

**I Never Had Enough Money
To Leave Town**

by Ed Winn

With special thanks to Roger Garner and Ken Thomas of Triangle Reprographics without whose help it would have been very difficult to have published this book.

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For my grandchildren
Aaron and Rebecca

EXPLANATION

My granddaughter, Rebecca, came to live with us when she was three years old and lived with us for about a year. She demanded a story to be read to her before she would go to sleep each night. When she had memorized all her book stories, I began to tell her stories about my early experiences. That is how this book really came to be written. Most of the stories in this book were bedtime stories told over and over until it was easy to set them down in book form.

I hope the readers of this book enjoy these stories as much as I did remembering and writing them.

Introduction

If the reader of this book expects to find some great literary work or style, he or she will be greatly disappointed. This book is only intended to bring some small degree of Central Florida history as I have known it. The words in the stories are written as I would speak them if I were telling the stories. The book was originally intended mostly for family and friends. I have omitted or changed a few names for obvious reasons. When you read the name "Buster", it is my nickname. Family and old friends still call me that.

The eight short stories in Part I are a collection of impressions and recollections of events that happened in Central Florida. Part II has eight short stories - six of which are hunting and fishing stories, and two stories are included to be read to the little folk.

To any young readers of these short stories, my youthful experiences may seem strange and impossible. But you must remember, I was born in Orlando, Florida, in 1928 when Orlando was a very small town. My Cousin, -

Bud Parker, and I in the early 1940s would stake out the Parker's cows by what is now Parker Lumber Company offices on Hwy 17-92 in Maitland. (The cows moved away Christmas Eve 1944). At that time 17-92 was a two lane road, and we would sit down by the side of the highway and wait for a car come by to see if we could tell what kind it was. Central Florida was sparsely populated, and there was very little traffic. . We knew most of the people we saw. The lakes had very few houses on them, as the early settlers built their homes away from the lakes to avoid the hordes of blind mosquitoes. There were almost no boats on the lakes, and I was free to hunt and fish most anywhere I wanted to go. The woods were almost all unfenced, and Posted signs were rare. There were lots of uncut woods and dirt roads to explore, and wildlife was plentiful. My young days were spent in an entirely different time and environment. As these stories recall, I spent most of my time out of doors. For a hobby and to earn a few extra dollars, I caught and sold all kinds of reptiles.

All the stories are true except the ones about the Ant and the Spider (a good spider), and even they are "might-be-trues".

Incidentally, the title of this book "I Never Had Enough Money To Leave Town" is only partly true! I've never WANTED to leave town. Over the years when people ask me where I was born, I answer, "Right here!" They always look surprised, so I always add, "I never had enough money to leave town!"

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WINTER PARK'S UNCLE GEER
(GEERIS HORRIBILIS)

This is a true story about Winter Park's Uncle Geer as told to me by Donald Chubb. When Donald Chubb heard that I was putting together some stories about Maitland and Winter Park, he asked me to make mention of his Uncle Geer. As you read this you might think Uncle Geer did some peculiar things, but you will first have to have some background on Dr. Donald Chubb, his nephew. I asked Donald if I could tell a couple of things about him, and he said it was O.K. No matter what I write about Donald, you should know we have been life-long friends; and he is one of the finest fellows I know. The Chubb family has been among Winter Park's pioneer business and civic leaders of their time.

First off, you have to accept that Donald has somehow lived his 67 years among other people without actually joining them as a group. Well, he's different; and a complete book should be written about him and his unusual antics. Case in point: one day I was riding with Donald in his car, and he had a flat tire. I got out and looked at the tire and hollered at Donald, 'Just look at that! It's a

disgrace to drive on such a thing! I can see all the plys where the rubber has worn plum off!" Donald looked amazed as he peered at the tire and said, "Lordy, Lordy, I could see two plys, but I thought it was a four ply tire!" That should tell you something ...

Just one more thing about Donald: Some years ago he met a fine lady whom he said had the prettiest face he had ever seen, and he married her. After a while he got a case of the "cheaps", and she threw him out and demanded a divorce. Donald hired an attorney, and the divorce cost him \$350 plus a \$35 fee. Donald nearly died at the cost, but he paid it. Now, this lady had a strong appeal for Donald, so, back he went - got his foot in the door and talked her into marrying him again. Everything went well for a few months, and then Donald got back that same "cheaps", so she threw him out again and made him file for divorce again. Well, Donald had read in a magazine that for \$75 you could send away and get a Divorce Yourself kit. He bought one and got divorced for \$75 plus the \$35 filing fee. It cost him \$110 total. So after a short period of time, the world greatest salesman - even though he is an optometrist by profession - got his foot back in the door again and back to the altar they went. And again, you

guessed it - after a few months "the cheaps" set in again, and out he went. But this time he photocopied the divorce kit and got divorced for \$37.00! I know! I went with him each time! I hate to tell you this, but he did it one more time before the door hurt his foot too much to get it back in. A total of four!

Now I'll tell you a little something about Uncle Geer as Donald told it to me:

Uncle Geer was born in Winter Park, Florida about 1890. He lived with his folks and one sister and four brothers. The old Chubb house sits just off North Park Avenue and overlooks Lake Maitland. (The house still stands but now several houses stand between that house and the lake). By the time Uncle Geer was 12, he would walk from the house to downtown Winter Park in a short time, and he spent a lot of time playing in the park next to the railroad. Park Avenue was a dirt street then. People came to town with their horses and buggies to shop along Park Avenue. Uncle Geer soon learned how to torment the horses and make them whinney and dance around while the owners were inside the stores shopping. By the time Uncle Geer was 15, he knew everything about Winter Park. One of the most important business buildings in town

held a livery stable owned by an older man, and he offered a very valuable service to the community. He rented horses and buggies which represented the best transportation for the Northern visitors who came to stay at the Alabama or Seminole Hotels in east Winter Park. The passengers got off the train across the park from the livery stable and they walked across the park to rent a ride to the hotels. A short distance from the livery stable was the Pioneer Grocery Store from which most local residents bought their groceries. Next to the livery stable (north side) was a feed store owned by Sheppard and Fuller. The store faced Morse Blvd. The space on the south side of the stable was later to be Bumby's Hardware Store. There were a few other scattered stores along Park Avenue. The downtown train station was a very important part of Winter Park, as most of the tourists (Winter people) arrived by train. But there was also another train station called the Dinky Train Station off Osceola at the bottom of Ollie Street on Lake Virginia. Most local people who wanted to go to Orlando rode that train and bought their tickets and boarded the train at the Dinky Station. The train and its narrow-gauge tracks are gone now, but they used to run between Oviedo, Winter Park, and Orlando. The train was important in moving

produce from Oviedo to Orlando. The Dinky Train was a familiar sight in Winter Park even when I was in High School as the train chugged along its track by Rollins College and around Lake Virginia every day. I remember that train very well, because one day in 1944 it ran over my new bicycle which I had left on the tracks by Lake Virginia.

Well, anyhow - this was the setting of Uncle Geer's world by the time he was in his middle teens. He had become an expert prankster - adding what he could to enrich the lives of some of the local people. As I mentioned before, the man who owned the livery stable was a perfect target for young Geer. The front of the livery stable was always open. The chickens that were kept for eggs lived in coops and cages in the rear of the store that faced the Alley. In the hot afternoons, the store owner would sit inside his doorway in his old rocking chair and nap - rest his eyes, as some would say. He kept a single barrel shotgun behind his chair in case he ever needed it. So one afternoon Uncle Geer found a bunch of rotten eggs and took them behind the livery stable where the chickens were kept and switched the rotten eggs for the good ones. Later that afternoon the livery stable owner traded the eggs to the feed store next door for

horse feed, and the feed store owner sold the eggs to their customers. Of course, in a short while you-know-what broke loose. I can only guess that until this writing no one knew for sure who had played the egg prank. Even though no one knew for sure then, the livery stable owner had a very good suspicion that young Geer was the culprit. Thereafter, whenever young Geer got near the stable he was promptly removed from the store area. This did not sit too well with young Geer, so after a while he hatched up a far better plan to bedevil the old man and upset his afternoon tranquility. One day he waited until the old man was sound asleep in his rocking chair. He carefully removed the 12 gauge shell and replaced it with one from which he had removed the shot. Then he carefully replaced the gun behind the chair and went out in the street and began throwing rocks at the livery stable door until the old man woke up and hollered at Geer to stop. Geer just kept on throwing rocks, and the old man, mad and still half asleep, grabbed that shotgun and fired into the street. Young Geer fell to the ground like he had been hit and killed. This thoroughly terrified the old man and he was so upset he couldn't speak. When he finally could talk, he ran out into the street and bent over Geer hollering, "I've killed him! I've killed him!"

About this time, Geer jumped up and ran away.

After that little episode, young Geer was not allowed anywhere near the livery stable; but I understand it was not the end of his practical jokes. At any rate, Winter Park somehow survived the teen years of Geeris Horribilis.

Note: After finishing this story, I went to the Winter Park Library and got a few historical facts about Winter Park that a local resident might enjoy reading. If you are not a local resident, you might just as well skip the data and go on to the next story. Facts are as follows:

In October of 1887 Winter Park incorporated and included the old towns of Osceola and Hannibal Square. The same year the Orlando and Winter Park Railroad was organized. (later called the Dinky Train).

In the year 1890, the year Geer was born, the total population of Florida was 391,422 people.

In the year 1902, when Geer was 12 years old, there were only 50 students total in the Winter Park Grammar School.

By 1903 most of the streets in the northern parts of Winter Park were surfaced with clay.

Charles Morse presented the City of Winter Park a deed to the land that is now the downtown park in 1911. The deed stipulates that the land must remain a park.

North Park Avenue had enough cars by 1913 to

impose a 15 MPH speed limit, and the new Atlantic Coastline Depot was built.

In the year 1922 Park Avenue was paved, and in 1924 it was widened to its present size.

In the year 1992 the population of Winter Park is 22,242. Every one of them owns a car and drives it down Park Avenue every day. In addition to the Avenue being full of cars, the sidewalks are full of people - very few who come from around here. The small stores are mostly gone now - replaced by nationally and internationally owned chain stores. You have to wait in a line to eat at a sandwich shop or make a deposit at a bank. You must hand it to old Charles Morse, who in the fall of 1911 made sure that the beautiful Winter Park park would stay intact.

Some years ago I strolled down the Via Veneto in Rome. It was beautiful, but I still take great pleasure in strolling down Park Avenue on occasion as I have for most of my life. In all my travels, I still think Winter Park is one of the most unique and beautiful towns that I have ever seen.

IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS

(Maitland In The 1930s)

When I was five, circumstances caused mother and me to move in with my Grandmother Bennett on Packwood Avenue in Maitland. Grandmother let us live beside her house in a downstairs apartment in a stucco building that had once been a store, and we lived there for three years. Grandmother Bennett (Nana) was a truly wonderful person, but she was getting along in years and was no match for an unleashed five year old boy. By the time she could get turned around good, I would be gone.

In 1935 Maitland was a glorious town for a kid. There were few cars passing by and not too many people, and you knew everybody. Every day was a wonderful day, but Sundays were the very best. Nana Bennett would prepare Sunday Dinner for the whole family. There were plates and dishes heaped high with mashed potatoes made with cream and butter, and chicken and dumplings, and everything else imaginable. Nana Bennett was the best cook in the whole world. About noon-time my aunts and uncles and cousins would start arriving. I would watch for the Parker

car that would have cousin Bud Parker aboard; for as soon as I saw him climb out of the car door, I knew it was "Let the games begin!" Bud and I are the same age, and if one of us got something the other one got it also. Bud would bring his large tricycle with him and I would climb up on mine, and away we would go. We were allowed to ride around the house and a short way on Packwood (across from where the Fire Station is now). We were not allowed to ride on Maitland Avenue, as a car might come by. Now back in those days, there were no small bicycles - just regular size bicycles. So as your legs grew longer you were given a larger tricycle, and the outgrown tricycle was passed down to a younger kid. Well, Bud and I had the large deluxe kind and we could make mighty good time with them. Now, on this particular Sunday afternoon we all had a mighty fine dinner, and we figured our parents would all be dozing, so Bud and I ventured out on Maitland Avenue at the intersection of Packwood, and no one came yelling at us to come back. So we went north to the next block. The further we got away from the house, the braver we got, so we continued north on Maitland Avenue until about three hours later we saw the old wooden hotel at the intersection of Maitland Avenue and what is now Hwy 436. We turned around and started

back home with both of us thinking that we had overdone it some and that everything might not be "just right". It was about then a terrible sight appeared! It was a car full of our relatives bearing down on us and glaring through the windshield. We were both snatched off our tricycles and thrown into the car along with our tricycles. We knew we would get a good whipping when we got back home, and they did not disappoint us. However, I kept thinking that at least we did not have to pedal that four miles back home. It was a good trade.

A year after the tricycle excursion, Bud and I turned six, and we were ready for First Grade. Bud attended the Maitland Hill Grammar School, and I was bussed to the Winter Park Grammar School on Park Avenue. (The old brick school building was torn down several years ago). It was a total mystery to us both why our parents would not let us attend the same school. I was deeply disappointed when I was sent to the Winter Park Grammar School, and I can still see in my mind's eye my cousin Bud attending his first day of school at the Maitland Hill Grammar School in the year 1935. Bud lived on the east side of Maitland Avenue in a large two story brick house with his parents and three sisters and two broth-

ers. It only took him about five minutes to walk south for a short distance and then to cross Maitland Avenue and walk the short block up Sybellia Street to the small three room stucco school. He had on his new store bought school clothes and a brand new pair of school shoes. When he got to the school he was met at the door by his teacher, Miss Reaves, and then shown to his desk.

