

# **CORAL CASTLE BOOK**

**WRITTEN BY COL. CARROL A. LAKE**

(mid 1950's)



**CREDIT**

**Historical Museum of Southern Florida**

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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This book by **Carrol A. Lake** relates the story of Edward Leedskalnin, an obscure Latvian immigrant, who single-handedly created from oolitic limestone (coral) rock indigenous to South Florida, what has become recognized as probably the finest example on the North American continent of massive stone construction, a modern wonder of the world.

A careful examination of Leedskalnin's work reveals that **he understood and put to practical use many facets of the ancient knowledge of leverage believed known by the Pyramid builders of Antiquity**, and he used this knowledge to construct the "Coral Castle of Florida". Leedskalnin cut from the ground huge blocks of coral limestone weighing up to thirty five tons, and then moved these single-handedly using simple pulleys, and an uncanny knowledge of the principles of leverage. Modern day engineers stand in awe of Leedskalnin's work, and are unanimous in praise of his engineering skills, believed lost somewhere in the past history of mankind.

Architecturally, Leedskalnin was the first in America to incorporate the modern concept of outdoor living in a semi-tropical zone. His carvings, in beautiful settings are artistic creations of the first magnitude reflecting a keen imagination combined with a practical and utilitarian nature to take full advantage of natural forces.

**Artistically, his creation is refreshingly unique.** The rare beauty of the individual carvings sets in the overall, breathtaking beauty of Leedskalnin's eternal masterpiece will inspire untold future generations.

Leedskalnin's priceless work in South Florida has been compared from an engineering standpoint to the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt, and architecturally and artistically with the same conception that gave birth to the Taj Mahal of India and is a cultural gem worthy of the genius of a Leonardo Da Vinci and a Michael Angelo [sic].

**Col. Carrol A. Lake, engineer and author, spent two years interviewing the people of the Redlands area of South Florida to obtain the material used in this book.** It is essentially factual and is all that is known of Edward Leedskalnin. The story is told in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person to give the reader an intimate feeling and rapprochement with Leedskalnin's actual life during the thirty years he spent building his masterpiece.

# FORWARD

How the huge mysterious creations in stone – called “The Coral Castle of Florida” or “Rock Gate Park” – were built is still baffling engineers and scientists from many lands. **With the death of their creator on Dec. 7, 1951, Ed Leedskalnin**, the mystery of the construction of this Coral Castle and the perfectly balanced rock gates moves each year further back into the shadows of a knowledge gone for many thousands of years, just as legends about this amazing little stonemason from Latvia are increasing. The favorite story of these is that he was jilted by his “Sweet Sixteen” on the eve of their marriage and he built his works of genius out of his frustration.

Whatever the reason, Ed proved for all the world to see today, that he knew the construction secrets of the ancients. He quarried and moved into place, alone and without modern machinery, rocks weighing three times the largest blocks in the Great Pyramid. In all, he cut and put into place over 1000 tons of rock, the greatest achievement in all history by one man.

Yet, except for the vision and understanding of one man even this proof would have been lost to the world.

The more this man studied the massive work of the little immigrant, the more convinced he became that here is one of the great Wonders of the World, ranking with the Pyramids of Egypt, with Stonehenge in England, with the fabulous Temple of Jupiter and Baalbek near Damascus in Syria, with the giant mysteries in stone on Easter Island.

Ed proved, by his own work, that he had the engineering knowledge of moving huge blocks of stone that has eluded builders since the days of Ancient Egypt. **So Julius Levin stepped in to save Ed’s Coral Castle and Rock Gate Park from being broken up for building rock and from becoming a night club rendezvous.**

When Ed Leedskalnin died on Dec. 7, 1951, in a Miami hospital, his Coral Castle and his strange stone garden were left wide open to vandals and to mischievous boys. His living quarters were ransacked, his shrubbery dug up, everything that was movable was taken before several neighbors and friends, headed by **John Neafsey**, moved in to save what was left.

