

Gary Stories



Mary Poppins said, "Begin at the beginning that is the very best place to start." Well, I am going to start near the middle, I hope. I will need to live to be 124, but I am working on it. There will be many flashbacks, flashforward, flash sideways, and other things that may make the movie Inception seem linear. Hey, it is my life and I'll tell the story my way, sort of even if I have to make up some of it.

When I was on a trip to Washington DC, I stopped by to visit my daughter and her family in Portage, PA. One of my grandsons had a homework assignment to interview someone. He chose me. I talked to him for about 45 minutes. When I got home I sent him some email with more information. What follows is a rambling discussion of my life. This has little purpose, but it is a collection of stories I have told about me over the years. When will it be finished? Never. I keep on having adventures. As long as I have life, I will dance tune being played.

One of the questions was how many places have you lived....so this is the beginning. Boring, like the begats in the Bible, but so what:

1. 440 B, Poinsettia Dr., Kwajalein Atoll, RMI May 2010 to May 2013
2. Room 219, Shell BQ, Kwajalein Atoll, RMI Feb 17th 2009 to May 2010
3. 2393 Place Rd, Port Angeles, WA since March 10, 2003
4. 70 Vista Lane, Port Angeles since April 17, 1996
5. An apartment on 104th Ave., near Aurora Blvd in Seattle, WA Jul 96-Oct 97
(I commuted home to Port Angeles most weekends)
6. Motel 6 in Port Angeles early April 1996
7. The Gaylord Hotel on Jones St, San Francisco, CA Mar-Jun 1996
8. Apartment at Third & Folsom, San Francisco, CA May 95 Mar 96
9. 4485 Queens Ave, Corvallis, OR Dec 92 to April 96
10. Greenmore Place, Corvallis, OR Apr 92 to Dec 92
11. Tokay, Corvallis, OR May 89 to Apr 92
12. South Corvallis, OR cannot remember the street Aug 88 to May 89
13. NW Ponderosa Ave., Corvallis, OR Feb 88 to August 88
14. Brick Ave, Ellensburg, WA Dec 83 to Feb 88
15. Apartment in Socorro, NM Sep 83 to Nov 83
16. Rented room from Karen Bradley, Socorro, NM Feb-Mar 83 ???
17. Rented a trailer on the South end of Socorro, NM
18. 809 School of Mines, Socorro, NM Feb 81 – Sep 83
19. University house, Socorro, NM Jul 80 – Feb 81
20. Rental home on Fitch Ave, Socorro, NM Jun – Jul 80
21. Trailer NE Socorro, NM Mar – May 80
22. Five acres and a house on Connecticut Ave, Mason City, IA Mar 78 – Feb 80
23. Rental home in Clear Lake, IA Nov 77 – Mar 78
24. Apartment in Richland, PA area Sep 76 Oct 77
25. Frequently stayed at Sandy's apartment Dec 76 – May 77
26. Apartment complex near Richland, PA Jan 76 – Sep 76
27. Motel in Johnstown, PA Aug 74 – Jan 76
28. Dorm room at Univ. of Pitt, Johnstown, PA Jun – Aug 74 29.
29. Home on Chicago Road, Livonia, MI April 73 to Jan 76

(Commuting every other weekend from Penn for 18 months)

30. Tacoma St., Clawson, MI Feb? 68 to April 73
31. Home in Madison Heights, MI April 66 to Feb? 68
32. Second Floor apartment 19 Mile Rd. & Livernois, Troy, MI Dec 65 to April 66
33. Carol's parents in Pearl Beach, MI Nov 65
34. 523 West Maple Rd, Clawson, MI Oct 65
35. Duplex on Huston, North Hollywood, CA Dec 64 to Sep 65
36. Rental home i2152 Rosamond Blvd, Rosamond, CA Jan – Dec 64
37. Apartment Rosamond, CA Dec 64
38. Barracks, Goose AB, Goose Bay, Labrador, Canada Aug 62 Nov 63
39. Barracks, Harmon AB, Newfoundland, Canada Oct 62 (R&R from above)
40. Carol's apartment, 78 West Davidson, Highland Park, MI Aug 62
41. Barracks, Webb AFB, Big Spring, TX Feb 61 – Jul 62
42. Barracks, Lowry AFB, Denver, CO Nov 60 – Jan 61
43. PATS Barracks, Lowry AFB, Denver, CO Oct 60
44. Barracks, Lackland AFB, San Antonio, TX Sep – Oct 60
45. 523 West Maple Rd, Clawson, MI Nov 53 to Aug 60
46. 313 or 314 Main St., Clawson, MI Summer 48 to Nov 53
(it was on the east side of the street just south of Tacoma)
47. Duplex on Center St., Royal Oak, MI 43? to summer of 48
48. Unknown, Lincoln, NB sometime in 43 or 44
49. Unknown location, near dad's training area 43 or 44
50. 250 West Baker, Clawson, MI Nov 42 to 43?
51. Hospital in Detroit, MI Oct 29, 1942 to ...