Miss Reaves taught all four grades, so she had four lines of desks with six or seven students to each row. Bud took his assigned seat in the First Grade row with the other six First Grade students. At the end of school year, all the students who passed simply moved over to the next row to their left, until the Fourth Year when he was in the row of desks nearest to the windows that were too high to look out of unless you stood up. Miss Reaves went from row to row teaching each child in each grade.

Now, Bud did wear shoes on the first day of school, as he had no other choice. The rest of the week he wore shoes to school but took them off as soon as he got in the classroom. So after the first week, his mother gave up and let him go to school barefoot like the other boys did. Few of the boys wore shoes until the weather got cold. The schoolroom floor was

hardwood that was kept oiled. Back in the old days floors in public places were not varnished - just kept oiled with a dark oil. Therefore at the end of each day a lot of foot scrubbing was necessary

Apparently, Miss Reaves was a real thinker and kept way ahead of her young charges. She convinced young Bud that on the days he stayed behind his desk and out of trouble all day, he could stay after school and sweep the floor. On the cold days of winter, the same kind of offer was made. Any boy who was good all day could bring in the firewood from outside to burn in the pot-bellied stove that heated the school room. I mentioned there were three rooms in the school, but one room was closed off so the class room and auditorium room were the only two rooms in use.

Well anyhow, when the four school years had passed by, Miss Reaves hugged Bud goodbye and sent him on to the Fifth Grade at the Winter Park Grammar School where I was already attending. Miss Reaves had no way of knowing then that her early educational skills would help Bud Parker to later become Mayor of Maitland in the years from 1966 to 1970. We in the family always considered Mayor Bud Parker to be the best mayor Maitland has

ever had. We also held that anyone who disagreed with us was just not properly informed.

I talked with David Kilbourne at the Maitland Historical Society's Building the other day, and David told me that he attended the Hill Grammar School's First Grade in 1923 which was the first year the School was open. The building was torn down in 1975, and the site is now the Hill Recreation Center. David remembered a lot of things about the old school, and he reminded me that my Aunt Rita Parker was instrumental in establishing the Hot Lunch Program there in the early 1940s. It cost 10¢ for a hot lunch and 5¢ extra if you wanted milk. My, my how times have changed...

Now, back to my Grandmother's house. She lived next door to our place in a large two story white house. It was located almost on the southwest corner of Packwood and Maitland Avenues. Maitland Avenue was divided for the next block north of us with huge oak trees growing between the two streets. The road was narrow and traffic was rare, as I've said. Across the street north of us was a large vacant lot. Then came Reiche's old store facing Maitland Avenue. It was an old frame

house converted to a wonderful store full of 1¢ candy, 1¢ fishhooks, bread, cans of food, and the like. Mr. Reiche always sat in his rocking chair at the far end of the room. Just a short distance north on Maitland Avenue at the southwest corner of Horatio and Maitland Avenue was Johnny's Grocery Store and Post Office. Both were in the same building. Across on the northwest side of the street was Benson's Drugstore. Their building had been a bank building as it is now. (Of all the buildings I write about, this is the only one left standing). The Bensons were strict people, and the store smelled strange, so I rarely went inside. A couple of blocks north of Benson's was Clair's Country Store. It stood very close to the house where Mr. Pinder, the Town Marshal, lived. Mr. Pinder was our total Law and Order, and as I recall, he didn't have much to do. He sure couldn't write tickets for running red lights, as we did not have any. On the east side of Maitland Avenue was the Railroad and Train Station. Mr. Woodard was the Station Master, and he did his best to keep us away from the carts with the big wheels which were used to move luggage or fruit. Then there was the small park and the little Maitland Courthouse. North of Horatio on the northeast corner was the American Fruit Growers Packing House. It was a large wood

building, and it burned down in 1969. It was the second packing house to burn down at that location. The original packing house was called The Pilgrim Packing House, and it burned down in 1926.

Highway 17-92 was a narrow road as I mentioned in the introduction . At the southwest corner on 17-92 and Horatio stood Stone's Texaco Filling Station. The store was very impressive to a five year old, as they sold all kinds of stuff - including meat, groceries, fishing tackle, as well as gas and ice. Uncle Laurence Parker and Forrest Stone were very good friends and often fished together. The store was built in the late '20s and survived to the early '50s. Across from the filling station was a Methodist Church built in 1925. Uncle Laurence taught Sunday School there; and in the early '30s (my time), that building became Stone's Packing House for oranges and grapefruit. Nearby were several houses. Then south a little on 17-92 was a juke joint called the Flo-Jean. It was situated at about the same place as Mr. Froelich's church. Just north of Forrest Stone's Texaco Station on 17-92 was Roy Kyle's Auto Repair building . He purchased my Grandfather's old garage on Packwood and Maitland Avenues and tore it down and used the tin and blocks to build part

of his new building on 17-92 . A few blocks north of Roy's garage was my Uncle Laurence Parker's Lumber Mill. The Lumber Mill began operations in 1934. Maitland residents began their days with the early morning 7: 30 A.M. mill's steam whistle . They started their midday meal with the 12 noon whistle and ended the day with the 4:30 P.M. whistle. When you drive by Parker Lumber Company as it is today, it'd be hard for a newcomer to picture what that business looked like in 1935.

To a kid of five, it was an unbelievable place of busy people. There were loud noises of engines and saws and steam and the sweet smell of freshly cut pine. Parker's logging truck brought in whole pine trees and rolled them off onto a ramp about where their main lumber shed is now. There was a huge boiler with a high smokestack on the east side of the building and a big steam engine in the middle of the building that operated the saw and planer mill. Uncle Laurence stood by the loading ramp all day long as workers hooked the logs and rolled them one by one onto his cart that ran alongside the ramp on a little railroad. When Uncle Laurence pulled back on the big wooden handle, the cart would go forward, and the saw cut the logs into boards. When he pulled the handle back, the cart

would return. A large belt about a foot wide and very long brought the power from the steam engine to that huge "singing" blade. The sound of the saw changed when it bit into a huge pine tree. You could hear the whole steam engine working to its full capacity and then race again when the cut was complete. Big piles of wet, sweet sawdust were carried away from the saw by a chain to make a small mountain of sawdust by the boiler. Lordy, how I do miss that old sawmill with Uncle Laurence at the sawyer's handle. The place just does not smell or sound just right any more

Before I leave the sawmill, I have to tell you about one "happening". Often, as the mill worked and Uncle Laurence sawed, Buddy and I played tag all over the mill lot. Neither of us could stand to be "It", so we drove everybody crazy running everywhere and tagging each other. Well, one afternoon I tagged Buddy and then ran inside the mill. There was just a small pathway along the rollerbed where the boards were rolled after they were cut. When I got to the end of the pathway I could see Buddy right behind me; there was no other place to go, so I turned left and jumped over the giant saw blade as it was running and landed on the sawdust pile by the blade.

Buddy, right behind me, could not stop either, so over he went - right over the saw blade and onto the sawdust pile. When we realized what we had done, we headed for Bud's house and into the back room. At 2 P.M. in the afternoon, we heard the saw and steam engine slow down and then turn off. Uncle Laurence closed down the mill. He sent the workers home and headed in to the house looking for us. We were silently and fearfully awaiting our certain fate. Uncle Laurence used a hairbrush on our rear ends. He hit the same spot over and over until with each lick I thought I would die. We never went near that blade again...

Then - there was Lake Sybellia. Lake Sybellia was two blocks west of our house, and I could walk down the brick street to the lake in about 5 minutes. It is Lake Sybellia that I remember the best of all. Can you remember where you were a kid how long the days of summer were? I fondly remember those long, long carefree days when I was five. The days began at new dawn and lasted forever to the last dusk of evening. I had no way of knowing it then, but those days were to be the most carefree days of my life. I almost never wore shoes. It felt so good to feel the hot, grey sand between my toes. Sometimes I would stand on one foot at a time because the sand would be

burning my feet so bad. It seems like I spent a lot of time trying to pick sandspurs out of the tough soles of my feet. The green sandspurs could be pulled out although they punctured your fingers, but the old dead ones had to be pried out at night with a needle! It was still better than wearing shoes.

Lake Sybellia was my place of refuge. It was a kid's heaven, and it was too far away for my Grandmother to walk. I can remember how white the sand was around the edge of the lake and in the swimming area. There was a small dock at the swimming place at the end of Horatio, and I could see the fish around the dock in the clear water. So, with a penny I bought two hairhooks at Reiche's - got some carpet thread - cut a bamboo pole from the bamboo patch next door, and I went fishing. I made small balls from the center of a slice of bread for bait. I learned to drop the bread offering down very slowly. Then one bream after another got snatched out of the water. After catching the bream, I would string them on a long weed that had a sweet smell and anchor it in the water to keep the fish from spoiling on those long, hot wonderful days

I learned a lot on that dock. I also remember so well how I learned to swim. A much

older boy came down to the dock one day where I was fishing and asked me, "Do you want to learn how to swim?" I excitedly said, "Yes!", and he said, "O.K. - stand up straight and face the water" - which I did. Then he gave me a hard shove. I still remember looking up at the surface of the water that was about six feet above me, then instinct took over. I dog-paddled up to get a sweet breath of air! Now that is how the one-step swimming lesson is taught! I could soon dog-paddle and swim underwater with great ease. It only took several days to get really good at it. I guess I have a lot to thank that boy for.

That same boy later showed me the first catfish I had ever seen. I was fascinated by a fish which had whiskers and could feel of your fingers while you unhooked him. I traded my string of bream to him even for that catfish. I ran home and put my prize in the sink on my Grandmother's back porch. I went into the house for a little while, and when I came out to clean the fish, there he was - only his head left with his bones and fins attached. It looked just like something from a cartoon. All the meat was gone. I was shocked and dismayed. I happened to look up over the sink and saw a cat sitting on the rail - carefully licking its paws and face. I remember I would have liked

to kill that cat, but I did not know how! Mercy! but those were glorious summer days in Maitland in the 1930s.

Maitland in my youth had been so special, that I began to wonder what Maitland had been to my parents and before; so I visited the Maitland Historical Society Building and with the help of Marjorie Tope I discovered some amazing facts.

Sometime around 1800 the Black Bear Trail passed right through where Maitland is now. The Trail began in Montreal, Canada, and ended at St. Petersburg. The Seminole Indians used the Trail and camped on the shores of Lake Maitland. The Indians called the lake Fumeheliga meaning muskmellon.

In the year 1817 Army troops fought a year-long battle with the Seminoles in North Florida and Georgia. This was the First Seminole War. The Army did not win. The Second Seminole War began in 1835 and lasted seven long years until 1842. One thousand five hundred soldiers lost their lives and over \$20,000,000 was spent on the war. The Army did not win. While the wars were being fought, Army troops had to march from up east, south through Florida and eventually to the Everglades area, so Forts were built along the way. Many were a day's march apart. Fort Maitland was built in 1838. It was occupied from October 1838 to April 1839 when it was abandoned. The Fort was named after Capt. Maitland who had received a mortal wound. The Fort was only used for about six months as the Indian fighting moved to the south.

The last Indian war known as the Third Seminole War was fought from 1855 to 1858 mostly in South Florida. The Army did not win. A historian told me that by the time the Seminole Indians had moved to the Everglades there were only 1200 of them left - this included men, women, and children. But they continued to fight. As you know, the Seminole Indians never signed a Peace Treaty. Our town, called Lake Maitland, was incorporated on June 17th, 1885. Mayor Eaton was sworn in on July 20, 1885. This was 47 years after the fort was built.

Well, things have changed some now, and the Indians and Forts are gone. In my time in Maitland during the 1930s, the population was growing to 500 residents, and by the year 1935 the population had reached 600! Now in 1992 as I drive through Maitland and watch six lanes of traffic bumper to bumper - and watch policemen on motorcycles writing traffic tickets - and then have to wait in line for just about everything, I can't help but to think what in the world has happened? Where in the world did all these 9,010 residents come from? Actually, thousands more live in the Greater Maitland area. When people ask me about this area I always tell them it's a great place, but it's overrun with alligators. I tell them I stayed because I never had enough money to leave town.

GATORS AND SUCH

When I was a kid, I lived on Lake Virginia on the west side of the lake. I moved to Winter Park from Maitland. The Dinky train tracks passed pretty close to our house, and the train shook the dishes every day. At the time of The Bull Gator Story I was about 15 years old - 1944 I think it was. I had a Collie dog named Smokey. He had too much fur, and in the summertime he was miserably hot, so he often went into the lake and submerged his body (not his head), just the really furry part, to cool off. One afternoon I just happened to look out the back door and saw Smokey in the water, facing the house, and a huge alligator about 12 feet long behind him moving in for a kill. You know alligators love dogs better than any kind of food, so they say. I ran to the edge of the lake hollering and waving my arms, reached for the dog's collar, and dragged him out of the water. The gator just slowly sank out of sight. I knew right then the alligator had to go, but I did not know how. There were enough houses on the lake to make it difficult to run around the lake and shoot him in front of someone's house - even at night.

