

An Explorer Awakened

It is just four days from my 81st Christmas here on earth. I sit down at a table holding more letters, papers, pens, and pencils, my pill box, and a host of other material things. As I choose a pen and pad to write on I know that those last Christmas cards should be answered. I know also that it is past breakfast time. My mind goes back in time and to a very special Grandpa. When, as a small boy, I would ask him to make something for me he would say "I will do it when the spirit moves." I did not know what he meant then but I do now. So the spirit moves me to write about one of the things that Grandpa Garlock gave to me. It was not a material object but a pursuit that has followed me all through my lifetime. He awoke within me the traits of an explorer, not one who was destined to see the wilds of Africa or the North or South Pole, but one who prefers the areas closer to home. The outback of yesterday.

That trait seems to come down to Grandpa from his past just as it has to me. I explored the creek banks just behind the house for frogs and turtles. Stones and clay concretions of strange shapes were there too. Every cupboard, closet, strange area and drawer were fair game. This was a favorite pursuit on rainy days. When the sun came out I could go to the woods just across the road. In spring the woods' flowers and emerging leaves were something special as if they came forth just for me. You say "what did you find in those cupboards and drawers?" What I found was bits and pieces of the past. There in that round box are Indian artifacts that my great grandfather found. Those old yellowed documents that were hard to read were my links to long ago. The leather working tools over in the barn were second nature to him and he showed me how to use them. The small farm tools he showed me were not antiques to him.

Grandpa was doing some carpentry work when I first remembered him. The tools he used became known to me. His initials BJG were on some of them. He said that when his son with the initials BOG took one of his tools he first change the J to O. That is without grandpa's permission. My father, mother and I at 2 years of age moved in with grandpa and his seven year old son Douglas. Grandma had passed away a year earlier. The great majority of the material footprint at that place was Garlock not Barshied. Luckily my mother told me who of my forbearers had once passed the contents of the house. It did and still does make a difference to me. Some of these possessions had come from the ancient Garlock farm that slipped from grandpa's grasp when his sisters foreclosed a mortgage and took the farm. Grandpa showed me and taught me about many things that had long since gone out of use.

Grandpa Garlock was not destined to live into the 21st Century. He passed away in 1971 at age 94. Not long before his death he still rode with me in search of those things both he and I regarded as treasures. Probably the last was an 18th Century red painted dresser found in a horse stable. When the early morning sun shines on it I think of grandpa Garlock who I can truly say, as he did about his own grandfather, he was a good old grandfather. Thanks grandpa for making me an explorer.

I'll now get at the cards and tasks.

Skip Barshied

Stone Arabia

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