

MAD HAZARD

A Life in Social Theory

Stephen Turner

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES
IN SOCIAL THEORY

VOLUME 38

MAD HAZARD

CURRENT PERSPECTIVES IN SOCIAL THEORY

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MAD HAZARD: A LIFE IN SOCIAL THEORY

BY

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University of South Florida, USA



United Kingdom – North America – Japan
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2022

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-80382-670-7 (Print)
ISBN: 978-1-80382-669-1 (Online)
ISBN: 978-1-80382-671-4 (Epub)

ISSN: 0278-1204 (Series)



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ISO 14001:2004.

Certificate Number 1985
ISO 14001



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Turner is Distinguished University Professor. His PhD is from the University of Missouri. His dissertation, *Sociological Explanation as Translation*, was published in 1980 by Cambridge. He is the author of a number of books in the history and philosophy of social science and statistics, including books on Max Weber, on whom he also edited the Cambridge Companion volume. He is the coauthor of the standard one-volume history of American Sociology, *The Impossible Science*, and has recently published an update, *American Sociology: From Pre-Disciplinary to Post-Normal*. He has also written extensively in science studies, especially on patronage and the politics and economics of science, and on the concept of practices, including three books, *The Social Theory of Practices* and *Brains/Practices/Relativism*, and a collection of essays, *Understanding the Tacit*. His *Liberal Democracy 3.0: Civil Society in an Age of Experts* reflects his interest in the problem of the political significance of science and more broadly in the problem of knowledge in society. A collection of his essays on this topic, *The Politics of Expertise*, also addresses these issues. Among his other current interests are problems of explaining normativity, especially the conflict between philosophical and social scientific accounts, and issues relating to the implications of cognitive neuroscience for social theory, especially related to the problem of tacit knowledge and mirror neurons. His *Cognitive Science and the Social: A Primer* is a survey of the problems posed for cognitive science by the social, and for traditional views of the social by cognitive science. His book, *Explaining the Normative*, is a critique and an alternative to the accounts of “normativity” one

finds in philosophers like McDowell, Brandom, Korsgaard, Nagel, and the like. He has had fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies.

EDITORS' FOREWORD

Since the inception of *Current Perspectives in Social Theory* (CPST) in 1980, we considered monographs for inclusion on numerous occasions. For one reason or another, however, those prospects did not materialize. As a result, aside from a collection of previously published essays by a single author (vol. 28), all volumes have been original essays by different authors. Even though the opportunity has existed in the past, the present volume constitutes the first monograph published in this journal. Stephen Turner's memoirs are a most fitting contribution to the series. Turner has been a member of the editorial board of *Current Perspectives* for three decades, since 1991, and a leading contributor to and spokesperson for the style of theoretical work CPST stresses.

Working from a strong foundation in classical social theory, influenced especially by the works of Max Weber, and to a lesser extent by Émile Durkheim, Stephen Turner has played a key role in social theory circles for more than four decades, both in the United States and internationally. He has published important theoretical work in the most prominent general journals and in more specialized outlets. His corpus includes many single-authored and coauthored monographs and many edited and coedited volumes. His contributions have addressed an exceptionally broad spectrum of theoretic themes and issues, including philosophy of social science, cognitive science, and democracy. As a faculty member at the University of South Florida, initially in the Department of Sociology, and since 1984 in the Department of Philosophy – where he has been Distinguished University Professor and Director of the Center for Social and Political Thought – he has pursued and promoted social theory as an indispensable activity in the modern world that warrants strong and unwavering commitment as well as focused and resolute attention. Stephen Turner also has played a major organizational and interdisciplinary networking role in social theory, including being a founding member of the International Social Theory Consortium (ISTC) in 2000. He has since been involved in organizing or coorganizing yearly ISTC conferences rotating between the United States and other parts of the world.

Stephen Turner's biographical essay illuminates the highly varied academic activities and everyday-life contexts that shaped his work as a theorist. The combination of autobiography and memoirs elaborates how his thought emerged from the relationships he forged at different stages of life with family, friends, and leading theorists, at the many universities at which he has worked, and through diverse professional contexts. The detail Turner provides in this monograph on related matters in their multiplicity and multidimensionality is impressive, unusual, and in many ways, undeniably unique.