Months went by - and one morning my long

awaited chance came. My cousin, Bud Parker, had spent the night with me. We are a month apart in ages. Bud had a Model A Ford, so he came to visit me often. Just at dawn I was awakened by a roar very much like the roar of a lion. I heard several of the roars followed by a hissing sound. I knew it was that ol' Bull Gator. I owned a 30-06 Springfield Army Rifle, so I slipped the only shell I had in the chamber and eased down by the shore of the lake. (I had tried to wake Buddy but he only grunted and rolled over.) I eased along the lakefront until I could see the gator plainly. He was standing up like a person using his tail for balance. When he roared, he lifted his head way back. I suspect his mate could hear him several miles away. When the gator saw me, he eased back in the deeper water but did not submerge. I took careful aim knowing that I could not shoot more than once. Luckily I caught him on the top his head. You should have seen all the commotion he made! He rolled over and over - throwing water everywhere and stirring up underwater grass and mud. I rushed back to my house and got some rope and jumped in my small 12 foot rowboat. I dropped the rope in the water, and he rolled up in it. I tied one rope to the front of the boat and the other to the back. He was as long as my boat. He was still thrashing and frailing

around and almost caved in the side of my boat. I finally got a rope over his head, and with great difficulty, rowed him back to my own waterfront. By now, Buddy was up, as he had heard the shot. He tried to help me slide the gator up on the bank, but the gator was too heavy. About that time, two workmen had come next door to work on Mr. Kessler's dock, and with some pleading, they came over and the four of us pulled and slid that gator into my cellar. My guess is he weighed about 900 pounds. Anyway, after I finished the hide, it measured 12 feet 1 inches long and was 5 feet across the middle; so you can see how heavy he was to move around. In the cellar I had a 14 foot long work table, and somehow we managed to heft him on that table belly-up so I could skin him out. It took me about four evenings of work to finish getting all the meat out and off the hide. By then my mother was complaining about the odor, so I called Cousin Bud and asked him to go to the grocery store and get some cardboard boxes so we could haul the meat away before it smelled much worse. He showed up in about an hour with the boxes in the rumble seat of his old Model A. We cut the hunks of gator meat into pieces that would fit in the boxes then filled up the rumble seat of the Model A and headed out of town to dump the meat. We did not know

where to go exactly and somehow we headed towards Goldenrod. Just before you got to Goldenrod there was a small stream which passed under the road, so we pulled the car over as close as we could to the water and proceeded to throw in about 800 lbs. of gator meat into the stream.

I want you to know, we did not do this for a prank; we just did not give the situation enough thought. It only took us about 10 minutes, and away we went. No one saw us do it. The next day I left home for about a week. I can't even remember where I went, but when I got back home, Bud called and said, "Have you seen any of last week's papers?" I said I hadn't. "Well", he said, "We made the front page of the newspaper for three days running! It seems that the meat started to really stink, and buzzards were lined up for a hundred feet on both sides of that bridge. Someone called the Sheriff, and a Deputy thought the meat might have been parts of human bodies, but somehow it did not look quite right; so they called in an expert - a Biology professor from Rollins College, who decided it was parts of cut up pigs." I promise you - up to time of this writing, no one but Bud and I knew what that meat really was

When the hide was tanned, it was so big I

had no place to keep it, so it was finally given to a man who lives in Winter Park to hang on the wall of his game room. A 12 foot 1 inch long - 5 foot wide gator hide takes a lot of space to hang up.

In the early 1940s the Winter Park and Maitland Chain of Lakes furnished "homes" to a lot of really large old alligators like the Ol Bull I told you about. Alligators, when they reach about 3 feet long, have no natural enemies other than man. Many young alligators are eaten by the adults when they are small. I would have to guess that the one I shot was at least 50 years old having probably moved to Winter Park before the turn of the century. Alligators with no enemies and plenty to eat live to be very old. Many dogs, chickens, and ducks along the lake fronts were devoured. When I was 9 years old my mother bought me three small ducks, and I built them a wire pen in the back yard on Lake Virginia. They only lasted about three nights before the pen was demolished and two of the ducks disappeared. The third one moved under our front porch. He had a strange look in his eyes, and after a few days he too disappeared.

The St. Johns River has always been full of gators, and Lake Jessup near Sanford is part of the St. Johns River. I'm sure that a lot of big

gators went from Lake Jessup up the Howell Creek to Lake Howell - then proceeded up stream through Snake Run and into Lake Maitland. This was before the dam was erected on Snake Run. From Lake Maitland they moved into all to Chain of Lakes. Most people don't see alligators in the daytime, because they are mostly nocturnal - feeding at night. In the summertime, usually on Saturday nights after work, I would get a croker sack and my flashlight- get in my little 12 foot wooden boat, start up my 3/4 horse Elto Pal outboard motor and head for the Snake Run and Mud Lake areas in Lake Maitland. I would shine my light on the shoreline, and whenever the beam picked up a red eye (prettier than any monster ruby could ever be), I would turn off the little motor and paddle toward the eye - never taking my light off that ruby eye. If it was a small alligator, 12 inches or less, I would grab the little alligator and put him in my croker sack. If it was larger than that, I left it alone unless I knew someone who would buy a larger one. If I spotted a really big ruby eye, I just left it alone. Mr. Brandt, who lived next door to us on Lakeview Drive, owned the Hawaiian Gift Shop in downtown Orlando on Orange Ave. and Central. He would buy all the small alligators I could furnish him with at \$1.00 each.

I worked all week long after school and 12 hours on Saturday in Cottrell's 5¢ to \$1 store in Winter Park for \$3.00 per week, so I was a serious hunter. The most little alligators I caught in one night was 20 bucks worth! Only once in the years that I caught small gators did the mother gator ever cause me a problem. I was wading chest deep in the mud lake and had picked up about 6 baby gators when an 8 foot long mother gator surfaced about 3 feet from me and scared me half out of my wits. With one arm, I slowly pulled my boat to me, reached inside the boat and pulled out a shotgun and did away with her. I hated to do that so much, but I figured it was her or me. In those days gators were considered a nuisance and were not protected by law. Most Florida lakes still have alligators in them but to see them you need to shine a bright light around the shoreline on a dark night. Once you have seen the beautiful shade of red reflecting from a gator's eyes, you will never forget it. Another thing about gators - you can call them to you if you are very still and make guttural sounds from your throat like the baby gators do. It sounds like auk-auk-auk. I learned to imitate it from the baby gators who all made that same sound when they were caught. Unfortunately, the large gators come to it also

- the mother to protect them and the males to eat them!

When I was not fishing or hunting gators I would go to visit my cousin Bud at Parker Lumber. I did not have a car, so I had to go by boat. I would leave my dock at the west end of Lake Virginia early in the morning with my 3/4 horse Elto Pal engine open to full speed, go across Lake Virginia, through Lake Osceola, through Lake Maitland and then into Mud Lake (now called Lake Nina). There were no houses on Mud Lake then. When I got to the small paved road which is now Horatio, there was a culvert under the road to the other side and then into Lake Minnehaha, so I would have to drag my boat over Horatio into the Minnehaha side of the canal. At that time there was only one house on Lake Minnehaha. It was the Dommerich estate on the east bank. Their garden went down to the lake, and they grew purple cabbages in their garden so I assumed they were strange people. Anyhow, after I entered lake Minnehaha I headed for the west bank and pulled my boat up on shore. Then I walked through the orange grove (which is where Contemporary Motors is now), and crossed 17-92 to get to the Parker's house. (It's gone now). Before Bud could leave, he always had to milk those durn cows, so I would

help him. He would sit on the right side of the cow, and I would sit on the left - both of us on small stools with the milk bucket in the middle. We would squirt each other, squirt the barn cat, and then squirt some in the bucket. Then we'd have to explain to Buddy's mother that the cow just did not have much milk today. She told us later that she knew all about us and the cows.

You know, it has been over 50 years since those days. The cows are gone - the house is gone - the groves are gone. But the lakes still have plenty of alligators.

LAKE WINDER SOME 50 YEARS AGO

Sometimes when I want to think some quiet, wonderful thoughts, I let my mind wander back 50 years ago when I was 13 to recapture my recollections of Lake Winder as it was in the 1940s.

My visits to Lake Winder began after I became acquainted with Leonard Bumby who owned Bumby's Hardware Store on Park Avenue in Winter Park. I visited that store every chance I got. I would wander around in there -as long as I could get away with it - gawking at the rows of guns and fishing tackle that were kept in several old varnished cabinets, all beautifully cluttered. Neat would have destroyed some of the store's charm. There were rows and rows of hardware items stacked from the floor to the very high ceiling. They had a ladder on wheels to reach the high shelves. No one bothered you or asked if they could help you. Everyone just stood around and talked about hunting or fishing experiences. Eventually you found what you wanted. Mr. Bumby sold me my first gun. It was a 12 gauge pump shotgun that kicked like a mule, and I never got used to it. One thing, though, it made a person try hard to hit the target with

the first shot. It hurt too much to shoot and miss!

Mr. Bumby took a shine to me, and I was soon invited to spend some weekends at his place on Lake Winder. To get to his place we drove east on Hwy 50 to just before Ft. Christmas and turned south on the Taylor Creek Road driving about 25 miles on a narrow dirt road. We would drive for over an hour through pines and palmettos that were owned by The P. V. Wilson Lumber Company. Somewhere in the '40s, Wilson sold it to R. D. Keene, and Keene sold it to the Mormons who own it now. As I remember, it was a tract of land with thousands and thousands of acres beginning at Hwy 50, and it went all the way to the St. Cloud Road. Anyhow, after we started down the Taylor Creek Road we had to drive kinda slow because the narrow dirt road was not used very often - but not too slow though, as there were places you could get stuck. When we crossed Taylor Creek we had to go very slowly, as the bridge timbers were not nailed down very well, and they jumped up and down as the car passed over them. It was about here that we often had to stop to let wild turkeys run single file across in front of our car. After what seemed like a forever, we would turn off the main dirt road to the left and follow a

narrow trail leading to a piece of high ground - an oasis of a sort - with great oaks and tall cabbage palms. Mr. Bumby's house sat facing the lake right in that hammock. His was the only house on the lake. There was only one other high place on the lake - directly across the lake from Bumby's place. It was called Moccasin Island - where I was to camp many times in the years to come. The island, incidentally, was well named.

Let me tell you about the Bumby house. To me, it was a magnificent, large old Florida style frame house that had once been painted white. It had a steep tin roof and a large porch that wrapped around two sides of the house - complete with old rocking chairs and a porch swing. The east porch faced the lake that was about 300 feet distant. There were two or three bedrooms - one with a fireplace. There was a big old kitchen with a huge wood stove. Just outside the kitchen was a 6 inch pipe from an artesian well which brought up sulphur water for the house. Mr. Bumby had a caretaker who lived at his place for a number of years, and he fed a large flock of turkeys in a clearing very close to the house. I never saw it, but Mr. Bumby said the turkeys would walk around the caretaker close enough for him to reach out and touch them when he

threw out their daily corn. The day before hunting season, he would feed the birds and then while he was in the middle of the flock he would fire his gun in the air. The birds would fly away and not come back until hunting season was over!

Just south of the house near the lake there was a large Indian mound. It was rich with pieces of bone and chips of pottery. I was allowed to dig all I wanted to, but when I was through I had to replace what I had found. Usually, just before I began to dig, I had to take the shovel and throw off a pygmy rattler or two, as they liked to sun themselves on the sandy mound.

There was other entertainment around the house, also. There were lots of wild razorback pigs in the woods, and they frequented the camp for scraps. They were a huge nuisance, because when you came in from fishing with a string of bass, you had to also carry an oar to run them off or they would steal your fish - with one exception. That was "John" the pet pig. John was a runt of a pig who lived under the house. The house, you see, was set about 4 feet above the ground, and that made fine living quarters for a pet pig. Anyway, John was excellent company. He would come when

called - oink, oinking all the way, and we took long walks together in the woods. You did not have to worry about snakes, because when he saw one, John would promptly eat it. I had a board with a nail through it made especially to scratch John's back. He loved to be scratched! He'd talk to you all the while.

As I said before, the house sat back a distance from the lake, and a small canal had been dug to keep the boat in so you would not have to walk so far to get into the boat. It would only take about a half hour to row from the canal to where I fished - at the mouth of the South River as it flowed into the lake. Lake Winder is one of the many lakes of the 300 mile long St. Johns River. The lake is about 3 miles long as I remember with the River flowing out the lake at the north end. I would row the boat to the mouth of the South River entrance and then tie the boat up to some weeds and wade around the sandbar that went partly across the mouth of the river - except where the deeper cut was where the main channel flowed. From there I would cast my lure into the river opening. There were more bass in there than you could imagine. The bass fed mostly on minnows and shiners. I had a lure that looked like a shiner. It was a yellow Heddon Torpedo with spinners on the

front and back. It had cost \$1, and I had two. The lure was an underwater bait, riding about 8 inches under the surface, and you reeled it very slowly. As I remember, there were very few casts that were ignored by the hungry bass. Sometimes you could see the bait go sideways through the tea-colored water when it was hit by a bass, or you would feel a yank. Sometimes three or four bass would strike the lure before one got hooked. I enjoyed each fish I caught, though they were seldom large - mostly between 1 1/2 and 3 pounds. In those days we did not know you could catch and release fish, so when you looked down at the bottom of the boat and it was covered with flopping bass, it was time to stop. Mr. Bumby used to say, "Better stop, Buster, we can't eat any more than you already have."

