

*Rambling
Through Life*

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RAMBLING THROUGH LIFE

By Frederick Laird

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LIFE AS A STREET NEWSIE

I got into the newspaper business through a boy I met named Myron Cheney. Myron came from a very religious family and was himself also very religious. At the time I met him Myron had a "corner" news business at the YMCA on Main Street in Worcester.

I passed through the "Y" often as a short cut from Main Street to the street in back which was, I believe, Murray Avenue. On one of these passings Myron and I struck up a conversation; following this I became his assistant, or "striker."

One incident involving Myron I recall very vividly. Myron lived in an old wooden frame house near the corner of Southbridge Street and Cambridge Street. One evening, as we were heading toward his house so that I could meet his family, we saw a glow in the sky and observed several fire engines rushing toward the scene.

Myron commented, "I hope that isn't my house that's burning down."

As we approached we realized that was indeed the situation. When we reached the house it had already burned almost to the ground. Myron's family lost everything they owned and had to start over.

At the time I became Myron's striker I was only eleven and couldn't get a "corner" of my own. I needed a license and had to be twelve to apply for one. Shortly after I turned twelve I had my own corner, first at Wellington and Main Streets, and later, on a bigger corner, at the Greyhound bus terminal on Franklin Street, near City Hall.

This last corner was where I spent several hours each weekday afternoon for the next three years. I organized a short delivery route between the newspaper office and the bus terminal on which I had several regular customers. Also, directly behind the bus depot was the employee entrance to the Worcester Knitting Company. The employees here got off work at about 5 P.M. each work day and I soon established this as part of my corner. It was at Worcester Knitting that I met Dan Love, a man I wrote about in my life history. He became one of the "unforgettable characters" in my life.

Other than the regular deliveries and the steady customers at Worcester Knitting, the rest of my papers were sold to transient customers in and around the bus depot.

Another incident I recall is one in which my big mouth got me into trouble. In order to get from Franklin Street to the alley in back of the newspaper office I took a short cut down a long corridor past an elevator. The elevator operator was a man of thirty or so who was usually friendly, but not always. He had a quick temper and often cursed at newsboys passing through, telling us we should go around instead of through "his" building.

On this one occasion I cussed back, thinking I could say what I wanted and not have to worry about an "old man" such as he. To my astonishment he came out of the elevator after me and chased me. He caught me at the very end of the corridor and probably would have given me a pasting if no one else had been there. What saved me was the presence of two or three other newsboys and a candy salesman I was friendly with. As it turned out, I got lectured and told to stay away from his building. I didn't stay away but I made sure the elevator wasn't at the ground floor before I entered.

Selling newspapers wasn't a very lucrative business. Newspapers at the time sold for 2¢ at the beginning of my career and later for 3¢ apiece. On my best days I was lucky if I sold 40 papers, so my takehome pay was a paltry 25¢ per day; this averaged out to about 8¢ an hour. "Takehome pay" is a joke; very seldom did I take any of it home, most of it went for candy. I did, however, manage to save enough for my first new bike and to buy Christmas gifts. The latter were probably bought with tips I received from my customers at Christmas time. They were very generous considering the meager salaries they were receiving at the time.

In 1938 the hurricane I described in my life history ravaged Worcester. I was selling papers at the time and in order to return to the Gazette office I had to walk west on Franklin Street past what was then the Bancroft Hotel. A large billboard was blown down from the top of a building and landed in the middle of Franklin Street in front of the Bancroft and about fifty feet from me.

Looking back at this stage of my life I think of it as an important stage, one that no doubt had a strong influence on my life during the next few years. I learned a great deal about self-reliance and perhaps too much about independence. I also learned how to get along with other boys and developed some friendships that lasted throughout my newsboy career.

I was in a situation where I had to get along with them or I would have been in deep trouble. They were a very tough bunch and would as soon pin my ears back as look at me. I learned all the profanity there was to know, also to smoke cigarettes, and to play penny ante poker. At this last I held my own against any of them. As tough as they were they were also fair and, at least to me, honest and above board. Not once did I ever feel I was being cheated or treated in an underhanded way.

One of the boys I got to know well was named Walter Barch. He was about my age, very friendly and reserved. I met Walter again at Coes' Pond after World War II and was surprised to discover that he had taken up boxing; not only that, he had won a diamond belt championship in his weight class. I saw him fight once, at the old Mechanics Building in Worcester. It was Walter's first professional fight and his opponent was another former newsboy I had known, Freddie Petrone. To

everyone's surprise Freddie won and shortly after that Walter quit boxing.

At the time, smoking was the only unhealthy habit that was common among newsies. Today, with the dope scene as it is, an environment such as that would be a ripe one for dope dealers to cultivate. I wouldn't want my children or grandchildren to be exposed to that environment now.

LIFE AS A STREET NEWSIE II

During my three years or so of peddling newspapers in Worcester it was necessary to make my appearance in all kinds of weather, during every season of the year.

Summers weren't bad; the occasional 90+ temperatures and 90% humidity could be endured providing I dressed accordingly. Besides, being outdoors during the hot season was much better than being indoors. Winters were another matter; they could be, and often were, severe. Temperatures below zero, while not frequent, were common enough to require extra layers of clothing, particularly on the feet. Also, we were in the direct path of the frequent winter storms that came down out of Canada, and experienced many blizzard conditions. Peddling newspapers in those circumstances was far from easy. I often found a doorway to stand in and hawked my wares from this convenient enclosure.

In the spring the only problems were those created by windy or rainy conditions. If it rained the papers had to be covered in some way to prevent them from getting soggy. We didn't have plastic bags to cover them with as is the case nowadays so we had to resort to makeshift covers, usually sections of cardboard boxes, if they were available. Winds presented another problem, the papers had to be weighted down. When I was on a "corner" it was necessary to find rocks and other weighty objects and then find a secure place to store them when I wasn't there so they would be available when needed. One "storage" place I remember using was under a mailbox, tucked into the inside corners of the legs. When my corner was at the bus terminal and the Worcester Knitting Company most of my outdoor miseries were over; I could stay indoors and sell the newspapers there.

Another of the characters I remember from this stage of my life was a police officer who frequently came into the Worcester Knitting Company entryway while I was there; I believe his name was Gallagher. Ostensibly, he was there to visit the watchman, Dan Love, but I suspect he was often there to get in from the inclement weather. Apparently he lived in one of the neighborhoods I had lived in at one time and knew my father. He also was a drinker; I often smelled liquor on his breath during his periodic visits to Worcester Knitting. The last

time I saw this policeman was when my friend George Jones took me to an illegal poker parlor in downtown Worcester when I was home on leave from the Air Force. Gallagher was there, in uniform, watching the games. I suspect the establishment slipped him money under the table.

During my newsboy career the paper I worked for, the Worcester Gazette, sponsored a contest for newsboys only, selling magazine subscriptions. I don't know what connection there was between the newspaper and the magazine publishers but I presume the newspaper publisher profited from it in some way. In any event, I sold enough subscriptions so that I was able to go on a bus with a group of other boys to a Boston Bees (later Braves) baseball game. I wanted to take a girl friend along but the newspaper officials discouraged this idea and I ended up taking my brother Jack. This was the first major league ball game I had ever attended. I don't remember who the Bees were playing or who won; it probably didn't matter at the time, I was in heaven.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BASEBALL NUT

While living in Worcester my acquaintances included a number of unsavory characters. Some of the boys I knew from school or from other areas in my circle of activities spent some time in jail, or reform school. One of these boys proved to be an embarrassment to me when I was living in Lancaster.

As I am a sport nut, and follow sports whenever possible, I went to as many games as I could of the school I was attending. The only sport Lancaster High School participated in was baseball and it was while attending one of the school's baseball games that the embarrassing incident took place.

I rode to the game in a school bus with a contingent from the school to root for the team at a game held at Shirley Reformatory, a detention center for boys. I was sitting in the bleachers with a girl and feeling pretty good about it as I had been trying to date this girl for some time. Shortly before the game was to start a group of boys serving time at the reformatory marched by on their way to their own bleacher section. As they passed my bleacher one of the boys in the group saw me and called out my name as if I was a long lost friend. End of romance.

MORE BASEBALL FEVER

Baseball, as I have mentioned before, has been a lifelong love of mine. Ever since I was a toddler I have been interested in going to a park to watch a game, or listening to one on the radio. Now, I have the added pleasure of watching games on TV.

Although I had limited athletic skills as a youth I tried to be involved in the game as much as possible. One way in which I involved myself, in my pre-teens, was with a mechanical game I bought at a second hand store not far from my home. By a push on a button a cylindrical tube would roll and then stop to indicate a play: a ball, a strike, flyout, single, etc.

The game played a large part in whiling away idle hours. I established a league, with teams made up of famous baseball players of the era; Jimmy Foxx, Pistol Pete Reiser, Dizzy Dean, to name a few. I kept extensive records showing games won and lost by each team. Individual statistics for each player were recorded: batting averages, home runs, won-lost records for pitchers and so forth. Many hours were spent playing with the game and keeping the records up to date.

This game was my favorite indoor pastime for several years and then, as with other toys, it was put away when I left home to finish high school in Lancaster. I never saw it again. It was probably one of the items my mother got rid of during one of the family's many moves.

The toy was lost but my interest in baseball has never diminished.

More Memories

Many cities, as part of their redevelopment, try to incorporate a bit of nostalgia into the new construction. Frequently, there are shopping malls with boutiques reminiscent of the stores and shops of earlier days. Several of these attempts at returning to the past include a transportation system much in vogue during the first four decades of this century, street cars. Usually they are electric powered and much more plush than one would have found in the twenties or thirties. Also, their modern use is often restricted to a small four or five block area of the city, and intended as a tourist attraction. San Jose, California is one such city; San Antonio, Texas is another where the "old town" practically overflows with nostalgic mementoes.

