



Various Vignettes and Ponderings

by
Martin J. Damgaard

from somewhere in Florida

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edited (tactfully) by Neil C. Damgaard
from somewhere in Massachusetts
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Polar Survival

When Germany surrendered after WWII, many came to us, Nazis no longer, to propose that we now join forces, and together, whip the Russians. And there was concern among the Allies as well, that the Russians, well versed in arctic warfare, might cross from Siberia, and descend across Canada upon the U.S. Farfetched now, perhaps, but not in those war-torn days. And top-level military planners must consider all contingencies.

To that end, the U.S. Army Engineers established an Arctic Test Station, halfway up the Hudson's Bay, at Churchill, Canada. That particular area has the peculiar conditions of extreme cold, a constant West wind, and little recipitation. There is much snow, covering land and frozen Bay alike, but it comes mostly horizontally from Alberta and other western regions, and drifts.

There to study and record conditions, I had occasion to fly, in a ski-equipped DC-3 to Baker's Lake, a winter weather station on Chesterfield Inlet, near the top of the Bay and some 200 miles inland. The terrain is solid white, with rough spots from rocks, and ice chunks, but we flew mostly Visual Contact Rules anyway because the navigational radio at Churchill broadcasts on the hour for only three minutes, to save fuel. And at that latitude, the proximity of the North Magnetic Pole makes compasses useless.

But we found our way, and landed on a somewhat cleared strip on the river, happily greeted by the Canadian weathermen and the local Eskimeaux, standing in the freezing blast of the propellers.

The engines, while on the ground, must be kept turning because once stopped, they cannot be restarted under those conditions, and the plane would be there until spring, and then possibly sink in the river. And from somewhere out of all this, I learned about the Polar Eskimo.

Like everything else in the far north, the Polar Eskimo is engaged full time in day-to-day survival. There is little to eat, on the land, so he hunts the bear, of course, and also the polar wolf. The polar wolf survives by his nose. He detects evidence of animal life, tiny particles of blood and urine, down to about four parts per million, carried on the constant wind. And therein lies his downfall.

The Polar Eskimo has a sharp knife, bone or stone, and also more smarts than the wolf. In his igloo, he melts snow, and drinks a lot of water, and then proceeds to a place where this has worked before. With his knife he digs a hole in the ice. Placing his knife handle-down in the hole, he now urinates on it, sufficiently to fill the hole. The knife is soon solidly anchored in the solidly frozen urine. (Keep in mind that the temperature during all of this is hovering around 50 degrees Below Zero).

Our intrepid hunter now pricks his finger on the knife point. He allows blood to flow over the knife blade, where it

too freezes. And then he retires out of the wind, to watch and wait.

The cold, weary and ravenously hungry wolf, somewhere downwind, detects the signs of life and unerringly follows the scent. Finding the source, he immediately begins to lick off the blood, never noticing that his tongue is cut in the process, nor that new, hot and fresh blood is beginning to appear in fact, the more he devours, the more it appears, and while his tongue is sliced to ribbons, the greater the feast becomes. In this happy state, he soon exsanguinates, permitting the now happy hunter to translate him to the igloo..

The Chesterfield Inlet Eskimeaux are a pretty sorry lot, and I hold no brief for either their veracity , integrity or credibility. You understand me.

mjd
ST.Petersburg 4/26/92

ARMY TIMES

It is commonly known that "Great Oaks from Little Acorns Grow". It is also profoundly quoted that "The Millwheels of the Gods turn Slowly, But They Grind Exceeding Small."

And now, sometimes, thinking back, it does seem that here and there, a very small event started another whole chain of events that indeed profoundly affected the course of life. Two come immediately to mind. In my High School Junior year, that summer, I attended, for a month, The Citizens' Military Training Corps. Ten years later, a draftee in basic training, I developed "acute cellulitis" in my left foot, derived from infected athlete's foot, which put me in the Post Hospital for three weeks. The long term effects on me were indeed profound.

The 'CMTC' was a most remarkably well conceived program. In it, The U.S. Army offered a month's military life and training to healthy youths, with Army pay, discipline, duties, uniforms, food, and life at an established Army base. A cadre of Regular Army soldiers was assigned to support the program, and Reserve Officers, in for their annual two-week active duty tour, provided the supervision and training. They changed at the midpoint, when a new group began their two weeks. But we student soldiers did the whole month, and experienced most of the shock, thrills, joys

and tribulations that any new soldier survives.

Each year, if you continued to attend, you progressed to a more advanced phase of training, and after four consecutive years, a commission as Second Lieutenant in the Reserve Officers Corps was offered.

I attended for only that one year, but the knowledge I came away with , particularly with the 1903 Springfield rifle, caused me, ten years later, now in the real Army for the war, to advance almost immediately to Squad Leader, over the recruits with no military knowledge at all. And as a squad leader, I was able to improve and progress to the point that, after the standard 13 weeks of Basic Training, I found myself assigned to a special company of candidates for the Engineer Officers Candidate School, at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. But this could not have come about, had I not been in the hospital when I was, because just then, another group, with myself as the leader, was selected to attend , as enlisted men, the Topographic (map making) School, also at Ft. Belvoir. This was considered to be a very choice assignment, because further assignments would be to highly trained specialist topo companies, with good advancement and duties. As compared to the usual hard duty in an Engineer Combat Battalion. (We were at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., all having been previously selected to become Engineer soldiers. But I discovered, on my release from hospital, that the topo group had proceeded on schedule, without me, the remainder of my company had departed for their assignments, and there I stood, with one shoe and one 'arctic' overshoe (my foot had been swollen when I left,

and my gear had been stowed away somewhere), in a heavy overcoat (it had been winter, now spring had suddenly come, there in the depths of the Ozark Mountains), unshaven-I had had to rush to catch the truck back, early that morning-and now here comes a summons to the Company Commander's office. He had little to say. Only "Report to Building D in 5 minutes". It was a long way off, and on a hill, so I got there out of breath, to find a large group of soldiers gathered around, and someone at the door calling names, and suddenly, just then, my name. So I went to the door, and he said, "just act natural" and I thought Well, what the Hell, there's nothing else to do, without the faintest idea of why I was there. So I entered the building, and it appeared empty, except that way down at the other end was a table, with several officers sitting there. One of them said something like "come forward" so I did, came to attention, saluted, and reported in. They sat there in silence, and examined me, up and down, without a word, until one of them burst out with : "What makes you think YOU can be an OFFICER?"