Jobs

I have had fewer jobs than places to live, but more than many other people. The longest I have ever worked for one employer has been 62 months. As a youth, I had a number of paper routes and actually sold papers on a busy corner once. I set pins in a bowling alley when I was eleven years old. These were semi-automatic machines. I picked up the ball and placed it in a ball return (gravity feed). I picked up the pins that were knocked down placing them in the machine in the proper place and after the second ball I would press a button and the machine would set up the pins. You worked on two alleys and had to pay attention to be able to jump out of the way. I made a penny a frame (10 cents per game). I would spend all the money I made on food from the snack bar. Most of the pin boys were boys like me, but there was one old man, in his late 30s, who was very lean and wiry. He could pick up four bowling pins in each hand. He would also rocket the ball back down to the bowler to speed up their play. After we moved to the Maple Road House, I frequented the bowling alley less and less. I mowed lawns and many other odd jobs to make some money. It was also a time when you could find pop and beer bottles and return them for two-cents usually, sometimes a nickel. I never had an allowance.

When I was 17, a new bowling alley opened across the street from my home on Maple Road. I was a porter there. That is a fancy term for someone who is essentially a gopher. I cleaned the alleys, picked up stray pins and balls, and cleaned the restrooms. The women's room had a tampon dispenser. When it was empty, they would announce that the candy machine needed attention. Sometimes I cooked in the snack bar. They always lost money when I worked there. I could easily eat 10 cheeseburgers in an 8-hour shift.

I had decided to go into the Air Force during my senior year of high school. I wanted to go to college, but I was smart enough to know that I was not mature enough. My high school grades were terrible just barely a "C"

student. My parents did not have enough money to pay my way even if I could have found a college to take me. My father had been in the Army Air Core during WWII and told me many funny stories about his adventures. He told me some bad/sad things too, but I was determined to go. I was interested in electronics and the Air Force would teach me more.

My parents decided to have a graduation party for me. Not sure why they did that but I got to invite anyone I wished. Being very shy, I did not do this but there was one girl I really liked. I sat near her and her friend (Wendy Wanless) in study hall and helped them with their Algebra homework. On the very last day of school, I invited Carol Winner to the party. She accepted. I spent the entire party talking to her and ignoring my other relatives. She went home and I went on with other things.

I was on two softball teams one was a fast-pitch church league the other an old man's slow-pitch league. (These old men were mostly in their 30s.) Because I was only 17, I had to get a waiver. Often I would go from the fast-pitch to the slow-pitch game on the same day. I was very good in the church league and played third base. In the old man's league, I got to play right field, usually the spot for your weakest player. Anyway, it was fun. I would often play basketball with Ron Buti and Gary Boussie in the Clawson Park. It was the end of childhood and I was enjoying the last bit of it, but I didn't know it then.

Carol came to one of the night games and offered me a ride home. I accepted. I managed to leave my baseball glove in her car. Apparently, it is a Freudian desire to return. She called me the next day to inform me. I walked to her house to retrieve it was the beginning of our relationship. I would walk her to work at her job in the Clawson shopping center on 14 Mile Road and walk her home when she got off work. Then I would stay with her in her parent's apartment until midnight or so. One time her dad had to come down and send me home. I went from being a shy boy who never had had a real girlfriend to having a very serious relationship in three weeks. We did talk of marriage but never of children or other things that I suppose we should have. Her parents were wary of her and mine of her but neither said anything. I was leaving soon and they thought this was just a teenage lust that would soon pass.