When I was a boy, street cars, or trolley cars as we commonly called them, were the usual mode of transportation to ride from one section of Worcester to another, particularly for families without cars. For the grand sum of a dime we could hop on the trolley on Chandler Street, ride to the downtown area, and then, with a transfer, ride all the way to White City Park, or some other outlying area if that was our destination.

The trollies of the era were often rattletrap old cages with hard, wooden bench seats; not too comfortable for a long ride. It was a one man operation; the conductor collected the fare, made change, sold strips of tickets to students. At the end of his run he would walk down the aisle reversing the direction of the seats so that he could then go to the other end of the car and operate it in the opposite direction. He also had to pull the trolley pole down from the overhead electric wire which gave the trolley its power and reconnect to the wire with a pole at the opposite end, which would then become the rear of the trolley. This pole was the cause of several "adventures" which I experienced.

My friends and I frequently "hitched" a ride on the back of a trolley by jumping onto the back step as the trolley was pulling away from one of its stops. Sometimes the conductor saw us and immediately stopped the trolley and made us get off; at other times we rode unmolested and hopped off as the car was coming to a stop. On one occasion we rode several long stretches back and forth on one of the many hills around Worcester. During one of our "rides" another gang of boys about our age hopped on and began pulling the pole off its wire. Each time, the conductor would have to set the brake and walk around to the back to reposition the pole. One of those times he forgot to take his money changer with him and one of the other gang members ran off with it. As he didn't know any of us he assumed that we were all in it together and accused us of being thieves. We knew we were innocent, perhaps because we hadn't thought of such a trick; in any event it spoiled our joy riding for a while.

Nevertheless, it didn't stop us completely. Some time later we hitched a ride from downtown and got off in front of the YMCA, a distance of about a half-mile. Normally, we would enter the front entrance of the "Y" on Main Street and continue on through to exit at the rear. From there it was a short walk to our homes. On this occasion, the desk clerk stopped us and wouldn't let us walk through. This was the only time this ever happened and couldn't have happened at a worst time. As we turned to go back out the front entrance two policemen nabbed us. They had seen us jump off the trolley as they were driving by in their cruiser. In spite of, or perhaps because of, some persuasive talking by one of my friends, they took us to the police station where they proceeded to question us about the theft of the money changer. We saved our necks by being completely truthful with them. We told them the entire story about being at the scene of the theft but were not able to throw any light on who the culprits were. Apparently they accepted our story as, after trying, without success, to contact our parents they released us with a lecture on the dangers involved in car hopping.

The trolleys are gone now from Worcester; they were replaced in the late thirties by much more comfortable buses. But the glamour and excitement are gone also. Who would want to hitch a ride on the back of a bus? To my knowledge, Worcester, in its redevelopment, has not brought back the trolleys.

TEACHERS I REMEMBER

My first memory of a teacher is of one whose name I can't recall. She was my fourth grade teacher at Ward Street School in 1932, the year we left in October to go to Scotland. Although I was in her class only a short time, she made an impression on me that has lasted all these years. I must have shown an interest in poetry; for as a parting gift, when I left her class, she gave me a handwritten copy she had made of Wordsworth's poem, "To A Daffodil."

I had one teacher in Scotland whom I remember well. My recollection is of a tall, heavy-set, gray-haired lady named Miss Bruce. My Uncle Harry had also been in her class and informed me that the kids called her, "Brucie, the Horsekiller." I can believe it; she was a very strict, no nonsense teacher who didn't believe in sparing the rod, as I had occasion to know.

When we returned to Worcester after a year in Scotland, I was in Miss Manning's fifth grade class at Lamartine Street School. She was a character. Each time she had oral instructions to give she prefaced them by saying, "Miss Manning says . . .".

I was given the job of being her office messenger, a situation she used to work on correcting my posture.

In both the seventh and eighth grades we were living on Dudley Place, near City Hospital, where I attended Chandler Street School. Both of these teachers I remember well. In the 7th grade my teacher was Miss Flynn, an elderly, gray-haired little person who also was somewhat of an oddball. Each morning when we arrived in class she would have a different proverb on the board, one that she would explain to us and refer to several times during the day. Another of her ideosyncracies was to toss pennies at us when we came up with the right answer to something. Also, there was a story that made the rounds that she wore a wig and that one day as she was dozing at her desk one of her enterprising pupils tied her wig to the back of her chair. When she stood up, plopp went her wig, exposing her bald pate. I was never able to verify the story.

My eighth grade teacher was Miss Coffey. Of all my teachers she was probably my favorite; she was into music and dramatics. I don't recall there being a piano in the room but we did a lot of singing; patriotic songs such as "America the Beautiful" and many Stephen Foster numbers. We also read poetry and acted out scenes from history. I can recall our "graduation" ceremony at the end of the year when each of us was asked to contribute something from our heritage. We had one black boy in the class, his contribution was the singing of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." My memory is faulty in trying to remember my own contribution.

In high school, three teachers stand out in my memory. When I attended South High School, in Worcester, I had a Miss Grady

(I think that was her name) for Algebra. I recall her class as being very undisciplined. She had all kinds of problems with pupils in her class, including me; but she had a way of explaining that made everything very clear. The problem was that I thought she was so easy that I didn't do homework and, as a result, got a "D" from her.

Also at South High was another of my favorites. Bessie Rosenbaum was the Glee Club Director and, to me, was an excellent teacher. As I loved to sing I could do so to my heart's content. I also learned to read music, a skill which I have since lost.

When I attended Lancaster High School I was fortunate enough to have a Chemistry teacher who had a great influence on my life. Lester Aldrich was a first year teacher and, as such, had to put up with all the barbs that beginners suffer through, including my undisciplined ways. We both survived, I with an "A" in the class, and both of us with an awareness that I had hidden talents that could be developed. It was his influence that caused me to go into teaching.

There were certainly other teachers who had an influence on my life but at this time my memory can't recall them. Perhaps the future will release more from its storehouse.

MY FRIEND GEORGE

My best friend during the middle years of my childhood, pre-teens to early teens, was George Jones. Although we lived in the same neighborhood and, no doubt, attended Chandler Street School at the same time, I didn't meet George at school. I met him as my newsboy neighbor. When I had my "corner" at the Greyhound bus station and the Worcester Knitting Company George had his corner across the street at the B&W (Boston & Worcester) bus station.

We soon became pals and, for several years, were together most of the time. George was of Albanian extraction and lived about two blocks from where I lived on Dudley Place. Neither his father nor his mother spoke much English so the few times I visited his home when they were there I didn't get to know them. I don't know what the father did for a living; I knew, from what George told me, that he owned several houses in various parts of Worcester. From this I gathered that he was a shrewd businessman, as was George. George had two younger brothers, John and Peter. I got to know them well as did my sister. From what I remember they were good students, George was not.

George was a better businessman than I was. While I was content with the 30 or so customers I had he soon worked his sales up to at least twice that. I could say that he had a better corner, which may or may not have been true, but even if we swapped corners I suspect he would have outsold me. It was his nature; he was an easy going, good natured person who never seemed to get pushy and was well liked by everyone who knew him.

George and I did almost everything together. We played on the same baseball team where George was a good hitter, in spite of poor eyesight (he had glasses but refused to wear them). However, because of his vision, he couldn't field any better than I could.

We often skipped school together and were together when the cops picked us up for hopping trolley cars. George turned out to be a good actor in that instance, he started crying when we were taken to the police station. Later, he told me it was all an act. We were also together hopping trolleys when another gang stole the conductor's money changer. We frequently went swimming together at Coes Pond; I can remember one evening going skinny dipping with a couple of girls. Of course, I kept my eyes closed. Ha! That was one of many "eye openers" I had with George.

When we started high school George went to Commerce High and I went to South but we still got together outside of school hours and didn't drift apart until my family moved out of the neighborhood and I had to transfer to North High School.

I got back in touch with George after high school when I returned to Worcester from Lancaster. At that time he was

working at a small drug store on Main Street and was involved, from what I could gather, with some of the rackets in Worcester. I know he sold illegal lottery tickets; whether he handled anything else I never knew.

While I was in the service I went home on furlough and got together with George again. He took me out to several places I didn't know existed; leave it to George, he knew about them. One of the places was a gambling room above a garage in downtown Worcester. One of the "customers" was a police officer I had known as a boy. George also took me to a stag party in Shrewsbury where we were supposed to be entertained by several exotic dancers. Unfortunately, the joint was raided before the dancers made their appearance. The police officers were quite calm and very polite. They sent everyone home without taking names. I often wondered if the raid had been fixed so that the sponsors could keep the money, or split it with the cops, and not have to pay for the dancers.

George and I drifted apart after I started college. The last time I saw him he was getting married and moving to Southbridge. He didn't seem too happy about it. Perhaps he had to marry the girl, or perhaps it was a family arrangement. In any case, I never saw him again and have no idea what happened to him. Perhaps, the next time I'm in Worcester, I should look him up.

MILITARY MEMORIES

Several years ago Joan and I attended our third reunion of the 494th Bomb Group, the Air Force Group I was assigned to while I was overseas during World War II. As is usually the case when old friends meet we compared stories in which we relived incidents in our lives; incidents that had taken place those many years ago. Each story led to another and each one evoked memories of other incidents. We could have gone on for days; in fact, some did.

I

One such incident was brought to mind by one of my old tent mates. When we were on Okinawa we lived in six man tents that were set up near some shrines where the natives of that area buried their dead, above ground. Because of the conditions of decay these shrines were infested with rats. These rats soon became a problem to us. They visited our tents at night and, if we had left any sweaty clothes out, chewed holes in them. Many mornings I woke up to find what was left of a pair of socks or undershorts that had been part of their meal. They also frequently ran across our cot, a frightening experience, particularly when we didn't know what kind of diseases they might be carrying.

