

Life. Ah, sweet mystery of life! How can I put into words the meaning of birth, family, school, work, play, and, the many and various things that make life what it is?

"as a man thinketh in his heart, so he is", is a quotation from the Bible. We experience what we think. In a broad sense life is a gem with many facets, a kaleidoscope of endless patterns of behavior, a maze of fate, meandering, turning, wandering, twisting in its course.

Looking upon these past experiences I believe, it was a socio-economic environment with changing times that mainly influenced the results of my present estate. Intertwined to make the existence meaningful was love, marriage, family, health, religion, war, labor and all the myriad experiences of a thinking mind.

Libraries are stocked with wonderful books describing life of the times in the history of humanity. Life appears to be a product of environment in this view of a physical being. As the knowledge about civilization has spread, the welfare and prosperity of each and everybody has brought hope for

(2)

a heaven on earth for the future.

This has brought us today to a new theology of pleasure. This is a pleasure that feeds upon self-gratification, the constant struggle for a new lifestyle that is self-fulfilling. We find ourselves indulging in fast foods, disposable lighters, instant cake mixes, etc., not as labor saving devices. What they save is TIME - the one thing of importance that wealth cannot buy.

With time and money today the universal concepts of a decade or two ago have faded away. While many still believe that society has benefitted by modern methods there has been a decline in the family ties. This decline is associated with working hours, increased urbanization, commuting, more women working outside of the home, etc. Less time for children and more divorces. Parent-child relationships suffer and divorces in the past fifteen years have more than doubled. Husband and wife strongly affect the family unit in striving for career improvement. The total number of women working outside the home nears 50%. There has been an enormous rise in the white-collar or professional occupations since WWII.

Three of every four Americans were born after the Great Depression of the 1930's. Most grew up after W.W.II. These events had a profound and indelible impact on the lives of those who experienced them. These events produced values that emphasized job security, patriotism, the acquisition of wealth and material goods. Conventional lifestyles of many are a logical consequence of their earlier lifetime experiences.

Often it seems that achievement is the result that comes from being in the right place at the right time. Mostly it is a struggle to gain an advantage.

As a child some illnesses took their toll and I grew up to be about 5' 9" and 120# at reaching 21 years. I had begun to get around carrying newspapers, going to school, etc., by the time of W.W.I. I saw the adversity of W.W.I. Camp Sherman, troop trains bringing in and taking out, the great flu epidemic, military funerals, caskets stacked numbering in the hundreds at the railroad depot.

In school I must have had an illusion that knowledge came like the sun hatching an egg. I was probably too unsophisticated to cope and understand this regimentation. Maybe I tried

(7)
for I did move on year by year through high school.

In high school I was fascinated by a petite beauty named Irene Fleury Bier. Her better judgment seemed to keep us at a distance: she sat in the seat at the front of the classroom and I sat in the rear. Following my graduation from high school I worked as a clerk at the Warner Hotel. I had managed to see Irene at her home and the "fascination" I found was true love. Marriage in 1930 brought responsibilities. However, we were doing well until the depression and changes which brought financial problems.

After Fleury was born I shifted from job to job just for the sake of a five dollar per month increase. I went to the Lasker Hotel, Portsmouth; the Virginia Hotel Columbus and from there to the Stonevale (Jackson) Hotel, Clarksburg, W. Va. All of this time I felt lucky to have an income.

The hotel at Clarksburg changed hands and I returned to Chillicothe. I joined the Governor Cabell Hotel, Huntington and, then went to the New Lancaster Hotel, Lancaster Ohio.

W. W. II was demanding a change in the course of events. I enrolled in a government training course for machine shop work. On completion

(5)

of this training I went to Anchor-Hocking Plant, Mc Connellsville, Pa., to work in the machine shop. Needless to say - the depression was over - I made more money than had ever been my pleasure.