The search for notes and papers went on. Nothing was ever found or revealed as to how Ed did his amazing feats of construction. He left some notes and several published bits of writings – on electrical and cosmic theories and on philosophy – but not one word about his greatest achievement in stone, neither did he ever tell or show to anyone how he did his work.

In the search for heirs, a priest turned up a nephew, **Harry Leedskalnin**, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A court struggle began to clear title to the property. Finally, the nephew obtained title, through the untiring efforts of **Roscoe Brunstetter**, a former Mayor of Coral Gables, Florida. The present owner came forward, along with a night club operator and several others, to buy the ten-acre Rock Gate Park and Coral Castle. Julius Levin was successful in January, 1953, and he immediately dedicated himself to the task of restoring Coral Castle Park, which is 25 miles south of Miami on U.S. 1, as Ed wanted it – and then opening the Park to the public.

This is the story of Ed, his work and his struggles to make that Park what it is today. Ed knew he was creating something great – and he did.

All who visit within the massive walls of the Park, enter the Coral Castle, or open – with their little finger – the perfectly balanced ten-ton rock gate are thoroughly convinced they have seen one of the greatest Wonders of the World.

# CHAPTER ONE – ARRIVAL

The bus swung sharply and shrieked to a stop. The frantically waving little man, in the shiny blue serge suit, leaped nimbly out of its way. The effort brought added pallor to his already pale face.

Slowly he pulled himself up the steps into the bus. For several minutes he clung to the handrail, breathing hard and fanning himself with his hat.

“In town?” brusquely asked the driver, shifting gears, his eyes on the white pavement ahead. “All the way?”

“Why, yes.” The little man spoke quickly, with a heavy foreign accent. He tucked his hat under his arm and took a small purse from his pocket. **“I must get – to – a hospital.”** He swallowed hard, again grasping the handrail, so tightly the knuckles showed white. His breath came in a faint gasp, “At once.”

So began a journey – that afternoon of November 9, 1951, on the almost deserted road 25 miles south of Miami, Florida, that was to lead – a month later – to death – and to a closed door on one of the most baffling mysteries in all history.

The scene shifts back, nearly 35 years, to two men approaching a little pioneer home on the edge of that vast uncharted sea of grass and endless swamps called “The Everglades.” One, fairly heavy and middle-aged, waved to a sweet-faced smiling woman who was standing in the doorway. He called, “I’ve brought company!”

She saw a small, thin man, with light blond hair, neatly dressed in a white shirt open at the throat and blue trousers, a hat in his hand, standing beside her husband. **“he looks desperately ill,”** she thought, though her smile of welcome broadened.

“This is Ed – er,” and **Reuben L. Moser** turned to the little man. “What did you say your name is?”

“Ed. Ed Leedskalnin,” he replied, in a brisk tone, smiling and bowing. His accent was so thick you could cut it. “Oh, yes. Ed Leedskalnin,” Moser nodded vigorously. “So thoughtless of me to forget. Yes, Ed Leedskalnin, Frances. He’s looking for some land”

The cordiality of her smile was not an act nor was it forced. It was lonesome in this new world of Longview in Southern Florida. She, like all pioneer women, welcomed those from “the outside world” she never had quite left behind.

“Do come in.”

She held the door open for the two men to enter – as she had so many times for so many stranger her warm-hearted husband brought home.

As Ed stepped through the doorway, a violent fit of coughing seized him. He leaned heavily against the door-jam for support. The Mosers quickly exchanged glances. She whispered, **“He’s very ill. What’ll we do?”**

Moser, grim-faced and silent, quickly took Ed by the arm and gently guided him onto a big easy sofa. He dropped into a nearby chair, glancing uneasily at his wife who slowly seated herself near the door. They just waited – in silence.

They felt so helpless, wondering what they could do or should do. The coughing stopped as abruptly as it began. Ed

leaned back for a few minutes, eyes closed, and breathing heavily.

