

Yale Boulevard and the Chambers Range

In June, 1952, Paul had finished the residence requirements for his PhD. at North Carolina State University, and we were back at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, for him to begin teaching. A place to live was the first order of business. We found one nice apartment near SMU, but it was on Milton Avenue. We decided that Minton -- frequently mispronounced Milton -- on Milton would be a problem we didn't really want to deal with. So, we continued our search and found an unusual but feasible dwelling on Yale Boulevard within easy sight of his office. We rented it.

To begin with, our lot went all the way from Yale Boulevard to McFarlin Street. The house was on the back of the lot, with a long, narrow driveway all the way from Yale to the garage, providing a monstrous lawn for mowing. In truth, it was a garage house, with no house in front of it. On the first floor was a single garage on the west, with a living room on the east. Between the two rooms, a long, narrow flight of stairs rose to the second floor. The landing at the top of the stair was a slim hallway leading to our spacious bedroom on one side, over the living room. That bedroom was what convinced us to rent the house. It had a ten-foot-high ceiling, like the living room, and windows on three sides, north, east, and south, guaranteeing access to any summer breeze and shielding the room from the hot evening sun. On the second floor, the room had no trees or buildings to restrict the breezes or our view. The west side of the house was shared by the kitchen on the south and the bathroom on the north. The kitchen back door led to an outside stairway down to the ground, a stairway that looked very rickety to us. We didn't worry about it because we didn't think we'd ever need to use it.

When we left Chapel Hill, we had sold what little furniture we owned. All of it had been acquired from other students who had left town. (I often wondered what the last students to leave Chapel Hill would do with *their* furniture.) In Dallas, as we looked for a home, we began accumulating a skeleton set of household furnishings. The house on Yale had no range or refrigerator. We found a wonderful second-hand Chambers range for sale, along with a good refrigerator. The other furniture was new and would be delivered by the stores where we had bought it. However, for the range and refrigerator we had to arrange for a moving company to pick up the appliances and deliver them to Yale Boulevard.

On moving day in early September, the movers brought the refrigerator up the inside stairs without any difficulty. The Chambers range was a different matter. It was a wonderful piece of equipment, solidly insulated so that later in November I could cook a turkey overnight with the gas off after the oven had heated to 350 degrees. It also had a built-in griddle and a deep well for wonderful slow cooking. It was beautiful, heavy, and much too big to go up the inside stairs. The movers, who had identified themselves as Bob and Harry from AA Movers, reluctantly started up the outside stairway with its wooden banister offering scant protection. At the top they negotiated the ninety-degree turn into the kitchen, settled the Chambers beast near the gas connections, and gladly accepted a cold drink. As I paid the bill and the movers left down the inside stair, Bob handed me the AA Movers card and earnestly asked us to call the AA Movers when we left Yale Boulevard but to ask that Bob not be sent.



Entertaining in that house was interesting, involving as it did many trips up and down the stairs between the living room and the kitchen. Most of our family activities were on the second floor, in the kitchen or bedroom. Fortunately, that winter was mild, for those unprotected second floor windows courted winter blasts just as well as they admitted summer breezes. But the bedroom was indeed a joy even on the hottest day, and the Chambers range was everything I had expected it to be.

We brought our first born home to that second-floor bedroom, and for a few weeks enjoyed the coziness of having him nearby. But it became obvious that George needed his privacy as did we, so by the end of his first summer, after only a year in the house, we found a little two-bedroom house on Airline Drive where we could be happy until we bought our first home. We did get someone besides Bob to move the Chambers range from Yale to Airline, and getting it down the outside stairway was even scarier than getting it up. The range continued to serve us well until we moved into our all-electric home and reluctantly sold it to another couple who were just starting out. At least, they did not have an outside stairway!