

THE CHICAGO LITERARY CLUB

TROUBLE

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TROUBLE
by Anthony S. Zummer

The sky was blue, the morning sun was bright, and the air was oppressive forecasting another hot summer day in Kankakee on the Illinois prairie. My cousin, Joe and I, carrying our fishing poles, had crossed Fifth Avenue to go down Cyprus Street which was being repaired as a W.P.A. Project. It was our usual route to the Kankakee River. We heard a plaintive call, “Y’all wait for me!” Joe sighed and said, “I hear trouble.” We stopped and turned to see Billy Lee jogging across Fifth Avenue toward us.

“Where y’all going?”

“Fishing,” Joe answered.

“Ah go with y’all.”

As we ambled down the street, we saw Bubala LeBeau coming toward us. Bubala was not a regular member of our group. He was on the pudgy side and had a slight speech impediment. He wore shoes, while we were barefooted all summer. Bubala also had a quick flash point. For unknown reasons, if someone called him “droopy drawers,” he became incensed to the point that he wanted to punch out that person..

When Billy Lee saw Bubala coming, he said, “Here comes droopy drawers!” Joe cautioned him that it was not a good thing to rile Bubala for no reason. Bubala was on a mission going in the opposite direction. We exchanged “hi’s.” Once we were separated approximately two car lengths, Billy Lee shouted, “So long, droopy drawers!”

Bubala responded, “You pig!”

Billy Lee shouted, “Y’all droopy drawers!”

Bubala picked up a rock and threw it at Billy Lee, missing Billy Lee, but almost hitting Joe. Joe and I decided that discretion was the better part of valor. We didn't want to be in a meaningless rock throwing contest with Bubala. We started to run toward the river.

Billy Lee found himself confronting Bubala alone. Billy Lee hurled his last insult, "Y'all droopy drawers!" He then started to run to join us. Bubala threw another rock at Billy Lee and missed. The encounter ended with no loss of blood.

Billy Lee eventually caught up to us. Joe suggested that Billy Lee not infuriate Bubala when he is with us since Bubala's rock may have hit one of us rather than him.

We crossed the railroad tracks to go down the embankment toward the river. There is a well known spring near the river about three hundred yards from the tracks. Not having any utensils, each of us lay flat on the ground and took a push-up position to lower our chin down into the spring pool to suck up the clear, cool, fresh water.

Billy Lee slipped. He went down full face into the spring pool. He was furious.

"This spring is no good! I'm gonna throw some rocks in the spring so y'all can hold on."

A retaining wall in the embankment adjacent to the spring protected the spring pool. The wall was made up of a collection of pieces of limestone carefully fitted together to form a four foot high wall approximately five feet long. This wall protected the spring from erosion and had been there for many years. Whether it had been constructed by the Pottawatomie Indians who had inhabited the area, or early French settlers who followed the Indians and founded Bourbonnais is unknown.

The rock wall had its parts held in place by vegetation and had withstood years of change. It was an integral part of the landscape. Billy Lee, in his fury with the spring, tried to remove one of the stones to throw it into the spring pool, but had no luck in his efforts.

“Y’all help me get this rock.”

Joe replied, “I am not going to help you ruin the spring which has good water.”

Billy Lee grumbled. We marched on.

Joe thought that we had arrived at a good fishing spot. We stopped to gather some bait.

Our favorite bait, and we believed also the favorite of fish, was the elusive hellgrammite. Joe and I went into the water and started turning over stones in search of a hellgrammite. In a previous excursion, Billy Lee tried to catch a hellgrammite, but instead encountered the hellgrammite's strong defensive pinchers. He had no desire to have another encounter with a pinching hellgrammite. Bill Lee went off looking for worms which do not have pinchers. Joe found a hellgrammite and proceeded to bait a hook on his line with the hellgrammite. I eventually found one and baited my line. We cast our lines into the river, set our poles and waited for a bite. Fortunately, Billy Lee did not disturb the fishing.

Joe got a bite on his line. He pulled up his pole to set the hook. After some fighting with the fish, Joe landed a nice sized bass.

