

TIMELINE (#16A)
PREACHER E. HOKE CAMPBELL LETTERS

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. The following events and their aftermath are detailed in Timeline (#16):
 - a. On 3/30/56, Bill Parks, Larry Green, and I started our Spring Break. In Larry's Volkswagon Beetle, we left Ann Arbor heading for Fort Lauderdale, Florida. We intended to drive straight through without spending an overnight anywhere.
 - b. After driving for 15 hours, we were about 25 miles south of the Tennessee/Georgia border (10 miles south of Chatsworth, GA) and got into a near fatal, single-car auto accident during the early morning of 3/31/56.
 - c. While we were marooned in Chatsworth, the pastor of the First Baptist Church, E. Hoke Campbell, befriended us. He graciously invited us to stay at his home for the remainder of our time.
 2. Shortly after we returned to Ann Arbor on 4/7/56, a short series of correspondence between the Campbells, we 3 students and our parents ensued. **3 of the extant letters have been copied verbatim and are included below.**
 3. During the next school year (1956-1957), Bill Parks and I moved out of Lloyd House but remained roommates and rented rooms in an old 3-story house at 924 E. Ann St.
 4. Once again, Bill and I decided to go to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, during our 1 week of Spring Break. Since Larry declined to join us, we enlisted Doug Dueweke, a friend of Bill's.
 5. Using Bill's car, we left Ann Arbor on Friday, 4/5/57, and successfully make it to Florida this time. We returned on Saturday, 4/13/57, after a round trip of 3411 miles (including 542 miles in the Fort Lauderdale/Miami area).
 6. Prior to the beginning of our trip, Preacher E. Hoke Campbell and his family moved to Decatur, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta (about 90 miles south of Chatsworth).
 7. During both legs of our Florida trip, we stopped to visit the Campbells in Decatur and spent the night with them, a very welcome break. Everyone was delighted to see each other again. We bought them a lovely wall clock and had it gift-wrapped. They were very pleased with it and had it hanging up by the time of our return visit.
 8. For the next few years, I exchanged Christmas cards with the Campbells. Then we dropped off each other's Christmas card list and I never heard from them again.
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LETTER 1

April 11, 1956

Mr. and Mrs. John Boyer
Greenbush, Mich.

Dear Mr. and Mrs Boyer;

As you know we have had the peculiar privilege of befriending your son, Tom, along with Bill Parks who stayed in our home while Larry Greene, their companion, was in the hospital recuperating from an automobile accident early Saturday morning, March 31, near our town. I want to tell you how much we came to think of Tom in such a short period of time. He is indeed a fine young man and we rejoice in the privilege of knowing him.

We carried Larry to Chattanooga, Tennessee last Friday morning where he boarded a plane for Detroit. Tom and Bill left early Saturday morning in the car for Michigan. We sincerely hope that they will make the trip without further accident.

Please be assured that it was a pleasure and a privilege to have Tom in our home and we believe that you have a son that you can always be proud of.

With every good wish to you and him, I am,

Most sincerely,
(signed)
E.H. Campbell

LETTER 2

April 30, 1956

Mr. Tom Boyer
217 Lloyd House
West Quad
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Dear Tom,

Your letter of April 10 was most interesting and I expected to hear that you had driven all the way through that night. I was hoping that you would stop for a break and maybe a few hours of rest but deep inside I felt that you would continue your journey until you reached school.

I have heard from your parents, Bill and his parents, and Larry's parents. I do hope that Larry is much improved and that the scars on his face will not be too pronounced. Please give him my best regards and remember me to Bill as well.

The folk around town often ask about you boys and of course occasionally Gracie Jean will have something to say about her correspondence. I am not sure whether that is pride or bragging but in any case I agree with her. I think that you are a very fine young man.

Mr. Parks [*Bill's father, a beekeeper*] sent us two jars of Michigan honey which we are enjoying very much. Naturally we did not expect that but it certainly is deeply appreciated. We had a lovely letter from your parents and I hope that someday we will have the privilege of meeting them.

Summer has finally come in Georgia and we are really glad to see it. The flowers and the trees are beautiful. I wish that you could see our section now that there is some vegetation to hide the bare rocks. [*One of the preacher's favorite greetings was, "You're as welcome as the flowers in May."*]

Please remember that we would appreciate hearing from you along and along and know we shall always be interested in you. You have a way that will certainly help you through life, a sense of humor that is rare, and a personality that just won't wait (if that is an old saying, then it should go). [*The preacher often said, "That's the way the old saying goes. Pause. And if that's an old saying, it should go!"*]

With the very best of wishes to you, I am,

Most sincerely,
(signed)
E.H. Campbell

LETTER 3

May 9, 1956

Dear Tom,

What a lovely surprise I had waiting for me yesterday! It was a lift I needed, for I was way down. Work has piled up, and I wasn't feeling too capable of handling the situation.

We are enjoying the Michigan honey. As Bill said, it has a different flavor; but I enjoy the change.

We were happy to receive letters from both the Boyers and the Parks. The other parents from K.C. [*Kansas City*] wrote a nice letter too. The preacher and I feel that we've gained so many new friends.

Thanks again for our thoughtfulness. Let us hear from you when you find time.

Lovingly,
Your Georgia Mom

P.S. Give Bill and Larry our regards
