

LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE

EARLY DAYS OF THE AUTOMOBILE

**STAUNTON TO WINCHESTER IN A MODEL T FORD –
ONLY 3.5 HOURS!**

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LIFE IN THE SLOW LANE

In the past year or so a lot of ominous signs or conditions have begun to appear on the stretch of road between the "new outskirts" of Waynesboro and the so-called "Hub of Augusta County." These signs consist of wooden stakes with pink streamers attached, lines of orange paint sprayed on the edge of people's lawns, teams of young men with poles and transits measuring and jotting down figures of clipboards, buildings becoming suddenly deserted, and a large number of for sale signs in front of homes that have been part of the roadside scene for almost a century. I haven't been asked by anyone in authority but if I am, I will tell the person that I don't like the way things are changing.

Perhaps I should turn the clock back fifty years to when I first drove into Stuarts Draft to look over the orchard where I was soon to be employed. I remember that it was unseasonably warm for early January with the temperature almost sixty degrees and I was so excited to think that Virginia had climate similar to that of Florida and in spite of the farmer I visited telling me that this was freak weather., I could not be shaken in my belief that the Old Dominion was an extension of the Sunshine States. Of course, soon after my arrival in March I found that Virginia weather in the Shenandoah Valley is almost identical to the climate of Pittsburgh without the smog.

I first lived in an apartment on Wayne Avenue when I married and drove daily to the orchard in a 1929 Model A phaeton which I purchased for sixty dollars. What a pleasure it was to drive on Route 12 (now Rt. 340) seeing the grazing sheep and cattle and inhaling the aroma of clover in bloom or freshly mown hay! The farmers along the way knew me because of my venerable Ford and, since in 1939 there were only about 800 people on the postal listing in Stuarts Draft, I was soon known as "the new boy in town."

I would stop at the corner drugstore on my way home from work and treat myself to a chocolate ice cream soda or a malted milk shake and enjoy talking with many of the school teachers and others my age and a number of friendly people much older than I. Across the street was the bank where I did banking for the apple company, two grocery stores, a feed store and the post office. Since the orchard used two large Percheron horses to pull the sprayer and haul apples in the fall, I made frequent stops for feed and occasionally accompanied old Mr. Painter to the blacksmith shop of Mr. B.B. Kube, who kept them properly shod and also sharpened and repaired shovels and picks.

Yes, Stuarts Draft was a small town---a very small town and I loved it and the friendly people who held out a friendly hand to welcome a young Yankee from north of the Mason Dixon Line. I bought my gas at either the Esso or the Texaco stations on the corners and when heading from Waynesboro, after a half a mile, I was out of town and in the countryside. Sometimes I would be stopped by a person waving a red bandana handkerchief on a pole and was asked to stop and shut off my engine as a large herd of sheep or cattle were moved down the road to pasture in another field. I found it to be a pleasant rather than an annoying ten minute wait to let the world go by.

Alas, that pleasant world has disappeared along with 600x16 tires, running boards, ten cent milk shakes, and nickel packs of chewing gum. Farm tractors on the highway are honked at and given dirty looks by drivers of high-rise pick-ups, having chrome roll bars with non-functional spotlights attached. It isn't relaxing to drive between Waynesboro and Stuarts Draft, which, if one notes where the town signs are located now are only some five miles apart instead of seven.

I recently figured out that I have driven that distance on an average of twice a day for five days a week for almost half a century. This figures out to be over two hundred thousand miles or at least eight hundred times around the world at the equator! In just a few weeks, the big yellow bull-dozers and earth movers will start tearing up the green grass and trees that have bordered the road for many decades and there will be young men with flags stopping traffic. Houses and some places of business will be knocked over and become piles of rubble. But, then, think of having a beautiful four lane highway between Waynesboro and Stuarts Draft! Add to all that an extra lane at the stop lights. A lot of young people can hardly wait. Well, I can wait and those narrow back roads that meander alongside and across the South River will see a lot more of me in the future. Perhaps I'll have to stop while some cattle are being moved to another pasture—perhaps I'll have to drive a mile or two behind a big John Deere. That's all right with me.....I like the slow lane.