One day when I was casting a Creek Chub #2000 topwater plug, I got a huge strike that I was sure was the world's largest bass. After a half-hour battle a 15 to 20 pound catfish came close enough for me to see. I was sorely disappointed that it wasn't a bass, but the catfish had fought so long and so hard that when I was able to get the hooks out of his mouth, I released him back into the river. He had been too hard a fighter to be eaten.

The lake was very private in those days - I rarely saw another boat on the lake. The closest boat launch was about 7 miles away north on Lake Poinsett, and few people owned outboard motors large enough to go that far. The only other boats I saw were small boats being rowed with the rower looking forward. These boats belonged to the otter hunters who lived in small shacks down the South River. They made meager livings by selling otter hides.

I think I enjoyed watching the bird life around the lake almost as much as the fishing. There were lots of long skinny Blue Herons all along the shore, and when you got close enough to worry them, they would watch you very carefully and then jump into the air and veer off with a loud squaking protest. But most of all, I liked to see the long flights of the White Curlews. They came in long, long lines and flew so low over your head you could hear their wings beating in the air. They would fly in V formations - very informal - kind of sloppy formations, flying like they were never in a hurry. They would glide; then when it was time, flop their wings a time or two and glide again. As they passed over, you could see their beautiful white feathers and orange beaks and faces framed under a bright blue

sky.

The Lake Winder days were very special to me, and I will never forget them or stop appreciating them. I've always thought that when the Lord made the world, He saved His very best for Central Florida.

MISS DOTY

Before I begin this story, I must tell you one thing. Miss Doty is not the teacher's real name. I've changed her name for fear she might have some kin who would look me up after reading this.

Miss Doty came to teach Science Class at the Winter Park High School in 1944. World War II was going on, and teachers were very scarce. That's the only reason I could ever think of for the school to have hired Miss Doty. She came to us from Martha's Vineyard - a place way up North somewhere. She was tall and skinny and wore her hair in a tight bun on top of her head. Her face looked pinched - like maybe her shoes were too tight - and she wore steel rimmed glasses. She had no sense of humor that I knew of. Now I don't know whether you remember high school science or not. The only reason students took science was to get a much needed credit. You got a "C" if you came to class every day, a "C+" if you did most of your homework, and a "B" if you sat in the front row. No one got an "A", because the really good students did not take science. They took physics instead. The science book was about 2 1/2 inches thick - not because it held a lot of knowledge - just had big print and lots

of pictures. It was designed for students like me and others in the class. None of us liked Miss Doty very much, and I'm sure the feeling was mutual.

For instance, just take the case of Eddie Bracken. Miss Doty was doing an experiment with osmosis in which she had cracked open the end of an egg without breaking the membrane and carefully inserted a small glass tube and sealed it with wax. The egg fluids were supposed to raise up in the glass tube. However, Eddie Bracken was always the first one in the classroom, and for four days running he pushed the tube back down into the egg. The fifth day, Miss Doty hid behind the door and caught him in the act! Well, Sir, she was some kind of mad! She made Eddie face the wall into a corner and paraded back and forth in back of him just hollering and hollering until her temper got the best of her. All at once she shoved Eddie's head against a wall. He was in the corner, so his head hit one wall then the other! When he turned around, his eyes were crossed. But I do have to say, nobody else messed with her egg experiment again..

Now we come to the good part. Miss Doty announced that we could bring in a pet to

show to the class - some kids had mice or kittens or such so I held up my hand and asked if I could bring in a snake. She said I could. The next morning before school, I carefully caught up a 3 foot Diamondback Rattlesnake that I had in a cage on my back porch and put him in a burlap bag and went to school early. I was ever so careful so that he would not rattle. He spent the day in my hall locker, and I had to ease books in and around him whenever I opened the locker. Science class was the last period, and Miss Doty's classroom was right over the Principal's office. At 2:30 P.M. sharp we all went to our desks. They were those small half-desks you slide into. You've seen the kind - you put books under your seat. When it came time to show the pets, each kid got up in front of the room and showed off his or her pet - a guinea pig or whatever. I was the last. When it came my time, I walked to the front of the room - as far away from everyone as I could and then carefully untied the sack and dumped my 3 foot Diamondback Rattlesnake on the school room floor. That was one mad snake. He had been cooped up in the hot locker all day. You should have heard him rattle! Miss Doty was the farthest from the door but the first one out. Kids were everywhere! Desks were turned over in all directions, and in just a few seconds

the snake and I were the only ones left in the room. I had forgotten one little thing. I did not bring a stick to catch the snake with, so I kept putting those big science books on him until I could pin his head down and put him back into the sack.

It was only a short time before I was summoned to the Principal's office. I knew Mr. Lehman very well; his sister, Helen, worked with me in Cottrell's Dime Store where I worked after school and on Saturdays. He said to me, "Buster, why in the world did you do such a thing?" My answer was that it was Show-A-Pet Day, and I had asked for permission to bring in a snake. Miss Doty had said I could.

I went unpunished. Miss Doty retired from school teaching several weeks later and returned to Martha's Vineyard. I hope she is O.K. I don't think she liked my snake.

ESSIE MAE WILLIAMS

I have just kinda stuck in this story about Essie Mae Williams. This story is just too funny - now, that is, not to recall

When I was in High School - myself and several older boys caught and kept a variety of poisonous snakes - mostly cottonmouth moccasins and rattlesnakes. When we got tired of them we could not turn them loose, so we either sold them, pickled them in denatured alcohol, or skinned them out and preserved the skin. Some skins we mounted on boards, and some we just rolled up. I had perfected a method of leaving the snake's head on the skin with the mouth wide open and the fangs protruding almost straight out and added glass eyes - that finished the job.

I was discharged from the Army in 1948 from Camp Kilmer, N.J., and I went to town and bought an old Buick to drive home to Florida. It ran; but the slick salesman failed to tell me it would jump out of third gear every now and then. When I got home I put that snakeskin over the passenger side visor and forgot it was there.

I had been away from home for nearly two

years and most of my High School friends had moved away. I badly wanted a date with a nice girl and was lucky enough to get Essie Mae's telephone number from a friend. I called her and asked her for a date to go to the movies. She said yes. There was a picture showing in Sanford that she wanted to see. Essie Mae lived right beside the old water tank in Longwood. I pulled up in the old Buick at her house and went to the door and knocked. The door opened, and I'll never forget what she looked like when she stepped out. She was one of the Lord's best handiworks. I don't think she could have been improved upon. She had shoulder-length blond hair and had on a spaghetti-strap dress. She was just plain beautiful. I had a very hard time saying hello. I took one good look at her and wanted to ask her to marry me right there on the porch - but I reasoned we should get acquainted better first. So I decided I would wait and ask her to marry me as soon as the movie was over. Then like a gentleman, I helped her into the car, and we started up the road toward Sanford making small-talk. My voice was slowly coming back, but it was still very hard to look at her and try to drive at the same time. Everything went well until I turned right off the Longwood Road to go to Sanford. We had to go over a rough railroad crossing, and that's when

it happened. That snakeskin with its mouth wide open, fangs extended, with glass eyes fell right into Essie Mae's lap. She just stared at it for a brief second and then started to scream like you've never heard before. She tried to open her door and jump out of the car while it was still moving, but she couldn't get the door open because those old Buick doors opened opposite most car doors. Then she dove for my door and got pinned between me and the steering wheel. I could not see where I was going and ran into the railroad guard and busted out my right headlight before I could get stopped.

Essie Mae just kept screaming, "Take me home! Take me home!" I kept trying to tell her it was only a skin, but she never heard me. Well, I knew right then the wedding was off. I never saw Essie Mae again. She would not answer my phone calls. I threw away that snakeskin. It had cost me a marriage.

CHARLIE BROWN

This is a story about a Beagle named Charlie Brown. The story begins when I received a 10 P.M. phone call from Charlie's owner. She was crying. It turned out that her husband had recently died, and she had to sell their home and move into an apartment which did not allow pets. She had taken Charlie to a veterinarian friend of mine, Dr. McElyea, to put Charlie to sleep; and Doc Mac suggested she call me, as I had found homes for dogs for several of his clients who could no longer have pets.

When she was able to talk clearly, she told me Charlie had always lived "inside", and when I asked her how old Charlie was, I thought she said 3 years old. But Charlie was OLD! When I saw him, his muzzle was white - more like 10 years old. Now I don't know if it was her mistake or mine; anyhow, I agreed to help find Old Charlie a home. It would be a shame to put the dog to sleep - he was in good health and could maybe hunt deer.

The next day I got on the phone and began to call my contacts - guys I knew who had hunting dogs, but it was summertime, and

nobody wanted to feed a Beagle until November - especially if he had been a house dog.

Finally I had only one possibility left - another friend of mine, whose name is Donald Chubb. I knew a little about Donald. First off, I knew he lived in a trailer in the woods near the town of Tangerine off Hwy 441, and that he had had a dog that some weeks before had disappeared. So, I called Donald at his office (he's an optometrist). I said, "Donald, I've got a Beagle dog I want to give to you to take to your trailer." "No, no," he quickly replied "I don't want another dog." So I told Donald my sad story about how he was the last hope for poor ol Charlie Brown; and, "besides", I told him, "if you don't take him, he will be killed and the killing will be on your head!" "Lordy, Lordy," he said. "Please don't talk like that! All right, bring the dog to my office tonight. I'll take the dog home with me."

Late that afternoon I went to Dr. McElyea's office to get Charlie Brown, and Leon brought Charlie out to my car with no collar, no rope. What a sight Charlie was! As I said before, Charlie was OLD. His fur was gray and his muzzle white. I knew Donald would just love seeing this dog! I got to Donald's office at 5:30 P.M. just as he was locking the door. He took

one look at Charlie and just said, "Mercy!" Donald never cusses. "Well, where is his collar and leash?" I told him how Leon had forgotten it, so we would just have to put a rope or something around his neck. We took Charlie out to Don's old pickup truck and started rooting through old tires, beer cans and such for a piece of rope. Now you would have to know Donald to know how the back of that pickup truck looked. Finally we found an old dog collar and a plastic rope which we put on Charlie, and away they went to Donald's trailer out in the woods. I forgot to tell you that Donald had recently bought that old pickup in a town 130 miles north of Orlando called Lake Butler. Donald had an office there to see Saturday patients from the Lake Butler Correctional Institution. The old dog collar we put on Charlie had a brass plate on it with a man's name and telephone number. Well, Donald took Charlie Brown out to the trailer on a Wednesday night and tied him to a tree outside the door. Donald said, "That dog sure did want inside my place. He barked and barked, jumping up each time he barked, until he lost his voice, then he just jumped up". The dog was tied up Friday evening when Donald left for Lake Butler to return again Sunday evening, and he had left plenty of food and water for Charlie. Now comes the bad

part. When Donald got home Sunday evening, Charlie was gone. The rope was chewed through. Donald looked for him for a whole day. Then he called me to say he was sorry but Charlie was gone.

Well, Sir - a month went by; and as it happened, Donald was in Lake Butler again and stopped at an egg farm on the highway just outside of town where he bought cracked eggs for 25¢ a dozen, and there was Charlie Brown living on the egg farm. I said, "Donald, are you sure it was Charlie?" "Oh, yeah," he said, "I looked at his collar." What had happened was, Charlie somehow got across Hwy 441 and went into a lady's yard in the town of Tangerine about 2 miles from Donald's trailer. After several days of feeding the dog she was able to read his collar, and she called the long distance phone number that was on it, and the man on the egg farm 130 miles away came and took Charlie to live on the egg farm. It seems that the man whose name was on the collar owned a bunch of hunting dogs, and he had just died. It was his son-in-law on the egg farm who had no way of knowing Charlie Brown did not belong to his deceased father-in-law, and that is why he drove 260 miles round trip to bring Charlie back from Tangerine to Lake Butler!

It's been some years since all this happened, and by now Charlie is probably in Beagle Heaven. He probably deserves it, as it must have been hard work guarding all those chickens and being so far away from home!

I forgot to tell you. The man at the egg farm told Donald some time later, "That Beagle was sure a strange dog! He kept wanting to go inside my house, and when I didn't let him in, he kept barking and barking, jumping up each time he barked, until he lost his voice, then he just jumped up."

WHATEVER COMES DOWN THE RIVER

During the 1970s I maintained a fishing camp on the St. Johns River. The camp was located south of Hwy 46 just before you come to the town of Mims. The area is known as The Flatbill. The first time I fished that part of the river, I caught so many bass that I drove back to the campsite and found a For Sale sign on a vacant lot next to the river and bought it the next day. Soon after, I built a nice comfortable fish camp - complete with a double garage to store my two boats. It was a wonderful place to spend several days at a time, and once in a while a whole week! Most of the time no one else was around, so I had the campsite to myself.

The river was full of fish - all kinds of fish, in those days. I was always anxious to reach the camp, and my excitement mounted as soon as I turned off Hwy 46 onto the 5 miles of graded road that took us to our camp. The road was usually a washboard, so you had to drive slowly, but that was OK because most of the ride was through a large swampy marsh with birds of all kinds lining the ditches on both sides. Sometimes we would see a deer crossing the road, and every now and then I

would have to stop to kill a Diamondback rattler as it went from one side of the road to the other. Diamondbacks are the only kind of snake I will kill. They are just too dangerous to let them pass. The powerline along the road usually had a Kingfisher who would spot a fish in the ditch below - give out a bird holler and then dive into the water for his catch. The telephone poles often had hawks sitting on them, and they would watch you as you drove by. The waves of marsh grass that covered the swampy prairie would wave in the breeze looking so much like pictures I've seen of Africa's Serengeti Plains. Sometimes when we would leave the camp in the afternoon to go home, we would see several Pygmy Rattlers sunning themselves on the warm sand on the road. I always carefully drove around them so as not to disturb their afternoon treat. You will note I've made several references to snakes. Make no mistake about the St. Johns River area. It is home to many kinds of creepy crawlers.

