

The Store

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Things sometimes don't go as planned. (I know this comes as a surprise to the august members of "THE" Club.) This was going to be a paper about the placebo effect – about what we know, or what we think we know, about the power of belief on the efficacy of treatments of disease or symptoms. It was to go from there into the effect of belief, or rather what Norman Vincent Peale called "the power of positive thinking," on happiness, with a final look at whether the mind can physically, measurably change the brain. Peale, William James, the Dalai Lama and Anne Harrington, chair of the History of Science Department at Harvard, would have been virtual co-contributors. Who knows, the mind-body problem could have been solved.

Several things derailed that. First, and most important, that effort turned out to be an awful lot of really hard work. Second, I realized that John Tew, John Steiner, and Rollin Workman all might have been unable to keep from jumping up to explain how I got it wrong. And finally, I was irresistibly sidetracked by a *New Yorker* profile of the new Speaker of the House, John Boehner. The article noted:

[Boehner's] paternal grandfather, Andrew, opened a homely little tavern – Andy's Café, on the industrial edge of Cincinnati – which holds a central

place in the Boehner story. When Boehner was growing up, his father, Earl, ran the place, rising each morning at four in order to open the bar at six for the local early-shift workers, who would stop by for a shot and a beer before punching in. Boehner spent much of his youth in the bar, doing chores and, eventually, tending bar. “You have to learn to deal with every character that walks in the door,” Boehner has said, explaining that he was prepared by Andy’s Café to handle the incoming Tea Party House freshmen.

“House Rule,” *The New Yorker*,
December 13, 2010 at 61.

So this is, to use a phrase that President Carey alarmed me with in referring to Mr. Boehner’s story a few weeks ago, “yet another story about growing up in a bar.” I soldier on, despite Gibby’s foreboding, with the knowledge that this has got to be a much better bar than Boehner’s, and its story is more Fellini than Horatio Alger.

The shock of commonality with John Boehner. My father, Al, opened Franz Brothers’ Café -- a not so little, but definitely homely, tavern in the industrial core of Cincinnati. When I was growing up, he would rise each morning at three-thirty in order to open at a little after four. He apparently spent less time for his morning toilette than Earl Boehner. Comparing the mug of tonight’s reader with that of John Boehner may give a clue why.

Like Boehner, I spent much of my youth in the bar, doing chores, and eventually, tending bar. And he was right; you have to learn to deal with every character that walks in the door. Our bar, Franz Brothers' Café, stood at 3201 Colerain Avenue, at the corner of Bates and Colerain, in Camp Washington, for forty-three years.

It was in my family's parlance "the Store." It was never the "bar," "tavern," "café," "saloon," or "restaurant," although all would have fit the place. Since I never knew a time that was (if you will) "pre-Storic," I never knew what led to that term for the place. I suppose "store" was a stab at respectability, and a point of distinction from other Camp Washington establishments, like the quaintly named "Yacht Club," and "Noah's Ark," which we saw (in contrast to our "Store") as sloughs of iniquity.

"Store" was also in one root sense a good description of the place. It was the place where things were kept for our use – a cornucopia of food, alcohol, and tobacco in industrial quantities. My icon of "freedom from want" isn't Norman Rockwell's Thanksgiving dinner. It's "the Store". In my memory, the Store is ten times bigger than its building looks today, now on the market as a Camp Washington apartment building. It's now described as "a Good condition 9 unit building fully occupied. Great potential. Court Ordered Sale. SOLD AS-IS."

Camp Washington is a neighborhood that I'll venture few Literarians frequent. Last year *Cincinnati Magazine* named Camp Washington one of the hot neighborhoods for real estate in Cincinnati, pointing to rehabbed industrial

buildings like the former machine tool plant now rented out as “Machine Flats.” Machine Flats is one of the few bright spots in the more general blight of the neighborhood.

In 1907, when my father was born, Camp Washington was a German neighborhood separated from Clifton by the southern stretch of the Miami-Erie Canal, which ran roughly along today’s route of Central Parkway. Bruckmann’s Brewery operated at the foot of Ludlow, where the chimney touting “Worthmore Soup” stands now. A public swimming pool stood in the park fronting the massive 1860’s workhouse building, now razed. Sacred Heart Church stood, as it does today, at Marshall and McMicken. The language of instruction in its school was German.