The Mosers sighed with relief. When Moser saw Ed open his eyes he broke the silence which had descended over the room by saying seriously, "Young man, you need a rest, a very long rest."

Ed nodded weakly. He looked from one to the other, his bright blue eyes wide and alert. He sat straight up on the edge of the sofa. A flush quickly spread over his pale face. He looked uncomfortable and terribly embarrassed.

Moser sensing Ed's feelings tried to speak as if nothing unusual had happened. He wanted to put Ed at his ease again. "Been traveling long, Ed?"

"Several days." Ed nodded his thanks. His voice resumed its quiet, normal tone. He leaned back, closed his eyes, and quickly reopened them. The smile flashed back onto his face. "I came from the phosphate mines – up north."

"Got your cough there, eh?"

"Oh, yes," agreed Ed lightly, with a slight shrug. "It's T.B. I came down here to die."

As he saw the startled expressions on their faces, he laughed and added hurriedly, "We all have to die sometime. **I've got a long time yet, a very long time, but I want to live here**, in the warm sun of this beautiful new country of yours."

"Then you're from Europe?" Moser hazarded a guess.

"Oh, yes. Latvia."

"Oh," and Moser glanced sheepishly at his wife. It was apparent he had no idea where Latvia was, whether it was a city or a country. "How long have you been in this country? Several years, I'd judge. You speak very good English."

"Thank you. Yes, about six years." Ed was laughing easily now. "I was a logger in California before I went into the mines."

"Amazing! I thought loggers were all big men – huge men – and strong as an ox? You can't weigh over a hundred pounds."

"Just eighty-five pounds now. However, Mr. Moser, it's not size that counts." Leedskalnin was speaking very earnestly. "It's how you use this," and he tapped his forehead. He looked from one to the other of them and added simply, "I was a good logger."

They knew he wasn't boasting. Again, even more violent cough seized him. Moser bounded to his feet, gently lifted the little man into his arms and carried him, as he would a small child, into a room he had just finished as a lean-to.

# CHAPTER TWO – LAND-OWNER

And so weeks passed. The motherly Mrs. Moser and her equally attentive husband proved themselves excellent nurses.

Both became very fond of the little man. They were deeply impressed by his constant good humor and by his unusually clean and orderly care of himself, his clothes, his room, and his few belongings.

He was very pleasant company for them, and a good example. He radiated a quiet friendliness and a fundamental goodness. He always saw good in people. He looked for good. He expected only good.

Yet with all his good cheer and friendly appraisals, he discouraged all attempts to be familiar, to get him to talk about himself or his past. He called no one by their first name, although he liked to have people call him “Ed”. The Mosers were always “Mr. Moser” and “Mrs. Moser”, never “Reuben” or “Frances.” **The only exception through the years was the Mosers’ small daughter** who was “Lois” to Ed from the very first day.

His influence on them was quiet but deeper than they realized. One day, they were on the verge of being quite abrupt and sharp in their answers to each other, almost to open anger on both sides. **Moser suddenly realized Ed was in the room.** As they remarked about it afterwards when they were alone that evening, “Wasn’t it strange this afternoon,” Mrs. Moser breather aloud, “that when we were raising our voices to each other, the effect it had on me to see Ed standing there in the doorway, with that big smile of his. You know, Reuben, I just can’t understand why it was that suddenly I felt so warm inside, so at peace with everything, and so far from being angry with you. I just can’t explain it.”

He crossed the room and put his arm around her shoulders. **“I know, Frances, I felt exactly the same way.”** He held her close for several minutes. “For myself, Frances, I’m glad he’s here with us. I enjoy having him around. He has made our home so much happier and cheerier. We’re both too serious and, to say a rather hackneyed expression, he has been a real ray of sunshine in our home – for us, and I know for Lois also. I know that whenever I’ve come home, feeling irritated or disturbed about something, just talking to him has made me feel so much better that, like today, anger and irritation or impatience have suddenly vanished. I don’t understand it – but I like it.”

