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MAKING MONEY FOR SCHOOLING

Some of the many boys--and a few girls--who worked to pay their way through Western in the old days ought to get together and compile their many experiences. A good-sized volume could be made of the stories that they told me when they came back from such money-making expeditions as selling books in the summer. Another book could be made from local experiences, when students working to pay their way were looked down on as something pretty low.

Along in the late teens or early twenties of this century there was a great wave of selling books as a means of getting a few extra dollars for education. Some company in Memphis promoted these summer sales and ultimately employed probably twenty of our boys. Fred Frey, who was apparently the first of our boys to work for the company, was told to get together a group to work one summer; he was given the money needed to get the "agents" into their areas to see their religious books. He had the tickets, too, for railroad travel. Away out in Oklahoma, where there was only a small railroad station and one lone operator, the train the boys were riding stopped to pick up a mail bag or two and some milk cans. There was no drinking water on the train, a rather slow-going one. When the train stopped, Jewell "Squirrel" Wright saw a pump somewhat behind the depot and immediately got off to get a drink. The station man and the baggage or express man were engaged in getting the milk cans straightened out. Wright got his drink and was leisurely strolling around the station to board his train; suddenly the engine gave two short toots and the train took off. Wright had no ticket, no money, no nothing; he took to his best gait as a runner, right down the middle of the tracks; he just had to catch that train. Meanwhile the other boys, found out that he was missing and assembled on the steps at the rear of the train and started encourgging him in his

marathon. Two or three got on the lowest step and grabbed him bodily when he got close enough and fairly dragged him aboard, amid the squeals and laughter of the others. Some of the boys felt that this one bit of near-tragedy paid for the whole rather unsuccessful summer. For weeks after the fall term began this story was told and acted out.

One of the boys, one year, was assigned to some area in Pennsylvania. When he rang a doorbell in some small town and announced his mission, the "lady of the house" came. She was very courteous and invited him to come in. When he said that he was selling Bibles and other religious books to pay his way through school, that he was a student at the Western State Normal School, in Bowling Green, the woman laughed and said, "My church helps support a missionary in Kentucky. Is Bowling Green in the Mountains?" In spite of this inauspicious beginning of his sales talk, the boy succeeded in selling a good-sized bill to the woman and, when he returned a week later to deliver the books, he was asked to remain for dinner. Maybe those mountain missions meant something, after all.

The champion story of all concerns Ed Ray. I have been unable to get him to write this true story. After a very unsuccessful book-selling summer in the Southwest, he managed to get to St. Louis by hitching a ride on a freight train. Dirty, sleepy, hungry, he got off the train when it slowed down in the yards at the freight station. He fairly walked into the arms of the night watchman, a middle-aged Negro. At first Ed wanted to run, but he was too tired and hungry to do so; he was willing to risk arrest. To his surprise, the man talked kindly to him, asked him whether he was hungry, and then took him to a small eating place (for whites) near the freight yards, had him order a full meal, and paid for it out of his own pocket. When Ed remonstrated, the man said, "No, I'm glad to do this. Somewhere out in the big world I have a boy who ran away from home. Maybe he is hungry tonight; maybe the Good Lord will send him somebody to buy

him some food." Ed used to declare that this was his most memorable experience, in a very active, wide-ranging life. Here is a sort of sequel that rarely happens: Some months later, after Ed had got back home and was close to his folks, he was in Louisville; his business took him near one of the railroad yards. There he saw a hungry, down-at-the-heel youngish Negro man get out of a boxcar. Like the older Negro of some months before, Ed guessed, rightly, that this colored boy was hungry. He took him to a sandwich shop near by and told him to fill up. He gladly paid the bill and hoped, somehow, that he had found the lost boy of the elderly Negro who had been so kind to Ed himself; anyway, he had passed along a similar kindness, which might be a good moral story to grow out of selling religious literature to raise funds for further schooling.