These are fixed parts of my picture of the place at the turn of the last century, because they all figure in oft- (maybe too-oft) repeated family lore. Bruckmann’s brewery was where my father was sent by his father to fetch pails of beer. It never occurred to me to ask, “How much beer stayed in those buckets?” (And to be clear, that’s a question of spillage, not sampling – it was a good mile and a half from my father’s boyhood house to the brewery.) It also never occurred to me to ask whether it was normal for a brewery of the time to peddle buckets of beer “to go” to minors. Or whether there were queues of sons in knickers and newsboy caps, lined up to discharge this important household chore.

That public swimming pool in front of the Workhouse was held up as the cause when my grandparents took my father to the doctor long ago for stomach problems. The family doctor advised to keep him out of the pool. If he had to go swimming, per doctor's orders, he should go in the canal, since "It's dirty, but it's moving." Getting to swim in the canal – when the police weren't chasing him out – must have been a quite an adventure for the young boy, for this story to not only to stick with him, but be remembered, like Agincourt, "with advantage."

Sacred Heart switched its language of instruction from German to English during the First World War. As a result, my father lost most of his first language. Ironically enough, in later days Sacred Heart was saved by being named the city's Italian -American parish. Today it offers a Vatican-approved weekly *Latin Mass*, where the women wear lace head-coverings, as they likely did in 1907.

My earliest personal recollections of Camp Washington, called just "Camp" by those who know it, was of a place that had become the cauldron of smoke, grit, and the odd smells that came from the combination of metal casting and meat packing. Adding to the atmosphere was the Mill Creek incinerator, one of two of the city's plants where fossil fuel was used to turn solid waste into air pollution. It was a different time.

It was a time when the Cincinnati Union Stockyards stretched from the Kahn's building at Bates and Spring Grove, south past the Hopple Street viaduct. It was a time when a walk down Bates Avenue from Colerain to Spring Grove passed the

establishments that served Camp's strange combination of industries. A foundry. A heavy-haul rigging and trucking company. A small machine shop that handled the odd jobs for companies like Powell Valves, Carleton Machine Tool, and Lodge and Shipley.

I had my own odd job for that machine shop once – straightening the bent front fork from a Royal Enfield motorcycle. The shop was a relic. Its machines all took power from a system of overhead pulleys and leather belts that must have been sixty years old even then. Fitting enough, since the Enfield could well have been made on the same sort of archaic machinery. As an aside – one should never ride a motorcycle made by a company with the motto “Built like a Gun.” But that is another paper.

Closer to Kahn's, on the corner of Bates and Spring Grove, was Van Atta Feed and Supply, catering to the farmers who once brought their stock to the nearby stockyards. There it stood in the middle of the city, a shop that sold and serviced farm tractors.

Turn left at Spring Grove, and the stockyards were to the right, smaller meat packers and sausage-makers to the left. For some reason I made that walk in midwinter, and was treated to the sight of a small frozen creek of blood running from under a shop door, across the sidewalk to Spring Grove.

Stuck in between the carnage and the molten metal was still a neighborhood, with turn of the century houses, a barber shop, and Steinkoenig's Drugstore. Steinkoenig's lives in memory as the most poignant survivor of the neighborhood. It was a vestige of the Camp Washington days, when *Hausfrauen* scrubbed their limestone stoops weekly. The Steinkoenig's name was set in black script in the white tiles of the shop's entryway. Inside, the place had all the equipage of a proper apothecary, with vials with Latin abbreviations, and wooden display cases filled with high quality grooming kit. Benet's Pharmacy on Garfield Place preserves the type today.

Like many second-generation families, mine left the close city neighborhood to get more living space. In 1951 they moved "up the hill", staying on Colerain Avenue, north into then-rural Mt. Airy. Colerain was a two lane road. The new house was surrounded by apple trees, and a white picket fence. Six days a week, for twenty-two years, my parents made a return trip to Camp. Getting back was for my non-driving mother a two-bus trip, with a transfer at Knowlton's Corner. Since from my earliest memory the Store served as day-care, I was occasionally in tow, leaving me with early memories Knowlton's Corner as a sort of anteroom to Camp, with sparking trolley buses and drug-store sodas.