To combat this situation I took it upon myself to be the "rat retaliator." I first tried a trap made from a bucket of water with food attached on the edge. The theory was that when they reached for the food they would fall in the water and drown. When this didn't work I resorted to Plan B, which consisted of borrowing a rat trap from the kitchen and, before retiring at night, setting the trap under my cot. The only problem was, I forgot to tell my tent mates. When the trap clanged shut during the night they all awoke with a start and wanted to know who the !#&*# was who had done such a stupid thing. End of rat catching; we learned to live with them until the war ended several months later.

II

Another incident that was brought back to my memory involved what was perhaps the best advice I have ever been given. After the end of the war those of us who had to wait several months before we were returned to the States found that we had a lot of free time on our hands. There were no more missions to fly, no guard duty, occasional KP. Many of us utilized this extra time playing softball all day and drinking beer all evening. This got to be such a regular routine that when we were finally ordered back to the States and went on a troop ship and then a troop train we needed something to do to occupy the time formerly taken up by the softball. We started drinking in the

daytime as well as in the evening and as a result were always in different stages of inebriation.

After this had gone on for some time an officer whose name I never learned took me aside and talked some sense into my head. What he said to me was that I wasn't like the others I had been drinking with; I had a future ahead of me if I stopped the drinking and started thinking about the future. As I said, perhaps the best advice ever given to me. I took it to heart and sobered up.

EARLY MARRIAGE: TERRY AND FRED'S FIRST "HOME"

Recent stirrings in my memory brought back recollections of the first place Terry and I lived after we were married.

My parents had many acquaintances in Worcester, all people they had met in their nomad existence of moving constantly from one place to another. One of the persons they knew was a widow named Mrs. Wallace who owned a rooming house in an apartment building at the corner of Wellington and Chandler Streets, in Worcester. It happened that at the time of the wedding she had a furnished housekeeping room available in the front of her apartment. The location was good, as was the rent. As Terry and I needed a place until school resumed for me in the Fall we jumped at the chance.

We lived there for over two months, in what turned out to be a large bedroom with a hot plate, a sink, and an ice box at one end. I recall there was also a small closet, and a bathroom down the hall. Nowadays, I probably wouldn't think of it as very comfortable but, being newlyweds, Terry and I were quite happy there. The only unpleasant memory I have is of a neighbor in one of the other rooms Mrs. Wallace rented cooking onions almost every night for supper and practically driving me out of there.

We stayed for the summer and then moved to an apartment at Fort Devens when I returned to school.

SECOND HOME

When Terry and I left our first home on Wellington Street we moved to an apartment in a student housing project for veterans at Fort Devens. The project was called "Harvardevens" as it was originally planned for Harvard students and their families. When the University of Massachusetts opened its extension campus for veterans at Fort Devens the project was opened to us also.

The Harvard students had to commute daily to their classes in Cambridge, which was about 35 miles each way. Those of us who were UMass students were more fortunate, our commute was only 4-5 miles.

The apartment was a big improvement over the room on Wellington Street. We had three rooms, a living room, a bedroom, and a small kitchen. We also had our own bathroom, what a luxury. We had to provide our own furniture which we acquired by borrowing from Terry's relatives.

Unfortunately for our next door neighbor, who was a law student at Harvard, the walls were very thin. When Terry started having morning sickness as a consequence of her pregnancy she went into the bathroom to be sick. It didn't bother me but our neighbor, if he happened to be in his bathroom, also lost his breakfast.

In spite of this, the neighbors were very friendly. They had a little girl, about two, who was quite a chatterbox. She and I became great pals as I would sit on the front steps with her and let her jabber.

We also met another couple who lived in the same block, about 3 units away. He was German, also a Harvard student; she was American and apparently from a wealthy family. To us she was a bit strange. They had two young daughters, one about four and the other two. The mother was very laissez-faire about discipline and let the children have free rein with whatever they wanted to do. One situation I remember is when she painted the lower half of the apartment walls black to cover up the crayon and ink scribblings on them. She also pushed the children out of the house to play as soon as the husband left for school. Sometimes they were only half-dressed, even on the coldest days of winter. The husband seemed like a nice guy and quite perplexed about how to cope with his wife and children. I've often wondered what became of them.

We lived at Harvardevens for a year. During that time I finished my sophomore year in college. Terry worked at a secretarial job in Leominster, taking the bus each way every week day. In May Terry quit her job when Elaine was due. At the end of the school year I got a summer job at the railroad station in Ayer. It was my job to replace each of the employees at the station when they went on vacation, including the station master. As I didn't have a car I borrowed a bicycle from a friend and rode this each way to work, sometimes at night, a distance of about 10 miles.

At the end of the summer we moved to Amherst and set up a small trailer there as our campus housing.

The Continuing Saga of Terry and Fred's Early Living Quarters

When we left Harvardevens in September, 1948, after completing my sophomore year in college, we had to find housing in Amherst. I was to complete my undergraduate work there at the main University of Massachusetts campus. Finding that housing proved to be a problem.

During August I went to Amherst with a student friend, Alan Rockwood who, together with his wife Alice and their new baby, was also transferring. We searched the entire area for off-campus housing suitable for two or three couples; they had other friends who would share with us if we could find a place.

When nothing was available Terry and I hit upon the idea of buying a small trailer. This we could park on campus in a space the college had set aside for that purpose right next to the student store. We were able to negotiate a loan from a Worcester bank and bought an old 20 foot "Indian" trailer from a lot near Worcester. As we didn't have a vehicle to tow

the trailer we had to pay a hauling company to deliver it to Amherst. I don't recall what the towing cost but it must have been cheap as we had very little money.

We established a time for delivery and arrived at the delivery point ahead of schedule to anxiously await their arrival. As it turned out, they were about five to six hours late. The driver informed us that the lug nuts on one of the trailer wheels kept loosening and they finally had to weld the nuts in place in order to complete the delivery.

This trailer became our home for the next 3 years. We soon discovered that early house trailers, as they were then called, were not made as well as they are now. I've already mentioned the problem with the lug nuts. Another problem we encountered: the trailer had a fuel oil space heater which required an outside fuel tank to service it; this required a permit. In addition, the tank connection always leaked no matter what I did to tighten it, and fuel oil constantly dripped onto the ground under the trailer. Also, because of heavy condensation, we got dry rot in one of the bedroom panels and I had to replace that.

In spite of the many shortcomings the trailer became a comfortable home for us. I built a pre-fab entryway and steps leading up to this entryway. This was a lifesaver in the winter in helping keep the trailer snug during prolonged cold spells. It probably also contributed to the condensation problem as it curtailed the amount of fresh air that entered the trailer.

When my undergraduate work was completed at the University of Massachusetts in 1950 we had the trailer moved to an off-campus site owned by Springfield College; their student RV park. Here we lived for the next year while I was working toward my master's degree. The park was located in a surprisingly rural area for being so close to a large city. As it was also part of a bird sanctuary we had to get rid of our beautiful, three-colored cat, Debbie.

By this time I had acquired my first car, a 1937 Chevy club coupe. I used this to drive back and forth to classes, about five miles away, and to a part-time job selling shoes in downtown Springfield. As the nearest markets were several miles away we also needed a car to do our shopping.

We left this area in the summer of 1951 when I obtained my first teaching job in Williamstown, Mass. As we were moving into a real house for the first time we sold the trailer before leaving Springfield.

WILLIAMSTOWN, MASSACHUSETTS

Our home for the next two years, August, 1951 through June, 1953 was in a four room, two story apartment that was at one end of a large, colonial style manor in Williamstown, Mass. As the manor was part of a former dairy farm the apartment had been converted from what had at one time been the milk processing plant. The downstairs floors were cement, and cold, and the entire apartment was drafty. An oil furnace in the cellar ran constantly during the winter months in our efforts to keep the place warm enough to be livable. As a result, for about four months of the year our fuel bill consumed a large part of our income.

Other than the expense incurred by winter it was an enjoyable place to live. The house was part of a 400 acre estate that included a large barn used at that time to store an assortment of vehicles. There were also two smaller houses which were also rented, a swimming pool that got little use and much open space where we planted a garden each spring.

The road on which the estate was located was aptly named Green River Road. The river -- more like a large stream-- paralleled the road and, to my joy, was a fair to middling trout stream. I enjoyed many hours of fishing by merely crossing the road in front of the house.

The owner was an aeronautical engineer who worked for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft in Hartford,, Connecticut. He lived in Hartford during the week and commuted to Williamstown each weekend, a considerable distance. He was, apparently, the holder of a number of patents in his field and, as a result, quite wealthy. The rest of the family, mother and two daughters, lived in the main part of the house year round. Both daughters attended Williamstown schools. The oldest daughter was an eighth grader and was one of my students during my first year of teaching. I was told she had been a holy terror the previous year and had been one of the reasons my predecessor had left. For me she was well behaved; perhaps because of my proximity to her parents.

The main section of the house, where our landlords the Hoovers lived, was a mansion. The living room, which occupied most of the downstairs, was as large as any I have ever seen and was handsomely furnished. We were able to spend a number of evenings in the comfort of that room when Terry babysat for Mrs. Hoover.

As Williamstown is close to the New York border we visited that state on several trips during the summer of 1952. It was my first visit to the upstate New York and has inspired many more. We spent a good portion of that summer camping in the Adirondacks.

Joan and I revisited Williamstown on our eastern trip in 1986. I was disappointed to discover that the old house was gone. Whether it burned or was torn down I didn't find out.

HUDSON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the summer of 1953 we moved to Hudson where I had accepted a position as school counselor. At the time Elaine had just turned five and Jim was two and a half. We were able to rent a cottage about two miles from the high school, where, for the next school year, I was to spend four days a week. The fifth day was to be at Merrimack Unified School in a small town about 15 miles away.

