

December 11, 1996

Scott:

A puzzle: do you recognize the church building described in this newspaper article?

If memory fails, and medical science tells us it can at advanced age: in 1964 we camped on army cots in the middle of its long-vacated altar. In uncharacteristic impiety, we had beaucoup vodka. I think it was vodka, or it could have been rum and beer, but something. We boldly sermonized to an empty sanctuary of dust and field mice, and profound views on mankind's folly (other than our own) were exchanged far into the sizzling summer night.

These blasphemous actions may come to haunt us in succeeding lives, but at twenty or so, we must have well comprehended those risks at the time, right? However, if you have undergone a deep religious metamorphosis in the thirty years since, I want to say right now that I regret the small role I might have played in your eternal damnation (is that the river Styx up ahead?).

Nevertheless, it was quite hot, and we used the front luggage well of my Corvair as an ice-chest. We checked out the cemetery, hiked down to the Brazos, and explored the two houses still standing in the area. An elderly woman lived in one, and we sat on her shady porch and she told us about the church building and the former town.

Ten years later, after some further research with maps and such, I came back to the site with a metal detector and found lots of useless crap which I no longer have. The woman had died by then.

Anyway, as you can see I finally found a way to turn a buck on the experience through the local daily. Isn't it amazing how things you learned back then can somehow pay the bills now?

I have a photograph of you sitting on the front steps of the church in a floppy hat and holding your sketchpad (young artist full of dreams, you should see it). You took one of me standing on the new concrete bridge at Dennis with Millican's Bluff downriver behind me.

Happy holidays. Hello to your mother, and to the evil twin.



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