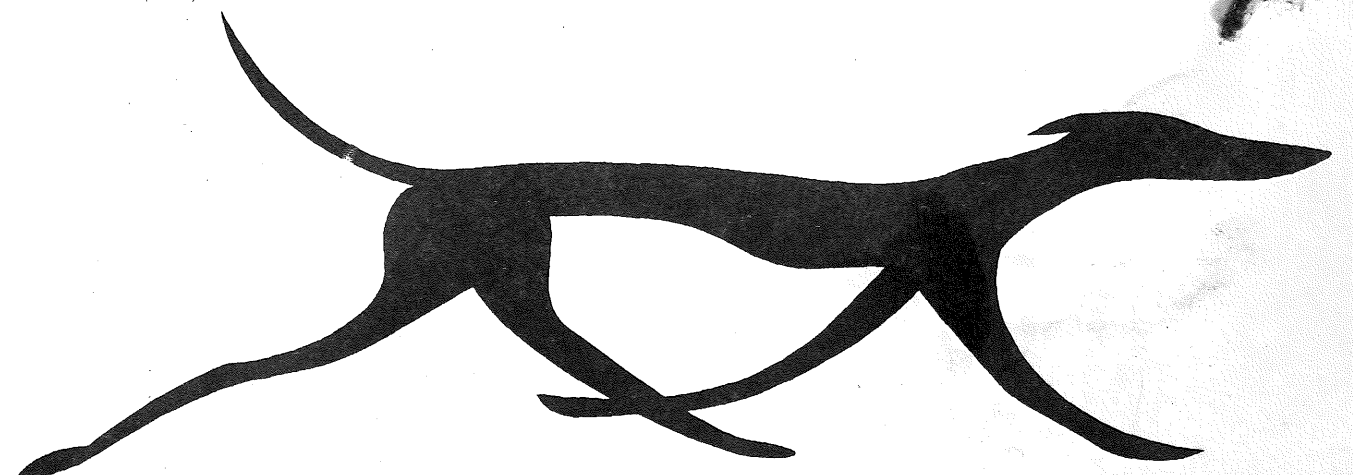


They Left The Driving To Us

Tales of the Road

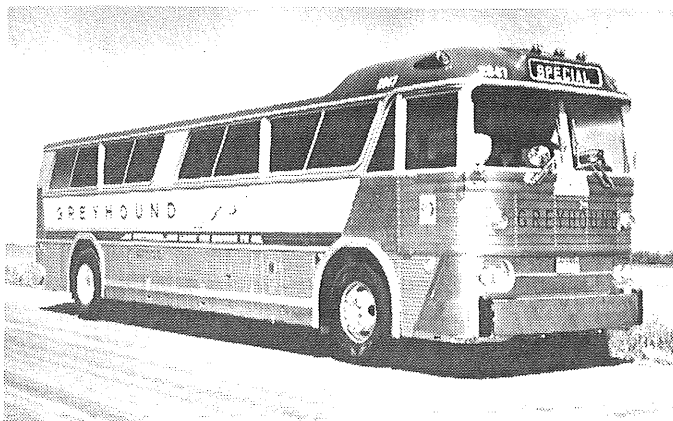
As told by the Greyhound Employees

Compiled & Edited by
Justine & Junior McHenry



There are lots of mistakes -
but as it goes,
let me know what you
think,
Justine

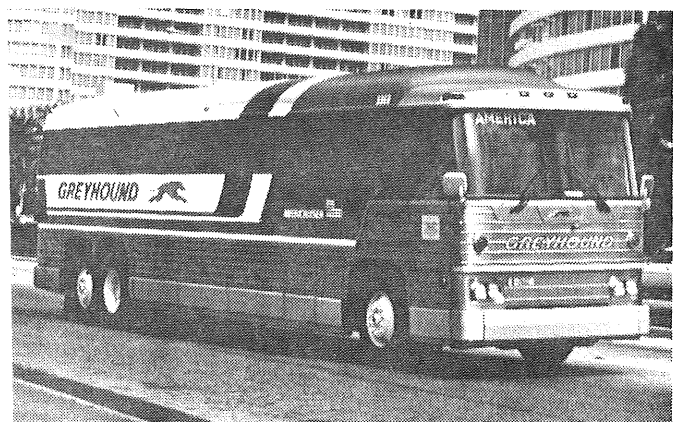
Ray could have done better.



1964 Motor Coach Industries (MCI) model MC-5 (5A), 39 passengers. (A) stood for Greyhounds modified model, built to US specifications. Motor Coach Industries, Ltd., had been bought by Greyhound a few years earlier, opening a finishing plant at Pembina, ND to avoid having to pay import taxes on a complete bus.



1968 MCI model MC-7, 43 passenger. This was Greyhounds next 40 foot coach following the Scenicruiser, and it was required a "tag" axle (single wheel) behind drive axle to meet highway weight measurements. It's front and rear resembled the MC-5A.



1974 Transportation Manufacturing Corporation (TMC) model MC-7, 43 passengers. MCI formed this company to completely build buses in the USA. It is a completely new designed coach which set the standards followed today for 30' coaches. Automatic transmission was standard for Greyhound and continues today.



1979 TMC model MC-9, now mostly 47 passengers. This model has broken the production record set by GM with their model PD-4104. MCI has modified this coach for Greyhound as model MC-12, which was first built in 1991 and is Greyhound standard coach with 801 plus 530 MC-9s in a fleet of 1790+ coaches.



1986 MCI model 96A3 (96"-A, 1st in series, 3-axes), 47 passengers and 1988 Eagle model 15. (Delivered new to Greyhound)



1980 Eagle model 10, delivered to Trailways, Inc. before purchase by Greyhound in 1989.

They Left The Driving To Us

Tales of the Road

As told by the Greyhound Employees

Compiled & Edited by
Justine & Junior McHenry

For my wonderful husband, Junior McHenry and all the dedicated
Greyhound Employees and their families

Acknowledgments

We owe a debt of gratitude to those Greyhound employees who told their interesting and humorous stories at the Greyhound golf tournaments, reunions and meetings.

Our appreciation goes to those Greyhound employees who were so generous with their time and expertise to write these stores of real life experiences.

The expertise in this book belong to and were contributed by the following:

Don Baker - An eighty-five year old driver, hired 1935 and retired 1970.

Stanley Bass - A great poetry writer.

Sella Board - A Charleston, West Virginia driver, now retired. He started work with Greyhound in 1948.

Donald Coffin - Provided a brief history of Atlantic Greyhound and photos of buses with captions.

G. C. Collette - Retired 1985. He looks forward to the Greyhound reunions every May and seeing all his friends.

William E. Edwards, Jr. - Contributed his entire manuscript of experiences during his driving years. He kept a diary of unusual episodes with his passengers and fellow drivers.

W. Fulcher, Jr. - Started working for Greyhound April 3, 1941 as a storekeeper in the Winston-Salem, North Carolina shop. Retired January 1963. He says, "My working days at Greyhound were the best of my life."

William Goforth - Started working for Greyhound on June 19, 1956 and retired July 1, 1986. He worked out of Washington, D.C. 1956-1965; Asheville, North Carolina, 1968-1972; Washington, D.C., 1972-1975; Orlando, Florida, 1975-1986. He feels these years were about the best years for Greyhound Lines. He says, "We sure made a lot of money for us and the company, driving hippies and demonstrators. My years with Greyhound were really an education and a great experience for me."

Robert Hinckley - Is eighty-three years old and started working for Central Greyhound Lines of New York in 1939. He has worked out of Erie, Pennsylvania; Buffalo, New York; Boston, Mass. and Scranton, Pennsylvania. He traveled Canada and United States on charters, including the Big Bands of the 40's and 50's. He worked seventeen years in Richmond, Virginia and retired from the hound in 1974.

Earl A. Hanson - Time with Greyhound, March 1956 until May 1, 1990. Worked in Charleston, West Virginia 1956-1967; Jacksonville, Florida 1967-1989; Charleston, West Virginia, 1989-1990 7 months, then retired. "I've been married to the same woman, Juanita, for forty-one years."

Clyde Lancaster - Contributed names and addresses of retired bus drivers and a very interesting list of nicknames of bus drivers.

Harry Messimer - Started driving on June 15, 1956, hired in at Roanoke, Virginia. When he got through drivers school, he was sent to Jacksonville, Florida and drove up and down the east coast. For seven winters he was transferred to Columbia, South Carolina.

Junior McHenry - Went through driver's school in Charleston, West Virginia, October 1950. From Charleston, he drove to Pittsburgh, Winston-Salem, Columbus, Clarksburg, Lynchburg, and Cincinnati. He retired November 1, 1986.

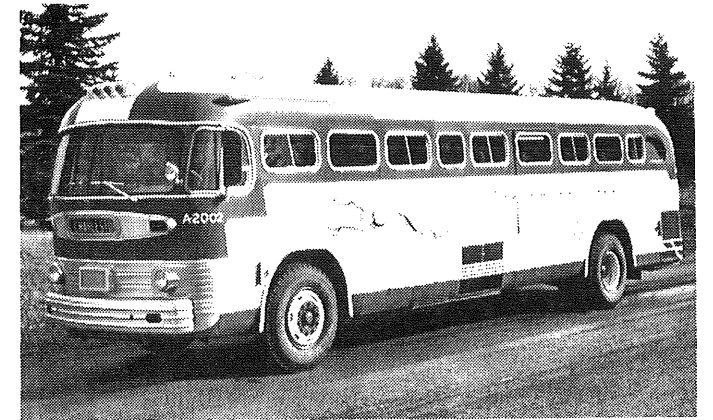
Dale Smith - A Charleston, West Virginia driver.

Troy Tucker - Started driving in 1938, and says he couldn't have worked for a better company than Atlantic Greyhound Corporation.

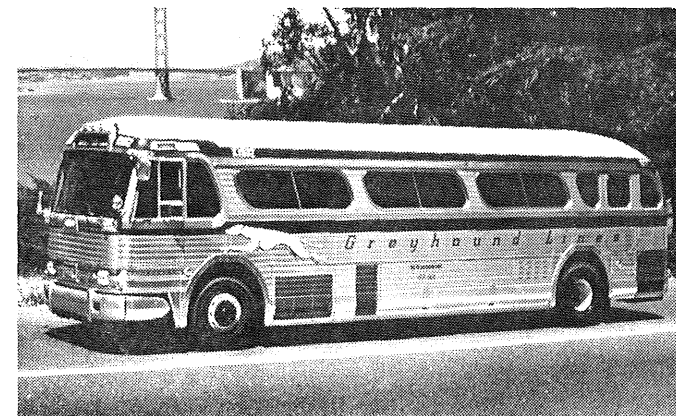
This book contains the factual stories written by Greyhound employees about their everyday lives on the open road of the United States of America.



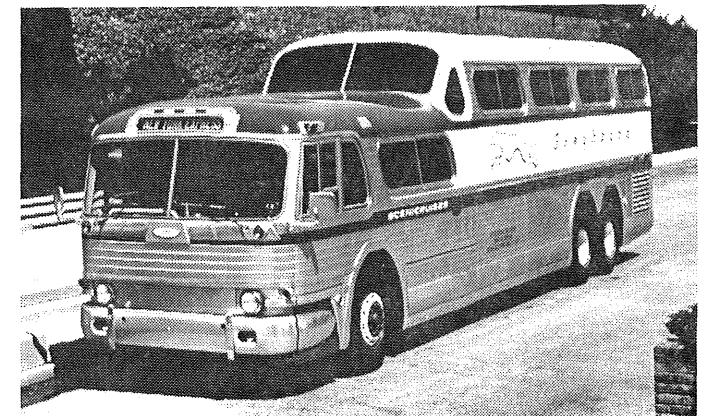
1949 General Motors model TDM 4509, T for transit, D for Diesel and M for manual transmission. 41 passengers, again with standee windows, small parcel racks but with all forward facing high seats. Again used in the Charleston area.



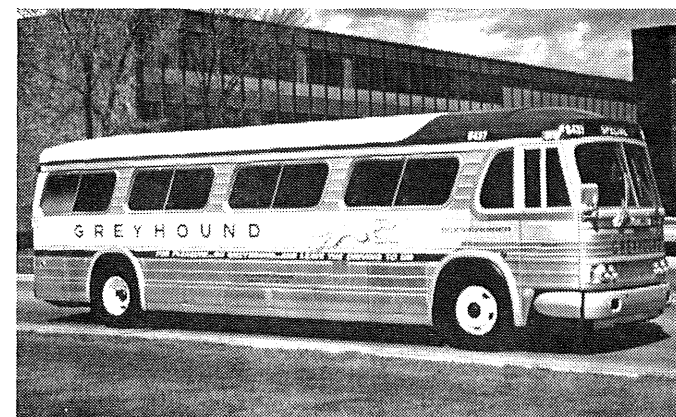
1951 General Motors (GM) model PD-4103, 39 passengers. Government restrictions on the use of aluminum for the decoration of bus sidings resulted in the final Greyhound order being finished with painted sides. Ten were equipped with lavs for Florida - New York limited service.



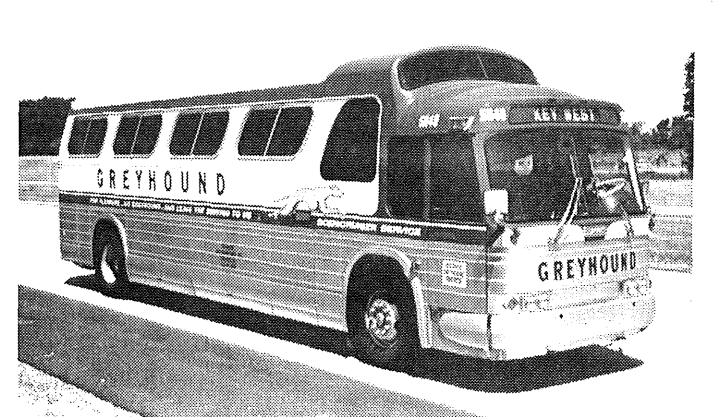
1953 GM model PD-4104, 39 passenger, with picture windows, power steering and air bellows in place of springs. Greyhound named it "The Highway Traveler" and reordered several hundred for delivery in 1957 & 1958. Most were lav equipped.



1954 GM model PD-4501, 45 passenger, 10 on lower section and 35 on upper level with lav on lower level. This was Greyhound's famous "Scenicruiser" as it was the ultimate in comfort and scenery observation. Over 1200 were built exclusively and for Greyhound in 1954-1956.



1961 GM PD-4106, 39 passengers. It was basically a PD-4104 with a restyled front and rear including some Scenicruiser features. Lav equipped was standard for Greyhound from here on.



1966 GM Model PD-4107, 39 passengers, designed to resemble the Scenicruiser and provide increased baggage space below floor level. Its slopping floor up to the third row of seats proved to be an accident hazard. This was the last model GM coach delivered to Greyhound.

wasn't any step to go up but most everybody would step up a step and put their foot down real hard, you know, like there was a step. That was right comical, I tell you, and yet today, when I retired, people would still be doing that.

Us old timers would get on and give the driver a ticket, and make a big step like you were stepping up. The floor was level, you see and I still on this little old bus that I drive now, people get on, some people do and make that extra step.

Buses, years ago, was all made the same, and now they come along in 1965, somewhere along there, and make all kinds of crazy steps on buses and all that.

SNOW AND ICE, OH BOY!

Well, snow and ice, oh boy. As you know, we always had a lot of trouble with snow and ice. But you get on these highways and get in a road block and they finally clear the road up and you kind of move a bit, come up to one of those elevated curves and the back end of that bus would come all the way around and you'd finally get it straightened up and a few times these ladies said, "Driver, I was praying for you" and I said, "Lord, I needed t!"

Well anyway, I use to park up on the hill at Lexington, Virginia and the bus station was up on a bank. Pull n there and back up and a lot of times I backed up and threw the brake on and get up out of the seat and that front end would slide down about eight to ten feet. Women and all of them would scream and holler.

I said, "Ah, just be patient, it can't go far if it does slide."

THAT NIGHT RUN

That night run, at the last, before I retired, quite a bit, this yankee woman, she sits down behind me and she says, "I'm going to sit here behind you and when I see you nod, I'm going to punch you on the shoulder." I said, "Yeah, and when you do, we'll end up in the corn field somewhere."

So she didn't say anything the rest of the way.

WHEN YOU GET TO WHERE YOU'RE GOING

I had this fella on there, I looked in the mirror, one day and saw him back there taking... turning the bottle up and taking him a big drink. So I was close to the station. When I stopped at the station, I went back there and took the bottle away from him. And he said he was very sorry, he didn't know he wasn't supposed to drink on the bus. I said, "Well, I'll give it back to you when you get to where you're going."

So, I get started out and I looked back and I seen him turn up another one, so I said, "Good dang, what's going on here." So I just stopped the bus and went back there and took that one away from him.

Got back and got to goin' real good and looked up, danged if he didn't have another one turned up back here, drinking it. So I finally wised up, he had a bag full of half-pints. So I went back and took that away from him, and took his bag and moved it up front, see, so he couldn't get to it.

I gave it all back to him when he got to where he was going. I didn't want them after he'd been slobbering round on them.

JUST DEAD-HEAD THE BUS BACK TO ROANOKE

In Harrisonburg, Virginia, we used to double out of Roanoke, you know, if you had over a load and get to Harrisonburg, going to Washington, DC. Sometimes we'd maybe run out of people or it would be kinda close.

So one day the regular driver said "Oh, I don't believe I'll need you from here on." So I called the dispatcher and he said, "Just dead-head the bus back to Roanoke." I said, "Okay."

So we'd been sitting out... both buses had be sitting out in front of the bus station there for about thirty minutes while we had a rest stop, meal stop.

Well, it was dark then, see, in fact it was dark and I got in my, the other driver he loaded up, he picked up about two people there in Harrisonburg, so he backed up and took on up the road and I got in my bus and I didn't ave anyone on to start with. So I just got in my bus and headed toward Roanoke. I got pretty close, within ten miles of Roanoke and I'd been singing and carrying on coming down the road by myself and I seen a light flickering in the back of the bus and I said, "Oh Lord, what in the world's going on?" So I looked and there was a passenger back there lighting him a cigarette. I said I couldn't believe ... excuse me, I didn't know what in the

outside rear view mirror and guess what! There was a man sitting behind me. He had his head bent over and a straw in his mouth. He had a pint bottle in his coat pocket and he was drinking it through a straw. So when he took the cap off it, it made an odor.