Stephen Turner has contributed substantially to interdisciplinary work on Max Weber and Weberian theory, sociology of science, and the methodological and philosophical foundations of social science. However, what makes his biographical monograph especially appropriate for *CPST* is his persistent and determined effort over the course of several decades to distinguish *social theory* from more narrowly drawn, specialized sociological theory, and to forge a distinct transdisciplinary space for a theoretical practice rooted ultimately in classical social theory. Indeed, it is ever more important to insist on the cosmopolitan outlook on social theory as a practice that requires and deserves its distinctive communicative space, which must be protected and maintained, beyond the increasingly hyperspecialized academic division of labor that has been shaping all disciplines – not just the natural sciences, but also the social sciences and humanities. In contrast to the dominant view of theory in disciplinary social science, Turner, as well as *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, represents the classical, “big picture” style of social theory as a living theoretical practice that provides rational means to argue the normative and analytical directions of more specialized, narrowly framed forms of disciplinary theory and of broader socio-cultural and political life.

Stephen Turner’s work in international social theory circles, his role in the formation of the International Social Theory Consortium, and his rich corpus of work across disciplinary lines have contributed substantially to later twentieth and early twenty-first-century social theory. He is a leader who has helped forge an interdisciplinary, international “home” for social theorists. Given the unequivocal and staunch devotion to the life of social theory demonstrated and illustrated in Turner’s memoirs, they are an indispensable and most fortunate part of social theory’s acknowledgment of its own social embeddedness and rigorous reflection of its history since the 1970s.

Harry F. Dahms, Editor
Robert J. Antonio, Associate Editor
Current Perspectives in Social Theory

MEMOIR DISCLAIMER

This is a memoir, and based on recollections, recollections of what I was told, and records my reactions to these events. Recollections can be faulty, and certainly are partial. Doubtless these are both, but no malice is intended: what is included here is presented solely for the purpose of explaining my own motivations and choices. If I misinterpreted, misheard, or misremembered an event, I have simply recorded what I remembered. It is not intended to be anything more than an expression of my own responses. It is not meant as a depiction of other people, or of facts to which I had no personal access. It is a personal remembrance of a life and intellectual journey, from a personal perspective, and should be read accordingly.

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...academic life is a mad hazard.
Max Weber

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PREFACE

I have been asked if I am writing a memoir. My initial answer was no, but on reflection, I have gone ahead and written one. I have published two short accounts of particular episodes in my life, and a third on rural sociology that was also personal, but they were largely oriented to my academic career. This one will be a little different, though I need to make some qualifications. My life has not been a terribly eventful or interesting one. I did not, as my father's father did, rise to an overwhelming challenge. I have not been torn by inner conflicts, doubts, profound regrets, and the like. I have had many disappointments in life, like everyone else, but only one has gnawed at me, and I believe that even here what ultimately happened was probably for the best. I have never thought of myself as a lucky person, but I did have one stroke of luck that changed my life. Whether it was a matter of merit, and whether I deserved it, is for others to judge. It did allow me to behave as a research scholar without getting a job at a major university, and to stay in Florida, which was always my priority. I have always tried to repay it and other kindnesses done for me through helping others with their academic careers. In a sense, this memoir is a repayment as well, to others who have found themselves on the margins of the intellectual communities they thought they were a part of. It is not designed to give them hope, but perhaps some solace and a sense that it is possible to live a worthwhile life of the mind despite the realities of present-day academia.

I can explain what happened to me, what my thoughts and motivations were at the time, what I took pleasure in and what produced pain, and say something about the people I was related to, my teachers and mentors, my friends and colleagues, and the larger world I enjoyed. This is thus a "life and times" memoir, with an emphasis on the times. If my life was not interesting, the times were. It is a cliché from Kierkegaard that life must be lived forward and can only be understood backward. I am not at all sure that I understand the world I was thrown into and the transformations I lived through. Women's liberation, the sexual revolution, the demise of sociology, the transformation of academic life, the decline of national loyalty and civility, and the end of the traditional religious substrata of social life – all this happened during my life, and affected me. My longtime helper, Eileen Kahl, has pointed out to me that I have omitted any discussion of the work that has occupied much of my time – mentoring – helping graduate students with dissertations, editing, and otherwise advising and encouraging. This has been gratifying work, and I am pleased that so many of these students and colleagues have prospered and achieved, or, in the harsh academic present, survived. Out of discretion and a reluctance to appear to take

credit for what they have accomplished, I have left this out. The successes and happy lives of others have nevertheless been a great source of satisfaction for me.