**“I do, too. When we think about it, I’ve never heard him swear, or get angry, or even show impatience. Isn’t that strange?”**

“Not when you know Ed,” her husband laughed heartily. “But during these weeks that he has been here, I still don’t know what he can do to make a living or what he knows about any trade or even what he has been trained to do.”

“He said he had been a logger in California and also worked in the mines up north.”

“Yes, yes, but that is unskilled labor. He’s too small to be a laborer, to compete in the labor market with big husky men.”

“Yet he seems to have done that – and quite well.”

“Why do you say, ‘quite well’? How do we know how successful he has been in his work?”

“Only that he said he has been a ‘good logger’, and I felt sure from that that he had been a good logger.”

"I agree there, of course, but we don't know what being a 'good logger' means. He may have trimmed branches or trees or some other light work. He's too small and too light for any kind of heavy work."

"Yes, I know, but we never get any information about him from him. He likes to talk, and he sure talks a lot, **but he never does say anything about himself**, it seems to me."

"That's true. He's always wanting me to discuss things with him that I know absolutely nothing about, such as electricity and philosophy and astronomy. What do I know about them? But when he got talking the other night about 'movement of masses', and what 'constitutes matter' and 'motion', he was so far over my head, I just had to call it a night."

"I remember that," she laughed, patting his hand, "You do need to brush up on those subjects before you can argue about them."

"All right," he grinned. "I may be stupid about those things, but I do know my own business and I do read the papers."

"You're a smart man, Reuben Moser, in more ways than one, but your knowledge just doesn't run along those lines."

"Thank you for them kind words, Frances. I like to talk. You know that, and I like to talk to Ed. When we get on subjects I know, like the events of the day, what's in the newspapers, about conditions of this part of Florida, about real estate and the markets, I think I can hold my own with me – or anyone else."

"Of course, you can, even to discussing the neighbors and the new buildings going up."

"Ah, that's a sight to behold, the building that is going on in South Florida. Ah, I like to see that," and he rubbed his hands contentedly.

"Sure," she nodded with a laugh. "That means you sell more land."

When they did try to analyze Ed and his background or rather his capabilities, **they did realize they knew very little about him, less even than they would have thought possible.** They knew he did much thinking, but even that may have been day-dreaming. They had seen him so many times lying on his bed, for hours at a time, staring at the ceiling. They knew he was not asleep, for his eyes would be open.

Other times, he'd read, hours on end. In fact, he had read all of the books they had, especially all the heavier or more solid types of literary fare. **He literally read "everything in sight," going through the newspapers "from cover to cover." Occasionally, they saw him glancing in the Bible.**

He never talked religion and he never accompanied them to church. Each Sunday morning, they'd make a special point of inviting him, rather formally, to go with them. Each time he would politely refuse, usually with some such statement as, "Thank you very much for asking me, but I'd be completely out of place there. Please excuse me."

Once he remarked simply, **"All organized religion is the bunk."** Another time, he said, "I can only believe in what I can prove." Yet they felt sure he did believe in a Supreme Being. Somehow, they sense that he had had a religious background or at least a religious mother.

During these weeks, they did find out that Ed was born in 1887 on a farm near Metei in Latvia and that his father's name

was Andrew. That they got from him. **They found also that he had arrived in American in 1912.** There was always the belief in the background that something horrible had happened to his family and that that was why he had come to the United States – to escape whatever tragedy it was that overcame them.

So here it was in the closing days of World War I, in 1918. There their [sic] information about him came to an abrupt end. What his schooling had been, or where, they did not know, even if he had had any formal schooling. Somehow he had learned to read and write, and he spoke like a man who had had quite a bit of formal education. Yet they knew nothing further, any more than they knew what his capabilities were or along what line of work he had followed as a trade. They felt sure he had never been a professional man.