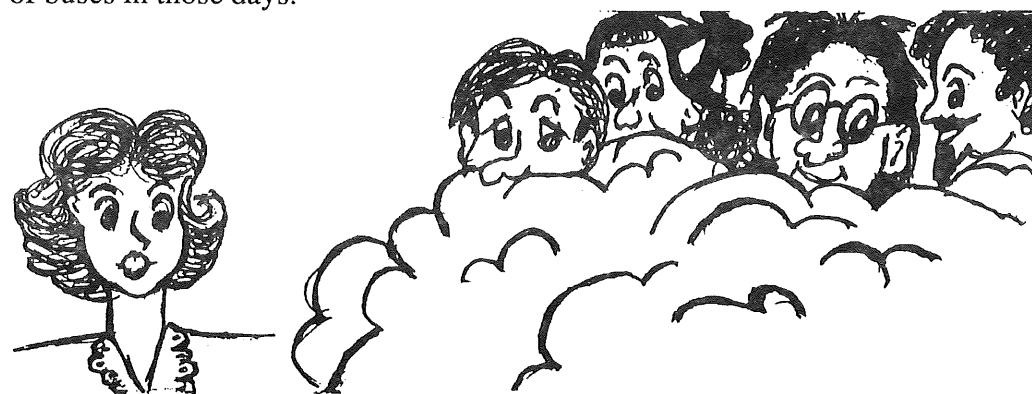
So when I drove into a bus stop, I asked him to give me the bottle as he had violated the company rules. He did give the bottle to me.

When I arrived at the terminal I gave it back to him. He thanked me for it and stated he had a good trip.



THEY CAME FROM BEHIND THE TREES AND BUSHES

I was on an Asheville, NC to Augusta, GA schedule that went through McCormick, SC and always had a bus filled with passengers. There was a bunch of people that rode the bus and many that flagged you down to ride between McCormick, SC and Augusta. The way they would do to get you to stop was one passenger would flag you so when you got stopped, there would be 10 to 15 that came from behind the trees and bushes to board the bus. I already had a bus load but I was able to get them on the bus, using all seats, aisles and steps. This was amazing to me. Evidently they had been passed up when they all stood there together to flag the buses due to the overloading of buses in those days.



THE FIFTEEN CENT GRAPEFRUIT

In 1945, Mr. Fred Martin sent me to Atlanta on company business. Martin was Vice President for Atlantic Greyhound, Southern Region. My business appointment was for 10 a.m. Saturday morning.

On Friday night I lived it up by going to the floor show and eating at the hotel where I was staying, thus getting to bed late Friday night made me late getting up Saturday morning.

So in the rush to catch a cab for my 10 am business appointment, I grabbed a grapefruit for breakfast which at that time cost 15¢.

Mr. Martin got a great kick out of this, for I always put on the expense report exactly what I spent. I heard from him about this, also some who had been turning in high expense reports heard about this too!

I HADN'T RUN OVER HIM AT ALL

I had an unpleasant experience while on my way Lynchburg, Virginia one rainy night. I picked up a man at Ansted, had gone three or four miles, he wanted off. Proceeded on my way. Just west of Rainelle, a car ran around me and stopped me and told me I had ran over a man back down the road.

I went on to Rainelle and called the dispatcher. He told me to check the state police. They might not want me to continue on. The state police told me to go on and he would have a report when I came back to Rainelle. When I got to Lexington, I called back to the dispatcher. He told me they had brought in a man and I had run over his leg. They sent him to the hospital. After a sleepless day, I came back through Rainelle. The state police had left a report for me. The man had a falling out with his girlfriend and he wanted her to think he had gotten hurt. I hadn't run over him at all.

That instance stays with me as I thought I had hurt someone.

A SANDWICH OF BUS, POLICE, BUS

In 1957, William Ross and myself were dead-heading two buses to Camp Breckenridge, KY to pick up two bus loads of Army Reserves and return them to Portsmouth, Ohio. As we crossed the Ohio River at Cincinnati, we ran into a heavy fog. As I was just out of driving school and William had all the itinerary and the only road map, there was no way I was going to let him out of my sight. So we were moving along about 35 or 40 miles an hour with him not more than one bus length ahead of me on a winding two lane road. I didn't even know we had entered a town until a red light went blink over his bus and then mine. We hadn't moved more than ten feet when a car came up behind me and tried several times to pass and finally worked up the nerve to pass my bus and came in between William and myself in that heavy fog. I could see the red bubble on top of the car but I still did not let more than one bus length off. He never did turn on his light or maybe it was broken. That's the way we traveled for 3 or 4 miles until we came to a sharp left turn in the road and then the car shot straight ahead onto a dirt road. I felt all the time that William knew he was there and since he wasn't stopping neither was I. Needless to say we had a lot of laughs about this, but we were very careful to find another way home.

WE NEED A BREATH SAVER

I was driving up 4106 and was the second section on a non-stop schedule from Washington, DC to New York City. I was about an hour out of New York City, when I saw this black man come out of the rest room and walk up the aisle, toward the front of the bus. He stood in back of me for a few seconds, then he said, "Driver, where is this bus going?"

I stated that it was going to New York City (then the thought came to my mind "Oh my God, he's sneaked on the bus trying to get to Baltimore"). I then said, "Are you not going to New York?"

He said, "Yes, but what I mean is, where is it going when it gets to New York?"

I said, "Probably to the 45th Street Garage, is there a problem?"

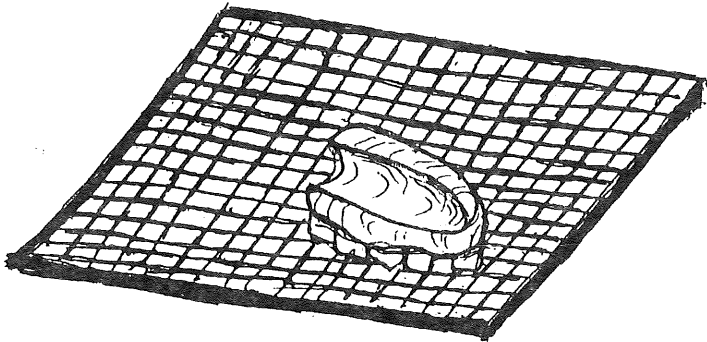
He said, "The problem is when I went into the bathroom, I sneezed, and my teeth fell into the toilet!"

Then I said, "You do have a problem. Just stay on the bus and when we get to New York, and I'll see what we can do."

So when I got to New York and told the dispatcher what had happened, and everyone in the dispatchers office had their laughs, he told me to take the bus to the 45th Street garage and to be sure and let him know what happened.

So when I got to the garage, I contacted the shop foreman, and explained to him what had happened (a weird look came over his face). So he pulled the bus over the pit and had the rest room dumped. We all watched as this happened and saw the teeth on the screen. When the job was finished, the shop foreman said, "There's your teeth." He picked them up and put them in his pocket. Then he got on another bus with me and rode back to the terminal.

I said to him, "If I were you, I would soak those teeth good in clorox." He said that he sure would. I wonder if his breath ever smelled like a Greyhound bus restroom!



HOSE REACHING FROM JACKSONVILLE TO DAYTONA

I was assigned the second section on a schedule from Jacksonville to Orlando. I loaded the bus, checked the shop card and saw that the bus needed fuel. I checked out and told "Smitty" the dispatcher, to give me an extra 15 minutes protection so I could pull the bus alongside the wall, so that it could be fueled. I noticed a young black girl in the right front seat, with a short skirt on. So as I pulled the bus on the fuel pit, the black employee was going to fuel the bus, also spotted her and I say the sparks begin to fly.

He struck up a conversation with her very quickly, so I realized that this would take some time, so I told him that I would check the oil, water and tires, while he was fueling the bus. I finished my job, got back in the drivers seat. He came back around to the driver's side, so I asked him how much fuel it took and he said, "101 Gallons".

So I said, "I'm all set then."

He said, "You are all set my man."

So I closed the door and left the station. When I stepped out of the bus in Daytona, Florida, (which is 88 miles from Jacksonville) the first thing I noticed was the fuel nozzle still sticking in the side of the bus. I noticed a bus in the zone next to me going back to Jacksonville, so I got the fuel nozzle out of the tank and put it in the front baggage compartment on the other bus. I told the other driver what had happened, and I told him that they would probably need this fuel nozzle in Jacksonville.

The next day when I came to work in Orlando, the shop foreman came to me laughing and said "Wouldn't that fuel hose reach from Jacksonville to Daytona".

I said "No, not really."

WHAT A REST ROOM

I was driving a silverside, and was the second section on a schedule from Washington, D.C. to Scranton, PA. I was just outside of York, PA. It was late in the evening after the sun had gone down, when a young black girl about 18 or 19 years old, came up the aisle and said, "Mister, I have to go to the bathroom."

So I said, "That's no problem, because we will be at the terminal in York in about 10 minutes."

She said, "Mister, I can't wait 10 minutes, I've got to go now." We hadn't got into town, so I said that I would pull the bus off the road, and she could go beside the right front wheel. I told her to knock on the door when she finished. So she knocked on the door, and said "Thanks a lot mister." Then we continued on our trip.

FIRE HYDRANT

As I was coming into Bristol from the West, you get on State Street and I always tell the people you're on State Street, half the city is in the state of Virginia and half is in Tennessee. On the left side is Virginia and the right side is Tennessee.

In the city of Bristol, you have two different fire departments and two different police departments, two different mayors and I think you can have two different wives, sounds good to me. (I get a little laugh out of them.)

So, I go on to the station at Bristol and you come out through a little alley. When you leave the station, you have to turn left onto State Street and it's a one-way street. Usually cars are setting close to the alley. You had to kind of get over across the street with the front of your bus and there was a fire hydrant on the corner over there. You would always get your right front end close to that fire hydrant. So, as you made your turn, most everyone on the right front seat would raise their leg up when you got close to that fire hydrant. So I asked some of them, "Did that help, did you miss it? Did that help miss that fire hydrant?"

They said, "Yeah." Like I said, men and them women would raise that leg up every time you'd get close to that fire hydrant.

EXTRA STEP

Well here we go with another one.

You know, years ago when passengers get all up and down the road, they would step up on the bus, and give you the cash or ticket, and you cut them a cash fare and you stepped up one step and went on back through the bus.

Well, they came along and built that MC-5. I believe it was, or one of those crazy buses, and when you stepped up on the third step you were standing beside the driver and when you went back through the bus there

I NEVER SAW THAT KID AGAIN

On my regular schedule, I arrived at a small town every other day. It was rare that I let off or picked up passengers at the corner where I stopped.

Being a little late, I stopped as usual one afternoon, opened the door for a young boy of about twelve years of age to board. As he stepped on, "Let's go," he said.

"How about a ticket?" I asked.

"I don't have one." I realized then he was just clowning around.

"Step off the bus." I said. "I'm late now and got to go." He just stood there in the stepwell of the bus and smiled. I began to get out of my seat, he turned and ran. I told one of the other drivers what had happened when I arrived at my destination.

"Oh", he said, "that kid had done that to me several times."

On my next trip through the town, the same kid was standing on the corner. As I stopped, I opened the door, he got on, I quickly closed the door. The boy began to scream.

"I'm going to take you to the police." He began to cry as I turned the corner and drove down the highway. I stopped at the edge of town, only a few blocks away and let him out.

I never saw that kid again.

GO AHEAD, YOU CAN MAKE IT

It had rained for several days, and at times very hard. The water had filled all the rivers and creeks to their full capacity. One of our drivers had left a major city on a local schedule. With him were many passengers and another driver who was deadheading home on his day off. To deadhead was an expression we used when riding home, or to travel to another point to work.

Arriving about one-half way to his destination, he stopped as the water was overflowing a small creek, and running over the roadway.

"Go ahead, you can make it," the other driver said. It was hard to determine how deep the water was that lowed over the road, although he had traveled that highway many times.

"It looks like the water is pretty swift."

"Yeah, but it's not very deep, and remember this bus is heavy." The decision to go was made. He proceeded slowly, the water began to cover most of his wheels. Then water came into the stepwell under the door. Now thinking maybe the water would drown his engine, his worse nightmare happened. The bus began to float, the front end first, then the entire bus was lifted and floated to a patch of trees that held the bus from going down stream. The bus sank very little after reaching the trees, as the stream was not deep enough to sink the bus.

Hours later, with a long line and chain, the bus was pulled from the stream, along with its frightened passengers.

HE NEVER SAID THANK YOU

Leaving the terminal on the 4:00 p.m. local schedule, I found myself driving on the boulevard of the next town. Traffic was heavy and everyone seemed to be in a hurry to get home.

As usual some automobiles were weaving in and out of traffic. To me this was not unusual as I had grown used to it with so many years of driving. With this big bus I had learned to flow with the traffic, and in most cases keep my cool. I had seen so many motorists who drove from work day after day so foolishly to try and save only a few minutes.

With two lanes of traffic heading in one direction, we were stopping at all traffic lights, block after block. I never could figure why the traffic engineers could not adjust traffic lights to turn green to keep the flow of traffic moving. Instead it seems the lights turn red at each intersection with traffic bumper to bumper in both lanes.

A motorcycle had dangerously moved in and out of traffic and maneuvered behind me as I occasionally watched him in my rear view mirror. Several times he appeared to try and pass me with automobiles in the next lane beside me, but changed his mind.

Middleway of a long block, he made his move. He began to pass me with another automobile beside me with no lane of his own. The roar of his bike caught my attention. I looked into my left rear view mirror. I couldn't believe what I saw. Half way beside me in an attempt pass me, his left handlebar struck the fender of the automobile that was traveling beside me. It threw him and the motorcycle against the left side of my bus. I applied

RELEASING THE PRESSURE

Another driver named Walt Houston used to drive out of Charleston, West Virginia. He worked that 1:20 a.m. between Charleston and Columbus, Ohio, up Burma Road. That was down through Point Pleasant and Gallipolis.

And this one winter night, he picked up his bus over at the garage, a brand new silverside. Just got it in the garage, hadn't been in service a couple of weeks in the most and he loaded up. Had pretty well a seated load and he took off for Columbus.

Now at that time of night, even though you're on the old route U.S. 35, down through there it didn't have anything on the road, just the bus, that was about it. It had about four or five railroad crossings. But the bus was nice and tight, heater was working real good and everyone was more or less dozed off.

All at once poor old Walt got a cramp and he knew, without a doubt, he was going to have to pass wind. So he didn't know what to do. So he finally thought, well I'm coming to an intersection down here in a little bit. When I go through that intersection, I'll lay my foot on that airhorn and turn it loose at the same time and no one will know the difference.

Now he picked the bus up at the garage just off the wash rack and it was nice and clean when he left Charleston. So he was sitting up there, moaning and groaning to himself and really sweating it out. He finally got to the intersection and laid his heel over the button on the floor to push the airhorn. And when he shoved on it, he leaned over off the side of the driver's seat and he cut loose.

Well, unbeknown to him that airhorn was full of water and frozen up and didn't make a sound! The only thing the people heard was Walt releasing all the pressure.

He said, "I'm telling you, I could have driven through the front of that bus all the way to Columbus that night. Just embarrassed me to death".

BOOM, WHISTLE, BOOM

A lot of the old-time drivers out of Charleston remember a driver by the name of "Buckshot" Wilson.

"Buckshot" Wilson worked the 5:30 pm between Charleston, West Virginia and Lexington, Virginia and it was on the 5:30 local at that time, going to Spencer, only made Clendenin, Spencer, and on into Parkersburg.

We loaded up there in the old Charleston bus station. I loaded over in the corner, we called it, right back against a big concrete wall and he loaded up on gate five, going east.

He always had a habit and like to tease me. He would come over when I wasn't looking.

I had an old 800 Silverside on that quite a bit. He would reach up there and push that emergency stop button and drop that butterfly in the motor. Of course, I couldn't start the engine, have to get the porters all out there to shove the bus away from the wall, and then would have to reset the butterfly before I could go on my run.

He used to think that was real funny. Well, this one night he brought his bus over from the garage and wanted to go to Lexington and had one of the brand new 719 gasoline cruisers sent back to Detroit to get it all refurbished, inside and out. Just looked like a brand new piece of equipment and was just as plush inside. In fact, we all called them "the hearse".

So he parked there at gate 5, right across from the old bus station there. It had a novelty shop, sold all kinds of knickknacks and everything else. I went over there and got two of those bombs you put on the spark plugs. When you turn on the ignition, they blow up.

So I went over there, he wasn't looking, I opened the tailgate up real quick and wired two of those babies between the spark plug and the block, closed it up and when he got ready to go, course I was hoping to get out of there before he started but I didn't do it.

Just before he was ready to get on the bus and start on his run, "Pop" Smith, who was the supervisor at that time, walked out on the platform and stood right there. At that time the platform was filled with people. So I was sitting behind in my bus and I was watching him and I could see him in my side mirror. He got up there, reached over and turned those two switches to start that motor. When he turned those two switches on, those things cut loose! They started out with a great big boom, big whistle and another boom and then smoke! He rolled off that bus, had that crank to open the baggage rack in his hand, so he could get the tailgate open.

In the meantime, there wasn't a passenger on that platform. They had all run inside and all that was left out there was "Pop" Smith and "Buckshot".

So when he got the tailgate open I just started my diesel and eased on out of the driveway. I guess "Pop"

was so mad, he said, if he found out who did that, he'd probably fire them right on the spot.

But you know, "Buckshot" never dropped my emergency switch on me after that.

I GUESS THE GOOD LORD LOOKED AFTER ME

You may have known me, and known that I drove, I guess, fifteen or sixteen years on that midnight out of Charleston, West Virginia and to Winston-Salem, North Carolina and back. I really liked that Scenic Cruiser. They got all the bugs out of it and got those twin fours out and did away with as much as that V-8 back there. Had that split-axle. That was a fine piece of equipment.

You used to come up there in the winter time, and basically it was two-lanes all the way. Didn't have any interstate. Wasn't even completed back then. The turnpike was open, but other than that you ran that old 52 all the way through the mountains from Bluefield into Wytheville, right into Mt. Airy.

So I came out of there one night in the wintertime, out of Winston. I started up Blue Ridge Mountain north of Mt. Airy. I got about half way up and it started to snow. The farther up we got the worse it got. I finally got to the top of East River Mountain; that's between Virginia and West Virginia. I suppose there was eight to nine inches of snow. It was still coming down real bad and I pretty well had a seated load that night. So I pulled off on the wide spot at the top of the mountain because I knew that once I committed myself to going down the mountain there would be no stopping that dog until I got to the bottom of it.

There were two women sitting on the right front seat. They were up in years, elderly-like ladies and down below through the snow, you could see Bluefield. It was a beautiful sight. All the lights down there. It was just before Christmas and all the lights were flickering through that snow falling, you know.

This one lady said to the other one, "Isn't this nice of that driver? He stopped the bus so we can look at the beautiful snow below us."

I thought, "Lady, if you knew why I was sitting here, you wouldn't talk like that?"