The cottage was tiny but warm and cozy compared to the old barn-like structure in which we had lived in Williamstown. It came equipped with an efficient furnace in the cellar much less expensive to operate than the one in Williamstown, a condition for which we were thankful. Directly over the furnace was a grate in the floor to direct the heat into the house. One day, when Terry's brother Bob was visiting, Jim got hold of his car keys and dropped them through the grate. What fun! I took Bob to a local garage where they instructed him how to hot wire the car so he could get home.

The school situation was a very pleasant one. I was in charge of the counseling program at both Alvirne High School in Hudson and for grades 5 through 12 at the school in Merrimack. I was on a job where I felt completely at home, one which I had taken my masters in at Springfield College. I revamped the counseling program from what it had been previously and established communications with local colleges and industries. In that way I was able to work with the students and help them in their career and college planning.

Unfortunately, the weather was even more severe than it had been in Williamsrown. Both Terry and I decided we needed to head for a warmer climate. After considerable research we headed west at the end of the school year, winding up eventually in California.

WESTWARD HO!

Before heading west I shopped around and found a utility trailer to load our belongings in. As a raw amateur at cross-country travel I had no knowledge of what driving an old vehicle with an excessively heavy trailer in tow would entail. It was not a subject any of my colleagues had any experience with.

We took off blithely, in late June, 1954, with all our worldly goods except the furniture we had acquired; this we sold or gave away before we left Hudson. Things went smoothly until we had to negotiate some steep hills in mid-America. I'm not certain exactly where we were when the problems began but I do recall the radiator on our 1942 Pontiac boiling over frequently from that point on. Stopping to replenish the radiator water became a frequent chore.

It took us about eight days of tough driving to reach Arizona, our planned destination. More initial planning and better knowledge of the western deserts would have prepared us better for what we encountered. We arrived in Tempe in early July to discover temperatures in the high nineties, day and night. As a consequence, we were there only a few days when Elaine developed a dry cough she could not shake. With our vision of a life in Arizona shattered we headed for southern California.

At the time my cousin Vera and her family were living in Costa Mesa, in Orange County. Vera invited us to stay with them while I canvassed the area for a teaching position. Strangely, in spite of the rapid growth taking place in southern California at the time, there were no vacancies in the dozen or so school districts I visited. Because of this we decided to head north and explore opportunities in other parts of the state.

We traveled north by way of Highway 101, stopping off in San Luis Obispo and Paso Robles among other places. We by-passed the Bay area, why I don't remember, and went further north to Ukiah and other schools in that area. By this time we were getting close to August and still there were no vacancies.

After a week off to relax on the South fork of the Trinity River (see separate story about this area), we turned south to check out districts in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. One vacancy was located, at a middle school in a small town near Merced. The principal who interviewed me said he needed a woman who could handle girls' P.E. as part of the assignment but would consider me if he was able to satisfy that requirement elsewhere. He also admitted he was concerned about my having a better background than he and might find me replacing him if he hired me. At least, he was honest about it.

As we continued south I became more and more discouraged. We were well into August and I had not found a job. Of course, I did not try to visit every school district but hop-scotched from one to another. I had hopes that an interviewer from one district would be able to tell me about vacancies in others. This finally happened but not in the way I anticipated. When I was being interviewed by a superintendent near Bakersfield he informed me that the Los Angeles School District was recruiting in his area and apparently had many vacancies to fill.

As a result of this interview I applied to, and was hired by, the Los Angeles Unified School District, an area where I had definitely not wanted to teach. Fortunately, I was assigned to South Gate Junior High School which, except for a two year hiatus in Florida, became my home until I retired in 1981. I said fortunately because I could just as easily have been assigned to Watts or some other undesirable area, and probably would have been out of teaching soon after.

EAST LOST ANGELES
1954 to 1956

After accepting the teaching position at South Gate Junior High we needed an economical place to live that was close enough to South Gate for an easy drive. We were referred to a rental agency by people we met in East Los Angeles who gave us a short list of what was available in the price range we could afford. We chose what we considered the best of the lot, a duplex on Ferguson Drive that rented for \$65 a month. It had two bedrooms, a living room, bathroom and a large kitchen. Laundry facilities were in an anteroom to the garage, which faced the street.

While we were living there Elaine, age 6, started school. As our new home was close to the city of Montebello we enrolled her in a first grade at a school within walking distance of the duplex. To supplement our income I obtained a part-time job at a shoe store on Whittier Boulevard, a short drive from home.

We had two pets at the time. Chippy was a two-year old part Setter, part Lab we had acquired as a pup before we left the East Coast. Although we considered him a gentle, loving dog the mailman refused to deliver our mail if Chippy was tied up in the yard. We gave him to a black man who worked for the trash collector. He thought Chippy was "black and beautiful."

The other pet was a kitten one of the family, I'm not sure who, had picked up in the neighborhood. The kitten loved to sleep with Jim, who was three and a half. We were concerned that it might lie on Jim's face and smother him. To prevent this from happening we set up barricade by leaning a card table in the bedroom doorway, a big mistake. One night the kitten tried to jump over the table and brought it crashing down on her breaking her leg. In the morning we took the kitten to a vet and had a cast put on her leg. Unfazed, the kitten learned to clop along on the cast. When we moved again in 1956 we gave the cat, full grown by then, to a neighbor.

After two years Terry and I were still searching for Utopia. I was happy with the school situation, but we were not content living in the city. As a result, we decided to chuck everything again and give Florida a try. This meant another cross-country drive toting whatever possessions we could take with us.

EUSTIS, FLORIDA
1956 to 1958

For our trip to Florida we sold the heavy utility trailer we had used on our western trek and replaced it with one much lighter in weight. We also, the year before, had replaced our old Pontiac with a 1946 Chevy sedan delivery. This vehicle package towed better and the van was also useful as a sleep-in vehicle when we traveled.

We were also more aware of the vagaries of desert travel, which made our journey uneventful. Crossing Texas, as before, was a bore, a thousand miles of what looked like barren desert.

Upon arriving in Florida I found a teaching position at the high school in Eustis, 25 miles northwest of Orlando. We located an apartment less than a mile from the school, another duplex. Again, more furniture to buy and the chore of settling in. The duplex was pleasant enough and adequate for our needs. One problem, the man in the other half of the duplex was a wife beater. On several occasions we heard the wife crying and pleading with him.

Jim started school here, going to a private kindergarten run by Mary Palmer who became a good friend of ours. It was from her that Terry got the pecan pie recipe. Elaine went to third grade in a school close to the high school.

To get away from our neighbors, less than a year later we found a house on a lot by itself and moved to this new location.

We loved the area we were living in. The weather was good, although it was wetter and more humid than California, and everything was green. Many lakes surrounded us and most of them contained large bass which were there for the taking.

The school situation, however, was not a good one. We were in "Cracker Country" and I was always made to feel like an outsider. Consequently, after two years we decided to return to California.

THE SUMMER OF 1958

This was the year we returned to California from Florida. Elaine was ten years old and Jim was seven. Records are skimpy but I have been able to piece together several facts from an old budget I located.

The cross-country drive was a fairly uneventful one, taking eight days with overnight stops in De Funiak Springs, Florida; Jena, Louisiana; Dallas, Texas; Colorado City, Texas; Toyahvale, Texas; Bowie, Arizona; and Gila Bend, Arizona; before reaching California. What was unusual about the trip was that, except for the night in Toyahvale, we stopped at motels every night. The one exception was at Balmorhea State Park in Toyahvale; apparently we stopped there for the swimming pool. We had a

car that burned a lot of oil as we had to add a quart almost every day.

When we reached California we stayed at a motel in East Los Angeles for a week and then rented a house on Beatty Avenue in Norwalk. This we furnished with all new (to us) furniture as we had left all our Florida furnishings in Florida. We started out with the piano which Elaine now has, then found some "recycled" bedroom and kitchen paraphernalia.

Other than the cross-country trip the summer was a quiet one, for us; primarily because we had to make a limited amount of money stretch until the first school check arrived in October. In order to do this I got a job at Rosecrans Drive-In Theatre, where I worked almost every night until about 2 A.M. This at least gave us time to go to the beach frequently during the day, where I could catch up on my sleep while the kids cavorted in the water. It must have been a restful summer.

Late that summer we were able to take one camping trip. On Labor Day weekend we traveled to Bass Lake, outside Yosemite and, while camping there explored the back roads north of Bass Lake. This was my first exposure to the Granite Creek area, a region that became a favorite camping and backpacking destination for us.

FROM NORWALK TO LONG BEACH TO LAKEWOOD

Our stay on Beatty Avenue lasted only one year. The owners went into bankruptcy and, in order for them to keep the house, had to move back in. We moved during the next summer, 1959, to a house on Everest Street, a few blocks from Beatty Avenue.

Here, Elaine had a good friend and schoolmate, Vickie Telles, who lived across the street. During our year there they were practically inseparable. Bill was born while we were living in this house.

Terry and I decided during that year that neither the neighborhood we lived in nor the school Elaine and Jim attended were satisfactory and, at the end of the school year, sought a new location in the Long Beach area.

After considerable searching we found a location we liked, near schools that we liked, on Sandwood Street in Long Beach, very close to Lakewood.

It was another small, three bedroom house that was not really adequate for a family our size but, costs of larger houses were beyond our means.

Elaine began Bancroft Junior High School, a school that subsequently each of the children would attend. Jim went into fourth grade at Mark Twain Elementary School, the school where Jean Taatjes was teaching. Lynette was born in 1961 while we lived in this house, adding to our space problems, but it was two and a half years later before we made another change.

In late 1963, with Terry pregnant again, our good friend Eddie Contreras convinced us we should buy a house rather than continuing to pay rent. He took us around the area looking at houses and luckily we found the one on Briercrest that became the family home everyone remembers best. Using the G.I. Bill as a financing source we moved in with no down payment and a postponed closing cost for a grand total of \$17,900. It was February 2, 1964, Jim's 13th birthday.