Having caught the bass, it was now necessary to prepare it for eating. Joe, who was zealous in keeping his knife blade keen, proceeded to prepare the fish. I went in search of dry wood to build a fire. I remembered a tree that had fallen into the river and had been washed up on the shore during the spring flooding season. The bark had come off the branches. I was able

to break off a few of the sun-dried white branches. I also recognized the need for a utensil to prepare the fish. A nearby willow tree provided necessary willow switches to weave into holders for the fish.

Billy Lee returned from his solitary exploration without any bait. He wanted to know what we were doing. I said that we were going to build a fire and cook the fish. An old fire scar provided the place for depositing some dried leaves and twigs which formed the basis for starting a fire. Joe used a kitchen match from his aspirin bottle to set the leaves and twigs on fire. Small branches and later the larger branches were placed on the blazing leaves and twigs. While the fire was getting started, we wove the willow switches into holders for each half of the fish. Billy Lee wanted to know if he could have some fish. Joe said that he could have some. Joe and I each held half of the fish over the open fire. Fortunately, it didn't take long to cook the fish over the open fire because the green willow switches started to burn. Once the fish was cooked, pieces of the fish were removed from the skin with a knife to form hot, delicious edible morsels. The three of us enjoyed the fresh-cooked fish as our mid-day repast. The fire was allowed to die down while we ate the fish. The embers were spread to destroy the fire. Water from the river in our cupped hands cooled the embers until the ground was cool to the touch.

Billy Lee had found a nearby wild blueberry patch which provided our dessert. The blueberries were warm, full-flavored and very tasty.

To wash down nature's gifts, we went back to the spring for clear, cool water. Then, we resumed our journey to the Indian Caves for further exploration of the caves that we had explored many times before.

The Indian Caves were formed by the flow of a creek which washed away the limestone to form a small gorge with caves. In some areas, there was a sheer wall. There was a cave in one of those walls. It is possible to explore the cave by climbing the wall to the cave. The cave is approximately fifteen feet above the floor of the gorge.

Joe said, "Let's climb up and look inside the cave on the wall."

"Ah never been in that cave," said Billy Lee.

I commented, "It's a neat cave and the little ledge up there lets you look out over the rocks."

Joe started climbing up the wall by placing his hands and feet into well-defined holes. Billy Lee had no problem with following Joe's lead to go up the wall. We climbed up to the cave, went into the cave and again found that it is a small cave, certainly large enough for the three of us. We searched the cave and found nothing of interest. Joe climbed out of the cave down the wall onto the floor. I followed Joe. Billy Lee came out of the cave to the small ledge and said that he couldn't climb down.

Joe said, "Just put your foot down on the small crack that you came up to start your way down."

Billy Lee refused to leave the small ledge at the mouth of the cave to reverse the process used to climb up.

I said, "Lie on your stomach and put your foot down to the crack."

Billy Lee said, "Ah don't know where to put my foot."

Billy Lee began to cry. Actually, he could have jumped down the fifteen feet, but the floor of the gorge was uneven. Not a good idea to jump. Billy Lee continued to cry and to howl like a dog in pain. Joe and I weren't quite sure what we could do.

Billy Lee said, "Y'all get a rope and tie it to a tree and let the rope come by the cave so that Ah can slide down the rope."

Joe responded, "We don't have a rope."

"Y'all get a rope."

"Where can we find a rope?"

"Y'all just go look for one."

I suggested to Joe, "Why don't we leave Billy Lee be so he can think about his predicament?"

Joe said, "Let's go back to the blueberry patch."

We left Billy Lee on the cave ledge and returned to the blueberry patch. We ate all the ripe blueberries that we could find, but found no rope. Upon our return, Billy Lee was quiet and said, "Where y'all been?"

Joe responded, "Looking for a rope. We couldn't find one so you will have to climb down."

Joe told Billy Lee to lie on his stomach and he would guide his foot to the crack. Billy Lee refused. Billy Lee resumed his crying. Joe climbed up to the cave ledge. I climbed up part way. Joe held onto Billy Lee while I guided Billy Lee's foot into a crack. All the while, Billy Lee was crying and accusing us of trying to kill him. He eventually put his foot solidly into the

crack while Joe held on to him. He slid down part way. I put his other foot into another foothold. He was now on the wall holding onto the cave ledge. Joe held onto his hand while I guided his first foot from the crack to a third foothold. Joe showed him where to hold on with his hand. Slowly, Billy Lee, with our guidance, inched his way to the floor of the gorge. Once he was safely on the floor, he accused us of being mean to him and not being his friends. Billy Lee followed us home from the Indian Caves hurling accusations against us.