So I decided I might as well give it a shot. So I eased the clutch out and started down. I was checking my right side there once and here one of those ladies, up next to the aisle, had her feet against the inside of the front partition on that Scenic Cruiser and her shoulders. Nothing else was touching that seat. She was just as stiff and rigid as could be. She held herself like that till I got to that stoplight at the foot of East River mountain just coming into Bluefield. I glanced around and she was still like that.

I said, "Lady, you can let your brakes off. I'm down that mountain now."

She relaxed on that seat. But you know, you come through there, you look back on it now and you wonder how you ever did it. But you just took it as part of a days work and I was very fortunate I didn't have any trouble at all down through there as many trips as I took in the winter time. Never had the first bit of problems. I always seemed to make it. I guess the Good Lord looked after me.

CLEVELAND OR BUST

Back when the old bus station was located on Seventh Street, here in Parkersburg, at that time, Cleveland drivers came as far as Parkersburg, and got their rest and go back to Cleveland. A Charleston man then picked up the run in Parkersburg and took it on to Charleston.

Back in the late part of 48-49, along in there sometime, there was a driver out of Cleveland, the Old Central Greyhound it was then. Name was James White.

Now James was a huge big man. He was immaculate at all times. Drove in gloves winter and summer and he was just as sharp as a tack.

So Whitey Hughes was the ticket agent at that time in Parkersburg. About the 23rd of December, that year, this elderly gentleman came in there and bought a ticket to Cleveland, Ohio. Now he was well dressed, had on a nice suit, white shirt and tie. Dressed perfect, you know.

The called the bus out, and this guy was one of those polite old men and every time a woman would come up the man would step back and say "Go ahead lady". Of course, some would have their husbands with them and he'd tell them to go ahead.

When they got down to when the bus was pretty well loaded, there wasn't room to get the old man on. So he had to wait for the next schedule.

Now this went on all the afternoon of the 23rd and till about noon on the 24th. The old fellow finally gave up and went down to the State Store and got a fifth of Whiskey and came back and sat down in the back of the

"Let me see your driver's license," he said. Seated in his car, he began to write.

"Look officer, I suppose you got me for speeding."

"Yes," he replied, and continued to write.

"Any other violations?" I asked.

"No."

"My wife is having our third child in about a month. It's been rather hard on us financially. I would appreciate it if you would consider not giving me a ticket."

Without any reply, he continued to write. "How a bout a lecture, or just plain give me hell, but please not a ticket." With no reply, he handed me his book.

"Sign here," he said. I took the ticket.

Several weeks later, I stopped in the same little town for a rest stop. When the rest stop was over, I loaded my bus with passengers who were waiting to board. The last passenger opened his hand and flashed a police badge. It was him! All our drivers gave the courtesy of honoring the police with a free ride. I looked up, "Remember me?" I asked.

"I don't think so," he said. The way he looked, I knew he was lying.

"My wife had a baby girl last week." I continued. "As far as I'm concerned that badge is not worth a damn, go and buy a ticket."

"Look, I'm a little short of cash, and my mother is in the hospital and may be dying, my father is going to meet this bus and take me to the hospital, I have to take this bus."

"Sure you can, after you buy a ticket." He looked at me with a desperate look in his eyes. "Are you going to turn me down?"

"Why not? Didn't you turn me down? I did everything but beg you not to give me a ticket, and your attitude was indifferent, and you appeared not to care about my situation what-so-ever. I even asked you to give me hell without a ticket, but you didn't care. I realize that many people lie to you when they are caught speeding, but I didn't do that."

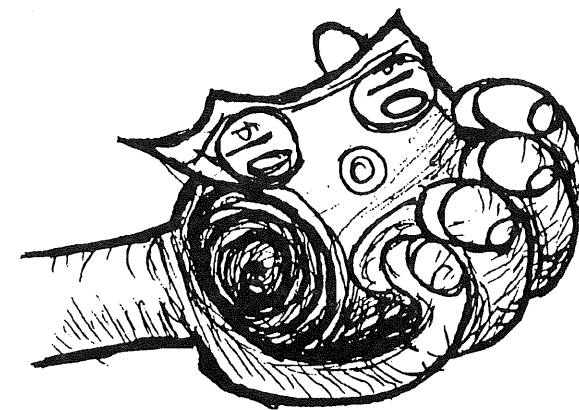
He turned and began to walk away, I took him by the hand, "I've given you enough hell," I said, "Something you didn't do for me." Get on the bus, you're making me late."

WHAT AN ATTITUDE

While on a charter, taking high school children to New York City for a tour, with two other drivers who I had worked with for many years, we had taken our group to the hotel where they would spend the night. Deciding to eat at a reasonable restaurant, we found the prices higher than expected. The company had given us an expenses allowance, however we were expected to stay within reason.

After dinner, and very poor service from the waiter, we each threw in a dollar for the tip. After paying the bill at the cash register, the waiter approached us with a nasty remark. "How cheap can you get, with only a three dollar tip?"

"Oh," I said, "Is that all we left you?" I reached for my wallet, and asked to have the three dollars back. He quickly gave it to me. I pulled out a ten dollar bill, he smiled. I wrapped the ten dollar bill around the three ones, and place it in my pocket, and said rather loud as we walked out the door, "With your service and attitude, you were overpaid!" I handed the other drivers their one dollar bill as we walked back to the hotel.



DING, DING, DING

Another thing I felt was funny, the first summer I drove when I got out of driver's school, I caught the local Beckley off the board. On my return trip from Beckley, when I got into Fayetteville, this lady got on the bus.

We had those old city type coaches on that particular run, the ten hundred series back then and had two long seats right inside the coach right as you got on. One on the left and one on the right, behind the driver.

She got on and sat down right behind me on that long seat.

So we got ready and I took off on down the road. She had two big sacks of groceries in her arms. So we were going down there just before you go across Gauley Mountain and was going up the last little grade at a place called Cotton and she leaned up and said over my shoulder, "Driver will you do me a favor?" and I said, "Yes ma'am, if I can." "So I want off at the next little path on the right, at the foot of this hill. Turn around and pull this cord so I can get off this bus?!" I said, "Yes ma'am, I'll be glad to."

So I just reached over my shoulder with my left hand and grabbed hold of that bell cord and pulled that buzzer and it rang a couple of times. And she said "Thank You" and I said, "Ah, you're welcome." So I stopped the bus and she got off and I went on down the road and the man in the right front seat said, "Driver, what was that all about, that you reached back there and pulled that cord?" and I said, "Well, she said she wanted to get off the bus and wondered if I'd reach around there and pull the bell cord so she could get off. So I told her I'd be glad to do so."

He said, "Well, didn't she know all she had to do was tell you?"

I said, "Well, maybe not. She must have thought she had to pull that bell cord to get the brakes to work so she could get off, which I was glad to do for her."

LIPSTICK UNDER THE BED

We had these two drivers that came out of driver's school together. One of them was Dave Rowings, and the other guy was Matthew Hancock. Hancock and Dave were real good friends and they lived in a little town called Clendenin. The both worked that Clendenin local between there and Charleston, West Virginia.

Now they were always pulling tricks on each other. But this time Dave Rowings' wife was going to go home to see her mother for a week and she lived up in Clarksburg, West Virginia.

Now she was an extremely jealous woman. If a woman even looked at Dave she would go into orbit right off the bat.

So after she left, Dave and Hancock lived in trailers up there parked in Clendenin, right at the garage where the buses came out of. So after Dave pulled his trip out of there that morning, Matthew went in to get one of his wife's paper baskets out of the bathroom and got all these kleenex that had lipstick on them, took them over and threw them under Dave and his wife's bed in the trailer.

Now Mrs. Rowings was supposed to come back on Friday after Dave had gone to work. When she got back, of course, she decided to clean the house. So when Dave came in that evening from work, walked through the door, hadn't seen his wife for a week, he ran in and grabbed her and hugged her and hugged her.

• He said, "Oh, honey, am I glad to see you!"

And she said, "Don't you honey me" and in the process of cleaning house, she swept under the bed with the broom and got all the kleenex that had lipstick all over them laying them on the kitchen table, and she said, "Now you tell me what's going on right here."

So he said, "Well I don't know where you got these."

"I got them right underneath our bed. Those women you had up here threw them under our bed. You're in big-g-g trouble."

So anyway, he had to get hold of Matthew and Matthew had an awful time convincing Mrs. Rowings that he was just pulling a trick on Dave.

The never pulled that trick on each other again. I guess it could really cause big trouble.

COUPLE OF STITCHES

Another thing those two guys used to do to each other. When the man brought the first bus into the garage, he backed it clear into the back of the garage, and when Dave brought his bus in, he parked it in the front, and so on. Then the first driver out in the morning took the first bus. Now there were three buses parked in the garage.

So they would always do something on each other. So this one time, Dave got about a six foot step ladder

STOLEN LUGGAGE

During another holiday season, at one of our larger terminals, a fellow driver and I walked through the platform, then along side of two buses parked in the stall. The baggage doors were open on both sides of each bus. As the baggage man was unloading the bus to my right, I looked through the bus and waved at him. He was liked by all the drivers.

Now walking behind the buses on our way to a restaurant where most of the drivers ate, we both noticed two men leaving the terminal area. Each were carrying two suitcases with the baggage tags dangling. Both men had to wait for traffic to clear before crossing in the middle of the street. Both men now were clearly off the bus property. In order to identify luggage, a passenger would be given a baggage tag, the lower part of the tag to be given to the passenger while the upper part of the tag would be attached to the luggage. When a passenger, after arriving at his destination would present his baggage tag to the baggage agent who then would match up the number, thus proving ownership and destroying both tags.

Our first thoughts were both men had simply picked up their baggage without being taken into the terminal. This way its much faster for the passenger, as most passengers are in a hurry.

We walked up behind the men, then walked around in front of them. Both men were young. "May we see your baggage tags?" I asked. Somewhat surprised, they sat the luggage down. For a moment they looked at us. Then both, as if planned, started swinging their arms at us in order to knock us off balance. Both took off running in different directions. We picked up the luggage and returned then to the baggage room.

From time to time baggage is stolen. however not very often.



NO SIR, YOU HAVE MY JACKET ON

Traveling north to New York City, the bus grew cold, the heat valve failed to continue to work. It was cold outside as it was in the middle of January. Before leaving the terminal, the driver had placed his heavy jacket on the seat directly behind him. Now getting cold with only his uniform coat on, he pulled the bus off the highway, and reaching for his coat found a rather shabby man had changed seats and had his jacket over him. He woke the man, and jerked the jacket off him, then put the jacket on, got back into his seat and continued to drive. Arriving at the terminal, the driver helped his passengers off the bus. When he thought all passengers had disembarked, he stepped back on the bus only to see the same man who had used his jacket. "May I have my jacket, sir," the man asked.

"Your jacket," the driver remarked.

"It's my jacket, get off the bus."

"Oh, no sir, you have my jacket on. You see when I sat here, I took your jacket and placed it in the overhead rack, I was going to use it when you took mine, but you scared me so bad, I was afraid to."

As the driver took his jacket from the overhead rack he discovered both jackets were the same size and color.

PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP

From time to time, I'm sure you have read somewhere that a bus driver has just stepped off his bus and simply walked away and never returned, leaving the passengers stranded only to have the bus company to replace the driver with some delay on the schedule. Why? Did the driver have a tough day? Did he snap? What really

happened? Most of this type of employment as driving for a living is a good job, and I feel a good living financially can be made. So what really happened? No one for sure can say, however after so many years of driving I have had my good days as well as my bad days. In any job we all have our good and bad days, but rare that this happens due to the need of a job, or after second thought dismissed the idea after thinking about it. But let's get back to why this may have happened.

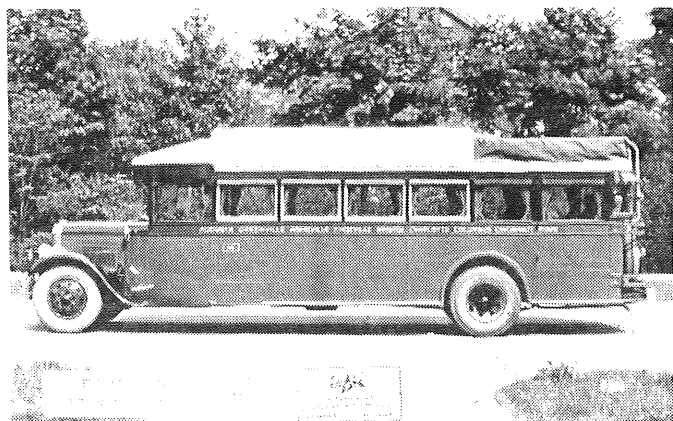
Dealing with the public is not an easy job, and driving for a living is strictly dealing with the public. If a bus driver after years of service reacts in this manner, he has let the daily job get to him, and by retaliating, he simply walked away from his job. One such driver loaded his bus. As he was backing out of the terminal, an automobile drove behind him, and the bus struck the car. The driver was so irritated, as each driver takes great pride in maintaining a good safety record, that he knew he was going to be charged with the accident, that he simply walked off the job. He was replaced with another driver to complete the schedule. He returned the next day only to be notified that he was dismissed.

Another driver with our company while at an away from home point, simply got mad about something I cannot recall, walked up to the supervisor's office and stated outright that he was resigning. He was told to ride the bus back to his home terminal and turn in all equipment issued him by the company. Having more than two hundred miles to travel, with several hours to think about what he had done, he regretted his actions. When he arrived at his home terminal, he walked into the dispatcher's office, pretended nothing had taken place and requested to be place on the extra board. Instead, he was met at the door by his immediate supervisor, who had been informed and accepted his resignation.

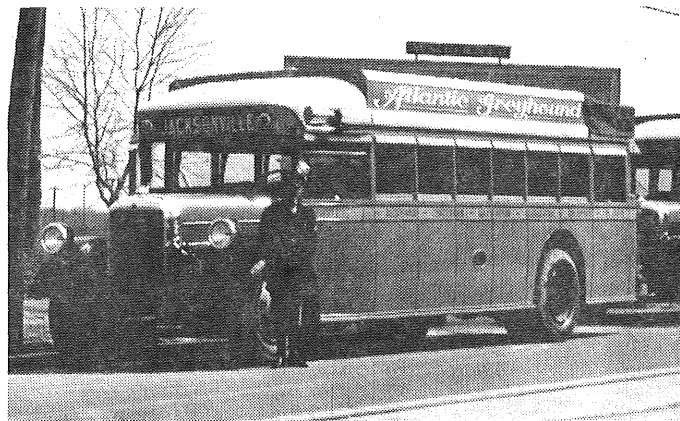
But all in all, my years as a driver I found that the good times outweighed the bad times, and I retired with a good pension. I cannot say that I regret or miss driving, because thirty-five years was enough, and frankly I'm glad I chose this type of life, as I met thousands of nice people who I transported from city to city, and most of all I worked with a great bunch of drivers. After retirement, we formed a retiree's club, and meet for breakfast once a month. So remember, the next time you take a bus, and you arrive at your destination, I'm sure you'll hear those words that I used so often, "When leaving the bus, please WATCH YOUR STEP!".

Photo History

Please credit all pictures to the Donald M. Coffin Collection



920 Yellow Coach Model U, 25 passengers, with Buick engine as delivered to Skyland Stages #14. Skyland became a division of Atlantic Greyhound during 1930 and maintained #14.



1931 Yellow Coach Model 630, 29 passengers, #401 - #410.

HERE PIGGY, PIGGY, PIGGY

I'm retired from Greyhound now, no longer a driver and I've been asked to try to tell some of the funny stories I remember that happened to me since I started to work for Greyhound in 1948. To start of with, I was able to work a run out of Parkersburg to Spencer, West Virginia. I made two round trips in the afternoon and on my first trip back from Spencer, I came into a little town named Reedy.

Now there was no bus station there, just a flag stop. This man flagged me down. I had a 719 gasoline cruiser on the run at that time and I stopped and opened the door and he stepped up and he said, "Driver, do you think this crate will fit in the baggage rack underneath the bus?" I looked out and there was a wooden crate sitting beside him and had about a hundred pound shoat inside (that's a pig). "I don't know but I'll find out". So I raised the baggage rack. We tried to get it in and it just wouldn't go in unless we laid the pig on it's side and I knew we couldn't do that. So I looked at the crate and the front end of the step well, and I said, "You know, I believe that pig will sit, that crate will sit right up here in the front of this bus."

So I got a hold of one end of the crate and he picked up on the back and we sat it up in the front end, right beside the driver. I closed the door and it just fit perfect. So I opened the door and stood up on my end of the crate and told the farmer to climb up in there and get in that front seat, which he did.

There was no one on the bus at that time, just him and me. I asked him where he was going to and he said, "Down to Two Run." That was a flag zone, that was a fare zone between Parkersburg and Spencer. So I said he owed me a quarter. So he paid his fare and I let him off there at Two Run Road and helped him unload the pig.

I said, "How are you going to get this hog up to where you're going to go?" and he said, "Well, I have a rope and I'll lead him." He tried to pay me for hauling the pig down there and I said, "No, you don't owe me a dime," and I said, "I'm glad I could help you out."

So he took off and I went ahead on my run. Well that took place along in April, May or June of that year.

Next September, I got called back to the Marine Corp when the Korean War broke loose. So a man by the name of Bob Finley, one of the drivers out of Parkersburg was pulling my run and just right before Thanksgiving, he came down through there on his last trip at night. A man flagged him down and he opened the door and he stepped in the bus and he looked at Bob and said "Well you're not the driver I'm looking for."

Bob said, "Who are you looking for?" He said, "Well, he was a short, stalky-built, blonde haired driver." Bob said, "Oh, you mean driver Brown." He said, "Yeah, that's his name."

"He's not driving now, he got called back into the Marine Corp. He's back in service." Well, I had a package here I wanted to give him." Bob said, "Well, I live right out near where Brown and his wife and sons live." He said, "If you let me have it, I'll be glad to deliver it on my way home, as soon as I get the bus in the garage and I'll be going home myself." He said, "You be sure his wife gets it."

He said "Yes sir, you've got my word on it."

So he did. He brought it out, knocked on the door that evening. Susan went to the door. He said "Susan, here's a package. Some guy flagged me down at Two Run and said to give it to Brown's wife and Brown will know what it's all about." So she thanked him and she went in, and opened it up and there was a whole hickory-cooked ham! So she wrote me a letter and I called her back on the phone and told her the whole story. And I got the ham off the hog I hauled down there for that old man that day. Something I will never forget.



seats and try to sleep.”

“You mean you’re not going to throw us off the bus?” the big man said.

“Well, I don’t want to, but I will if I have too.”

“Well we want you to,” replied the other service man.

“O.K. if that’s what you want. Here’s what we will do, when I pull the bus over and come to a stop, each of you step off, and remember to be fair, I’ll take you on one at a time.”