EARLY DAYS OF THE AUTOMOBILE

I believe that almost everyone who loves antiques automobiles might occasionally dream of what it was really like in the early days of the automobile in the United States. I am thinking of that sweet, dim, wonderful decade before driving an automobile was an adventure, a large investment, and a mark of social status.

Let us imagine that we are Mr. and Mrs. Lottabucks who have just purchased a beautiful Brewster green Winton touring car. Our 1910 model is complete with a windshield, tan mohair top, Kelly-Springfield tires, all brass lamps, and a complete set of tools. We even had a chauffeur sent by our local dealer to show us how to drive it and make minor repairs and adjustments. Of course there are no front doors to keep out dust, but the seats are real diamond tufted leather and since we will wear our new goggles, driving gloves, and dusters we won't notice those small inconveniences. Gee, that smell of new leather, fresh paint, and gasoline (correct spelling until about 1918) is exciting. Let's get the picnic baskets packed and heed the call of the open road!

I crank the engine while the spark is retarded and pull on the choke at the same time. I am careful to keep my thumb from hooking around the handle. There is a loud pop, a buzz on the coils, and a hissing sound. It didn't do like that when the chauffeur did it. I try again and again, and ---it starts up with a roar so I jump in over my wife's lap and push on the clutch pedal, the footbrake and then ease it into low gear. We creep down the driveway to the street and notice those nosey Brewers are watching us. Boy! Are they jealous! Perhaps we may invite them for a ride one of these weekends—we'll see.

Now we are leaving those bumpy city cobblestones and are running on the sandy, unpaved road to Tareytown. Wow! Look at that cloud of dust we're making. If we pass a wagon we will be sure to shout what all the ritzy folks say---"Hey Mac! Excuse our dust!"

This is the life! Twenty-three skidoo! My wife is yelling something and pointing to the front left wheel but that four cylinder powerhouse is making so much noise I can't hear a word she is saying. The car is becoming a bit hard to steer so I reach over for the emergency brake and then throw the gears in neutral. She says one of the tires was beginning to look funny. She was right. The darn thing is flat. Guess I'll have to use that new jack and the tire removing tool.

The car is jacked up, the tire comes off the rim in about 15 minutes and then I find the cause of our problem...a big horseshoe nail! I wish those hick farmers would keep their horses off this highway! Well, we have our vulcanizing kit so I scrape the tube around the puncture spot, put the patch on, and light it with a match. It sizzles and smokes a bit and then the repair is complete. Pretty neat. Now to get that clincher tire back on and pump the tire up to eighty pounds pressure. My wife says I look tired and I'm getting sweaty. She's right. My knees and my back are weakening. I'll never be able to walk upright again. There! The tire is filled with air and I put the tools away and lower the jack. The tools are nice but I didn't think I'd have to use so many of them so soon!

This time the car starts on the second pull of the crank and we're on our way once more. Golly gee! Look at those blisters---on both hands. Well, that's part of the price you pay for being a motorist! I like the sound of that word—motorist. It sets you apart from the common people.

We come around a curve in the road and see a fellow dressed like a policeman riding a bicycle. He waves and signals for us to stop. We are told that the speed limit in this county is 15 miles per hour and that by his reckoning, we were going at least twenty-five. He writes out something on a little tablet he has and tells us to pay him twenty dollars or appear in court one week from today. I give him a ten and a five and the wife found five ones in her pocketbook. We get a receipt and a warning to obey the signs that are posted every ten miles and to notice the sign on the outskirts of Hicksville that says, "Drive slowly and see our town---drive fast and see our jail." Fat chance that we will visit Hicksville soon!

I turn the car around and I notice that the sky is getting darker by the minute. We stop briefly and snap on the glass rain curtains as the rain hits us in full force.