Here's how the Store looked in those days. Three stories plus attic of unglazed red brick. Curtains in the second and third floor windows showed the apartments there. A lighted rectangular plastic Pepsi sign above the first story, with "Franz Brothers Café" across its lower quadrant. A much older, globular glass "French

Bauer Ice Cream” sign below that. A dark-green painted cast-iron store front framing large display windows on Colerain, with one other fronting Bates. Bespoke neon tube-lights framing the windows’ interiors, the tubes bent into neat circles at the windows’ lower corners. Occasionally, these neon lights even worked.

There were two front doors on Colerain. At one time, the building offered two storefronts that had been united by knocking out a third of their shared wall. A picture of the place appeared in an article on the history of Kahn’s Meats in the fall 1992 issue of The Cincinnati Historical Society’s “Queen City Heritage” magazine. The picture was present not because of the historical interest of the Store, but because Bates and Colerain was the handiest high-and-dry spot that Kahn’s meat trucks could reach during the 1937 flood. That all-time-worst flood drove the Mill Creek a mile outside its usual course, filling the first floor of the Kahn’s plant. Kahn’s brought product by makeshift wooden jerry-boats to the corner of Bates and Colerain for loading onto trucks, according to the article. My father’s recollection was that Kahn’s had to get livestock to the plant by reversing this route. He obligingly allowed Kahn’s to use a narrow alley-way, running front to back along the side of his store, as a loading ramp – for slight per-head yardage fee.

My father once mentioned that his place had been owned by one Anna Marie Hahn, a Bavarian immigrant who lived at times in her life in Camp Washington. Hahn’s métier was befriending and poisoning older men who either had money in

the bank, or recently acquired life insurance. She did in at least five, and was the first woman to die in Ohio's electric chair. The case was so celebrated that Hahn carried no less than five press nicknames: "Arsenic Annie," "The German Housemaid," "The Angel of Mercy," "The Poison Angel," and best of all, I think, "The Blonde Borgia." *Time Magazine* covered her execution in 1937 under the article title, "German Cooking." With this much notoriety for Hahn, it's incredible that there was no more than one parental mention of her ownership of the place. Like most parents, including me, my father was not one to mention an interesting fact or event in his past only once. So I had put the Hahn story down as an interesting projection of a neighborhood legend.

However, curiosity arising from work on this paper led to the following from a 2006 Hahn biography:

[In early 1931] the Hahns managed to purchase from John Rinck a small bakery and grocery/deli at 3201 Colerain Avenue, on the corner of Bates Avenue in the Cincinnati Suburb of Clifton [poor Camp Washington doesn't even get its props for its famous citizens!] They struggled ..., trying to make a go of it, but they did not fare well, even with Anna Marie spreading cream cheese on bagels and taking bets. Fifth District police never caught her at it, although they knew she was running a betting operation from within her establishment.

"We walked in and out of that place so often that we were able to break up that handbook," recalled Detective Fred Stagenhorst.

Less than a year passed before the Hahns sold their business to Aloysius and Harry Franz in 1932.

Franklin, *THE GOOD-BYE-DOOR*, Kent St. Univ. Press (2006) at 8.

So, not only had Anna Marie owned the place, my father and uncle bought it directly from her when she was roughly eighteen months from doing away with her first victim. And with respect to the Hahn biographer, I'd wager it would be hard to find anyone in Camp Washington in 1932 who even knew what a bagel was.

My father came to own the place as the last step in a series of entrepreneurial operations, starting with multiple paper routes. Cincinnati had at the time at least three dailies. He had a bum knee as the result of a childhood fall from a railway overpass, so delivering papers by bicycle must have been a challenge. But he did it so effectively that when he was offered a job in a local Camp Washington factory, he turned it down, because he couldn't take the cut in income.