Waiting on the tables at boarding houses here was a standard way of helping with school costs. As I have often told, only boys did this until Gertie Clemmons, of Edmonson County, broke the custom and made table-waiting respectable and worthy for girls, too. Not all the people who ran boarding houses were cruel to their "servants," as one middle-aged boarding-house keeper called the students who helped her; sometimes there grew up a very warm friendship between the family who fed students and the helpers and the boarders. I, personally, cherish the memory of the innate kindness of "Pa" and "Ma" London, who used to keep a boarding house over on Center Street. Mr. London was far past the average age of students and had taught many years before he, largely through the influence of Professor Burton, decided to come here and finish what was then the Life Certificate curriculum. Mrs. London, who had been quite an old maid when she married Mr. London, was childless but motherly; we students soon found out how kind and hard-working she was. Mr. London was a hypochondriac and was humored by his hard-working wife until some of us felt that he needed a shingle

properly applied. Years after our staying with the Kondons, Mrs. London died. When I saw "Pa" London at the K. E. A., he was about the most pitiful-looking person whom I had ever known; he was lonely, somewhat shabby, deeply appreciative of his boys who had eaten at his house, practically lost in the midst of the later ones who could not have known what boarding houses and their keepers were like.

A list of the students who waited on tables and then, with their college work behind them, attained to considerable prominence would be a long and informative one. Here are a few: Will Taylor, Charles Taylor, L. Y. Lancaster, L. C. Winchester, O. A. Adams, Elijah Nisbet. With a little searching of older catalogues and newspapers, I could add twenty-five more equally prominent ex-waiters.

Some of our boys worked for business men down town. One boy did all of his high school and college work without ever stopping, his chief source of spending money being what he earned as the school representative of a local laundry. One boy, when rules for barbering were somewhat lax, worked his way through to his degree by cutting hair and shaving people at Toy's Barbershop. A number of boys met trains and arranged to find rooms for the students. When I stepped off the 10:18, on the night of January 19, 1908, the first person I saw was L. L. Hudson, who was working his way through Western; he directed one Corbett McKenney and me to the old Potter House, where we spent the night and then went to the old campus to register the next day. McKenny and I remained the best of friends from then on until his death, late in 1912; his family call me "Uncle Gordon" to this day.

Some of us paid our way through school or a portion of our way by firing furnaces, working in gardens, doing a lot of yard and house work for faculty members and other citizens. By having a garden for the Munkle family, on Chestnut Street, I got acquainted in a great way with Major W. A. Obenchain and his talented wife, the author of AUNT JANE OF KENTUCKY. Major Obenchain was an avid weather observer

and kept numerous instruments in his back yard. We would talk across the fence about the weather and everything else. Mrs. Obenchain was one of the early promoters of woman suffrage; she, too, exchanged ideas across the cross fence; I admired her greatly and lost no time in telling her how much I had enjoyed her books. Running that garden was worth all the energy it cost, even if I had not made a fair amount of very-much-needed money to help with school expenses.

In 1908, I believe, the ELEVATOR was started. A. L. Crabb was its first editor. The editor and the business manager earned \$20 each for the months when the magazine was published. It was my good fortune to be picked as an associate editor by Grover Cleveland Morris, who succeeded Crabb as editor. Morris was in bad health and had to leave school and go to the mountains of Colorado after only four or five monthly issues of the ELEVATOR had appeared. Uncle Billy Craig asked me to take over for the rest of the year. In the fall of 1911 he, as sponsor of the magazine, asked me to continue as editor-in-chief. When I was asked to teach some classes, beginning in January, 1912, I went to see President Cherry to resign; he asked me to remain as editor for the rest of the year. Thus I was soon a rich man, for to the \$20 a month that I got from being editor I drew the huge sum of \$75 a month as teacher of English and Latin. Maybe that sudden wealth caused me to become engaged in May, 1912; a man with a salary of \$95 a month could afford to dream of having a home of his own to take the place of miscellaneous boarding places since Christmas, 1906. But our marriage was still some time off, for it was not until September 9, 1913, that we felt equal to facing life together.

When I went to Indiana, in September, 1913, I found that many of the students were working their way through college and that there was no stigma attached to doing so. A roster of prominent men who did this would also be a great bit of good reading. To my surprise, I found even greater democracy at Bloomington than I had ever seen at Bowling Green; there was a tradition of working one's way through college.