**Occasionally, they saw him writing, with a pencil on a pad of notepaper he kept in his pocket.** They never saw what the writing was, and Ed never mentioned it. Somehow, they felt sure he was not writing letters.

Gradually it was being impressed upon them that they knew very little more about him now, after these several weeks of his convalescence in their home, than they knew that first day when he had been so ill from his coughing. They knew they liked him and were glad to have him in their home, but aside from his being a very friendly person, a happy person, and a good influence on all those with whom he came in contact, they knew nothing more. **Both were inclined to let the matter drop right there.** They made no further attempts to pry into Ed's past or into his knowledge or capabilities. They were content to let the future take care of all that.

Ed had acquired a rather badly used-up bicycle which he completely overhauled. "Just like new," he had proudly explained to the Mosers. **Every morning he would ride away on his bike, returning late in the afternoon.**

He would, in the meantime, while he was away, run whatever errands the Mosers wanted done, **but the mystery ride continued.** Rumors of his walking through fields, miles away, looking at the ground, examining the soil, and quickly riding away, began to spread among the few residents in that area.

One such report reached Moser. His informer said, "We're all hearing reports that Ed is combing this entire South Florida district. **He's looking for something.** Probably buried treasure. You know the stories going around about the huge hordes of treasure buried by pirates along this coast. It looks as if Ed was searching for this treasure."

"Nonsense," replied Moser, not at all sure that Ed wasn't. "He's never mentioned such a thing. I'm sure he hasn't any such maps."

He didn't know that, either.

"Maybe not," his friend said, "but how do you explain his actions?"

"I don't," Moser answered. "**I don't ever make any attempt to understand what he does or what he thinks.** But I just can't accept this story that he is searching for buried treasure."

"Maybe not, but it's very mysterious."

And the talk grew, until more of the neighbors came to regard Ed as "the treasure hunter."

Whether Ed knew this or not, Moser did not know. He knew Ed made no attempt to explain where he spent his days – or

how – **and they never asked him.**

One afternoon Ed was sitting in the warm sun, after his return from his ride watching Moser strolling leisurely up the path on his way home from his real estate office in Homestead. He nodded cheerily, “Such a wonderful day, Mr. Moser.”

“It’s that,” and Moser dropped on the ground beside Ed’s chair, fanning himself with his hat. “You’re beginning to look like your old self at last.”

“Yes, that I am,” laughed Ed happily. **“I’m more grateful to you and Mrs. Moser than my limited command of language can express. I’m almost well now.”**

He looked away into space, and idly watched the fleecy clouds rolling slowly across the deep blue sky. For a moment he appeared to be deep in thought and Moser was on the verge of rising, when he suddenly turned and said seriously, “I was walking in those fields behind your new orange grove today. **I studied the ground there. It’s perfect.** The most perfect I’ve found anywhere.

He laughed and said, “It is often said that what you search for may be right at hand, all the while.” He laughed again, a deep hearty laugh that Moser could not understand why. Ed abruptly added, **“The soil’s very thin over coral rock.”**

“What’s so perfect about that? The farmers want more soil. They hate this thin top soil we have on some of these fields.”

“Yes, that we know.” For the first time Moser sensed a degree of impatience in Ed’s voice. Ed looked into Moser’s face and asked, **“Is any of that land - back there – for sale?”**

Moser laughed. “My boy, you know I’m in the real estate business. Any or all of this land is for sale. How much do you want?”

Ed looked toward the pine woods to his left, across to the new citrus grove Moser had planted behind the house, and on to the great level expanse sweeping away toward the eastern horizon. He closed his eyes for several seconds, then opened them abruptly, “About an acre will do, at least for the present.”

**“It’s yours,”** Moser nodded, getting slowly to his feet. **“You pick the spot.”**

So began “Ed’s Place,” a little acre of strange happenings where secrets lost to the world for many thousands of years was to unfold in a most mystifying way.

# CHAPTER THREE – UNBELIEVABLE

Try as they would the Mosers just couldn't believe their eyes.