In fact, this is what this story is really about. I have a favorite Uncle, who we call Uncle Sonny. He likes to fish, but he's deathly afraid of snakes and not too wild about water unless it is saltwater. He is not much of an outdoorsman. I had tried several times to get

Uncle Sonny to spend a few days and nights at my fish camp with me. Finally when I told him the fish were really biting, he consented. Now I'm sure Uncle Sonny loves his wife, Louise, very much; and he was willing to leave her for a night or two, but he just could not bear to leave his dog, Bee-Bee, for too long a time. So it took a little more persuading to get him to actually make the trip. Anyhow, he finally did, and I drove him out to the Hatbill Camp. The evening started out OK until I fixed our supper. I had made some fine looking hamburgers. That was when Uncle Sonny discovered I did not have any ketchup! He said he could not eat if he did not have an ketchup. I carefully explained to him it was about dark, and it was a seven mile drive one way to the nearest store. He said, "Well, if it's that far we'd better get started right now". This incident ought to give you some insight as to why family members refer to Aunt Louise as Ste. Louise-y.

Early the next morning we loaded up the jon boat and started up the river. Up river is north, you know. Only the Nile and the St. Johns rivers run north. We put out our Beetlespin baits and began to troll them behind the boat. We soon caught a nice mess of bream and small bass.

We came in at lunch so Sonny could eat some more ketchup, and then we kinda took the afternoon off. We started out to fish again about an hour and a half before sundown. Again we were in my small aluminum jon boat which has very low sides. We were armed with two cane poles and a big can of worms. I anchored the boat in the middle of the river - right where it turns a sharp right curve and where another stream flows in from the south. The river is not very wide there, and this place was a favorite spot of mine, because you could catch a mess of fish there most any time. When we got settled, we put our poles out and kinda relaxed. The wind had quit blowing, and the river was as smooth as glass. Everything was absolutely still except for the murmuring of the water, and the two of us were hauling in small catfish and big bluegills one right after the other. Just as soon as the cork hit the water, down it went!

All of a sudden Uncle Sonny stood up in the boat and began to shout, "Here comes a snake! Here comes a snake! And it's gonna get into our boat!" Sonny was wild-eyed, and I could see him looking for a place to jump in the water. I said, "You are crazy." But just to be sure, I stood up and looked where he was

looking, and sure enough, about 300 feet away, up the small creek, comes a long skinny snake swimming in our direction. Uncle Sonny kept yelling while all the time I'm telling him, "Don't get upset! There is no way that snake will try to get in our boat!" But it did! It swam directly toward us with a course as straight as if it were an arrow shot from a bow. I could see it was a non-poisonous chicken snake, but I did not want the snake in the boat and Uncle Sonny in the river. Sonny was poised to go overboard, and he can't swim! When the snake got about 8 feet from the boat, I wrapped my cane pole around him and slung him about fifteen feet away and set about to getting Uncle Sonny quieted down. But now he wanted to go - right that minute. The fish were biting so very good that I sweet-talked him into staying for 10 minutes more and promised him this sort of thing could not possibly happen again. But it did! No more than 5 minutes later he was up again and shouting, "Here comes another snake, and he's gonna get in the boat!" "Not in a million years," I said. "Just be calm," I knew it could not happen again. The second snake was following the first one - exactly on course and headed straight for our boat. The same thing all over again. When it got close enough to the boat I wrapped him around my pole and threw the

snake way far away from the boat. Both were chicken snakes about the same size - 4 1/2 to 5 feet long. I tried to get Uncle Sonny seated again to let us fish a few more minutes. He would have no part of it. Now this is exactly what Uncle Sonny said. "Let's go right now," he shouted, "before whatever chased those snakes down the river comes after us!" I had no argument for that, so we headed for the camp. It was getting dark anyway. When we got back, Sonny began packing his stuff, and I said, "I thought you were going to spend the night!" Uncle Sonny said, "I have to go now, Bee-Bee misses me!"

Uncle Sonny NEVER went fishing with me again....

Part II

THE WILDCAT HUNT

I remember with great affection the hours I spent in the woods with Chubby Chub hunting wildcats around the town of Oviedo - actually just north and east of Oviedo in the swampy area around Lake Jessup. Now Chubby was a unique individual. He lived, what was then, out in the country on Lake Howell Creek. This area is now Tusawilla. His barnyard was filled with a mishmash of dog pens - each one filled with eager barking long-legged hounds - the only sameness was the good ol hound odor. Hounds smell. If they didn't, I'm sure they would not be any good. There was no one in Central Florida besides Chubby who had the knowledge, know-how, and dogs to hunt wildcats. He was one of the best outdoorsmen I have ever known.

You hunt wildcats at night, you know, and Chubby had hunted East Orange County for years and knew where every trail and dirt road was. Chubby's mixture of dogs varied in kind and color, but they all had long legs and fine voices. They were dogs to be proud of. They were trained to run wildcats, and Chubby knew the voice of each of his dogs by heart. After the time I spent hunting with those dogs, I've always felt sort of sorry for anyone

who has never spent a clear cold moonlight night listening to the music ringing through the woods and palmettos as one hound after another sends back his rich voice for your enjoyment and his. Maybe the wildcats felt some different.

The special night this story is about was a very cold night in January of 1945. As the night grew older, the air became colder. I helped Chubby load up about a dozen of his hand-picked hounds and loaded them in the back of his old staked-back Model A truck. That truck would go most anywhere and rarely got stuck; but on occasion you would have to stop and put water into the steaming radiator. On this particular night by 9:30 we had driven into a swampy area near Lake Jessup, and I drove the truck while Chubby walked slowly in the dim headlights to look for cat tracks in the sand road ahead. It was not long until he held up his hand. I knew he had found fresh track. We took the gate down from the back of the truck, and the hounds poured out. They were a mass of barking, yawling, squeeling long-legged hounds that had already smelled the cat. In a few minutes we heard an awful commotion - all kinds of new squeals and yips as the dogs jumped the cat. So the race began. A large wildcat (or bobcat) can cover a lot of

miles when he has a dozen souped-up hounds on his rear, and the cats are very, very smart. For hours we drove that Model A as fast as we could down those old dirt roads trying to get ahead of the dogs, but this cat was exceptionally smart; and when he would hear the truck, he would turn in another direction. On and on he went and we went!

About 2:00 A.M. the temperature was way below freezing. My hands were very cold, but I had on a cheap pair of orange picker's gloves, and Chubby's bare hands were near frozen. Finally he could not stand it any more and said, "Buster, if you will trade me those gloves right now, when we get home I will give you a 10 gauge doublebarrel shotgun." I was too dumb-founded to answer. He mistook my hesitation and added, "I will throw in a cat skin." I quickly said yes and gave him those gloves. When we got back to Chubby's house, he brought out a handsome old 10 gauge doublebarrel shotgun and a cat skin. The gun was very heavy and very long, and the hammers were in the old style rabbit ears that curl way above the barrels. To me, it was an absolute treasure.

When I first got home with the old gun, I was not sure it could shoot modern heavy duty

shells, so I put the gun in a chair, packed it in sandbags, tied a string to the trigger, and gave it a pull. When it fired and did not blow up, I knew I could use it. I hunted with that old 10 gauge for several years. The first time I used it I aimed up a tree at a squirrel, and when the gun went off, it knocked me over--

Well when I started telling you about the old gun you must have guessed that the wild-cat got away...

THE PIG HUNT

If you will remember, I spoke of Chubby my high school friend who had all the hunting dogs. He invited me to hunt Wildcats one cold night back in the late '40s - which is one of my stories. I did not hear from Chubby again until late fall in 1972 when he called and asked me and my son, Bruce, who was 16 years old at the time, to go hog hunting with him. You can't hunt by yourself with dogs because you have to set out the dogs and then stay ahead of them. It takes two or more people. Finally, Chubby had to give up "Cat" hunting, because too many people had invaded his woods and built too many houses and too many fences. But at this time there was still a large undeveloped area near Lake Jessup. It was on the southeast side of the lake. A dirt road ran off the road from Oviedo to Hwy 46 and went almost all the way to the lake. It then turned and bordered the lake swamp for several miles. It was called Walsh Road. The area was rough and wild, and it took a truck like Chubby's old stake back truck to get through the soft sand, so not many people ventured too far down that old dirt road. We met Chubby at his house early in the morning and caught up 8 or 10 long-legged hog dogs, and then a small Chihuahua dog

came yapping around the truck; and when the other dogs were loaded, Chubby tossed him in the truck with the big long-legged dogs. I must have look astonished, so Chubby said, "Don't laugh, Buster, (my friends all call me Buster) - when the hounds jump the pigs you car hear their voices a long way off. But when you hear the Chihuahua's yap yap, get ready to shoot, because he is so quick and small that he goes under the palmettos instead of over them like the hounds. He keeps up with the pigs as they run." I looked at Chubby several times to see if he was funning me or not.

Each time we stopped for a red light, that Chihuahua would jump of the truck, and we would have to stop and fetch him up. It was strange see such a small dog get tossed into the truck with those big long-legged hounds!

We finally arrived at the end of the sand road and turned south along the lake swamp. We drove slowly for about 1/2 mile, and then we all saw the fresh hog sign - fresh tracks. Chubby sent Bruce and me back to almost where we had turned in, and he gave us time to walk the distance before he released the dogs. The dogs could smell the pigs and were all over the back of that truck - whining and barking to be set free. They were soon in the

woods, and we could hear their musical voices. You could sure hear "Old Music" - Chubby's favorite dog in the lead. My guns were packed at the time, so Chubby had loaned me an old 12 gauge side-by-side shotgun, and Bruce and I trotted down the dirt road to wait for the race. When we were in place, we could hear the hounds filling the air with their yawls and barks as they moved through the thick palmettos after those pigs. It seems to me we waited and listened for about 30 minutes until I heard the hounds come our way; and then, just as Chubby had said, I heard the Chihuahua's yap-yap-yap! So I stepped out on the dim road, and here comes this young shoat - a pig of about 50 pounds running for all he was worth with that little dog right behind him. I raised the old shotgun to fire and got a quick shot just as the pig was crossing the dim road. He dropped like lead in his tracks. Bruce and I went over to look at him, and we could both taste fresh barbecue right then. We had to carry that pig about a half mile; so we tied his feet together, slipped a pole under him, put the ends of the pole on our shoulders, and started back to the truck. That pig got heavier and heavier. Just when I was sure I could not go another yard, the truck came into sight.

The very next day we barbecued the little porker, and he was delicious.

Some years later Bruce and I went hunting in a different place and time, and a baby pig ran across the road. Bruce hollered, "Stop the truck! I want to catch that baby pig!" I slammed on brakes and Bruce jumped out the door and ran into the thick woods after that baby pig. Some few minutes went by. Then I heard crashing and thrashing in the woods and out comes Bruce. With one jump he was in the truck. I asked him, "Where's the baby pig?" Now Bruce is a very quiet person and does not talk very much, and the only thing he said was, "The mother did not want me to take it!"

THE MOOSE HUNT

Not all hunting trips, or fishing trips for that matter, turn out as you might want or expect them to. This is just such a story - when the trip was, well, let's say it was unusual. My memory tends to dim as the years go by, but I'd guess this event took place in November of 1973. My friend from Ocala called me one day and said, "Ed, how would you like to go moose hunting up in Canada?" I thought about it a minute and answered "How do you moose hunt?" It was his turn to think then. After a pause, the answer was, "Well, I visualize being on the edge of a great moose meadow and out into the meadow walks these great mooses." "Sounds good to me", I answered. "Count me in." Arrangements were made for four in our party; but one of the men was afraid to fly, so he kept calling me and begging me to drive with him in his car. I kept saying no, but he kept calling, and finally pointed out to me that one person had to take a car to pull a trailer back with all the moose meat. "You know," he said, "even one fair size moose weighs about 1,000 lbs." So I gave in, and we drove up 4 days early to meet our two friends who were flying in to Thunder Bay, Canada. When we got to the hunting camp, it was rustic but adequate. It was situated in

the woods near a small town called Sioux Lookout. It was just north of a large town called Dryden in the Province of Ontario, Canada. Thunder Bay, on Lake Superior, was the only large city within a hundred miles. I remember the first day of our hunt when the guide said to me, "Don't get lost - the nearest town north of here is on Hudson Bay, a distance of about 750 miles." That scared me some especially when he added that one of the other guides had lost a hunter two years before and never found him. I thought about this for a minute and then told the guide, "Don't worry about losing me. If I get lost, look for me on the edge of a forest fire!" As it turned out this was an empty threat because it rained every day.