I was aware that our neighbor, Mr. Dubois, liked to have frogs for dinner on Fridays. He usually paid two cents for each frog. I went to Mr. Dubois' house on Thursday afternoon and asked him whether he would like to have some frogs that evening. He said that would be fine. I then had to recruit Joe to provide the essential equipment for gigging frogs. Joe's brother, Bruno, had made for him a trident with a long handle. I told Joe that Mr. Dubois would like some frogs. Joe thought that it would be fun to go out to gig frogs.

Later, I borrowed my father's carbide lantern and Joe brought his trident. As we were walking toward the frog quarry, we encountered Billy Lee. "Where y'all going?"

"We're going to gig some frogs."

Billy Lee's response to no invitation was, "I'll go with y'all."

We knew that one of the many quarries around Kankakee was adjacent to Soldier Creek. Part of that quarry floor was in relatively shallow water with vegetation in the water favored by frogs. The frogs were nocturnal in their singing. At sunset, their singing increased. Each frog had basically the same song, but the pitches varied from frog to frog so that there was a certain amount of discord in the choral symphony.

The frogs, with their symphony, provided ample assurance that they were there in great numbers. We climbed down to the water. The carbide lamp shone a strong light which reflected the frogs eyes so that Joe could spot each frog. As Joe speared a frog, I took the frog off the trident and put it in a gunny sack. Billy Lee tried to be helpful by announcing where he thought a frog was located. After we had collected a half dozen frogs, Billy Lee backed up to observe a particular frog. The quarry was rather deep and the area with the vegetation was an upper portion of the quarry with a sharp drop off. As Billy Lee backed up, he stepped off the ledge and went down into the deep part of the quarry. He made quite a commotion which disrupted part of the symphony. Billy Lee, though not an excellent swimmer, was water-safe so he got back to the ledge with his clothes soaked. He disappeared. We were left without his assistance. We collected four more frogs. Joe and I went to the Dubois house to deliver the frogs.

I knocked on the Dubois' back door and Mr. Dubois appeared.

I said, "We have ten frogs for you."

Mr. Dubois thought that ten frogs was more than what he needed. Since he didn't specify how many he wanted, he agreed to pay us the full twenty cents for a night's work. Joe and I each had a dime which was the price of a movie.

It was a sweltering afternoon which did not inspire any great activity. Joe and I were sitting in the shade when Buzz came along.

He said, "Ya wanna see what I got?"

Joe responded, "What do you have?"

Buzz reached into his pocket and pulled out a foot-long garter snake – a black upper body with yellow stripes running down the length of the body. We passed it around, admired the snake and gave it back to Buzz, who returned it to his pocket.

We considered going swimming in the south side quarry, but decided that it was too far to go. The bicycle ride would be much too hot. Billy Lee made his appearance while we were in the midst of our discussion.

“What y'all doing?”

Buzz said, “We're trying to decide whether we want to ride over to the south side quarry for a swim.”

“Y'all be crazy to go all that distance for a swim. Y'all better off staying right here.”

Billy Lee then proceeded to tell us how much better it was in Tennessee, where he came from, and how Kankakee was such a hick town.

While Billy Lee was extolling the virtues of his former community, Buzz removed the snake from his pocket and dropped it down the back of Billy Lee's bib overalls. Billy Lee felt something and asked, “Whatcha put down my back?”

“Just a snake.”

Billy Lee is of the class of individuals who are deathly afraid of snakes. Billy Lee screamed and started to run. The frightened snake slipped down his pant leg and out the bottom. It was thrown up into the air by Billy Lee as he ran so that he ran into the snake. The snake landed on the ground somewhat dazed. Billy Lee kept running and screaming. Buzz picked up his trophy and returned it to his pocket. There was no sign of Billy Lee for the rest of that day.