Me? Standing there , unshaven, in a heavy overcoat and rumpled uniform, one shoe and one 'arctic', out of breath, be an Officer? Corporals still scared Hell out of me! But thinking faster than I really could think, I blurted out something like "I usually find myself in the lead", and, having lucked out like that, later found myself assigned to attend a month of cut-throat training in which four times as many as could go competed for the chance to go, and ended up somehow, going , to the 4th class (there were eventually some 110 of them) of the

Engineer OCS,whence, duly commissioned, I proceeded to my first officer assignment,in an extremely special unit, the first Camouflage Battalion, which later sent out cadres from which all of the few others were formed. I was on one cadre, formed the new Battalion, Commanded Company D for a while, and then became its S-2, S-3 (Intelligence, and Plans and Training) then, operationally, Operations Officer, from the day the battalion was activated until we deactivated it , with the Normandy beaches and all five battle campaigns of the ETO behind us. My lifetime career in Army Engineer Research and Development, based initially on Camouflage, followed.

And except for a month of High School vacation time, and a quarter square inch of open sore between two toes-they wouldn't let me out of the hospital until it closed-the war would have been spent as an enlisted topographic specialist, with who knows what post-war future.

And thus do acorns grow, and the Gods' millwheels continue forever to grind exceeding fine.

Martin J. Damgaard May 1992

976 words

NOSTALGIC WAR SONGS

{as recollected by MJD}

WW I

Katy

K-K-K-Katy, Beautiful Katy
You're the only one that I adore
When the m-m-m-moon shines
O'er the c-cow sheds
I'll be waiting at the
K-K-K-Kitchen Door

FRENCHY

Now, Rosie Green was a village queen
Who enlisted as a nurse
They said "Go pack your grip"
"You'll take a trip ,on the next steamship".

Rosie Green met her soldier, Jean,
On leave, down in Patee.
And when he said "Parlez Vous, my pet?"
She said "I will, but not just yet"
But when he's alone with her,
She'll answer, lovingly.....

Oh,Frenchy, Oh, French, Frenchy,
Although you're language is so new to me,
When you say "Oui,Oui,La,La"....
"Oui" means you and me, La, La

Oh Frenchy, Oh Frenchy, Frenchy
You've won my love with your bravery
Marchons! Marchons! With any girl you see
But when you OOH,La, La, La, Love
Oh Frenchy, save your La La Love for me.

Now, Rosie Green took her Soldier, Jean,

Back home, somewhere in Maine.
They say her rural Pa and Ma
Refused to do that "OOH La La."
But when he,s alone with her,
He hears that same refrain.

Oh, Frenchy, Oh, Frenchy, Frenchy....

DADDY

He's got those big blue eyes like you, Daddy
Those lovely eyes that seem to speak.
And when he smiles, he looks like you, Daddy
Yes, even to the dimple in his cheek.
I named him after you,,
'Cause I knew you'd want me to
He reminds me of you all the time.
And when he grows to be a man
I'll give him up to Uncle Sam
Just as I did with you, Daddy Mine.

LETTERS

Three letters left a village
Bound for somewhere "Over There"
Three letters for a lonesome soldier boy.
Each one a loving story told,
Each one was worth its weight in gold
Three messages that gave his poor heart Joy

For the first was just old fashioned
And it breathed a mother's prayer
While the second started, "Darling,
God protect you, "Over There".
And the third was filled with kisses,
Sent to Daddy, 'cross the foam
From his Mother, Wife and Baby...
Three wonderful letters from Home.

WW II

England

From a London stage play, 'The Lisbon Story',
forerunner to 'Casablanca' ...

'Never Say Goodbye'

The dreams we borrow
May fade tomorrow
And leave sweet sorrow
But we must never say goodbye.

The stars we're under
May lose their wonder
And drift asunder
But we must never say goodbye.

Let no final word be spoken
Before we part
Leave the melody unbroken
In your heart

Time may be mending
And fate be sending
A happy ending
So we must never say, Goodbye.

unknown

Silver bird in the moonlight
Silver star, up above
Many moons I have waited
To tell you of my love

But I will share him with you.....

france

'J'Attendrai.....'

'Symphonic.....'

'La Vie En Rose'

germany...Heidelberg

Ich tanza mitt dier
Im den himmel hiencin
Im den siebenten himmel
Der liebe.

Die erde versincht
Und vie zwei sind alein
Im den siebenten himmel
Der liebe.

Kom, last unst traumen
Bei leiser musicke
Und manche romantische
Merchen von gluck

Ich tanza mit dier
Im den himmel hienein
Im den siebenten himmel
Der liebe.

DER FUEHRER:S FACE

Ven Herr Goering says
Ve Isss der Master Race
Den ve HEIL ! SIEG HEIL !
Right in Herr Goering 's face

Ven Herr Goebels says
Ve Ought to Own Dis Place
Den Ve HEIL ! SIEG HEIL !
Right in Herr Goebel's face

Ist Das Nichts Ein Superman?
Yah, Das Ist Ein Superman !
Super Mann, Dooper Mann,
Super Dooper Super Mann !

Not to Love Der Feuhrer
Iss a Great Disgrace
So Ve HEIL ! SIEG HEIL !

Right in der Feurer's FACE. !!!!!

africa

'Dirty Gertie from Bizerte'

Martin Jens Damgaard
From somewhere in Florida...
9teen90too

WHOOPEE

Sometime back around 1929, there was a popular song that went: "If I had a talking picture of you--ooo. I would run it every time I felt blue--ooo. And there was a billboard that showed a big, handsome broadly smiling negro chef, in a sparkling white jacket and tall chef's hat, holding up a baked ham - I forget the brand- on a platter and declaring : "The Ham What AM", and Eddie Cantor was starring in "Whoopee", one of the earliest, maybe the first, sound musicals..and still a joy to behold.

Another good thing that year, was auto polo. It has never appeared since, in my memory. Played by stripped down Model-T Fords, just the frame , with- roll bars cross-wise and back-to-forward and a big bumper. The polo ball was some six feet in diameter, and the little cars rammed it at top speed, chased it and each other around the field...without mufflers, so that the din was terrible, and the exhaust fumes were awful. probably until everybody died of asphixiation. I don't remember if anybody ecer won.

