

PONTON CLINIC
Arvel R. Ponton, M. D., P. A.
P. O. Box 1290
Alpine, Texas 79831

Telephone 915-837-3484

*Barney
Stamps of interest to
you here in
Wm*

*MAJ JWA
PBH*

July 29, 1988

Mr. Chappell
1210 Mistletoe Drive
Ft. Worth, Texas

Dear Mr. Chappell:

My daughter, Berry Crowley, said that you would be interested in knowing more about the neighborhood where you now live and where I grew up. I thought I would begin by telling you a little about my family and myself and about the way things were in Mistletoe Heights during the 1920's and 30's.

My family moved from Lubbock to Ft. Worth in 1919. My father had built Lubbock Memorial Hospital (now Methodist Hospital) which he sold before moving. We lived in a small house down the hill towards the river while the big house was being built. My father was a pioneer West Texas surgeon who learned to fly so that he could operate on patients in several towns on the same day. Because of his interest in aviation I was able to meet Will Rogers, Wiley Post and Frank Hawks, and had the experience of flying in the old Ford Tri-Motor when it first came out. I remember eating lunch with Will Rogers at Barney Holland's house (#13) and being amazed as I watched him perform what, to a small boy's mind, was nothing short of a miracle - eating lunch and chewing gum at the same time! I was with my father and Mr. W.A. Moncrief on the golf course at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs when they brought word to us that Will Rogers and Wiley Post had been killed in a plane crash in Alaska.

My father was head of the shrine in Ft. Worth and I remember him leading parades on his horse. He built several hospitals in the area, the last of which was Pennsylvania Hospital in Ft. Worth which he had to sell during the Depression. He then built a clinic on Pennsylvania Avenue where he practiced until the time of his death in 1944. He had purchased some land near Aledo, Texas and was out there riding when his horse fell, injuring him seriously. Since antibiotics were not readily available in those days, he died from the resulting infection. My sister, Mrs. Paul Gregory, lived on the ranch until she died, and her daughter still makes her home there. After my father's death, my mother sold the house to Dr.

pp. 7 Wier, a Ft. Worth pediatrician.

Growing up there in Mistletoe Heights in the 20's and 30's was, in retrospect, an idyllic time despite the Depression. I remember spending a lot of time listening to the radio - Amos and Andy was one of the favorites. I always looked forward to the arrival of the ice man and his wagon because he would give me a chip of ice and let me pet his horse. My mother would put a card in the window to tell him how many pounds of ice we needed. The neighborhood was considerably more rural in the

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days and we had horses, cows and goats down by the river. We also had a duck pond, a small track for sulky racing and a fishing pier out over the river. Most of this was washed away in one of the Trinity's more violent floods. We had a black couple who lived in the little house which is the garage now. He did all the heavy work around the house and drove the car for us. His wife did the cooking. I remember that it was a treat to eat with them because she would fix Opossum (captured while plundering our garbage can) and would let me sop my bread in the grease - something strictly forbidden at my mother's table.

We would spend our after school time fishing for crawdads in the stream down by the railroad tracks, riding bicycles, playing football in the vacant lot (#3) playing marbles on the Klar's tennis court (#18) and staging wars with rubber band guns. My biggest financial move was calling on the neighbors to sell the Saturday Evening Post out of my little red wagon.

In 1933 I went off to Culver Military Academy on a scholarship. Following that I graduated from U.T. Austin and went on to graduate from the Medical School in Galveston in 1943. After an internship at Harris Hospital I served in the Army in Burma as a doctor attached to a regiment of Chinese troops. I spent a year walking about 400 miles in the jungle supplied by air drop, and an additional year in India processing troops to go home. Back in the States I took a two year surgical residency in Lubbock and then returned to Ft. Worth where I practiced in the clinic my father had built for 8 years before moving to Alpine in 1957. I sold the clinic to Harris Hospital and it is now the site of their power plant.

Now, about the neighborhood. It was not only Depression time, but also the days of Prohibition. I remember helping my father make bathtub gin - really made in the bathtub - with alcohol he was able to bring home from the hospital. We hid the finished product in a cabinet covered by a tapestry halfway up the front stairs. A button in the entry alcove would open the cabinet door. Very high tech. Prohibition also accounted for the two stills in the neighborhood - both of which blew up. Depression and hard times accounted for the three men in the neighborhood who did time in prison - early white collar crime.

- Home #1 TANDY Charles Tandy dated my sister before going overseas in the war. Upon his return he met and dated a girl in California but ended up marrying her mother. With the assets acquired by marriage he expanded Tandy Leather into the Tandy Corporation. When his wife died they had a party complete with fireworks on the Boston Common as per her wishes. He later married Ann Winfor, again a woman considerably older than him. *Windfohr*
- Home #2 RENFRO (Renfro/Rexall Drugs in Ft. Worth)
- #3 VACANT LOT Site of many football games
- Home #4 HALTOM (Haltom Jewelers and Haltom City) One of Mr. Haltom's daughters taught me the Charleston and Black Bottom
- Home #5 REICH A wonderful German family that lived next door to us. Mr. Reich had a bakery and did very well. They had three fine daughters who all graduated from Vassar. I remember the sounds of them practicing the piano, playing pool in their basement, and the wonderful coffee cake that Mrs. Reich made. She just recently died at the age of 104.

nearly 99.