My major motivation for writing this memoir is that I never felt I had communicated any of this, or enough of this, to my sons. There is a moment to tell one's story, a moment when it can be a kind of dialogue, and this moment never seemed to come. My own father told me much more, and I spent several summers going around to buildings with him, doing what needed to be done, but mostly just watching him supervise, negotiate, deal with businesses – shade shops, laundries, plumber supply shops, paint stores, and so forth. With my own sons I tried to give them the childhood I didn't have: little league, support for anything they wanted to do, lessons, and a bit of soccer, and availability at all times to play catch, go to the beach, toss the football, and interact. I took time to travel with each of them, and there was no lack of contact. But I didn't feel there was ever the right time or the right receptivity to tell the rest of it. It is difficult to explain one's attitudes apart from the environment in which they were formed. This is in part what I have tried to do here.

Autobiographies are often either triumphal accounts or complaints. I hesitate to make this one either. It is not bitter, or at least not intended to be bitter. Nor is it a story of triumph, over the odds, or in any sense other than the story of a satisfactory life of the mind and the partial fulfillment of early dreams. Many biographies and autobiographies of intellectuals resemble the journey of an express train, rushing between major stops, going from success to success. This one is more like the meandering route of a local, with stops in many villages. These villages, the small communities in which friendships and mutual understanding are made, were my primary intellectual homes. The phrase "in the village everyone is famous" applies to them. They were the little platoons of intellectual life, not the towering heights, or the precincts of the mandarins.

It is necessarily a story of loss. Most of what I will describe, inevitably, is lost worlds, lost social worlds, and lost intellectual worlds. My partially fulfilled dreams were of Miami, as it was in the 1950s and 1960s, and in a sense of what it was in the 1920s, as will become clear. This is where I was comfortable and wanted to be, but could not be. It is an academic and intellectual memoir, at least after I come to my thirties. By this time I was pulled along by the ordinary currents of academic life – invitations, roles, PhD students, and a terminal position with its own demands. These demands get some attention, and are revealing about the transformation of universities.

It was not a life without its passions and turmoil, but it was also uxorial, and always surrounded by pets, or children, or both. I have tried to be as honest as possible about the motives I had, or reflected on, at the time. This kind of second order reflection – reflections on memories of reflections – is inevitably subject to error and confabulation. The story told here is not didactic. My experience is not a model anyone could follow today. The good and bad luck of the present does not resemble the luck of the past.

I got the life I wanted, though not in the crucial detail of location. But what I did get, namely the privilege of living half my life in Pass-a-Grille, brought me in many ways closer to the life I envisioned. Although not a triumphal life, it was

productive and externally successful. I had many hours to sit on the porch and watch the mockingbirds and many hours with cats snuggled next to me or laid out on my chest. I made breakfast for two little girls during summers in Michigan. I played a lot of catch with my sons. These are the things I got pleasure from. I escaped Chicago, with scars. Others will need to judge which they were and how deep they were.

Texts like this can veer into name-dropping, but the names I will drop here are mostly obscure, though a surprising number of them can be easily traced. I don't think there are any illuminating stories about the rich and famous, though occasionally there are some about people who did lead interesting lives. The things reported here are the products of the failing memory of an old man. I have sometimes gone back to my "archive," but there is not much there. After the fire inspector insisted that my office be cleaned up and out, we separated the valuable documents into a container and prepared to throw out the less important stuff. Instead, the valuable box was tossed. It did not contain anything profound, however.

Although this is an academic memoir, it is not as impersonal as many such memoirs are. Indeed, for an academic memoir it is probably indecorous, and too personal. Nevertheless, this is how I experienced and valued what went on in my life, and it would be misleading and dishonest to leave it all out. I have not named many names in these connections, to preserve the privacy of people. But I have tried to convey the relationships as I saw them. I was fortunate in these relationships, and my regrets about them, though real, are few. I always looked for the silver linings in the clouds, and continue to do so. The powers we have to make things right for other people are real, but limited. I like the idea that Stoicism was a formulation of the philosophy of Sparta, and I have always been prone to, and comforted by, this approach to life, for myself, at least. And that is reflected in this memoir, and perhaps explained as well by my childhood, in which finding the silver lining was a necessity.

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PROLOGUE

The bookshelves in my father's office in the basement of our house in Chicago had a copy of Saul Alinsky's *Reveille for Radicals* of 1946, a first edition "second impression," with an endorsement by Jacques Maritain, saying "this book is epoch-making," and a dust jacket quoting a newspaper description of Alinsky as a "hardboiled sociologist and criminologist who refuses to pull punches when he believes the welfare of the people with whom he works is being jeopardized." I was in my mid-sixties when I learned that the reports he published on gangs omitted the gang rapes they executed, and that his account of the rehabilitation of a robber had failed to explain that the thief had eventually gone back to crime. This book sat alongside my mother's gynecology textbooks from the 1930s and beyond, her copy of the Kinsey report on the Human Female (1953), Drake and Cayton's *Black Metropolis* (1945), a crumbling paperback collection of de Maupassant short stories that my father had kept from his time in the Army Air Force in Guam, and a paperback of Plato's *Republic* with a few additional dialogues, which I appropriated. There was also a how-to book on making a million dollars in real estate (Nickerson 1959), which taught me a great deal. There was a paperback of *The Best American Short Stories 1959* that included Phillip Roth's breakthrough "The Conversion of the Jews" (1959), which spoke to my own deepening skepticism about theology.