I keep driving and wish that someone would invent something to keep the windshield clear of rain drops. All of a sudden we find ourselves deep in mud and the rear wheels begin to spin. I give it more power but nothing seems to happen. Let's face it. We are "stuck." That's one of the worst words that go with the new sport of motoring.

I see a farm house just ahead to our right and I walk up the lane and knock on the door. A man (obviously a farmer) answers and I tell him about our problem. He tells me that he will get his team and pull us out for twenty-five dollars. I am about to say something but I swallow my pride and tell him it is a deal. He says that the price is twenty-five dollars in ADVANCE. I pay him and actually ride one of his big Percherons back to the car because my legs gave out when I arrived at his house.

The team is hitched to our beautiful new Winton and we are pulled free of the mud hole. I try to start the car but nothing happens. I try again---and again. What did the Winton salesman tell us about Winton reliability??

The farmer strikes a deal. He will pull us and the silent, muddy Winton back to our home for just fifty dollars. I thought that all the highway robbers had been killed off before 1900 but I bit my lip and extracted my last bills and placed them in his rough and greedy hand. We arrived home just about dusk. I surely hope that the Brewers were not looking out of their window. They are such nose people!

STAUNTON TO WINCHESTER IN A MODEL T FORD ONLY 3.5 HOURS!

Imagine if you can that you are suddenly transported back to the year 1922 and that your father has recently installed one of those "new-fangled" telephones in your home. Your neighbors got together and formed an independent phone company with twenty subscribers. It enables you to talk with any of the families on the line and, if you are lucky, you can ring "central" and make connections with Aunt Matilda in the little town of Winchester, Virginia.

Yes, you can almost hear everything that Uncle Charlie says after Aunt Matilda invites you and the children for the weekend. He says that the Valley Turnpike is in good shape and you ought to make the trip from Staunton in at least four hours. That much time might be consumed because there will stops to pay toll at the numerous toll stations along the way. No matter, everyone is anxious to make the trip, so Father goes out to the barn where we keep the Model T Ford and takes a look at the tires (50 pounds air pressure), the gas tank under the front seat(10 gallons of gas) and the radiator (3 gallons of water)

Of course, he disturbs the livestock below and the cows, the four Percheron plow horses and the prize Southdown Ram in his pen, but they are used to seeing his kerosene lantern in the barn and they soon go back to sleep. A bantam rooster crows several times thinking that the light he sees is sunrise, but he stops quickly in an embarrassed sort of way. His harem of hens is not impressed and they tuck their heads back under their wings.

Father returns from the barn with the news that Lizzie is ready for the trip tomorrow morning. The spare tire in back has been patched once but the tread is good and the new detachable rims make tire changing a breeze. What will those boys in Detroit think of next? Everyone gets ready for bed and soon the house is quiet.

The next thing we know it is almost daylight and everyone performs his chores without being told. The cows are being milked by Father; fresh kindling has been put in the big wood stove in the kitchen. Mother starts getting the big breakfast ready and the younger children are setting the table.

During breakfast, last minute additions are made to plans already made. If we aren't back by six, the Stoner boys will come over to feed and do the milking and the horses will be brought back from the pasture if it looks like an all-night rain. We have already told the little Connor boy he can keep all the eggs he collects this morning and we know he won't forget an offer like that.

The sun is just peeping over the Blue Ridge as Father cranks up the car and backs it out of the barn. Mother thinks the he should buy a self-starter now that they are available for Model T's, but he says that he understands just how "Lizzie" needs to be started and she responds to his special procedures every time—well, almost.

Everyone gets in-Mother up front with the youngest in her lap and the rest of the children in the back seat. We're off! As soon as we cross the cattle guard and head down the road, Father takes his foot off the low gear pedal and the car lurches into high.

Soon we turn on to the Valley Turnpike and the speedometer on the dash reads 38 miles per hour. Father is really "letting her out" and we keep hoping that he will see if Lizzie can do at least 45. The turnpike is one of the few macadamized roads in this state and we enjoy breezing along and waving to the other motorists going by in the opposite direction.

