

(Note: Mr. Hughes provided this account on January 5th, 2018, with editing done by Frank A. Shepherd and Roger Johnson)

In May 1958 at the last minute, I switched my plans for college attendance from Auburn to the University of Florida. I had planned to study electrical engineering and enter Auburn's co-op program. But I got a job as a student engineer at Tampa Electric Company that required I attend U of F. Most of the students that went to college from my home town went to U of F and lived at CLO. Charlie Lake was one of them and encouraged me to apply to CLO. I applied to CLO and drove to Gainesville for an interview and was accepted. At the time CLO was always full and I was lucky to get a spot that late in the application season.

In 1958 everything at CLO worked on a seniority basis. So, as one of the last to be accepted, I got one of the worst rooms. I was assigned to the attic of the Brown House. At the time CLO was composed of four former residences and a garage that had been given in trust by its initial donor. The four residences were the Brick House, the Mess Hall, the White House and the Brown House. The White House and Brown House were just used for members rooms except on Homecoming weekend when the Brown House was emptied of members and used to house dates that had come into town for the big weekend. The Mess Hall contained, on the ground floor, a kitchen and an area where the members gathered for meals and members were housed on the second floor. The Garage contained two rooms for two members each and the office for CLO. The Brick House was the largest of the buildings and contained mostly member rooms, but it also had a large common area that we called the living room where a member could meet with guests and where members would sometimes gather for bull sessions. There was no television in the living room or anywhere in CLO during my tenure there. Members simply didn't want to take time from studies to watch TV. The Brick House had three stories, the top most of which was the attic. The attic was one large open space where there was room for six members. Each member in the attic had an army surplus cot, a desk that U of F had discarded and a desk chair. My desk chair had a cane bottom, the seat of which was in bad shape. When my family drove me to Gainesville for the beginning of school, I wouldn't let them come up to my sleeping area for fear that they would be so turned off that they would insist I not live at CLO.

Living in the attic of the Brick House my freshman year was one of the great experiences of my life. My five roommates were diverse, inspiring and supportive. They were Ian (Mike) Latford, Frank Townsend (maybe Townsely — my memory fails), Mike Smith, Sageid Salah (forgive me if I misspell Dr. Salah), and Ed Partin. All of them except Ed Partin were older than I was and had some experience in life after high school before coming to U of F. Mike Latford was a British emigrant who had served in the U.S. Army in the Korean War and had decided to take advantage of the G.I. Bill as it was about to end. Mike was a patient and wise adviser who was a real help for a stressed freshman. Mike was an engineering major as were many of the CLO members at that time. Frank Townsend was also a veteran who had served in Germany and was majoring in German. We called him Francois because he wore a beret most of the time. He woke me one night screaming in German. I woke him up and told him he was having a nightmare in German. He was ecstatic. It was the first time he had become sufficiently fluent to dream in German. Mike Smith was of Jewish heritage, but spent his summers selling Bibles and Christian literature for a Nashville book publisher door to door in the rural south. Sageid Salah was raised in Seoul, Korea, but was of Turkish descent. He was probably the most brilliant student I met at U of F. He obtained a Ph.D in Nuclear Engineering in a very short period of time. Ed Partin was approximately my age and came to U of F right out of high school. He was from Kissimmee, Florida. The Kissimmee Cowboys were one my high school's rivals in athletics. They were really cowboys. Disney World did not exist at the time, and Kissimmee was the center of the cattle-raising industry in Florida. Florida was the second biggest cattle producing state in the country. Ed dressed like a cowboy of the era including slit pocket pants and shirts and boots. Ed occasionally borrowed money from me.