Here was Ed Leedskalnin, stripped to the waist, his thin little body gleaming wet under the midday sun. His tousled light blond hair was dripping perspiration from under his hat. And he was working slowly, methodically, on a complicated mass of chains and cables and tackle-and-hoist arrangements **suspending the largest block of solid rock either had ever seen.**

"That block must be all of ten feet long!" Moser exclaimed, his voice rising shrilly. He was as near showing excitement and utter amazement as he ever came. **"It must weigh at least ten tons. Incredible! Unbelievable!"**

Mrs. Moser only gasped as they hurried nearer.

They saw Ed had some old chains around the huge stone block from a simple wooden tripod above with a maze of chains and pulleys. **That the rock had just been lifted out of the ground was evident.** There was the gleamingly new hole directly under it.

Then Ed saw them. He straightened up, gave the chain a hitch to hold it. He dried his hands – and his face – on a handkerchief, and walked toward them. **He was grinning broadly.**

"Busy, eh, Ed?" Moser greeted him cordially. It had been many days since he had seen him. "But don't tell me you lifted that huge hunk of rock out of that hole – all by yourself? I just can't believe it!"

"And you Ed Leedskalnin, only a short time out of a sick bed," Mrs. Moser scolded him gently.

Ed laughed heartily. **He was very pleased with the wonder he had caused within them.** "It's simple," he exclaimed, his smile wide, with his head tilted a little to one side, "Really it is. **It's all just in knowing how.**" And he characteristically tapped his forehead. **"It's really just in knowing how,."**

Moser walked closer and examined the huge block of coral rock. The sides were smoothly cut. "As if by a big saw," he thought. **He couldn't see a mark, not even a chisel cut.**

The block was a perfect rectangle, about three feet each way and all of ten feet long. As he looked at it from the end, he thought, "Ed hasn't missed the size, in any direction, by a fraction on an inch." He breathed aloud, "Incredible!"

He turned to the broadly smiling little man.

"First, I'm going to build a house." Ed laughed again, a long, hearty laugh. He turned and pointed to the simple wooden shack on stilts he had built under a clump of trees nearby. "I can't go on living in a place like that, now can I?"

The Mosers knew that little shack well. **Day after day, they had watched the happy little man build his one-room house, erecting it on posts about two feet above ground.** It was not an ordinary house, not even an ordinary shack. In many ways it was as unordinary as Ed was proving himself to be. In one corner of that room, he had his cot. Above that cot were two nails, so "each morning," he told them, "I can pull the covers back, drape them on the nails, and let the

bed air all day." A small oil stove, a table and a chair completed the furnishings. His clothes hung on nails behind the door.

All during the time he was building his shack, he had been clearing his land, of undergrowth, of oversized bushes and giant weeds. The trees he left untouched.

"Every day you are amazing me more," Moser nodded slowly, rather reluctant to admit all he saw was far beyond his comprehension. "Will your new house be all of rock?"

"Oh, yes, of course," and **he shrugged his skinny shoulders as if the mere thought of anything else would be preposterous.** "Let me show you."

He squatted on his heels and leveled a square of white sand in front of him. He took a small twig and quickly sketched a side elevation of a building as if he were drawing a blueprint. "This," he explained, speaking very fast, "will be the east side of my house. One window here," and he showed how the huge blocks of stone would be laid, one on top of another, **like bricks, to form a two-story building.** "I haven't decided yet whether I'll use all big blocks, or fill in with a lot of small ones."

How'd you do that?"

"You know what is called the dry-wall technique? How farmers will build walls around their land by fitting the stones?"

"Oh, yes. I've seen that done."

"I may use some of that. I haven't decided yet."

"That depends on what?"

Ed laughed again. "I see, my friend, you are beginning to understand. The main reason will be the rock structure underneath this land. If it is a big ledge, like I've found so far, then I'll use bigger rock. If not, then I may have to settle for smaller rocks."