He came by his entrepreneurship from his father, the younger son of a German farming family who, either in search of opportunity, or in avoidance of German military service, came to Cincinnati as a trained woodworker. He ultimately came to run a business installing parquet floors and building wooden staircases. An oft-heard story about him was that early in his time in the U.S., he worked for a company that made custom doors for walk-in iceboxes. His employer chastised him one day for drinking beer with his lunch. He responded, "No beer, no work," and quit. If there would ever be a Franz coat of arms, it would carry that motto: "*Nulla cervesia, nullus labor.*"

My father's enterprises went from paper routes, to candy-delivery routes, which (so we gathered) included servicing games of chance, like punchboards and one-armed bandits. A slew of the latter, heavy and ornate, wound up in my grandparents' attic, only to disappear after the old folks' deaths. I'm not totally sure of the legal status of this games-of-chance work. The family did hear that my father once met Al Capone at a convention in Detroit, and that Capone was "a nice guy." Obviously, he and my father were never in competition.

The candy route was followed by a catering business, which led in 1932 to the Store. 1932 – a great year to start a new enterprise in the notoriously up- and-down restaurant trade – mid-Depression, and a year before the end of Prohibition. The Store was, I think, from the beginning, a combination of neighborhood bar and factory cafeteria. The physical appearance betrayed that. Walking though the front door, you'd be on a black path deposited on the floor, built up of metal shavings, cutting fluid, and factory grime. To your right was a six by eight foot display of magazines, with titles like *Argosy*, *Police Gazette*, *Popular Science* and *Popular Mechanics* – standard barber shop stuff, minus the ones you'd spend time holding sideways. Rotating wire racks of paperbacks and comic books stood in front of the magazines. I can't recall selling one magazine, book, or comic book in over a dozen years in the place, but Marshall News would dutifully rotate the stock, and we didn't pay for what didn't sell.

To the left, behind a soda-fountain counter, were jobbers' shelves chockfull of over-the-counter drugs. Fifteen feet of dark wooden cabinets, three feet high,

stretched along the wall past the drug racks. Next a grill and sandwich station, a steam table, a twenty-foot mahogany bar, and a corridor leading to the kitchen. The right side of the space was filled with about ten tan-Formica-topped tables, mismatched chairs, and a varying collection of coin-operated machines – a bowling game or bumper pool, and always a juke box. I can't count the times I heard "Stand by Your Man" on those boxes. A partial wall obscured a couple of tables from the view of the bar, so those tables were favored by the local teens and tweens in the early evening hours. We didn't sell them their cigarettes, but it wasn't for us to say they couldn't smoke.

The ceilings were in my memory enormously high, the original pressed metal long before pierced by hundreds of nails to hang some no-doubt toxic ceiling tiles, just as the walls had been covered, in a fit of modernization, with tan-over-blue 4x8 particle-board panels.

There was a back room behind the main eating area, with booths complete with remote selectors for the juke box. These never worked, because in my time, this room was never used. Twenty years before, musicians would come from the Crosley Building further up Colerain, for some post-work jam sessions after performing on WLW radio.

Waning down, but still holding on, was the "Consumers' Pleasure Club," a neighborhood club named for the long-defunct local brew – Consumers' Beer. The club met in the Colerain side of the basement, in a dank room with the stone

foundation walls painted a ghastly yellow. I am not sure what they did in the Consumers Pleasure Club, but am fairly certain beer was involved. Sort of like The Literary Club, I suppose, but subterranean.

The Bates side of the basement was the warehouse for the food and drink operation, with a walk-in box with ten 32-gallon barrels of beer, and rooms with storage for acres of canned goods, and innumerable full and empty bottles of beer and soft drinks. The rear area was piled with stuff that hadn't been moved in decades, and there were parts of that space that I would avoid for the sheer creepiness of it – and Anna Marie Hahn had nothing to do with that.

So there was the stage. Now for some players. The founder you know a bit. He was a stocky fellow with a broad nose and big ears. The apple didn't fall far from that tree. His work attire, summer and winter, was a short-sleeved white shirt, and thin black pants covered with a white cotton apron that was grimy by 11:00 A.M. – forgivable when you start at 4:00. My mother, in the sort of waitress garb you have to go to Hathaway's to see today, was a sparrow-like Eastern Kentucky complement to my father's blue-eyed North German taciturnity. My uncle, the night bartender, a slimmer, taller, infinitely shier version of my father.