“Fair enough”, the service men said. When the bus completely stopped, the driver opened the door, all three quickly stepped off, immediately the driver closed the door and drove off, arriving at his destination on time.

MOVE OR ELSE

During the mid 1960’s, bus transportation seemed to have grown to it’s peak. During the Christmas holiday in 1964, buses were lined up several blocks from the terminal, waiting their turn to unload and reload passengers. Extra baggage men were hired, every ticket agent worked overtime, security guards were hired to keep the peace and watch the package express and baggage taken from the buses. It wasn’t unusual for a passenger, who was in a hurry, to pick up a wrong piece of luggage that resembled his. Further duties of the security guards were to watch thief of baggage. It wasn’t uncommon to catch thieves during any given holiday season. On this Christmas holiday, small trucks and cars tried to park on terminal property instead of the street to unload packages for shipment. When this happened it further delayed the many buses waiting to enter the terminal.

Standing on the platform, I was waiting for my bus to pull into the stall. As one pulled out, my bus started to pull into the empty space. The driver had waited in line for more than thirty minutes. Many buses were behind him. As he placed his bus into gear, an automobile, rather expensive, quickly drove around the bus from the street and parked in the space. The driver got out of his car, locked it, and started into the terminal, when a security guard stopped him. The guard cautioned him to move his car immediately. The man refused, as he remarked he would only be in the terminal a few minutes. He was told again and again.

“Move it or else!” the guard yelled.

“Or else what,” the man asked in defiance.

The guard then took out his night stick and smashed his left headlight. The car owner was horrified. “Move it!” the guard yelled again, “or the other one will go.”

The man stood there, the guard then walked to the other side of the car and smashed the other one. “Your windshield is next,” he said.

The man rushed to his car, unlocked it, got in and hurried away. I later learned the Company paid for the guard’s actions, and the guard paid with his job.

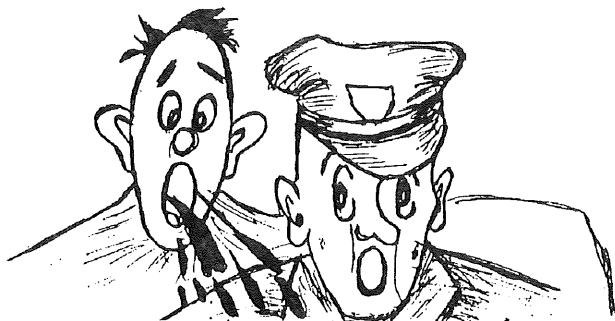
STOP THE BUS!

Nearing the terminal, only a few blocks away, I was completing a local run. With the exception of the morning rush hour, everything had run rather smoothly. A passenger around the age of twelve ran up toward the front. “Stop the bus,” he yelled, “I’m sick!”

The bus now in motion, and cars parked to my right, it was impossible for me to pull over. Almost immediately he turned his head toward me and threw up. What he had eaten that morning spattered on my right shoulder, down my stomach onto my leg, over the dash of the bus where my tariff and tickets were.

I can’t remember what language I used, under my breath, and could not understand why he ran in my direction.

“I feel better,” he remarked as he got off the bus at the terminal.



MAN, WAS HE PULLING MY LEG

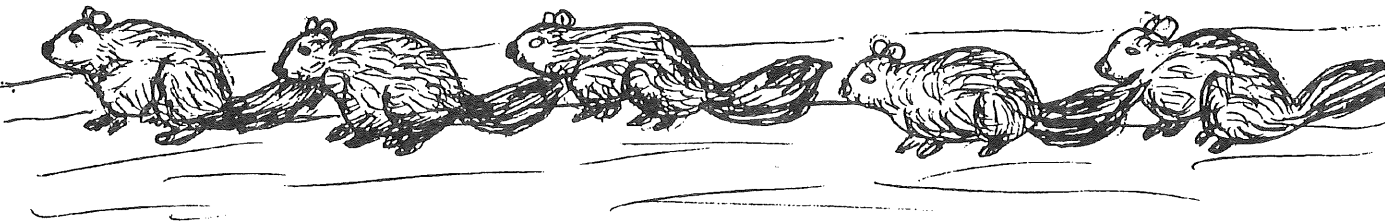
H. J. Pride stopped me one morning. I was on the 12:45 Cleveland schedule while leaving Charleston going north and he was coming back from Pittsburgh on the midnight out up there, I mean the 9:30 leaving Pittsburgh.

He was coming down the road and he got to cutting his headlights off and on and off and on, right there in a little place called Kenna. So I just pulled up along side of him, just ran our side windows down and he said, “Brown, I just wanted to tell you”... Now this is on old 21, “Brown I just wanted to tell you, when you start up Salt Hill” he said, “Right as you go around that hairpin turn there’s a great huge herd of groundhogs going across the road, you watch for them.”

I just said “O.K., H.J., thanks a lot.”

So he took off for Charleston and I just started on North. I got up there and I put the bus down in second gear, eased up around that hairpin turn, just barely moving and all at once I said, “A heard of groundhogs! Man was he pulling my leg!”

I know that he laughed all the way into Charleston.



WE’LL DO THIS AND WE’LL DO THAT

Now you all remember Greg Plumbley, of course, he worked out of Charleston. He just passed away, oh maybe a year ago.

Greg had a habit of saying, “We’ll do this and we’ll do that.” Never “You do this and you do that.” So the second year I drove for Greyhound you couldn’t get a day off for love or money. You just worked every hour and every day that they could get you to work. You violated on your log and everything else. As long as the dispatcher signed it they said you were in the clear.

Well this one Sunday, I happened to be off. We’d been invited over to my mother’s in Parkersburg to eat Sunday dinner with her.

So we were just ready to leave the house, in fact my wife and my boy Richard, were out in the car and I was just ready to lock the door and the phone rang. I looked at my watch and I said, “Well, there’s no bus in now, so that must be mom cause we were running a little bit late.” So I went back in and answered the phone. I said “Hello.”

Greg said, “Selby”, he always called me Selby, “I’m going to tell you what we’re going to do.” He said, “We’re going to go out to the shop there and Old “Baldy” David got bus so and so all ready to roll and we’ll just take it up old route 2 till we get to St. Mary’s, go across into Ohio and pick up 7 and we’ll go north to Towhatten Point and we’ll get Old “Do Right” Lowther and we’ll just double him right into Charleston.

I said, “Greg, since you’re going, no sense in me going. It don’t take two of us to drive the bus. And you have a good trip.” So I just hung the phone up.

Boy I guess he went into orbit. He tried to call back and I just left the house, of course, didn’t even pick it up. He called Old “Baldy” David and he didn’t know where I was. So Greg worked the relief and I came back on the next trip after my days off. He was working the evening trip and I got into Charleston.

He said, “Why did you hang up on me the other day up there?”

I said, “Well, Greg, you said we were going to do it and I said it wouldn’t take two of us to drive that bus.”

He said, “Well you knew what I meant.”

I said, “That isn’t what you said.” From that time on he didn’t say we’ll do this and we’ll do that. That took care of that.

JUST WAIT A MINUTE, SONNY

Old J.L. Sandy who is a driver out of Charleston, you guys remember him. He put out a bulletin one time and it said “Effective this day to the letter that no one would come over from the garage until twenty minutes before you were due to leave, you’d get a first call and you’d leave on time and not loaf around the bus station.

Ernest Pauley was the dispatcher. One evening when I first came out, I had that 9:30 schedule from Parkersburg, so I told Pauley that I brought the bus over just twenty minutes before I was due to go out. I went over the sheet and marked myself in, you know, like we used to do down there. Turned the lights on, opened the door and went over to the dispatcher’s office and I said, “Pat, give me a call.”

He said, “Now, don’t get in any rush, sonny boy.”

I said, “The man says to give me a call fifteen minutes before I’m due out.”

“I’ll take care of it.”

So I opened the door there going into the bus station gate 4. The people knew where the bus loaded up, so I just went on ahead loading up. So I picked up the ones that were standing there. A lot of them were my locals. I thought everyone was there and by that time, it was twenty-five or twenty minutes till ten. So I went back over and I said, “Pat give me another call.”

“Well now just don’t get in no hurry, sonny boy.”

I said, “Everything’s in, isn’t it?”

“Yeah, but just you don’t get in no hurry.”

I said, “OK Pat.”

So I went back over to the door and maybe picked up two or three more. By that time it was seventeen minutes until ten.

I walked over and I said, “Pat, are you going to call me out?”

He just turned and looked at me and turned his back on me. I thought, “Boy, I’ll fix you tonight.”

So at 9:45, I marked myself out, how many on, and how many off at Parkersburg, and how many by, got up in the bus, fired it up, and took around the corner.

As I was going out and going around the corner to gate 4, he started yelling, “Driver Brown, Driver Brown.” I just ignored him and kept on going. Out of that bus station I went, headed for Parkersburg. When I got to Ripley, I didn’t have nobody on the bus. They had all got off, my locals. So I got into Parkersburg right on time. Ticket agent there said, “Ernest Pauley is furious. He called up here and said you went off here and left people down there and didn’t even have a call and he had to call a man out and he’s bringing a bus up. They got the people on this schedule that has to wait on it.”

I said, “That’s Pat’s fault, that’s not mine.”

The next night I went in, Pat started to bawl me out and I said, “Pat, stop right there! Now you know the rules and regulations and J.L. Sandy said that was the way we’re going to operate. He puts a bulletin out and I’m going to run her right by the book.”

Buddy, that night when I said “Give me a call”, he about tore that microphone up getting hold of it. But I stopped him from “Just wait a minute, sonny.” cause he got everything put together.

IF YOU CAN, I CAN

I was hired by Greyhound in 1935 and retired in 1970 and for 22 years worked as a dispatcher in Norfolk, Virginia.

A driver by the name of Frank Holley, who works out of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was in the area of the dispatchers office and was telling some big story.

Frank has trouble talking, he stutters quite a bit. He would tell part of his story with his stuttering and he would slow down.

A driver, by the name of Lawson, was there listening to his story. Lawson would say something with a stuttering voice during Frank’s story.

This went on for some time and when Frank was finishing his story, Lawson would cut in, you know, and would say something in a stuttering voice.

This would upset Frank because he thought Lawson was mocking him. He went over and put his finger up under Lawson’s nose and told him, “Are you mocking me because my of stuttering?”

Lawson said, “N-n-n-no, because I-I-I have trouble talking to-o-o. I-I-I also stutter!

After he said that they both shook hands and had a good laugh about the misunderstanding.

A MIRACLE HAPPENS

On January 2, 1936 he was driving a bus through Thornbird, Virginia. They had recently completed a three lane highway. A car had run off the road on the right-hand side. Lights were shining up toward the bus, blinding

the bus still in motion. With this I came to a slow and gradual stop. I turned off the switch to the motor, moved slowly out of my seat, got the fire axe, opened the door and chopped the snake in half. When it was dead I used the axe handle to push the snake out of the door. I gave the bus a search along with other passengers who wanted to help. Most passengers got off the bus completely during the search.”

Finding nothing, we were on our way within ten minutes, with some uneasy passengers due to fear that there may be other snakes. With many discussions by the passengers, some assumed the snake got into the bus as it sat in the field. This was ruled out by many, as it was thought, why didn’t someone see the snake before now, as the bus had been operation several hours. The final conclusion, and what most likely happened, some joker must have had it caged and released it.”

“As a boy,” he continued, “I lived on a farm, and knew that a black snake was non-poisonous.”

“You know,” I said, “I wouldn’t care if he was poison or not, I think that if that had happened to me, I would have opened the door, jumped and yelled, ‘Everyone for himself.’”

“You’re kidding of course,” he said.

“Yeah,” I replied.

KEEP YOUR NOSE OUT OF OTHER PEOPLE’S BUSINESS

I had worked with a fellow driver, whom I shall call Frank, for many years before his retirement. He was kidded by his fellow employees about his large nose that indeed matched Jimmy Durantas. At times he was teased so much that I felt if it had of been me, I am sure that I could not have taken it as well as he did.

Loading his bus one summer afternoon, he had the baggage man lock down his doors, called in his passenger count to the dispatcher, got into the driver seat and closed the door. A lady ran up to the bus, banged on the glass part of the door with her hand. This type of thing happened more often than not, although the company encouraged passengers to arrive and board the bus at least ten minutes prior to departure time. There seems to be at least one passenger running late. Frank opened the door. “Can you wait until I purchase a ticket?”

“O.K.” Frank replied. He got out of his seat, and waited on the platform.

“There’s always one,” complained a passenger.

He watched her walk rather hurriedly toward the ticket office. Frank glanced at his watch several times. Ten minutes had passed, and the lady had not returned. Frank closed his door, and walked toward the ticket office. Half way there, he saw her coming. “There were several people ahead of me buying tickets,” she explained.

As they walked back toward the platform and bus, Frank took her ticket, and as she was about to board the bus, looked at him rather funny and said, “How did you get such a large nose?”

Being teased so much, he was well prepared for the answer. “Well lady,” he replied as he once again got into his seat. “I kept it out of other people’s business, and gave it a chance to grow.”

With this, she sat down in the nearest seat.

BE FAIR, I’LL TAKE YOU ONE AT A TIME

Sitting in the driver’s room waiting for my bus to arrive in order to relieve the driver who was bringing it in, one of the drivers began telling me the following story.

Being assigned the 2:30 a.m. schedule to Norfolk, the bus was full of service men returning from their weekend leave. Now on our way, three of the service men who were seated on the back row were talking, followed by laughter that could be heard all over the bus.

After thirty minutes, some of the other passengers began to complain due to trying to sleep. One passenger complained so strongly, the driver coming to a complete stop after pulling the bus off the highway, walked back to the rear and asked the men in a polite manner to keep the noise down.

Continuing down the highway and five minutes later, the laughter continued, and more complaining from the passengers. Once again the driver pulled off the highway, walked back to the rear of the bus with a warning that if the noise continued, he would throw all three of them off the bus.

The driver was now back in his seat with the bus heading in the direction of his destination. Only a few minutes had passed when the three service men walked up to the front of the bus. The largest, estimated to weigh well over two-hundred and fifty pounds, stepped into the step-well of the bus and looked directly at the driver. “Sir,” he said. “I don’t think you can throw me off this bus, and I’m quite sure you can’t throw all three of us off.”

Now catching a strong smell of alcohol as they stood, the driver said. “O.K. but why not go back to your

At the first rest stop, I was still thirty minutes late. I gave the passengers just ten minutes with the hope I could make up some of the lost time. As I helped several of my passengers off, I saw the old gentleman standing in the aisle walking very slowly, and holding up passengers who were trying to take a quick advantage of this short rest stop. It took several minutes to help this old gentleman off the bus. Now getting even more irritated I knew then that by the time I got him back on the bus I would even be later. I realize he had every right to a rest stop as anyone, but I felt if he had remained seated and asked me to bring him something, I would have been more than willing. I further felt he didn't want to use the rest room, as I had made an announcement that a rest room was at the rear of the bus.

Everyone finally got back on the bus, including the old man. I was on my way again, only now I was forty minutes late on my schedule. At this point, my frame of mind was not at its best.

When I arrived at one of the small towns, a lady boarded my bus demanding to know why I was late. This isn't my day, I thought, as I told her to please take a seat.

I finally arrived at my destination, and was helping all of my passengers off the bus. I was eager to get home, as I had friends coming over for dinner. I had arrived almost an hour late. As I expected, the old man was once again holding up most of the passengers. "Sir, wouldn't it be easier for you to wait until all passengers were off, then I could assist you better, and you wouldn't hold up so many people."

As I recall, I didn't say this with my best manners, or tone of voice, as I had suggested this to him twice before, I felt this old gentleman did not use any common sense at all. The old man never answered me, as I recall he never answered me at anytime.

He walked from my bus to the entrance door that lead inside the terminal. Then he fell backward, his arms outstretched. As he laid on his back, I could see that his eyes were open, as I rushed over to him. I felt his pulse. There was no heartbeat. I looked at him, and not being a medical doctor, somehow knew he was dead.

I picked up the outside telephone that was a direct line to the dispatcher, and requested an ambulance. I walked back and as I stood over him a lady walked past and looked down. "Drunk again, I'll bet," she said. I couldn't help but think how wrong she was, and how quickly we sometimes judge others.

As the ambulance arrived and soon afterwards removed the body, I asked one medical man if he had died, as at that point I was not sure. "Yes," was the reply. With this, I don't believe I have ever felt worse. I was as bad or worse in my thoughts as the lady who was so quick to judge him. I felt I should have treated him better while he was a passenger on my bus, but how was I to know how sick he must have been. I truly felt bad.

Then I remembered the package the baggage man had placed into the stepwell of my bus. I took it from the overhead rack, I shook it several times, trying to figure what it was. Then I took it into the baggage room.

"This must be your package now," the baggage agent said to a well dressed gentleman who was standing on the other side of the counter.

"Yes, that's it, many thanks", he said. "Sir," I said, "Would you mind telling me what's in that package?" explained the caution given me at Baltimore.

"Not at all," he said. "It's a human head."

Later I thought it must have been a skull for study as it was sent from a university in Baltimore.

On my way home and trying to forget the guilty feeling I had for the old man, I further thought, what if I had to make a quick stop while driving my bus, and that package had somehow came loose and fell to the floor, broke open, and the skull rolled down the aisle? I don't think I could have kept many passengers on the bus, including myself.

LOOK AT THAT SNAKE

Having coffee in the terminal restaurant, I was seated with another driver. "Let me tell you what happened yesterday," he said. "The company is building a new garage in Norfolk. Due to the limited space we have to park some of our buses in a field until it's finished."

"Yeah, I heard, so what happened?"

"One of our drivers picked up a bus in that field, loaded it with passengers at Norfolk and drove it to Richmond where I relieved him. He gave the through passengers a fifteen minute rest stop."

"After the rest stop, I loaded other passengers on board. About twenty miles en route, I heard a woman scream about three seats behind me. Two seats back a man jumped out of his seat and ran toward the rear of the bus. Seeing, this I started pulling my bus over to the side of the highway to find out what was going on, and before I could stop, a young girl yelled, "Look at that snake!" She too had left her seat and scramble to the rear.

Somehow a black snake about three feet long had crawled to the front of the bus and went under my seat,

him to some extent.

About the time he got close to where the car was, a man ran out toward the road from where the car was and ran right in front of the bus. He said he hit this man with his bus. It threw the man up on the radiator of the bus. He hit the windshield and bounced back off.

He stopped the bus as soon as he could and he was sure that he had killed this man. He was very nervous over it and couldn't make himself get out of his seat to go see about the man.

There was a lady sitting on the right front seat, said to him (this was a night run), "What happened?"

He said "I just hit a man and killed him?"

