

STORIES FROM PIPA BILL
BOB & BILL'S PAR INN

Unlike most children, I was never given an allowance. At best, the most that was ever provided me was an idea (usually from my mother). My earliest memory of one of these ideas was buying (three for a dime at the A&P Store) and selling (at a nickel each) candy bars to the workmen who built the Windsor Terrace apartments in 1936-7.

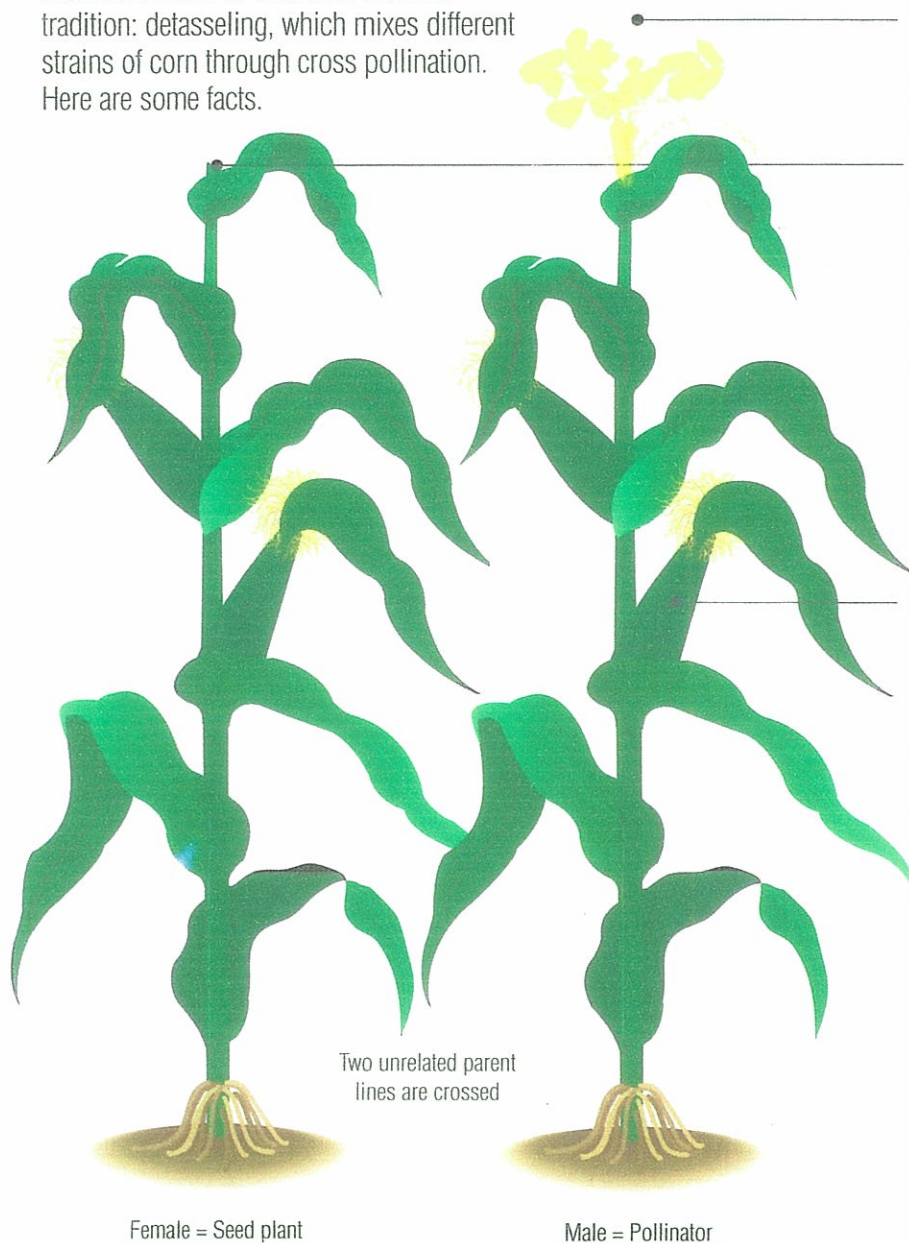
Numerous entrepreneurial ventures followed. With mail order razor blades, it was possible to supply my father's friends with a better product and a lower price than could be found in local drugstores. And during the war, I sold "blackout" candles which were to provide light in homes during Iowa air raids (ha!).

Of course, like most young boys, I mowed lawns and shoveled snow (unknown to today's teenagers) and other odd jobs. And, growing up in Iowa, it was unlikely that I might escape an Iowa rite of passage: detasseling corn.