The next morning, I thought I might do something important like go down to the river. My mother had other ideas. She assigned a task to me. I was to go into the garden and inspect the tomato plants. It was my duty to pick off all of the caterpillars and other creatures from the plants to keep worms from invading the fruit. The tomato vines provided a safe refuge for some of the caterpillars which I collected. Handling the vines gave my hands a disagreeable odor. I also picked off the caterpillars on the dill. It seemed that monarch caterpillars had a particular affinity for dill leaves.

Joe made his appearance while I was engaged in my gardening duties. He didn't offer to help to collect the creatures who invaded the garden. Rather, he sat in the grass and urged me to be quick. Whitey drifted down the alley and was curious about my engagement.

Our deliberations stopped when a gaunt stranger walked into the backyard. He was carrying a jacket. His clothes were worn and slightly soiled. We watched as he walked up to the back door and knocked. Mother answered the door.

He took off his cap and said, "Do y'all have something Ah could do to earn some food?"

Mother said, "Where are you from?"

"Ah'm from Louisiana and Ah have been riding the rails to get to Chicago. Ah hear work is available there. Ah haven't eaten in two days and Ah would like to earn some food."

"You can mow the lawn and I will give you some sandwiches."

"Ah'd greatly appreciate it and Ah'll do a good job of mowing."

"The lawn mower is in the garage. Go help yourself."

The three of us watched intently. He laid his jacket on the back porch, walked to the garage, and carried the lawn mower out onto the lawn. He proceeded to walk quickly up and

down the lawn pushing the lawn mower. He made the reel on the lawn mower hum. He finished the lawn. He replaced the lawn mower in the garage. He took a broom from the garage and swept the sidewalks. The broom was returned to the garage. He then went back to the back door and knocked.

Mother answered the door and said, "Are you all finished?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Here's a couple of sandwiches, an apple and a potato which you may take with you."

"May Ah use the water from your back faucet to wash my hands and get a drink?"

"Help yourself."

The stranger rinsed his hands in the outside faucet, took out a silver-looking item and pulled it apart to form a cup. He filled the cup with water and drank. He had several cups of water. He then proceeded to eat the sandwiches and apple. He put the potato in his jacket pocket.

He again knocked on the back door. My mother answered. He returned to her the plate that had held the sandwiches and said, "Thank you very much for your kindness ma'am."

He went to the front of the house and disappeared.

Joe said, "Who was that?"

"Every once in a while we get a stranger who will come by and offer to do a chore for food. My mother typically likes to find something for them to do. This time the chore was mowing the lawn."

The next morning, Joe and I talked about building scooters. A trip to local grocery stores was required to see if they had wooden orange crates that they wanted to discard. I went to

Mike's grocery store and asked Mike if he had an orange crate that he no longer wanted. He said he was sorry, but he had just thrown away an orange crate and did not expect to have another one soon. Joe went to the Royal Blue store and inquired about an orange crate, but none was available. He then went to English's grocery store, but found no orange crate.

A hike uptown to the the big store, Big Bear, was necessary. At Big Bear's back door, we consulted the produce man. He told us that they were just emptying a crate of oranges. We could have the crate. He also had an apple crate. The apple crates are sturdy, but are smaller than the orange crate so it was not satisfactory. Fortunately, there was another orange crate in the trash at Big Bear which we could have. Joe and I each had our own orange crate. Walking a mile to home with even an empty orange crate was a burden. We left the orange crates in the garage and went off in search of a two by four. Fortunately, we found a two by four which was just about the right size for us. We took it home and cut it in half which produced two sections each about a yard long.

Joe brought his roller skate to the garage. I found my roller skate. The roller skates which we had were the kind that one size fits all. The roller skate is made up of two separate platforms. Each platform has an axle on it. A pair of roller wheels is mounted on each axle. The platforms are interconnected with a channel and tongue so that the length of the skate may be adjusted. A single bolt holds the channel and tongue together. Removal of the bolt allows the two platforms to be separated. The front platform has a pair of clamps on the platform. The clamps are connected by a threaded rod which determines the spacing between the clamps by turning the threaded rod. The skate, in its normal usage, is applied to a shoe. The clamps are tightened onto the shoe to secure the skate to the shoe. The other platform has a curved wall

which is intended to fit against the heel of a shoe. The curved wall has a pair of slots through which is mounted a strap. The strap is designed to fit over a skater's foot so that the skate is theoretically secured to the shoe. In practice, the clamp often does not hold securely and comes loose while the skate is in use.