He replied, "I just can't get out. I'm just too nervous, I can't get out."

She said, "Well, let's just open the door up and I'll go out and see about him."

So the lady got off, went out, and came back and told him "The man's not dead! He's laying up against the right wheel of the bus!"

In stopping, he had run about eighty feet from the distance where he had first seen the man. About that time, another man came in a car and they picked the injured man up and took him to the hospital.

He was checked at the hospital and all he had was two cracked ribs.

The driver felt this was a miracle because of the way he had hit the man. They got to looking around and found out that he had knocked the man out of his shoes.

Needless to say, the driver was very thankful the man was not dead and that a miracle had really happened.

LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW, LET IT SNOW

I was employed by Greyhound on October 10, 1950. Upon completing my training, after driver's school, I was assigned to a run that worked out of Clendenin, West Virginia. One week I would run into Charleston and make a round trip to Beckley and go back to Clendenin. The next week I would come into Charleston from Clendenin and make a trip to Sissonville.

On this particular week I was on the side that went to Beckley. It was on Thanksgiving. It started snowing on Thanksgiving and the road got pretty bad coming in from Clendenin. Of course, since I just started in October, I'd never driven on snow or anything like that.

Coming up over Mink Shoals Hill, a car in front of me stalled. That particular bus had a wide bumper on it and I ended up pushing the car to the top of the hill so it got out of the way.

I came on in to Charleston, took the 8:15 am out of there to Beckley. Upon getting up on Gauley Mountain on Route 60, just east of Gauley Bridge, I had encountered numerous trucks trying to get on the mountain. They were in such a position that I could get around them.

I continued on over on Route 60 and off on 21 towards Beckley. I arrived on Price Hill, the south side of Mt. Hope. A truck turned crossways in the road in front of me. I had to stop and when I tried to start ahead, the bus wouldn't start. It just started to slide and I had to get out and put my chains on.

I went on into Beckley. Arriving in Beckley, I was two or three hours late by that time because it had gotten so bad, I decided the snow would quit so I took the chains off because it was so rough driving with them.

Coming back, I made it to the intersection of where 60 and 21 meet. The traffic was all tied up there and I stopped the bus. By that time the snow was a foot deep. I got out to try to help get some traffic out of the way so we could get on up the mountain.

I looked around and the people were getting off the bus. I went over asked them what they were doing. The bus stood there a little bit and then it started moving sideways in the road. It didn't go but first a little way and stopped. The bus tires were warm and had caused the snow to melt making the bus move sideways.

After we got the traffic moving, we went on into Charleston.

The next day, which was a Friday, I had to go back to Beckley. It snowed all day on Thursday and was still snowing on Friday.

A small car that had got stuck on Cotton Hill on Thursday, was still there on Friday and all you could see was the snow piled up on its top.

I ran that run for three days. I never did get back in time to go from Charleston to Clendenin. I'd make the trip to Clendenin the next morning in the bus and picked up the run to Beckley and back into Charleston.

Snow continued for three days and we had an accumulation as much as fifty-one inches in the Charleston/Beckley area. This snow stayed on for almost two weeks before they finally got it cleared off the road.

This was my very first experience driving on ice and snow. It was good training that I will remember the rest of my life.

DRUNKS

I was working a run from Charleston to Pittsburgh. This schedule came out of the south. The run itself went to Cleveland and I had to change buses in Parkersburg.

On the way to Parkersburg, I had two passengers. To me they seemed to be drinking. I could smell whiskey and they were getting rather rowdy on the bus. I went back two or three times and told them to quiet down. I talked to them pretty rough to try to get them to quiet down.

Upon arriving in Parkersburg, they were still rowdy. One of them was going to Pittsburgh with me and the other one continuing on to Cleveland. I called the police in Parkersburg and asked them to come over. I didn't want to take this passenger on to Pittsburgh.

One passenger was outside the bus talking through the window to the other passenger. The police came and I showed him the one that was going with me. I told the police I didn't want him to go and I explained to him what the problem was.

The police walked out to this guy and the policeman spoke to him. The policeman put his hand on the man's pocket and he had a pistol in his back pocket.

This shook me up because I had talked to them rather rough coming up the road because they wouldn't be quiet.

So from that time on and the rest of the years of my driving, I was a little more gentle with people when they caused problems. I'd try to quiet them down and the first place I could, I'd have them taken off the bus.

CLEVELAND OR BUST

I was on a run to Pittsburgh. It was a time when we had Scenic Cruisers. The driver that brought the bus into me from Winston-Salem said there was an elderly gentleman on the bus. Someone had put him on down at Florida and was going to Cleveland. The man had a tag on him that gave his name and the people who he was going to in Cleveland.

I got on the bus and asked passengers that came in on the bus, if they would give me their tickets. This old gentleman said he didn't have any ticket, that the other driver had taken his tickets. So I talked to the other driver and he said he had given the ticket back to the elderly gentleman. I got back on and finally got him to locate his ticket.

We started out the road towards Ripley and hadn't gone very far until this old gentleman got up and came down the aisle. He came down in the lower level and he grabbed some woman by the leg.

I had to stop the bus and go back and get him in his seat. He tried to get up again. Someone was sitting by him kept him in the seat till we got to Ripley. At Ripley, this passenger got off. From Ripley to Parkersburg, I had all kinds of trouble. I had to stop numerous times to try to keep him in his seat and from disturbing other passengers. He'd grab a hold of women and all kinds of things.

When we got to Parkersburg, I told the driver that was taking him on to Cleveland about the trouble I had with the old gentleman. He had got off the bus and was standing outside.

He called the city police. They came over and talked to the old gentleman to find out what his problems were. The police asked him, "Where are you going?"

He said, "I'm going — (and he named some town in Florida).

The police said, "I thought you were going to Cleveland?"

The man said, "Well, this town I'm going to is right across the bay from Cleveland."

The police took him down to the station and they called the people he was going to in Cleveland.

They told me later the people had come from Cleveland and picked him up and took him on to Cleveland.

SUPER POWER WAGON

I was working a relief run to Clarksburg and on one side you went by the way of Spencer, Glenville, Weston and Clarksburg.

On this particular day, we had some snow when I left. After going into Clarksburg and on the way back I ran into a heavy snowstorm. I came down to a place called Sand Ridge.

Coming up Sand Ridge, my bus started spinning out on me. I got it up on the upper side of the road. It turned sideways on me and blocked the highway. I had just met the salt truck just few minutes before and it wasn't very long before the salt truck came back. But I couldn't get the bus to move because of the angle the bus was sitting.

as to the place of arrival to a bus load of passengers who had been asleep for several hours. I continued my announcement and told them there would be a thirty minute rest stop for all passengers, and once again with the old familiar words that ended my announcements that I must have said more times than I cared to remember, "WHEN LEAVING THE BUS, PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP."

I turned in my report and passenger count to the dispatcher on duty, and walked across the terminal platform on my way to my car which was parked several blocks away. Looking in both directions while crossing the street, I saw little traffic as I walked to the other side. Walking past the furniture store that was on the corner, I noticed smoke was filling the store inside behind the large glass window. Lights being on in the store made it easy to see that smoke was building up fast.

I ran back to the terminal, "Call the fire department!" I said rather excited.

The dispatcher dialed the number and handed me the phone. I gave the address to the fireman on the other end of the line. Hanging up, I quickly walked back toward the store. Within minutes, sounds of the fire trucks were heard in the distance. Three trucks arrived at the scene, firemen jumped off dragging hoses with them. One fireman looked through the large plate glass window, and yelled for an axe. Others were connecting the hoses to hydrants, others were climbing ladders to see and locate the blaze that may have been on the second floor.

With all the excitement around, several other people had gathered to watch along with me. Standing on the opposite side of the street as not to get in the way, I noticed a printed sign on the front door of the store that I had overlooked when I first saw the smoke. I walked across the street and read, "DO NOT CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT, FUMIGATION IN PROGRESS."

I quickly called one of the firemen, who seemed to be in charge. He read the sign. He turned and yelled, "HOLD IT!" He ran around the other side of the building to stop further damage to the building.

Shocked and stunned that I had caused such a turmoil, and feeling I wanted to melt into the sidewalk, I quickly left the scene and walked to my car and drove home.

HOW QUICKLY WE JUDGE OTHERS

While loading passengers at the Baltimore terminal, I was due to leave at 2:00 p.m. I was asked by the dispatcher to hold up my schedule for a connection with another bus that was running a little late. This always irritated me to a small degree, as I took pride in being on time at every stop. This schedule being a local run was rather hard to make due to many local stops.

As the connecting schedule arrived, I took on several people. One of the passengers was an older man that was extremely slow. All during my driving career, I always had compassion for elderly people, but this old gentleman was slower than usual. "Sir, I would appreciate it if you could hurry it up a little," I said, as he walked slowly from the bus he had departed from to my bus. As he stepped onto my bus I noticed the time was now 2:20 p.m. and it seemed rather difficult for him to step up. It had taken another five minutes to assist him to a seat. At this point I felt the old man could have done better, or maybe he just didn't care how late he made me and the other passengers.

As I sat in my seat and started the engine, I always checked both rear view mirrors before backing. In my left mirror I saw one baggage door up. The job of the baggage employees were to lock down all doors once all baggage was loaded. Before I could get out of my seat to lock the baggage door, a baggage employee walked up to my door of my bus with a package and sat it down in the stepwell.

"Put it in the baggage compartment", I said, "and lock down the door."

"I can't," he said. "I was told to ask you to take special care of this package and for you to place it in your overhead baggage rack."

Now thirty minutes had passed. I could hear some of the passengers complaining. I jumped out of my seat, picked up the package and almost threw it in the overhead rack.

"Be careful," the baggage man said.

"What's in it?" I asked.

"Don't you know?" he replied.

"I thought you were told."

"Never mind," I said. He walked off.

I closed the passenger entrance door. The baggage man walked around my bus and closed the baggage door. I backed out of the stall and drove out of the terminal. Being this late, I didn't care one way or another what was in the package.

“Well in the past eight months, I’ve been robbed twice, and each time it happened, I had a real fear that maybe this time I’d been shot. I think today’s crooks are much worse than the bad guys in the 1920 and 30’s, such as Baby Face Nelson, John Dillinger, Pretty Boy Floyd, Bonnie and Clyde, and Machine Gun Kelly, at least those guys had a little compassion for others.”

“They may have” I said, “but they too did their share of killing people.”
“Did you know”, the agent continued, “that Jesse James turned to robbery after he got out of the military service. It was said that he was trained to rob farmers and banks for food and money in order to feed the southern troops during the Civil War. Later, and after the war, he found it hard to make a living, so he turned to a life of crime.”

“That’s interesting, but what’s that got to do with the red light not blinking?”
“It’s not a real camera,” he said quietly. “I can’t afford a real one, this is only a cheap imitation, but it looks real, don’t you think?”
“It had me fooled,”
“Yeah, and hopefully everyone else, I’ve had it for six months now, and so far no robberies.”
“That’s great,” I said, as I glanced at my watch. “Wow, five minutes late. See you next time.”
“O.K.,” he replied.

I WAS GETTING COLD WALKING THE STREETS

Although most of my trips were routine, and from time to time the unexpected did happen. I found myself head-heading a bus that was much needed back to my home terminal during once again a holiday season. It was in the early hours of the morning, the sun was hot due to the rise for several hours. It was cold outside, but I had the bus cozy warm.

I had driven for over an hour, and was testing my vocal cords in an attempt to sing Christmas carols. I knew no one could stand my singing, so I did so rather loudly at times, thinking I could sound like a great opera star. From time to time my singing was so bad, I shook myself. Singing is something I would have never done with passengers aboard.

Suddenly, a hand was placed on my shoulder. I jumped. The person released his grip and nearly fell into the seat behind me.

I was taken completely by surprise, as this was indeed unexpected. I quickly switched on my overhead light. There standing over me was a shadow of a man. He wore shabby clothes and needed a shave. Before he could say anything, I applied my brakes to throw him off balance in the event that he wanted to do me bodily harm. He almost fell into the stepwell. I came to a complete stop.

“What are you doing on this bus?” I yelled.
“Excuse me sir, I didn’t mean to scare you”, he said in a meek tone.
“Well, you did, you should have called out to me. I could have wrecked us both.” Seeing he was harmless, I put my bus in gear and proceeded north to my destination.

He began to explain. “I have no family or friends, I’m just bumming around, and I was getting cold walking the streets, so I got into your bus, went to the back, sat down and went to sleep.”

“I guess it’s partly my fault.” I said, “I should have looked the bus over before I left. I can send you back on another bus if you like.”

“Oh, no sir” he said. “It doesn’t matter what city I’m in.”
When we arrived at the terminal, I asked if he was hungry. “Yes sir,” he said.

After reporting in to the dispatcher, we went across the street to an all night restaurant, where I treated him to breakfast. Before I left him, I gave him a few dollars, as I felt this man was really down on his luck. He thanked me. As I paid the bill, and we both walked back across the street.

“You know,” he said. “It must have been the radio you were listening to on the bus that woke me. He sure was a terrible singer.”
“I’ll agree,” I said, as I waved good-bye.

DO NOT CALL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT

Although I had more than thirty-five years of service with the company, I worked the extra board for over twenty-five years. I felt most of those years must have been night driving.

One morning I arrived at my home terminal at 3:05 a.m. after a long and tiring trip. I made my announcement

I put a chain on it and tried to get it out but I couldn’t get it to move. I was talking about walking to a house and trying to get a wrecker.

A young gentleman came down the hill with a Dodge Power pick-up truck with a short wheel base. He said to me, “I think I can pull you out.”

I said, “No, I don’t hardly think so.”
He said, “Well, I believe I can.”

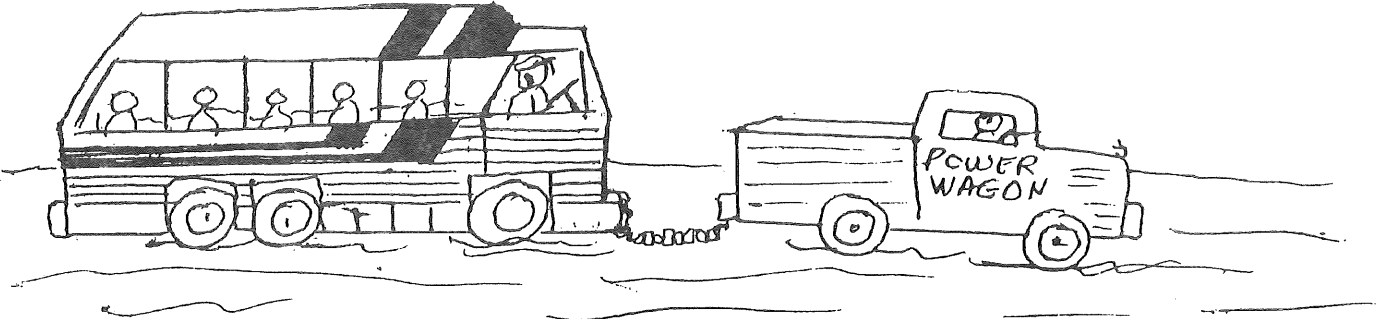
I replied, “Well, if you think you can, let’s try it.” So I said, “If that bus starts going toward the ditch, I’m stopping it because I’m not going into the ditch. If I go in the ditch, I’ll have to make out an accident report.”

So this gentleman turned around his pickup truck. He had no chains on it. It was a four-wheel drive power wagon. He hooked up to the front of the bus with a tow rope he had and started up the mountain with me. We went a little piece and we had to stop and change the hook up on the front of the bus.

This gentleman took this little pickup truck and pulled me out of that curve and I got up to the top of that mountain. I asked him, “How much do I owe you for that?”

He said, “You don’t owe me a thing. Just tell those guys that the power wagon pulled you out.”
I gave him, I don’t know, I had ten to twelve dollars in my pocket. If I would have called the wrecker, it would probably have cost one hundred to two hundred dollars to be pulled out.

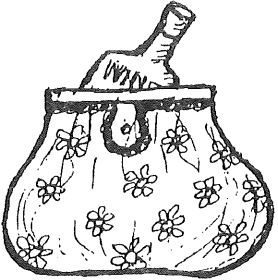
That young man was very proud of that power wagon ... and so was I.



COOKING ALL THE WAY TO RICHMOND

A well dressed middle age lady boarded my bus in Norfolk, Virginia. The run ended in Richmond. When I looked to see if everyone was off, I saw this lady near the rear of the bus slipping in her bag (a big pocket book), a bottle of wine, about gone.

I said, “What is this?”
She replied, “It was cooking wine.” She had been cooking all the way to Richmond.



ERIE, PA SOMETIME IN THE 50’S

I was on a Chicago run. I was standing in the step well counting my tickets. A lady and her small son was sitting in 3 & 4 seat. The little boy, seemed interested in what I was doing. He had pretty red hair. As I started to get in the driver seat, I rubbed his hair and said “Where did you get that pretty red hair?”

He replied, “The milk man.”
His mother said, “His father tells him to say that.”

TAKING OFF

One time, when I was making a turn around run and Washington, DC, they were on fast time and in Richmond, we were on old time.

I was loading the coach going south. A black young man was in line. He asked me what time I arrived in Richmond. I told him and he stepped back by the wall. When all the people were on and time to leave, I had given my count.

As I walked back to the bus, I said to him, "If you are going with me, let's have your ticket."

He replied, "No way. I just want to see you take off."

YOU WAS A GREEN HORN

I was working a turn around run, Richmond to Norfolk. I left Norfolk at 4:30 am. Next stop, Hampton, Virginia. The station was closed. Several people waiting to board the bus, by the way this was a Cincinnati, Ohio destination coach.

First in line was a black woman. I could smell she had been drinking. I took her ticket. She sat down in seats 3 & 4. As I was leaving the station, she asked me how long I had been driving. I told her this was my first trip today. She replied, "I's knew you was a green horn, the first I's see you."

JACK BENNY'S JELLO FACTORIES

I was dead heading on the cushion from Towanda, Pennsylvania to New York City and on Brown Town Mountain, there was a place where they cooked up dead horses and cows. It was before air-conditioning and a real warm day. Don Coffee was driving and some lady asked him what that bad smell was. Coffee replied, "Oh, that's one of Jack Benny's Jello Factories."

P.S., "Don has been dead a long time."

FIRST CLASS BUS COMPANY

I was working the regular from Boston to New York City. A Jewish lady sat in section 3 and talked off and on the entire trip.

