

CHAPTER LI

VACATION JOBS

By Charles

Charles from the time he was a very small boy had jobs of various kinds during the months of the summer vacation. In Wausau, from the time he was about eight, he used to drive the neighbors' cows to pasture just outside the city each morning and then in the evening drive them back. In Wausau at that time there were no milkmen. Most families had a barn and a cow and for about 10 cents a week, could hire a small boy to drive the cow to and from the pasture. Also, all the stoves and most of the furnaces burned wood and there were always jobs of chopping, sawing and piling wood.

Aside from these jobs for neighbors, the first real summer job which Charles had was after the family had moved to Boston.

1913-1914

Grandfather, as he has no doubt told you in this book, went to Boston to do Commercial Research. He was writing up the results of his studies in the form of big reports and he wanted someone to draw charts to illustrate them. Charles was then in high school studying drafting and mechanical drawing, so Grandfather gave him the job of making the charts. If, sometime, you look at Grandfather's first reports - "Agricultural Implements" and "Department Stores" - you will see some of the charts that Charles drew during the summers of 1913 and 1914.

1915-1916

Early in the spring of 1915, Grandfather anticipated Charles' graduation from high school and bought him as a present an Indian motorcycle.

That summer Charles rode it out to Wisconsin, where he got a job as assistant timekeeper and checker at the Mosinee Paper Mills. Mr. Karl Mathie, Grandfather's friend, was General Manager and was very helpful to Charles in explaining to him the processes of manufacture and how the time records which Charles kept were a part of the system of accounting which made it possible for the executives to know exactly what was going on daily and what every department was doing. Keeping of the time records necessitated going into the factory a great deal and Charles was able to talk to the engineers about the various machines and learn much about how paper is made.

The following summer Charles went back to the Mosinee factory, again riding his motorcycle from Philadelphia. This time he acted as assistant to the bookkeeper, doing work on the general books of account and the cost accounting system. The head of the Accounting Department was Mr. Sill, the comptroller of the company. His wife and family were gone for the summer and he offered to rent Charles a room for the summer in his house, which Charles accepted. This meant that he spent many of the long summer evenings with Mr. Sill and was able to talk to him about the theories of accounting and the accounting system which was used in the mill. This general knowledge of accounting proved of material value to Charles later when he came to practice law in New York City and to work on cases involving difficult accounting and financial problems.

1917

Having finished his Sophomore year at the University of Pennsylvania, Charles again set out for Wisconsin for summer work. This year he succeeded in getting a job in Racine, Wisconsin, as a mechanic in the Wallace Tractor Company. He started as an extra hand in the assembling department, working on the assembling of this or that part of the motor,

wherever they needed extra help. The hours were long and pay was at the rate of 28 cents an hour, measured by the time recorded on the time clock.

The Wallace Tractor Company was obligated on the night of July 5th to start for New York a train load of tractors which were to catch the boat to be delivered to the British Army. As a result of too much Fourth of July celebration, the force in the testing shed was badly depleted and the foreman was in despair as to how he would get his tractors tested and shipped. Charles suggested that he be allowed to test as he was familiar with the motor assembly, having been shifted from section to section in the course of the four weeks which he had been in the factory. This suggestion was accepted and Charles, as a matter of fact, was never sent back to the assembling work.

After about two weeks in the test shed, the sales manager happened to be coming through on a tour of inspection. He asked Charles how he would like to go to the company's experimental farm and assist there in putting tractors through certain practical tests of plowing, pulling stumps, etcetera. Charles was of course delighted to do this and for a time on the experimental farm just outside of Racine, he drove tractors through all sorts of difficult tests and stunts. The purpose of the sales manager became evident a few weeks later when he asked Charles to accompany him to Fremont, Nebraska, where they were holding the National Tractor Show.

At that time tractor companies were having difficulty in selling powerful tractors to the farmers because the farmers felt they were so complicated they could never learn to run them. It was the idea of the sales manager that Charles, who was then eighteen but did not look his age, should drive the Wallace tractors at the show to demonstrate how easily they could be operated. Charles was so happy to be driving one of the big tractors that he was able to overlook many remarks which the Wallace Tractor salesmen were

continually making to the farmers, such as - "See how easy they are to run, any dumb kid can run one."

