SEPTEMBER, 1956

A Lifetime Packed into a Single Month

by

CHARLES SMITH LINE

On the morning of September 7th, at Los Angeles International Airport, my son Francis put me aboard an American Airlines Cruiser bound for Detroit. Seven days later, at the same airport, he met me upon my return. In that seven days, with my other son Winfield, I had renewed the acquaintances of a lifetime,- in Linesville, Pa., New London Ohio; and Howell, Michigan. Few weeks in my life have been richer in experiences than that one.

Then, just after returning home, came another experience,- another climax, of far different kind.

Some 200 of you shared with me in these unusual events of September, 1956. This message is addressed to you personally, and I hope you will so consider it in lieu of an individually addressed letter, which for me would be a physical impossibility. Also, to those of you who may be on our annual Christmas list, take this as an advance message ahead of the season, from myself and wife, replacing the formal card in December.

To all of you go my heart-felt thanks for helping to make September, 1956 one of the outstanding months of my life, wherein- notwithstanding the sombre note at the last- "All's well that ends well".

My story with its full-packed series of incidents, all within one month, starts below following. a brief biography of the Line family.

AN INTRODUCTORY "LINE" ON THE CLAN OF LINE

Amos Line, my great-grandfather, founded the borough of Linesville, Pa. in 1800, and in this town were born my grandfather Smith Line; my father Henry Line; myself; and my oldest son Winfield Henry Line- the last two in the ancestral home, built in 1852.

My father married Helen Smith, daughter of Charles F. Smith. Thus my name, Charles Smith Line, combines the full names of both of my grandparents. On January 15th, 1957 I will be 85 years old, thus making the exploits noted hereafter rather unusual for a youngster of that age, still coming up smiling.

My wife is Daisy Henry Line, who also lived at one time in Linesville. On last August 22nd we celebrated our 58th anniversary of marriage.

For 50 years, after having worked in the same business for others, I was "on my own" in the 5 and 10 cent merchandising trade- 7 years in Linesville, 7 years in New London, Ohio, and 35 years in Howell, Michigan;- in all these activities working as an integrated team with my wife, later supplemented by help from the boys when old enough to be behind the counter out of school hours. Wife and I have been retired now for some 15 years or more here in "Sunny California", residing in our own modest home at 2327 Santa Anita Ave., Altadena.

Our elder son, Winfield, successor to my business, expanded the single store to a chain of seven large stores. During World War II, since for many years he had been an accredited flight instructor, he sold his merchandise stocks to the D.and C. Stores, another small Michigan chain, now with 35 stores, that he might fill the government's desperate need for pilot instructors at State College in Lansing, to teach the air-minded draftees how to fly. He and Francis both graduated from U of M.

Winfield still owns the buildings occupied by the D.and C, and has a man-sized job thereby in property management, added to his self-imposed duties- carried on by himself and his wife- in a continuing program of Korean relief, supplemented by frequent benefit lectures by both whenever called upon, to swell the much-needed Korean fund. They operate from their homes in Northport, Michigan, and Palm Springs, California, "commuting" between those places semi-annually.

Francis Raymond Line, our younger son, who was born in New London Ohio, lives with his wife in Eagle Rock in Los Angeles, 6 miles from our home. As a professional motion picture photographer and nationally-known lecturer, ably assisted by his wife, he has all of the United States and to a lesser degree the whole world as his field of operations. Their film production for the past season was "Monument Valley Adventure", filmed in the wilds of the Navajo Indian country, while their newest film, just ready for release, bears the title "Best of the West". Their daughter Adrienne Line, 20 years old next month, is a Junior at Occidental College.

THE STORY BEGINS

We left Los Angeles airport with a full complement of 80 passengers and five crew members, under sunny skies and perfect visibility, cruising at 300 m.p.h., at between 8000 and 18,000 feet high, according to the terrain and winds, and landed at Willow Run Airport (Detroit) at 8:10 P.M., on time. Winfield met me and forthwith we took off in his big Buick for Linesville, our native town in the old Keystone State, as our ultimate objective.

(Continued next page)

First we hit for the Ohio Turnpike, entered at Maumee, Michigan, thus by-passing the city of Toledo. Upon reaching the turnpike objective we put up for the night and next day traversed that wonderful highway for 150 miles at 65 m.p.h. There is not a crossroad or signal in its 241 miles between the East and West borders of the state. Leaving the turnpike after getting out of the Cleveland area, we deployed North to the lake shore at Painesville, joining U.S. # 20 there, and then continuing East through East Springfield, Pa., my old stamping grounds as a boy. We found that our old home, built by my father 75 years ago, had been wrecked to make room for the new highway as modernized; the schools to which I had gone as a youngster were either gone or modernized beyond recognition. Then on through Girard where Dan Rice, the celebrated native showman, had lived and died. Dan was the P.T. Barnum of his day, and his statue in the public square brought back memories of yester-years. This and the fine marble-block bank- "The Battles National Bank", suggesting by its name the banker Rush Battles, of 75 years ago, were the only two points connecting my memories with the past.