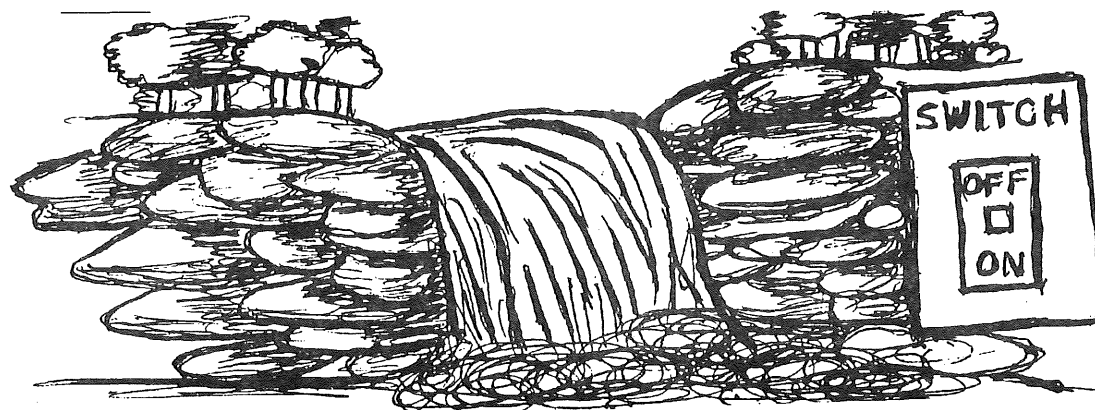
She asked me if I could help her son, Herman, get a job with the Greyhound Lines. For three years he had been driving the truck at the fish market for his Pa-Pa.

At that time in New York City, you did not let passengers off. They went into the terminal. She wanted to get off around 170th street and when I refused, she replied, "You're a second class driver! How come you're working for a 1st class bus company?"

TURN OFF NIAGARA FALLS

I was working a run from Scranton to Buffalo and there was four middle age ladies going to Niagara Falls. They were asking me about the falls. I told them they were nice at night when the lights were on. I told them I thought they turned the lights off at 11 p.m.

One lady spoke up and said, "Do they turn the falls off at 11?"



SIR, PLEASE HELP ME

During my many years of driving, I sometimes grew tired of driving in heavy traffic during the day. I decided from time to time to pick a night run. On one occasion, it left me away from home every other night.

One early morning, while walking to the nearby hotel for a much needed eight hours rest, I passed many homeless people who were just waking up from sleeping in cardboard boxes, or old rags spread on the concrete sidewalk, with only newspapers spread over them. How they could survive cold winter nights was beyond me.

I had from time to time noticed a middle aged woman sleeping in a doorway of a department store that was used for delivery, and not by the public. I had walked past her many times. She looked so dirty, her hair appeared not to have been combed in weeks. She wore baggy clothes, and only thick socks with plastic bags wrapped over her socks that were tied above her ankles.

During each trip, I would leave home with some fruit in my carrying case. One morning I stopped in front of her. She stopped trying to straighten up some old rags that she had slept on. As she looked up at me, I held an orange in my hand.

"Here, take it," I said.

She only looked at me and never reached for it. "Please" I continued. "Take it". Then she looked away, and began to speak softly, something pertaining to religion that I cannot recall. I placed the orange near her belongings, and walked away. I left with a feeling that maybe I had done some good, at that point I wanted to do more.

The next trip I took several pieces of fruit, and a sandwich, with the intent of giving her some money for coffee to warm her. She wasn't there. I passed out the fruit and sandwich to other homeless people, who seemed to appreciate it.

For many trips that followed I looked for her, but never saw her again. My only intent was to help her in my small way. I truly felt very sorry for her, the sad eyes I saw, the dirty old clothes she wore, and slept in.

A week later, I saw a man sleeping in the spot as the woman previously. The following trip he was awake just sitting as he watched me coming down the street. I walked over and gave him my sandwich and fruit, which he took.

"Do you know what happened to the lady that slept here?" I asked.

"She died, I think." If he knew for sure, I'll never know. Soon after, I changed my run, and never saw them again.

As a young man, for many years, street people approached me begging for money. At that time I always felt they were burns, and should go to work as I had done. Today, and before I retired, I help whenever a street person asks for help. Some when begging, were honest enough to say he needed a drink, others said nothing more than, "Sir, please help me."



THE RED LIGHT IS NOT BLINKING

Stopping at one of our agencies en route, I had let several passengers off, and loaded others who were waiting to board. Checking my watch, I was ahead of schedule by five minutes. I walked into the terminal and exchanged greetings with the ticket agent.

"Well you've got something new," I said, pointing up to a surveillance camera that was mounted on the wall. At the direction it was pointing, the camera could very well pick up anyone who was standing near the ticket window. The red light that was built into the camera did not flash, but remained continuously red.

"Why is that?" I asked.

PUT YOUR HANDS BEHIND YOU

One morning, I had the express run that made no stops between Richmond, Virginia and Washington, D.C. The destination of this schedule was New York City. Arriving in Washington during the mid-morning hours, I stepped off my bus at the terminal platform. Immediately the dispatcher called me over the PA system (public address system) to report to his office. I motioned to a driver who was standing on the platform to assist my passengers off the bus while I checked with the dispatcher.

Walking into his office, he asked if I had a man and woman seated together and began to describe the clothing they were wearing.

“They are suspects in an armed robbery”, he said.

I was then asked to walk back through the bus in a casual manner, as if I was checking the baggage rack. “Do nothing” he suggested, “until the police arrive.”

The bus was almost empty due to passengers taking advantage of the rest stop. I entered the bus and walked back toward the rear, three seats from the back of the bus, I saw the man and woman wearing the clothing that was described to me. I walked past them. With so much activity outside the bus, I couldn’t help but notice uniformed police had completely surrounded the bus. I turned and walked toward the front, with the idea of getting off, as I remembered that the dispatcher had said “Armed Robbery”. “How could they not spot the police?” I thought.

With the possibility of gun fire from the robbers, if the police were spotted, and also gun fire from the police, I didn’t want to be caught in the middle.

A plain clothes policeman stepped on the bus just before I could get off, with uniform police following. As we met near the front of the bus. “Which ones are they?” The plain clothes policeman asked. He grabbed my arm and turned me around. “Walk casual,” he said. “I’ll follow and maybe we can surprise them.” I walked past them and turned and pointed. To my surprise and delight they had never looked up, or had seen the police. The plain clothes policeman had his pistol out, and was holding it behind him. Quickly he pointed his gun on the man, with the second policeman covering the woman.

“I’m a police officer,” he said. “Place your hands on your head, both of you, now.” Each did as they were told. “Each of you are suspects in an armed robbery,” the uniformed police said, taking the woman’s purse, which was rather large. The other policeman read them their rights. Then each of the suspects were made to stand, the man was being shaken down, as the woman was being led out of the bus. The man now handcuffed as soon as he stood. A pistol was found inside his coat pocket, with a wad of money tied with a rubber band that was larger than my fist. As the man was lead from the bus and onto the platform, the woman suspect was also being handcuffed, as in her purse the police had found a small gun, and a large amount of cash.

Almost immediately, they were placed in a squad car which drove off. It was less than ten minutes from the time of my arrival at the terminal, until the suspects were taken away by the police. Most of the passengers never knew what had taken place when they returned to the bus from their rest stop.

I later learned that the ticket agent in Richmond had a telephone call from the police in Richmond describing the couple. The agent remembered selling them the tickets, and described the clothing they were wearing.

Later in thinking of what took place with the police and suspects, I decided never to allow myself to get into a possible situation where shooting may occur. As in reality, I would like to remain a live coward.

YOU’VE GOT TO GO

Late one afternoon, as I waited on the bus platform for my schedule to arrive, a large man walked across the driveway and approached me and a policeman that I was talking to. The man being rather intoxicated began to use profanity. The officer repeatedly told him to move on. “If you don’t move on, I’m going to lock you up,” the officer said. The police officer being rather thin, would be no match in a fight with this huge man, especially if he was sober.

“You’re not big enough to lock me up, sonny boy”. The

The officer then walked over to the platform telephone that was a direct line to the dispatcher, and asked him to call for a back up and meat wagon. Within minutes several police officers walked onto the platform, following came two squad cars and the patty wagon. One officer opened the rear doors to the wagon, two officers took the man by his arms, but couldn’t move him. With much difficulty, another officer began to push him toward the wagon by placing his hands on his back. Four officers struggled to get this big man into the wagon without success, and at this point it became impossible to put handcuffs on him. With both arms outstretched, he placed

DRIVER’S NICK NAMES

I always get a kick out of driver’s nicknames. I am not going to list their last name...

Country
Crazy
Shakey
Wormey
Mule
Moose
Hacksaw
Spot Light
Wildman
Sleepy
Ding A Ling
Teeny
Blinky
Bear
Rat
Slippery
Gooney
Jay Bird
Slick
Slatts
Roundman
Frog
Deep Freeze
Redeye
Strawberry
Railroad

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

I was also amazed at our network of news. A driver would leave Jacksonville, Florida with some news from the Miami driver had given him. The Jacksonville, Florida driver would bring his bus to me or other driver in Fayetteville, North Carolina and give me the news. Sometimes it was about the company or some driver etc. I would take his bus to Richmond, Virginia. I would tell the Richmond drivers the news. He would take back to New York. It was like that all over.

WATCH YOUR SCHEDULE

I went to work driving in 1938. You couldn’t have worked for a better company than Atlantic Greyhound Corporation, worked under or with a better group of people. It was a pleasure working for them. I am a little older and can’t remember like I used to and as the little boy said, “His mother had gone to the doctor to get a Cadillac out of her eye.” Well I have one in each eye and if I misspell a word, please correct it. The dates I can’t remember.

I was crossing 14th Street Bridge going in to Washington, DC. A man behind me hadn’t hardly spoke all the way from Roanoke. He punched me on the shoulder and said, “Mister, is that the Tennessee River?”

I said, “No, that is the Potomac River.” He was old and I guess he lived in Tennessee.

I pulled into Lexington, Virginia one Sunday summer evening at 6:30 pm. Twelve or fifteen people were there, mostly ladies, going to Bridgewater College Summer Board School. They were teachers. One lady talked terrible to me up one side and down the other. Said I was one hour late. She just took a fit. Said I’ve stood here one hour waiting for you.

I said, “I’m sorry but I am on time.”

She said, “You were due here one hour ago. Right here it is on the schedule 5:30.

I looked at it and said, “Lady, I am 13 hours late due according to that, as you are showing me the a.m. schedule.” That brought on a good laugh. I did not hear another word out of her.

WHAT ARE THEY GOING TO DO WITH THAT

Another time I was on an express run to Washington, D.C. We crossed the Blue Ridge between Luray and Little Washington, Virginia. As I turned towards the steep and crooked highway, I met a tractor trailer with a large pleasure boat on it. A lady sitting on the right front seat had not said a word all the way from Roanoke. She saw that boat and said, “What are they going to do with that damned thing up here?” That brought on a good laugh.

DADDY, DADDY

I was on a run between Roanoke and Norfolk, Virginia. Going out of Norfolk a few miles, a lady and small boy were sitting behind me. All of a sudden the boy started patting me on the back and said, “Daddy, Daddy”. That brought on a good laugh. His mother said all I can figure is that his father is a Chief Petty Officer in the Navy and wears a cap styled like mine.

As long as I was on a run down that way some one would call me daddy.

LEFT, YOUNG MAN, GO LEFT

I was going in to Bedford, Virginia, headed towards Roanoke. A pickup truck was ahead of me. The street was wide. He was driving close to the curb. I was next to the center, I guess 15 miles per hour. All of a sudden, he turned left. A car was coming and he stopped. I hit him. He told the police he had his arm out to make a left turn. The policeman gave me his name, phone number, etc. “Go on about your business and make what report you need to and if you need me, call.” He said, “I can’t even get the window glass down, he couldn’t give you a left turn signal”.

I didn’t scar the bus.

I don’t remember which one was first but about the same place a car was coming toward me. All of a sudden it turned left in front of me. I backed up a little, jumped out and three or four other men - got the car door open.

A lady said, “Lay me on the ground so I can die easy.”

A man was running down through his yard. I hollered for him to call a doctor.

He said, “I am a doctor.” Her husband made the turn there to go to his house as she had an appointment with him. When was hurt but no bones were broken.

WHO PICKED MY POCKET?

In the year 1944, I was loading a bus at 5:30 p.m. scheduled for Asheville, NC and Augusta, GA. I was loading at the Knoxville, Tennessee bus station. There was a lot of passengers to board the bus. I loaded all the passengers which was a bus load. Afterwards, I went to sign the dispatch sheet and I felt my back pocket and my wallet was gone. I know I had it before loading. I was very much disturbed about it. The first thought I had was to have all the passengers searched. My next thought was that would not be a good thing to do. So I got up in the front of the bus and announced if anyone on the bus had seen anything of a wallet, as mine was missing.

I got no response. So I proceeded on my run. I drove it as far as Asheville, NC. At this point another driver took over. I had \$130.00 and a bunch of gas stamps. At that time, gas was rationed. You could not get gas without stamps, also my driver’s license.

I applied for new license and borrowed some money to get groceries and applied for more stamps. I drove this same bus 8 days later from Asheville, NC to Knoxville, Tennessee.

After my arrival and unloading the passengers, I decided to look the bus over and see if it would happen to be on it, and would you believe my wallet was on the bus. It was behind the very back seat of the bus in front of the motor. I picked it up and looked into it. All the money was gone and the gas stamps. The one that pick-pocketed me did leave my license. This was some experience, the kind you don’t forget.

BOTTOM’S UP

I was driving a bus from Asheville, NC to Knoxville, TN on an evening schedule. When I was ready to depart, I made the announcement as required by Greyhound. I got down the road about twenty miles and smelled alcohol. About every twenty minutes, I could smell it real strong.

So I kept looking up in the mirror to see who was drinking. I looked in the mirror every chance I had. Then I just gave it up, but a few minutes later, I smelled it again. Luckily, I turned my head to check on traffic in the

world was going on.

What he had done, he got on at Harrisonburg and he thought there was going to be two buses. So he got on and went back to the rest room, you see, so he wouldn’t have to pay. A lot of them did that, you know, to save a ticket. Get a free ride to Washington that way. So he done got in that rest room, see, and when I got on the bus, I looked back through the bus, I’m pretty sure I did. But anyway, I didn’t say a word. I just pulled on into the bus station in Roanoke and he came up and I said, “Well, I guess you’ll get to Washington, D.C. sometime today or tomorrow. So you really got socked that time”.

So he had to buy a ticket from Roanoke to Washington, D.C. We have a lot of people do that. We have a lot of people hide in the rest room while you take up tickets. They try every trick in the book.

SO, TIMES HAVE CHANGED IN EVERYTHING, I GUESS

Well, I’m back again. Don’t forget to mention in your book all we use to haul on our buses, newspapers, blood, human bodies. Lord, we’ve delivered newspapers for many, many years. Start out in the morning with the aisle, in front there, rolled up papers, whole bunches. Throw them off at the grocery store, wherever they wanted them to go off.

I remember this lady in Upperville, Virginia next to Winchester. She was always looking for her racing forms every morning and they weren’t on the bus, she really threw a fit, I tell you!

But if they didn’t bring them to the bus, I couldn’t get them to her.

But all the things we used to haul up and down the road, that’s the only way people use to get things at that time. All these syndromes they have any more about every little thing – how many syndromes did we have in our times? When you drive ten to twelve hours in ice and snow and come in off a run and have been out in that mess all day, with the people, the traffic and the snow and ice, and whatever. We had all kinds of syndromes. So did the mechanics, so did the ticket office, so did the baggageman. The mechanics worked in fumes from those buses forty years and never complained. Now you can’t get nobody to walk by one unless they’re bitching about the fumes coming out.

So times have changed in everything, I guess.

I’m still driving a bus. I’m driving a shuttle bus for Amtrak and work on Wednesday, Friday and Sunday out of Roanoke to Clifton Forge, Virginia. These railroad people are very nice. There’s no problem what-so-ever driving an old beat-up railway bus, 1969 model with no power steering on it. This little old company’s got that bid on this contract. But I can drive anything they’ve got. Doesn’t make any difference to me.

This little old shuttle bus, Amtrak deal, I do, I leave the hotel where we had our convention, remember? and that’s where I work out of. I’ve been doing this ever since I retired.

I’m sure you won’t forget years ago, you couldn’t drive from Charleston, West Virginia, south unless you had two or three years driving experience. I remember that when I went to school in Charleston, West Virginia. So people didn’t realize what roads they had to drive on before I even came to work, how dangerous they were and what they had to put up with. That one must have been a syndrome, too. A driving syndrome, Kirby’s syndrome.

Anyway, one time they transferred me ... seven winters I went to Columbia, South Carolina and worked. Every winter for seven years. Come a little snow down there, they cancelled schedules, I said, “You’re a bunch of sissies. Lord, if you slide off the road you have no where to go but in a little ditch.” But if it came a little skiff of snow, they would cancel schedules until it melted off. That’s the way it was in different areas where we drove and way out West, too.



As the light turned green, I proceeded up the hill. I had hardly enough time to shift into third gear when I noticed in the distance a pick up truck that was slowly backing down a hill that led to a grocery store. For some reason, I felt a danger. Slowing down as I got nearer, I saw that no one was in the truck. It continued to roll backward into the four lane highway just ahead of me as I came to a stop. Quickly I turned on my flashers, at the same time sticking my arm out of my side window trying to warn a car that was about to pass. The car barely missed the tail section of the pick-up as it came to a stop.

In a near run, I left the bus and stopped traffic in each direction. I opened the door of the truck and found the hand brake and pulled it to a stop position, the gear shift in neutral. As the truck was rather old, the hand break was only holding partly. This was the reason for it's slow movement backwards down the hill and stopping in the center of the highway.

As I looked up toward the store, I saw a large man walking toward the truck, he must have weighed over three hundred pounds. On his face I saw a look as if he was carrying the world on his back.

"Your truck?" I asked.

"Out of my way," he said, as he got into the pick-up and drove it back up the hill. As mean looking, and big as this man, I didn't dare yell, "Hey, at least you owe me a thank you."

On my way again, and slightly late on my schedule, I had not driven more than ten minutes, when rounding a curve on the interstate, I saw a car ahead of me run off the right side of the road onto a steep bank and turn over on it's top.

I pulled off the highway completely. I grabbed my fire extinguisher. "Just in case," I thought. I ran up the embankment, several bus passengers followed. All four wheels still turning, I bent down looking into the car. A woman was on her hands and knees on the roof of her car. "Are you hurt?"

"I don't think so," was her reply. By this time many cars and trucks had stopped to render any aid possible. I asked her to pull the door handle in order to open it. She did, the roof slightly caved in made it impossible to pull open, even with the aid of several people. Some tried the other door, but were unsuccessful.

"What to do now?" I thought.