Let me give a bit of an extended story about Ed Partin. When I went home for the Thanksgiving break (I had not gone home any weekend before then because I studied all waking hours) my next door neighbor drove up to Gainesville to give me a ride home. One CLO member from Auburndale had a car at U of F, but he and the other Auburndale students had departed in it early in the day the last day of class before Thanksgiving. I had a three-hour lab that ran late in the day the day before the holiday and didn't want to cut it. On the ride home from Gainesville my neighbor was asking me about my experience at U of F so far. I told him about my roommates and he responded by asking if Ed was one of "The Partins." He said he would show me something about them when we got home and he did. He showed me a Life Magazine (a major magazine of the time - it could have been a Look magazine but I think it was Life) article about the Partin family of Kissimmee. There was a picture of all the Partin men and Ed was in it. The story was that Ed's grandfather had come to Kissimmee with one cow and one dollar and bought one acre of land. At the time of the story the Partin ranch covered 500,000 acres and was the largest ranch east of the Mississippi River. I was dumbfounded. When I went back to school I approached Ed and asked if he was indeed a member of that family. He confirmed that he was. I asked why he was living in CLO, an organization catering to students that didn't have many resources. He said that he didn't have access to the family resources until he was twenty-one and would be added to the family bank account. I was amazed at the size of the ranch and asked if Interstate 4 crossed it. He said yes; it ran about ten miles across the ranch.

One last story about residents my freshman year. One of the rooms in the Garage was occupied by Larry Garret and Tom Philpot. They were both medical students in the recently opened medical school. My fondest memory of them was that they used their chemistry skills to make wine. It was a treat to be invited into their room for a glass of wine.

In 1958 the monthly assessment for members of CLO (we didn't call it rent then - there was no lease agreement or written agreement of any type) was \$40 . It rose to \$49 my fourth year. For that assessment a member got his (all male at the time) room and all meals except Sunday lunch. Breakfast was not a cooked meal. It was arranged by the member who had the job as purchasing agent. He would set out cereals, sweet rolls and sometimes fruit. A milk dispenser was always available in the Mess Hall. Lunch and dinner (we called it supper) was prepared by a hired cook and his family. The cook had Sunday off and that is the reason lunch was not served on Sunday. The evening meal on Sunday was again arranged by the purchasing agent and consisted of sandwich makings and accompaniments.

The purchasing agent was just one of the student officers who administered CLO at the time. He purchased all of the food for the kitchen, the cleaning products for maintaining the houses and supplies of all sorts. The other officers were the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Bookkeeper. The President, as the title would indicate, was the lead officer and played big roles in budgeting, recruiting, discipline, etc. The Vice President was usually a building construction major and was responsible for major maintenance. CLO had a work weekend each semester that the Vice President organized when major maintenance projects were performed by the members. When a maintenance project was beyond the ability of the Vice President to get accomplished with member labor, the Vice President was responsible for arranging with contractors to do the work. The Vice President was also responsible for insuring that the duty rosters got posted each week that listed who was on duty to clean the restrooms, sweep the common areas, clean the dining area, etc. The Secretary had a lead role in recruiting including interviewing applicants. He also kept the minutes of the Board and House meetings. The Treasurer was over-all responsible for finances and the Bookkeeper kept the books. Assessments each month were collected by the Bookkeeper in the office the first few days of the month after dinner. As a check, the Treasurer and Bookkeeper were to mutually check the amounts to be deposited in the bank and accompany each other to the bank. The year I was President, the check wasn't made by the Treasurer every time and the Bookkeeper

embezzled some money. The Bookkeeper walked into the Sheriff's office one day and confessed. It seems his parents were elderly and in desperate financial shape, and he had stolen to help them out. It was very sad. The officer were all elected and reported to an elected Board.

One last thought about my era at CLO. The organization was completely student run. There was no house mother, or adult adviser, no paid manager or any real supervision by the University. The President and Vice President would visit the head of university student housing once a semester and give an oral report on the status of the organization, and that was it. The student officers were forgiven their monthly assessment for their services. Other than the cook, the only other paid personnel were the dishwashers. Members who worked washing dishes after dinner (the cook took care of dishes at lunch) had half of their assessment forgiven. I was a dishwasher my sophomore year.

I hope this gives the reader some idea of the CLO experience in the 1950's.

-Randy Hughes

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