Corn detasseling is the crucial last step in producing hybrid corn seed. It involves removing the pollen-producing top part of the plant, the tassel, so the corn can't pollinate itself. Instead, pollen from another variety of corn grown in the same field is carried by the wind, pollinating the detasseled corn. The result is corn that bears the genetic characteristics of both varieties and can produce healthier crops with higher yields. Despite technological advances in agriculture, detasseling is still a task that for the most part is done by hand. "It is a hot job and not a pleasant job with the bugs and everything." (Pioneer spokeswoman Allison Larson in the Des Moines Register 7/21/05) I was paid thirty-five cents an hour during the 1940's; today's pay: \$6.42/hour. And during the

DETASSELING

Summer is time for that time-honored tradition: detasseling, which mixes different strains of corn through cross pollination. Here are some facts.



Tassel

Each corn plant has both sexes. The "male" part of the plant is the tassel. To prevent self-pollination, or inbreeding, which would contaminate the crop, the tassel is removed from the female plant.

Seed companies usually leave a row or two of corn with tassels beside four to six rows of detasseled corn.

Ear

"Female" part of the plant is the ear.

Crossing these two plants will result in a hybrid. "Crossing picks up characteristics of both parent lines," Bill Tomlinson, production director for Pioneer, says.

Two unrelated parent lines are crossed

Female = Seed plant

Male = Pollinator

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1940's, woman and girls dominated the detasseling brigades as young men went to war. Today, it is a common force of coed work.

In a very real sense, the detasseling ritual in those days was perhaps the only semblance of sex education given teenagers. The attached exhibit describes the "creation" of male and female stalks of corn from morphrodite beginnings. Rumor has it that as the corn became sufficiently tall, other forms of "traditional education" took place.

We lived then on several acres of land on Terrace Road in the city limits and, as a result, my detasseling experience segued into another entrepreneurial scenario: I raised sweet corn, sold it door-to-door and furnished all the sweet corn sold by Harold Goldman's Thrift-way Store, as well as the Des Moines Club and Wakonda Club. Each summer we would have a large party, invite our guests to pick their own corn from our field, which we would boil in large kettles. Mother would fry chickens (at least one hundred) to add to the menu. It was a great event!

In the summer of 1949, while looking for work at City Hall, I stood in line with my old friend Bob (then called "Boob") Martin. It was then that he suggested we contact the Des Moines Golf and Country Club with a plan for installing a refreshment stand on the sixth hole of the golf course. While it was his idea, my entrepreneurial instincts make for quick affirmation. We contacted the club. They said, "o.k – a great service to the golfers." It was the first installation of its kind in Des Moines and possibly anywhere. "Gus" Gutfreund supplied us Schlitz beer, the leading brand in Iowa, and Fred Mitchell (Mid-Continent Bottlers) supplied 7-up and its affiliated flavors.

We built a stand and had a sign painted *Bob and Bill's Par Inn*. It was hard work hauling supplies to and from the stand, but the enterprise was an instant and an enormous success. We were making \$200-\$300 a week each – a lot of \$\$\$ in those days. We were 7-up's largest local customer (except for the State Fair) in that soft drinks and the supermarkets had only begun their combined ascent. (Dahls was just

emerging from its corner grocer beginnings). Toward the end of the summer, we gave a huge party with free beer at our house on Terrace Road, hired the band from the Biliken Club and placed them in our garage. It was truly a blast!

Seldom in my life have I had as much truly discretionary money. But money was only part of "It doesn't get any better than this" story. Add the following: I had one or another of two new Hudson convertibles (see pictures). Boob and I each had great girlfriends most of the summer. He dated Sue Stevens (1950 Hawkeye queen); I divided myself between Ann Woodard and Katie whom I had just met. The girls frequently had the "good sense" to show up in white bathing suits, prompting some golfers to spend excess time at the sixth hole Par Inn. Few would then "par in." Sinatra got it right:

When I was twenty-one
It was a very good year
It was a very good year for city girls
Who lived up the stairs
With all that perfumed hair
And it came undone
When I was twenty-one