And the harness races! They're what we really skipped school to see. Mostly we hung around the stables, watching the race horses being groomed and walked, with an occasional practice run out on the track. And the carts ! Called sulkies. They were built with the most absolute economy of weight--the seats were tiny squares of webbed cane. The straps were narrow, and the wheels.! For a boy with a bike they were totally beautiful, slim, slim, with bright gleaming spokes, a thin rim, and center sprocket--they looked like some millionaire kid's bike wheels, and they spun so silently and fast. What a joy it must be to ride such a cart. But the

riders were invariably old, old skinny little guys, with no weight to them, with long-peaked caps, and big wrap-around goggles, and on their hands sharp looking elbow-length gauntlets, because sitting snugged right up behind the horse's hind hooves, much mud was splattered, and they came back from a run thoroughly plastered. Speaking some strange language known only to that rare breed of men, the harness racers.

The horses were the most beautiful that there are. Some were trotters, moving their hooves in a da-da-tlot da-da tlot rythm wonderful to remember. Except that the pacers were really the absolute best. A pacer moves both legs on one side at the same time, and then both legs on the other side, so that he seems to sway from side to side. To see a pacer in full stride brings a thrill to think that anything could move so smoothly, totally disciplined, effortlessly, and, it seemed, forever. ("Inch worm. inch worm, measuring the marigolds")...look at that pacer ...pace-pace, pace-pace ...measuring the race track precisely, with all the other pacers around , striving to win, too. Now *there* is a memory worthy of exercizing your memory on.

But the thing about Eddie Cantor was that he had this trick of suddenly realizing the extreme danger he was in at that moment , and, from a standing still, quietly chatting position, bursting without notice into an all-out arms-out-stretched forward,- hands and fingers reaching for help- get-me-the-hell-out- of- here run offstage. He was there, and then he was gone. Watch for him to do that the next time they run the classic "Whoopee".

mjd
5-10-92
558 words

YOUNG LOVE, AND THE STRIATED AROMA OF SPRING

* * * * *

TO KEEP THIS SHORT, WITHOUT FURTHER FUSS, CONSIDER THAT OLD TREES, SAWN DOWN, EXHIBIT THEIR LIFE HISTORIES IN THEIR RINGS, AND THE QUALITIES OF BYGONE, YEARS CAN BE READ THERE.

IN THE NORTHERN CLIME WHERE I GREW UP, IN THE TWENTIES, WE HEATED WITH SOFT (BITUMINOUS) COAL, AND THE NEARBY RAILROAD ENGINES, WORKING IN THE RAILROAD YARDS, BURNED IT. IN CONSEQUENCE, A BEAUTIFUL GLISTENING WHITE SNOWFALL, TURNING THE WORLD INTO A FAIRYLAND, OVERNIGHT BECAME A BLACK- SOOT-COATED WORLD OF GRIME, UNTIL, SHORTLY, THE NEXT SNOWFALL CHANGED IT ALL BACK AGAIN. MEANWHILE, WITH COLD DAYS AND COLDER NIGHTS, EVERYTHING REMAINED FROZEN, AND THE DRIFTS , SNOWFALL BY FROZEN SNOWFALL, GOT LARGER AND LARGER.

WHEN SPRING FINALLY ARRIVED, AND WE BEGAN TO DIG INTO THE DRIFTS, AND SPREAD THE SNOW ABOUT TO MELT, THE HISTORY OF THAT WINTER WAS REVEALED, LIKE TREE RINGS, BY THE THIN LINE OF BLACK SOFT-COAL SOOT, SEPARATING THE SNOWS OF EACH SNOWFALL, SO THAT THE INTENSITIES AND FREQUENCY OF THE STORMS, AND THE PRECIPITATION LEVEL OF EACH COULD BE READ.

AND WITH THE MELTING OF THE DRIFTS BECOMING , DOWN THE STREET, INTO THE TORRENTS OF SPRING, CAME, EVEN TO US SIXTH GRADERS, PECULIAR FEELINGS OF STRONG ATTRACTION TO CERTAIN SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITE GENDER. FOR ME IT WAS MARGARET HOWE, YOUNGER SISTER TO LEONA HOWE, FOR WHOM I FELT NO ATTRACTION WHATSOEVER. BUT MARGARET.. THOUGHTS OF HER , WITH NO KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE TO FILL OUT ANY FANTASIES, MIND YOU, FILLED MY EVERY MOMENT.

BUT BRING NOW YOUR MIND BACK TO THE PROGRESS OF THE SEASONS. BECAUSE OTHER PRECIPITANTS WERE DEPOSITED ON THE NEWLY FALLEN SNOW BESIDES SOOT. THEY WERE CONTRIBUTED BY HOUSEHOLD PETS, TURNED LOOSE TO SO DEPOSIT, AS IS THEIR WONT. AND THAT ALL FROZE, TOO. EACH TIME. AND LAY IN THE DRIFTS, FROZEN, UNTIL SPRING. WHEN IT AGAIN APPEARED. ..LIKE TREE RINGS.

SO I ASK YOU NOW TO PONDER ON THE NATURE OF A MAN WHO, AT THE FIRST TINY WHIFF OF CAT LITTER, FEELS HIS HEART SURGE WITH A GREAT LOVE FOR A GIRL LONG FORGOTTEN AND DISAPPEARED INTO THE PAST, AND WHETHER IT MIGHT BE NOBLER, IN THE MIND, TO SUFFER THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS MEMORY, OR TO TAKE ARMS AGAINST A SEA OF AROMA, AND BY DELIBERATE EFFORT, REMEMBER ONLY THE GLORY OF A NEW FALLEN SNOW. PONDER THAT, GEORGE WILL.

Alternate Title...Love Litter....

MJD 5-22-92 397 WORDS

PONDER THIS...

If a mouse sat in front of you on the table, and you dropped a penny on its head, mouse would probably scamper away. But if you stored up some energy, by pulling back the lever of a mouse trap, the penny, dropped on the trigger would release enough stored energy to smash the poor mouse's head all to hell.

Now, if instead of murdering a poor little mouse, you attached a little spreader bar to the lever, so that it could reach across the triggers of two mousetraps set side-by-side, your penny could now release twice as much stored energy. And if you were to repeat this process twenty times, you could release the stored energy of more than a million mouse traps. And there you have the principle of the chain reaction in an atomic bomb. But the purpose of all that is not to lead anyone into a career as an atomic physicist. Only to illustrate that great ideas can be tried and considered by combining the simple components and looking at the result as a whole, like mousetraps on a breadboard.