Here, our family was completed less than two months later when Barbara was born. To provide enough room for all to have sleeping quarters I built a room in the garage for Jim, built triple bunks for the three youngest and gave Elaine a room to herself. For a time Terry and I slept on the couch in the living room.

FOREST GLEN: A CAMPING EXPERIENCE

Terry and I first arrived in California during the summer of 1954. Our family at that time consisted of Elaine, 6, and Jim, 3. While looking into teaching positions we explored the state and discovered many recreational opportunities.

One of the areas we discovered during this exploration was a primitive section of northwest California midway between Red Bluff and the Coast. We knew from our study of a road map that a campground was located in a remote area known as Forest Glen, on the South Fork of the Trinity River.

At that time, Highway 36, which now connects Red Bluff and the Coast, was almost non-existent. The road was very primitive and not recommended for passenger cars. As this was before our RV days we were driving a 1946 Pontiac sedan and towing a very heavy utility trailer loaded with all our possessions.

We approached the area from Highway 299 out of Redding and then Highway 3 south through the small towns of Hayfork and Peanut. This combination of roads turned out to be suitable for our car although Rte 3 was narrow and winding. In one place we had to pull way over to the side of the road to allow a lumber truck to thunder past. I don't think he slowed down one bit even when he passed us.

The campground turned out to be a delightful place. We set up our tent, gathered firewood, which was plentiful, and settled in for a few days of relaxation. It was a short walk to the river and I indulged myself with many hours of good fly fishing. We became acquainted with another family camping next to us which consisted of a grandmother, mother, and two small children. The grandmother showed me the good fishing spots and became a part-time fishing buddy. At night the adults sat around the campfire and played penny-ante poker. One thing that surprised us was how cold it was at night even though it might have been 80 during the day.

A RETURN TO FOREST GLEN

During the summer of 1993 Joan and I spent several days at Forest Glen, on the South Fork of the Trinity River. This is an area that Terry and I camped at with Elaine and Jim during our first summer in California, 1954. At that time the camping was primitive but ideal. Also, the fly fishing in the South Fork was excellent.

In 1993 that had all changed. The campground is not as primitive but also not as scenic. The fishing too is gone, the river is closed to fishing in that section to protect salmon spawning areas. While I agree with the need for protection I was disappointed that the fabulous fishing was no more.

Off We Go Adventuring

I haven't a dime to pay my way
As I walk down the pathways of life
But I whistle and sing as I walk along
Free from all care and strife.
For life is a great adventure to me
That can't be enjoyed sitting still.
There are rivers to cross and roads to explore
And that lake at the top of the hill.
So follow the call of the open road
Or hike to the distant hills.
Fly to the moon or sail the high seas,
Whatever provides the right thrills.
Take the life that's been given to you
Face it with a song and a smile
Reach out for the many joys to be had
And make the adventure worth while.

The preceding poem, written in 1984, exemplifies perhaps more than any of my poems the outlook which I apply to the pursuit of life. My concept of adventure defines this outlook in two different ways. One part of the definition contains the idea that life itself is a great adventure, one that must be carried out to its fullest and every aspect of it enjoyed. The other facet, closely related to the first, embodies a perpetual search for adventurous undertakings. Whether they consist of places to go, things to see, or activities to become involved in, they are all adventures to me.

Raft trips down an unfamiliar river, backpacks into the wilderness, RV trips to faraway places; these and many more are adventures I have been fortunate enough to take part in.

The raft trip down the Dearborn River in Montana was an adventure three of my children are certain to remember. As rivers go, the Dearborn is a small one; the section we floated covers a distance of about eight miles, as the crow flies, to where it empties into the Missouri River northwest of Helena. We discovered that the river doesn't flow in a straight line, as the crow supposedly does; it meanders to and fro with many direction changes before reaching its destination. The total distance we covered must have been at least 12 miles.

It is beautiful country; low, rolling, timbered hills, away from traffic and, except for the last two miles, out of sight of any human habitation. For the most part it is a slow moving, gentle-natured stream, not difficult to float. One short stretch contains rapids that drop about ten feet in a distance of fifty yards. The girls and I lined the larger raft, which was our vessel, through the fast water; Bill, using a smaller raft, ran the rapids with no mishap.

The fishing was good but not spectacular; we caught many trout but none very large. The floating itself, regardless of the fishing, was a delight; until we found we hadn't allowed ourselves enough time and had to finish the last stretch at dusk, in the rain. In spite of the capricious ending, it was a marvelous adventure. I have made many other float trips, both by raft and by boat, on larger rivers, but none has compared to the float down the Dearborn.

Of the many backpacks I have been on, two stand out in my mind as high adventure. In 1976, again with the three youngest members of the family, a good portion of the summer was spent backpacking in Montana. We ventured into the back country on the outskirts of Yellowstone National Park for several hikes and then headed to the western part of the state, to the Bob Marshall Wilderness, near Augusta. On a trip covering about 45 miles through rain, snow, and mud, we hiked to the Danaher Basin on the upper watershed of the Flathead River. We crossed paths with a pack train and heard their stories of grizzlies and moose but never saw any sign of either, or other people for that matter.

This is wild country, certainly the most primitive in my experience and, in places, fabulous fishing. We didn't see as much of the country as we had planned; continued bad weather forced us to shorten our hike and leave a few days early.

The second backpack I would classify as high adventure took place in 1981. I was part of a Sierra Club led trans-Sierra hike of about 55 miles. My group of twelve hardy souls began the hike on the west side of the Sierra at Wishon Reservoir and finished at South Lake on the east side eight days later. Throughout the trip we had gorgeous weather; some days we hiked as much as ten miles, a good portion of it off-trail and above timberline.

We hiked along the North Fork of the Kings River, crosscountry past Mt. Goddard, which some members of the group ascended, to Muir-Pass where we picked up the John Muir Trail. We followed this trail down to the Middle Fork of the Kings River where I, as designated camp fisherman, caught enough trout one afternoon to feed the entire group. We left this area by climbing a steep trail to Bishop Pass and then an easy downhill trail to South Lake. While waiting for our bus to pick us up we gorged ourselves on fresh baked pie and milk at Parchers' Camp, our first fresh food in days.

Two of the most outstanding RV trips I can recall were ones that covered many miles and were brim full of scenic pleasure. On a recent trip to the East coast Joan and I visited up-state New York and upper New England during the prime time of the year, Fall Foliage time. The vistas were magnificent, particularly in New York. This is one trip everyone should take at least once, the colors are so beautiful.

Several years prior to the New England trip we toured the Canadian Rockies and were awestruck by the scenery. Moraine Lake in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, Rogers Pass, and Maligne Lake were but a few of the splendors of this trip.

All of my adventures have not been the result of going places and doing things. Some excellent adventure can be had without the expense of travel. Armchair adventuring is a great pastime. Reading a good book can, in itself, be an adventure, especially if it describes places I would like to see. I can remember, as a boy, the excitement I felt when reading SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON and TREASURE ISLAND. Also, many sensory adventures can be had by listening, smelling, and observing. As a music lover, I find that listening to music can be transcending. Some pursuits, such as sky diving, white water canoeing, and hang gliding, I might have tried if they had been popular when I was younger, but now I will have to experience them vicariously.

And there are still adventures ahead. Joan and I are in the midst of planning our most adventurous RV trip yet, to Alaska. As this is being written, in the Spring of 1991, we are busily engaged equipping a newly bought camper for the 8000+ miles we expect to travel this summer. It could be the adventure of a lifetime.

Or perhaps that big adventure will be in 1992. During that year we hope to tour Europe, without an RV of course. We have been discussing and examining the options for several years now and are looking forward to seeing much of Europe.

Or perhaps . . .

ON THE ROAD: I

Our first trailer was bought in 1963 before Barbara was born. It was a 15 foot 1954 Aljoa which we paid \$595 for from a dealer in Compton. At the time we bought it, it was painted a dull red and faded white in color. It came equipped with: a double bed in the rear, a dinette in front with a sling bunk over the dinette that would sleep one child, an ice box, a propane stove, and one propane tank. It did not have a toilet, not even a porta-potty, so it could never have been classified as self-contained. When Barbara was born, the following March, I built a crib at the foot of the bed which became her sleeping quarters during all of her trips for the next four years. My memory is hazy about other sleeping arrangements but I think Elaine and Lynette slept on the dinette, Bill in the sling bunk, and Jim in the back of our tow vehicle. I also don't recall how much closet and drawer space we had; with all of the other fixtures there couldn't have been much. I believe we stored our clothes in plastic bags, one for each

As this was our first venture into trailering we decided that our new purchase had to have a name. After much conjecture and discussion we chose the name "WEAK END WAGGIN'" and had John Witkowski paint it on the back. We received many comments on the appropriate name we had selected. One special feature this trailer had was an awning and extra canvas room which we could attach. We used this extra room on many of our trips, particularly those where we stayed put for a period of time.

This trailer was our camping vehicle for a period of about five years, until 1968 when we replaced it with a larger unit. We went everywhere with it, including one cross-country trip in the summer of 1963 and a trip to the Chicago area in 1966. The 1963 trip was one replete with problems. We got as far as Albuquerque, New Mexico when the frame on the trailer started to sag and we had to have it welded and reinforced. This repair held together until we were on the New Jersey Turnpike later that summer heading toward Worcester to visit Terry's family. The frame broke almost completely and we had to find a truck with a portable welding unit to come to the scene of the breakdown. After a delay of several hours we continued on our way. Upon arriving in Worcester, Terry's cousin Francis, who was a welder by trade, rebuilt the frame completely so that we never had another problem with it.

In the summer of 1966 we towed the trailer to Lake Eliza in Indiana where we set up camp for the family while I attended Illinois Institute of Technology in Chicago. We took full advantage of our extra room on this stay at Lake Eliza, even to the extent of buying an old refrigerator for \$15 and setting it up outside in this room. By this time we had acquired a new tow vehicle, a new Chevy Suburban Carryall. This made the towing considerably more trouble free than it had been with our Buick station wagon.

