

LOOKIN' BACK, TEXAS

from, "Sky-High Dreams and Down-to-Earth Wishes"
by R. Ace Avakian
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The year was 1973. The place was Denver, Colorado. I had been flying for Frontier Air Lines now for Twenty Five years.. Twenty Two years as Captain. I had flown the Douglas DC3, Convair 340, Convair 580, Boeing 727 and now the Boeing 737 — all as a Reserve Captain. This meant, being 'on call' as a reserve pilot all these years. On top of all this, financially, things were not going too well. A divorce and later a remarriage — a new home and being 'on call', was sort of catching up to me. Now, here came an opportunity to start a 'new life' if you will, by bidding out of Denver and going to the Dallas/Ft. Worth, Texas area.

If I could be a successful bidder to the DFW domicile, because of my seniority position; I would, at last be classified as a 'regular' Captain — and thus be able to choose the trips I could fly and the days off. All these things were running through my mind. But — the other thing that sort of 'haunted' me was the fact that I am a 'Yankee' and how would I— meaning, we - my family - be accepted in Texas.

I had been in Texas before as a pilot in the Army Air Corps and was relatively familiar with the 'difference' of being a 'Yankee' - the worse kind — a 'Noo Yawkah' yet. I had been stationed in Wichita Falls, Amarillo and San Antonio — all in Texas and remember the 'atmosphere' of 'not belonging'. With all this on my mind, it was a tough decision and after thinking it over and over and discussions with Janet, my wife —I finally bid the Dallas-Ft.Worth (DFW) vacancy and was successfully awarded the position.

Now came the time for heavy thinking of whether I did the right thing or not. It kept going over and over in my mind. After all, Denver had been home for many years not only with the air line but even back when I was stationed at Lowry Field during my military career. Off and on, Colorado had been 'home' since I was 19 years old.

Now the time had come to go to the DFW area and seriously look for a place to live prior to the actual physical move. The 'up for sale' of the home in Denver and the packing, etc. While all this time wondering how I would be accepted to the DFW domicile for 'invading' their territory. All this kept mulling around in my mind and it truly worried me. Did I do the right thing?

One thing that was a 'plus' for my thinking was the fact that most of the pilots that had been flying with me as copilot were commuters, living in the DFW area. They had really been a friendly lot. I seemed to get along with them real well but —I thought, "...sure as long as I was in Denver and 'they' were in DFW."

At this point, I do not want to mention too many names for fear I may omit some but I would like to state that I had 'made friends' with a Texan named Don Miracle. He stated that when the time came for me to come down to Texas for house-hunting, etc., that he would be more than happy to show me around. Further, that he was living in a town called Euless and he would be happy to show me around this particular area which he thought was a nice area. The town was/is situated between Dallas and Fort Worth.

When I finally made the trip to Texas, to 'look around', it was Don who picked my family and I up at the airport - which was Dallas, Love Field at that time. He then drove us to Euless. . .offered us to stay with him and his family — at his home! Further, that he and his family were going on vacation soon and that we were welcome to stay at his home, use his car to 'look around' and then informed me that he had 'stocked' the refrigerator with all sorts of food and we were, "... welcome to use all of it." Not only that, but that there was a home across the street from him that was for sale and if we were interested in seeing it, etc., he would arrange for the tour, etc.! The only request he had for me was that, "...if the house was to catch fire... .please drive my Mercedes out of the garage to safety..." These events that were unfolding truly were wonderful for my wife and I which had us completely relaxed. (We later, did purchase the house across the street and Don, his family and mine became very close.)

The pilots, the station personnel — all the people we came in contact with were very friendly and made our move extremely pleasant. One thing I'd like to mention. I made a 'boo-boo.' One morning prior to our actual move, I went to a local Eatery for breakfast and was asked, " . . . would jawl lahk Biskits-n-Grayvee?" I hesitated for a moment and answered, "No Ma'am— I'd like to have Breakfast." The waitress looked at me kind of funny, walked away — hesitated and came back and asked, "Honey — where ur yawl frum?"

As time went on and we finally settled down in our new surroundings. we found everybody to be extremely friendly and put all our emotions at ease. It was truly wonderful. All the company personnel from the pilots, copilots, station personnel — all made us feel ‘at home.’ All my tense feelings had quickly vanished and I felt completely accepted.

To make things even better, we became interested in football, the Dallas Cowboys, the get-togethers with some of the pilots, their wives and we became like one big family. One of the main attractions, if I may classify it as such, was ‘joining’ Johnnie Tyler’s band. I had played the harmonica and got to know some of the country tunes that were popular at the time and joined in with Johnnie on the Guitar, Eddie Birdwell on Banjo and **Jack Prather** on Bass — later with Dave Cole on the Fiddle and still later Bill Medcalf on ‘stand-up’ Bass. <I asked Dave what was the difference between a ‘fiddle’ and a violin?> He answered that, “...the Violin had gone to college...”

I had mentioned I did not want to mention names for fear I may inadvertently omit some important ones but I must mention that most all the Copilots and Captains of the DFW domicile have become some of my closest friends. From the Division Chief Pilot Mark Burke to the other two ‘Yankees’ that ‘invaded’ the DFW domicile, namely Charlie Weed and EP Lietz. . .all of us were graciously accepted to the DFW domicile. To be associated with these people, I couldn’t go wrong.

To this day, both Janet and I look back to the ten years we were ‘based’ at DFW. We agree those were some of the best ten years of our lives. And we reminisce as we go Lookin’ Back to Texas.