

THINGS IN MOTION...

All things are in motion and nothing is at rest ... you cannot go into the same (river) twice. —Heraclitus (540?-480?) B.C.

Number 8, Spring 2007. Published by Hugh Singleton
At 102 Azalea Trail, Leesburg, FL 34748
For The American Amateur Press Association

THE WIND'S WILL

ONLY now and then in my life has come a day that stands out prominently in memory because of the wind; a special time when strong winds worked their magic on my childhood. My first encounter occurred during a Sunday visit with my Aunt Jenny's family on the farm where I spent my first three years. After playing with Aunt Jenny's cat, a descendant of my own "Tabbo", I decided to climb up into the fork of the large chinaberry tree which had shaded much of the yard and the well for as long as I could remember—the thick leaves of summer were bobbing and swirling as the wind gusted and shoved the limbs this way and that. Soon the rhythmic dance and swishing sound lured me higher and I thrilled as I swayed back and forth for hours—it was enchanting.

My next memorable date with the wind was in a vacant field near my Aunt Lucille's home. I had ridden my bicycle into town where I spent my one nickel to buy a kite. By the time I was at Aunt Lucille's house again, the sky was overcast and the wind was whipping the blackberry bushes that lined the ditches. I assembled my kite and carefully took it into the vacant field where it eagerly sprang from my hands and was quickly soaring as high as the string would allow. I ran across the furrows, winding and unwinding the string; spending an entire afternoon with my kite and the steady wind. As sunlight faded and a chill crept into the wind, I reeled in my kite, sorry to end such fun, but happy in that special way that children are after a time of joyful activity with only themselves for company.

On a late spring day in later years, when the winds along the Chattahoochee River had blown the soil from cultivated fields into a long yellow haze that stretched for miles, I climbed a large pecan tree and sat in the upper branches to sway gently, thinking adolescent thoughts of the years ahead of me and imagining wonderful events that I hoped those years would bring. Just before the day ended, I strolled under tall pines that rustled as only a pine can in the face of a constant wind; it is a magical sound that brushes away busy thoughts to leave a calmness unmatched in the forest.

The wind is not always a friend. Hurricane Donna swept across Florida in 1960 and tested the integrity of my newly purchased house. The pleasures that I had previously claimed from a brisk wind were missing as night fell in North Orlando and the fronds of the palm tree in my yard began to wave frantically. Before the sun was again visible, winds exceeding 110 miles per hour had blown through central Florida and left a full measure of destruction to mark its passage. Lucky me—my house was intact.

I have stood atop the dunes on the beaches of Florida and inhaled the salt air in both Atlantic and Gulf sea breezes; have watched the white sails of invisible boats traverse the horizon and have thrilled to black fins rising and white caps breaking—without the wind, such vistas would be greatly diminished in effect.

Perhaps Longfellow best described the winds in my life: *"A boy's will is the wind's will, and the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."* Certainly I treasure those special days when my heart responded to the wind rustling thru trees and whistling around the corners of buildings. I count those days and the thoughts that flooded my young mind then as some of my finest hours. #

