



TIME CAPSULES AND WHAT THEY HOLD

by Jerry Klein

A BIT of reverse English sometimes is applied to the old saying that "everything that goes up, must come down." In the case of time capsules, those buried treasures of odds and ends which one generation passes along to another, the saying should be that "everything that goes down, must—eventually—come up." And when it does, it's a sight to see!

A toothbrush, a woman's hat, a box of cigars, a piece of string, and a milk bottle—these are just a few of the weird items that have been solemnly stashed away under ground as typical products of our civilization. Buried in time capsules, their purpose is to tell generations yet unborn what life was like way back in the 20th Century—assuming they care!

During President Truman's administration, workmen repairing

the White House discovered a small marble box under the entrance hall. Apparently buried there in 1902, this time vault contained:

Indian head pennies, newspapers reporting Theodore Roosevelt's message to Congress, and the label from a bottle of rye whisky. Some more newspapers were added to this hoard and the box was re-buried in another White House location for some future administration to find.

When the Washington Monument foundation is opened, some future Americans will find a copy of the U.S. Constitution, a portrait of George Washington, 75 assorted newspapers, a silk flag and a sample of the coins and currency in use a century ago. This cache was placed in the 25,000 pound, marble cornerstone of the monument when it was laid in 1848.

Some future generation of Englishmen will find a time capsule containing a razor, a Bible, cigars, a box of hairpins and photographs of "twelve pretty women." These items were buried beneath Cleopatra's Needle, the famous Egyptian obelisk dedicated on a new site in London back in 1878.

Just recently, as part of its 50th anniversary celebration, the State of Oklahoma buried a time capsule in front of the county courthouse in Tulsa. Since Oklahomans do things in a big way, they included in their vault a brand new, de luxe 1957 automobile, all gassed up and ready to roll—come the year 2007!

That's when the capsule is scheduled to be opened, according to the chairman of the celebration committee, W. A. Anderson. He said the committee decided a modern automobile should be preserved for citizens of the next century as "the great common denominator of our times." A 1957 Plymouth was chosen for burial, Anderson declared, "as an advanced product of American industrial ingenuity with the kind of lasting appeal that will still be in style 50 years from now."

To make doubly sure posterity doesn't forget the Plymouth, the car will be awarded to that person—or his heirs—who comes closest to guessing the population of Tulsa in 2007. Entries in this contest are already closed, and the prize may be driven home in 50 years.

Meantime, the eight-cylinder, shark-finned, high-compression symbol of American good living will have to wait—along with many other strange items buried in the earth for future reference.

One of the most ambitious time capsules of all was the one buried at the New York World's Fair in 1939. It was made of a specially resistant alloy to enable it to last until the time comes for it to be opened—in the year 6939. The last time anyone looked, a glass crypt filled with nitrogen gas was inside the metal shell, buried 50 feet deep in a petroleum pitch compound that is supposed to protect it from moisture and acids in the soil. Among other things, this hoard includes a can opener, fountain pen, camera, cosmetics, eyeglasses and dictionaries.

A bottle top, a broken compass, three pennies, a knife and several fishhooks, these are the items preserved to posterity under the cornerstone of a boy's club in New York. The club was about to be dedicated when a city official turned to one lad and asked him to contribute the contents of his pocket as mementos of American boyhood in the 20th Century.

OF COURSE, the contents of some time capsules are serious. With them, mankind hopes to acquaint future generations with his language, science and art, his fears and his aspirations.

At Oglethorpe University in Georgia, for example, there is a 2,000 cubic foot vault built in solid rock. It contains steel cylinders holding a cross-section of the social, scientific and religious attainments man has reached thus far in his development.

Should the English language no longer exist when the crypt is scheduled to be opened—in the year 8113—there is a machine that

gives both a visual and sound indication of 1,500 of our basic words.

FOR THOSE nearer us in time there is a brass capsule of scientific data buried in 1939 beneath an atom smasher at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Placed there by scientists, this treasure is to be opened in 1989—unless the atom smashes all of us to bits before that date.

Americanism, as either a phrase or a force on the contemporary world scene, has been eroded into something negative and defeatist. It has come to represent merely a delaying action against the victorious march of its enemy, collectivism. The air is full of clarion calls to Americans to organize, in order to better fight against socialism, communism, or some vanguard of their forces. Twice each day the mail brings to my desk pleas for me to contribute money, or effort, or moral support, or all three, to some group which is battling to hold back some particular advance of collectivist storm troops.

In the worldwide ideological struggle which divides mankind today, we conservatives fight always on the defensive.

During this long and forced retreat we have fought only a rear-guard and sometimes delaying action. We have never been rallied to counterattack, to break through the enemy or rout him, and to climb again beyond our highest previous gains.

If we heirs of all the ages are to find a turning point in this rapid and sometimes stampeding descent, in which we are abandoning instead of improving our inheritance; if the last half of the twentieth century is to see the curve that measures individual dignity turn upward; if the men who really wish to be free and self-reliant are to begin climbing back up the mountainside; then the goal must be known, and the purpose of aggressive offense must replace defensive defeatism as the banner under which we march. It is fatal to be merely against losing ground, for then there is no way to go but back. We have to be for something; we must know what that something is; and we must believe it is worth a fight to obtain.

There are many stages of welfarism, socialism, and collectivism in general, but communism is the ultimate stage of them all, and they all lead inevitably in that direction. In this final stage, communism, you have a society in which class distinctions are greater than in any other, but where position in these classes is determined solely by demagogic political skill and ruthless cunning. You have a society in which all those traits which have helped to make man civilized, and which our multiple faiths have classified as virtues, are now discarded as vices—while exactly their opposites are glorified.

—ROBERT H. W. WELCH, JR.

He changed his students from bored prisoners into eager collaborators



HE KNEW HOW TO TEACH

by Lee Hancock

MORE THAN twenty-five years ago I met a man who knew how to teach history. If that doesn't sound like a particularly startling statement to you, think about it a little.

How much of your school-taught history do you remember? How well do your children like history? It is probable that you remember practically nothing; and that your children hate history class. That's because hardly anyone knows how to teach it.

My own recollections of history before Karl N. Keller are associated with boring classroom ses-

sions, longing glances out of the window, and the surreptitious sketching of forbidden pictures in my notebook.

Karl Keller was a wizened little man who seemed always to have been old. He possessed, apparently, only one suit, a blue serge, and in the two electrifying years I spent under his jurisdiction, never appeared in anything else. He had a dour face, lighted only occasionally with a sudden disarming smile. He was slightly bent, due to the fact that he always carried an armload of books. He was one of the most unprepossessing indi-