, this had nothing to do with gout, but it was very intriguing, especially to scientists. So they got permission to pursue the question. They set up an experiment with a large group of college students, complete with some mumbo jumbo to disguise their real purpose. They gave the students IQ tests and blood tests for uric acid. They plotted the curves on a chart and the curve of the IQ almost exactly followed the curve of the uric acid. The higher the uric acid, the higher the IQ.

Now, they didn't know what to do with this marvelous conclusion, but I arrived at a conclusion and a question:

Conclusion: If anyone tells you that you are full of urine, it is not necessarily derogatory.

Question: Why in the hell don't they inject chimpanzees with uric acid and elect them to congress?

*Young people Wheel and Deal
Us old folks Wither and Dither*

There I was, prancing along on my sturdy steed, the gentle wind was rippling the leaves, dappling the sunlight on the grass in the wooded glen. Yea, I was in search of high adventure, mayhaps even a spot of romance. I was in full armor, my trusty sword at my side, prepared for any dastards, cowans, or even a Knight with an opposing viewpoint. Then, Hark! I hear a fair maiden screaming in distress... or at least it was a maiden and she was fair screaming... I clapped spurs to old Paint and galloped off to the rescue. As I came into the dale I saw a coach upended, with a dragon devouring the horses. The maid was screeching off down the road, her dress up around her hips, trying for a four minute mile. I charged up to the dragon

with my lance at the ready, when he reared back and blew a stream of fire, scorching my beard and scaring old Paint out of a years growth.

Old Paint promptly up-ended, dumping me, and took off after the maid, probably thinking she might need transportation away from there more than I seemed to. I drew my trusty sword, Old Excaliber, and charged the dragon, smiting him hip and thigh. Also stern. I lopped off one of his fore-legs, when he reached out and clamped his jaws on my shoulder and commenced shaking me like a rat, shaking me...shaking meee...shaking..."Wake up, Daddy. The Cowboys are on T.V. and quit poking me in the stomach with your finger." Well, now if hadn't been football, I would have TALKED TO THAT GAL! Did she but know it, she was skewered with Old Excaliber!

Now, I made the statement earlier, that I might titivate the subject matter a tad, but I would not exaggerate, nor will I prevaricate. Therefore I have to make a slight correction on the above classic. Actually, it was not the Cowboys, it was the Raiders and the Dolphins... But I still didn't Talk To That Gal.

You know, these vagrant thoughts air getting elusive. Which reminds me of a little ditty I ran across long ago and converted:

*The wheels of the gods grind exceedingly slow
Tho they grind exceedingly well
But compared to Old Grandpa's writing
They go like a bat out of hell!*

In the olden days of golf, there was no marking of the ball on the green. You could not pick up your ball nor touch it without penalty. If your opponent's ball was between your ball and the hole, you were just out of luck, and since you were "away" you had to shoot first. The proper name for

this situation was stymied. That term has somewhat held over today. When you are balked or frustrated, you are said to be stymied. Sometimes your best friend glories when he can stymie you. A similar situation occurs in pool when the eight ball blocks any of your possible shots. You are said to be “behind the eight ball”, “stymied”, frustrated, beleaguered, restricted, bound, confined, corraled or otherwise penned in, hemmed in, walled in, fenced in, railed in, hedged in or otherwise limited in action. Man, Me and Old Roget is full of them—other stuff, too... Sometimes you can even have a sticky wicket, Old Boy! Egad! and Zounds! Tally Ho! The Fox!!!

Athos: “Ho! Varlet, my gun, I would go agunning”

Porthos: “Ho! Varlet, my fishing rod, I would go afishing”

Aramis: “Ho! Varlet, my rapier...”

You know, it puzzles me

And often I wonder

Why I can hear those Rock records

But I still can't hear it thunder?

Gladys says that Old Grandpa ain't hard of hearing, he's just hard of listening... Yea! She accused me of having Directional Hearing. Or was that Selectional?... Whatever..

In the days of old, yea, even before the Knights were bold, the Greeks worshipped the gods of their mythology. The great god Bacchus was the god of wine, and had his many Bacchanals and Bacchae, who celebrated the Bacchanalia. Their drinking toast and battle cry was Evox. Now, that is all spelled out in history and mythology books, and in general is regarded as the true facts. However, the old patriarchs passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation the actual origin of the terminology. Diligent research by us researchers has opened this to modern interpretation. It is a true fact that the old wine busts

(forerunners of the beer busts) were eating, drinking and merry-making orgies. When the lads and lassies had overindulged, they would retire to the outback and force regurgitation, then come in and start with a clean slate, so to speak. One time, the host was looking for Joe, and yelled, “Hey, Ari, wheres a Joe?” “Joe, hesa BACK’N-ALLEY....EVOE up!” Thus are great legends born...

*Of all the words of tongue or pen,
The direst are these: “I’ll raise you ten!”*

The people in the lowlands of Europe, Holland and all, carved their shoes from wood for centuries. I believe they still do to some extent. They call the wooden shoes sabots. In the early days of World War II, Germany overran the low countries, and forced the natives to work in their war factories, making ammunition, tanks, guns, etc. In the evenings when the second shift shut down for the night, some of the Dutch, not being stupid people, would take off their sabots and drop them in the machinery. When the machines were fired up the next morning, all hell would break loose, and the machines would break down. This is whence came the word Sabotage....

There is a tree native to India that has peculiar growing habits. It grows very widespread, and the limbs send down shoots to the ground. These shoots take root, expanding and forming additional supports for the limb, becoming auxiliary trunks. The limbs then spread farther and farther, sending down additional shoots. One tree may cover acres and acres, very densely. They call this tree a Banyan Tree... Little did they know... They have the Murphy Genealogy Tree...

I AM A FOE OF THE STATUS QUO

I had that motto pasted on the wall of my office, and the clerks were always complaining that I was changing everything too much all the time, stream-lining their records, improving them, making more work. They dearly loved routine, and resisted all change. They finally came around, though.... Had to...

Which is the heavier, a pound of feathers or a pound of gold??? Actually, a pound of feathers is 4 ounces heavier than a pound of gold....(Avoirdupois versus troy).

1/2 of 2 and 2 is what? 3...You work a problem in it's algebraic sequence: 1/2 of 2 is 1 and 2 is 3. QED... Quod Erat Demonstratum... Which was to be shown... N'est-ce pas? Oui, Oui Senor. Ja, das was goot! 'Sta Bueno...Tres Bien!!

Well, it is now about 3 months since the last report on Gladys. Her vision has improved to the point where it was before the operation, thank the Good Lord! She has quit taking the heart regulatory pills, the anti-biotics, and is slowly returning to normal. Awfully slowly. But I have not, and will not abdicate the husbandry. That kitchen is mine. When it comes to roasts, spitted or otherwise, ribs and yams, bacon and eggs, cakes or cobblers, I am reigning supreme... even washing up, yet. Me and old Bird's Eye get along fine.

I can whip up a mouth-watering peach cobbler. I make the crust from scratch. I haven't perfected the crust yet, but what I do to a Duncan Hines cake mix would raise old Dunc's eyebrows. I take a basic Golden Yellow or Butter cake mix and mix it with 2 cups of pecans, 4 eggs, 1 cup of toasted coconut flakes, 1 package of Jello vanilla pudding, some vanilla flavoring, 1 cup of Eagle Brand milk, and mix it all in my giant KitchenAid beater with a cake attachment,

pour it into a Bundt pan and bake it in a preheated oven at 350F for 1 hour. Anyone wishing a copy of my special recipe, send a rusty old \$5 bill and a stamped, self-addressed envelope, and I will enter your name on my special list...

In researching the Gateley family, we found that they came from England in the seventeenth century. The name has been spelled Gateley, Gately, and Gatly, but was originally spelled Gaite Lieh or Liehe. Gaite was Old English for goat and Liehe was meadow, or lea. Sooo...All of us goatfields gather round, Y'hear?

Now is the time for all good men to gather round and help them durn Cowboys!!! Right now the Redskins are Whapping up on them 27-7.

Speaking of Redskins, in the days of old, in the West, the Indian tribes had many ceremonial dances. The Rain Dance, Fertility Dance, ceremonial rites inducting new Chiefs, the rites of passage from boyhood to manhood, and many others. One of the more unusual ones was the Marriage Celebration. This was a dance held by the Groom's Escort around the "Marriage Plant".

After the marriage ceremony, the Escort took the Groom into bondage, and performed a slow and stately dance around the Marriage Plant, accompanied by the slow beat of tom-toms. As the dance ended, four stalwart braves took the Groom forcibly, one on each nether extremity, swang him between them like a sack of corn, and lofted him unto the center of the Marriage Plant. The Groom then very carefully and painfully extracted himself from the undesirable enclave and hied himself unto the hinterlands promptly, murmuring a few good-bye phrases to his erstwhile and ex-bosom buddies.

Actually, the Marriage Plant is an arborescent plant of the Lily family, having rigid leaves with a spiny tip, very sharp. Lo, the poor Indian bridegroom, upon landing in the

Plant, immediately rose six feet in the air, ran twelve feet before he hit the ground, then raised a cloud of dust in evacuating the premises, screeching bloody murder and calling down imprecations upon the heads of his so-called pals.... His ex-Escort, ex-pals, and ex-friends then gathered around the Marriage Tree and did a hilarious, joyful stomp dance, yelling “YUCCA, YUCCA, YUCCA”.

An early day settler, who was privileged to witness a marriage ceremony, erroneously recorded the name of the Marriage Plant as the Yucca Plant, not realizing that was the way the Indians laughed! Thus was legend and terminology originated!

So mote it be!

In Dallas, every time I passed the Cullen and Boren sporting goods store, I was reminded of a Fastidious Roue.

The gorgeous blond said, “Sir, I hear you are quite a wit. I think I can give you tit-for tat.”

“Okay” sez I, “TAT.”

SCATTERGRAZING, The Sequel

Here it is now, May 1 1990, and I haven't touched the Marvelous Memoirs for several weeks. Just now I was in the Lazyboy, in the Lotus Position, meditating mightily, when I had a peculiar thought. After taking some Excedrin and mulling it over, I reached a profound decision. If any of you cotton-pickin' chillern ever let this Sublime Saga fall into the hands of a Psychiatrist, I don't want to talk about it! If any of you have a Psychiatrist for a friend, don't let these puerile ululations get near him. He would probably be amazed at the very few marbles with which one can function. Or at the size of the deck with which one can play poker!