Anyhow, when we all got together and decided where we would hunt, I chose to be left alone in a large clearing that looked like an old cow pasture with lots of big rocks. We had two guides between the four of us - a father and son operation. I got up at 5 A.M. to make my own breakfast and then packed my own lunch- 2 sandwiches in a paper bag. Well, before daylight we were driven to our appointed hunting places and let out. The guides had two boats, so two hunters went out in the boats and the other two "still-hunted" in vari-

ous fields. The fields in Canada are not like the fields in Florida. They are part of the tundra ground with thousands of pothole-sized holes covered over with moss. The third day, the senior guide (the Father) broke his ankle when he accidentally stepped into one of these holes. Anyway, the first three days of our seven day hunting trip I was dropped off from the pickup truck in a field in the dark. I wore glasses at the time, so when it began to rain each day I could not see a thing. I kept wiping off my glasses with my wet handkerchief while trying to take cover under a big rock. Some kind of a bird which I did not recognize ate my wet soggy sandwiches at noontime each day. After the first day the bird waited for me! On the fourth day, I revolted and was assigned to a boat to hunt the edge of a lake. You can't shoot a moose just anywhere in the woods. You must be able to drive a truck to the downed animal or pull him behind a boat. You just can't carry off a 1,000 or 2,000 lb animal. After the senior guide broke his ankle, he hired a 19 year old named Fester, who may have been a few bricks short of a load, to take his place.

I need to tell you about Fester. He was a very husky kid - 19 years old and just as dumb as a stump! Well, Fester drove the boat, and

I sat huddled in the bow seeing only rain, rain, and more rain. It was the coldest rain I have ever been in. The cheap poncho I had bought for the trip was not much good. Fester ran the boat along the banks of the lake while I tried to look over the bow for a moose standing in the water. I would raise up, take off my wet glasses, wipe them off with my wet handkerchief, put them back on, stand up, take them off, etc. hour after hour. I was not having fun. I wore rubber boots, but no one had told me about those felt inserts for the boots so your feet don't freeze. Finally, I just could not stand being so cold anymore, and I told Fester to go ashore and build a fire so I could warm my frozen feet. The backs of my rubber boots blistered some, but I did get temporary relief when I held them up over the fire. I missed Florida so bad!

That evening when we returned to the landing where the two pickups were, we saw the other boat coming in with a cow moose about 750 lbs. It was roped and was surfboarding behind the boat. When the boat came ashore, the guide backed one pickup down to the moose in the shallow water and put up boards from the ground to the pickup bed. Then we all pulled and tugged to start the moose up on the boards. The guide made a rope harness, tied it

around the moose and took the nylon rope over the pickup to the second pickup - tied it to the back and drove forward very slowly. With some help from us, the moose loaded up quite easily. I looked at that poor animal and was immediately glad I was not the one who shot it. If I had been the one to see her in my scope, she would have been quite safe. The next day it would have taken ten strong men to put me back in that boat, so I was taken to a new field. It had stopped raining. I saw moose tracks everywhere and most headed through a small draw into a nearby swamp then into heavy cover at the other end of the swamp. I got Fester and showed him the tracks and said, "Fester, I want you to go on the other side of this swamp and chase the animals back this way, and I'll wait right here." About an hour went by. Then bang-bang-bang-bang. I knew Fester had found the moose (two as it turn out). But he had forgotten the game plan. I was supposed to take the moose. Fester came out of the swamp and said he had a young bull and cow down in the heavy cover of the swamp. He would have to get a "tree planter" to get them out. I asked him how much that would cost. He said it was \$50 per hour.

Now let me tell you what a tree planter is. It's a piece machinery made somewhere on

Mars. It's about 25 or 30 feet long with four monster-size wheels in the back section and two slightly smaller wheels in the front section. The machine had a pivot in the middle so it could navigate in the thick woods. The cab was up maybe six feet high. You climb a ladder to get into the cab. The front of the machine had a plow blade, and on the rear it had a large winch with a long 3/4 inch cable.

So anyhow, Fester went back to his truck and off he sped to rent the tree planter. It turned out that Fester had always wanted to drive a tree planter, but no one would let him (they must have known about the missing bricks, too). Later I learned the owner of the tree planter had told Fester he could rent the machine but he had to use the regular driver. When Fester got to the motor pool, he climbed in the cab himself. He would not let his once-in-a-lifetime chance go by. Three hours later I heard this horrible noise and here comes Fester in that huge machine, along with the guide's son who did not know, of course, that Fester was not supposed to be driving. Fester drove that machine right down into swamp. I screamed and waved my arms, and I could see the top of the swamp, quivering just like a bog here in Florida. Fester opened the door and asked what was the matter. I hollered back,

"Fester, don't take that planter any further into this swamp. It's a bog and if you go there, you'll get stuck!" "No, no," he said. "A tree planter will go anywhere." The other guy had a chain saw, and he walked ahead cutting the bigger trees down. The planter can pass over a three foot high stump! As Fester went further into the bog there were no trees to cut - just little trees looking like our Bay trees. I stood and marveled at that machine and almost felt secure that Fester was right. That is, right up until he tried to turn to the left to go towards the animals. Down and down he began sinking in that huge machine - me screaming and hollering and waving my arms. Fester saw me and came down the ladder. "No problem," says Fester. "A tree planter can go anywhere. All I have to do is to use the winch and cable and pull it out using the trees." Then he started the winch. Each tree he fastened to made a sucking/swooshing noise as it was jerked out of the mud. In an hour's time, the whole area looked like a giant mud field covered with uprooted trees.

It was dark by then, so we left. Fester had asked me previously if he could have one of the two moose that were down, and I said it was OK with me but we'd have to clear it with the head guide and the other hunters - which

meant to Fester a clear Yes. The next day he got a bulldozer and took out the two animals one at a time by tying them to the blade. He took one moose home with him, and he disappeared. By the next day our guide with the broken ankle found out what Fester had done, but he still had no idea of what the situation was or how bad it really was. His leg was in a cast, and he could not get to the area to see. Anyhow, he asked us each for an extra \$100 toward the use of the machine. Of course, we quickly paid even though we knew \$400 would not even touch his problem.

The next morning my companion with the car rented a U-Haul trailer (Canadian), and the guides quartered the two moose and loaded the eight quarters of bloody moose in the trailer. Well, this was the day the sun finally came out, and it got Hot! We packed our gear and headed to town for ice. When we finally found some, it was \$1.19 per small bag, and the store had only 10 bags. Ice is very expensive in Canada. So we drove 30 miles back to Dryden where there was an ice cream factory. There we bought all the dry ice they could spare - about 20 lbs and headed for the border. As we drove, the day got hotter and hotter. We knew we would lose some meat, and we did. At

the border we paid our fee and started across. The Border Guard politely informed us we could not take the Canadian trailer into the U.S.A. He turned us back. We drove to the nearest filling station and left the trailer. Back to the border crossing we went and into the U.S.A. We drove to the closest town, rented a U.S. trailer and headed back across the border. By now the guards knew us. We drove back to the filling station - dressed in our traveling clothes and together slipped eight bloody moose quarters into the U.S. trailer. Back to the border crossing we went. The guard said, "What's in the trailer?" "Moose meat," we answered. "Don't you know you can't take moose meat out of Canada unless it is tagged?" We allowed we certainly did not, so he gave us directions to the tagging station. We found it and paid the fee for each tag - eight in all - and headed back to the border crossing. "Whoa!" the guard said, "Come in and show us your license and mark the map where the animals came from." And then, believe it or not we made it to the good 'ol U.S. of A. with the Canadian guards waving good-bye.

We found more dry ice in a nearby town and headed south to the butcher shop in Ocala where they prepared the meat for freezing. We split the

moose meat four ways. The young bull was fairly tender, the old cow was as tough as leather. But there was no way to tell the tender meat from the tough meat until you tried to eat it. We gave away a lot of the meat, but I thought that meat would last forever.

Several weeks after I got home, the memory of that sinking tree planter still haunted me, so I called the guide to see what had happened. "What happened? What happened?", he blurted out, "I'll tell you what happened! I had to rent two bulldozers and a mile of cable from the railroad to get that machine out. The crew put the cable around the top of the machine and pulled it out of the mire on its side." I said, "What happened to Fester?" In a very low voice he said, "He took the train out of town." "What will you do when you see him?", I asked. "I'm going to kill him.", was his answer. I then asked the guide about possibly going back to hunt bear. He was still a moment and then quietly answered, "Please, don't come back."

THE DEER HUNT

In my TV room hangs a magnificent head from a very large Buck Mule Deer - the taxidermist near Crawford, Colorado, said it was the largest body weight head he had ever mounted. The rack has 12 beautiful points and measures about 30 inches across, and the distance from the bottom of the cape to the top of the horns is 42 inches. The weight of the deer was estimated to be about 400 lbs. I am often asked about where this trophy came from, so here is the story...

Sometime in the mid 1970s, I received a call from a friend of mine in Ocala who had met a man who owned a ranch close to the town of Crawford, Colorado. He said the ranch was about 4 miles long and located in a deep canyon. The canyon walls were about 300 feet high and rose up at a steep angle - enough so that only the front and rear of the canyon had to be fenced, as the cows could not climb the steep canyon walls. He said the top of the canyon ridge was covered with cedar trees, and the BIG TROPHY BUCKS hid in those cedar brakes, as he called them. The ranch was divided between livestock and fields of alfalfa which turned gold colored in late autumn. He also said that in the years of heavy

snow - like in January or February, he had seen as many as 50 BIG BUCKS at one time milling around the grain and hay storage area which had a building and was surrounded by an 8 foot high fence. Well, this conversation took place in the middle of summertime here in Florida, but my memory had not dimmed by fall; and I became anxious to hunt on that ranch. I had never been much of a deer hunter, and even now, nothing much has changed.

When the November hunting season came, my friend and I flew from Tampa to Denver - our rifles carefully packed. Denver, as you know, sits on the immediate east side of the Rocky Mountains which run mostly north and south through Colorado. We then got on another plane to take us across the high mountains to the town of Grand Junction. This small town had an airstrip on which only the small frontier airplanes could land. Grand Junction is on the west side of the high mountains. We were met there by an acquaintance who drove us to Crawford in his Jeep which he kindly loaned us for the week. I expect Crawford is a much larger place by now, but at the time of my visit it was at the crossing of two graded roads. On the west side of the street was a small post office, a small general store where I bought some ammunition, and a small grocery store. Across the street was a restau-

rant that sat about 20 people. We had lunch there. We were eating when we heard the sound of an old pickup truck bearing down on the grocery store across the street. We watched it come sliding to a quick stop - throwing gravel in all directions - and saw the two large dogs in the truckbed going over and over as they tried to regain their balance with some dignity. After we had a few more bites, I looked over at the truck just in time to see both dogs jump up and anchor their legs apart for balance. The lady driver jumped in the truck, slammed the door, started the engine, and let the clutch out all at the same time. The dogs once again went upside down all over the back of that truck. It was obviously not the first time they had had that experience, because they had done the best they knew how to prepare for it! Their best was just not good enough.

Early the next morning my friend and I donned our hunting gear and drove to the ranch where we were to hunt. It was as beautiful as the owner said. We met our host, and he told us to drive to a certain place in the bottom of the canyon. He would ride his horse across the top of the canyon through the cedar brakes to try to run some bucks down the canyon wall. All was still for about 2 hours.

Then I saw movement, and there was a good size buck with a fair rack running along the rim of the canyon about 300 yards away. I stood up, took careful aim, and missed him five times as he moved across the ridge. I then put another clip in my automatic Model 740 Remington 30-06 rifle and tried again - this time leading the deer about three feet. I shot. He went down. The man on horseback retrieved the deer, and we took it back to prepare for a venison feast. It was delicious, as the deer had eaten mostly alfalfa for all of his life.

The next three days were frustrating. We saw deer - but they were always out of range, and they saw us first. Then came the day of my weakness. Rusty, the son of the rancher, had been after me to hunt with him on horseback. I finally agreed. When I approached the horse, I waited for Rusty to mount up (I couldn't remember which side to get up on). Finally, I said, "O.K., Rusty, I have to ask - which side?" He knew then that he had a "live one" to spend the day with. After we saddled up we rode up a winding trail to the top of the north canyon and proceeded along the top for about two miles. We did not see anything, so Rusty said we'd have to cross over to the other side. "How do we do that?" I asked. "Easy", was his reply,

"Just follow me." We then dismounted and started down an almost vertical drop to the canyon below - Rusty leading the way with his horse being pulled behind him. Then I started down with the reins in my hand. I half walked and half slid with that heavy horse right behind me. The horse slipped and slid worse than I did and showered me with small rocks which bounced off my back and legs. It did not take too long to reach the floor of the canyon. Rusty announced we would have to ride up the other side to hunt on top of the south ridge. I looked up and was terrified at the sight, but I got back on the horse and up we climbed, - up and up. The horse was slipping and sliding and again rocks rained down - but this time, behind us. I looked down when we were about three-fourths of the way up and was half sick at what I saw. About then the angle was so steep that my rifle slid out of the saddle holster and fell into the top of a small tree right below me. I told Rusty that I'd like to have my rifle back but not bad enough to go get it. He climbed the small tree and retrieved it for me. I managed to get off the horse and climbed on foot the rest of the way to the top pulling the horse behind me. We rode for about another hour before we came to a jeep road leading back to the ranch. I slid off the horse and told Rusty that was as far as I could go. He could

just go home and fetch the Jeep and take me to the ranch house. When he left, I sat down in the road. Every bone in my body hurt, and my sitdown was a wonderous source of great pain. I learned later that I had a huge broken blister back there somewhere. I have never ridden a horse again and never will. This Tenderfoot no doubt gave Rusty many laughs over that day on the ranch.