Some time during this period I decided the trailer needed painting, another decision fraught with problems. First, the decision about color, then the preparation, then the choice of method. We decided a light cream color with a decorative blue stripe would be appropriate and the stripe would be affixed by using masking tape to mark the delineation. All went fairly well until after the painting was over, then we had a slight problem. I had borrowed a spray gun and while using it the wind had blown with just enough force and in the proper direction so that the car belonging to Virgil Jenkins' daughter acquired a case of light cream freckles. With abject apologies and an offer to pay for the damages, which he refused, Virgil was somewhat mollified.

One other summer trip with this trailer involved us in another misadventure which will be described in the story about Milsap Bar.

FISHING TRIPS I HAVE KNOWN

Easter Trips

Easter vacation was a favorite time for short trips with the family, particularly with the three youngest. We often went to a section of the Colorado River for camping, boating, and fishing. Temple Bar, in the Lake Mead Recreation Area, was one of our favorites. Here we could launch the boat and explore parts of upper Lake Mead. Fishing was often poor, but the weather was great, and we were able to relax and enjoy the water.

On one occasion the fishing was great. Large female rainbow trout came into the dock area to spawn and were easily caught. For bait, we stripped some roe from a freshly caught fish and tied that to a hook. Everybody caught fish; even Barbara, who was quite small at the time, managed to catch several in the 16 inch range.

A few other Easters were spent in the Lake Mead area at Willow Beach, near the fish hatchery. In this section we would fish upstream as far as Hoover Dam, about ten miles; we also could fish downstream but seldom did. Again, the fishing wasn't outstanding but the boating was enjoyable. On one downstream trip the wind was perfect for kite flying, a situation we quickly took advantage of. Several years after we stopped going there the public campground was washed out in a flood and the government decided not to rebuild it. There is a concession operated RV park there, part of the marina complex, but we never stayed there.

Further downstream on the Colorado is Davis Dam which backs up the water to form Lake Mohave. We visited this area several times and camped, both above the dam at Katherine's Landing, a lovely National Park Service campground, and below the dam at Sportsman's Park, a Clark County park. We didn't find the fishing good either place but the camping at Katherine's Landing was very pleasant at Easter time. One time we launched the boat at Sportman's Park to fish below the dam; the motor conked out and while we were trying to get it started we drifted down the river to Laughlin, where we were able to row to shore. At that time, Laughlin was a peaceful little gambling town of one or two casinos. Joan and I visited there in 1989 and found it had developed into a gambling mecca, with a dozen or more Las Vegas type casinos.

One of the most memorable areas on the Colorado we traveled to on several Easter vacations was far above Lake Mead. This was Lee's Ferry, in the Marble Canyon section of the river in northern Arizona, about 12 miles below Glen Canyon Dam and above the Grand Canyon. This very scenic section had superb fishing, and much cooler weather at Easter time than the lower sections of the river. Also, the water level fluctuated considerably, depending on the power needs of the dam. We boated upstream

on numerous occasions, fished and explored side canyons on foot, and then floated back down to the launch area, a good day's float.

On one trip up-river I almost bought it. We had anchored at a bend in the river where the fishing was good and after we had caught several nice trout Barbara's line wrapped itself around the propeller on the outboard motor. One of the kids tilted the motor up out of the water but forgot to latch it. When I reached out to untangle the lure the motor plopped back down into the water and took me with it. The shock of the icy water almost paralyzed me, it was so cold. Before I knew what had happened I was swept about 50 feet downstream by the force of the current. As it was a cold morning I had worn long johns under my outer clothing and when these became waterlogged I was not able to swim back to the boat. Fortunately, one of the kids pulled up the anchor to let the boat drift down to me; this saved me. We then went ashore and built a large fire so that I could warm up and dry out. I still shiver thinking about it.

One early morning at Lee's Ferry Bill and I motored several miles upstream to a sandbar and proceeded to cook breakfast. While we were cooking pancakes the water level started to rise, forcing us to pile everything into the boat and look for a more suitable dining area. Another time, the water level was so low we had to get out of the boat and walk it upstream until we found navigable water.

Lee's Ferry was also the launching area for whitewater raft trips through the Grand Canyon. We frequently saw a dozen or more of these huge rafts lined up ready to begin their downstream assault.

The Madison River

We first became acquainted with the Madison during the summer of 1968. On our way back to California from an eastern trip we decided to see what Montana had to offer and, following some research about the area, headed for the headwaters of the Missouri River near Three Forks as a starting point for our explorations. At that time there was a small, primitive campground at what is now Missouri River Headwaters State Monument. Now, it is a state park, with a newer campground, and a fee, and has lost some of its charm.

The custodian of the campground was Buel Reed, a retired highway department employee, who supplemented his retirement income by working several days a week at some of the nearby state operated parks and recreation areas. We soon got to know Buel well and made it a point to stop at the monument each time we passed through the area. With Buel's help, and also with the help of another camper we met on our first visit there, we soon knew all of the hot fishing spots on the three rivers that form the Missouri: namely, the Madison, the Gallatin, and the Jefferson.

We fished the Jefferson several times, both by floating and by wading, and found this river the least productive of the three. The only event of consequence that happened on the Jefferson took place on a float trip on which we were using two rafts. Jim's raft lost an argument with submerged debris and had to be abandoned. The Gallatin was good fishing at times but the only way to fish it was to hike about a mile along the railroad tracks from the campground. We did catch some good fish but the hiking was hot and hazardous. This left us with the Madison, which turned out the best of the three.

A little geography might be helpful at this point. The Madison gets its start inside Yellowstone National Park when the Gibbon and Firehole Rivers merge. It emerges from the Park about 30 miles below this point near West Yellowstone, Montana and flows in a northwesterly direction to Hebgen and then Quake Lakes. Both of these lakes provide good fishing for trout but that's another story. Beyond these lakes the Madison is a good, over-fished river that in recent years has been subjected to many restrictions. Most of these restrictions have to do with size or possession limits that vary from year to year and continue down-river to Ennis, Montana.

Below Ennis another lake (Ennis Lake) was formed when a dam was built by a power company. Downstream from this dam the river flows unimpeded for another 30 plus miles until it merges with the Jefferson and the Gallatin near Three Forks to form the Missouri River. An eight mile stretch of the Madison immediately below Ennis Dam is the section known as Bear Traps Canyon. This is a wild section of the river that is a difficult float, with many rapids and boulder filled stretches that have defeated many rafters.

A number of areas along the Madison proved to be productive. One section we visited several times was Grey Cliffs. This was located along a bumpy, gravel road about mid-way between Three Forks and Bear Traps Canyon. There was a primitive campground and ample room to launch a raft. The fishing here was often good but not outstanding.

Our favorite area on the Madison was along the stretch of highway as the river leaves Bear Traps Canyon. This section had good fishing and a number of places where we could dry camp. We floated the raft through here many times both above and below the highway bridge and usually caught several trout, mostly browns. On one trip there with Bill and Jim a few years ago Bill caught a brown trout that weighed over 5 pounds and measured 24½ inches. During the summer of 1988 Joan and I visited the area and were saddened to discover that because of a long term drought the lower Madison was so low that a large majority of the trout had died.

Florida Fishing

When we lived in Florida, from 1956 to 1958, I was able to go fishing frequently. Here, I wasn't looking for the elusive trout, but bass, big ones at that.

One weekend Terry and I, with Elaine and Jim, drove to a lake about an hour's drive from our home in Eustis. Here we launched our little 10 foot wooden boat which I had bought from a student in my class. It had a large patch on its side and, appropriately, we named it "Leakin' Lena." We had the lake to ourselves for the entire weekend and caught a few nice bass, including one caught on half a grasshopper. I had cast my line with the whole grasshopper attached out into the middle of the lake, with a bobber on the line. When the bobber did a disappearing act, I tried to set the hook but missed what appeared to be a hard strike. I reeled in and discovered that the grasshopper was still alive although it was half gone. I cast the half-grasshopper out to the same spot; in less than five minutes I had another strike and reeled in a six pound bass.

At this same lake I cast out a live minnow and let it sink to the bottom; I had a strike and then seemed to be stuck on the bottom. I tried and tried to reel in but couldn't budge it. About ten minutes later I felt my line moving and then nothing. I reeled in to find my hook stripped; apparently, a large turtle had been sitting on it.

One of my favorite Florida lakes was about ten miles from Eustis. Not only did it have good fishing, there was also a nice, sandy beach where we could swim. This lake produced a nine pounder, which I caught on a plastic worm, and also several 3-4 pounders. One of the three pounders had a lure in its mouth that Terry had lost less than an hour earlier. While I was fishing at this lake Elaine and Jim played in the water. On one occasion Jim caught some small frogs and released them inside the front of Terry's bathing suit. This stirred things up a little.

Less than a quarter of a mile from our house in Eustis was a small lake which also contained bass. I caught a few small ones here and hooked one large bass that I never saw. It wrapped my line around an underwater obstruction which I tried, without success, to wade to, shoes and all. While I was wading it took off and threw the lure back in my face.

There were many other lakes in and around Eustis, all of them contained bass; some of them also had a resident alligator or two. We heard several stories of a dog swimming in a lake being pulled under and badly maimed, if not killed. We were quite concerned at one lake; we were fishing in our boat when our Dalmation, Pepper, broke loose from the tree she had been tied to and swam out to us. Fortunately, she made it without mishap.

In addition to the good lake fishing there was also good ocean fishing at that time in Florida, particularly at Cocoa Beach, about 50 miles from home, near Daytona. Sea trout were plentiful as were croakers, sheepshead, and other bottom fish.

Unfortunately, as elsewhere, the good fishing was spoiled by development. When we made a return visit to Florida in 1971 the jetty and bridge we had fished from at Cocoa Beach were no longer there; they had been replaced by high rises. Also, several of our favorite lakes were surrounded by new homes. Progress?