I shall digress a moment. You know that ululating means anything waving or wavery, such as howling or wailing, but do you know what an ululating current is? Direct current is an electrical current that travels in one direction continuously, as from a battery through a light bulb. Alternating current travels in reverse directions alternately, as from a dynamo. But an ululating current??? I ran across that one studying the course on telephony from the Bell Library, back in Spur, Texas in 1941. An alternating current is usually represented by a sine wave. When the current is travelling in one direction, the wave is above the line of reference, which I shall call the Null. When the current is in the opposite direction, the wave is below the Null. This can be seen very graphically on an oscilloscope.

In the old magneto crank phone, direct current was supplied by batteries. This flowed through the diaphragm of the transmitter, then through the primary winding of a repeating coil. This was a constant flow of DC, or direct current. The voice made the diaphragm vibrate, which fluctuated the resistance of the diaphragm to the current, causing the DC to fluctuate in the same wave pattern of the

voice. This was a fluctuating current, always in the same direction, thus an ululating current! This current flowed through the primary of the coil, causing an inducted reaction in the secondary winding, a true alternating current, or AC, with the voice pattern impressed on it. Come to think of it, the ululating current might more properly be called the ululating direct current! It can also be seen graphically on an oscilloscope. The sine wave would be entirely above the line, or Null. In the secondary winding, the null point would be the center tap of the winding.

This dissertation is put in here for two reasons. One is to let you know my career successes were not accidents nor luck. I worked damn hard and studied for them! Two is to tell you to study your job, no matter how menial, and learn all you can about it. Your education does NOT end with your diploma! NO, it BEGINS with your diploma and continues the rest of your life! Lesson over....

Well, here it is, the 26th of September, 19 naught 90. Gladys passed her 74th birthday with a usual dining out. I passed old 77 with a surprise visit from Roger, Margaret Ann, Anita and Joel. Of course, the visit was between the birthdays, and we shared the honors. They brought a humongous birthday cake, which we're still eating on. They also brought two new computer programs for old Grandpa. One was Sierra, with Solitaire II, and Friday Night Poker Club, with 5 card stud, 5 card draw, 7 card stud and "Texas hold-em". All of these with five players! Now that is some program! There was a lot of thought and effort in that program, for those players are sharp, and will run bluffs. Each week I can hardly wait for Friday night!

The other day I measured an inch of rain in my rain gauge, and thought to myself that would really do the grass good. The county farm agent told me, during one of my research projects, that a really good yard needed one inch of water

weekly. So the inch of rain set my mind on it's usual meandering path: how much water would it require to put an inch on our yard?.....mmmm....Oh! well! Here goes again:

Our yard is $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre

One acre = 43,560 square feet

$\frac{3}{4}$ acre = 32,670 square feet

1 square foot = 144 square inches

$32,670 \times 144 \times 1" = 4,704,480$ cubic inches to cover the yard 1 inch.

1 gallon = 231 cubic inches

$4,704,480 \div 231 = 20366$ gallons required to cover the yard with one inch of water.

One month's bill runs around \$21.20 for 5190 gallons. All over that would be \$1.60 per thousand gallons.

Watering the yard one week would cost $20.366 \times 1.60 = \$32.58$

4.33 (weeks in month) times $\$32.58 = \141.17

Conclusion: Prohibitive moneywise, and consider the additional and heavier mowng! I'll meditate the question from the Lotus position. Look for the interesting conclusions sometime later....Besides, how do you know when you've squirted one inch? I'll research that later, pending the meditative conclusion.

It has now come upon the 17th of December with Christmas just around the corner. We plan to go up to Roger and Alice's on Friday the 21st and stay over Christmas. Laura and Todd coming up from Houston, so it will be a meeting of the clan. Turkey, ham and all the trimming's. Gladys has already cooked up candies, cookies, and other goodies galore! I have already gained 4 pounds, and it hasn't even started! This old Ladies Maid gets in on all of it.hehhehheh!

Roger came down this morning and spent the day. Most of the day he spent straightening out my WS2000 and Word

Perfect programs that I had really messed up trying to shift some of the Memoirs and letters around. I'm back to square one, now, and back at the wheel, hacking and doodling away. He updated some of my programs, like Lotus, 123, Cookbook, Quicken and Mailist. What scares me is that I'm beginning to understand some of this crap. Hoo! Boy! I think I'll take a break and update my back-up floppies.

I didn't get very far! Roger hadn't been gone 30 minutes when Ronnie, Margaret and Daniel dropped in and visited for the rest of the day. A most enjoyable day. Had homemade chili and beans with enchiladas for supper. It is now Tuesday, 2:00pm. This day has an even pace. Getting ready for the Xmas trek. Went to town and bought a 96 Qt. Thermos ice chest and gassed up the Van, now ready to load it up. If you will excuse me, I think I'll go and assume the Lotus position and meditate....

Well, after much meditation, not to mention a most enjoyable Xmas in Dallas, being snowed in, iced in, sleeted in and over-fed, it has now come upon Jan 5, 19 naught 91. The old year passed quietly, and it has been nasty cold weather since we got back. We are sticking close to taw, awaiting more clement weather. Also awaiting Gladys' next eye operation on 21 Feb. Our next safari will probably be to Corpus Christi to visit Grady and Rudy. We will also visit Juanita, who has pulled up stakes and moved back to Aransas Pass. We are really enjoying the new Van.

It is now the 11th of April, 19 naught 91, and I have been very remiss in posting the Memoirs with marvelous tidbits of the trials and tribulations of Grandpa and Grandma Murphy. Gladys had the left eye operated on, on February 21st. Everything OK, except the healing process is awfully slow. It has been a month now, and I believe the process has been slower and more painful than the first eye. We will know more about it in two more months. She goes in tomorrow for a check-up, maybe we'll find out a little

more. Gladys said that if she had another eye, I wouldn't be able to talk her in to going through that again!

Floyd had his eye operated on for the same condition, and he is progressing nicely. Of course, he doesn't have the services of a built in Ladies Maid, poor lad!

Gladys and I were sitting out on the back patio last evening about dusk, smelling the flowers and admiring the trees and the back yard. A little hummingbird, a cute little dude, came darting across the patio and came to a screeching halt about a foot from where my feeder usually hangs. He sat there on nothing, looking at the empty hanger, then turned and looked me in the eye-balls, looked back at the hanger and flew off.

Gladys said, "Well, I guess he told you off, you ought to put that feeder up." "Yeah, I guess I should." That little dude came back about 15 minutes later and went through his ritual again, this time staring at me for some time, looked like he was trying to decide whether to dive-bomb me. I said, "OK, OK" and went in to the garage and dug out the feeder, filled it with sugar-water and red food coloring.

I hung it up on the holder and sat back down. It was 7:45, just about dusk. That little dude showed up at 7:57, and drank so much I thought he would founder! There are a few around today, but they'll flock around as soon as the word gets out.

I am cleaning out one of the flower beds, slowly. I take a small stool, sit and pull weeds. Margaret and Ronnie gave Gladys a beautiful Lily for Easter, so I set it out in the bed and watered it good. The last time we were up at Roger and Alice's, I dug up 5 good clumps of Ivy, so I set them out in another flower bed that I had cleaned out last week. I love yard work, but I sure have to take it slow. I now hire the mowing and trimming.

I am now on a religious diet: I eat what I want and pray I don't gain weight! When a reporter asked Katherine

Hepburn what kind of a diet kept her so slender (skinny?), she replied “ If it tastes good, spit it out!” Like I said before, when you get up to the age where you can buy the good food you crave, the Doctor says no-no!

As I have mentioned before, as old father time creeps up on you, of necessity you modify your diet. I have always loved oatmeal, so it has become an important staple in my diet. I often have it for supper when I want to eat light. There is a recipe on the box for cooking it in the microwave. Mix 3/4 cup water, 1/3 cup of oatmeal, dash of salt, microwave on medium for 5 minutes. Works like a charm. Of course, old Grandpa had to modify the procedure a tad. In the first place, that ain't quite enough oatmeal. So... If you use 1/2 cup of oatmeal, how much water do you use?

RESEARCH!!!

Using ratiocination:

$1/3 > 3/4 = 1/2 > X$ $X =$ the new amount of water.

Going decimal: $.333 > .75 = .5 > X$

The product of the extremes equals the product of the means, thus: $.333 \text{ times } X = .75 \text{ times } .5$

Or: $.333X = .375$

X equals 1.126126126, or 1 1/8 cups of water.... Voila, Monsieur!

Not quite! Grandpa still had to put in the SWAG factor. The SWAG factor is used extensively in Toll Switching engineering. After all the growth factors, customer usage, etc. etc. are figured in, then the SWAG factor is entered to take care of minor oversights. SWAG factor: I deleted 1/8 cup of water and substituted a gob of oleo. Perfect!!!

Note; SWAG, or Scientific Wildass Guess!

18 Sept 1991

Time is flitting, and the old font is drying up. We are living a very sedentary life, so nothing much to put in the Chronicle. The sedentarianism is compelled by the state of our health, mine and Grandma's. Grandma's heart is still acting up.

The Doctor last week changed her prescription again and she has to go back in two weeks to check the effect. She still has fibrillations, but not so bad now. Her blood pressure is high, and her pulse rate is way too low, around 30 to 36. That is what the Doctor is working on now. She can't do much walking, and is very short of breath. So the Ladies Maid has come back into his own! My health problems have taken a peculiar turn. It seems that my headaches that I have been afflicted with for years stems primarily from nervous tension.

The last 20 years of my employment with the telephone company, my job carried a lot of responsibility, and was a very nerve-wracking job. My retirement at 61 with 100 percent disability, with hypertension, high blood-pressure and black headaches was merited. My allergies didn't help the situation. I cleared up considerably, and was doing fine until about 2 years ago, when Gladys went downhill with her heart. I have been really worried, and have been building up the tension for 2 years. Some small family problems didn't help the situation.

Anyway, about a month ago I broke out with a bad rash on my hands and feet, driving me crazy (not an overnight trip, don't pack a bag!). The Doctor has been treating me with Predizone and some Hydro-something tablets. I have completed the Predizone course, which straightened me out like a clothes line. I am still on the Hydro-, which makes me sleepy, lethargic, and with no ambition, but which stops the itching and the rash.