LINESVILLE, PA.

Arriving in Linesville in mid-afternoon we were shocked, upon calling at the office of The Linesville Herald, to learn of the recent death and funeral of the editor, Harold Lowing, with whom we had counted upon having a nice visit, to renew our acquaintance from our visit of five years ago.

We can't express sufficient thanks to Mr. L. V. Wallace (known to us as 'Vern') for his efforts as host in introducing us to many old-timers and citing us to historical spots etc. etc. To his credit be it said that he has worked on the Amos Line memoirs for many years. In this process he unearthed an old tintype of Amos Line, which Vern had enlarged to about 24 by 36 size and framed in heavy walnut. This he presented to me, as among the last living of the Line clan, and which I, in turn, with Vern's concurrence, gave to the borough, through its burgess, Earl Madigan, with the stipulation that it be hung permanently on the walls of the Council Chamber.

Some enterprising citizen should make a write-up of the above-mentioned incident,to be published in the local paper, giving credit to Mr. Wallace, to whom it is due. All the data acquired by Mr. Wallace, through the years, was turned over to the late Colonel Frank Wiser, who published it in a little book two years ago. I still have a few copies of this booklet, free upon request, to anybody writing me.

Among the numerous personal contacts space permits me to mention but a few, among which were the Knierman's, our motel hosts, who gave us many helpful hints; Gordon Irons, operating a chicken hatchery; Blanche Stratton, 80, the oldest living native citizen, and Frank Irons, 85. We visited the old Quaker Cemetery 3 miles North, wherein is the unmarked grave of the original Amos Line, who died in 1853. This is now a cow pasture, and most of the markers therein have long since crumbled into dust; 1866 was the earliest legible date we could make out on the few stones still partially standing. We visited the local wild bird sanctuary; the Pymatuning Spillway; the largest inland fish hatchery in the world; walked out E. Erie Street to the site of our old homestead, now wrecked with others to make room for the new million dollar school, covering 52 acres over all. Richard Farley, president of the Board of Education, took us on a tour of the buildings and premises and incidentally gave me several copies of ancient Quaker books. One of these antedated Amos' regime, back to Amos' father, Henry, the publication being dated 1789. These volumes of ancient vintage will eventually go into the archives of the Crawford County Historical Society in Meadville, county seat.

Sunday we attended services of the Universalist Church, Rev. Henry Pommer presiding pastor, with coffee served afterward in the Sunday School rooms. Met Gordon Whitesmith, son of a former pastor; Eva Cunningham; and others. This day we also ran over to Meadville to call on a cousin, Ida Lee Knapp; and to drive around the campus of Allegheny College, from which my father graduated in the 1850s.

Returning to Linesville, we had a nice 'get-together' with Ted and Blanche Allen for an hours talk. Ted was the boyhbod friend of my deceased brother Fred, who taught in the public schools at that time and later became a minister in the Universalist Church, of which my parents and the family were members. This day also we visited the local cemetery and our family lots.

NEW LONDON, OHIO

Leaving Linesville at daylight next morning, we drove over the causeway spanning Pymatuning Lake, to Andover, thence Westward to New London, Ohio, where we arrived at noon. Here, by previous arrangement, we were entertained for dinner at the home of Marvin (87) and Etta Hibbard. By phone appointment we called on neighbors of the Hibbards, the Brundages, who occupy the house I built 51 years ago. It still has the same lovely grain of the Southern Pine finish, as when newly built. Contacted Ross Seiler, the barber, and Frank Childs the druggist- both of whom have been in their respective businesses at the same location for 54 years; saw Paul Kirkton who, as a young timber man, sold me the framing lumber for the "Line Block", built 50 years ago, later sold to the Barnes Clothing Co., and now occupied by them, on whom we called. Called upon the Charlie Post family and upon M. E. Graves, 82, now moving to Florida. I noted that the brick pavements laid 50 years ago, when I was a member of the city council, covering all the main streets, but now with a tar top coating, seem as serviceable as ever, to last maybe another 50 years.

