

DEAR

POP



Dear Dad:

Each month when the "HOOVER RAIL" reaches me it brings on periods of reflection in which I go back several years to the time I spent at home as a boy. For several issues you dads, back home have written to us who are away and now perhaps it is time for some of us to let you know that we are thinking of the folks back home.

Well do I remember the penalties inflicted when some wish of yours was violated. My most common method of escape came though by using an age old ruse. When all persuasion had failed I would often walk out the door with a look of innocence and an air of good intentions. However, as soon as I was out of sight what could happen except that I managed to catch the truck loaded with local base ball players and climb on board. As you remember Tod Caldwell and others took the boys over each night for two or three hours of practice. Naturally you had said that I was too small to do such things, but I had other ideas. When darkness came we all grouped on the old red truck for the return trip. Just as we crossed the bridge each time, I had to be let off so that I could come sneaking in as though I had been within calling distance all the while. Questions sometimes revealed that you were suspicious but each time you were unable to muster enough proof of such underhand actions on my part.

As the years passed and I grew rapidly to the exalted place of a freshman in high school, self importance began to creep upon me. Very soon ideas of driving the car came to me more and more frequently. At first you were adamant and at the time I thought that you were the hardest dad a feller ever had. Gradually a softening up process took place and at last you drove over to the ball park road for my first lesson in driving. When I slid over under the wheel of the old Chrysler the motor sounded much like a modern bomber on the take off. Then you asked me if I knew what to do first. "Sure", was the ready reply. Now I can tell you that I didn't have the least idea what to do. After fumbling with this and that for some time you shoved the gear into position with what sounded like a disgusted grunt. Suddenly and without any warning our heads left their moorings and our feet came up to the top. A series of short high rabbit hops followed which left me scared in addition to being dizzy from the violent leaps we had been through. It was with much persuasion that I finally succeeded in getting you to proceed with the lesson at the risk of having no car. The next years were spent while you rode beside me giving constant advice. Inevitably, the day came when I wanted to drive into Shelby where traffic was heavier and beset by stop and go signals. Since I was too young to secure a driving license, your reply was always a firm refusal. I decided to bide my time and the day came when you dozed off on the way to Shelby and awakened to find yourself in the car which was parked close to the main block of Shelby. That broke your resistance and from then on I always drove down to "town" each and every Saturday afternoon.

The next great step came when I wanted to have the car for a date with my best girl friend. When you ultimately gave in to me you relinquished many rights you had previously held in regard to driving. The mileage soared unbelievably and from then on any night driving you planned was subject to opposition from me backed by my best pleadings.

So you see I recall vividly the rearing you gave me and today I salute you for your wisdom.

Affectionately, your son,
Pvt. Ralph Eaker