I attached my two halves of the skate to opposite ends of my two by four. Once the skate was secured to the ends of the two by four, the orange crate was nailed to the one end of the two by four. A one by one piece of wood was nailed across the top of the orange crate to form a handle. Joe and I finished making our scooters almost simultaneously.

It was essential that we test our handy work. We moved our scooters to the front sidewalk for a test run through the neighborhood. The skate wheels rolling on the concrete sidewalk created a roar like sound. The orange crate provided a sounding board to magnify the roar of the scooter as it rolled on the sidewalk. The faster we went, the louder the roar. The roar attracted other boys of the neighborhood.

Buzz saw Joe and me on our scooters and asked me if he could have a ride on my scooter. I allowed him to use my scooter. He went back and forth a couple of times. He decided that he would have to build a scooter for himself.

Billy Lee appeared. He asked Joe if he could try Joe's scooter. Joe said that he could take a ride. Billy Lee got the scooter going so fast that he stood with both feet on the two by four. Then he shouted, "Look at me! No hands!" He took his hands off the handle bar. As he did, the scooter went off the sidewalk onto the grass where it stopped abruptly. Billy Lee fell onto the orange crate and broke part of the crate. Billy Lee ended up on the ground crying hysterically.

We ran to Billy Lee and picked him up. He seemed to be in one piece, but not so with the orange crate. Upon inspection, we decided that the orange crate could be repaired so that the scooter could become operable.

The area around Kankakee is as flat as a football field, except for the shallow valleys carved by the Kankakee River and tributary creeks. In the summer, it can be hot. One hundred plus degree days are common. The only cool places in and around Kankakee were the ice houses where ice is manufactured and stored, and the movie theaters. Joe, Buzz, and I were lying in the shade of a tree wishing that it were cooler. Buzz suggested that we take advantage of a cool movie theater. Joe pointed out that we had no money to go to a movie. Buzz said that we could stand in the outer lobby of a theater which does not require a ticket. It was a splendid idea. We walked to the Paramount Theater, the largest theater in town. It has a marquee over the sidewalk and a box office on the sidewalk. Behind the box office, there is an outer lobby where people wait to get into the inner lobby and auditorium. A ticket taker station separates the outer lobby from the inner lobby. Cool air from the auditorium rolls into the inner lobby, then to the outer lobby and out the door to the sidewalk.

We went into the outer lobby where we looked at the posters of forthcoming movies. A man in a suit came into the lobby and told us to leave. We went out onto the sidewalk and stood by the door where there was some cool air spilling onto the sidewalk. The same man yelled at us. He told us to get away from the door because we were blocking the door. When he said that he would call the police, we decided that it was more discreet to avoid an encounter with the local police force so we moved. Across the street and a block south, there is the Majestic

Theater – a smaller movie house, but owned by the same company that owns the Paramount. We went into the outer lobby and inspected the posters. The ticket taker chased us out of the outer lobby onto the sidewalk.

The air on the sidewalk seemed to be extra hot. We consulted on our next course of action. While we were talking, Madaline Landsteiner came up to us. She seemed to have a shine for Buzz. Madaline complained that it was too hot and even worse in the bakery. Her family ran Regal Bakery next door to the theater.

She asked if we would like to have a sweet roll. There was an immediate unanimous acceptance. She told us that we would have to go to the back door. Our quartet trooped down the block and went around to the alley which led to the back of the bakery. While Joe, Buzz and I waited near the bakery service door, Madaline disappeared into the bakery. We waited patiently because baked goods were always welcome and worthy of even a long wait. Presently, Madaline appeared with a large pecan roll in each hand. The alley was not an appropriate place to enjoy a pecan roll. The four of us waltzed up the alley to Court Street, crossed in the middle of the block and found refuge for the bright sun in the shadows of the buildings. As we passed Ryan's Pharmacy, we saw Tom Ryan and his younger brother, George, in the store. We waved at the Ryans and they waved back. The four of us scurried to the Kankakee County courthouse lawn shaded by ample elm trees. Joe cut each of the pecan rolls in half. Each of us took a half to demolish. Madaline was not quite as fast in stuffing a pecan roll into her mouth as we boys were. Upon finishing the pecan roll halves, Buzz, Joe, and I thanked Madaline and we headed for home.