Memorable employees: Dorothy the cook --- a large black woman, about the size and shape of Tyler Perry's "Madea." In my pre-bartending days – that is, pre-sixteen – I spent hundreds of hours with her in the kitchen. Hours that became uproarious after I learned I could make her laugh by mimicking the Appalachian accents I heard "out front." She fought with my father about monthly when the

stress of the midday lunch hour was too much for one or the other of them. If you ever experienced a lunch hour at the original Izzie Kadetz's, you have the flavor of it. My brother swore that a brewing bar fight was quelled when Dorothy stepped out of the kitchen holding a meat cleaver – but he wasn't an eyewitness, and this could be another family legend. Barbara Sue Branscum – a blond bantam from Eastern Kentucky – sprightly, funny, sweet, smart, and illiterate. Broaddus, the night-janitor who was always referred to as “our porter” – which today rings sour in both words. He was roughly five-four high and four feet wide – none of it comprising fat. An unfailingly kind person, except to the café patron who unwisely called him “boy.” And that only once.

The patrons divided into two unequally sized groups. By far the larger was the mass of workers who blew through – some not on lunch hours, but on lunch half-hours. Most of them seemed then as now like an episodic tide of mouths that once fed, disappeared. The biggest surge came from Powell Valves Plant Number 2, a block away. One standout group was from the foundry just south on Bates. Every worker from there came in covered with soot, and all had so little body fat they looked like they'd been flayed. Winold Reiss captured the type in his heroic metal workers in the Union Terminal mosaics. He obviously worked from life.

Another place where work seemed to determine morphology was Kahn's meatpacking plant, which sported on its south wall an example of some of the worst advertising copy ever: “Home of the wiener the world awaited.” The

Kahn's workers, at least past the slaughtering operations, worked standing, in refrigeration, wearing long white coats. Because of the plant, the garb, and the work, Kahn's is always linked in my memory with two Gary Larsen cartoons. One shows a building looking much like the Kahn's building, and carrying the sign, "The Contaminated Pork Building, Cincinnati, Ohio." The other, captioned "The Horse Hospital," showed a doctor in white coat in a ward of bedridden horses. He carries a chart with two columns. The left is headed "Diagnosis," and lists a number of maladies. The right is headed "Treatment," and repeatedly lists one word: "Shoot."

The Kahn's workers tended to look like linebackers – tall, strong enough to manhandle and carry legs of beef (which they regularly delivered to the store's kitchen), but pale and pinkish from the moist cold. In contrast to every other plant's workers, every one I saw from Kahn's was white. Unlike the callous-and-horn hands of the factory workers, the Kahn's workers' were soft from the continual work with tallow.

Because of the cold in the place, we often delivered dozens of pints of hot coffee to Kahn's. These were prepared to order, with the lids marked "C," "S", "CS", and "XX". There was only ever one "XX", which of course held coffee with two shots of liquor.

Maybe it was owing to the nature of the work, but the Kahn's crew seemed to have a slant for a certain gallows humor. I remember once referring to some

Kahn's Braunschweiger sausage as "chicken liver," only to be corrected by one of its makers: "Paul, nothing in that stuff ever saw a chicken."

The smaller, but more memorable, group of patrons comprised the regulars, and they fell into a number of subgroups. First were the ones with roots in Camp, whose parents and grandparents had lived there. They had names like Mueller and Duritsch. One of the Duritsch boys was a frequent sight around town – he was a beefy Cincinnati motorcycle cop, with a face like a bulldog's – an unfriendly bulldog's. "Puss" Mueller, the plumber, another beefy customer, liked to show his insider status by drinking his beer standing *behind* the bar. From that vantage, he often held forth on the secrets of the plumbing trade. To all in general, and none in particular, he liked to announce that "To be a plumber, you only need to know two things: Friday's payday, and shit don't flow uphill." From what I've seen, the second point is sound organizational theory, as well as plumbing art.