However, we are both in so much better health than a lot of

people our age that we give thanks to God for our good health. What worries me most is Gladys' slow rate of recovery. We will go on, plodding along and playing it by ear. Que sera, sera!

The final verdict is not in on Gladys' eyes. She goes in on 30 October for the final check-up and the new prescription for glasses. Her progress seems to be very good, so she is not too worried, thank the Lord.

Our birthdays passed quietly, with the customary dining out. 75 and 78! Lord have mercy on these old bones. Now 78 is getting to be a tad elderly. I feel like the elderly gentleman who, when the doctor told him to cut out half his sex life, asked "OK Doc, you want me to cut out the looking or the thinking?" Oh, well!

27 Jan, 19 naught 92

Well, some water has passed under the bridge, some of it a tad murky. I have been very lax on the Stupendous Saga, so I'll try to fill in...As we have notified all of you by now, we have moved to town. It took us the entire month of December to get moved, and we are still unpacking and moving furniture around. We may get settled by summer, but I don't know what year. If you want to know, it is quite a pain to skinny down from 5 bed rooms to two!!! We still need some Dynatrim!

We are right in the middle of everything, within 3 blocks of all the stores, 7 blocks to Scott & White hospital. There are 8 restaurants within 5 blocks! The apartment is very quiet, seems to be well sound-proofed. Can't wait until spring to try the small swimming pool. Just learned yesterday that all the water heaters are wired to the managements light meter. They also pay the water! We pay only electricity, (all electric). I don't know if I can stand it! The rent is \$325 a month!

Gladys made her latest trip to the Doctor last Monday, to find the results of her latest tests. Her eyes are now OK,

corrected to 20\20. The only problems, they tire easily, and get dry frequently. She uses Tears Plus eye drops all the time, so she is not complaining a-tall, a-tall. The heart fibrillations are still with her, and will be from now on. No excitement, no worry, no lifting, etc.etc., take it easy, but otherwise everything rosy, maybe I'll see you in 6 months or so! Do anything you feel like doing! Hallelujah!! We went home and packed the van. Took off Tuesday morning for Corpus Christi and visited Grady and Rudy, went shopping, dining and sight-seeing. Went through New Braunfels, ditto, and on to San Antonio. Visited friends, dropped by to see JT's and Alberta's, but they had gone to the coast! Anyway, we got back late Friday. We rested up and watched a ho-hum Superbowl, (at least I did).

Grandma just told me to pack the van in the morning for Dallas, to see Roger and Ronny et al. That cotton-pickin' Doctor didn't know what he was doing when he turned Gladys loose! I think our next sojourn will be to Galveston, to stay in the Flagstaff motel, built out over the water. We'll do a little fishing and see if we can find some Jambalaya! That motel is on our Allstate travel club, 50% off!

28 Jan, same year!

Just had to come back and tell you about my computer room set-up. All we have in this (small) bedroom is my 6 foot computer table with the computer, printer, telephone and a 5 foot book-case on it! Also 2 bachelor chests with 5 foot book-cases on them; a rolling TV stand with TV and 144 video tapes in tape cases: Gladys' 4 foot sewing machine cabinet that unfolds to 6 foot; a 2-drawer filing cabinet; an office arm-chair with rollers and arms (for old Grandpa to use on the computer); a table floor-lamp (for

reading); a two-drawer end table beside my Lazyboy (what else!). I keep telling Grandma her \$1500 sewing machine is de trop, but she pays me no never-mind! That dern sewing machine has more computer programs than my computer!

I must tell you about my sound system, since you asked! As you know, we live in an apartment with NEIGHBORS! Looking forward to eventual apartment living, I gathered the equipment while we were still in the country. I bought 3 Realistic (Radio Shack) model SA-150 stereo amplifiers, each with 3 inputs, 2 outputs and a jack for earphones. I can listen to TV or switch over and listen to AM-FM, or cassette tapes, with no speakers going on either of them! I usually listen to music while working (now Gladys says playing) with the computer.

I wired the TV in the living room to the other 2 amplifiers (his and hers), so we can TV without bothering the neighbors! Of course, one is by my Lazyboy and one by her's. I kinda wish I had me for a neighbor!

24 July, 1992

Time is slipping by with increasing rapidity. Like the old man in my poem, I sometimes swear that I can see that hour hand moving! Life is pleasantly tedious, easing along in an easy flow. Nothing earth-shaking going on, taking it easy, smelling the roses, enjoying the sunshine, the lack of responsibility, the small pleasures in life, the joy of companionship, the good fellowship in the apartment complex courtyard (Gladys' Sewing and Quilting Society!)

The bed of roses has developed a few thorns along the way. Gladys had a stroke about three months ago. She doesn't want me dwelling on it, so will only say she was partially paralyzed on her left side. Had to use a walker for about two months. Still light-headed and dizzy. Taking coumadin to thin her blood to prevent another stroke. Can't get out too much, goes to the store with me once in a while.

Can't travel, so we sold the Van. That was a blow, but Gladys is now doing very well. Takes her own calisthenics, and the paralysis is slowly going by the wayside. Her attitude is very good, and she is determined to completely recover! The Sewing Circle is giving her priceless group therapy. She is determined to get the better of her ailment, and when that gal is determined, walls are going to move! We will keep you posted....

6 August, 19 naught 92

I was just browsing through the above entry, and just had to tell you this. Last afternoon Gladys went out to join the Sewing Circle, and I came in to mess around on the computer. I got to thinking about Gladys and her present health, so I wrote her a love poem. I got kind of carried away, so I printed it out and took it out to the Circle. I asked Gladys if I could read it to them. She didn't know what to expect, so she said go ahead. I tried to read it, but it was so sentimental I choked up, and gave it to one of the ladies to read. She read it, and the group was suitably impressed. So far I have printed four copies they requested. To save you the trouble of digging it out of my poetry, I will reprint it here.

FOLK LORE

From Great-great grandmother

To relieve bee stings, apply lean raw meat.

For sprains, mix white of an egg and salt into a paste, apply to sprain.

To stop bleeding, make a paste of flour and a little water, apply.

To make soap, boil one pound of lye, four pounds of lard in the boiler for five hours, then add twelve gallons of water and boil a few minutes. Let it stand until cold.

To kill skunk odors, mix vinegar and tomato juice in equal parts and rub on affected parts.

To polish old furniture, boil equal parts of sweet oil and vinegar for ten minutes, saturate an old piece of silk goods and rub on furniture.

To clean kid gloves, rub with very slightly damp bread crumbs.

To bleach yellowed linen that has been laid away, soak in buttermilk for two or three days.

To remove wrinkles in the skin, mix one ounce of white wax, two ounces of strained honey, two ounces of juice from lily bulbs, melt and stir.

To remove freckles, put half a pound of best Windsor soap scraped fine into half a gallon of boiling water. Stir well until it cools, add a pint of spirits of wine and half an ounce of oil of rosemary, stir well.

TRIVIA

This Chapter shall contain small extraneous events or facts that may or may not be of interest. The major earthshaking events have been covered, now to the nitty gritty.

Dad told us one time that grandpa W R Murphy, in his younger days, was an ordained Baptist Minister. In the early days of World War 1, he preached against war, and our involvement. Feelings ran high, and he really thumped the pulpit and chewed the scenery. It split his church, and they ended up kicking him out. I don't know where the church was, and I don't know much about afterwards. I do remember that he and Doc ran a barber shop at one time. I remember him giving me a haircut. I don't know where or when.

Grandpa told us boys one time that he left Georgia in the front of a posse. He let us stew about that for a few days, and then told us the truth. He was having some trouble with a family that had a slue of big strapping boys, and he felt that the climate would be more clement elsewhere...anywhere elsewhere! He didn't say what the trouble was, even after we asked. Presumably he went to Marshall, Arkansas, since uncle Edgar was born in Marshall on 7 Aug 1895. Since Dad was born on 30 Oct 1888 in Augusta, Georgia, the exodus must have taken place within that time period. I wonder how they travelled?

Uncle Edgar was the preacher at the New Hope Baptist church in his earlier days, between Dardanelle and Centerville. He gained quite a reputation as an evangelist and as a preacher. Grandpa told us one time that a delegation from the First Baptist church in Tulsa, Ok, came to interview him. They offered him the pastorship of the First Baptist church, with a good bit more money, and, according to Grandpa, "The Lord called him over!"

He gained quite a reputation in that church and served one

term as President of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was later sent to form the White City Baptist church in a ritzy suburb of Tulsa. His flock there presented him with a 4 seated Piper Cub. As he was a pilot, he flew to all the conferences. He flew in to Austin one time, called me from the airport and I picked him up. We put him up for a few days, and he took Gladys and the children for a ride in the Piper. I think he also took Rudy and her children for a ride. I was working and missed it. Another time he flew in to Dallas and stayed with us while he attended a conference.

Uncle Pat, the eldest, achieved notoriety of a different kind. Gladys, Alice and I went to Cisco and Ranger to research Uncle Pat for the genealogy. We visited his and Aunt Clover's graves, getting the dates from them. We went to the local paper and viewed the microfilm for the obituaries. Back in those days they did not have obituaries, but we found a write-up on Uncle Pat on the front page! He was a past Commander of the American Legion Post and was very active in the VFW. He and

a partner owned radiator repair shops in Cisco and Ranger.

In his youth he had signed a contract with a Major League baseball team, the paper didn't say which one. He almost immediately went into the army for World War 1, and served as an ambulance driver. He was severely wounded and came out unable to fulfill his baseball contract.

Dad was telling us about a church they attended in his youth. The preacher was of the fire and brimstone, give 'em hell variety, and his favorite subject was the Wandering Tribes of Israel. His favorite protagonist was Old Eber, a patriarch of the tribe who lead them out of the wilderness, with God's help, of course. According to the preacher Old Eber was the wisest, strongest, kindest, profoundest, deepest, the mostest and bestest leader ever! Dad and his brothers became heartily sick of Old Eber. They started tabbing anything outstanding as "Old Eber". The biggest

melon in the patch was Old Eber. The biggest fish of the catch was Old Eber. The Hero of any yarn was Old Eber. Needless to say, us boys just had to carry on such a noble tradition! You might even run across a mention or two of Old Eber in this Marvelous Saga!!