The early experiment phase of most research and development projects begins with a breadboard model.

And even that early in the process, you must anticipate success, or your effort is

purposeless, and leads to no meaningful finding. Surely that is self-evident, but you are about to discover why it was worth detailing. (All of this is assuming that no ulterior motive, such as satisfying a political debt or spending funds just to be rid of them, is at work).

Within easy memory was a time when foreign countries held large numbers of Americans hostage. The release of our hostages was a primary national goal. Walter Cronkite announced each evening, the exact number of days they had been held. Everything, even a rescue mission, was tried. And it was just at this time that the President's brother took to carousing around in beer taverns with representatives of the most flagrant terrorist nation holding our people hostage. And that the President's wife, upon whom he depended, together with his schoolgirl daughter, he had told us, for advice on his presidential duties and problems, came up with a stunner. Wouldn't it be just Jim Dandy, Jimmy, if brother Billy, through his close and friendly connections could get the Libyans to effect the hostages' release?

It was reported that the idea was given very serious consideration, but that the Libyans appeared reluctant.

This is where the reasearch and development applies. Among those engineers, there was an advisory remark that cautioned: "Don't start vast projects with half-vast ideas".

Had the success of the idea been assumed, all of the hostages would have been released forthwith, and The United States of America would have been forever in debt to the most vicious of its own enemies. And that is not a consumation devoutly to be wished, nor a Presidential success to be celebrated.

I called all of this to the attention of Mr.. George Will [well-known political columnist - *ed.*] at the time, and he remarked, "H'mmm. I'll have to ponder on that".

So far as I know, he is pondering still.

Martin J. Damgaard
5-26-92
533 words

MORE NOSTALGIC SONGS

(Many people know only the tunes)

Hong Kong Blues

Now, Here's the story 'bout a very unfortunate Sailor man
What got 'rested out in old Hong Kong
He had twenty years privilege taken away from him
'Cause he kicked old Budha's gong.

He said I need somebody to love me
I need somebody to carry me back
To San Francisco,
And bury my body there.

I need somebody to lend me
A Fifty Dolla Bill and then...
I'll leave old Hong Kong
For happiness once again

That's the story 'bout a very unfortunate sailor man,
What got 'rested out in old Hong Kong
He had twenty years privilege
Taken away from him
"Cause he kicked old Budha's Gong.

Hoagy Carmichael c1925

(N.B. "Kicked Old Budha's Gong"..(Kickin' the gong around..1920s slang for smoking opium...doing dope.)

STARDUST

And now the purple shades of twilight time
Steal across the meadows of my heart.
High above the sky, the little stars climb,
Always reminding me we're apart.

We wandered down the lane and far away,
Dreaming of a song that will not die,
Love is but the stardust of yesterday,
A dream of days now long gone by.

Sometimes I wonder why I spend the lonely night
Dreaming of a song,
The melody haunts my reverie,
And I am once again with you,
When our love was new
And each kiss an inspiration.
But that was long ago,
And now my inspiration
Is in the stardust of a song.

Beside a garden wall,
When stars were high,
You were in my arms,
The nightingale sang his fairy tale,
Of paradise where roses bloom.
Though I dream in vain,
In my heart it will remain,
My stardust melody,
The memory of love's refrain.

Hoagy Carmicheal
c 1925

THE GREEN-EYED DRAGON

...A little song to put children to sleep

There once on a time lived a fair princess,
Both beautiful and charming..
Her father, the King, was a wicked old thing,
With manners most alarming..
And always on the front door mat,
A most ferocious DRAGON sat..
H'd make such an awful shrieking noise,
So all you little girls and boys:

BEWARE ! TAKE CARE !

Of the green-eyed-dragon with the thirteen tails..
He'll Feed, with Greed, on
Little Boys,..Puppy Dogs, and Big Fat SNAILS
Then off to his lair each child he'll drag.
And each of his thirteen tails he'll wag,,
Beware, Take Care, and ..
Creep up on Tiptoes
And hurry up the stairs, and say your prayers, and
Duck your heads, your Pretty Curly Heads,
Beneath the Clothes, the clothes, the clothes.

Now, the Dragon, he lived for years and years,
And he never did grow much thinner.
For Lunch he'd try a Policeman Pie,
Or a Roast Congressman, for Dinner.
When Brave Men went 'round with an axe
And tried to collect his Income Tax,

The Dragon, he'd laugh with fiendish glee,,
And a badly mannered R.I.P.

BEWARE ! TAKE CARE !
OF the Green-Eyed Dragon with the thirteen Tails,
He'll feed, with greed, on Little Boys,
Puppy Dogs, and big fat Snails,
Then off to his lair each child he'll drag,
and each of his thirteen tails he'll wag,
Beware, Take Care, and creep up on tiptoes,
And hurry up the stairs, and say your prayers,
and tuck your heads, your pretty curly heads,
Beneath the clothes, the clothes, the clothes.

Well..The Dragon went 'round to the kitchen, one day,
Where the Fair Princess was Baking !
He ate, by mistake, a RICH PLUM CAKE,that
The Fair Princess was making..
Well...this Homemade Cake, he Could Not Digest.
He Moaned, and GROANED,and , at last, WENT WEST
(died)
But still his Ghost, with Blood-shot Eyes,
At Midnight, Clanks his Chains, and Cries:

BEWARE! TAKE CARE !
Of the GREEN EYE-EYED DRAGON, with the
Thirteen Tails,
He'll Feed., with Greed, on Little BOYS,

PUPPY dogs, and big Fat SNAILS....
Then off to his Lair Each Child He'll DRAG,
And Each of his Thirteen Tails He'll WAG...
Beware..Take Care...And Creep Up On TipToes !
And Hurry Off to Bed! and Say Your Prayers !
And Tuck Your Heads, Your Pretty Curly Heads,
BENEATH THE CLOTHES, THE CLOTHES,
THE CLOTHES.

c. 1930..Sung by the great
Operatic and Movie
Musical Star _____,
to scare Hell out of
little kids before
sending them happily
off to bed.

mjd 6-7-92

~~DEERS~~
~~GO~~
LAWRENCE
TIBBET,

The Money Machine

Being some 77 1/2 years of age at this moment I can claim that in my childhood, there were no electric washing machines, AND no electric wringers. A wringer was a hand operated device, consisting of two upright boards, about like 2 by 4's, cross-braced, top and bottom, and two hard rubber rollers, close together, half-way up, and a crank handle. Put a piece of wet clothing between the rollers, turn the crank, and the clothing emerged from the other side, squeezed dry.