We saw no more buck deer in the next several days, and I was very disappointed, although in the evening many does fed in the alfalfa fields. Saturday evening we tried once more. I took a stand below the canyon wall and watched the sun dip below the mountains. Everything turned very still. A beautiful shade of purple settled around me, but I had totally given up. Then, I heard it. Small rocks came rolling down the canyon wall. I stood up and looked through my scope and saw two does running a trail near the top of the canyon. I moved the scope to the right - there he stood! Magnificent and still and looking down at me, he looked like the Hartford of Connecticut deer logo. I took aim and pulled the trigger. I was such a poor shot I figured it was a ricochet. He never knew what hit him. When I finally got up to where he had fallen, I could see he was enormous. The next day the rancher

took up mules and packed him down the canyon. He was an old buck and needed to be harvested. His 400 lbs. came from eating alfalfa for many years.

It was a rich experience for me, and it was probably the last mule deer I will ever take. I was never a very good shot, and as I get older my aim is getting even worse. When I received the mounted deer head some time later I wanted to hang it in the living room over the fireplace, but my wife explained to me that I could not hang it anywhere in the house. So I added a new room on to the house and hung it up in there. Shortly after that, my grandson, Aaron, who was just a little fellow at the time, came over to see it. His eyes got real big, and he went running into the other room looking for the rest of the deer. There wasn't any. We had eaten it.

THE BLACK MARLIN

Every now and then, when my mind is free - I get a quick mental picture of a beautiful Black Marlin leaping out of the green Pacific Ocean with leaps so high that for just a split second the fish would be framed with the blue background of the sky. As I remember, each of his magnificent leaps would have carried him lengthwise over a car with room to spare...

My story begins with an invitation from two friends from Ocala in September of 1965. Together we flew to Miami, changed planes and flew to Panama City, Panama. We had to clear Customs, and there an American who worked on the Panama Canal inadvertently took my suitcase instead of his. He had my clothes and fishing tackle. I had his clothes, and they looked like they would not fit me. The Customs agent remembered the man and knew his address, so we got a taxi and hunted him down and exchanged suitcases. From there we rode to the Pacific-side docks and saw our boat - The Cayman II - an old wood boat - 47 feet long and fitted out just to fish for Marlin. It was built with the stern no higher than the deck and a step below the deck so the billfish could be slid aboard. The boat was tied up to a floating dock, as Panama has a 20 foot

tide differential between high and low tides. We had a Columbian Captain who spoke very little English; a First Mate from I don't know where, who could speak a little English, and a third hand who was Panamanian. The Captain's name was Flores, and the First Mate's name was George. I never knew the Panamanian's name.

We had ordered our food ahead, as the boat goes out to fish for a minimum of 7 days and could take up to a month's supply of food and water. The Captain looked for "Booze" or beer and was mighty disappointed when he discovered we three were all teetotalers. He complained bitterly and said his crew liked a little something to drink. When the boat was loaded, shortly after noon, we started across the Bay of Panama. I watched with interest as the Panamanian boat hand got drunker and drunker as the hours passed. He had a bottle hidden somewhere. When he was thoroughly drunk, he assailed the Captain in Spanish - which one of my companions could understand. My friend was madder than a hornet and told the Captain, "I said no booze or beer on this boat!" The Captain said he did not bring it. Well, Sir, about this time an island appeared on our right. My outraged friend asked the Captain if there was a dock on the

island. He said yes. When it dawned on the Captain what we wanted to do, he begged us to not put the Hand out. "We'll need him too much when we fish!" But his pleas fell on deaf ears. We made the Captain dock the boat and put the drunk Hand off on a dock on an island some four hours away from the dock at Panama. I often wondered what happened to the poor drunk fellow. Hope he got back OK. He probably gave up drinking, as he probably did not remember how he got on that island.

From there, we chugged along at 9 knots (top speed for the boat's large diesel engine) until we anchored late in the afternoon in a beautiful bay in the Perlas Islands. As soon as we were settled, I went down below deck and put on my bathing suit and went above the cabin to dive in the clear cold water for a very cold dip. Just as I was about to dive, the Captain saw me and began waving his arms. He did not know the English word for shark, but my companion quickly translated. That's when I saw the shadow below the surface - it slowly swam under the boat - a huge shark that at one point I saw his head on one side and his tail on the other side of the boat. I still get goose bumps when I think of what could have happened had I dove in - in front of his path!

Later on that evening - just about dusk, an 18 foot cayouga (a canoe hollowed out of a log) came alongside the boat. The cayouga is a very strong log that has been hacked on and burned out to form a one-piece canoe. There were two very primitive native paddlers who held on to the side of our boat for about 15 minutes. I asked our Captain what they wanted. He told me they wanted to trade coconuts for fishhooks. So I gave them a half dozen, and they put 3 coconuts aboard and quietly paddled away. I never saw where they went after they left us.

We spent the night in the bay and started for the area of the "Marlin Hump" which is just off the coast of Columbia, early in the morning. I asked the Captain why we did not run at night, and he said, "Too many trees float out in the Ocean from the rivers driven out by the strong outgoing tides." At noon-time we stopped off a small white sandbar island covered with banana trees and coconut palms to radio back to Panama. We radioed back each day at noon. I quickly put on a large feather jig and dropped it over the side. When I had let out about 50 feet of line, a 40 pound Amberjack grabbed it. I had a hard time pulling him in on my small rod, and the Captain was angry at the time I was taking with

the fish. The crew only wanted to fish for Marlin, nothing else. I doubt the crew was paid except what they could sell the Marlin meat for. Marlin meat is pure white and delicious. There were two very large refrigerators aboard, cooled by the diesel engines as we ran during the day. Later that evening we turned into a beautiful rain forest river flowing out of Columbia. The banks were very high, and we were surrounded by small mountains. The Captain said the Ocean was 300 feet deep at the water's edge, and the bottom was flat for miles out and still 300 feet deep.

About five miles out was the huge rock shaped just like a pyramid 150 feet high - with another 150 feet of water above it. That is known as the Marlin Hump. The ship's depth finder and fish recorder showed thousands of fish all around that huge rock. This is why the Black Marlin feed around the area. This location is supposed to be the best place in the Pacific to fish for Marlin. (Most of the really big Marlin weighing up to 1,800 pounds are caught near the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Australia.) Early the next morning we started out of the river to troll over the Hump. The boat constantly trolled two small feathered hooks on a long line and shock cord behind the boat to catch Bonito for bait. The

Bonitos when caught were tied short behind the boat to be used as bait as needed. There were three of us fishing all the time, and there were three large outriggers to run our lines out on. The boat had the very best of equipment. I used a 25 aught Penn Senator reel with a #170 Harwell Rod attached to a heavy leather harness which I wore. The reel had about a mile of #140 Dacron line attached to a 14 foot steel cable. The hook was 1/4 inch stainless steel - about eight inches long with the curled part standing up about 4 inches. A small ring ran free on the hook - the Bonito was sewed to the ring (through the bridge of his head so that the fish remained completely lively and had no hook injury). The Bonito bait weighed about 4 pounds each. Marlin are very fussy and very smart. I've always thought the right outrigger to be lucky, so that was my choice. Nothing hit the first day of fishing, but the second day at about 10 A.M., I saw something like a huge flash of light as my Marlin attacked the bait. Billfish hit their prey with their bills - like a giant "Whack" - this kills the fish and at the same time pulls your line out of the outrigger clothespin.

A second later I saw another flash, as the fish returned and took the bait. My bait was about 75 yards behind the boat. Now here is

the tricky part - if the Marlin feels any strain on the line he will drop the bait, so you point your rod at the fish with the line free and wait and wait - and wait. You can't set the hook until the hook is behind the Marlin's mandible (that is the bony structure around its mouth). The Captain shouted, "Set the hook! Set the hook!" while he ran the boat full blast away from the fish to take out the slack. I set the hook seven times! On the 7th pull, the fish came out of the water. What a sight! He greyhounded over the green Pacific Ocean. He would come out of the water in gigantic leaps, and I could never guess where the next leap would surface. In somewhat less than an hour, I had the fish up close to the boat, but not until he made two more runs when I thought he was whipped. The next to the last time I got him close to the boat he started stripping line off the reel like crazy, and I was so tired I almost wanted to cut the line and let him go! My back had just about given out from the pulling and prying up of that stiff 170 Harnell rod. When the fish came near to the boat thoroughly exhausted, the Mate threw a flying gaff into his back. The one inch line that was attached to the gaff was looped once around a pipe which stood up on the boat's stern so the crewmen could give slack or pull the fish in close enough for us to use gloved

hands and grasp his spear. This way the three of us slowly pulled the fish over the very low boat stern and onto the deck. Overhead was positioned a pull-out rail on which ran a block and tackle. The fish was quickly tied up, lifted, and pulled forward, and dropped in front of the freezer. They do not weigh the fish unless the fish is of record class. My fish was just over 9 feet long which was big to me, but not big in terms of Black Marlin. I cut off his sword (spear) and have it mounted for display in my TV room along with the bill of a 120 pound Pacific Sailfish I caught the next day. The Marlin was quickly cut into five pound blocks and placed in the freezer. We had packed away three by the time we returned home. We ate Marlin each night for dinner, and it was delicious.

This same night we again pulled up into the Columbian River (not its name) and anchored for dinner and to spend the night. We were located in a small bay slightly out of the main current. You could see whole trees floating out to sea on the outgoing tide. I was hot and sweaty and wanted a freshwater shower very badly. I could see a high narrow waterfall on the mountainside across the small bay, but there was no way to get there - until a small cayauga (canoe) with two young

Columbian boys paddled up. I had the Fish-hook Thing down pat by now, so in short order they understood what I wanted, and they paddled us in one at a time. I traded the fishhooks even for that wonderful ice cold waterfall shower; it felt so good to get clean. When I got back to the boat, the Captain was very upset. It seems that only 50 miles away, there were still headhunters in the jungle, and no one should have gone ashore. I did not want to lose my head over taking a shower, but it seemed like a worthwhile risk at the time.

The next day no Marlins were to be seen, so with constant pestering, the Captain agreed to let us fish for Pacific Sailfish. We started very close to the shore - remember, it already was 300 feet deep. We put out three trolling baits and a teaser (a large block of cone-shaped wood which the Mate jerked in the water to attract the Sails to the boat). We had our lines out less than 15 minutes when three Sails broke the water at the same time. What an aerial display! Three going up at one time. When the Sails were landed, we estimated the weight of the three fish to be one at 120 lbs (mine), one at 125 lbs, and one at 150 lbs. Pacific Sails are much larger than Atlantic Sails, but we were handling them with Marlin

equipment.

On the way back we returned to the Perlas Islands and then back to the Panama dock. If anyone should ask me what was the best week of my life, I'd be hard pressed to think of any week much better than the Marlin trip.

After we docked in Panama, I got a plastic bag and put the four billfish swords inside, wrapped them up good and taped the bag very carefully so they would not smell on the way home. When I got off the plane in Miami, the Customs Officer searched my tackle box and luggage and then told me to open up the plastic bag. I looked at him a moment and said, "No, I don't want to." He looked very surprised. So I told him the bag had ripe fish swords inside, and they would stink. He agreed with me, and they stayed sealed until I got home.

LAS PALOMAS BLANCAS

The White Winged Doves

To the best of my recollection it was in August of 1984 that my friend, Felton McCrary, called me to see if I would go dove hunting with him in Honduras in Central America. Felton had received a brochure from a company that listed a 5 day dove hunt in Honduras, and he was anxious to go. I told him I wasn't much of a shotgun shot (actually I told him I was a lousy shot), and because of the trip's cost, I told him to find someone else to go with him. Well, it seems he tried for about a week, and no one was interested, so he called me back. Felton said, "All right, if I pay for the trip will you go?" So I agreed to that, and I would pay for all the shells. He said we could take our 20 gauge shotguns, but the ammunition would have to be bought from the Honduran Army (for their pension fund). As I remember back, our three days of dove hunting cost me \$750 for the shells. I must have retired someone from the Honduran Army.

We began our trip by boarding a plane in Orlando and flew to Miami - changed planes there and flew into the capital. It is spelled Tegucigalpa but we pronounced it Two-geese-a-goppla. As we prepared to land all we could

see was miles and miles of banana trees and palms. The landing strip was concrete but it was old, rough and short. We did land, however, and when we got out of the plane I could not believe my eyes. The terminal building was an ancient two-story building that had once been pink; but after years of neglect it was faded pink and dark grey from the years of hard use and no repairs. No official was at the airport, if you could call it that, who spoke English. I asked Felton where the tickets were, and Felton said he did not have the tickets - he had probably given them to me. I knew that I did not have them. Then I remembered what his wife, Louise, had told me about keeping an eye on him. So we rushed back out to the plane and found the tickets in the seat where he had left them - with about 10 seconds to spare before the plane took off for Nicaragua. Why in the world Louise asked me to keep an eye on Felton was more than I could understand. Only a month before the trip, Felton and I went to the Altamonte Mall in Felton's car to buy something or other. Each of us was trying to out-talk the other. After Felton parked the car, we got out and were still talking on our way inside. When we came out, we could not find the car. After fruitless searching up and down the rows, we had to call Louise to come drive us around to find the

car.