We are approaching Mount Sidney and up ahead we see a pole across the road so we stop and Father pays our toll which according to the sign is "autos-15 cents, horse and wagon-10 cents, man on horseback-8 cents and animals driven in herds-1 cent each. Why do they charge the motorists the most? The service stations are charging 12 cents a gallon for gasoline and a quart of oil must be at least 25 cents! An automobile is an expensive luxury these days!

We have to stop again at Mount Jackson, Woodstock, and Strasburg, and another place I cannot remember. I must admit that those who charge the toll do keep the highway in fairly good repair, but it is a real expense to drive about 100 miles these days. Father says that someday the state will take over these turnpike road sections and that you will be able to travel from any place in the state to another for free! That's hard to believe just now as we see the old houses on the outskirts of Winchester up ahead. A road sign showing the Michelin tire man in cap and goggles informs us it is two miles to Winchester.

As we enter the town a large sign reads "Welcome to Winchester. Drive slow and see our city. Drive fast and see our jail." You can believe that we slowed down in a hurry. We make a few turns into different streets and then we are looking for the big iron setter dog in Uncle Charlie's front yard. Hey! There is Aunt Matilda standing on the porch in her blue dress and white apron. We burst out of the back set and head for the big iron gate in a rush despite Mother's admonitions to slow down. We are here again!

Uncle Charlie asks Father if we had any trouble and he replies that we didn't have a flat, a blowout, or radiator boil over and after consulting his big gold pocket watch, he announces that we set a new record---just 3 hours and 12 minutes.

Mother interrupts and says that Father is trying to be the Valley's Barney Oldfield. Everyone had a laugh about that. These are great times to be alive!

CARS OR AUTOMOBILES?

"Sorry I'm late, I've had car trouble." Most of us have said that at one time or another. Or perhaps, one of our children have asked, "Dad, may I have the keys to the car?" The word CAR has become synonymous with automobile but that wasn't always so. The word "car" has been with us since the days of the Roman Empire and perhaps even before that. Our word "car" comes from the Roman word "carra", meaning a four-wheeled vehicle to distinguish it from the word "cart" which was a two-wheeled vehicle. A two-wheeled vehicle could be a chariot or any other vehicle with two wheels, which was invented by some unknown mechanical genius almost as soon as man invented the wheel.

During the period 1820-1898, the word "car" meant a railroad car-either freight or passenger and after 1870 or so, it also meant a horse car or a trolley car. When the early automobile arrived on the scene, it was called a horseless carriage, a moto-cycle, and even an ipsometer. We have the French Academy of Science to thank for meeting in 1895 and making the name "automobile" the official French word for this new invention that was the talk of European society. Since France was at least a decade ahead of the United States in automobile development, we were forced to use many of their terms such as "chauffeur", for a professional driver; "garage", instead of auto barn; and "chassis", for the automobile frame. The world also adopted the French and English Carriage names for body styles such as landau, Victoria, brougham, sedan, and coupe. We still like horsey names such as dashboard, station wagon, and horsepower.

It took the automotive world a long time to break away from the carriage maker, who built all the bodies for the early autos. They were crafted of wood and leather, the wheels copied from cannon carriages and called "artillery wheels" and were made by skilled wheelwrights in almost the same way carriage and wagon wheels were crafted. About this time, the bicycle makers stepped in and gave us single tube tires, metal tubing framing, and wire spoked wheels. In fact, many of the early cars were developed by companies that first made bicycles---such as Rambler, the Columbia, and the Pierce. Columbia and Schwinn ventured into the manufacture of horseless carriages, but gave up and are still making fine bicycles today.

The word "automobile" is universally recognized and is spelled almost the same way in many European languages---the word "car" is not. But Americans like the word and use it in various forms such as "car wash", "carport" and "car parts". But we know what junior means if he asks to borrow the "wagon" to go camping or wants to use the car tonight. Would you let him drive away if he asks for the ipsometer? Never!