Carol's parents were buying a house in Pearl Beach, MI (sometimes called the Pearl Bitch). I got invited out there a couple of times. On one occasion we were painting the inside of Carol's bedroom closet and got into a friendly paint fight. Because of the nice summer weather, we would often sleep on the porch in the lawn furniture. We would go swimming in the canal and just walk around talking, holding hands dreaming of the future.

Carol's dad was Earl Winner but he liked to be called Bill. Usually, he called me Jerry not Gary which irritated me so I would call him Earl. One night just before I was to return to be inducted, Earl was very drunk and remembering something from his WWII experience and told me not to trust the Chinese. I still have no idea what he was talking about. This was around August 1st. Also, at this time I began to get many strange requests to call people when we got to California, other people's cousins, aunts, uncles, etc. I never understood this. Although, phone calls were still very expensive and not reliable.

Now when I graduated in June of 1960, I was only 17 so my parents had to sign for me. I was part of a group of 21 people who would go into the Air Force together. We were to leave for Lackland AFB in San Antonio on August 9th. After five weeks of basic training, we were to go to Biloxi, MS for communications training. The local paper (Daily Tribune) had taken our pictures and done several stories about us. The problem was that I had been injured the weekend before. Gary Boussie, Ron Buti and I were playing football on Bywood St. Even

though it was a paved street we always played football here. I managed to trip on the curb and scrape my left shoulder, knee and hip. I thought nothing of it. It had happened before and would again.

My parents, who were about to leave on their camping vacation in northern Michigan (Indian Lake), dropped me off at the recruiter's office in Royal Oak, MI. I said goodbye to them kissed my girlfriend, Carol Winner, goodbye and left in a chartered bus. The bus took us to the induction station at Fort Wayne in Detroit. I had been there for some paperwork processing and a dreadful physical some weeks before. When we arrived, we were given a quick look-see by a doctor. He decided that I should go home to wait for my sores to heal. That was a problem. My parents were on their way 360 miles north. I had no ride back to our house in Clawson, and I no longer had a key to the locked house.

I hitchhiked home. Cleverly removed a locked storm window and opened the window to my bedroom. I called Carol who drove me to the bank so I could draw out my savings. (I don't remember how much but probably around \$40).

I left a message at the campground where my parents would be arriving in another four to six hours. It simply said, "Call home, Gary." I'm sure it worried my mother some. They called and we decided that they would stay up north and I would stay home alone. I liked the last part very much since I would be able to see Carol more. She thought it was great. We went grocery shopping and planned several meals.

The three weeks went quickly by, and on Thursday, September 1, 1960 I returned to the Fort Wayne induction center. I don't remember who took me but they waited to make sure that I was acceptable to the Air Force. I was. There was a large group of us—100 to 150 who were sworn in. Most of the draftees were not following the sergeant who was leading us. After the induction we were taken to a bus stop, several older (probably 19-20) guys were put in charge. They had our meal tickets. We boarded a regular bus for the train station. It was a short ride but the draftees began singing a then popular song, "Please, Mr. Custer, I don't wanna go." The civilians on the bus were not sure what was going on but it was a great deal of fun.

Boarding the train was easy. I had one small suitcase. We were given individual sleeping cars. It was a very nice way to travel. We traveled south through Toledo, Ohio and many, many small towns. Frequently we stopped as cars were removed and added to the train. I know we went through St. Louis, but I do not remember it. We arrived in San Antonio Friday at about 3:00pm. A low-ranking airman met us at the train station, told us we had ten minutes to buy whatever we needed/wanted from a store there. I bought several electronics magazines. Then we were herded onto some Air Force blue busses, driven through downtown San Antonio and onto



Lackland AFB. We arrived at what is known as the Green Monster. It is a sprawling building that handles bulk processing of human beings. It turns them into GI's. While we were waiting on the bus, another airman jumped on the bus. He said "Hi" and wanted to know who was from Iowa.

Most of us had come from Detroit, so no one raised their hand. He got angry and chewed us out.

After he left, we were taken into a large room, a sergeant called off names about 100 or so at a time and people left in groups. This turned out to be barracks assignments. About 5:00 they decided they needed to feed us, so our group strolled over to a mess hall. It was a very nice brick building had quite good food— the best food I was to have for five weeks.