There were many other books that I took note of, idly. Some were by people that my parents knew, such as James Nichols' history of Protestantism, others on such topics as Christian Sexual Ethics and the Dead Sea Scrolls. And there was a long run of *National Geographic*, in which one could find articles from the late 1940s on experimental aircraft, which fascinated me. My father's office had two large cluttered desks, covered with receipts from the family business. Clutter was a habit I inherited. My mother had a desk on the other side of the room, which she rarely used, with her case of medical instruments for house calls, which she seldom made, her medical school microscope, which I sometimes used, and the slides and data cards for her medical research. She used what amounted to a pre-Hollerith card sorter, with what looked like knitting needles that threaded through gaps punched at the edge of the cards. It was sufficient for her purposes. After she got the publication needed for her appointment as an Assistant Clinical Professor at Northwestern the system was never used again.

The basement was the warmest space in the house in the winter, and the coolest in the summer. It had a phone, which was used when people wanted privacy. I sat at the desk when my mother called from South Orange to tell me her father was dying of prostate cancer – I was 12; and when I needed to call my high school girlfriend four years later. This room was in a sense where my life as an “intellectual,” with my own tastes and concerns, began: the stepping stone to my later interests.

MEET THE FAMILY

The event that most influenced my life occurred long before I was born: the Great Miami Hurricane of 1926. My father's life was changed by this event, and in a sense, I have spent my own life trying to live the life that he would have lived if it was not taken from him by the storm. The life I was born into, in Chicago, was very different, and lacked many of the things that a normal childhood, and a normal adolescence, would have contained. This was not because my parents were poor, or that I lacked for anything, but because of the way in which the South Side was transformed in the nearly 16 years I lived there growing up, and the peculiarities of the way I was raised. To understand my parents, especially the oddities I will recount later, it is necessary to explain the family background and the family legends that went along with it, and with some truths that were not part of the family legends, but which I discovered myself. These facts do not explain enough: my parents' treatment of me remains largely a mystery. But they explain something, and they relate to my future intellectual development.

My grandfather on the Turner side, Fred, known as F.A., came from what had been an important pioneer family in Bluffton, Wells County, Indiana. The county, near the Ohio line, was settled quite late, and was partly swamp that was drained. My grandfather's grandfather, Robert B. Turner, had come to Indiana from Lewistown, Pennsylvania, with two brothers (at least according to legend), and by the 1830s they were in Dayton. They were mill-builders and, however this may have happened, Robert became the proprietor of the Mill in Bluffton, on the Wabash River. His first wife died young, and is buried in the pioneer cemetery. She had several children who moved elsewhere in Indiana, and seemed to be quite entrepreneurial, for example, by founding a medical insurance company – this in the late nineteenth century. There seems to have been no contact between the first and second family, or very little. His second wife, whom he married in one of the first recorded marriages in Jay County, to the south, was the mother of Lewis, my father's grandfather.

As mill owner, Robert was a central figure in the community, and this got him into elective politics, as a Democrat. He was sent to the Indiana House of Representatives, and aside from sitting on a committee to resolve a border dispute between counties, there is nothing in the record about his service. When he returned home, he was elected as a judge for Wells County, a position that did leave a trace in the family, though an odd one. The Sheriff of the county had the

Mad Hazard

Current Perspectives in Social Theory, Volume 38, 1–10

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ISSN: 0278-1204/doi:10.1108/S0278-12042022000038001

last name of Lynn, and this became my great-grandfather's middle name, and also the name by which he was known. It then became my father Lawrence's middle name, and then my sister's. By this time, when the children of his second family were being born, Robert Turner was in his forties.

For whatever reason, nothing about Robert was passed down in the family legend, at least to me, other than his name and that he had come to Indiana from Pennsylvania by way of Dayton on the National Road, and the facts about mill-building and his brothers, which I never could verify. I later reconstructed some of his history from a record of Indiana judges created in the nineteenth century, which identified his home town, Lewiston, Pennsylvania, which in turn led to some other information, including his father's will.