Dad and his brothers were playing with a pistol, firing at a target and cans. They ran out of bullets, except for one that wouldn't fire. They kept snapping it, but no fire. They retired to their playroom in the house, one of them carrying the pistol. They had named that pistol "Big Magic". In the room, one of them was waving that pistol in a circle and chanting "Round and round, roared Big Magic" and snapping it all the time. On one circle, as he was pointing at the ceiling, that dud bullet fired! Scared the Bejabbers out of all of them! Also made Christians and Good Gun-Handlers out of all of them!

Grady said Grandpa W R Murphy told him one time that his dad was cornered in a field by an old bull. His dad was also named W R, and he had lost an arm. The bull cornered him against a fence, and was butting him, when he pulled out his pistol and shot him between the eyes. Killed him daid. That's all Grady could remember of the tale. It's tantalizing little tidbits like this that make me wish some of those old boys had kept diaries!

Last week I was researching our old bank statements, pinning down the time frame of some of our moves. I ran across an old letter from Richard dated 11-27-1980. In it he asked if I would make some tapes, just talking about me and our life, about all the family. He especially wanted to hear about Grady and I, and why we called each other "Chumps". I had told him the story, but he wanted it on tape!

Well, Richard, I'm finally getting around to doing something about it. Several times I considered tapes, but that is highly unsatisfactory. Extemporaneous speech is

OK, but you cannot go back and edit it, rephrase it, add to it or shift it around. Old Wordstar 2000 is ideal, but even with it I have been on this saga for 8 months now, and still no end in sight. Think of the problems I would have had on tape! But all is not lost!! I plan on sitting down to a tape recorder when this gets a little farther along, and reading this into the tape, enlarging and commenting as I go. The future progeny will then have the dubious honor of hearing my mellifluous tones recording these marvelous, madcap adventures. The only drawback I can foresee is that their stereos, or whatever, will still have volume controls!

But, back to the Two Chumps! Grady and I were always having Serious Discussions in our youth. Especially between High School and Marriage. In one of the more serious, we were settling the problems of the country, our future, the problems of life in general and ours in particular. We came to the question of Conformity. Should we or should we not, that is the question! We decided that the way of the nonconformist was haaard! He might dine sumptuously on soul satisfaction, but the bread on the table would be moldy crumbs. As one pundit said, "He who takes on a wife and children gives hostages to Fortune." And we definitely intended to take on wife and children!

So Grady looked at me and said, "Shall we be nonconformists, or shall we be Chumps with the rest of them?"

I said, "Hi, Chump!"

He said, "Hi, Chump!"

So mote it be!

At various and sundry times, come a time to eat, we made a habit of stopping in a small grocery store and picking up a bite to eat. One of our regular choices was a handful of sharp cheddar cheese, a handful of peppermint or peanut stick candy, and a handful of crackers! Ambrosia! That was a favorite of a lot of the oldtime country folk. Mom was the

one who introduced us to that little delicacy.

Before you turn up your nose and snort, just consider—you can order a slab of hot apple pie topped with a slab of cheddar cheese in most high class restaurants. Very little difference!

A present day snack I love is the old standby, peanut butter and crackers. One night I got a brainstorm and tried peanut butter and Fritos! That is an improvement! As a lad, I would take a bottle of Coke and pour a handful of salted peanuts in it and sipple on it, getting a few peanuts and some coke on each draught. Nowadays I just sip the diet decaffeinated coke along with the peanut butter and Fritos...And they call this Progress??? Huh!

Another snack I swear by is red sock-eye salmon right out of the can, sprinkled with pepper sauce or vinegar and finely chopped onion, eaten with crackers. Ideal bachelor food, easy to fix and very little cleanup. Or good sardines ditto. Kippered herring not bad. Dang, I think I'll go have a plate of left-over barbecued beef sausage and pinto beans, excuse me...

In Bastrop one morning, we had 8 or 10 Buffalo fish that weighed from 12 to 28 pounds. Most of them about 16 or 18 pounds. We geared up the old Model T with wet towsacks and took off for the sawmills over around McDade. We pulled up by one about 4:30 PM. They shut down at five. We parked just off the road and arranged our fish for display. An elderly black gentleman came along and looked the fish over.

“How much is that old Big One?” He asked.

“One Dollar” Dad replied.

“Well, I think he is too big, his meat will be too coarse. How much is this little one?”

“One dollar” Dad said, “They are all one dollar apiece.”

“Well...Hmm...” He pulled his pocket book out and carefully fished out a dollar bill. He gave it to Dad and said,

“Well...I think I’ll take one...Hmmm...Yeah...I just think I’ll take that old Big One!” Yea! Man! Right on...

At 5 O’clock the rest sold like hot cakes...

In Hogtown one time a group of us boys were playing on Hog Creek, about 1/4 mile upstream from the bridge in town. There was a big pecan tree growing on a cliff, overhanging the creek. We tied a rope on a limb about 10 feet out over the creek, hanging down a bit below the cliff, about 12 feet over the water (from the end of the rope). We would get a big run and swing way out over the water and hopefully up on the bank on the other side. One time I didn’t run hard enough.

I hit the cliff on the far side with my chest. My arms, shoulders and head was above ground. It knocked the breath out of me and stunned me. I fell into the creek and lay there a while getting my breath back. For the next 6 weeks I went around hump shouldered, hardly daring to take a deep breath. I was sore, and afraid to tell anyone lest I somehow be taken to blame and punished.

About 2 months later I was playing in the front yard. Our old flat bed Model T truck was parked under the old oak tree. The bed was about 4 feet off the ground, and I found a limb just right to swing up and hook my heels on the bed of the truck. Stretched out parallel to the ground, I would swing up a storm, lots of fun...Yeah, until that little old limb broke! I fell flat on my back, and that time I couldn’t get up. I couldn’t get enough air to yell loud, but Mom heard me and had a fit. She called the Doctor, and after examining me he asked:

“Well, lad, when did you break these ribs?” Ribs? What ribs?

“These three right here” Ouch! You mean those ribs?

“Yes, and you have cracked them again!”

Well, I had to tell them all about it, Mom scolded me for not telling, and the Doctor taped me with a yard or two of

tape, and I went around for quite a while not breathing much a'tall. I still wonder how we attained adulthood. I have always had to comb my hair straight back. I had 5 big scars on my head, and when I tried to part my hair the part would wander off over yonder! Oh! Well!

I had a very traumatic experience here a while back. We were visiting Roger and Alice and the house was full of progeny romping around having a ball. One of the children hollered "Hey, Grandpa". I opened my mouth. but Roger, my SON, answered him!!! My Son, the Grandfather!!! That do bring on deep consideration on how Tempus do Fugit! I have been retired from Grandpa to Gramps! I can remember very well how proud I was when I became Grandpa, but I can't say that I'm overly fond of being Gramps! Oh, well, at least I can look forward to Great Great Grandpa! I figure I'll be 96...Three years before I write "The End" to this Marvelous Saga on my death bed!!!

In the South, after the Civil War, there was widespread hardship. No jobs, no crops, and some widespread famine in the land. Great Great Great Grandpa was very adversely affected...

Now, it is a tradition in the South to eat Black-eyed Peas and sowbelly on New Years day, usually served with corn bread or cornpone. The more peas you eat, the more good luck you will have in the new year! That is a legendary tradition, and, as with most traditions and legends, it is based on some esoteric and strange data. Us old Researchers have unearthed the underlying basic foundation of this Legend, thusly:

Great Great Great Grandpa, "Ma, here it is New Years day, do we have anything in the kitchen safe for dinner?"

Great Great Great Grandma, "I'll check and see, Pa."

Let me explain a few facts of life to you ignorant chillern:

Cornpone: Corn bread batter fried on a griddle like pancakes.

Sowbelly: Regular salt pork.

Kitchen safe: Early American version of Mother Hubbard's cupboard.

Hog Jowls: The jowls of hogs, usually salted, very similar to sowbelly, and sometimes served in lieu of sowbelly, being somewhat cheaper.

Back to the tale:

GGGGMa, "Pa, I found some dried Black-eyed Peas, some sowbelly and some corn meal. We can have some boiled peas, sowbelly and cornpone!"

GGGGPa, "Man alive, are we LUCKY!!!"

Oddly enough, GGGGPa's luck took an immediate upswing, and he prospered for the rest of the year. Being somewhat superstitious, come New Years again, he nearly foundered on black-eyed peas and sowbelly. Again he prospered.

GGGGPa, not being one to hog all the luck, bruited the news far and wide. Thus was one of the premier legends of the South born....

Research...It can go down some weird paths. Some of the results are plumbupsetting. Back when I was into Norse mythology, I read all the tales of Eric the Red, the seafaring deeds, of the Norse gods, Odin, Thor, Woden, all of Asgard. In the tales of the Vikings and their adventures, I took particular note of their carousals. Evidently they were the Norse counterpart of the Greek Bacchanalia. Their particular drink was Mead, which they called the Nectar of the Gods. "It flowed down the throat like water over a dam, smooth, with a delectable taste of honey and milk!"

It was written that the Vikings went Berserk with too much Mead, and lay about them with broadsword, and woe betide friend or foe! Nowadays they say the Vikings ran amok, but I can't buy that. Amok is a Malay word that meant

“possessed with a murderously frenzied state.” This described the Berserkers exactly, but I don’t think the Malays and the Vikings had a speaking acquaintance. No...I prefer Berserk.

In further research, I discovered how they brewed Mead. I wish I hadn’t, for my boyhood dream of a magical Elixir blew skyhigh with a bang! Them dang Vikings mixed honey with MARE’S MILK, and let it ferment to a ripe old alcoholic stage, and drank it forthwith! I can well empathize with those Berserkers!!! I would have used that broadsword on those brewers! Ugh!!

TRIVIA II

Back to the grindstone after quite a while off loafing. It is now 12 March, 1990, and Laura and Anita are pressing me for more trivia. Anita has requested “Hey! Boy!”, So:

We were living on Shadowwood, in Dallas in 1968 and 1969. Margaret, Anita, David and Daniel stayed with us for a year while Ronny was in Viet Nam. A most enjoyable year. The back yard was full of shade trees, and I had a 6 foot privacy fence built. The lawn was thick, spongy San Augustine grass. We had a large portable barbecue pit, and a large swing set that I purchased from a school supply company, King size.

On weekends I usually fired up the barbecue, cooking brisket, steaks, hot dogs, hamburgers or whatever. Some weekends Roger, Alice, Chuck, Teresa and Laura joined the party. Roger and I would tend the cooking, usually having some extra Hot Links on the fire for sampling, and to go with the cold beer. The yard also had several lounge chairs about.