Now, forget that for the time being, and turn your attention to the Tri-State Fair, (Wisconsin, Minnesota and Upper Michigan) which occurred in early September, just after school started, in order that to attend, you had to play hooky. In Superior, Wisconsin. Place yourself on the midway, feet in the wood chips, side shows all about, with barkers' shouts, rides, engine-generators roaring, calliope music, and the heavenly smell of carnival hamburgers lying upon the crisp autumn air. And now, a man in the crowd, just there ahead of you, erects a folding stool, climbs up on it and begins to shout OVER HERE !! OVER HERE !! WE'RE MAKING MONEY OVER HERE! MONEY, MONEY, MONEY !!. WE'RE MAKING MONEY !! OVER HERE !! Right away, people begin crowding around. He waits for a small crowd, mostly country yokels, many in town for the first time, with what little money they have tightly clutched.

So now the guy on the stool holds up in his left hand, a gadget shaped almost exactly like that old clothes wringer, but only about 10 inches high and 3 or 4 inches wide. What is unusual is that a piece of white paper is entering between the rollers from the rear, and a Brand New ONE DOLLAR BILL is emerging from the front

And now the fun begins. The pitchman slowly turns the crank. The dollar bill slowly emerges. The pitchman yells at the top of his lungs IF YA GOT THE RIGHT KIND OF PAPER, AND YA GOT THE RIGHT KIND OF INK, YA CAN MAKE MONEY !!

He turns the crank backwards. The dollar bill disappears back between the rollers, and the white paper reappears behind them. IF YA DON'T GOT THE RIGHT KIND OF PAPER, AND YA DON'T GOT THE RIGHT KIND OF INK, YA CAN'T MAKE MONEY. Cranking forward again, the dollar reappearing..SO YA MUST HAVE THE RIGHT KIND OF PAPER, AND YA MUST HAVE THE RIGHT KIND OF INK, TA MAKE MONEY...appears to peel the dollar bill off, and waves it in the air. OVER HERE !! OVER HERE !! WE'RE MAKING MONEY OVER HERE !! He holds up a sheaf of white paper in his left hand, and a bottle of green ink in his right. IF YA GOT THE RIGHT KIND OF PAPER, AND YA GOT THE RIGHT KIND OF INK, YA CAN MAKE MONEY. A shill in the crowd yells "How Much?" "One Dollar". "Gimme One". And the stampede starts. When the last sucker has bought this miracle stuff, the pitchman quickly folds his stool, and FADES into the passing crowd, before someone thinks to ask where to get the MACHINE!!

And that's how it was, in early September, right after school started, up in Superior, Wisconsin, on the shores of Gitche Gumme, where the carnival hamburgers smelled like heaven, just those short three score years ago.

Martin J. Damgaard 6-8-92
St. Petersburg, Florida

FT. CHURCHILL, MANITOBA, CANADA

Churchill is a very small town in northern Manitoba, on the western shore of Hudson's Bay, about halfway up. It's reason for being there is it's small grain elevator, and the single track railroad from Le Pas, where it connects to other lines of the Canadian Railway. Grain from the area was transported by the railroad to Churchill, and from there, in summer months, to England and elsewhere. The Bay freezes in winter, closing all commercial activity. But during WWII, a large military type hospital was built there, as well as an airbase, which was used as a refueling and maintenance base for C-47 cargo planes being provided to the U.K. by the U.S., surrepticiously. The U.S. being officially neutral, could not legally provide the U.K. any war materiel, but these planes were flown to a U.S. base near the Canadian border in North Dakota, where, somehow, they were left unguarded at night, and somehow, Canadian pilots regularly landed them at Canadian bases. The C-47 thereby became known throughout the United Kingdom, all during the War, as the "Dakota".

Not many people know that story, and now, so long after, I'm not really sure that it's true, but that's the way I always understood the facts of this very mysterious mystery.

When the U.S. entered the war, a steady flow of planes and other materiel passed there officially. Also, the hospital was in constant use for returning wounded. With its military establishments, it became Fort Churchill.

My own association with it began in the winter of 1946, by which time the U.S. Army Engineers had established an Arctic Test Station there, in the now abandoned hospital building. The purpose was to learn about the Arctic and to test Engineer equipment there.

(This group either invented or redefined the term "Wind Chill Factor" now used so loosely by T.V. weathermen. It is really a measure of how the rate of heat energy loss of a given mass is increased by wind (moving air) , and is measured in Kilogram Calories per Square Meter per Hour for a given wind speed.)

The trip up there, from Winnipeg, through Le Pas (French for "The Pass" (Step Gate "Gateway to the North"), Flin Flon, other tiny trading post towns, mileposts, accomplished at 20 miles per hour because the track is laid on frozen muskeg (swampgrass) and it bounces along, and jumps the track at any greater speed. It is a slow 500 mile journey through the past, because this is still(was) the frontier. The whole region controlled by a small force of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (One for the entire Churchill -Hudson's Bay area...he travelled by dog sled...the only law in that whole frozen northern land).

There will be space here for only one other aspect of the trip. It is a condition known universally, up there, as "Permafrost", and is just what the name describes. Ground permanently frozen. A short ponder on that will quickly lead to the conclusion that "permanently" really means "eternally" because no one knows how long ago it froze, or when it might thaw. What this leads to is a tremendous internal pressure in the ground. The soil pushes against itself so hard that it is not ordinarily possible to drive a stake or pole into the earth. It just won't go in. In fact, if a small building is erected, and left for a season, it will be found filled with soil from beneath , after a period. The small temperature difference at the ground surface weakens the pressure sufficiently for the soil underneath to push upward, filling the space effected.

But an army in the field needs to drive stakes for many reasons, so I developed and tested a device for that purpose, during my second visit, the next year. It consisted merely of a steel rod with a hole

drilled through it, and a driving cap , having a projection exactly fitting the hole. Inserting a sharpened steel pin into the hole, folowed by the projection of the driving rod, holding the first rod tightly against the ground, and driving the drive pin down, forces the pin out of the hole, and into the ground, there being nowhere else for it to go. I was able to force a steel pin of 3/16 inch into the ground 6 inches by this method, but no farther. Yet a tracked jeep, known as a "Weazel" driven at full thrust, could not pull the pin out of the grasp of the permafrost. I don't know whether that device is still in use.