The Fremont show lasted ten days. At the end of every day each tractor was carefully inspected to make sure that it would run perfectly on the following day. The largest model of the Wallace tractors had such a big opening on the side that in inspecting and cleaning the inside of the motor, Charles could get his head and arms and shoulders inside. This was very effective so far as working was concerned but meant getting covered with oil and grease.

Grandfather was in the West at this time and decided to go to the tractor show and see Charles. He arrived at the grounds one afternoon after the demonstration while all the drivers were cleaning and inspecting their machines and inquired as to how he could locate Charles. The manager told Grandfather that Charles was cleaning his machine and to "look for the dirtiest kid on the grounds."

After the national tractor show at Fremont, Charles went to various places in Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma driving Wallace tractors in demonstrations at County Fairs and also repairing tractors which had broken down. For the balance of the summer he worked as an employe of the Kansas City office of the Wallace Tractor Company, going from city to city upon telegraphic instructions, either to do repair work or give demonstrations.

The sales manager was very nice to Charles on the several occasions during the summer when he saw him and explained to Charles that the great field for tractors would be in Russia. He told Charles that as soon as the European war was over the Wallace Tractor Company expected to open a branch in Russia and to do a tremendous business, and that if Charles would study Russian when he returned to college, he thought that upon graduation he could

make Charles a very attractive offer to go to Russia as representative of the Wallace Tractor Company. Charles went back and started to study Russian, but that is another story. He had just learned the alphabet when the Bolshevik Revolution took place and the Bolsheviks changed many of the letters. Perhaps it was because of this early discouragement that Charles never became very proficient in the language.

1918

The war was on. Charles had decided to enlist in either the tank corps (where his experience with the tractors would be valuable) or with the artillery. Meanwhile until the chance should come, Charles went to Green Lane Camp as assistant chief counsellor. This was a camp run by the University of Pennsylvania for under-privileged boys from the city of Philadelphia and vicinity. As a matter of fact, the chief counsellor was forced to be away from the camp most of the time, with the result that Charles had much of the responsibility in the course of the summer for the conduct of the camp. The boys who came were in many respects an unruly lot and keeping them in order and happily engaged in their games or work was a lively task and afforded many a lesson in handling difficult situations. The camp closed for the season the latter part of August, and it was thereafter Charles had his opportunity to join the heavy artillery.

1919

The war having ended and Charles having been able to make up his work and rejoin and graduate with his class in June of 1919, he had decided, after talking it over with Grandfather, that he would like to go to Harvard Law School. Mr. Weter, who was a friend of Grandfather's and the senior member of the firm of Weter & Roberts in Seattle, Washington, offered to let

Charles work in his office for the summer so that he could get an idea of what the work of a law office was like. Charles was able during the summer to do certain errands and filing of papers for the firm and at the same time pick up some information about the general practice of law.

The firm of Weter & Roberts controlled a number of small banks located in small towns of western Washington, and Charles spent most of his summer in these banks rather than in the law office in Seattle. He would go to the small bank and assist the cashier in charge for a number of days until he was familiar with the work and then the cashier would go on his vacation, leaving Charles in charge of the bank. This was possible largely by reason of the knowledge of accounting which Charles had obtained during his summer at Mosinee and by his studies of the subject at the University of Pennsylvania.

These country banks had only one man in charge. This man would act as paying and receiving teller during the day and then when the bank closed at three o'clock, he would balance the books and lock up the money in the safe for the night. Even little banks such as those in which Charles worked while the cashiers were on vacation have practically all the problems found in the bigger city banks, and the familiarity with the problems and methods of running these small banks helped Charles a great deal in his work later in New York.

1920

The mail order house of Montgomery Ward & Co. was having difficulties and the banking interests had requested a committee of efficiency experts to go to Chicago and make a thorough investigation of the company. A group of distinguished efficiency experts and one professor from the Tuck School of Dartmouth and another from the Harvard School of Business

Administration were appointed as the Committee. Charles applied for, and was successful in obtaining, the job as secretary to the Committee.