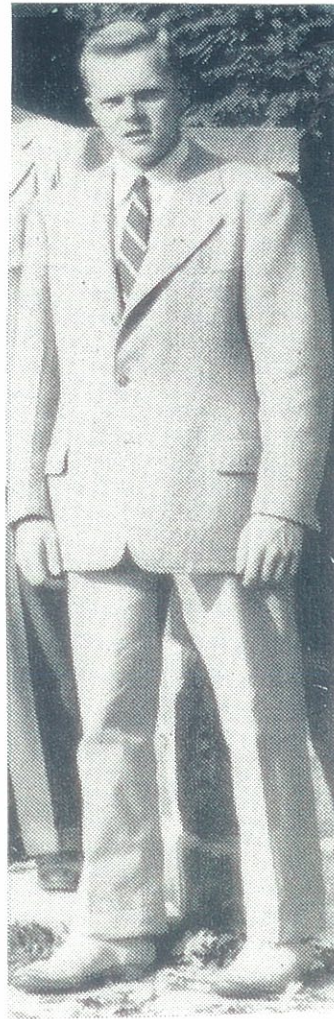
But now the days grow short
I'm in the autumn of the year
And now I think of my life as vintage wine
from fine old kegs
from the brim to the dregs
And it poured sweet and clear
It was a very good year

Not surprisingly, the Club took over this enterprise, and every other country club followed suit. It is a lucrative club profit center. The Par Inn location is now occupied by Dowling Catholic High School, and my old home at 2901 Terrace Road is owned by the Minister of Plymouth Congregational Church. . The Spanish conquistadors built their cathedrals atop the ancient (believed pagan) pyramids. Is there a metaphor here?

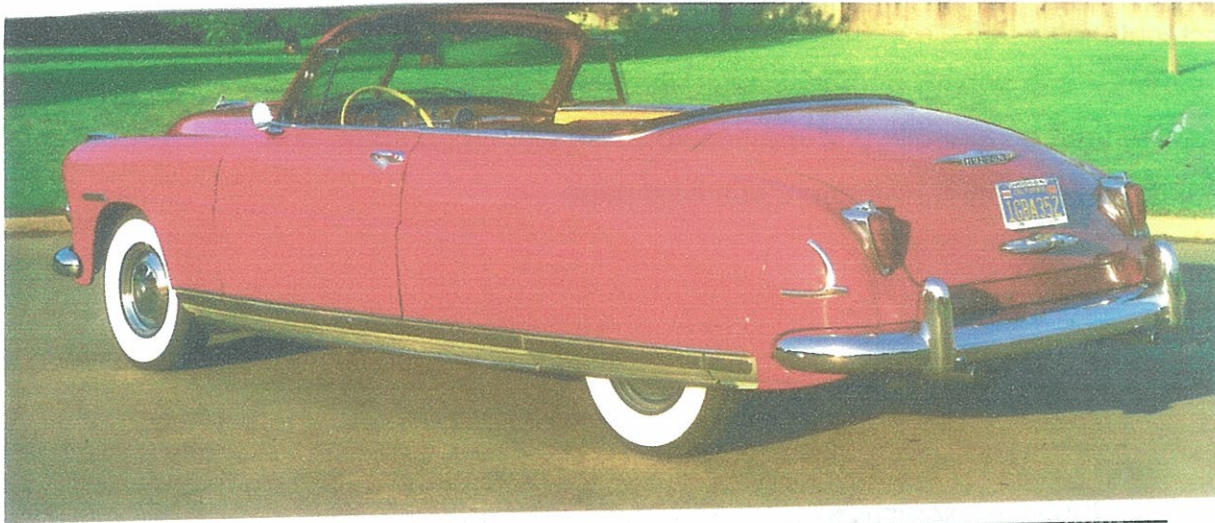


Miss Sue Stevens, 1950 Hawkeye Beauty Queen





BOB & BILL



This page, and opposite page top and lower left: Except for serial numbers, the '49 Step-downs were virtually unchanged from the debut-year '48s. This Commodore Six was one of three Brougham convertibles in the line. With model year production of only 655 units, it's a prized rarity today. (Owner: Bob Hill) Opposite page, lower right: A happy birthday photo from 1949 on the occasion of Hudson's 40th. Company president A.E. Barit is behind the wheel of the '49 Commodore

As the son of an automobile dealer, I was given easy access to spectacular new vehicles. In the summer of 1949, I drove two Hudson convertibles – one yellow, another blue, each with red leather seats. The pictured red convertible is identical to these except for color. For those unfamiliar with the Hudson, see next page.



In 1990, what was tantamount to a memorial service was conducted for Hudson, 35 years after its demise. Providing the transportation for Miss Daisy was a 1949 Hudson that enabled Jessica Tandy to become the oldest Academy Award winning actor ever and the movie *Driving Miss Daisy* to win an Oscar for the shortest movie ever given the award! Forty years earlier, in a 1949 convertible with the same “step down” construction, I had just met and was “Driving Miss Katie.”