Americans have enjoyed an eighty-year love affair with the automobile. When the great Depression struck the USA, Will Rogers remarked, "The United States is the only country in the world to drive to the poorhouse in an automobile." Many of the people at that time, hoping to get off the relief rolls, refused to give up their automobiles and stood in bread lines so they could take their Sunday drive to see Aunt Gertrude or Grandma.

We found out during the "20's" and "30's" that automobiles are both very good and very bad. Cars killed thousands of people and were used extensively by bank robbers and gangsters, but they also took injured people to the hospital, took young people away from the front parlor loveseat, and provided jobs and businesses for many thousands. They spawned many new enterprises such as drive-ins, motels, shopping plazas, and hundreds of parts and accessories. Yes, that unreliable, smoke-belching, noisy "contraption" at the beginning of this century has really changed our world. Sorry, Old Dobbin, you are out to pasture forever.

CAR NAMES

Let us suppose that you have won the Irish Sweepstakes or have inherited fifty million dollars and then you decide to venture into the automobile market with a new car of your own design and engineering. One of the first things you will have to decide upon is a name for your new creation. What name would stir the public into a frenzy so that they would assemble in mob-like groups around the showrooms of the new network of dealerships you have set up? In the past, some car manufacturers have chosen the names of US presidents, Greek and Roman gods and goddesses, animals, birds, explorers, and alas, their own names.

Surely, if you named your new car Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Grant, or Roosevelt, it would be an instant success but wait---all of these names have already been used and the companies that promoted these historic names have themselves passed into history. Perhaps, you might call your car an Abraham because Lincoln is already taken. Then, what about an Eisenhower Eight, a Kennedy Kamper, a Hoover (but that is already a vacuum cleaner), or a Coolidge? Perhaps a Reagan Runabout might make it or a Nixon might sell in China, but that would be a little risky.

When we turn to mythology, we might choose Pan, Mars, Diana, Mercury, Cyclops, or Minerva. But then, we find that all of these names were once used and only the winged messenger has survived. What a loss.

Now when we survey the animal kingdom, we find that beautiful names have met with public approval for many decades. Some early successes were the Lion, Deagon, Seven Little Buffaloes, the Panther, and the Bearcat. Once again we find that all those vehicles with those appealing names have gone out of production.

A person might think that creatures that bite, sting, scratch. Or because other types of bodily injury would make poor names for family cars, but facts have proven to the contrary. In the past decade or so, the big US automakers have greeted us with such unpleasant names as Stingray, Barracuda, Hornet, Wasp, Mako Shark, Bobcat, Lynx, or Cobra. Why not nice friendly fish like a Perch, Guppy, or Goldfish? What about a nice insect like an ant or a butterfly? When looking for animal names, why not choose an animal that most people can "cozy up to" like a Beagle, a Koala, or a Squirrel? I was going to say a Rabbit, but VW already has one on the market. I have always thought that the name of a huge animal such as a whale, an elephant, or one of the huge dinosaurs would do well, but such names as Jumbo and Mammoth are found only on such things as tubes of toothpaste and bags of potato chips.

I must admit that some of the names of the early cars doomed them to failure almost as soon as they were put on the market. How could your friends keep a straight face if you announced that you have just purchased a Blood, a Klink, an Acorn, a Poppy Car, or a brand new Twombly? We all remember the chuckles that greeted the Henry J. and the Edsel, but then it might be hard to market a Gordonmobile, or a Whitmer Six, or a Phillips Buzzard Wing. But please don't laugh...the DeLorean almost made it.

WHAT'S FUNNY ABOUT CARS?

One of the sad things about our new automobiles is that they aren't funny and they really aren't much fun. Old cars were funny and though often unreliable, they were fun to drive and taking a trip or a long drive was often an adventure that was recounted many times in the weeks or months that followed. Automobiles at the beginning of this century were something new and exciting. All of us have seen reproductions of the sketches and cartoons from early editions of popular magazines. We see these crude vehicles running into horses, cows, chickens, buildings, and other cars. The drivers are usually tossed harmlessly into the air and will live to drive another day. The old autos had frequent blow outs, flat tires, radiator boil overs, and mechanical failures of all kinds which were viewed humorously by most people and especially by cartoonists of that period.