That was only one of many strange conditions encountered in that far north endeavor.

Nowadays, with the advent of the snowmobile, T.V.viewers can watch the polar bears foraging for garbage at Ft. Churchill, watched by tourists brought there by Travel Agencies for that purpose.

I do remember one other thing...on the trip up from Winnipeg, as the train moved slowly around a great curve over the vast snow covered terrain, at one time I saw two small Indian children running toward the track ahead toward the milepost there. When the train started again, after stopping to leave the mail, for the local trappers- they trap mink, silver fox and white arctic fox- the two children were running back to their hovel, one eating a banana and the otherr drinking a Coca Cola. And I thought, there go the wonders of modern civilization that the white man brings to these,our poor impoverished, frozen Arctic brothers...

Martin J. Damgaard

6-5-92

924 words

World War I changed warfare through the introduction of the machine gun and the tank. In the process, it killed more people than in all other wars in history to that time. A great many of them, on the Allied side were buried in a Belgian plain known as "Flanders' Field". Plain white crosses marked the graves. This is a famous poem, popular in the post-war period.

IN FLANDERS' FIELD

IN FLANDERS' FIELD THE POPPIES BLOW
BETWEEN THE CROSSES, ROW ON ROW
THAT MARK OUR PLACE. AND IN THE SKY
THE LARKS, STILL BRAVELY SINGING, FLY,
SCARCE HEARD AMID THE GUNS BELOW.

WE ARE THE DEAD,
SHORT DAYS AGO, WE LIVED,
LOVED, AND WERE LOVED,
SAW SUNSET GLOW,
AND NOW WE LIE IN FLANDER'S FIELD.

TAKE UP OUR QUARREL WITH THE FOE.
TO YOU, FROM FAILING HANDS, WE THROW
THE TORCH. BE YOURS TO HOLD IT HIGH
IF YOU BREAK FAITH WITH US WHO DIE,
WE SHALL NOT SLEEP, THOUGH POPPIES BLOW
IN FLANDERS' FIELD.

c. 1918

Martin J. Damgaard

6-10-92

170 words

CASEY AT THE BAT

c. 1928

Now, as every American boy above the age of one knows, in Baseball, the visiting team is given the courtesy, by the home team, of batting first in the inning. Or to put it more brutal, the home team reserves the privilege of batting last, thus getting the last chance to score, and get themselves out of a hole, to win the game.

In the eighth grade, I had to memorize and recite this poem, but now I only remember what follows. (The scenario is: last of the ninth, Visitors-4; Mudville-3, bases loaded, two out .) --with a little poetic license here and there, to make it work :

.....
.....
The fans all breathed a relieved sigh,
As in the stands they sat,
For Casey, mighty Casey,
Was coming up to bat.

The pitcher loosed his fast ball,
Across the plate it sped,
But Casey just ignored it
"Strike One" the Umpire said.

The next pitch was a screwball, yet
Across the plate it flew.
That ain't my style" said Casey

The Umpire said:"Strike Two".

And now, the Pitcher holds the ball,
And now he lets it go.
And now the air is shattered
By the force of Casey's blow.

Oh, Somewhere in this favored land,
The sun is shining bright.
The band is playing, somewhere,
And somewhere hearts are light.

And somewhere folks are happy,
And somewhere children shout.
But there is no joy in Mudville.
Mighty Casey has STRUCK OUT .

mjd 6-13-92

252 words

THE ROAD TO MANDALAY

(Reputedly sung by an old retired British cocney soljer)
(many words and stanzas are missing from my memory)

BY THE OLD MOULMEIN PAGODA
LOOKIN' EASTER'D TO THE SEA
THERE'S A BURMA GAL A'SETTIN'
AND I KNOW SHE THINKS O' ME
WHEN THE WIND IS IN THE PALM TREES
AND THE TEMPLE BELLS, THEY SAY--
COME YER BACK, YER BRITISH SOLJER,
COME YER BACK TER MANDALAY,

COME YER BACK TER MANDALAY---

COME YER BACK TO MANDALY
WHERE THE OLD FLOATILLA LAY
CAN'T YER 'EAR THE PADDLES CHUNKIN'
FROM RANGOON TO MANDALAY--
ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY
WHERE THE FLYIN FISHES PLAY
AND THE DAWN COMES UP LIKE THUNDER
OUT 'ER CHINA 'CROSS THE BAY

WELL, 'ER LITTLE BLOUSE WAS BROWN, LIKE
AND HER SKIRT WAS KIND'ER GREEN
AND 'ER LITTLE CAP WAS YALLER
LIKE A FLIPPIN BUDGEREEN

AND I FIRST SEE'D 'ER A-PUFFIN'
O' A WHACKIN' WHITE CHEROOT
AND A'WASTIN' CHRISTIAN KISSES
ON A 'EATHEN IDOL'S FOOT

ON A 'EATHEN IDOL'S FOOT

BLOOMIN' IDOL, MADE O' MUD
WHAT THEY CALLED THE "GREAT GOD BUD"
PLUCKY LOT SHE CARED FOR IDOLS
WHEN I KISSED 'ER WHERE SHE STOOD
ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY
WHERE THE FLYIN' FISHES PLAY
AND THE DAWN COMES UP LIKE THUNDER
OUT 'ER CHINA,'CROSS THE BAY.

SHIP ME SOME'ERES EAST O' SUEZ
WHERE THE BEST IS LIKE THE WORST
WHERE THERE AIN'T NO TEN COMMANDMENTS
AND A MAN CAN RISE A THIRST
WELL, THE TEMPLE BELLS ARE CALLIN'
AND ITS THERE THAT I WOULD BE
BY THE OLD MOULMEIN PAGODA
LOOKIN' LAZY AT THE SEA--
LOOKIN' LAZY AT THE SEA--

COME Y'ER BACK TER MANDALAY
WHERE THE OLD FLOATILLA LAY
CAN'T 'CHER 'EAR THE PADDLES CHUNKIN'
FROM RANGOON TO MANDALAY
ON THE ROAD TO MANDALAY,
WHERE THE FLYIN' FISHES PLAY,

AND THE DAWN COMES UP LIKE THUNDER
OUT 'ER CHINA, 'CROSS THE BAY.