On one of the initial get togethers, I called all the chillern to attention and told them we had a small problem.

Oh? What is it, Grandpa?

Well, we needed a new can of beer occasionally, and needed to pass messages to the women folk, etc. etc...It was a very important position. What we needed was a Hey! Boy!

I can, Grandpa, no! me! I said first! You're too little! Not so! Are so! Me, Grandpa!

Well, now, we do seem to have a problem! Let's take it time about, fair play. Okay, Grandpa. We'll go in alphabetical order, Anita first....Now when Roger or I call “Hey! Boy” we expect you, front and center! Okay, Grandpa!

Many and many a pleasant afternoon was thus spent...I

especially remember one afternoon, typical summer, shady and cool, Roger and I laboring over the hot cooker, sampling the Hot Links, sipping the potables, the women folk goofing off in the house, fixing salads or some such nonsense. The chillern all swanging on the swangs. Anita was on the outside swing, going very high. I was watching her, and started to caution her, when she lost her balance and tumbled out on the thick grass.

She wasn't hurt, but it did scare her, and she squalled bloody murder. Margaret came bouncing out the door, and I told her what happened, and that she wasn't hurt. Margaret told her to get up and shut up. She was laying there curled up, and moaning like a dying duck in a hailstorm. I said, "Come over here, Anita, and Grandpa will pick you up." You know, that child started crawling over to me, moaning and groaning!!!

Well! That broke up the whole group! Everybody started laughing, and Anita got up, mad as a hoppy toad, and got back on her swing, not speaking to nobody!!

You know something? This next little jewel was special requested by Grandma!!! SO:

We were living in Austin in 1948, next door to Pappy Shipp. One weekend we all decided to go fishing. Pappy and Mammy Shipp, Donald Wayne, J T and Alberta, Gladys and I and our 4, and I think Grady and Rudy and their 2. Not sure about them. We went up on the Colorado, just below the Marshall Ford Dam. About 200 yards below the dam was a low-water bridge, and we set up camp about half way between them. We built up a good campfire and everybody had a good supper, and fished in the rapids. After dark, all the womenfolk and chillern sacked out on pallets, and us old boys wandered down to fish off the low-water bridge. About midnight we got tired of the poor fishing, and decided to wander back to camp and swangle one of the ladyfolk into making us a pot of coffee.

Wandering back up to camp, we met a group of hogs...or a flock, or a herd, or a drove, or whatever, rooting along and feeding on something, very amiable and peaceful. There were 15 or 20 hogs in that group. One of our group, I disremember which, suggested that we might ease the hogs up through our camp, thus waking up one of the ladyfolk, who might be persuaded to make us a pot of coffee! No sooner said than done.

We fanned out on the nether side of the flock, talking to them, and gently persuaded them in the right direction, without unduly exciting them. They gently infiltrated the camp, snuffling and snorting....We figured out later that the only thing wrong with our strategy, was that one of them dang hogs snorted right in the face of one of the ladyfolk! Boy! She came off that pallet screaming bloody murder! Of course, that scared the bejabbers out of them poor hogs, and they went to squeeling and squalling and tearing out for the hinderlands over yonder! This excitement caught the attention of the other ladyfolk and the chillern. Boy! Did it ever! I think the chillern were the only ones that saw the humor of the situation!

Fortunately, us old boys hadn't quite made it to camp when the balloon went up, so we sank down in the dark to meditate upon the situation, and to muse upon the possibility of our cup of coffee! HAH!! That was a laugh! We were lucky to get out of that one with our lives! In fact, we were lucky to get out of that with our wives!!!

As I remember, I did catch a 5 pound channel cat on a light rod and reel! When I finally hauled him in, Abigail told me she didn't know I knew all those cuss words!

Once upon a time, during a family get-together, all the old folks were back in the kitchen or garage-den-patio-cave-cum-library except old Great Grandpa. He was sacked out in the living room reading the paper and working the crossword puzzle, waiting for breakfast. A little cloud came

wafting silently down the hall and into the living room. She drifted across the room, not noticing old GGPa, graceful as a ballet dancer. She approached the hearth, climbed up on it (18"), in perfect balance, and carefully reached out on the third open shelf of the bookcase abutting the fireplace.

She was standing on the edge of the hearth. With her left hand she very carefully lifted the cover of a crystal bowl, and with her right hand she reached in the bowl and carefully selected, after due deliberation, a single piece of hard rock candy. She touched only the chosen one, then carefully replaced the cover with not a sound. All of her movements were as precise and as graceful as any ballet I have ever seen!

Descending gracefully to the floor, she started back out of the room, and saw GGP! Her eyes got big and round, and she broke out with the sweetest, most angelic smile, and still not saying a word, floated to the hall and back to the party. GGP could see the faint halo floating over her head, and the small, soft white wings gently waving in the breeze! Indeed! 'twas one of life's finest moments! That little angel was Britney Dianne Murphy, Chuck's No. 1 daughter, 3 years old, better known as "Tater Bug".

Well, here it is, the 12th of May, 19 naught 90, and I have been lax about adding to the Stupendous Saga. We were just discussing the dentist, and I recalled a small event that happened to me in Dallas in about 1951. Which I shall now relate. I was Chief Switchman in the Dallas 4A at the time, in charge of the evening and night shifts, and the conversion of the office from A4A to 4A. I was working from 6pm to about 8am. I went by the Baylor Dental College in Dallas and set up a complete dental overhaul, very cheap since I only paid for materials used.

I had broken a molar years before, and had had it pulled. It was a middle molar on my left lower jaw, and my chewing was affected. The Prof talked me into putting in a gold

bridge and a false tooth on a permanent basis. The entire cost was \$75, and that was the gold (\$36 an ounce). The Prof said that the student who would do the work was a senior, about to graduate, and this would in effect be his thesis!

I would get off from work and show up at the college about 8:30. This went on for several days, as their schedule would allow. He had to grind down the two adjacent teeth and fit them with temporary caps. After 2 or 3 days of this, the monotonous grinding and the lack of sleep got to me. I drifted off sound asleep one morning, dead tired. The absence of the drone of the drill finally woke me, and I looked up to see 5 or 6 students ringed around my chair with very funny looks on their faces! I don't think they believed it!

The last time I was in the dentist's chair, I asked him how the bridge looked, and would it stand up? He said that to him it looked like a gold cadillac! And that I would be buried with it. I told him the story behind it. He laughed and said he had never had a patient go to sleep on him! Let's see, that bridge is now 39 years old! It has chomped on many a steak! Hey! I just figured out why I went to sleep. I was in the Lotus Position! And evidently Transcendental Meditation took over! The drone of the drill was my mantra!

So Mote It Be!!!

One evening we were all at home on 721 Genoa, enjoying a quiet evening of TV on our 9" screen. The TV itself was huge, about 2 ft by 3 ft by 2 ft, a Sears Roebuck special for \$550. This was in 1950, and there were very few TVs in the neighborhood. Also we had a total of 3 TV stations, none of them national. Needless to say, the programming was of poor quality. We now have cable with thirty stations and the same poor quality. The chillern were all in the preteens, and all was quiet, when Margaret went into the kitchen to

get a drink. She turned on the kitchen light and let out a squall. A tiny mouse had found a way in and couldn't get out. It was running around the kitchen and Margaret was doing a stomp dance. Both were trying to avoid each other!

We had a Cocker Spaniel dog by the name of Sugar Baby, given to the chillern by my Dad when she was a pup. Well, she was part of the family, one of the chillern, she didn't know she was a dog! All of us, including Sugar Baby, joined in the chase. Sugar Baby was the winner! She snatched up the mouse, chomped down on it, then looked up at Gladys with the feebly kicking mouse dangling from her mouth. She had a startled, soul-sick look in her eyes. She opened her mouth, dropped the dead mouse on the floor, and proceeded to vomit all over the place! Some dang dog! You know, I don't think we ever had an everyday normal dog!

We had a pair of toy poodles, LeRoy and Lady. Now, that LeRoy was a real character, but Lady took the cake! When JT's dog Henri, a miniature Schnauzer, came to visit, he would go around marking the trees as his own. That cut no ice with Lady. She would belly up to the tree, standing on her front feet, her hind end straight up in the air, and mark the tree a good foot above Henri's mark! That Henri was the most frustrated dog in South San! Like I said, I don't think we ever had a normal dog!

Lady delivered four pups one time. I happened to be there, and a good thing, for the third one was turned wrong, and I had to midwife it! I carefully eased it straight and took it from her. The fourth came OK. One time Mammy Shipp's toy poodle had three pups, with trouble on the second one. Again, I was handy, and again I came to the rescue. I was evidently a little slow that time, for we lost that pup. The rest and the mother was OK. I don't think I'll follow that avocation....I'd druther be a Ladies Maid!

If I may interrupt, I would like to relate a present day

tidbit. It is now Nov. 10, 1990, 8:30 AM, and I, the Ladies Maid Par Excellence, have just suffered the put-down of the century!!! I arose as usual at 6:25 AM, read the paper, took my metamucil, put a Christmas tape on the stereo, and surveyed the situation. Having an unusual surge of get-up-and-go, I did my usual chores of dish-washing and bed making, then decided to scrub down the kitchen counters and stove. The dish-washing and bed making are daily chores, the rest are weekly, or as required, depending on the resident gourmet's sloppy cooking habits!

Having completed the spit and polish, I retired to the living room and the Lazyboy. Feeling chipper, I related the morning's activities to Grandma, expecting lavish praise and commendation, of course, of course....

Grandma said, "Let me read you your Horoscope for the day. Virgo: Your spunk and initiative could irritate some lethargic types today, don't rub it in!"