As I looked around the airport I began to realize how poor the country of Honduras really was. A worker's salary was about \$300 yearly and unemployment was about 50%. After about an hour's wait an old beat-up school bus came to get us. There were about 25 people in our group, and we all boarded that ancient school bus for a five hour trip up and over some small mountains to the place near the Nicaraguan border where we were to hunt for Las Palomas, the white winged doves. After we rode for about an hour, I became very thirsty and asked our guide - who could speak very little English - for a drink of water. This was dumb, because you should never drink their water. When the drink came, it was a large container of Rum and Coke. I don't like alcohol, but I was so thirsty that I got most of it down. I tried to open the window to dump the rest out, but the windows had not opened for years. Well, I drank the rest. So, pretty soon I had to use the restroom. I called the guide back and tried to make him understand what I wanted, and after several attempts, he did understand and shouted to the driver to stop the bus. I won't tell you what he shouted in English. We were now on a narrow road going up a mountain. When the bus stopped,

the guide went up front, got several large rocks from under the seat and placed them behind the wheels of the bus. There was no parking brake on the bus! We all got out except the woman, who stayed inside; and we did the best we could while cars passed by several feet away. The best I could tell, there are no filling stations anywhere and certainly no restrooms. So you did the best you could most anywhere. There were hundreds of small crosses along the highways where people had lost their lives due to traffic accidents. Maybe they were trying to go to the bathroom. Our bus driver did his best to add us all to the collection. Some years have passed since that bus ride, but my memory has not dimmed about that experience yet!

When our trek came to an end, we were in a small town only the Lord knows where, and we moved into a quite nice motel (nice for Honduras not necessarily for our country). We unpacked and got ready for the next day's shoot. Honduras is overrun with the white winged doves. No one has guns to shoot them with. The doves do much damage to the grain fields, and the farmers look forward to the tourist hunters making a small dent in the dove population. When we got settled in, each hunter was assigned a "Bird Boy" to fetch the

downed birds and to carry ammo, etc. I can't remember the names of my two bird boys, but I can still remember the name of Felton's boy - it was Purdizio. Felton could not remember his name and kept calling him Des Moines; and at the end of the second day when Felton called him Des Moines once too often, the boy jumped a foot in the air and hollered, "No es Des Moines, es Purdizio!" I wish I could tell you that Felton did not call him Des Moines again, but I can't. However, whenever Felton saw him close to jumping in the air again, he would remember Purdizio just in time!

We also got a collapsible three legged stool with a heavy leather seat. It cost me \$7.50, and I still have the stool. I did not know enough Spanish to tell anyone I only needed one birdboy instead of the two assigned to me, and as I mentioned, I can't recall their names. The next morning before daybreak we went out into a grain field. I guess it was a dry rice field. I really could not identify what type of grain it was, but it looked like a poor crop. I started across the field with my two boys, and when I got to where I wanted to stop, I said, "Let's stop here." They both kept on walking - neither could speak a word of English. After about another 100 yards, the Spanish word for "here" came to me, and I shouted "Aqui!".

They both stopped. I sat down on my stool with one boy on my right and the other on the left. Then here came the doves! Flocks of three, four, five - sometimes twenty! I aimed, fired, and missed until I calmed down and began to concentrate. Each time I hit a bird, one of the boys ran out and brought it back - the boy to the right went to the right and the boy on the left to the left. The older boy would hand me three more shells for my Winchester 20 gauge automatic after I fired. The barrel was soon much too hot to touch, and at the end of two hours I had 80 birds in my bag. Soon after, we all went back to the truck. Twenty-five hunters had killed 2,500 birds, and a Peace Corps worker distributed most of the birds to a long line of waiting, hungry people. Each day a selected number of peasants were lined up to get 4 or 5 birds each - not an easy picture to forget. Those hungry people had walked for miles for a few birds. I will never forget an exceptionally beautiful girl of about 8 or 10, I think, who was carrying her 2 year old sister - trying to carry the small child and the birds at the same time. She would keep dropping the birds - then stoop over to pick them up from the dirt road without putting her sister down. I did not see a single house within a 3 mile radius. There was no way to know how far she had walked to get those

birds...

Each of our three days was about the same. We saw flocks of parakeets fly overhead with flashes of beautiful colors. An occasional parrot in red or yellow would drift by. It seemed strange to see parakeets and parrots in the wild. When our trip was over we returned by the same bus back to Two-goose-a-goppla. We had time for a taxi ride before we left, so Felton and I got to see a nicer part of town with some small shops. My wife had asked me to bring something back for her. What I found was a beautiful and very large stuffed toad called a Boofa (sp?). It stood up nearly 6 inches tall. I thought it was a great gift, but my wife never made friends with it, so I eventually gave it away. Wives are just hard to please sometimes. My wife was not the only person who did not like the giant toad. When our plane landed at Miami, we had to go through Customs. The Customs Officer took one look at my toad and put us in Quarantine. I explained to the Officer that it was a dead toad and what's more, it was stuffed. The Customs man referred to his manual. Nothing mentioned a stuffed toad, so we were both released. It's strange, isn't it, how few people appreciate a giant toad?

SAMMY THE SPIDER

A Might Be True Story

This is a story about a small and quite nice spider whose name was Sammy. Now Sammy was much like all the other spiders in his large family except that Sammy was afraid of the dark. He even imagined that Barn Spider Trolls lived in the shadow-y depths of his old building. The old building was actually an old horse barn - but the old horse had long ago moved away.

Sammy lived on the bottom strand of a very large web woven by his mother. He shared the web with his many brothers and sisters, but nonetheless, he remained terrified of the dark. He was also fearful of leaving the nest to explore the lighter area of the barn which he could clearly see far from his web. But one day, after a very long and seemingly endless night, Sammy slowly crawled to the lighted area and looked out to see a bright and very beautiful world outside. He knew he could never go back to his dark and dreary corner again, no matter how safe he might be there. So he watched the barn door opening closely day after day. He caught small bugs to keep him alive until he could come forth with a good escape plan. He knew he could not crawl on

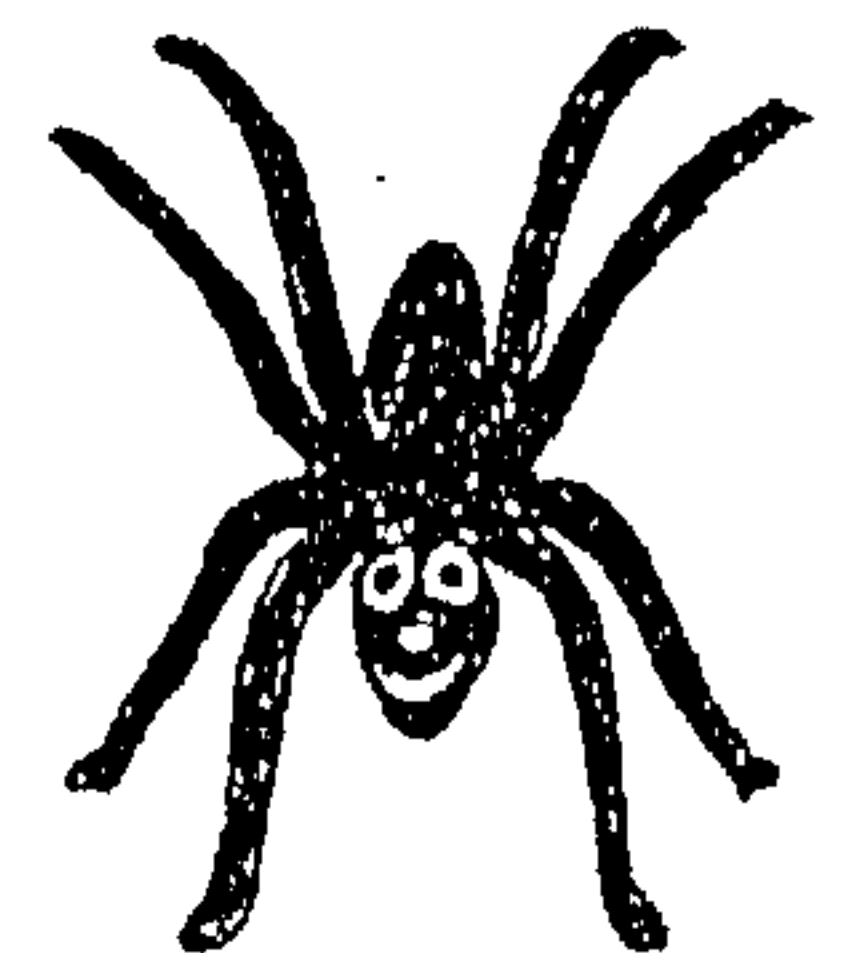
the ground, because he had observed that the small birds flit about outside and eat all the moving insects. Then, all of a sudden it hit him! THE BIRDS, THE BIRDS! The idea came to Sammy that he could use the birds as a way to escape the leave through the air - not on the ground.

Sammy watched with great interest the flying and twisting and turning of the birds that flew close to his building. Then it came to him! It was a simple plan by which he could escape the darkness to the beautiful light outside! That night Sammy attached his web to the very top of his building. Then with all his might he leaped nearly six feet to the closest tree and again attached his web to the tree. The web was an almost invisible small thread, and it would be his ticket to his new home!

When he finally finished, he carefully crawled to the very center of his web - attached another small web to the center and left it attached to his body. Then he swung over to the tree and very carefully hid. If he was lucky, one the many birds he had seen flying by would fly into his single web, and he would be attached and get an undetected free ride to a new home of his choice...

He did not have long to wait, because soon after daylight a small barn swallow flew into the single web catching it over his wing, and that left Sammy swinging slightly below and behind the birds. As he soared, Sammy became sick when he looked down. Everything went around and around, and everything looked so little. As you know, spiders are used to going up and down but not around and around. The swallow darted and flitted from side to side as Sammy tried to watch everything below. Then - at last - he saw it! The perfect place for his new home. It was a beautiful tall lamppost way out in the clearing away from everything AND it was lighted by the sun by day and lighted by a light at night! Well, Sammy immediately let out a long web and swung down onto the lamppost. He began at once to spin his own web.

Now he lives on the lamppost in his own web as a very happy spider. Oh! You can spot Sammy easily. He is the happiest spider around, and he has a huge smile on his face.





ANDY THE ADVISOR

A Might Be True Story

Well now, this is a very short story about a very small subject; a small ant who lived a very short time ago and not very far away.

This little ant's name was Andrew, but most all the other ants called him Andy for short. Now Andy was a small ant, even compared to the other ants who lived in his ant hill.

To Andy, each day was like the day before and the next day promised to be about the same. You see, each day Andy was awakened before daylight and was put into a long, almost endless column of other ant workers. Then they all would march in line up and up to the top of the ant hill and then down and down to the bottom. All the ants took their marching directions from the most learned of all the ants. This special ant had once climbed to the very top of the mound, stood on his hind legs and proclaimed he had seen the whole world; and everyone believed him! Now, back to Andy.

This story is about a very different kind of day. Andy marched in a long line away from

the ant hill as usual - in an endless single file weaving around each obstacle that was in their path and then occasionally crawling over smaller ones. On and on they would go until they could find some food to send back to the nest at the bottom of their ant hill. Now, as I said, this is about a very different kind of day - a day that would set Andy apart from all the other ants! Andy was marching in his place with the other ants along a small but swift stream when he happened to spy a choice tidbit to eat at the very end of a small stick which stuck out into the stream. He carefully and slowly, with perfect balance, crawled to the end of the stick and extended his mandibles forward as far as he could to grasp the tidbit, but - just as he got a good hold, the stick broke loose; and the stick with Andy on board rapidly floated down the swift stream. Andy was petrified! He waved his antennae wildly to the other ants, but none could come to his rescue. Down, down the stream he rushed. He was so scared! He knew his only hope for his life was to stay afloat until he could reach shore somewhere. Then maybe he could somehow find his way back home.

Well, he and the stick bumped along from shore to shore for what seemed like an ant forever. Until at last, he bumped into a sun-

ning turtle. He quickly crawled off the stick and on to the turtle's shell. Here he dried off, rested, and began to grow warm in the sun. He shook the water from each leg and his mandibles and pondered whether the turtle would crawl ashore or dive and drown him. He figured it could go either way! After what seemed like several ant lifetimes, the turtle slowly crawled ashore to cool himself in the shade. Quickly Andy crawled to the ground and began his long trek back home, counting his blessings that he was on the same side of the stream where he started. Hour after hour went by, but he went stumbling and walking forward - on and on as best he could. You know, ants have six legs not two like we do. When an ant gets tired, it's hard to make all six legs work together. But he kept on all afternoon, all night, and then early the next morning he arrived back at his own ant nest.

When he arrived at his hill many of his friends and co-workers rushed out to greet him. He, of course, told them all about his great experience. The Queen was immediately informed, and because of his great courage and experience and newly acquired knowledge, Andy became the First Advisor to the Queen. This is an honor which he still holds to this very day!!

EPILOGUE

When I was a small boy, one of my relatives drove me over to the St. Johns River for the very first time. I stood on the river bank and with utter fascination, watched the tea colored water swirl by. A short distance to my left a small creek fed into the river and a school of bass were feeding on minnows. Every few seconds a bass would fly right out of the water and into the air in a feeding frenzy. Occasionally a bass would come up so hard it would do a somersault before it fell back into the water.

A few feet away about a half dozen grackles marched around like proper soldiers. Their feathers were a beautiful iridescent combination of purple and blue. I was standing near a small cluster of palmetto palms that cast a dark shadow on the water.

I remember standing in complete silence: and somehow I knew at that very moment that I would never want to live anywhere very far away from that beautiful river. I'm thankful that I have pretty much kept that promise - except for the time I spent in the Army in Germany and the time I spent at the University of Florida in Gainesville...

The Author