

THE CHICAGO WORLD'S FAIR

In 1933 Grandmother McComb took four of her grandsons to Chicago's World's Fair. This was a very big deal. Raymond McComb, the eldest, did the driving. I was the youngest.

We stayed in "cabin camps" as I recall, but mostly I was impressed by a very big city.

It was there that I saw my first Catamaran. Twenty-three of them, from Italy (!) had landed on Lake Michigan. I was not to see another until 1943.

Three other memories stick in my brain. One, I got to see President Roosevelt in his wheel chair. Two, I saw my first television set. Three, there was a "Midget Village". I was the right size to go through the village like a good tourist should. A picture of the village with its inhabitants has survived.



It must have been politically correct to have a village of midgets. Every building was small. The rooms had very low ceilings, and the staircases were just wonderful. I believe that the little people were living there for free, and were paid besides.

While in Chicago I asked questions about Al Capone, a local community organizer, but the lack of answers suggested that was not politically correct. He had already been sent to prison, but that seemed to make very little difference. He did not die until 1947.

A filling station attendant tried to cheat Raymond when he bought gas, but Raymond and Randall (Jim) disabused him of the idea.

Kansas boys in the big city; what a learning opportunity for a 9 year-old! And just imagine what it meant to see the President of the United States!

In 2008 I was on a Rotary committee to host our “Student of the Month,” and to my great surprise when she arrived, a high school senior, she was only three feet high. Not having been forewarned, I was at a loss. Should I acknowledge her height, or pretend not to notice? Her parents and sister accompanied her, and before too long I asked if they knew about the “city” for little people that I once saw at the Chicago World’s Fair. No, they had not, but boy, were they interested! In using the expression “little people” I had accidentally fallen into using the correct words. We had a wonderful conversation for it was easy to discuss how one deals with this problem—and they were quite happy to do so. For the first time in decades, my 1933 experience in Chicago was relevant.

There is some merit in living a long time. Just be patient.