Herb Thomas's Hudson Hornet

One look at the Hudson Hornet design of the early 1950s quickly reveals that its sleek lines most likely had an unfair advantage over the squarish shapes of the competition. And this was in the days before the importance of race car aerodynamics was clearly understood.

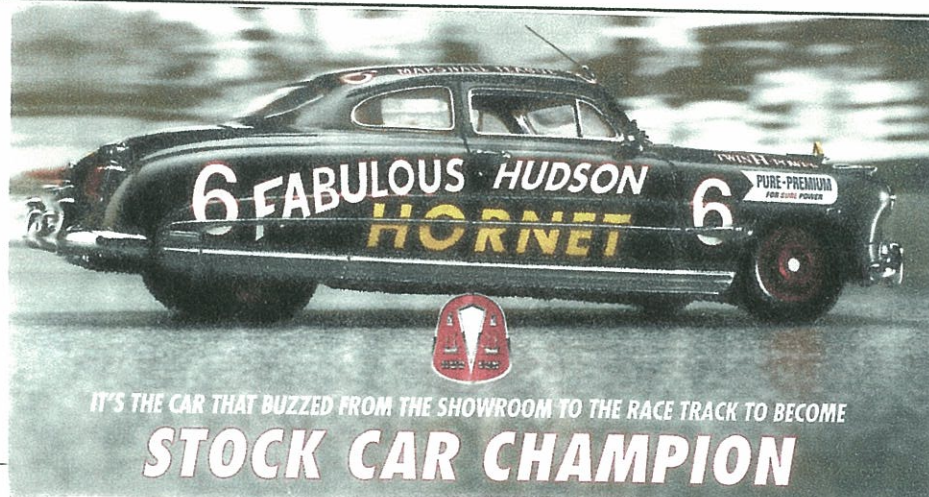
The machine shown here is the car that won the 1951 championship, piloted by NASCAR Champion driver and car owner Herb Thomas. A young Smokey Yunick built the potent powerplants for this low-slung machine. The Hudson was also

possibly the most powerful engine of the time, aided greatly by the Twin-H Carburetion System which had been encouraged by another Hudson driver, Marshall Teague.

The Hudson won the NASCAR Championships for four straight years from 1951 thru 1954. A measure of the domination of the Hudsons came from the fact that they won 13 AAA/NASCAR races in 1951, a startling 48 the following year, and 46 in 1953. Even when the factory Hudson racing program went away in 1954, there were still plenty of the machines around and they were run. Thomas, using year-old equipment, finished second to Lee Petty in his Chrysler for the Grand National Championship the year after the factory shut down the operation.

The domination of the Hornet came mostly from its low center of gravity, which added greatly to the handling of the model. The Hudson had a strong and reliable rear end/axle assembly, and an excellent selection of rear end gear ratios. This alone allowed the car to be tuned to each and every track it raced. The transmission was also reported by the teams to be very reliable.

But the technology was moving swiftly and it wasn't long before the Chrysler 300 and new 1955 Chevy overcame the Hudsons and they were no longer able to compete—both on the track and in the marketplace. However, the Hudson Hornet established a racing legacy that won't be forgotten.



1949 marked the 40th anniversary of the Hudson Motor Car Company. During almost all of those years, my dad and uncle were Hudson distributors who grew to become Iowa's largest auto enterprise. In 1953, as the oldest Hudson dealer in the United States, they ended the business. Hudson, one of America's greatest automobiles, filled its final years in a flurry of award winning achievements. The "step-down" design begun in 1948 helped it to become a Nascar legend.

The Summer of 1950

Birth Of a Salesman

In the summer of 1950, I shifted gears and pursued a new and different way of economic achievement. I met Watson Powell, Jr., for the first time and joined one of his rural sales crews that marketed the products and indeed formed the basis for the growth of American Republic Insurance Company where Watson then served as Sales Manager.

We received about a week of sales training. We learned to “block and tackle: in a difficult sales environment: selling medical insurance door to door to Iowa farmers.

We were sent to Decorah, Iowa (one of the most pleasant spots in Iowa) as a crew of about ten young men. Full page ads with local newspapers and commercials in the movies served to introduce the public to the merits of medical insurance and to alert them that a “man from the plan” would be calling on them.

Gaining entrance to the house was the major challenge. Experience soon indicated that if admitted there, then more than 50% of those calls would result in a sale. Various supportive evidence was used in “the sales pitch.” Farmers were, of course, familiar with the accidents and injuries that occur, especially with farm machinery, but one of the decisive arguments was a statement we were taught “Do you realize that ____ per cent of women between the ages of ____ and ____ will find a need for major female repair?!” I forget the ages and the percentage but will never forget the phrase which, when repeated in front of my mother, would cause her to double up in laughter and even call her friends and repeat the female repair statement, and they would all laugh. But it sold medical insurance!