Touche, hosay! That'll learn me, dern me! If I hadn't checked it in the paper, I would have sworn Grandma made it up!!!

before we start my father's poetry i thought i might drop in
a few pictures of the love of his life, our mother, gladys.



june 1934 just after high school graduation



on top of grady's hill early on in austin



same time frame, same place



early on in temple as a flapper



the two lovebirds in austin

MY LOVE, MY LOVE

acwor

*You are sprightly, my love, and neat and trim
as lovely as you were the day we met
your hazel eyes are slightly dim
but sparkling with love and humor yet*

*Why you have put up with this old crow
with all our trials and woes and care
how you stand it I'll never know
I just thank God for you, my dear*

*Please lean on me for help, my dear
your burden I'll gladly bear
for I have leaned on you, my dear
for many and many a year*

*You have soothed away my pain
eased my aches, erased the bane
in thunder, lightning and in rain
helped to make me well again*

*I could have looked the whole land over
with many girls to choose
but I have landed in a field of clover
and you I don't want to lose*

*And now, my prayer for you, my love
when I reach the end of the line
I want you to bury me, my love
when I die at ninety-nine*

*And my last wish for you, my love
when I have left your bed
please wait at least a year, my love
before you are re-wed*

One thing has always bothered me. I cannot express my sentiments and my love in words, but I can type them in this dang computer with ease. Plumb silly, ain't it?

Oh! Well, so mote it be!

OBLIVION

acwor

*As a rat in the race, in the days of yore
Rising at dawn was quite a chore
When the wind blew cold, and the rain did pour
I arose at six, and oft before*

*Weary, sleepy, tired and sore
How I wished for one hour more
I longed to slip into oblivion
Indeed 'twould be a touch of heaven*

*They say that death is deep oblivion
I do not know, I can not say
Indeed 'twould be a touch of heaven
If it came upon a wintry day*

“LITTLE JOE” COWBOY

acwor

*He tilted his hat to block out the sun
He watched the broncs ridden one by one
By “Cowboy Bill”, his special pal
As he sat on the rail by the corral*

*His boot heels hooked on the second rail
He sat and thought about Cowboy Bill
He knew old Bill would do it up brown
But what if HE let old Bill down?*

*What if he went and bit the chunk
When it came his time to fork the bronc?
He shook his head, and made up his mind
To leave all his doubts behind*

*He gazed out over the rolling range
And thought it would be passing strange
If he could own a spread like this
Indeed, 'twould be utter bliss*

*For Bill was turning old and gray
And Joe determined to pave the way
And take care of Bill in his dotage
Indeed Old Bill would have his own cottage*

*Joe would work and save his pay
And they would own all this one day
For he had plenty of time, you see
For after all, he was only three...*

GLADYS

acwor

*Now I am old, and hale and healthy
With time on my hands, in that I am wealthy
No rats to race, no competition
Just writing my poetry, ah! such erudition*

*Just reading my books, and writing my letters
Writing my memoirs about my betters
Working upon the family tree
To see if there's another ape like me*

*An ape like me, who won the prize
Gladys married me, surprise! surprise!
She stuck by me through thick and thin
With a lass like her, I had to win!*

*And win I have, with her to leaven
Indeed, and 'tis a touch of heaven!
And now we live in the age of gold
But alas, the knight is no longer bold*

*He's weary and worn, slightly deaf and old
Tottery, doddery, ill in his soul
Then here comes Gladys, bright and gay
And the knight is bold for another day!*

THE WAGGLER

acwor

*She came down the street with a wiggle and a waggle
And now methinks I have created a snaggle
For what in the world will rhyme with waggle?*

*I know that geese come in a gaggle
And when you trade you have to haggle
But what in the world will rhyme with waggle?*

*I could have said she waggled and wiggled
And then I could have said she giggled
Or then I could have said she wriggled*

*I could have even said she jiggled
But I guess I'll just have to finaggle
For naught in the world will rhyme with waggle!!*

MY RACE IS RUN

acwor

*Life's evening sun is nigh on setting
My race is run, nor am I fretting
My last long trip I'll take alone
But please don't mourn for I am done
With this old life, but it's been fun
E'en tho for years I was on the run
Now I have passed all the goals I set
I'll have to admit I'm running yet
Old habits are hard to break I know
But as of now I'm running slow
Slowly and yet more slowly I go
Creeping along with an even flow
Tottery, doddery, even decrepit
That is me, old step-n-fetchit
My race is run and I am glad,
My chillern can have all the cares I had
The cycle continues, I hope forever
The Clan lives on, and I hope never
Dies out, for then who would there be
To carry on with the family tree
For I have worked at this enough!
Someone indeed **MUST** read this stuff!
So all you chillern stop the debate
Get busy, progeny, Procreate!*

*Of all the things that I wot
An Ogden Nash I am not*

*Me lay claim to erudition?
A country boy? 'Tis contradiction
Indeed, 'Tis cause for extradition*

*Unto the gates of Perdition
'Twould cause a great conflagration
If I should join that congregation
'Twould set off a great celebration
No, I'll take my cerebration
And hie me unto hibernation
Erudition? Bah! Rediculation!!!*

*In case any of you chillern are wondering
ACWOR is not my pseudonym
It is my acronym for A C.W. ORiginal!!!hehhehheh*

*Hibernia is a country, a country is a nation
Is that whence came Hibernation???*

TO MY GRANDCHILLERN

acwor

*Whyfor all the hue and cry
For all we do is live and die
And love a little
We can't stay here for very long
Even if we do it wrong
And sing a little
So live it up and do it right
Be sure you give the jolly good fight
Like the Knights of old
Help your neighbor when you can
And live your life like a Man
Even if it hurts
Do right by all, do hurt to none
So when you face the setting sun
You can say "Amen"
Do your job, and do it best
Forget about all the rest
Don't goof off
Learn all you can, don't be a fool
Education starts when you leave school
Keep on learning
You do all this, and do it well
Then you'll hear old Kipling yell
YOU'LL BE A MAN, MY SON!!!!*

THE QUEST

acwor

*Things are rife in this old life
We hold so very dear
When we look back and think of strife
We hold it very dear*

*All our dreams and aspirations
Are old and oh! so dim
All our deeds and dominations
Seem only to be whim*

*Whence went the goal for which we strove
So hard to reach and rest?
Life slipt the latch and came to snatch
The feathers from our nest*

*Now life goes yonder and we ponder
Have we been so blest?
Yea! My brothers, tell all the others
For we have had the Quest!*

PARASITES

acwor

*Step into my parlor
Said the spider to the fly
We will live happily
Bye and bye
Come look at our circus
Oh you dog, said the flea
We will live together
In harmony
Give me your vote
Said the candidate
I will raise your taxes
That is your fate
Give me your tithes
Said the preacher to his flock
Give until it hurts
Give quite a lot
Do as I tell you
Said the tyrant to the mob
God gave me the power
So get on with the job
All the property is mine
Said the communist
Give it all to me
Or I'll put you on my list
Do as I tell you, do as I say
That is the theme song
Of the rulers of the day
But they never learn
Nor do they long endure
For you can't legislate
Human nature*

THE PORCUPINE

acwor

*The porcupine's a prickly cuss
As for her, she's wuss
He can't stand her, she can't stand him
Except sometimes, upon a whim
They decide to give love a whirl
(For he's a boy and she's a girl!)
He brings her flowers, she bats her eyes
He takes her dancing, now that's not wise
She takes him to her home, you see
And he loves her, very c.a.r.e.f.u.l.l.y...*

DANG CHILLERN

acwor

*Now Grandpa has reached a ripe old age
Seventy Seven has turned the page
E'en tho his moves are slow and thrifty
He feels as spry as he did at fifty*

*He does all the things he used to do
Maybe not as much, but he wants to
But the dang chillern say no way
Move over, Grandpa, you're in our way*

*Sit you down, Grandpa, and take a rest
We'll do this, and do it best
Sit down, Grandpa, you've had your day
Sit down, sit down, we'll make the hay*

*Sit down, Grandpa, we know how you feel
But if you don't sit down, we'll haul your keel
Sit down, Grandpa, you've paid your dues
Sit down and mind your pees and ques*

*Grandpa slowly turns aside
And slowly shuffles back inside
He bows his head, so they can't see
His fierce expression of unholy glee*

*Hurt his feelings? No way hosay
They had just made his day
He quietly chuckles, chuckles with joy
Chuckles all the way to his Lazyboy!*

THE SLOTH

acwor

*The sloth a funny lad is he
Down side up, in a tree
Or up side down upon the ground
Or is he down side down upon the ground?
Or up side up in the tree?
No wonder that he moves so slow
For where he is, he don't know
But the mystery, it seems to me
When he procreates, where is he?
Down side up, or up side down
In the tree, or on the ground???
But to decry him, I am loath
For after all, I lean to sloth*

THE BUSY BEE

acwor

*In this day of throw-away
and built-in obsolescence
We despair but don't repair
And abide with evanescence*

*Day after day, day after day
I sit, nor thought nor power
As futile as that busy bee
upon that silken flower*

*The bee was at a loss you see
He buzzed around and looked at me
And he said "What can it be?
Oh! Woe is me, may I bide a wee?"*

*The little bee pulled up his chair
And down beside me sat
He leaned back to meditate
Mayhaps to chew the fat*

*"It looks like a flower, it feels like a flower"
He said, as there he sat
"But there's no honey there for me
And I know not where it's at"*

*He meditated as I watched
To see what he would do
At last he tipped his hat to me
And away he flew*

*Back he flew, to his own little world
Flowing with milk and honey*

*Where he receives a very full cup
When he puts down his money*

*He left me there, to meditate
And muse on this and that
With our built-in obsolescence
WHERE'S THE HONEY AT???*

*Mary had a little lamb
(Now, the Doctor said that was genetically impossible, as
Mary had not reached the age of puberty...)
Her father killed it dead
Now it goes to school with her
Between two hunks of bread*

*Twinkle, twinkle, little bat
How I wonder where you're at
Up above the world so high
Like a tea tray in the sky*

*At the bar, at the bar
Where I smoked my first cigar
And the money from my pockets rolled away
It was there by chance
That I tore my Sunday pants
And now I have to wear them every day*

COMING AROUND THE BEND

acwor

*Now seventy nine is on the line
Coming around the bend
Now I don't mind for I find
That I am on the mend*

*All my ills give way to pills
From the modern state of the art
The doctor's bills fill up his tills
At least he does his part*

*I moan and groan and carry on
But I am satisfied
For nary bone that I own
Is any way ossified*

*The knight of old is not so bold
Nor swift to aid the maiden
He's getting old, his blood runs cold
When he hears the roar of the dragon*

*My little world is in a whirl
I ponder each move with care
Each day is a pearl that I can twirl
Only if I dare*

*Now I reckon, what the heck
I'll keep it on the beam
Play on the spec, with a full deck
For life is but a dream*

*Live life to the hilt, feel no guilt
Let there be no fantasm
Swing with a lilt, and do not wilt
For life is but a spasm*