“Wait for me!” called Madaline.

Buzz said, "No. Girls can't come to our secret place, but thanks for the roll!"

We three boys went on our way leaving Madaline on the lawn with the remainder of her pecan roll, but no playmates.

The following day was hot. Joe and I discussed the merits of going fishing. It could be fun since the river was low during the summer. Joe thought that he could ask his brother to turn over some dirt in the garden to gather some worms as bait. He located Bruno and asked him to dig up some dirt for worms.

Bruno said, "You don't have to dig up dirt. You can have the worms come to you. Joey, go into the tool room and get the ten pound sledgehammer."

Joe disappeared. Bruno picked up a metal fence stake in the garage. When Joe arrived with the sledgehammer, Bruno had Joe hold the stake while Bruno drove it into the lawn. He drove it around 3 or 4 feet into the ground.

He said, "Do you have bait cans ready?"

We realized that we didn't have any containers to hold worms. We went to the trash can and found a couple of cans. When we returned with our bait cans, Bruno said, "Get down on the grass near the stake and watch for the worms."

He then proceeded to strike the stake on its side so that it caused vibrations in the ground. In a short while, night crawlers peeked out of their holes. We did our best to catch the quick night crawlers and collected a dozen night crawlers for bait. Joe and I helped Bruno remove the stake from the ground. Joe returned the sledgehammer to the tool room.

Joe and I collected our fishing poles and hiked to the river. Our favorite spot was clear of weeds and there were no bushes or trees nearby which would have interfered with casting our lines into the river.

Joe cast his line upstream and I cast my line downstream. We stuck cut branches in the ground and rested our poles on the branches. Now came the patience of waiting for a bite.

Joe's line seemed to have some movement as if a fish were nibbling on the bait. Joe took the pole and felt the line. He jerked up the pole in hopes of setting the hook in a fish's mouth. Then, he started to reel in the line. There was resistance.

He said, "Awww, shucks.....I got a snag."

He reeled in the line with some difficulty. There seemed to be a dead weight on the line. Finally, I could see the end of the line and there was a fish – a large fish. It didn't seem to fight back. Joe backed away from the river bank and I stepped into the water and grasped the fish at its gill to have a firm hold on it. Once I got the fish on the river bank, it flopped around. Joe had caught a large carp.

"Joe, what are you going to do with this carp?"

"I don't know what I'm going to do with it. I don't think my mother wants to prepare a carp. I don't think that any of the neighbors will buy a carp."

An old man walked by carrying a fishing pole. He said, "You boys caught a nice fish there. What are you going to do with it?"

Joe said, "I'll probably sell it."

"I'll give you a quarter for it."

“Okay.”

The deal was quickly concluded. The man dug into his pocket and produced two dimes and a nickle. He handed the coins to Joe. Joe gave the carp to him. The man walked off carrying the freshly caught large carp. Joe was delighted that he didn't have to deal with the carp. He got twenty-five cents– the price of two movies and an ice cream cone.

Joe, a perennial entrepreneur, suggested that he, Billy Lee and I go house to house and offer to wash cars. He thought we could make a lot of money washing cars which would be fun on a hot summer day. I did not express a great enthusiasm for the venture.

Billy Lee said, “It sounds like a lot of work and doesn't sound like fun. Ah don't want to have anything to do with it, but if y'all make a lot of money, don't forget your pal.”

Billy Lee left abruptly. Joe commented, “Billy Lee expects to go through life's revolving door on somebody else's push.”

Our respective homes produced the necessary car washing equipment, including; buckets, soap, chammies, rags, and brushes. The neighborhood with the fine automobiles would be the most profitable place to sell our services. The price for our car washing was not yet settled. Joe thought that a quarter for a car wash would be fair. This sounded like a lot of money to me, but I was willing to go along with Joe's money-making venture.

Our house to house visits offering our services resulted no success. After walking six blocks soliciting every home, we were about ready to give up the venture. In a last gasp, we decided to try one more block before giving up. There was a Hudson parked in the driveway at Mr. O'Doyle's home. Joe knocked on the door and Mr. O'Doyle appeared.

Joe said, “We will wash your car for a quarter.”