* Eleanor - 4 yrs at Sophie Newcomb + graduated there

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House #6 PONTON

House #7 GLENN/CHAPPELL Mr. Glenn was in prison when I was growing up but his wife continued to live in the house. We all considered her a mean woman as she wouldn't let us play in her yard and she fenced up the path between our house and hers/yours. During the war she turned the house into apartments. I never was inside your house.

House #8 MITCHELL/ISAACS Mr. Mitchell had two children, Zetta and Gatlin. I believe that Gatlin practiced ^{now lawyer} ophthalmology in Ft. Worth. B.K. Isaacs, an attorney, bought the house around 1926. His daughter, Annabeth, married Wiley Clarkson. His son Burford became my best friend and has remained so through the years. He married Virginia Farrell, daughter of John Farrell, an early oil millionaire. Burford changed his name from Burford King Isaacs to Burford I. King. Through smart business decisions and hard work he became a wealthy oil man and owner of a large trucking company. His two boys now help him in the business. He and I have spent many wonderful times together fishing, hunting and skiing. He is a fine man.

House #9 QUARLES Mr. Quarles had a lumber company in Ft. Worth

House #10 BEGGS Mr. Beggs was a Scotsman with three children - Ed, George Jr. and Deborah. Deborah is married to Tex Moncrief. Tex, Amon Carter Jr. and I all went to Culver at the same time. Mr. Beggs had his butler walk his bulldog on a leash every evening and all of us were terrified of the dog.

House #11 LATTIMORE Judge Lattimore gained possession of the house after the still that had been in operation blew up and the judge sent the original owner to prison. Hal, his son, grew up with me and became an attorney.

House #12 LOWDEN Bob Lowden and I were friends growing up. He owned and sold Stafford Lowden Printing Co. He and his wife were big tennis players.

House #13 HOLLAND Mr. Holland's son, Barney, and I were friends. Barney became wealthy with barges up in Oklahoma.

House #14 Another still that blew up. It created a terrific fire and a smell that I'll never forget. The streetcar tracks ran down Forest Park Blvd. and were our favorite target for "greasing" on Halloween. That was probably our biggest vice growing up.

House #15 JETTON On the edge of Shanty Town toward town a fellow named Jetton had a small BBQ joint. He expanded over the years and ended up with several large restaurants around town.

Area #16 This was the area called Shanty Town (or Niggertown). One of its best features was a Holy Roller church where they had beautiful singing in the evenings. We often stopped to listen on our way home from town.

House #17 HYDER Mr. Hyder was another victim of white collar crime. His son, Elton, became a prominent attorney and took part in the Nuremberg trials after the war. He married Martha Rowan who, together with her brother, were heirs to the Rowan Drilling Company fortune. Her brother was killed in a backyard BBQ fire leaving her the sole heir. Elton and Martha are prominent socially both in Texas and in New York, and their pictures are frequently in Town and Country

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- and Ultra magazines. They have a magnificent home in Ft. Worth as well as one in San Miguel d'Allende, Mexico.
- House #18 KLARS Had a jewelry store on South Main. Their clay tennis courts were the scene of our marble shoot-outs.
- House #19 ETIER Mr. Etier also did some prison time. I knew his son, Ed, who became a doctor in Ft. Worth. As a young man he went on a trip to Alaska and came back quoting Robert W. Service.
- House #20 HALTOM One of the senior Mr. Haltom's boys. G.W. Haltom grew up with me and was later killed in Africa during World War II.
- House #21 KENNEDY Marshall Kennedy had an insurance company in town and was famous for the quality of beer he made at home. His son was also killed in the war. The Kennedys later moved out to Eagle Mt. Lake.

That about wraps up all I can remember about the neighborhood. It's been fun to recall my childhood and the people who were part of it. My wife and I live outside of Alpine in a solar home that uses an indoor swimming pool as the heat collector. My children are scattered throughout Texas. You know Berry. I also have a son, Rod, who is a defense attorney in El Paso and who was made Defense Attorney of the year last year for his work on the Henry Lee Lucas case. I have another son who appraises real estate in Dallas, and a daughter who is a dietician here in Alpine. We'd love to have you stop by and see us if you are ever out this way. I hope that your memories of Mistletoe Heights will be as pleasant as mine.

Sincerely,

A.R. Ponton

(I am almost sure Arvel had 5 children)

#1
TANDY

#2
WENUS

TENNIS COURT

#18
KLAR

HOLY TRINITY CHURCH
SABAN RA TOW
(BLACK)

MISTLETOE BLVD.

1201

#20
HALTOM
(L.W.)

#19
STIER

#17
HYDOR

MISTLETOE DRIVE

FOREST GREEN BLVD.

Mistletoe Ave.

#14
STILL

STILL
#11
LATIMORE

#12
LOWDON

#13
MOLLAND

#2
RENFRO

VACANT LOT

#4
HALTOM

#3
REICH

#6
PONTON
WEBB

#7
SWEAN
CHAMBERLAIN

#8
MITCHELL
ISAACS

#9
QUACKS

#10
BEWES

1192

1200

1208