THE OLD MAN

acwor

*Now seventy-eight is on the slate
Engraved so very bold
Now that date is very late
Yet I feel not so old*

*I realize that in no wise
Am I very decrepit
But in two years, alas my dears
Comes eighty! and I can't help it!*

*As I wane I'll need a cane
Mayhaps a pair of crutches
To save the wear, maybe the tear
When I fall upon my haunches*

*But I just think I'll stay in the pink
And never grow so old
Laugh at life and forego strife
And be a Knight so bold*

*I'll have my aches but for your sakes
I'll keep them to myself
I'll moan and groan and carry on
But keep them on the shelf*

*Here's to life with no more strife
May there be joy aplenty
May we have peace and our woes cease
May we live to one and twenty*

MUSING

acwor

*“Into each life some rain must fall”
From whence that came, I can’t recall
Indeed it is a kindly fate
For with no salt, the sweet must sate*

*The rain must fall, to soak the soil
To grow the grain, o’er which we toil
To sharpen our taste, for the love of life
To hone our love, we must have strife*

*The things for which we work and sweat
And sacrifice our weal to get
Would never, ever seem to matter
If handed to us on a platter*

THE TREK

Acwor

*Pack up the Van for one long span
Of driving down the road
Break new trails, relieve our ails
Rejuvenate the mood*

*O'er the hills, down long vales
Dotted with farms and cattle
Across the streams, past fields so green
Old CW's in the saddle*

*Thru small towns, of some renown
With echos of the past
Down great highways, and small by-ways
America, ah, so vast*

*We hit the trail, and away we sail
To enjoy our heritage
For we may sail, with no travail
Unique in this day and age*

*Thru piney woods, with their many moods
With shaded glen and dell
By Grand Canyon and Painted Desert
Thru Petrified Forest as well*

*Thru giant redwood forests, moss-covered Rain Forest
The magnificent Yosemite Park as well
Up Highway One, which you can no longer run
From Frisco to Puget Sound*

*Up the Coronado Trail, away we sail
From Clifton to Prescott, Arizona
Up the Switchbacks, thru the Needles Eye
With vast scenic vistas plethora*

TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE REST OF MY LIFE

acwor

*Now I am just a country boy
Full of fun and lots of joy
When I awake, I give thanks to Thee
For one more day that I can see
I give thanks to be awake, you see
For the alternative scares the hell out of me!*

IN THE GLOAMING

acwor

*Here I sit, in all my glory
Out to pasture, to enjoy my leisure
No more work, no more worry
Nothing to do, except for pleasure*

*When a chore comes up, (will you, hon?)
I mull it over, (do I want to be fed?)
And with a sigh, (it will be fun!)
I go to the store for bread*

*I would like to go fishing, in a quiet little brook
Where time and toil doesn't matter
But someone always baits the hook
And puts it in the water!*

*When the day is long, and the sun is hot
I go jump into the pool
Exercising, I am not
I'm just keeping cool*

*I'll read a good book, or perhaps go cook
Something up for dinner
Give it a good look, hang it on the hook
I'm sure it will be a winner*

*When friends come over, it is no bother
To sit and shoot the breeze
We out-lie one another, but there is no pother
For we aim only to please*

*Tis a great life, there is no strife
All that is in the past
And with a Good Wife, ah! good things are rife
May it last, and last, and last!*

“IT”

acwor

*Eenie, meenie, miney, mo
We can't stand the status quo
Jimmy, Johnny, Mary Jo
One of us has to go
One, two, three, out goes he
The one behind the mulberry tree*

THE LADIES MAID'S LAMENT

acwor

*I need to scrub the bathroom wall
I need to vacuum the rooms and hall
The bed needs to be stripped
(There is a coke to be sipped!)
The dishes need to be washed
There is dinner to be hashed
I need to brew some tea to guzzle
(I haven't worked the crossword puzzle!)
There are some shelves I need to build
There is a way, but there is no will
The kitchen counters need clearing
The sink, too, I am fearing
Alas, the Ladies Maid is resting
Upon his laurels he is cresting
So long, methinks he is nesting
Say me nay, I am jesting
He is resting, resting, resting
Only resting, only resting
Never pressing, never pressing
Only resting, only resting
Tomorrow, she's another day
The problems she may go away
go away, go away
Come again some rainy day
That will be a day of joy
Right now I want my Lazyboy*

I AM HAPPY WITH ME

acwor

*I am happy with me
I ponder the vagaries of life
and it's deeper meaning
we were put on this old world for a purpose
God knows what
we serve our purpose with a life well lived
I am happy with me*

*I have toiled and sweated, worried and fretted
fulfilled my duties as I perceived them
I am a good man...mostly
I have helped my fellow man...mostly
I am happy with me*

*this is a strange world, this is a strange life
where one slight misstep, one single mishap
can destroy a lifetime of good clean living
ruin a reputation built up over a career
there is no tolerance, no forgiving
I have made some ill-conceived decisions, suffered some
reversals forced some turnabouts of ill fortune
went on with life and learned from experiences
I am happy with me*

*I have not done as well as I could have, and should have
I wish I could have been wiser and done better with my
children
but I am very, very happy with them
I am content, I am retired, I do nothing, I neither toil nor
do I spin
I fulfill no useful function in life, except to enjoy
I am happy with me*

*come to think of it, I do take care of Gladys
I think she is happy with me*

*As one pundit said: "There is a divinity which shapes our
ends,
rough-hew them how we will"
and Brother, I've seen some ends which were well and truly
rough-hewn!
I am happy with me*

I WOULD I WOULD

acwor

*I would I were in a widdle wagon
wolling down the woad
an I would meet a widdle girl
I would incwease my widdle wagon's woad
I would! I would! I would!*

*I would I had a widdle axe
to chop a cherwy twee
I would give it forty whacks
and then I'd lie to thee
I would! I would! I would!*

*I would I were a widdle kite
aflying in the sky
I would weach a wondrous height
and watch the world go by
I would! I would! I would!*

*I would I were a widdle cloud
away up in the sky
I would thunder vewy loud
and wain all over my kite!
I would! I would! I would!*

*I would I were a widdle boy
playing in that wain
the mud would fill me full of joy
and mama full of pain
It would! It would! It would!*

*And now that I am out to clover
I look back with quiet amaze
would I like to do it over?
relive those wondrous days?
I would? I would?? I would not!!!*

GOODBYE OLD PAL

acwor

*Growing old is solid gold
For the alternative is so permanent
But we despair, for we care
For friends who weren't so fortunate*

THE STORM

acwor

*The old man by the fireside sat
swaying gently in his old rocking chair
at his feet were his dog and cat
the storm was outside, but they didn't care*

*The hail was pounding upon the roof
the wind was howling at the door
the cat meowed, and the dog went woof
the old man nodded, but said no more*

*The mood in the room was peaceful serenity
there was no worry, there was no pain
the three good friends had attained tranquility
the storm raged on, but raged in vain*

*The storm of life had passed them over
The toils and woes were gone
And now they were out to clover
Though the storms of life raged on*

*The wars and crime still swept the meads
The ills, the drugs, the woes held sway
They swept, like the hail, over their heads
But peace was there to stay*

*The storm would pass, the sun would shine
The spring would bring fair weather
Their storms had left them on the vine
Safe, happy and together*

*Mister Peanut asittin' on the railroad track
his heart was all aflutter
Number ten coming around the bend
Toot! Toot! peanut butter!*

RELATIVITY

acwor

*The little boy watched the grandfather's clock
awaiting Santa Claus
the minute hand frozen, as if in shock,
did nothing but pause*

*The teenager awaited the results of the test
his diploma on the line
his watch was slower than all the rest
it died upon the vine*

*The young lad waited for his date
while she gilded the lily
she was only ten minutes late
he was nilly-willy*

*The old man watched the evening sun
setting in its groove
when he glanced up at the clock
he could see the hour hand move!*

THE STREAM OF LIFE

acwor

*stand on the bank and watch the stream flow by
oer the rocks and rills, rapids and rough
into deep ponds, placid it lies
from the shade of the bank it seems not tough*

*but breasting the current, avoiding the shoals
striving to reach the source of the stream
strain with our might to reach our goals
how now it seems the mist of a dream*

*the lonely traveler in his racy canoe
plying his oars with care
striving to reach the head of the queue
for what? the eclat and the blare?*

*the family man toils with his family houseboat
sluggishly moving upstream
each milestone passed is an event of note
each day the achievement of a dream*

FOUR WALLS

acwor

*four walls close me in
and keep the weather out
the rain, the cold, the hassle, the din
all are put to rout*

*I am cozy, snug and warm
no clock to watch, no pace to set
these walls have their charm
Gladys is with me yet*

*the golden years have turned to dross
the knight is no longer bold
Gladys is my greatest loss
I feel left out in the cold*

*four walls surround me
nurture and enfold me
I am lonely but at peace
for Gladys is here to hold me*

*these four walls still hold her
echoes with her laughter
filled with joys remembered
joys forever after*

*I leave the lights aburning
it makes a cheerful place
it tends to ease my yearning
I can almost see her face*

*four walls surround me
nurture and enfold me
Gladys is around me
to ease and console me*

*I can still feel her laughter
I can still feel her smile
she'll be with me forever after
until I walk that last long mile*

*and then we'll walk together
as we have always done
and forever and forever
we will always be one*

ALONE

acwor

*You are gone
I am alone
The outlook is so drear
I don't know why
But I still try
Because you still feel near*

*You are still with me
A vital part of me
You keep me sane and whole
I close my eyes
And realize
You are in my fold*

*You are in my heart, my love
And there you'll always be
We shall never part, my love
Some day I'll be with thee*

FOUR SCORE

acwor

*Four score is now on the line
yet I still feel seventy-nine
life is real, and life is drear
for I am lost without you, dear
I mope and moan and miss you so
but then recall the love we had
the warmth, the joy, the fun, and lo!
all of a sudden I'm not so sad
your love, your humor, your patience with me
helps me bear the loneliness
you would always bear with me
and bring me only happiness*

ASPIRATIONS

acwor

*I wish I were a handsome prince, in
an ivory tower
I wish I were a butterfly,
asipping on a flower
I wish I had a lovely Princess,
to awaken with a kiss
My Princess was my lovely Wife,
whom I do sorely miss*