Still, I felt the urge for job security. I managed to apply for and take a Fed. Civil Service Exam for the position of Custodial Officer with the Bureau of Prisons. I was accepted and went to the U.S. Penitentiary Terre Haute, Ind. (1942) serving over a year (probationary period) under ~~a~~ ^{and} ~~domineering~~ ^{domineering} staff I did not believe I had. Obtained the job security that I sought. The all-out war effort and Navy signs "Join the Seabees" found a volunteer.

low pay and

I went to the Post-Office Bldg, Terre Haute, saw the recruiting officer, and, signed my enlistment for the war's duration as a Seabee. He said he would give me a 2nd Class Petty Officer rating. The next day at the Federal Bldg, Indianapolis, I saw the same officer again and he advanced my rating to 1st Class Petty Officer.

I was sworn into Naval Service at Evansville, Ind. Following I was sent to Boot Camp at Camp Peary, Virginia. Here I advanced to Chief Petty Officer and assigned to the 26th Special Naval Construction Bn., a platoon chief of black stevedores.

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By troop train we crossed the continent to Camp Huenehme, Oxnard, Calif. From here we embarked via troopship for Pearl Harbor. The unloading of cargo ships was regular duty with each ship's supplies somewhat different. The climate, duty and association with other chiefs were enjoyable. There was rumor of attacking the Japanese homeland. I began to wonder if this war was forever.

Anyway, Harry Truman and an Air Force Colonel from Columbus, did the world a favor, and, dropped the first nuclear bomb at Hiroshima.

I was soon enroute to the States on the U.S.S. Amsterdam. It was miserably overcrowded and I slept with my gear in a gun tub. We docked at Astoria, Oregon to unload casualties developed enroute mostly from food poisoning. We then proceeded to Portland, up the Columbia River, which I felt was a rare treat. Here we debarked, and, I was soon on the Great Northern Railway headed for Great Lakes Naval Station for discharge.

I arrived home around the 27th October 1945. This was two years since I had entered the service almost to the day.

(7)

after a sojourn with Mom and Henry I was off again to Terre Haute to resume my job. With rationing on everything we were handicapped. I spent over a year on the job and pleaded for a transfer to Chillicothe Reformatory so I could be with my family.

Finally I was transferred. We bought the home at 447 Laurel from Grandma Dier (\$500.00) with my G.I. loan at 4% interest. Here we were living when Maston, Byron and Hugh were born. I attended Ohio University part time completing sixty-six semester hours. I joined the Naval Air Reserve, Port Columbus. The latter, I believe, was a stigma on my job towards advancement. Officials found it necessary to comply with training schedules, and, they felt "The Department of Justice ^{IT WAS} above any request to cooperate. The Reserve gave me many schools to attend. I took advantage and after training for Aviation Boatswain Mate at Philadelphia I volunteered for service in the Korean War.

The next couple of years I enjoyed one of my greatest satisfactions in a successful job aboard the aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Mindoro, CVE 120. I was the Chief in charge of the catapults. Eventually I had to speak for myself at the Reformatory and advise

(8)

them that I felt it was my turn for a promotion. Understanding the system, I then advised the representative for Veterans Affairs, U.S. Civil Service, Cincinnati, of my predicament. Civil Service ordered me advanced to a GS-8. This was certainly unusual but satisfying to me. However, I felt that I could not advance on merit without lackeying to some fair-haired senior officer. This was so distasteful that I hated the organization.

Retiring when the Reformatory closed, Dec. 30, '66, I remained on the job ^{SIX MONTHS} to acquaint the Ohio State officials with the duties and equipment to operate the water works and Sewage Treatment Plant.

You will recall my stint of employment at Smith Junior High School as Study Hall Monitor. The purpose was to find a way to occupy time and be helpful. Oh well — —

Ten years have passed. But, Byron and Hugh have made their mark. Fleury has a happy life. Mom and I think of our spiraling family — the grand Children. What more consolation could one desire for a happy life?

9

The present trend in the late 70's is to simplify living. Freedom and comfort ~~have~~ seem to have entirely different meanings from our more stable times. Inflation, Watergate, quick credit, casual wearing apparel (jeans), drugs, booze, sex, and, other demoralizing aspects of crime now take the spot-light. Religion seems in decline.

What is this thing called life? We will always be amazed at what is to come, and somewhat bored by what has passed.
Carry on!

(The foregoing ideas are not entirely my own but this tells it like it is in this changing world)

Maston M. Sansom
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