After preliminary work in Boston, the Committee went to Chicago and there spent the summer, making a detailed investigation and report on all of the workings of Montgomery Ward & Co. It was the job of Charles to assemble all the data as it was turned in by the various members of the Committee and, in the end, to assist in compiling it and helping in the preparation of the final report which covered the question of plant management, personnel, accounting and selling methods. While in Chicago Charles lived at one of the fraternity houses on the campus of the University of Chicago.

1921

Charles had finished his second year at law school and it would be necessary before the end of the following year to decide definitely whether he was going to go into business, using law as a preparation, as was his original intention, or whether he would undertake the practice of law. Through a friend of Grandfather's he was able to obtain a job for the summer with Winston, Strawn & Shaw in Chicago. This was one of the biggest of Chicago law firms and Charles was to be allowed to work in the litigation department for the summer without pay.

During the course of the summer he had a varied experience. This firm represented many of the Chicago brewers who, following prohibition, were no longer getting the rentals from their corner saloons. The brewers had decided that prohibition had come to stay and that they might as well remodel these corner properties into stores and get better tenants. Charles was therefore assigned the job of cancelling the leases and ejecting all of the ex-saloon keepers who had failed to pay their rent. As a result he spent many days in the "ejectment court" and occasionally assisting one of the

experienced lawyers to try more important cases. While in Chicago this summer, Charles lived at one of the fraternity houses of Northwestern University with William R. Boyd.

1922

When Charles graduated from Harvard Law School in June of 1922, he took a vacation and then, on August 1st, began his life work - the practice of law - in New York City. As Charles looks back over the summers, he realizes that Grandfather by his help made possible for Charles a series of the most interesting, thrilling and worth-while summers that a boy could have. In New York Charles was to work with Wall Street bankers and brokers and men of education and wealth, but Charles has always felt that in addition to the gaining of valuable knowledge and information, his summers gave him an appreciation of the problems of other workers, for he had gone to the factory in his overalls with his dinner pail and had sat long hours on a high stool keeping books.

(Note by Editor)

It was part of Grandfather's philosophy to believe that summer vacations offer periods of real opportunity which are for the most part wasted. He believed with Pope that "Want of labor is not rest; an empty mind is a mind distressed." He looked upon vacation periods as a time when a boy could get first hand knowledge of the joy in work. To do this the boy ought to work under someone who enjoyed his job and could be an inspiring influence.

Grandfather felt that except when driven by the necessity of earning money, a boy ought not to work in connection with a pleasure resort. If a boy works while all about him play, he gets a distaste for work. The boy should, if possible, work where all about him work enthusiastically. If

possible, the jobs should be varied. Soon the boy will choose a life work and his experience will be confined to a single line; in summer, he can have a variety of jobs and can, if the jobs are placed with that thought in view, go into different sections of the United States, not as a sightseer, but as a worker to be a part of the industrial life of the community.

In accordance with this philosophy, George also had a series in interesting summer experiences. One summer when George was in high school, an appeal was made by the Government for youths to help the farmers. George enlisted for a summer and when Grandfather went out to visit him, found him at the end of a threshing machine, valiantly pitching the straw, one of the hardest jobs on a farm. One summer he was a chauffeur, driving a car in New England. A couple of summers he helped run the Green Lake Camp which Charles mentions above.

One summer there was a pressman's strike at The Curtis Publishing Company. Non-union pressmen were brought to and from the building in taxicabs. The schedule of the taxicabs for picking up the pressmen at specified places was varied daily. The keeping of this schedule was important and highly confidential. George was entrusted with this responsibility.

The National Wholesale Hardware Association had gathered data concerning costs of doing business. One summer George organized this material and wrote a report for the Association on Cost of Doing Business in Hardware Wholesaling.

George spent one summer with a leading law firm in San Francisco. Thus, you see, both Charles and George had varied and interesting summer work in various parts of the United States. Grandfather believes that this was a valuable part of the education of Charles and George. To draw a new job with strangers and be under the obligation to make good within a period of three months taught responsibility and resourcefulness and offset the "rah rah" point of view which college is apt to create in a youth who does not employ his summers with serious purpose.