HOWELL AND VICINITY

Leaving New London, we headed for Howell, Michigan, stopping in Ann Arbor to call on Mrs. Blum, 88, and at Brighton to see the Newmans, mother and daughter. At 8 p.m. we arrived at Lake Chemung, which is Winfield's cottage home while at Howell, next door to the Yoon family, where we made night headquarters during the remaining 3 days of my outing. Grace, Winfield's wife, was at the time, at their Northport home, and therefore, upon the few occasions that were offered, when we were available, Mrs Yoon contrived some wonderful dinners for us to sit down to, with the family. These were highly appreciated by Winfield and myself.

Starting Tuesday morning we put in 3 intensive days of calling, sometimes together and I sometimes alone, in more or less brief interviews, while Winfield attended to his own business about town. Some of these I will mention in rapid fire order; met Mrs. Roy Sears; saw Howard Warner and Guy Knoop, both of whom were my draymen when in business; met Gerald Hubbell at the Tavern; talked with Mrs. Beatty, basement manager in the big Howell D. and C. store; Mr. Johnson, the manager; met William III and called at the McPherson State Bank; dropped in at the insurance office to talk with R. B. McPherson, lately deceased, and his associate, Paul Uber; saw Bob White, Standard Oil Station operator for many years; Russell Smith, the Ford man; Wilbur Johnson, veteran druggist; Mrs. Douglas Marr; and the Buick agency manager. Called on Mrs. Bert Pate, Frank and Blanche Andersen, Mrs. Ross Hildebrant, and Robert McPherson. Visited Don Van Winkle, my one-time attorney; his son and associate Chas. K. Van Winkle; and the efficient office secretary , Miss Esther Yerkes. Met Winfield for lunch at the old original Family Restaurant, with its familiar faces.

Roy Caverly, co-owner, showed me around the Livingston County Press, than which there is no more modern plant in Michigan and which employs 45 people. Winfield drove me around to view the four new schools at the corner areas of the city, and John S. Page, the genial superintendent for the past 35 years, showed us the central building's refurbished auditorium, seating 730, and said the district had over a million dollars in school investment. We visited the motor and appliance factory, out East Grand River, in which Archie Fournier has an interest but since he was away we were shown around by his brother Don, and the shop foreman. Our boys were pals of Archie as youngsters, in many great and wholesome adventures. We saw the big hospital, now building; and the new Baptist Church, which is a beauty, then drove around the old Fair Grounds, now the site of a new factory. Nearby is the 11,000 square foot new A. and P. food store. With Winfield, under the guidance of Bill Ladner, on a conducted tour, we did the new Citizens Auto Ins. Co., employing 300 and costing $1,300,000, Berthold Woodhams president. While here we saw Joe Brady, an officer of the company, Winifred Hight, Margaret Peavy, Marion Earl, and other old friends.

We drove to Milford to inspect the new self-serve D. and C. store, managed by Lowell Newcomb; then through the Kensington Huron River Park development for miles, maintained by the state; thence into Ann Arbor over the new bridge spanning the Huron River and to Dob Sun Yoon's Music Store, featuring the latest in piano models; thence to Howell via the river and lake road, stopping to call on the Harry Williams' and continuing on to Oak Grove to see the Ikens' and Wriggelsworths; next day inspected the country hardware of Sherm Haller at Lake Chemung, and saw Fred and Nellie Boutin at their apartment house at the lake. We made a trip to Brighton around the new home and factory developments; called at the D. and C. and met the manager, Mr. Chapel; saw Paul Uber, druggist; drove around lovely Island Lake, where we at one time maintained a boathouse, and the boys learned to swim; next, to "Northland" in Detroit, the biggest neighborhood shopping center in the world, sponsored by the J.L. Hudson Co; then to Walled Lake, another D. and C. location; and finally to Highland, to partake of a 6 o'clock dinner with Eph and Rose Hubbell, cooked and served as only a farmer's wife can.

The last full day in the Howell area we ran over to Fowlerville to renew old ties with Ernie Lang, the good-natured manager of the D. and C.; then on to Lansing with its capital city attractions; to Grand Ledge and the big double store of the D. and C. where we contacted Banker Towne; next on to Eaton Rapids, to the double-front general store of Lynwood Webb; then to the Miller Dairy Farms, a wide-spread institution, presided over by George Miller and Gladys Miller; then to Stockbridge, headquarters of the D. and C., where I had a good personal talk of an hour with their president, Herb Dancer, who showed us their newly built all-metal warehouse, 100 by 140 feet in size. Enroute home we drove around the State Sanitorium, with its new construction.

After supper I went down with Winfield, who had to attend the monthly bank directors meeting at the First National and I was courteously invited to sit in with them, as a former shareholder and chairman of the Board. But I had to excuse myself shortly to meet another appointment and repaired to the home of Roy and Cora Caverly, where later we were joined by Winfield about the festive table with cake, ice cream and coffee. Also we said "Hello" to the Caverly Jr. family- William, Carol and "Chucky."