Kipling ? c1895
mjd 6-15-92

An Essay on George Washington's
Farewell Address
submitted by Martin J. Damgaard, 17 years old
Senior Class, Superior Central High School, Superior, WI
to a state-wide contest
conducted by The Milwaukee Journal
Spring, 1932

NOTE: This essay is thought to have been published in a Sunday Edition of *The Milwaukee Journal*, in the spring of 1932. The Contest was held to commemorate the Bicentennial of George Washington's Birthday. It won Second Place in the State of Wisconsin, The author, Martin J. Damgaard, was awarded a Silver Medal, which he retains to this day.

The Legacy of Advice

George Washington's Farewell Address is considered my many to be one of the greatest historical documents of all time. It has certainly exercised more influence than any other. It was written in 1797 and, although never read by the President in public it was presented to the people through the medium of David Clapool's *American Advertiser*.

Washington had two definite purposes in mind: the first, to notify the people of the decision that he would not run for a third term as president; the second, to leave a last legacy of advice to his people concerning their government in future years when he would not be there to guide them.

The thing Washington feared most, and that which he stressed in his farewell address, was the possibility of misunderstandings arising between the several states, resulting in revolution.

"The Unity of Government which constitutes you one people is also dear to you.. It is justly so, for it is the main Pillar in the Edifice of real Independence; the support of your tranquility at home, of your

peace abroad, of your safety, of your prosperity in every shape, and of your Liberty.

Washington urged the people to live together harmoniously, saying that none of them could prosper without the rest. The West, he said, needed commodities from the East, and also needed an outlet for her own products. The East needed grain, etc., which they could not grow themselves, but which grew abundantly in the West. The South, in like intercourse with the North, finds additional commercial enterprises and in like manner, the North sees her prosperity grow.

In the address, Washington also warned us emphatically against close relationships or alliances with European or other foreign nations, for these may create either intense hatred or fondness and produce a variety of evils; enmity toward the one, and sympathy and partiality toward the other, both of which are not in keeping with a nation that wishes to "observe good faith and justice and to cultivate peace and harmony with all".

Washington also stresses the importance of moral, intellectual and religious development, upon which rests the entire strength of a democratic nation.

Washington's Farewell Address is not only noted for its tremendous political influence, but also for its high literary merit. It is written in clear simplicity which makes it easy to understand. It goes straight to the point, presenting its wonderful message in the fewest number of words possible. For seventy years it was read at each opening of Congress and even today, one hundred and thirty five years later, it is studied by students the country over, because of its good advice, its fine phrasing, its clear-cut sentences, and its great value as

a work of real statesmanship and patriotism, not narrowly American,
but giving the broad foundations upon which must rest democracy.
It is a statement of the philosophy of good government.

After six decades of reflection...
Martin J. Damgaard
6-16-92

HAMLET'S SOLILOQUY.

To be or not to be, that is the question. Whether it be nobler, in the mind, to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep. And by a sleep to mean we end the heartaches and thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to. 'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep. To sleep, perchance to dream, aye, there's the rub, for in that sleep of death, what dreams may come, when we have shuffled off this mortal coil, must give us pause.For who would fardels bear, the merchant's calumny, the law's delay, ...when he might his own quietus make with a bare bodkin? That far country from whose bourne no traveler returns, doth make us rather bear those ills we have than fly to others we know not of. Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all, and enterprises of great pith and moment wither away, and lose the name of action.

There's more, and this is out of order, but it's close enough to show the towering thoughts to which language can rise, for those who can use and appreciate it to its boundaries. A few more examples follow...

"So, in the Libyan fable it is told that:

Once an Eagle, pierced by a dart,
On seeing it's fashion, said:
By our own, not by others' glories,
Are we now smitten."

Aeschylus
Greece..c456 b.c.

The square of the hypotenuse is
Equal to the sum of the squares of
The other two sides.

Pythagorus
Greece..c497 b.c.

A rag, a bone, a hank of hair,
A poor thing, but mine own.

also..

A loaf of bread, a jug of wine, and
Thou beside me, singing, in the
Wilderness. Ah Wilderness is
Paradise Enow.

Omar Kayyam
Persia..c1123.

"Gentlemen, include me out"

Samuel Goldwyn
Hollywood..c1929

"It ain't over 'til it s over."

Yogi Bera

Brooklyn..c1959

MJD

presumably, sometime in 1992

ADDENDUM (21 DEC 92):

Feeling depressed? Take my advice:
Pull down your pants, and slide on the ice.

--Dr. Sidney Whatever
Psychiatrist from ICORPS
M*A*S*H 1980whatever

--NCD, Editor pro tem

THE BLIND BAGGAGE

c. 1938

You must understand that this happened a long while ago, when things were all quite different.

First, let us consider the Lynx. Or a simpler version, the Wildcat. And a more complicated type, the Wolverine.

What these three beasts have in common is a tendency to go quite mad with anger. Rather on the order of the old Viking Berserkers. Vikings, on occasion, in a killing spree during one of their raids, would carry on killing long after the need had passed, and seem to lose all control of themselves, in the wild lust to kill, kill, kill.

The wolverine has this tendency, it is told. Wildcats do it more out of bravery. A story was told, as true, by a locomotive engineer whose engine passed a certain spot in the woods each night, that a lynx who had his den there, snarled and spit at the train, presumably protecting his young, and on one occasion, leaped straight at the engine, hung on, and scratched and pawed at it for half a mile, until knocked off by a branch. Such bravery is out of all reason, but it happens.

All of that is only a prelude to the story, which really begins in the Milwaukee railroad yards. My travelling companion Doc, (he wasn't a doctor, but when a pretty girl passed down the street, he would remark, "'Boy, I'd sure like to fix her up". So we called him Doc) and I, having lately arrived aboard a "string of empties", had just been

forcefully offered the choice of jail or immediate departure on the first train out, by a huge local cop. Grasping the reasonableness of his kind suggestion, we headed for a passenger train (the fast non-stop express to Madison, we discovered) that stood nearby, ready to leave.

Now, the only way for unticketed passengers to ride a passenger train, is on the Blind Baggage. A procedure to be avoided at all costs, but we had little choice.