It didn't take long for the movie industry to see the value of the automobile in films. We have all seen the hair-brained antics of the Keystone Kops with their Model T police patrol wagon and their hair-raising escapes from the locomotives and big red inter-urban streetcars at the rail crossings.

Let's be honest about it folks, the Model T Ford was a godsend to the movie industry. It was funny-looking, cheap, and ubiquitous. It was easy to alter so that it fell apart, got squashed between two buildings or went careening along narrow, dusty roads and fell off cliffs.

I was fortunate to be a kid when most of these car comedies were made and I saw several chase sequences being made when I was living near Hollywood in the early 20's. These 'two-reelers' as they were called were a regular feature to be expected with a Saturday matinee that also featured a western and perhaps a mystery serial.

When we saw the names Laurel and Hardy or W.C. Fields, we squirmed in our seats with excitement because we knew that there would be some funny car scenes ahead. Today on TV we see modern actors portraying Laurel and Hardy driving Model T's or Model A's or we see short scenes of Keystone Kops chases. Why do we see these glimpses of our past? We are shown these scenes because they hold our attention and make us laugh or chuckle as we are gently pressured into buying beer, windshield wipers, or life insurance.

If I may deviate from the subject of old cars for a minute, I would also like to state that old airplanes were often funny. Like old cars, the early planes were crude, slow, and fun to fly or watch. We still see them in old films or new films about the old days and various comedians jump into them and take off on wild rides before they crash harmlessly into a field, haystack, a pond, or a building of some sort. By contrast, jet planes aren't funny and new cars do not bring a smile to your faces.

Can you picture short clips of scenes from "Miami Vice", "Crime Story" or similar detective shows being shown to our great-grandchildren for laughs? Today, car chases

end in terrible crashes in which most vehicles explode in a ball of flames or fly over a cliff before they explode. What's funny about cars anymore? Nothing...and I believe we are poorer because of this fact. Let us remember, when we drive our old cars in parades or on club outings, that most of the young or old persons we pass, break into smiles or laughter and frequently clap their hands because our vehicles are strangely funny to watch and these people are not laughing at us in derision---they are happy. The young folks laugh because the cars are different and the older folks smile because as we pass we remind them of days past when life was simpler, perhaps happier, and we were all driving in the slow lane.

DRIVING COSTUMES

If a young driver were asked today what a motoring costume was he would probably reply, " a motoring what?" Yet, for the first three decades of the automobile industry, a "costume" was almost a necessity. We are all familiar with the duster and the goggles of the brass-car era but not everyone remembers why the early motorists dressed the way they did.

There were two main factors that determined what the motorist had to wear---the design of the automobile and the state of the early roads. The very early automobiles, we recall, had no windshields, no front doors, and often, no tops. The men wore caps which would not blow off, dusters to protect the clothing, goggles to protect the eyes, and gauntlets to keep the hands warm and the wind from blowing up the coat sleeves.

The lady also wore a duster, a large hat, goggles, and a veil to hold the hat on and protect her delicate face against dust and sun. Most ladies used muffs for warmth unless they drove the car from either the front seat or the back. As we all know, some ladies still try to drive the car from the back seat. Perhaps, that is why our 1917 Jeffery was designed with a passageway between the front seats so that the driver could tell his mother-in-law to get in the back seat without having to stop the car.

During the early twenties, there were still more open cars on the road than closed vehicles. Even trucks had no door windows and often no doors to protect the driver. Ladies who drove usually wore riding breeches with boots or leggings of some sort and although the goggles and veils had disappeared, a long hat pin or two was a must if madam wished to keep her hat in place.