Friday the 14th Winfield took me to the airport, after a momentous and busy 7 days, with a total of 1300 miles registered in auto travel, in which all the oldsters I met from other days urged me to repeat the trek in 1961, as has become my habit, every 5 years. Winfield vows that at that time he will convoy me across the Macinac Bridge, now building,- the longest suspension bridge in the world, so nicely described in the October Readers Digest. I only regret that I must make these travel exploits alone, leaving the wife to 'keep the home fires burning', as she is allergic to long trips.

BACK TO CALIFORNIA

The West bound plane left Willow Run at 11:45 a.m., Sept. 14, on time, stopping only at Chicago on the flight to Los Angeles. There were 60 passengers aboard this time and the usual efficient crew, captain, 1st officer, flight engineer, and two stewardesses, with all of whom I had good informative conversations. Lovely day with visibility unlimited, and I enjoyed every minute of the trip. I certainly commend American Airlines for service, speed, and comfort. It suggests that most long distance travel in the future will be via this sort of transportation.

Plane arrived at the Los Angeles Terminal on time where Francis met me and whisked me home by 8 p.m., where Daisy had a lunch waiting and we sat up and talked half the night, thereafter sleeping soundly and for several nights thereafter. I felt O.K.,not too tired, and called it a happy ending to a weeks' composite 5500 mile air and land trip, with no least hint of what the immediate future held for me, which, like the preceding chapter, ended happily, though on an entirely different plane. Let me say right here that dire results, to follow so soon, were in no way an aftermath of activities described in Chapter I. But let us go on with Chapter II.

ALTADENA COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Of a balmy Saturday evening my wife and I went down town to attend the annual Art Show, held on the City Hall Plaza in Pasadena, with its expanse of shade and lawn. We walked around among the exhibits for perhaps 1½ hours before taking the bus for home, with no signs of trouble. However, be it known that during the past few years I had had "symptoms" but kept things under control, and thought the situation was improving. Be that as it may, when I awoke next morning I was plugged tighter than a jug and was rushed over to the hospital, Doctor Fowler taking myself and wife over, after arranging for a room and contacting Dr. P. E. Wilson, recommended as tops in operations of this nature. A superficial examination indicated major surgery, for the removal of an enlarged prostate, with operation set within the next 48 hours. After affording me temporary relief, Dr. Wilson carried out the operation as planned, with Dr. Mallard assisting, and Dr. Van Horn as anesthetist, with two staff nurses in attendance.

The Operation was a complete success and my recovery has been slow but sure, and satisfactory, in which, I credit 50-50 to the skill of my surgeon and to the efficiency of that band of dedicated personnel attached to that hospital, headed by the superintendant, Mrs. M. Ratcliff, R.N., with 12 years experience, down through the corps of 13 nurses who attended me at various times, whose names I mostly learned from close association,- Jackson, Stevens, Wickizer (she gave me the fine ball-point with which I write this) Billiard, Adami, Claypool, Kerwin, and others whose names I did not learn, but at one time or another, contacted all. They represent a cross section of professional America. The hospital service, equipment, and facilities are superb, the main lack being room. In this connection, this well-located institution has plans on the board and funds raised for modernization and enlargement, on the same site, from the present 10-bed capacity to 22 or 23 beds.

As a patient, I had my ups and downs in various degrees, but in my fifteen days as a guest, whereas for the first week I could not read or write, could not sleep much, from nervous tension, and ate only under protest, could not listen to radio, or take any interest in life, yet at the last end this was all changed and I came to know that all is not gloom and drab in a hospital. It has its bright moments.

I recall a card I received from a concerned Michigan friend, conferring upon me the lapel badge awarded for 'bravery beyond the line of duty'. This was so apt that it went the rounds of the nurses. On another occasion, when I was able to hear the radio one day during the world series, one of the nurses proposed a bet (or was it the other way around.) Anyhow, I lost and so had to write her out a check for ONE CENT, to settle my debt, and she said she was going to frame it instead of cashing it!

Al and Minnie Berggren brought me home and they, as well as neighbors and friends, were helpful beyond measure. Thus ends Chapter II, and happily, for I am tending to return to normal in every way, though I am writing this one month later than the tentative Oct. 1 date appended hereto. So, as of the date noted, ends the most momentous 30 days of my whole life.

2327 Santa Anita Avenue
Altadena, California

Finis

C. S. Line

Dated as of Oct. 1, 1956

C. S. Line