

# Points East

By: Iko Adams

Over the last month, I've had a few opportunities to get out and roam around the central Appalachian highlands of Kentucky, Virginia and into some communities I hadn't visited since back in the sixties and seventies.

For the most part, I knew where I was most of the time. Most of the towns have grown considerably and most are now surrounded by strips of discount and chain shopping places. Suffice it to say that downtown Beckley, Abingdon and Bristol are much easier to navigate these days and that parking on Main Street does not seem to be much of a problem anymore.

I became pretty well acquainted with Southwest Virginia and West Virginia when I was in college at Pikeville from 1961 through 1971. I spent a lot of time chasing women and fishing for rainbow trout... on week ends and breaks from academic pursuit, along the tributaries of the New, Tug Fork, Levisa Fork, Guyandotte, Clinch and other major rivers too deep to wade. Blue Ridge trout, I discovered early in life, are far more cooperative than the basses.

We usually fished in groups of three or four guys who could split the gasoline bill and all pile into the same motel room. Of course, gasoline was 25 cents a gallon and 8 bucks was a big price to pay for a room in places like the Valley View, Rest Haven or Hilltop Inn.

We fished little streams called Grassy Creek, Big Tumbling, Brumley Cove and Big Harper and, at night, we'd head for dance halls like the Pine Room, Merry Widow, Hawk's Nest and Blue Tail Fly.

We'd ask those Virginia mountain girls to dance and they'd turn up their noses and try to use a Washington, D.C. accent on us because they had spent last summer stacking paper and scrubbing floors at the FBI headquarters and they acted like they might get dirty if they put their arms around a Kentucky boy's neck.

Apparently, some congressmen from southwest Virginia had some pull with the FBI back in those days because half the pretty girls in that part of the state had been on the pay-

roll at one time or another. It didn't matter that their dad was a coal miner just like ours because they had spent three months learning how to cross their eyes and look down their noses and they would sit flat on their behinds all night before they'd dance with anybody whose old man didn't wear a tie to work.

West Virginia girls were less selective as I recall. Young men were the problem in West Virginia. If you were from Kentucky and you asked a West Virginia gal to dance, there was going to be a fight if she accepted. They'd wait for you outside the door and you had to hope that a peace officer was keeping an eye on things when you started to leave. West Virginia boys tended to be very possessive of their womanfolk but, thank God for hillbilly accents, if you told them you were from some place else in West Virginia, there was never a problem. If you were in Beckley and let word get out that you were from Lenore and vice versa, you could normally avoid much confrontation.

The streams are still there and the road signs still call the towns by the same names they used in the late sixties. But there were no Super 8's, Econo Lodges or Comfort Inns and, certainly no Wal-Mart's, Rite Aids and Pizza Huts. Every town had an old vivid identity and the businesses were owned by Mom and Pop. But now, it's the same old blue and gray and yellow around the city limits and they pretty much look the same.

The hills, however, have not changed much. They are still high and green and, I'm told, the fishing is even better now than it used to be. I'm getting so old that I feel guilty if I cross my mind that a young lady is pretty anymore. I also doubt very much that the boys in West Virginia would feel threatened if one of their girls agreed to dance with me. On the other hand, I wonder if there are still places to dance anymore.

If anybody has to be Huffy; Virginia lady! I'd like to know if the Pink Room is still there. If it is, I'd like to drop in and find out how things are at FBI headquarters.

## Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves



### New and Old Memories

If we aren't careful, the memories we thought safely stored away, become dim with age and the fresh ones we try to slip in beside them almost become one and the same. Yet, with a little research, the thrill of each occasion becomes a vivid picture as we relive the scenes of our past joys.

So, maybe I had better begin with the latest and, go backward to the clear trickling water from a spring log crossing at intervals for the traveler to use. The bridges, designed and built by man, were the next step in getting from one side of a body of water to the other without getting one's feet wet or to continue a journey. The log, or stepping, stones, across a small stream of water was the first step in a chain of bridges of all kinds and styles before the ingenuity and knowledge of man designed and built the famous "Golden Gate Bridge." It was built over the water where the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay mingled as one body of water. Alcatraz, the old federal prison now a tourist attraction, can be seen a short distance away as one crosses it.

For years, I have wanted to see the Golden Gate Bridge as the grand finale to my odyssey of bridges and the water beneath them. Last week, I finally accomplished that dream with the help of my Grandson Deno. He has known about my fascination and promised if, or when, I came to see him, we would take a tour of the bridges of San Francisco. Early the morning after my arrival for his wedding, which would be the next day, he arrived at the motel with a smile, a hug and Grandma question, "are you ready to go out with your Grandson?" He had remembered his promise and was determined to "take Grandma to see the Golden Gate Bridge" before he vowed all his love and attention to his beautiful wife.

We began our tour by first driving past the pretty lake and flower garden where his wedding would be held the next day, then across the San Francisco Bay Bridge. This was more than I had expected. One bridge is what I had asked for and this was only the beginning. The blue water beneath the bridge rippled with small waves from all the ferries filled with tourists sight-seeing and shopping at

the wharf when they reached the other shore. These three deck ferries plied the waters of the Bay hourly, each seeming to show a different point of interest to show the passengers. On our way to the next bridge, we drove through China-town, and a residential section of homes built on the sides of hills so steep, a well-trained goat would have a hard time climbing them. But, these were the homes of people that had never known the beauty of the hills and valleys of Kentucky, so were happy with what they had. Then came the experience of crossing a long section across the bay on the bridge that was severely damaged by the big earthquake a few years ago.

I have already forgotten the names of all the big bridges we crossed that day but they totaled four before Deno finally said, "here, just ahead is the Golden Gate Bridge." I can't say my heart skipped a beat for what I saw was another beautiful big bridge. The only difference between it and the last one was the soft sheen of gold covering it and it joined the two northern sections of San Francisco, making them one big city. Soon, we were on that bridge I had dreamed of seeing for so many years and, thanks to Deno, my dreams had been fulfilled.

My tour though had not been completed. We had one more bridge, the mate to the one we had just left, minus the gold paint, to cross before we reached his house in Oakland. I may have been the most interesting one I

had seen. The traffic was not as heavy and the side rails allowed one to see the beautiful blue water below. Oakland is the city across the Bay from San Francisco. When he first moved there, I thought it was a suburb, but it is a city and a big one. I think that was my biggest surprise when he began driving to all the places of interest he wanted me to see and the hands on my watch kept going round and round. We did arrive back in time for him to get ready for the rehearsal dinner that evening at his and Crista's home and me back to the motel to do the same.

Now, stepping back to the past, I'll remind my readers of other bridges and streams of water I've written about. The beautiful Ohio River can never be surpassed in my mind, nor the bridges crossing it when one views them from the top of the hill as I enter Cincinnati from the south. That is when I catch my breath as I look down on the Queen City with its busy highways entering from every direction like ribbons weaving their way to an ending at the water's edge of the Ohio River. Then, using the bridges as an anchor to pause beside before they continue their way south. Another bridge that did this was the one entering the U.S. from Canada, after crossing the St. Lawrence River at Ogdensburg and mate to the one we had just left, minus the gold paint, to cross before we reached his house in Oakland. I may have been the most interesting one I

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