*I wish I were a little squirrel,
gnawing on a nut
I wish I were a peasant,
in a snug little hut
I wish I were a grizzly bear,
in his wintry den
I wish I had a farm,
and a little banty hen*

*With pigeons in the hayloft,
and lambs in the lea
Ducks on the pond,
my, what a place to be
I wish I had the power,
to make my dreams come true
But God, with infinite wisdom, gave
us only our due*

*That which we will treasure,
we must earn with toil and sweat
Easy come is easy go,
and not a real asset*

THE BLIND POET

acwor

*I think that I shall never see
a poem, let alone a tree*

THE WIDOWER

acwor

*I think that I shall ever be
as lonely as a lone pine tree
a tree upon a lonely hill
away by far from rippling rill
the wind shall moan thru barren limbs
as evening twilight grows so dim
the dark of night unlit by moon
the dark of spirit bereft so soon
the big black clouds blot out the stars
a big black mood brings on the wars
the mind cries out against the fate
that took my wife, my love, my mate
and left me here so all alone
to sigh, to weep, to mourn, to moan
as I await the promised end
when we shall be as one again*

(Revised March 31, 1997, 3:30am)

TO KYLIE, Age 6
acwor

*Little Kitty in the tree
how did you get way up there?
a bad old doggie went and chased me
I rode up here on a scare!*

*Little froggie in the pond
sitting on a lily frond
catching flies with his tongue
of catching flies he was very fond
but he'd rather be over yon*

*on a lovely lily pad
with a lovely froggie maid
in that large and lovely lake
but that trip he could not make
he was not allowed to go beyond
the limits of his little pond
poor little lonesome froggie!*

DREAM ON

acwor

*All the world is topsy-turvy
except the girls, and they are curvy
and the boys, they are nervy*

*old men, now, they are crafty
tho some are just a wee tad dafty
old women are somewhat hefty
with curves distributed very deftly*

*it all evens out in the end
as down life's long trail we wend
and we shall meet in the bend*

*and so twain shall be a team
as love wings in on a beam
and knits up both without a seam
God let us live in our dream*

THE COWBOY AND THE LADY

acwor

*She didn't know
he was alive
how could
she when*

*She wore
Chanel No. 5
and he wore
Corral No. 10*

THE FATCAT

acwor

*Tis dank and dreary, rainy and foggy
fits my mood just like a smoggy
over all I'm in a boggy
I feel just like an old, wet doggy*

*doggy that is in a ratty
at least it's not all that smutty
but my mind is just like putty
sometimes I think I'm going nutty*

*It's not that I am going batty
it's only that I do feel ratty
now when you say that I am tatty
you are being very catty
(just don't call me fatty!)*

*I am close to being a fatcat
except I do not know whatsat
a kitten in a fatlap?
Or a lion in a catnap?
(Or a tabby in the catnip?)*

INEXPLICABILITY

acwor

*I see the hour hand move, inexorably
and so my life goes, deplorably
and yet it goes peacefully
even if not happily
I am not atheistical
nor am I iconoclastical
I have a deep sense of Theism
also of realism
also of human frailties*

*I'm not surprised that I'm 85
I'm just surprised that I'm still alive
I still have a few friends around
but most of them are under the ground*

*when I was a yonker, I often thought
if I made it to 75, and came to naught
I will have had a wonderful life
but only, of course, if I could keep my wife*

*God granted my prayer, we sailed past the mark
then the sun went down, and on came the dark
I made it to 79, she made it to 77
when God, in his wisdom, took her to heaven*

*for weeks on end, I was lost.....forlorn
sunk in a morass, to weep and to mourn
but Roger and Alice took me in hand
with loving care, as I came to understand*

*we are not destined to live here forever
there's a better world across the river
when your time comes, she'll be waiting
don't drag your heels, no hesitating*

And now I am waiting.....waiting.....

MY DAY

acwor

*So tell me, old man, how do you fill your days?
In leisure, in pleasure, in many, many ways
meditating, ruminating, trying to figure out
living your life daily, what it's all about*

*rousting out at the break of day, a habit from days of yore
pills and coffee and cookies, daily paper at the door
the comics, the crossword puzzles, the headlines and more
keeps me occupied, a couple of hours, or more*

*lunchtime is an adventure, to be taken at high tide
or bypassed with a snack, wait til eventide
the afternoon is a drag, but I refuse to take a nap
I do not want my days and nights, thrown into a flap*

*And then there is the computer, a mainstay, there is no
doubt
poems and games, and many things I haven't figured out
the Clan letter, the Clan Family Tree, the Memoirs, the
Email
and don't forget the Pictures, from o'er hill and dale*

*I never watch TV, unless the Cowboys are there
or mayhaps John Wayne, parting the villain's hair
or Nature's tune, with the big baboon,
combing his auburn hair*

*Eventide is reading time, I have many, many books
westerns, detectives, poetry, filed in all the nooks
but most important of all, Gladys' Romance books
on which, many years ago, she got me hooked*

*she called them her "nothin' books", and that suits me just
fine*

*I am deathly tired of violence, mayhem, cursing and crime
I want the hero to win the girl, with happiness ever after
after a courtship, a little rocky, but always filled with
laughter*

*I have a flock of poems that I recite, like the counting of the
sheep*

*I never finish all of them, Hoo Boy, I fall asleep
and of course, during the night, every three hours or so
Old Mother Nature's clarion call means I have to go*

*but this is no hardship, I'll have you know
back to bed, a poem or three, and back to sleep I go
to dream, perchance, of happenstance, and things of long
ago*

old glad things, old sad things, but, oh, I love them so

*I like to keep my daily beat on an even flow
up by seven, abed by eleven, no wild seeds to sow
not on a diet, I eat what I like, tho I admit I do go light
like the last Doctor said, with a shake of his head
OLD MAN, YOU'RE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT!*

THIS AND THAT

The other day I was idly thinking of this and that, composing tidbits of nonsensical poetry in my mind, when the thought of iambic pentameter came floating through the clouds of fantasy. So I idly considered iambic pentameter. I dimly remembered from high school that an iambic pentameter was a line of poetry of five metric feet. A foot consisted of one unstressed syllable and one stressed syllable, such as “to BE”. The caps indicate a stressed, or I accented syllable.

This satisfied my idling mind, and I started back to composing, when an unwelcome thought came bulging through the clouds like a 747 easing into a hangar: What if it were a four foot line? Three foot line? What if the stresses were reversed? What if there were two unstressed and one stressed, as “to the END of the LINE?” Sheesh!

I took two Excedrin and settled back in the Lotus position, but the pestiferous questions persisted. I reluctantly arose from the Lotus position, dug out my disreputable research cap, and dug in. These are the results:

Iamb, or iambus: a single metric foot with the first syllable unstressed and the second stressed, as “to BE.”

Trochee: a single metric foot with the first syllable stressed and the second syllable unstressed, as “DOU ble, DOU ble, TOIL and TROU ble.”

Anapest: a single metric foot of three syllables, with

the first two unaccented and the third accented, as
“to the END of the DAY.”

Spondee: a single metric foot with two stressed syllables.

Dactyl: a single metric foot with the first syllable stressed and two unstressed.

Pentameter: a line of five feet.

Tetrameter: a line of four feet.

Trimeter: a line of three feet.

Dimeter: a line of two feet.

Strophe: A rhythmic system composed of two or more lines repeated as a unit; such a unit recurring in a series of strophic units; stanza.

To conclude my research, I dug out or made up some samples:

Iambic dimeter:

“to BE the ONE”

Iambic trimeter:

“to BE or NOT to BE”

Iambic tetrameter:

“the BOY stood ON the BURN ing DECK”

Iambic pentameter:

“to DAY i CAME up ON a MAID en FAIR”

Trochaic dimeter:

“JEN ny KISSED me”

Trochaic trimeter:

“ECH oes WITH the LAUGH ter”

Trochaic tetrameter:

“JUMP ing FROM the CHAIR she SAT in”

Trochaic pentameter:

“DOWN the SHA dy TRAIL she WALKED with

PLEA sure”

Anapestic dimeter:

“til the DAY i see YOU”

Anapestic trimeter:

“we shall MEET on that BEAU ti ful SHORE”

Anapestic tetrameter:

“as she SAT in her CHAIR in the SHADE on the PORCH”

Anapestic pentameter:

“in the DARK of the MOON, we did HUNT for the COON in the WOODS”

At this point, Gladys came in and confiscated my research cap, and perforce I had to cease operations. And I was just getting in to the good part: a line of verse of six feet is a hexameter; seven feet, a heptameter; eight feet, an octameter. I couldn't find nine feet, but I assume it is a nonameter or an enneameter....maybe. Of course, ten feet is a decameter.

But enough of this nonsense. The above samples run true to measure, but the writing of poetry is not an exact science. The feet and meters may be thoroughly mixed up, but an overall rhythm should be obtained, or at least striven for. Following are some samples of mixed meters and feet, but with good rhythm:

DAY af ter DAY, DAY af ter DAY

we STUCK, nor BREATH nor MO tion

as ID le AS a PAINT ed SHIP

up ON a PAINT ed O cean

BLESS ings ON thee, LIT tle MAN

BARE foot BOY with CHEEKS of TAN
LIFE is....REAL and....LIFE is....EARN est
AND the....GRAVE is....NOT it's....GOAL
DUST thou....ART, to....DUST re....TURN est
WAS not....SPOK en....OF the....SOUL
WHY for....ALL the....HUE and....CRY
when ALL....we DO....is live....and DIE
and love a little....

Now, those last three lines are mine, and point up the mixture in poetry. The first line is trochaic tetrameter, except the last foot is only six inches (or one syllable). The second line is true iambic tetrameter. The third line is free verse and serves to break the rhythm. To continue:

we CAN'T....stay HERE....for VER....ry LONG
EV en....IF we....DO it....WRONG
and sing a little

And so it continues, with every third line breaking the rhythm, much as an actor does with an “aside” to the audience. Free verse is a good way to tell a story, but I don’t care for it much, since it has very little rhythm. I like a rhythmic, lilting poem. When a poem is very rhythmic and lilting, it is often set to music and becomes a great song. As for the ability to write poetry, I can only paraphrase old Robbie Burns:

O wad some power the giftie gie us
To set our thoughts so ithers see us!

Incidentally, that quotation comes from his “Ode To A Louse”. Class this “aside” as a non sequitur.....End Of Dissertation.....So Mote It Be.....