FAVORITE FISHING HOLES I
Middle Fork Kaweah River

One of my favorite fishing places has been the Middle Fork of the Kaweah River at Castle Creek crossing. I believe all of my kids except Elaine have been there on more than one occasion. Wally, I believe, was there once and also Jim Brown. John Witkowski went with us several times.

From the trailhead near Hospital Rock, inside the south entrance of Sequoia National Park, it's a long, hot seven mile trek. The river at the section where the trail ends is about 50 feet wide, and usually difficult to cross, especially wearing a backpack. For this reason we usually set up camp on a sandbar on the same side of the river as we arrived at on the trail.

On a few occasions we were able to cross over and make our camp a short distance up Castle Creek. The camping conditions on the Castle Creek side were a marked improvement over the conditions on the other side. We were in shade for one thing, also there was a fireplace where we could do our cooking and, best of all, a clean water supply from Castle Creek.

Although a few times some of us fished Castle Creek, our fishing was usually in the main stream. We could wade, or walk the shore, for a considerable distance above camp and always caught plenty of trout. There were some days when we counted over one hundred caught and released. I can't remember the fishing not ever being great, but for the non-fishermen in the group the scenery was also outstanding. Even that was worth the hike.

Usually we had the place to ourselves. I can recall only two occasions when we met other people there. One time a man had come in on horseback; the other time there were three or four men who had arrived ahead of us. I remember watching as they belayed their packs across the river on a rope, using some kind of navy rigging they were familiar with. After they crossed the river we didn't see them again, so we still had the place to ourselves.

As mentioned earlier it's a hot trail so we usually tried to get there in June before the summer heat arrived. Later in the summer there was a good chance the back country would be closed because of fire hazard. This happened to us one time, I don't recall what our Plan B was.

The last time I was there must have been at least 15 years ago (1979?). I believe Bill, Lynette, and Barbara, Marie Brown, and Nancy Atkinson, a teacher from South Gate made up our group. That was one of the times we crossed over to camp near Castle Creek.

I have discussed backpacking into the Kaweah with Joan but so far it hasn't become a part of our agenda. If we are going to do it we had better do it soon, while we're still young.

FAVORITE FISHING HOLES II Middle Fork Kaweah River

Although not as good fishing as at Castle Creek crossing, there is another section of the Middle Fork that Jim and I hiked to on several occasions. John Witkowski accompanied us there a few times.

In order to reach this section of the river we had to leave the trail about three to four miles from the trailhead and climb down a steep hillside. For the last 15 to 20 feet a cliff had to be scaled.

Once we reached the river we had a small sandbar to camp on, with ample fire wood, and water from the river. This was always a bare bones type of trip so we left some old equipment there in order not to have to lug it back and forth. As far as I know, it's still there. As mentioned, the fishing wasn't as good here. We also were restricted to a short distance both up and down stream. Beyond that was an impassable box canyon.

One time I led a group of teachers to this place; Les Burns, Larry Markle, Hal Pelfrey and perhaps one or two others. We had two near mishaps on this trip. We stopped on the way in at Panther Creek for the first night, our sleeping bags on the ground. In the morning a deer came bounding through camp and almost landed on top of Les Burns. Les moved in the nick of time or he might have been hurt by the deer's hooves. Later that same day, I dislodged a large boulder as we were climbing down the hillside. It clipped the end of Hal Pelfrey's pack and shook him up some.

For some reason none of the men on that trip went on another backpack with me.

I doubt that I will ever return to this section of the Kaweah. I know my friends from South Gate never did return.

FAVORITE FISHING HOLES III Beartraps, Madison River

Third in the series but not necessarily third in importance is the section of the Madison River in Montana immediately below Beartraps Canyon. In the late 60s it was a real hot spot. We carried an inflatable raft with us at that time and made several floats each day from the Beartraps area to the highway bridge, about three miles downstream. We always caught several trout, mostly brown trout, in the 14 to 18 inch range.

In subsequent years that section of the river and also the stretch from the highway bridge downstream became a favorite stopping place. We always caught fish and didn't mind getting wet doing it, as the weather was usually warm.

Joan and I stopped there during a 1988 trip and discovered that, because of a long-term drought, the river fishing had

suffered. The water level was so low it was too warm to sustain a large fish population and many of the trout had died.

We returned to the area in 1994 and found that the river was on the road to recovery. The fish were not as numerous, nor as large, as they had been in the 70s but fishing had improved considerably from 1988.

At the time the family and I were fishing there floating through Beartraps Canyon was considered a hazardous undertaking. Now, with more modern equipment and knowledgeable guides, it has become a daily affair. When Joan and I were there during the summer of 1994 we saw 5 or 6 commercial rafts that had made the run. They all talked about it as if it was a piece of cake.

By the summer of 1997 the fishing had improved even more. Joan and I spent a week on the river below Bear Traps with Jim and his young friend Richard, Lynette and her family and Lynette's friend Jeff, also another couple from Arizona with their two children who had come with Lynette. The fishing was excellent. Many trout were caught, some in the 19 inch range, particularly by Richard who outfished us all.

FAVORITE FISHING HOLES IV Skalkaho Creek, Montana

Although I have not fished there enough to really classify it with other favorites, I have found that Skalkaho Creek near Hamilton, Montana could easily become a favorite. I have fished it on two different occasions, each time finding the fishing outstanding.

My first experience with the stream was in August, 1988 when, after reading about it in one of my outdated Montana fishing guides, Joan and I stopped there for a few days. The section of the stream I fished paralleled a Forest Service campground called Black Bear, which is about 13 miles by a good, paved road from Hamilton.

The campground was occupied by one other camper and no one else was fishing in the creek. I fished the stretch several times in the short time we stayed at the campground. Each time I met with fabulous success. The trout, mostly cutthroat, rose to almost every cast and I succeeded in catching five or six each time I fished.

Joan and I returned to Black Bear campground in August of 1994 and again the fishing was excellent. I fished for an hour to an hour and a half each time I went out and always caught six to eight plump cutthroat trout. In 1994 the water was much lower than it had been in 1988 but this didn't seem to affect the fishing. The fish were in different stretches of the river but they were there just the same.

I should add that fishing the Skalkaho is not easy. It took constant, very tiring wading over a slippery, rock covered bottom to get to the sections where the fish were located. Sometimes these sections were adjacent to each other, at other times there was a distance of 50 yards or more of the above described wading. Also, the fish are not very large; all of them I caught were pan-sized, from 7 to 10 inches. I suspect there are larger trout in the creek but I haven't come across them. YET!

FISHING HOLES V Hebgen Lake, Montana

During several summers in the mid-to-late-eighties Joan and I got together with Joan's cousin Bill Webb and his wife Bicky. One of their favorite areas was Hebgen Lake, on the Madison River near West Yellowstone, Montana. They always stayed at a private resort on the north shore of the lake that had RV hookups and a launch ramp available for their boat.

Bill and Bicky had a fairly large boat which they brought to the lake for many summers. Their kind of fishing, while not like mine, was very productive for trout in the 18 inch and up size range. They used leaded lines which, because of their weight, brought their lures (Triple Teasers) down to the depth where the fish congregated.

At times the fishing was fast and furious, at other times fairly slow as we had to experiment with different locations on the lake and with different depths to determine where the fish were. I usually managed to land a couple of nice trout, all about 18 inches.

Becky passed away in 1997 and Bill's children have him in a nursing home in Idaho Falls, using a walker as he has lost much of his mobility. Sadly, his fishing days are over.

I would like to return to Hebgen sometime in the future. I'm certain there are still many large fish there waiting for me to catch them.

MILSAP BAR

A favorite side trip of ours for several years was to an area on the Middle Fork of the Feather River known as Milsap Bar. Frequently, on our way home from Northern California, or other points north, we stopped here for a few days to fish, hike, swim, and just laze about.

There was a small campground close to the river which was almost perfect for our needs. On our first trips to the area this campground was very primitive, no facilities except an outhouse, not even marked tent sites. Later, the campground became more developed, and more heavily used. We set up camp among huge boulders at the edge of a small feeder stream which was also our only water supply. This small stream, called the South Branch, was one of two streams that fed the Middle Fork in this section; the other, the Little North Fork, was an excellent fishing stream.

Access to Milsap is limited. The only easy part is on a good paved road from Oroville to a small community called Brush Creek. From Brush Creek a narrow, winding dirt road snakes its way down to the river, a distance of about eight miles. Also, from Brush Creek, the Oroville Road continues on and eventually reaches Quincy.

It was this stretch of road that caused us to have a serious mishap with our little Aljoa trailer. We were in Quincy, on our way home from a long summer trip, and decided to take this road to Brush Creek. We had planned to leave the trailer at the Forest Service work yard there and then take the dirt road down to Milsap Bar to spend a few days. We assumed that the section of road from Quincy to Brush Creek was as good as the section from Oroville. Far from it, it turned out to be one of those washboardy, dirt roads that seems to be unending. Once started there was no turning back, we continued on our bumpy, jouncing way to Brush Creek. When we arrived and opened the trailer door, disaster. The sling bunk had fallen down, dumping its contents on the floor to mix with the contents of the ice box which had sprung open. Also, the water tank, which was located under one of the dinette benches, had ruptured and the water had combined with all of the other ingredients to provide us with a gooey mess. The cleanup was horrendous but eventually was completed so that, after several hours, we were able to leave the trailer and continue on to Milsap Bar. Considerable more repair was needed after we got the trailer home.

The South Branch was a rough and tumble stream which, when flowing at normal capacity, was about ten feet across. Because of its accessibility it was not a good fishing stream but it was a delight to wander along, or sit next to, and quite cool. The Little North Fork, about the same size as the South Branch, was a much better fishing stream, perhaps because access was more difficult. The mouth of the stream was a small box canyon

and the only way to get upstream was to wade, sometimes waist deep, for the first fifty feet. On one occasion Jim and I back-packed up the Little North Fork and spent a night about a mile upstream, at the base of a waterfall. We spread our sleeping bags out on a large flat rock that sloped downward toward the stream. Several times during the night we had to jockey the sleeping bags back up the rock so that we wouldn't end up in the water.