Those who have ridden a steam locomotive drawn train will recall that passing from car to car, there was a small platform projecting maybe a foot out from each car, giving you about two feet to use as a bridge between cars. Baggage cars, which are positioned ahead of the passengers, are the same. The forward-most one, too, only on that one, the door is locked, there being no place forward to go. Leaving that one one-foot little platform projecting ahead. There is an iron rod placed on each side of the door, as a handle. It is possible for two men to stand on this little platform. The approved procedure is to cross your arm in front of the other, and grasp the iron rod. He does the same, and you each are therefore protecting the other from falling forward and landing just ahead of the wheels of the whole train.

We had assumed these positions when the train began to move, smoothly, after the fashion of the steam drawn trains, and slowly.

Then faster, and faster, and now out in the open country, oh, quite a bit faster, indeed. It is at this point

that the matter of the berserker wolverine, lynx and wild cat come into play. Because that is the way the locomotive begins to act. Passengers riding in comfort in the cars don't know this, but the engineer and fireman riding right inside the engine know it all right. That huge tank of boiling superheated steam is blasting get out. It screeches, it whines, it roars, spits, blasts out white and black steam, pours out black smoke, and sprays black coal dust and boiling water ceaselessly. And it dances. Oh, how it dances. The wheels jump high off the track, sometimes one or two but sometimes all of them at once, with a high clanging racket, steel against steel, pounding its way madly ahead. Continuously. And there we stand, facing straight into the coal, water, steam that come pelting back from that howling, dancing, spitting, berserker of a wolverine lynx of a locomotive engine gone mad, complete with coal car/water tender behind it, and just there ahead of us.

Trapped, real good, we are, each securing the other, with his free arm across in front, and so unable even to wipe an arm across his own face, to clear the coal dust and steam from the eyes. Facing that wild demon of a screeching jumping tearing ahead machine, with its crazy berserk insistence to draw this train, and all who ride it, straight into either Madison or eternity, it doesn't seem to matter which.

After whatever time it took, it slowed, and at last drew near some control point and came to a stop, the first moment of which we departed forthwith, with no regrets nor ever a backward glance, staggering on unbelievably firm

ground, and flinging down to lie there, panting, groaning, and, my God, laughing madly with relief.

After that, a freight to our home in Superior was easy. And so was arriving at the decision that the Blind Baggage shall henceforth and forever remain empty of our presence, a consumation devoutly to be wished.

Martin J. Damgaard

1992

873 Words

A VERY GOOD YEAR

Everyone thirteen or older has been twelve. My own twelfth year seems now to have been outstanding, as years go.

My father, having been to Florida the previous year (1925) convinced my mother to have a look at it, and so in September 1926 they, in my older brother's car, with my older brother driving, and me under their wings, ventured down there, from Superior, Wisconsin.

The car was a 1924 Essex 4 cylinder Touring Car, with a soft top like today's convertibles, and Eizinglass curtains, for rain. Loaded on a rear luggage carrier were our clothes, and on the side running boards, a house tent and poles, which we erected each night. One night we spent in a field on the banks of a river with a field full of Tennessee mules braying constantly all night long, over there in Columbia, (Muletown) Tennessee. Earlier, in Illinois, where there had been a flood, and the road (there were few paved roads, they were mostly gravel or just plain mud) just disappeared. We crossed a low area on wooden tracks with a little wood flange on the inside edge, built by the farmer, who charged a hefty toll. They meandered around his fields through water we discovered later was 4-5 feet deep in places.

We came to the Chattahoochee river, and skidded down the wet muddy banks directly on to a wooden platform floating near the bank. The approved, and only way, to cross the river on this State Highway. The platform was attached to a rope across the river by two shorter ropes, one at the bow and one at the stern (this turned out to be a river ferry). The rope at the stern was lengthened so that

My father's work took him near Tampa Bay, where some yacht basins were going in, and he killed a four foot water moccasin poison snake, and brought it home for me to see. It had gorged on a small rat or something just earlier, and had a large bulge a few inches from its head. He put it into a quart fruit jar, with denatured alcohol, and sealed it. I carried it home to Superior, when we went, and it reposed proudly on the science room shelf for many years. Later, I almost stepped on one while walking barefoot alongside a little lake, as it slithered under my descending bare foot.

But greater things happened. Next door lived a fine older gentleman, the city's Postmaster, and his young daughter, my classmate. The father was a radio fan, and had in his living room what, in those days, was the finest kind. A console with six or eight large tuning dials, switches, gauges, etc, and a hallway full of large wet and dry cell batteries. But the receiving range was always uncertain. One day he called me excitedly: "Come! Come Quick! I've got Baltimore. We listened together to SQWEEEEEEK SQUAAAAAAAAAHK OOOOEEEEEUAAAAK ..."MORE". After a little, it finally came clearly: John BarryMORE playing in "Don Juan" at the theatre in Tampa, just across the bay.

And sometime that spring, the daughter and I were walking home from school--the seventh grade, I attended four seventh grades that year--and we short-cut through a little stand of stunted pine trees. There was a Model-T Ford that had been standing there, abandoned, we thought, for several days. Abandoned Model T's were not uncommon. We could see it from our houses, and decided to investigate. It was standing in a little sandy trail that came across from the other road, a block away. And we discovered why it was there. Plowing ahead in that deep sand, the engine had failed, and the driver had got out with the crank to restart it. He was lying there on his back, With the crank in his hand. Having failed to start

GREBES...

eRNEST hEMINGWAY (that was a computer error, but I wonder how Papa would have liked the style) --tells, in *The Green Hills of Africa*, how, after a month's hard action, hunting big game, he and a friend, on the way home, sat on a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee, watching the great flocks of grebes rising and landing on the water. Hemingway wondered why they were not mentioned in the Bible. His friend remarked "Well, anyway, I'm not going to walk on it. I mean, it's already been done."

mjd

presumably, sometime in 1992
ncd--editor, redactor & sometime interpreter

There were, in Government Research and Development circles, in those days, certain advisory remarks which crept into the conversation, such as "Don't Start Vast Projects With Half-Vast Ideas", and "The Elephant Went Into Labor, and the Mouse Was Born." Whether either of these to that which follows is a matter...

The elephant part happened eons ago, when geological formation occurred, depositing vast projects of coal in the Eastern U. S., iron in the center, five Great Lakes connecting them, Great Plains in the West, producing grain, sand in this modern eon, vast numbers of people all around, to absorb nature's bounty.

The people did their share, creating a great fleet of so-called "lake steamers", ships with a high bow containing the bridge and crew quarters, a long row of bulk cargo hatches down the length, and a funnel and cabins, with the coal-eating steam driven engine room at the stern.