Family history of this kind, which is quasi-genealogical, is something of a bore, but it is useful as a corrective to the simplifications of social history. What is striking about this family, during its time in Pennsylvania, is how entrepreneurial they were – briefly running a distillery, for example (a crucial activity in the rye growing regions of the state), as well as the mill-building. These were anything but traditional European peasants, nor was anyone around them, including the locally prominent Burns family, with which they intermarried. They farmed, almost all of them, but also did something else in the long downtime of farming. My great-grandfather, for example, was a boot-maker. His leather grinder was inherited by my grandfather and kept in the basement of the building that was central to their lives, which, until it was sold, was known as the University Avenue building for its address.

Without unraveling the obscure relations between people, a little can be said about the rest of this side of the family. They included others who served in county politics and were noted for solving budget problems and issues with the poorhouse. My grandfather's mother was a Crandall. I was told little about this family, but it had the longest history in the Americas, beginning in the 1630s. The emigrant, Elder John Crandall, was the great grandson of Nicholas Crundall, vicar of the parish of Winterbourne, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire. His son, Nicholas Crundall, Jr, who succeeded his father as vicar, was accused in the Star Chamber of resisting a constable, crying out "The Queen's name! The Queen's name! I do not care a turd for thee nor her either." There are variant stories of Elder John Crandall's emigration, but he became a pioneer of Rhode Island, recipient of a land grant from friendly Indians, and a founder of the town of Westerly. My family line, however, descended from a rebellious younger son who abandoned the Baptist sect over a dispute about primogeniture, when Elder John gave his assets to his oldest son. After a sojourn in Cape May, New Jersey, this estranged family moved west. The name Thankful, as a girl's name, repeated over many generations into the late nineteenth century, is a good gauge of their religious sensibilities.

My grandmother on the Turner side, Sarah Park, known as Sadie, was descended from Irish immigrants – Scots Presbyterians from Donegal. One arrived just in time for the Civil War, and died at Chickamauga. The rest arrived shortly after. Their history is complex and obscure. The main family names, such as Hogg and Gailey, were Scottish – the Gaileys were Buchanans, the name deriving from a victory in a tournament on a Gay Lea. Among them were

Covenanters, who died at the stake. They were mixed with some French. This element had always been mentioned as part of the family legend, but I never believed it. I couldn't see how it could be true, and the embroidered notion that they came over with William the Conqueror seemed incredible. But I had repeated experiences in my thirties of being mistaken as French. The first time was in Spain, when a group of girls asked directions in French. I told them I spoke English. They said "we do too." They had simply taken me for French on the basis of my looks. My wife said "it's your clothes." But it was also true that I had an uncanny resemblance to the star of a French educational movie that aired on public television, so this was not the whole story. I had a later experience that was even stranger. I was at dinner with a group of academics at a colleague's in Vancouver, when one of them, a Frenchman, said "you are French, right?" I insisted that I was not. The next week I was in Ireland, where I made the pilgrimage to Letterkenny, the town near where the family had lived. I discovered there that a genealogist who had come before me had determined that part of the family, named Torrens, had indeed come to Ireland from France, shortly before the revolution.

On my mother Natalie Stephens' side, the family background was a mixture of Welsh, English, and German. The Welsh, Hughes and Jones, arrived from Anglesey in the 1860s and settled in Covington, Kentucky. There is a story about the boat they were on being captured by pirates. The Ohio valley was a major destination for the Welsh. They shortly moved to New Jersey, however. There is some mystery here. The family had split up and Catherine, my great-great-grandmother, lived with my great-grandfather in New Jersey. The sons were successful in the emerging industrial world, as machinists. My great-grandfather bought a share of a paper box factory in Newark from his employer, moved into a new home in Maplewood, then a new suburb, and in retirement became a senior golf champion in state competitions. He lived to an old age, and held me as a baby. His wife became an institutionalized mental patient and suffered from such things as fornication. When told by her daughters to go to bed, she replied "what, with all that livestock?" She was also known for saying "there are 18 bibles in this house, and I haven't opened one." My mother's mother grew up in this family, and was shortchanged. Her younger sister was sent to Montclair State College to become a teacher. Her brother was sent to Stevens Institute of Technology to become an engineer. She was expected to stay home and sew. Her brother became fascinated with aviation, created an airfield, and was issued a flying license by Orville Wright. When he married, his father told him to give up flying, which he did. Before Maplewood, the family lived in Jersey City, along with various relations, including Germans on my great-grandmother's side. They arrived before the Civil war, but the details are obscure.