Mr. O'Doyle thought that it was expensive, but he would let us do it. Joe asked him whether we could use the garden hose for a source of water. He gave us permission. Washing the upper part of the car presented a problem since we weren't quite tall enough to reach the top of the car. Joe improvised by standing on one of the buckets to reach the top of the car. We proceeded to wash down the car while Mr. O'Doyle took an observation post.

He said, "You boys are quite enterprising. You should save your money and go to college."

"Where should we go?"

Mr. O'Doyle said, "You could live at home to save money and go to St. Viator's College in Bourbonnais. I went to college there and I received a good education. I also had a good time. I played on the football team. Our team played Notre Dame. We didn't win, but I did score on Notre Dame."

We continued washing the car and chammied down the car so that it sparkled.

Mr. O'Doyle said, "You boys did a pretty good job, but I really should charge you for all of the water you used. I feel pretty good, so you get the quarter."

Joe pocketed the quarter. We went on our way happy having collected for our first job and continued to solicit additional car washing jobs.

There was no success on the remainder of the block, so we went onto the next block. The third house on the block had a Studebaker in the driveway. The car was in dire need of washing. Joe knocked on the door. Mr. Matukas came to the door.

Joe said, "We will wash your car for a quarter."

Mr. Matukas said, “The car is in need of washing, but the price seems high. Nonetheless, go ahead and wash it.”

We proceeded to wash the car and even scrubbed the tires so that the Studebaker was gleaming. We knocked on the door to inform Mr. Matukas that we had finished.

He came out and looked over the car and said, “You boys have done a good job. It is kind of hot out here. Would you like to have a lemonade?”

Our response was a chorus, “Yes sir!”

He said, “Come in.”

He presented each of us with a glass filled with lemonade. I noted that the glass had “Notre Dame” stenciled on the outside of the glass.

I inquired, “Sir, did you go to Notre Dame?”

Mr. Matukas replied, “Yes.”

I asked, “Where you at Notre Dame when Notre Dame played St. Viator's College?”

“I don't remember us playing St. Viator's, but let me take a look at my book of Notre Dame football records.”

Mr. Matukas disappeared and shortly returned with a book in hand.

He said, “Ahhh, yes, Notre Dame played St. Viator on November 13, 1897. Notre Dame won by a score of 60-0. The next game was November 18, 1908. St. Viator lost 46-0. Another game was played on October 14, 1911. St. Viator lost 43-0. The last game was played on October 5, 1912, when St. Viator scored 7 points and Notre Dame scored 116 points. I would imagine that everybody on the Notre Dame squad played in that game.”

I mentally noted that Mr. O'Doyle had neglected to mention the score of the game in which he played against Notre Dame.

We finished our lemonade. To our surprise, Mr. Matukas gave each of us twenty-five cents. We were elated.

Having collected a total of seventy-five cents, we abandoned the car wash business since it was lunch time and getting hotter by the minute.

The next morning was a typical Kankakee summer morning – close and hot. Joe and I thought that the river might prove to be a cooling place and the Indian caves might provide relief. When we walked past Billy Lee's house, he yelled from the front door, “Where y'all going?”

Joe replied, “To the river.”

“Ah'll come with y'all!”

We walked up to the tracks and walked in the shade of the box cars on the siding. We heard the clank of a switch engine coupling to a string of cars. We saw that the switch engine was going to pull the cars across the bridge over the river and presumably, to the railroad yard west of town.

Billy Lee decided that he would take a ride. He jumped onto the step on a box car and quickly moved onto the end of the box car so that he was positioned between adjacent box cars. Thus, no railroader would be able to see him – neither the switchman, the fireman, nor the engineer. The switch engine with the string of cars rolled along.

Joe called, “Billy Lee, jump off!”

Billy Lee was a master at not following directions. Billy Lee stayed in his position. The switch engine with the cars and Billy Lee picked up speed. It approached the bridge over the river. We could see Billy Lee's arm sticking out between the box cars, but there was nothing that we could do. We watched the string of cars roll over the bridge. Apparently, Billy Lee had some concern as to where he was going and what would happen to him. Billy Lee jumped off the moving box car, landed on the embankment, and rolled down into the shrubbery at the bottom of the embankment.

Joe said, "There goes trouble."