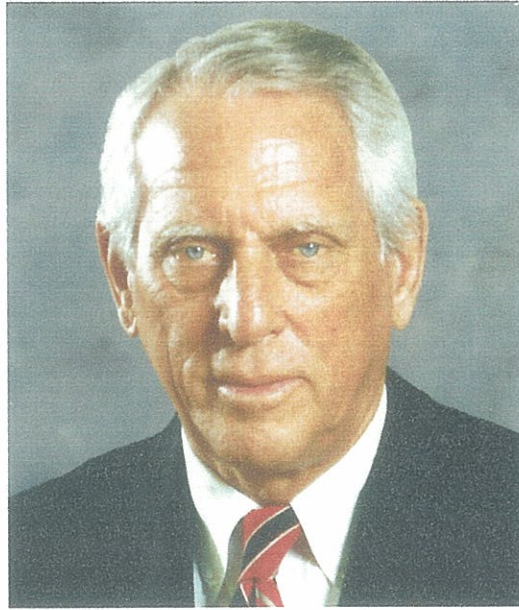
Traditional sales closures were used: “Do you want to pay for this quarterly?”; “The first premium won’t be due until after your crop is

harvested”; “What is your full name, Mr. _____?”; “I wonder if I could use that table (magazine, whatever) to write this application?” On one occasion, I was told, “Don’t you go writing my name down, young man.” On another instance, I was bodily thrown out of a house. One memorable event was that of looking out my rearview mirror at a fast-moving truck with dust billowing up behind it. Buyer’s remorse; he wanted his money back. However, despite what might be viewed as somewhat egregious sales tactics and methods, there was never any doubt in my mind that we were providing these farmers with protection they truly needed, some desperately so.

I sold over 100 policies that summer, a result that never ceased to amaze and impress Watson Powell who always believed my family circumstances were such that I did not need the job. True or not, what was always so: a summer without a job was unthinkable to me – forever!

Watson became a foremost civic leader and, in addition to building a substantial company with over 600 employees and a billion dollars in assets, he received numerous awards for his community contributions. During the 50 years I knew him (he died in 2000), he was also my supporter. He wrote an outstanding letter of recommendation to Harvard Business School (wish I could find it) when I applied there. He saw to it that my printing company was given the contract for all of American Republic application forms, which was unusual in that we received only 2% of our sales from a not very receptive local business community.

Watson was handsome and charismatic. He was selected as Des Moines’ best-dressed man. Katie was at the same time selected as the city’s best-dressed woman. (The following day I had to renew a six figure loan at the bank. Such is life!)



Watson Whiteside Powell, Jr.
July 31, 1917– January 2, 2000

Robert "Bob" Martin



MARTIN, ROBERT "BOB", died at his home in Longwood on Monday, May 30, 2005, following a long struggle with cancer. Bob was born in Des Moines, Iowa, on September 1, 1926, the son of John H. and Marie Newlen Martin. Bob enlisted in the United States Navy during World War II. A Signalman 3rd Class, he

was onboard ship at both Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and is the one who signaled the fleet to return to the United States at the end of the war. Following his enlistment he graduated from the University of Iowa with a degree in English and Speech Therapy. After graduation, he worked for CNA Insurance Company, where he rose to the position of Vice President for Marketing and Sales. In 1956, he wed the former Rae Kozlow in Detroit. They moved to Longwood in 1973. Bob enjoyed reading and public speaking. He was a lector at The Episcopal Church of the Resurrection in Longwood, where he played the part of Matthew in The Living Last Supper. He also frequently presented reading at various community programs, and enjoyed playing golf where he was involved in several tournaments. He is survived by his wife, Rae; a daughter, Sara (Mrs. Michael) Marinan of Longwood; two sons, Brian K. Martin of Los Angeles; and Kelly M. Martin (Elanie) of Winter Park; and five grandchildren, Shane Moore, Michele Marinan, Timothy Marinan, Carson Martin, and Reilly Martin. A Memorial Eucharist will be celebrated at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection, 251 E. Lake Brantley Drive, Longwood, at 11AM on Saturday, June 4, with interment in the Memorial Garden following the service. Contributions may be made to The Memorial Fund at the Episcopal Church of the Resurrection.

Published in the Orlando Sentinel on 6/2/2005.

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