One of the main features of this area was a large swimming hole in the main river at the mouth of the Little North Fork, near the bridge. This swimming hole was a source of enjoyment for all of us.

In spite of the misadventure with our little trailer we enjoyed the ambience of this stretch of river so much that we returned for several years in a row. Later, when we had a larger trailer to contend with, we stopped going there. It's a place to return to, and sometime in the near future I shall.

MILSAP BAR REVISITED

How many of my children remember Milsap Bar? We visited it frequently on our way home from long summer trips north or east of California. According to the trip logs I have, the last time we were there was 1969.

To refresh your memory, Milsap Bar is on the Middle Fork of the Feather River about 33 miles from Oroville, in the north central part of California. We all liked it very much; partly because of its ambience, partly because of the beauty of the surrounding area. Two feeder streams enter the Middle Fork very near the Forest Service campground, the South Branch, which is adjacent to the campground, and the Little North Fork, across the river.

We found many activities here to keep everyone happy. There was a swimming hole across the river, at the mouth of the Little North Fork, where we spent many happy hours. The Little North Fork was best for fishing, with trout rising readily to our fly. The South Branch was too cold for swimming but it was a good stream to rock hop, or sit next to as the air temperature was usually cooler there.

As this is being written Joan and I are sitting behind our camper looking out over the Middle Fork. There have been some changes in the area, mainly due to stream action. The swimming beach is no longer there; it has been covered over by huge boulders from a time when either the Little North Fork or the Middle Fork was in flood stage. Also, access to the Little North Fork is now relatively easy. During previous visits it was necessary to wade almost up to our waists to go upstream past the first pool. Now, because of stream action, deep wading is no longer necessary; knee deep is all that's required.

Whether this has affected the fishing I can't say; on this visit I didn't fish past the first pool. I would assume that easier access means more fishing pressure and, therefore, poorer fishing now.

Another change that has taken place is on the road from Oroville. Building of the Oroville Dam, and the subsequent lake that was formed behind the dam, resulted in parts of the old road now being under water. To replace it an excellent new road was built that takes one about ten miles above Oroville Lake; here this road ties in with the old road. One section of road hasn't changed, unless it's for the worse. The eight mile access road that leaves the highway from near Brush Creek and meanders down into the canyon of the Middle Fork at Milsap Bar is rougher and narrower, and (it seems) longer than it used to be. It took us almost an hour to negotiate this section. I don't remember it being so difficult on previous trips, but perhaps that's because I'm more than 20 years older.

It still has the same ambience and would be an excellent haven for a short family stay, for those willing to negotiate the road. As for me, probably not.

FISHING FACTS AND FANCIES

One of the facts I have learned in my 60+ years of fishing is that if I go fishing I expect to get wet, especially if I'm wading a stream.

Wading is an art, one I haven't yet mastered in spite of many years of practice. There are always hidden boulders that lurk in my path, waiting for the time when I least suspect it to roll and throw me off balance. Or the boulders are so slick that the instant I place my foot on top of one my foot slips off to the side and I find myself up to my elbows in ice cold water.

If the water is not too cold I have better balance if I wear wading shoes instead of waders (an old pair of sneakers works fine). When it is too cold for this type of wading then I wear waders or hip boots. One caution here to other fishermen, if you wear chest waders be sure to tie a belt around the upper part so that if you do end up over the top of them the water will not get into the waders. People have drowned because they have failed to heed this safeguard.

One other suggestion comes to mind. Sunglasses are often necessary to protect the eyes against harmful rays of the sun. They also make it easier to see when there is a great deal of glare on the water. I find, however, that when wading the use of sunglasses may obscure my vision enough so that it is more difficult to see the stream bottom and to judge the depth of the water into which I am about to take the next step. This has resulted in my taking several unexpected dips.

As to the technical aspects of wading, let me pass on a few truths that I always try to follow but usually forget to do at a crucial time.

One of these is the absolute need to make sure one foot is securely positioned on the stream bed before lifting the other foot. I frequently forget this important step as I'm in a hurry to reach my next objective on the stream. As a result, as soon as I lift the second foot the first foot slips and I find myself sitting dazedly on the bottom. A solution to this problem, which I also usually forget, is to carry a wading staff to use as a third leg. This staff can be attached to your vest or your belt and allowed to float below you when not being used.

Another of these truths: If I reach out for an overhead branch to use as a means of support while I negotiate a few steps, the branch is either going to break off or bend so severely that it provides no support whatsoever.

Another unstable means of support is a log protruding from the bank or seemingly anchored to the bottom. Sure as shooting, as soon as I put any weight on the log it moves and there I am, wet again.

There will be occasions when it is necessary to cross the stream. If the stream is deep and fast moving I look for a wide place above a cascade. In most cases the water will be more shallow here and slower moving. As I cross I try to angle slightly upstream, against the current. This way, my momentum, if I falter, will tend to keep me moving upstream and not to be swept downstream by the current.

At times it is easier to walk along the edge of the stream, instead of in it, to reach the next area I wish to fish. There is frequently heavy brush in this situation which I have to bushwhack through. If you do this be sure to carry your rod in such a way that the tip is trailing behind you instead of pointing ahead. If it points ahead there is a tendency to point the tip up instead of keeping it level. If it is pointing up it will catch on every bush and tree that you walk by. Carrying it in the trail position it is more likely to be carried on a level plane.

Incidentally, always use the word "rod" and not "pole." Rod sounds more sophisticated, whether you are or not.

All of the foregoing discussion may seem immaterial to one who is not going to do any stream fishing. But if you are one of those you will miss out on what has to be the ultimate enjoyment in fishing, the fight and the fury a trout in a stream can provide that is not encountered in any other type of fishing. It is even more pronounced when fly fishing.

I'm not a purist trying to sell fly fishing as the only way to go; I am recommending it as the type of fishing that has given me the most enjoyment. This is primarily true because the fishing is right out in front of me where I can actually see the fish in action. It is also enhanced by the usual surroundings that accompany fly fishing. The ambiance of a trout stream is about as close to nature as one can get and has a soul stirring profundity to it.

TEACHING: FROM CLASSROOM CLOWN TO SERIOUS EDUCATOR

How can a person who all through life
Has been the classroom clown
Walk into a classroom and expect to teach
And not let his students down?

Questions similar to the one above have been raised from time to time by people who knew me in my early years. There are many different ways in which the question might be answered.

Admittedly, I had been the classroom clown on numerous occasions. Not only that, I was not a good student either in high school or college; not until graduate school did I distinguish myself in any way. I think I needed to be motivated, perhaps more than most, and didn't get that motivation until I could see where I was headed.

One possible answer to the question might be that because I had been a goof-off and was frequently in hot water in school I saw things from a different perspective than those who had been achievers all their lives. Perhaps I had a better recognition of the student's approach to accepting learning.

Another possible answer is that I was a late bloomer. During my college days, and continuing on into several years of teaching, I often blundered ahead with no real idea of where I was headed. I could see short term goals but not long range ones. However, after I had been teaching a few years, I began to realize that I could have been a good student but had never been made to feel that I had the potential. (Perhaps this is why I had been a clown.) Teaching actually helped me grow, and grow up also, so that I became more confident in myself as a person. This confidence made me more successful as a teacher so that I began to experiment and to use innovative ideas. This again made me an even better teacher.

A third possible answer to the question is that as a class clown I had developed a good sense of humor and was able to see or to evoke humor in situations that arose in the classroom. Occasionally, when I was teaching, a student's humor was the kind that required disciplinarian action on my part; but even then I often had difficulty keeping a straight face as the student was being reprimanded. Perhaps, I also became quite stern with my students in order to counteract my tendency toward frivolity. In any event, I feel that my sense of humor helped me stay in teaching longer than I would have been able to had I not had a good sense of humor.

Finally, in spite of all the preceding explanations, I think I was a success as a teacher because I'm a "do-gooder" at heart. I'm somewhat of an idealist and feel that by teaching I have made the world a better place to live, at least for some of the students who came my way. If I have helped make life better for them I have accomplished something in life.

MY FAVORITE DREAM

When I was a young boy I met a hermit who lived in a home made, one room shack in Leicester. As described in an earlier anecdote, this shack gave me ideas of wanting to live in one like it.

During the next several years one of my favorite pastimes was drawing plans for such an abode and making extensive lists of how it should be furnished. In high school one of my friends had a similar passion. We would talk for hours of the "mansion" we wanted to build. We even made plans, which never came to fruition, to go to Alaska together and build that dream.

As I look back on those days I have to chuckle because they now have their humorous aspects. I can certainly laugh now about wanting to live in Alaska. No way! But there were other aspects of that time that are not humorous but nostalgic. They were halcyon days.

I still dream of a cabin in the woods and how I would furnish it. But the dream is even larger than when I was young. Now, I not only want a cabin in the woods but that cabin has to be on an island, on a lake, surrounded by land I own. When I win the Readers Digest contest I'm going to get that cabin, on an island, . . .

FAMILY BONDING

One of the terms that is used frequently in modern sociology is the word "bonding." It is a word that, in its strictest sense, means adhering to something. As used sociologically, it refers to two or more people having a close relationship.

It is a very appropriate term in trying to describe the relationships that my children have to each other and, hopefully, to me. I believe that the catalyst to this bonding has been our many excursions together in the great outdoors. There are so many activities that a family can take part in together: camping, hiking, fishing, swimming, etc., that it is only natural that a family that enjoys the outdoors together will be closely bonded.

There are many other factors that could enter into this bonding but I'm certain being outdoors was our primary one. Thank God for the great outdoors.