My grandfather's family, the Stephens, were English, and provided their own color. My grandfather's grandfather was born in Red Marley, in England, and his wife, Lydia, was from a southern county. They lived in Hereford, where he was a painter. Before standardized paints, this was a trade which involved the handling and making of the paints and coatings, as well as artistic skill. He did such things as pub signs, and some fine art, and passed on the skills. He

back-migrated to Hereford, after – according to family legend – he rose from the dinner table complaining about the food, and sent for his oldest son. He was known in Hereford as “Mad Tom,” and harassed the people going to the Cathedral for services by playing his violin and ridiculing them. The rest of the family remained in New Jersey. One of his sons, my great-grandfather, worked in the painter trade for the Erie Lackawanna, where he was responsible for such things as gilt work on the ferries. His son, my grandfather Claude Stephens, was a Doughboy, an artilleryman, and could see his father working in the railroad yard from the troopship that carried him to France from Fort Dix. When my great-grandfather retired, he spent winters in St. Petersburg in the 1930s, and I am told they enjoyed sitting on the boardwalk. As far as I can tell, there was no boardwalk in St. Petersburg, but there was one in Pass-a-Grille, where I live, which was a short daytrip away by trolley and boat, so perhaps I returned to the spot. They died a decade before I was born.

My grandfather Stephens died when I was 12. My grandparents on both sides were a useful buffer against my parents, so this was a great loss. He was a Masonic lodge member, an air warden during the Second World War, a one-handicap golfer, a country club member, and a paragon of normality. In South Orange, housing prestige was a matter of how high up the hill the house was. His was at the bottom; when he asked his wife whether she wanted to move up, she said no. As a toddler, he would pat me, and I would pat him in return, which greatly amused him. As he was dying of prostate cancer, he told my mother that his great regret was that he had never taken me golfing. That he was unable to is one of my few unalloyed regrets.

My grandmother Stephens, born Irma Hughes, my mother’s mother, was an operagoer and season ticket holder at the Metropolitan Opera, and bridged the old and new Met. Jerome Hines and Renata Tebaldi and later Joan Sutherland played on the family stereo. My grandmother was also, oddly, fond of Frank Sinatra, who she saw as a fellow, because he was born in Hoboken. She slipped into dementia in the 1970s. I credit my grandmother with a great deal of tolerance. Her three daughters were very different, and the two oldest were trying, in different ways. My mother was the first born, and a difficult child when she started school, stubborn and uncooperative. The second oldest went to Mt. Holyoke, and there were issues about whether she needed a fur coat. Style apparently mattered in those benighted times. I always wondered whether my mother’s devotion to her mother was compensation for the trouble she had caused as a child.

My father, Lawrence, was born in 1915 in Evanston, Illinois, to two Hoosiers from Wells County, Indiana. My grandfather, F.A., was a “Secretary” in the YMCA, and worked as what was called a “Boy’s man,” meaning that he organized activities for boys, especially sports. He had started out in the railroad YMCA’s which were created to be wholesome, meaning alcohol-free, residences away from home for railroad crews. He married my grandmother, who had been a teacher in rural one-room schools, after establishing himself as a YMCA man. The YMCA was a large and hierarchical organization, with all that implies. He attracted some notice, and was moved to better and better positions. The move to

the Evanston YMCA was followed by a move to South Chicago, to a YMCA near the vast steel mills.

My father started school in Chicago; by this time the family had moved to Woodlawn. This led to his one brush with fame. Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, who had been appointed commissioner of baseball to clean it up after the Black Sox scandal, saw my grandmother and my father together on the sidewalk of 63rd St., then a major shopping street, and exclaimed “you can’t deny that boy.” I suppose there was a resemblance, but I never saw it. My grandfather was in charge of such things as the YMCA summer camps, and, with the help of the campers, worked at constructing cabins and other facilities. During the year, he worked at supervising sports at the Y. My grandparents pooled their savings and purchased, and then sold, an apartment building on Marquette Road, which was a learning experience; they bought another one on University Avenue. This building, which they owned for more than 60 years, and lived in for much of it, played a large role in the family history, which I will explain later. My grandmother taught my father to read before he started school, and as a consequence, he was “double-promoted” into second grade. This was something he always regretted, and it had some effect on decisions that were made about me as well.

Chicago at the time was a great industrial city. Buildings were heated by coal, as were the factories. Around age nine, my father developed what was called at the time “bronchitis.” The coal fires of Chicago and its polluted air was the probable cause. His doctor advised that he be taken to a better climate. I am not sure why Florida was chosen, but my father’s great uncle, a physician with a degree from the Cincinnati Eclectic School of Medicine, had traveled to Florida often in the 1910s, and other relatives had also migrated. In any event, the family, including my Aunt Phyllis, who was then five, moved to Daytona to begin a new life.