At the other end of the spectrum of old Camp Washington stock was a tenant, Mrs. Meerpohl, third floor rear, Bates Avenue side. She was a sweet, elderly widow who managed to make incredible confections on the ancient gas stove in her apartment. In fact, she seemed to emerge from her apartment only to bestow that bounty on her landlord and his grateful kids. After her death, every holiday season we'd try to find or make a *Linzer Torte* to equal hers. But none ever has.

A tad younger than Meerpohl was Howard Oerhleman, a soft-spoken, fedora-wearing older bachelor for whom the Store was de facto what “Senior Centers” are more overtly today – a place not to be alone, where – and here the theme song from the sitcom *Cheers* really did have it right – “everybody knows your name.” We not only knew his name, we knew his order, and knew that the glass gallon jug he brought in should be filled with draft Burger. Given the selection at the tap, there was only a 1 in 2 chance of getting that wrong.

The next generation of regulars held the south-to-north migrants who moved to Camp for the factory work, or knew somebody who had. Across the bar came many wistful tales of eastern Kentucky and “East Tennessee,” accent always on the first syllable. One Dale Hollow native, a Powell Valves worker, memorably liked to relive his days of foraging in the woods for American ginseng, even then, to hear him tell it, precious and rare. What could be farther from machining tools, polishing valves, pouring metal, than searching the woods for a precious herb?

One summer my brother, having let it be known at the bar that he was heading down I-75 -- ultimate destination Fort Lauderdale -- got the memorable mission of taking one Southern transplant, broken by the combination of too much hard work and too much alcohol, back home to Tennessee. Unspoken, but known to each, was that this reverse migration was a homecoming for dying.

There were traces of the South also in the voice of Harvey, a sixty-ish, olive-skinned gentleman who was always turned out in a straw snap-brim hat, with well pressed dark green Dickies work-shirt and pants. His heavy black horn-rimmed glasses magnified his eyes, betraying extreme far-sightedness. The huge eyes, and very quiet demeanor, gave him almost an oracular air. He lived in our building, and kept to himself. His posture looked military to me, and I once asked him if he'd even been in the service. He said he was a Marine, and had served on a gunboat in China. Probes about what action he'd seen there never got more than this: "Well, they *were* shooting at us."

In contrast to the laconic and oracular, there were more than a few who could be described by a term I learned later – "*Luftmenschen*" – impractical people who seemed to subsist on air. One was Jerry, who claimed to come to Camp because he had been thrown out of "the Bottoms," down on the riverfront. He was, by occupation, a clown performing under the name "Gee Gee." He would occasionally come in for a drink in full whiteface and costume, minus only the fake red nose (his real one being red enough for the purpose.) No one paid these appearances the least attention – and this offers a pretty good definition of a regular's neighborhood saloon. You can literally be a clown, and no one will bother you about it.

There were few female regulars. It was a time when most women didn't hang out in bars. The racier folk, you'll recall, frequented the Yacht Club. Occasionally those revelers would make it to the Store the following morning. Neenah, whose

sister worked in the Store off and on, often did that. Neenah was a sweetly gregarious person, whose physique recalled the Venus of Willendorf. Although usually cheerful, when she had partied too much the night before, she could get weepy, and when that started it was our job to send her packing, for her own good. On one such occasion she was in such bad shape that I needed to walk her home, although home was only across the street. I returned from that mission only to learn that there had been lively speculation at the bar on how long I'd be away. I was forever grateful to my uncle for assuring the speculators that I'd be back quick-time. As I was.

As you've noticed, many of these recollections center at the bar. The American bar is an odd thing. If you watch people at a bar, you will see a lot of men who are alone in the company of others – to borrow the title of a recent book.¹ The setup is almost sacramental, with an altar, and a sort of secular communion.

At Franz Brothers', if you were a regular communicant, you had credit. Your running tab was kept on an index card in a 3" x 5" wooden file box burnished by long use. The bar business was the only high-margin one in a restaurant/bar, and extending credit was one way to keep a patron coming back. Of course, there was always that last bill. We always got stiffed on that last bill, and expected to.

