

Preface

This series of recollections came about because when the pandemic hit in early 2020, I feared my increased irritability during the ensuing lockdown could be a telltale sign I was descending rapidly into curmudgeonhood. Thinking this would be unfair to the dogs, not to mention my wife Cathy, I decided I needed a project to keep my head straight.

My answer was to learn how to build a website. I thought if I could figure out how to do this, I could upload lots of family genealogy information. My mother had done extensive research into both sides of her family in the 1960s and I had added to that effort over time. I thought that with any luck, perhaps I could entertain myself and at the same time create a useful bit of family history for my both near and distant relatives.

With good advice and help from family members, and a tutor who knew more about building websites than I did, within a year I had completed my first iteration of the website at www.wbowe.com. The effort had largely exhausted all the digital family content I had, but with the pandemic still crawling to a finish, the question became what to do next.

My quandary caused me to review the personal papers I had saved over my working life. What I hadn't thrown out or digitized before, I now scanned. Sorting through all this accumulated flotsam and jetsam reminded me of some of the fascinating individuals I'd met and events I had witnessed over the years. Given the extra time provided by the continuous stream of virus variants, I began writing down some of these memories. It turned out to be great fun bringing these people and events to life again in my mind. Fun for me anyway.

You might be in a different category. The great crime novelist Elmore Leonard's once summed up key precepts any writer should keep in mind. In his Rules for Writers, I was always impressed with his 10th maxim, "Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip."

While it was interesting and enjoyable for me to look back at the people and times I was reminded of, you should proceed with caution. If you find yourself getting bored at any point, follow my newly established numero uno Rule for Readers, "If you're feeling bogged down while reading something tedious, skip over it."

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