When women began driving vehicles during World War I, the dresses became shorter and high lace shoes reaching almost to the knee were a "must." As a child, I remember my mother dressed like this fashion and my father always wore a cap, a short linen coat, and linen knickers with golf socks. My sister and I riding in our 1923 Marmon touring car wore long stockings and long sweaters even in the summers.

When we took our long trips during the early twenties, the United States was engaged in a massive road-building program and every trip involved detours, long delays on bumpy roads, and the usual clouds of choking dust which we all endured and were really not aware that our traveling attire was still a "motoring costume" of sorts.

Today, we drive our closed car with either the heater or the air-conditioner on so we don't wear costumes anymore. Now we jump into our cars with the plaid shorts, Budweiser tee shirts, blue jogging shoes, fancy sunglasses, and Caterpillar tractor caps. No indeed! Nobody wears a driving costume these days!

CLOTHING OF THE 1920S

As I look back on my early childhood which began at the close of the First World War, I am reminded that my generation was living in what was the end of the Victorian Age and the beginning of the Roaring Twenties. As children, we were raised by Victorian standards and wore clothing that retained influences of the 19th century. For example, when I was two or three years old my mother was struggling to fasten tiny buttoned shoes on my feet with a buttonhook, an instrument that reached through the slits and pulled the buttons outside. Of what use is a buttonhook today except to describe a pass pattern used by wide receivers in football? Does everyone know what a panty-waist is or the shame we felt if someone called us a panty-waist? Well, I remember them well enough. They were special drawers for both sexes that had a pair of horrible garters hanging from each side to which we were expected to fasten our white, brown, or black cotton stockings above the knees. Outside, we boys wore short pants or knickers while the girls had their pretty little print dresses.

Can any sane parent these days expect their little boys to put on outfits like that? Impossible! We kids did not have the luxury of having fads in clothes, food, or toys. We were told, "children should be seen and not heard" and that's the way it was—no pet rocks, convertible robots, hula hoops, or cheeseburgers. We invented many of our own toys and games involving homemade wooded rifles and swords. One must remember that kids my age were born just before or during the Great War and we were all familiar with the many songs, stories, and later movies that dwelt with that subject. It's quite thrilling to remember that the little Jewish songwriter who wrote, "Oh, How I Hate to Get up in the Morning" for a camp show called "Yip, Yip, Yaphank" is still alive. Irving Berlin will be 101 years old this May!

I suppose one of the main reasons that there were few fads was a lack of unifying media. Radio was still in its infancy and I don't remember any announcer telling us to "get your mom or dad to buy one of those now!" I do recall that old high school students mimicked college students by wearing yellow oilskin rain gear like that worn by fishermen and they had their friends draw faces or write clever sayings in India ink on them. They also wore four-buckle "articles" for snow wear. The girls often left them unbuckled to flap as they walked which, believe it or not, gave them the name "flappers". Other flapper fads were short hair and short dresses.

I remember my mother finally giving in to my request for a cotton polo shirt because "a lot of my friends were getting polo shirts." This, as far as I know, is honestly the only fad request I made of Mother. She willingly took up the sleeves of my dress shirts or any shirts for that matter. Shirts were made in lengths to somehow follow neck sizes and having a large neck and extremely short arms, nothing fit me without alterations.

Boys' pants came in sizes large, medium and so on. Since boys under the age of 14 still were doomed to wear "knickers", length was no problem. I will always remember getting my first suit with long pants as I was about to enter high school. The blue grey wool pants itched and were rather uncomfortable in early fall weather, but no matter---they

were cut to my length, my size, and they were all mine! Suddenly, I was no longer just a kid. I had become a young man. Thankfully the word "teenager" had not yet been invented and we didn't feel that we were a special group that had needs or needed catering to. We seemingly switched from being children to being young adults without fanfare. We were being addressed as "young ladies" or "young gentlemen" and we tried to act accordingly. I like to believe that we succeeded. It was a period of American social life that was unique and that will never come again. I'm glad that I lived in it and was part of it.