1

K. Huddleston, *Alone in the Company of Others: A Novel* (ebook).

My father was adept at rough payout calculations, and never overextended on a tab. Would that subprime lenders had had that practical wisdom.

Our bar stocked the full array of miscellaneous merchandise that bars of the era had: cigarettes, of course, but also displays of combs, handkerchiefs, lighters, lighter fluid, flints, nail clippers, lip balms, Timex watches, and tiny, useless folding knife-and-file sets apparently (though ill!) designed for nail care. What conceivable market research led wholesalers to pitch that collection to the bars of America? And what did the display communicate across the bar, and at what primitive level -- “You’re a disheveled mess, but at least you’ll be able to make fire?”

The cliché of the patron spilling his troubles to the barkeep didn’t seem to happen in Camp. Drinking was a serious business. It could be interrupted by occasional levity, but not spoiled by whining. Catch-phrases, and humor by repetition, were much preferable. If you revealed character, it was a stock character as formulaic as any from *Commedia dell’Arte*. The writers of *Cheers* knew this, and should have given credits to the Italian stock characters. Consider: Norm as Harlequin, Cliff as the bumptious Captain, Frasier as *Il Dottore*, Sam and Diane as *Inamorato* and *Inamorata*. Not coincidence, archetypes. To steal a line from Matthew Arnold, “Sophocles heard it long ago on the Aegean.”

But then as now, Camp was not really a place of quaint stock characters. It was a tough place that in the 1970’s got tougher. The son of a long-time Camp resident

was a victim of that. I served this son his first legal beer. His order surprised me, as he was with a group of neighborhood kids who came in the early evenings to drink Cokes and feed the juke box from the table least visible from the bar. Although I had been bartending from about sixteen, I dutifully carded him. And he produced the ID to show it was his eighteenth birthday. That beer was on the house. Five years later, he was cut down by a shotgun in Camp, for reasons unknown.

My father was shot in a holdup. It was only a .22, fired into the meat of his thigh as parked his car while returning from the Provident Bank at Hopple and Colerain. Every Friday he'd cash payroll checks -- for free if you were a regular, for a quarter if you weren't. That required about four or five bank runs, since he wouldn't get more than \$5,000 in cash at a time. The thief got away only with about \$200 in rolls of coins in a canvas bank bag. The bills were, as usual, stuck in my father's pants pockets -- just in case what did happen to him, happened. His chief concern when my brother arrived at the hospital was getting the \$5,000 in bills out of there ASAP. First things first. The thief was never caught. Within two years, Franz Brothers' had been sold.

After the sale, my father still kept his first house in Camp as a rental property. One of the tenants was an old customer. This one could be seen as the apotheosis of Camp, its *genius loci*. Tommy Leary was said to be heir to a sizable Camp Washington foundry. He got crosswise with his relatives, and wound up working on the line at another foundry. He was an arresting figure -- below middle height,

but powerful. With an aquiline nose and thick brush-cut hair, he looked like the more Romantic portraits of Nietzsche. His eyes, especially when looking out from behind the foundry's soot, were a mix of Charles Manson, and the Afghan girl in the *National Geographic* cover shot. My parents must have done him some kindness, because he was devoted to them – and would have probably literally killed for them.

He fell apart. His intensity became obsession. He became a hoarder, filling his apartment and adjoining lot with junk. The trash became more and more a nuisance, and eventually he had to leave. I last saw him walking down Colerain on a bitter cold day, and stopped to give him a ride. I took him a few blocks, and gave him what money I had. He teared up, kissed my hand. I never saw him again. A goodbye to the intensity and madness, the industry and oblivion of Camp.

So – as promised – not Horatio Alger, more Fellini, maybe some Dante. No edifying moral, no celebration of “learning to deal with whatever came through the door.” A neighborhood where the machines to make machines were made for the world, while livestock were slaughtered by the thousands. A crossroads of great migrations. Lots of accents. German, black, Appalachian. As always, La Rochefoucault has said everything you'd want to say, only better:

“The accent of one's birthplace lives in the heart and the mind, as in one's speech.”

And that's not a placebo effect.