"Break the window," someone said. "Sir" a boy around the age of ten said, standing behind me next to his father. "Ask the lady to roll down her window." I turned and looked at the boy, as his father told the woman to try the window. Cracked, but not shattered, the window opened. I was shocked as to why I had not thought of this simple procedure. We helped her out of the car and found only a few minor bruises.

"Good thinking, son," said his father, as they walked away. A state police car arrived, I called to all my passengers to board the bus, and we were on our way again.

I arrived in Washington nearly thirty minutes late, turned in my report and passenger count to the dispatcher, and headed for the restaurant that was only a block away. As I had nearly two hours before I made my return trip home, I entered the restaurant, waved at the bartender and sat in my favorite booth. The bartender was serving drinks to two men at the end of the bar. We had grown to be friends as he had worked there as long as I can remember. I gave my dinner order to the waitress. She brought over coffee immediately, as she had waited on me many times before, and knew this is what I wanted without asking.

Drinking my coffee while waiting for dinner, I looked over at the bar. The two men at the end of the bar were looking at each other at a close distance. Without words, one picked up his glass and threw beer into the face of the other, a closer look, I knew both men were intoxicated. Still without any words spoken, the other man picked up his whiskey glass and threw it into the other man's face.

Words between them must have been spoken before I arrived, but at this point, I heard none. Each man got off his stool and began to wrestle, with each falling to the floor.

"Hey, Hey," the bartender yelled. He rushed from behind the bar, grabbed each man by the arm, and lead them out the door. For five minutes I watched them argue without hearing what was said. Then one put his arm around the other, and they both walked down the street as if real buddies.

After dinner, I paid the bill, walked back to the terminal, loaded my bus, and had an uneventful trip back to my home terminal. Turning in my report and passenger count.

It was not long before I drove into my driveway, and was greeted by my wife at the door, who most of the time, waited up for me. "How was your day?" she asked. "Just routine, sweetheart." I replied.

IS THIS WHERE HENRY LIVES?

I was on a run out of Columbus Ohio, at around 12:01 a.m. on a weekend. At that time we had about all the passengers we could haul and the bus was full. On weekends there was a lot of people going home just for the weekend. A lot of them would be drinking.

I had this man who was drinking and had a bottle in his pocket. I told him he could go if he let me keep his bottle until he got off. He said, "Okay."

About 25 miles south of Columbus I came to a four way stop on the highway. I looked in my mirror and saw this man coming up the aisle from the back of the bus. When he got up to my seat he looked out the window and asked me if that was where Henry lived. It was about 15 degrees above zero and I guess the heat on the bus and his drinking had got to him. He asked me two or three times if I was sure that Henry lived there.

I told him, "Yes."

He told me that he wanted to get out, so I opened the door. I gave him his bottle back and told him he wouldn't need it before he got to Henry's house. We were 25 miles from Columbus, Ohio and about twenty miles to the next town.

For about a year after this, people would get on my bus and ask me if this is where Henry lives.

THREE BIG KNIVES

I was on a run from Columbia, South Carolina, to Jacksonville, Florida about 7:30 p.m. on I-95. This real big black man came up to my seat from the back of the bus and told me to take him to the police station. I told him I would when we got to the next town which would take about 30 minutes. He went back to his seat.

In just a few minutes, he came back up front and told me he had just killed someone in South Carolina. He didn't want to have to hurt me. I told him I didn't want him to. He had a little weekend bag that he had set down on the floor next to my seat. He opened it up. I could see a big knife laying on the top.

He stood there in the door well and talked crazy and smoked until we got in the city limits of Brunswick, Georgia. He told me to pull over and let him out and for me to call the police to come and pick him up.

I called the police station when I got to the bus station. They picked him up. They told me that he had three big knives in his bag.

I got 10 years of gray hairs in that 30 minute ride.

GET THOSE TWO PASSENGERS OFF THE BUS

I was on a run from Fayetteville, North Carolina to Jacksonville, Florida. Two passengers in back of the bus got into an argument and was about to get into a fight. When I got to the Walterboro, South Carolina bus station, I called the city police to have them taken off the bus.

When the police arrived they would not remove them from the bus.

I called my boss in Jacksonville, and he tried to get me to come on to Jacksonville.

I told him I was not going back out on I-95 with those two on my bus. I stayed there about two hours before a state police came and got the two men off my bus. I had a real quiet load of passengers from Walterboro and to Jacksonville, about 225 miles.

THE BUS WENT OVER THE CAR

I was working the extra board in Jacksonville and the dispatcher called me about 2:00 a.m. to ride to Savannah, Georgia to relieve a driver who got sick.

When I got to Savannah, the bus with about 36 passengers had been there about 4 hours and the driver came back from the hospital to ride home with me. He thought maybe he was having a heart problem.

When we got to Bennettsville, South Carolina, on the by-pass, a car ran a stop sign from my left and I hit it broadside and knocked it in a ditch. The bus went right over the top of the car. There was a brick house right in front of me and it looked like I was going in the front door. I turned the wheels back to the left and just hit the front porch. When I cut the bus away from the house, I hit a telephone pole with the left front of the bus. I knocked out all the windows in the front of the bus. I then went on down the sidewalk and hit another telephone pole. That is where the bus stopped. No one on the bus was hurt, but the two men in the car were killed. The car was full of beer cans.

After things settled down, a black man came up to me and asked if I was driving the Greyhound bus. I told him that I was the driver, and he said he wanted to shake my hand. He told me he lived in the house that I had hit. He told me that he watched the wreck and that he ran in his house and told his family to run out the back because a Greyhound bus was coming in the front of the house.

The driver who got sick and rode home with me was off from work for about three weeks. He blamed me for trying to him. He was sitting on the front seat back of the entrance door.

FROM THE DESK OF GILMER COLLETTE, SR.

I had many interesting and exciting things happen while driving a Greyhound bus.

I was operating the extra section from Winston-Salem to Charleston, WV with Kenneth Gray operating the regular schedule. At Bastian, VA his bus broke down. I picked up his passengers and himself.

We continued on to Bluefield, WV where we called for further instructions. Greg Plumbley instructed Gray, the regular driver, to go on to bed and for me to come on to Charleston, WV.

Over the years we had many good laughs as I was the second section and he was the regular driver being put to bed in Bluefield, WV.

I'M SITTING ON MINE

I was on a run from Durham, North Carolina to Richmond, Virginia. While on a rest stop at Blackstone, Virginia bus station, I noticed two girls talking to a soldier. Camp Pickett was nearby.

When I left the bus station, all seats were taken and people were standing all the way to the windshield. It just so happened one of the girls was standing beside me, the other one was sitting right behind me. Through their talking I found out they were sisters. The one standing beside me was married to the soldier. I said to the girl behind me, "Your sister is married, where is your better half"

She said, "I am sitting on mine."

DIE NOW AND SAVE

On this same run, during the recession in the fifties, I was going through Victoria, Virginia. In front of a funeral home was a sign which said "Die Now and Save".



I THINK I'LL STRETCH MY LEGS

I was unloading my bus in Clarksville, Virginia one night during the Korean war for a meal stop. The last one to get off was a young black soldier. He was on crutches with one leg off at the knee. He said, "I think I'll stretch my legs!"

his hands at the top of the patty wagon and gave a hard shove backwards. Four policemen went down on their backs along with the big man. A black man was hit by a policeman that was falling backwards during the struggle, as he was walking across the platform. It was unintentional. He happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. A roar of laughter came from passengers who had gathered to watch. Each officer quickly got up, they somehow turned him on his stomach before he could get to his feet. One officer placed his handcuffs on one wrist of this big man. The laughter continued as the man lifted himself to a position of being on his hands and knees, with one police officer seated on his back.

During the struggle which was now a short distance from the rear of the patty wagon, another man stepped from the wagon, and continued to stagger across the platform unnoticed by the police officers. He had been arrested earlier for being drunk in a different location. He reached the street, and disappeared behind the terminal.

By now the big man had gotten to his feet, one handcuff dangling. Now six officers pushed him toward the wagon, with the big man's outstretched arms and legs. It seemed almost impossible to get this man into the wagon. At one point, they almost made it, but never succeeded.

During the struggle, another police car arrived with a police captain. He got out of his car and yelled. "Wait a minute."

The other officers held the man. The captain walked over to the man. "Listen, son," he said, "You know we haven't lost a fight yet, so what makes you think you can win?"

The man breathing rather heavy stood and listened." Why not just get in?" he continued, talking in a polite manner. "You've got to go!" with this, the man stepped into the wagon and sat down.

As the doors were being closed, one officer yelled, "Where's the other one." One lady pointed in the direction of the drunk who had gotten off the patty wagon. The officer ran in the direction in which they lady had pointed. A few minutes later, the officer returned with the drunk staggering in front of him, one hand holding his belt, the other his collar. He was placed in the police captain's squad car, I felt they were not about to open the patty wagon door.

Within minutes, both vehicles left the terminal with an applause from the crowd. A job well done, I thought. Well anyway, a job done, was my second thought.

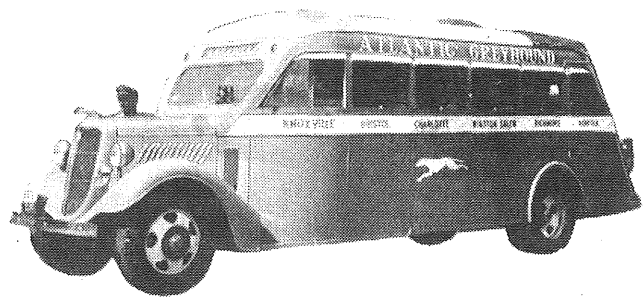


JUST ROUTINE, SWEETHEART

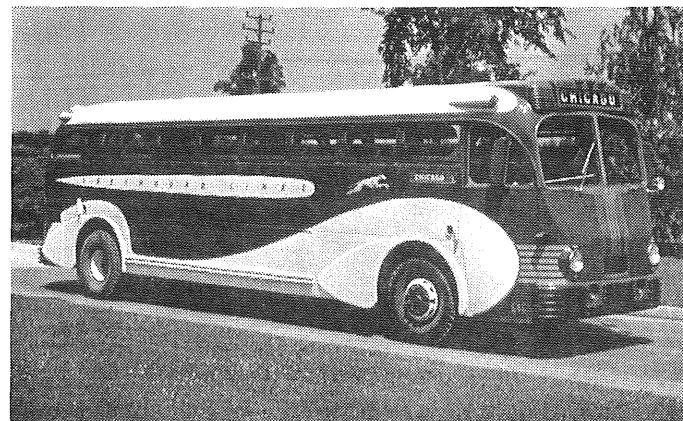
Leaving the terminal on my regular run, I managed to leave on time. It was 3:00 p.m. This schedule was hard to make as I was due to arrive in Washington, DC when all the city traffic was at it's worst, and everyone was in a mad rush to get home from the office.

Leaving Fredericksburg on time, the only stop I was scheduled to make before my destination, I crossed the Rappahannock River Bridge and came to a stop at the traffic light. Many times in the past, I had heard passengers who were seated behind me remark, "This is where George Washington threw the silver dollar across the Potomac." Like everything else, history can also be misinterpreted in the minds of many people. The passengers who thought this were only partly right.

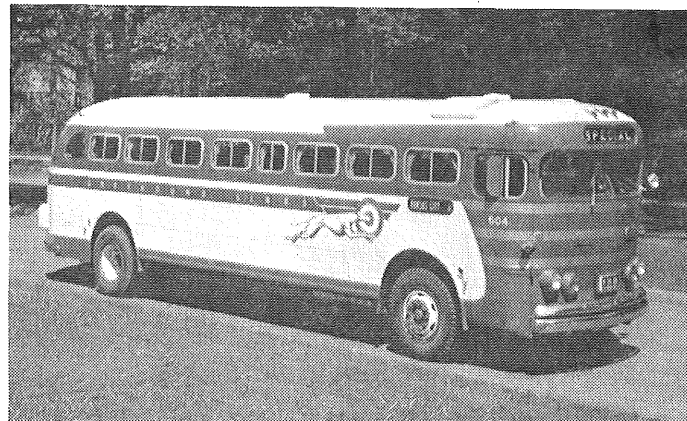
During the many years I worked the extra board, I drove many charter trips, and Fredericksburg was only fifty miles from my home terminal. I toured it many times, and listened to the tour guide who was hired by the charter group. According to the guides, George Washington did throw a coin, but not a silver dollar. It was a Spanish piece of eight, and it wasn't across the Potomac, but was indeed the Rappahannock River near his boyhood home which was across the river from the city of Fredericksburg.



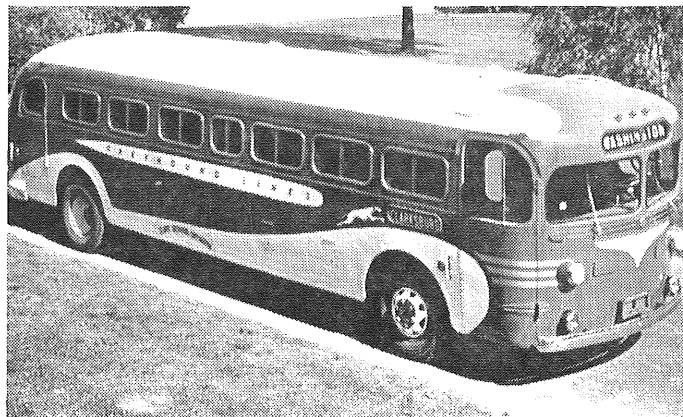
1935 Ford, #222, probably assigned to Skyland Division service as destination sign and letter board reads.



1937 Yellow Coach 743, 37 passengers, #646, first cruiser delivered to AGL. It was an all metal body with engine mounted across coach in rear with luggage stored in weather proof bays under flooring between the wheels. Air conditioning appeared in 1938 and diesel engines in 1939. Bus also referred as "pusher" because of rear mounted engine.



1942 Yellow Coach model PDA 3701. 37 passengers, with in-line (front to rear, rear mounted) engine according to O.D.T. WWII US Government regulations. This was first coach with slanted windshield glass. The letter P meant parlor, D - diesel, A meant the numbers 3701 were being used a second time. This coach was delivered to South-western Greyhound.



1940 Yellow Coach model PG (gas) 2902, #1008. Used mainly on short distance runs.



1947 General Motors (Yellow Coach name dropped) or GM PD 3751, the 51 signifying post WWII assembly. After delivery the number was changed to an Atlantic Greyhound 1800 series. This, the post war version of the famous Greyhound "Silersides" first delivered in 1941.



1942 Yellow Coach model TD 3605, 36 passengers, #1017. this is a transit body with standee windows, side facing seats over front wheels and small parcel racks above standee windows. Used in suburban service out of Charleston, WV.

INTRODUCTION

"THEY LEFT THE DRIVING TO US"

This is a book containing interesting stories of Greyhound Bus Company employees as they drove the open road of the United States of America. Their stories are heart-warming, sad, frightening, and loving episodes of dealing with the public, hazards, weather and bus mechanics.

They are true stories written by the employees themselves. Written with their true feelings, their memories, and their day by day life on the road.

The only fictitious part of the stories is the names of the drivers have been changed in the stories. All episodes are reproduced as the employees either wrote or taped them. So this book belongs to them - and to you the reader sharing their experiences.

A brief history of the Atlantic Greyhound Lines follows in the introduction and was written by Donald Coffin of Pennsylvania.

Photos of the Greyhound buses are included in the back of the book. Their captions were also contributed by Donald Coffin.

All of us from the Greyhound employees' families have lived these stories. As you read them, we hopefully want you to enjoy them with us.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ATLANTIC GREYHOUND LINES

December 26, 1929 National Highway Transportation Company, Charleston, WV was formed as a holding company to acquire:

The Blue and Gray Transit Company, Charleston, WV, formed September 25, 1928.

Camel City Coach Company, Winston-Salem, NC, formed December 12, 1925.

July 1930 National Highway Transportation Company name changed at Atlantic Greyhound Lines, Inc.

1930 Skyland Stages and Old South Lines acquired by Atlantic Greyhound Lines, Inc.

November 1933 East Coast Stages, Raleigh, NC (formed in 1932) merged with Atlantic Greyhound Lines, Inc.

January 1, 1937 Atlantic Greyhound Corporation (formed during December 1936 as a holding company) acquired all property and assets of Atlantic Greyhound Lines, Inc. and Old Dominion Stages, operated by Atlantic Greyhound Lines since 1932.

1929-1937 Several other small bus companies were acquired by Atlantic Greyhound during these years.

1957 Greyhound Corporation acquired 100% ownership of Atlantic Greyhound Corporation. Shortly thereafter, Atlantic Greyhound and Southeastern Greyhound merged to form Southern Greyhound lines. Southeastern Greyhound had previously acquired Dixie Greyhound, Florida Greyhound and Teche Greyhound, all divisions of the Greyhound Corporation.

1969 Southeastern Greyhound and Eastern Greyhound merged to form Greyhound Lines - East and Central Greyhound and Western Greyhound merged to form Greyhound Lines - West. These two were eventually merged as Greyhound Lines, Inc. and continued to operate as one company until it sold in 1989 by the Greyhound Corporation. The new company continues to operate under the name Greyhound Lines, Inc., although top management has changed three times.

ANOTHER REASON TO LEAVE THE DRIVING TO US

This is a story about a bus driver,
A Driver of a Greyhound Bus.
About his very first day on the job
When you could leave the driving to us.

After graduating from driver's school
And being assigned to a Georgia run
From Charlotte to Atlanta, Georgia,
The first morning when it all began.

Now, I ain't saying I am superstitious,
But we started out with thirteen that day.
I waited around to get another passenger,
But I had to leave with thirteen anyway.

The first thing that happened; I backed into
Another bus a-backing out of the track,
Tore off his baggage door, knocked it clean off.
I guess I plum forgot to look back.

After all the confusion, got all witness cards signed.
We finally got on our way,
But turning into the Greenville Bus Station,
I had my second accident for that day.

Tore off the left mirror after hitting the wall.
Had to drag the witness cards out again.
Got them all signed, everything squared away
And back on the road again.

I remember thinking, Lord is this happening to me?
Starting out on the very first day
Two chargeable accidents I've gone through
And I ain't even yet half way.

After sitting down, starting off again,
My passengers didn't have much to say.
From out of nowhere, a man and his wife came
With a load of furniture on an old Model A.

I ran up behind them and slammed on the brakes
Just showing off, young and foolish back then,
And about that time my brakes started to fail
And that's when all the fun began.

I scattered the truck and all the furniture
Over an area about one half mile
And I remember thinking, "My Third One"
And I've been here just a little while.

Well, both windshields were scattered all over
And the door was seen on the fly.
Ripped out all the windows there were
From the front to the rear of the right side.

Sent the man and wife to the hospital
But they got all right after then,
But facing my passengers was agony,
But I got out my witness cards again.