The ties to Chicago were not cut, however, because they still owned the University Avenue building, which they were selling on a lease type arrangement that enabled them to take ownership back if the operator fell behind on payments, and perhaps under other circumstances. This was an arrangement that was important later in the history of the South Side, as it was the way in which Blacks bought buildings, and was portrayed as an unfair deal. But the key to the deal was that, unlike a mortgage, there was no down payment, so it was possible to buy on this basis without funds. The buildings were typically owned by local people – dentists, such as a friend of theirs named Chittick who retired to Hollywood in Florida, janitors who bought the buildings from the owners, and so on – as a source of retirement income. They were typically bought with the expectation of paying off the mortgage in 10 years from the rent, and then the building being sold or becoming a source of income. This was not a lucrative business, and margins were low. If the building was managed by a real estate company, it would produce very little income: management fees would eat up any profit. Owner managers were more common. The family derived income from this arrangement, though probably not much, and certainly not enough to live on.

In Daytona, my grandmother and grandfather both worked as real estate salespeople. My grandmother was an agent for Howey-in-the-Hills, and they even bought a lot there, as well as land in Volusia County. All of this “went for taxes” (along with a huge part of the state of Florida) during the depression. They never invested in Florida real estate again, except for the houses they lived in, though they kept a sharp eye on it. In addition to working in sales, my grandmother ran a rooming house, as she had in Evanston, where the family also lived. There are several pictures of Phyllis and my grandparents in front of this house, which was on Volusia Avenue, which is now Speedway Boulevard, a few short blocks from the water and downtown.

At some point they heard about how nice Miami was, and after a year, in which my father attended school in Daytona, they moved. My father remembered the Florida East Coast railway trip from Daytona as slow, hot, and smoky. When they arrived in Miami, probably in the early summer, they rented, but my grandmother wanted to buy a house, which they did. It was a house built, as the story I was told had it, by the builder in the neighborhood, who was getting a divorce. The address was 2341 S.W. Tenth Street. They moved in at the beginning of September 1926, days before the great hurricane.

The great Miami real estate boom had ended by this time, but prices had not dropped precipitously. The house, which they bought for \$10,000, was to lose much of its value during the depression that followed. It was sold for the same price in 1954. Nevertheless, it became the family home for the next few years, and acquired mythic status in the minds of my father and Phyllis. I remember it myself, and it is among my earliest memories untainted by photography and films. It had a breakfast nook that was cozy, a fireplace which my father told ghost stories in front of as a child, and a sleeping porch – not unlike the one my father slept in during his time in Daytona (which he did not remember fondly, because of the Palmetto bugs). This was the pre-air conditioning era, and it was normal to drive to the beach for the evening air in the summer.

Life in Miami was good. My grandmother taught Sunday School at the nearest Methodist Church, the Tamiami Temple, and they attended the White Temple on the Bayshore as well. The Sunday School class, with three teachers and a large number of students, was photographed by Gleason Romer, the classic Miami photographer who was of course also a commercial photographer: the picture survives. On Sundays, they dined at the home of a woman who made Sunday meals for a living. They went to Church picnics on the beach, driving the family Jewett, which appears in several snapshots. My grandmother could strip the carburetor on the way to church, taking off her white gloves. My father had a full school life and friends whom he shared books with, and took piano lessons, performing in recitals arranged by his teacher. At one piano duet, he and the girl he was playing with hit a sequence which went back and forth and failed to stop and move on. A recital notice survives. The school he went to, Shenandoah Junior High, was in what was at the time an ultra-modern campus. In the 1930s, the school moved and the campus became an elementary school. The buildings were later replaced.

The idyllic life in Florida did not last long. My grandfather was hired by the Y, but on the condition that he raise his own salary from uncollected pledges. There was nothing to collect. After the 1926 Hurricane and the collapse that followed, everyone was broke. Banks failed. Real estate values dropped drastically. My grandfather was able to secure some work in the Washington D.C. area – based on his experience with pledges, and spent the next summer at a Y camp in Maryland. My grandmother was left with the family and the responsibility of running the house. She sold stockings door to door as a representative of an Indianapolis stocking firm. They had some money in a safe deposit box, which she drew from. And there was a small amount of income from the University Avenue building. But there was not enough to live on.

My grandfather returned to Chicago, to the South Chicago Y, lived in a rented room and later at the Y hotel downtown. He practiced barbering on the side, the trade of an uncle and cousin, with the idea that this might be a way to survive in Miami. There were barbering jobs, but not jobs that made enough. After two years and intermittent return visits, once at least by boat, he found a place for the family in Morgan Park, and they returned to the north. As my aunt recalled, my grandmother cried all the way to the state line.

