

July 2, 2008

Dear Bill and June,

Although this makes two days and two weeks after the designated Father's Day I am sending you this card signed by myself and others who know you from Fort Towson, Marietta Wofford Hutchinson and the Arkansas Country Doctors Museum. To me, a good father is enthusiastic, knowledgeable, tender, wise, protecting, compassionate, understanding, patient, and respectful. So many of these characteristics are present in your Arkansas/Oklahoma roots. Often you have expressed your appreciation for the values of the people in Fort Towson where you were raised. I found that the people of Ft. Towson, past and present, are a joy.

I left Las Vegas on US Airways on June 12, landed in Dallas about 3:30, got a rental car and drove to the Village Inn in Hugo arriving after dark. There was a breakfast in Ft. Towson from 7:00 to 11:00 on Friday the 13 and a pie and cake auction at 2:00. Kathleen Noble was registering everybody, so she was the first person to welcome me and sell me some barbecue tickets. As I was tasting small portions from about five different pies the auction was conducted by Sylvia Smith, one of the "young ones," then went to the museum next door. There was some curiosity about the origin of a brass spittoon you donated, I saw Lou Ellen May, met Freda Hambrick, one of the city council members who graciously copied a newsletter from your class of 1945 and a newsletter from Dad's class of 1944. She's about my age and has been in Ft. Towson only about 6 years. I visited with June Stokes, then met Ron her son and his wife Sandy, whose father was Mr. Cogburn; they gave me a detailed tour of the house and it was really good to be back in that house where some of my precious memories were made. Sunday morning at the Methodist Church was interesting in that the piano player had so much energy he could have been on stage with Willie Nelson's band! I stood up to give a little greeting when the minister asked if there were any guests. I was sitting right next to Peggy Wilson when the minister asked for any expressions of gratitude or if anybody needed any prayers; and Peggy said that she was glad the homecoming was over. It was really nice when Dickie Lohr came up to introduce himself. I gave him your telephone number in Dallas, since I had it right in my Rolodex in the car.

Continuing to the next destination to see Marietta, I was never more glad to see someone. She was about the most beautiful person on the face of the earth at that time, and it was confirmation that I got where I needed to go. I was a little rattled because of the long drive, a lot of the time not really sure whether I was on the right road. She truly is a wonderful positive smart loving person, and everything she said was thoroughly attended by me. She talked about being a principal and curriculum planner, how she wanted to get her health up to where she could be independent again, about her children. Since Marietta spoke from her heart, it really connected, and she's not afraid to speak about somewhat unpleasant things because she seems to be really stable.

After two nights in Hot Springs, I realized it was not Eureka Springs, that there was only one functional bath house that closed at 3:00 PM, that during the thirties Al Capone and

Sent to
ACDM
- Port Hook
July 11/08
copy
original to
ACDM

other gangsters went to gamble and drink, that everybody had to wear a tuxedo in public at night, and this is where you could take a ride on the "duck", an open air touring car that was also amphibious.

The next two days (Wednesday and Thursday) were spent at Lincoln's Arkansas Country Doctor Museum. Walking into the Harold L. Boyer Educational Center, I was greeted warmly by Dr. Joe Hall, Diana Hale, met volunteers, officers, board members David Therneau, Andy Newbill, Jerry Leach, Betty Battenfield, Sue Heisler, Joanne Foley, Wanda, and Maxine Ward, who is the widow of Dr. Ward, and I hope I didn't miss anybody. Dr. Hall loaned me a book about Dr. T. E. Rhine of Thornton, Arkansas, which I read as much as I could before returning it the next morning. Thursday Dr. Hall showed me a video of my father speaking, his burial at Hartman, and some of the houses in Hartman, Arkansas. Then Jerry Leach took out the 1924 Ford Model T and gave me a ride through the streets of Lincoln. The day was clear and calm, the temperature was perfect—not too cool, not too warm, and ...the highlight of the ride...we found a terrapin in the middle of the lane that needed rescuing. Jerry stopped the Model T, I jumped out to halt oncoming traffic, the way a cop would do it—with a stern authoritative look and outstretched arm, hand up. Two bikers and a van got the message and waited as I bent down and grabbed up the terrapin, ran triumphantly back to the Model T and put it in my lap for the ride back to its new home—the Arkansas Country Doctor Museum yard and garden. The terrapin didn't even mess on my white pants, so the paper towels that Diana gave me became souvenirs. The sayings were "If you love life, life will love you back."—Arthur Rubinstein, and "With every rising of the sun, think of your life as just begun."—Anonymous. I surely enjoyed that ride, with very special appreciation to Jerry Leach. After the Model T and surrey were returned to the barn, Dr. Hall showed me the books he had prepared in collaboration with Claytee White at the Oral History Department of UNLV, and some of the volunteers there. Dr. Hall also showed me Grandpa's clinic, especially the room dedicated to Peggy McCormack, a polio victim who despite her bodily paralysis became a poet and author. He was so proud of her healing herself from within.

Dr. Hall and the Museum are doing a splendid job of teaching health as demonstrated by the country doctor, and is especially looking for examples from Dad's (your brother Harold) and Grandpa's life. If you have any more stories such as the ones you told me, he would surely appreciate hearing from you. (Personally, I find that respect and appreciation are at the root of everything good.) His telephone number is 479-846-2018 or the museum at 479-824-4307. Pastor Andy Newbill of the Methodist Church next to the museum showed me the colored glass window in the sanctuary, and the rest of his church, and said a great prayer for me. On my way out, I saw the park for the Battle of ~~Pea Ridge~~ ^{Prairie Grove} and spoke to Ann Park for a while. I spent the night in Van Buren and drove all the rest of the day to DFW for the flight back to Las Vegas.

I hope you are enjoying life. Know that you are very loved.

Your niece, Mary Elizabeth