The just shrugged and said, "It could happen to anyone.
Because of this, we are not going to fuss."
After straightening them out I got back under the wheel
And again was leaving the driving to us.

Well, I made it into Athens, Georgia,
Let off one passenger, took on two more,
But while backing out of the track,
Backed into a fence, chargeable accident number four.

This time, I tore off the rear bumper,
And also the rear engine door.
I looked into the mirror, the passengers just sighed,
Brought out the witness cards once more.

After all this had been taken care of,
The passengers reluctantly got back on the bus.
It took a lot of talking and begging
To get them to leave the driving to us.

I arrived into Atlanta too late even to guess
Just thankful to be here and alive.
Making a quick left turn from a right hand lane,
You guessed it, chargeable accident number five.

My passengers looked at me, all with blank faces,
Filled out the cards again with nothing to say.
After asking and begging them to get back on,
They said they rather walk the rest of the way.

You should have seen the procession enter the station.
Ten passengers followed by the wreck of a bus
With parts strewn from Charlotte to Atlanta.
Another reason to leave the driving to us.

Took a bushel basket to carry my witness cards in
Next morning when I reported to the boss.
I asked him how much he paid for the bus
That would just about take care of the loss.

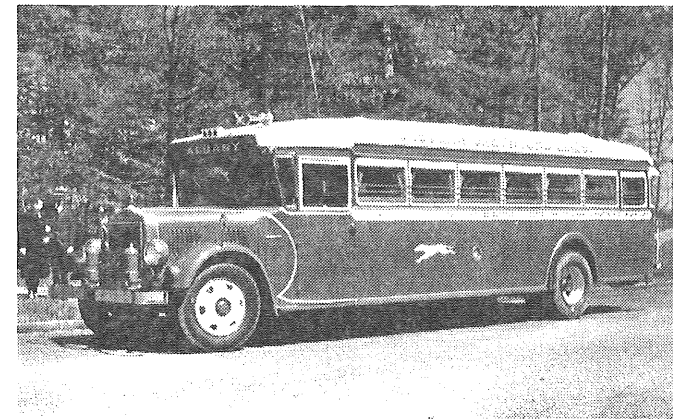
He asked me why didn't I just haul off and quit
After having my first accident and then
I told him I would, but every time I wound it up
I would have another accident again.



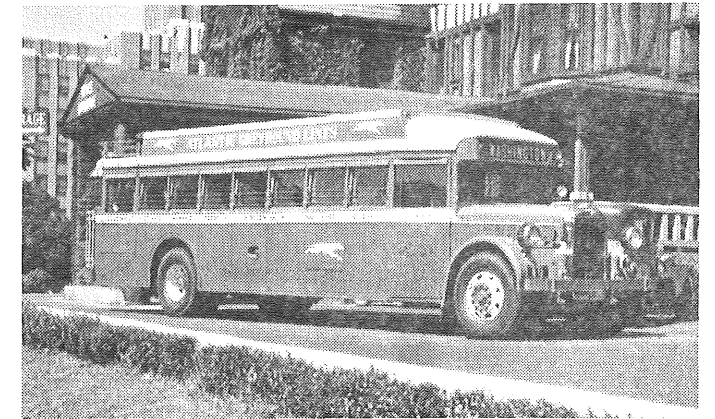
1930 Yellow Coach model 610, 33 passengers. Old Dominion Stages operated between Washington and Knoxville via Winchester and Bristol. Merged with Atlantic Greyhound during 1936 although Atlantic Greyhound had provided service for Old Dominion since 1932.



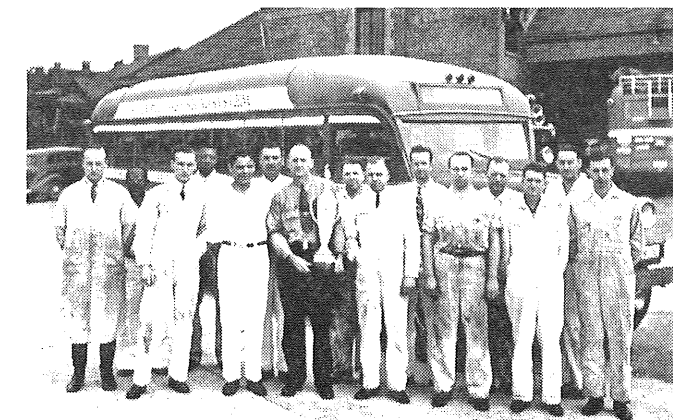
1930 Yellow Coach model 610, 33 passengers, as repainted in Greyhound livery, keeping same #202 as shown in Old Dominion photograph of #201 & #202. This basic coach was built for Greyhound as model 376.



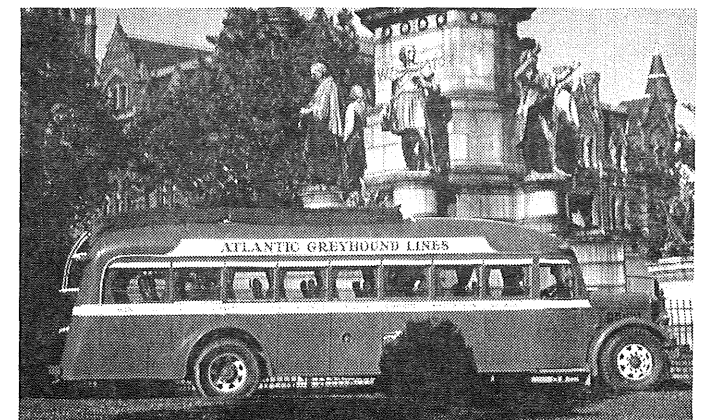
1931 White model 54, 29 passengers. Atlantic Greyhound obtained a few of these when buying out East Coast Stages and Old South Lines in early 1930's.



1932 Yellow Coach model 649, 33 passengers, #316, operated by Atlantic Greyhound for Old Dominion Stages as lettered on door under bus number.



1934 Yellow Coach model 834, 33 passengers, #370. Some of the mechanics jumpers are lettered East Coast Stages, merged with Atlantic Greyhound 1933. Note Atlantic Greyhound System rather than Lines.



1935 Yellow Coach model 843, 33 passengers, #389. Note larger top outside baggage rack as added at Charleston, WVa shops.

you know.

I'll tell you one thing, he'll have you all praying before you get to Pittsburgh." Of course some of the people laughed. I did too, and Matthew just got all shook up and just shook his head, you know.

So Radcliff got off the bus and we went on up the road. Got up there and just before we got to a place called Young, this man came up from the back of the bus. He said, "Driver, you have a woman back there on the floor and I think there is something wrong with her."

So Matthew just turned the inside lights on and never even stopped, looked up in his mirror, and I looked back in the aisle. Sure enough a lady was lying down on her face, right there in the aisle. He said, "Brown, go back there and see what's wrong with her."

So I walked back there and reached over and tapped her on the shoulder and I said, "Lady, are you alright?"

She never made a motion, never made a sound. I said, "Ma'am, are you alright?" and I shook her a little bit harder that time. She turned around and said, "Oh, I'm just fine. I'm just praying, that's all", and I'm telling you that whole bus just cracked up. Matthew told me later that woman stayed on here knees the entire trip. All the way from there to Pittsburgh and before they got there, they ran into a terrible snow storm, just a regular blizzard. They got into Pittsburgh an hour late.

When she got off the bus, she said, "Driver, I don't think you would have made it if I hadn't been praying for you."

WOW! A NEW REST ROOM

As I drove out of Charleston, I spent as much time cushioning back and forth from Parkersburg to Charleston, West Virginia, as probably every driver did that drove for Greyhound. I lived in Parkersburg the entire time that I drove. I ended up working out of Charleston.

This one night, I was cushioning, in with one of the drivers coming from Pittsburgh into Charleston. So I was on the bus and the other driver on there with me had come in off a charter to Parkersburg and dropped a coach right out of town and he was cushioning back to Charleston, also.

So Vick Dobbs was the driver. So he got down there on old 21, two lane road at that time, and he caught up with this car from Ohio and every time we got in a straight stretch, Vick would swing out to pass him and he would speed up. This kept on and on and on.

So finally, Joe Ross walked up, the driver cushioning in with me, and he said, "Vick, hang her back and sit this next turn. You're coming on in a little bit and get the jump on him and sack him." and he said, "I'll go on the back and I'll take care of that joker."

That was when we first had the buses with the rest rooms on them.

So Joe goes back there and I was sitting clear in the back of the bus with him. He pulled the window open and when Joe came around that turn, he popped out there and laid the coal to that diesel and he got the jump on him. When he got up to where Joe could see the front end of that car, just right even with him, he dumped the rest room. And when he did that, the headlights... everything just disappeared. Old Joe just covered him up with everything in that toilet at that time.

So we never saw him anymore, but he took care of that guy. I often wondered what he thought had hit him after he dumped that rest room.



my brakes. The car beside me then moved forward, with the automobile traveling in the same lane as the motorcycle. At that moment, the motorcycle passed me laying on its side and crossed over into my lane with the rider sliding on his back directly behind the bike. His arms were partly outstretched to prevent him from tumbling.

A woman seated in the front seat screamed. Later she said she thought I was going to run over his chest or head. At this point I was now standing on my brakes, giving it everything I had. I could see the rider looking up at me as he was sliding. I was terrified I that I was going to kill him. I finally came to an abrupt stop.

Switching on my emergency brake and flashers, I hurried off the bus to see a young man, his head and neck only inches from my front tire. He tried to get up, but found his back and elbow were in a great deal of pain. He asked me to remove his helmet, the back part was scratched up. All in all this young man, as foolish as he was, was indeed a lucky guy. He never thanked me or the other motorist who had stopped for helping him to get comfortable as possible. One lady took off her sweater, lifted his head gently and placed it under him. He never said thank you.

Later I thought he may have been dazed and unable to think straight. At one point while waiting for an ambulance, I wanted to give him hell for such a stupid act, but I didn't. I signed a police report, and made out a long report pertaining to the accident after I arrived at my destination.

All in all, even with extra time spent, with delays and report time, I was glad that what could have happened did not. Even if the young man did not appreciate all our efforts.

MY FRIEND'S TRAGEDY

Returning from my vacation, and back to work I was told that my good friend and fellow driver had requested a leave of absence. A tragedy had happened to him while driving. He was working the extra board, and had taken a local schedule during the rush hour out of Washington, D.C., and was due to return only with sixty-six miles traveled.

Out of town and near his turn-a-round point, an elderly woman with a child around the age of five, asked to be let off the bus by the dirt roadway that led to a small farm house that was across a busy highway. As the woman took the child by the hand and stepped a safe distance away from the bus, the driver pulled back in the driving lane of the highway. Checking his left rear view mirror he saw the woman and child crossing the highway. At that precise moment an eighteen wheeler, tractor/trailer passed the bus from the opposite direction and traveling at the speed limit. The child had seen the truck coming and was pulling back on the woman's hand, the woman looking straight ahead to the other side of the highway, never saw the truck. She dragged the child to their death.

The truck nearly jackknifed trying to stop. Perhaps the roar of the bus engine, which is located at the rear of the bus drowned out the noise of the oncoming truck. It's possible she looked both directions before crossing, but may have been in a blind spot as the bus pulled back onto the highway, and it's reasonable to believe that the woman looked in both directions before crossing, but looked only once, and never saw the oncoming truck.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIE FOR ME TO LIKE YOU

I suppose I shall never understand why it's necessary that some people have to build up their ego, but maybe that's not the word. Here's the story. Many years ago, a man seated behind me began a conversation. After a few minutes of 'How's the weather down the road', etc. he said, "I used to drive for your company."

"Really?"

"Yeah, I drove for years."

"What company?" I asked. The reason for this question was that our company was broken into many companies with the overall ownership of a corporation. The corporation owned as much of or more than fifty-one percent of each company.

"Oh, I worked for your company," he remarked. With this answer, I knew then he was putting me on.

"What state did you work out of," I asked.

"Texas," was his reply.

"Oh, I know what company you worked for." I said. So I named a company in Pennsylvania.

"Yeah," he said, "that's it." After I explained to him the difference between the company and corporation, and politely told him that he would know the difference had he truly worked for any company within our corporation. "Why was it necessary to lie about something that really doesn't matter," I asked. For a moment,

he said nothing, and then said, "You know, I guess I wanted you to like me."

"You don't have to lie for me to like you," I said. He leaned back into his seat and soon was fast asleep.

BUSTER CRABBE AND MORE

During my many years with the company, I was assigned a charter that was touring the Chinese ping pong players. We were scheduled to drive on the White House grounds in Washington, D.C. with our buses. I was delighted that I got a chance to stand in the rose garden, extreme back row, while President Nixon talked with their leader, and presented each player with a small gift, cuff links for the boys and signature pens for the girls. As some gifts were left over, I did receive one of each from a white house staff member, I still have them.

Over the years I got to see Bush, who was then a senator, also, Senator Kennedy, and a few others.

As a young boy, it was fashionable if you were in Washington, D.C. to roll Easter eggs on the white house lawn on Easter Sunday. My brother and I did just that many years ago. "This is dumb," I thought, so I stopped. The same day, President Roosevelt came out on the balcony. I wasn't excited at that time, but now consider myself very lucky to have seen him.

On another charger to New York City, two other drivers were in a small restaurant having lunch. A man walked in and as he headed for the counter to sit down, his coat brushed my head. "Excuse me," he said.

A few minutes later the waiter came over, filled our coffee cups. "Do you know who is seated at the counter?" We all looked.

"He looks familiar," I said, but I didn't know.

"It's Buster Crabbe, the movie star." In the early years, he played Tarzan, and appeared in many movies.

As the waiter left, I suggested we invite him over to our table. "You can't do that!" one of the other drivers said in a low voice.

"Watch me," I said.

Without further hesitation, I got up and walked to the counter. "Are you Buster Crabbe?" I asked.

"Yes," was his reply. I asked if he would join us at our table.

"I would love to, I'm tired of eating alone." As he ate we talked for nearly an hour. He told us of the many female stars he had worked with, and names of several movies he had made. At this point in his life, things were not so good for him now in Hollywood. He had not made a movie for several years, and that he was in New York City appearing on stage with a small part. I asked him if it was too much trouble to get his autograph. "I wish more people would ask me, then I would feel I wasn't forgotten."

Somehow during the many years that have passed, I have misplaced it. I can truly say he was as nice a person as I have ever met. Buster Crabbe died several years after our meeting.

WOW, A JUDGE

Stopping in a small town on a local schedule at the agency, I had to stop behind the local sheriff's car which was parked in the bus stop area. The sheriff waved his arm, an indication for me to wait. Seated next to the sheriff was a rather stout man. Both men continued talking. I glanced at my watch, it was time to go. I began to back my bus in order to clear the sheriff's car when I drove forward. The sheriff waved his arm again, several minutes later, and it didn't appear that the conversation was over, I blew my horn. No response. I got out of the bus, walked to the car. "Sheriff, I'm late, I've got to go." I walked back to the bus, minutes later the man got out of the sheriff's car with a rather large suitcase. As he entered the bus, he had trouble lifting it. Once again I got out of my seat, placed his case in the overhead rack while he sat on the front seat. At this point I believe he sensed I was a little hot under the collar for making me late.

As we finally headed out of the small town, he asked me several questions pertaining to the schedule. I answered him, but not in my usual good manner. I suppose by this time he knew I was pretty mad at him. Several minutes later, and now trying to make up a little time. "Kind of exceeding the limit, ain't you son?"

"Are you speaking to me?" I asked.

"Yes." I never replied.

Several minutes later, I noticed in my inside rear view mirror, a man walking up the aisle toward the front of the bus. He sat down beside the man I now had grown to dislike. "Good morning, your Honor," he said.

Wow, a judge, I said to myself. As they talked, I gradually reduced my speed and every question he asked thereafter, I was indeed polite, as I had to drive through his town many trips to come.

and we had these air-tight doors that you open, reaching inside, the driver's side through the window and flip a switch there and the doors would open up. So, when the air-pressure got down you just got a hold on the doors, pulled on them and they would open up.

So he got this six foot ladder and propped it up against the door on the inside.

So when Matthew went out the next morning to go to work, he pulled the door apart and the six foot step ladder fell out and hit him right smack in the middle of the forehead, cut him pretty good and he had to get a couple of stitches in his head before he could even go to work.

That's the last time they pulled that on each other.



WE USE THE COUNT SYSTEM

I caught the 12 am midnight between Charleston and Pittsburgh on day. It was in the fall of the year and of course we use to get quite a bit of fog down that Ohio Valley, out of Charleston there, all the way up to Pittsburgh. On a real bad foggy night you ran right along that Ohio River for ninety-some miles.

So this one night, I left there, I had a Silverside, and pulled out of there right on time and the fog was really bad that night. I was going up old 21 driving like it was clear as a bell. I hadn't been there long enough to have sense enough to know you'd better back off a bit. And there was this man and woman going to Cleveland, Ohio, going to Pittsburgh, I mean, sitting on the right front seat, and I could see their reflection in the mirror. He would lean up over that big wide bar we used to have on the Silverside there. Then he would sit back, then he'd lean up and sit back.

Finally he just couldn't take it any longer. So he leaned up and he said "Driver, may I ask you something?"

I said, "Yes Sir" and he said "How can you see to drive as fast as you're driving in this fog? I can't see a thing." and I said, "Mister, I don't want to get you all shook up but I can't see a bit more out there than you can see."

And I thought the poor old man was going to have a heart attack on me, but I said "Just wait a minute. We drive this road day in and day out and we know it like the back of our hand. We use the count system."

He said, "The count system! What do you mean?"

I was going up over Divide Hill at that time and I was in second gear. I was coming right at the tip of the hill with a big sharp "S" turn and I said, "Well, we're coming into a turn now, take two complete turns on the wheel to the left, and I count one thousand one, one thousand two, and I take two complete turns back to the right." And I made two complete turns and made my right turn and took off across the bridge.

And he sat there a little bit and finally he said, "I hope I haven't made you lose count, have I?"

And I said, "No sir, not yet." And he just leaned his seat back and went right to sleep.

PRAYING HELPS

Had a man driving for us named Radcliff. Now they only made one Radcliff. I mean, he always had everyone in an uproar all the time and he had more fun. You know, he was just a happy go lucky character.

And this one night I came in from Winston-Salem and I rode that bus on in to Parkersburg where I lived to go home, and he lived out there at Eden's Fork. That's about twelve miles out of Charleston.

So they had a loaded bus that evening and he and I were both standing up when we pulled out of Parkersburg. Matthew Hancock was the driver.

It was winter time. We hadn't any more than got started out on 21 when Radcliff turned around to the people on the bus and said, "Have you people ever ridden with this driver before?" and of course no one said a word,