My grandfather was again assigned to collecting on pledges, an unpopular role, but one which provided him a unique education in real estate. What would now be done by lawyers in complicated proceedings was done by him in court representing the Y. The pledges were legally binding and were the collateral for the building funds for the YMCA, so this was serious business. It brought him into contact with businesses in distress, and he was already, in his letters home to Miami, commenting on the apparent failures of building projects. The depression, when it hit Chicago, would not have been a surprise. He had seen it already. But it was a loss for him: he was let go by the Y, as its finances contracted.

I have nothing but admiration for what my grandfather did next. Back to the wall, unemployed, with the 1933–34 World's Fair pending and with one asset, he moved the tenants out and converted the six-flat apartment building, which had large apartments with several rooms, into an overnight accommodation for fair-goers. As a youth on the farm, oil or gas had been discovered on the land, which had set off a frenzy of wasteful burning and left little money, but which gave his older brother a career as he followed the oil, and taught my grandfather pipe-fitting. He used these skills to jerry-build illegal outdoor pipes to the rooms of the split-up apartments. The family then went to work generating business, much of which came from word of mouth from connections in Bluffton, Indiana, where they both still had family. But some came from the efforts of my father, who stationed himself on a street corner in South Chicago, with other men and boys doing the same thing, in front of a Catholic Church on the road from Indiana. He flipped cards into the slow-moving cars, and often drove them – creaking model-Ts from the country – into the city to the building.

This new business was a success. After the first season, my grandparents were able to close the building and return to Miami for the winter. My grandfather worked as a salesman in a store, a position he took intermittently in Chicago as well. After the second and final season of the fair, they took down the pipes and

returned the building to apartments. The depression was still on, indeed had deepened. But they were able to start buying other buildings with the profits. My grandparents did not live large; they were frugal and invested. My grandmother had a preference for “brick and mortar” as an investment. But they also bought stocks, and had bought mortgages in the past, and passed on the habit to their children. Phyllis, once she started working in the late 1940s, bought a share of AT&T every few weeks. She held these shares, or their successor companies, until her death at 90.

In Chicago, they kept an apartment, shared for many years with Phyllis, and once my father had returned from the war and could take care of the buildings in their absence, returned annually to Miami for the winter. My grandfather played golf and occasionally fished, and they hosted guests, but his main sport was lawn bowling. He was a member of the Miami lawn bowling club, as well as one in Chicago, in Jackson Park, where I often went to see him as a child. The Miami Club traveled to meets all over Florida and sometimes beyond. I don't know many people who retired well. They were good at it. They found a social life in Miami, were active, lived in beauty, and appreciated it. We were always driving around looking at flowers and flowering bushes and trees at people's houses, a Miami pastime. They had and encouraged visitors in Miami, and enjoyed them. Among them was a lively railroad man they knew from the Woodlawn Methodist Church, Charles Mottier, who visited one time when I was there. He was the engineer who, in the 1920s, raised the tracks on the Illinois Central through Chicago and electrified the commuter line. They visited friends in Key West, traveled to Cuba by boat, and were happy. My grandmother was not fond of cooking, so they often went to cafeterias, and loved Toby's, at 27th and Tamiami Trail. Toby's was so large that it had two serving lines, which were long but fast-moving, and specialized in “Southern” cooking. In Chicago, we often ate as a family with them at the Hyde Park Y, which always had huge “steamship rounds” of roast beef, along with mashed potatoes.

My father had started High School in Morgan Park, and was allowed to continue even after the family had moved back to Woodlawn and the University Avenue apartment. He at least once went to “Park House,” a neighborhood place for teens that Robert E. Park was on the board of. Phyllis, five years younger, went to Hyde Park High. My grandparents took my father to the University of Chicago, and considered enrolling him there, but the university would not even speak to them about the curriculum and his options until he paid tuition, so they backed off. He entered a city-wide scholarship competition for free tuition to Chicago Teachers college, which he won, and he graduated from their two-year program. He then went on to the University of Illinois – as a student in the college of education, with the aim of becoming a science teacher.

As a student he spent at least one summer at the National Summer School at Greeley in the late 1930s, and participated in many hikes. There is a picture of him jumping down a glacier. As far as I know, he never returned to Colorado, but sent me there to a YMCA camp for the summer of 1962. The West, and the mountains, had a special appeal to the family. Phyllis drove all over the West in the middle of the 1950s, and sent many postcards, which survive. There is one