"Simple, isn't it?" grinned Moser, looking at his wife, who was standing silently by, staring at the sketch at their feet. They exchanged glances, as if both were mentally shrugging in their astonishment.

**"Never for an instant,"** Moser thought quickly, **"during the many months we've known Ed, did we ever have the remotest idea he had such a talent, or such ability,** or such knowledge of stone and of engineering. This is amazing beyond words."

The hidden genius of this unexpectedly extraordinary little man came as a shock, a rather abrupt awakening. **It brought a sudden shyness to Moser that he never had before and couldn't understand now.**

"And the roof?" queried Moser. He felt he had to say something. "Each minute you are amazing me more."

"Stone, yes," Ed agreed quickly, "but thinner, about ten inches thick."

“That’ll mean each slab of rock will still weigh a ton or more?”

“Perhaps, my friend. What difference will that make?”

Moser didn’t have an answer for that, so he merely nodded, rather numbly. He still couldn’t comprehend all that he saw and was hearing. All he could think of, to say, was, “How will you bind these rocks together? How’ll you keep the roof from leaking?” And he pointed to the seams between the blocks in Ed’s sketch. **You’ll need a lot of cement, won’t you?”**

Leedskalnin leaped lightly to his feet and straightened to his full height, or around five feet four. Displeasure was written all over his face as he looked sternly at Moser. “My friend,” he said coldly, “I use no cement. I don’t need it.” He paused and shrugged as if the answer was too obvious even to discuss. **“I fit my edges.”**

Moser nodded again, rather lamely. He knew his remark was considered an insult by Ed, and he felt ashamed at even suggesting anything so commonplace as cement. He knew nothing Ed ever again could do or say would surprise him.

“It’s all too wonderful for me to understand,” Moser agreed simply, almost apologetically. “I’ve never even heard of anything like this – never.”

**Ed’s face lighted up again into a broad grin and his bright blue eyes sparkled. “I’m going to build a real home here – a real home.”**

“And then get married, eh?” Mrs. Moser put in, more in a teasing way than really believing it. She just couldn’t understand any of this, and she wasn’t trying to.

Ed became very serious. The smile faded into a new shyness. He looked at them keenly and nodded slowly, thoughtfully. “Yes, I hope so.” He stopped, and added softly, **“I want to send for my Sweet Sixteen from Latvia.”**

“Oh,” Mrs. Moser gasped, and her face reddened. She stammered, “I didn’t know. I really didn’t mean -.”

“No one knows,” Ed said, with his usual direct simplicity.

**He turned abruptly and walked briskly to one side of the big rock block.** This was his usual method changing the subject, especially when he didn’t want to talk more about what was under discussion or when he didn’t want to answer further questioning.

He pointed to the space he had leveled off, near the western boundary of his acre. “Here,” he explained, “is where my house will stand. Over here,” and he pointed to another leveled off spot, “I’m going to dig my well. Then I’ll build a wall around my land. There’ll be other buildings, and even some sculptured pieces for the grounds,” he added, proudly.

For several minutes they just stood there and looked around the grounds. Moser patted the big slab of coral rock. **“How do you do it? If you had a tremendously powerful hoist you couldn’t have lifted that rock as easily as you’ve done it, without breaking or chipping it.”**

“Yes, that I know,” Ed agreed readily, with a slight shrug.

“But how? This type of work hasn’t been done since the days of ancient Egypt when thousands of slaves worked for

many years, some say as many as thirty years, to build the Great Pyramid. Why, even today, I doubt if our greatest engineers could duplicate that work.”

Ed shrugged and laughed. “The work done in ancient Egypt was not really such a difficult job,” he said simply. “That was not nearly as difficult as too many people believe today. Why, my friend, only a hundred men could have built the Great Pyramid in a year, yes, in a year, easily, very easily. It is, you know, simply in knowing how,” and again he tapped his forehead.

# CHAPTER FOUR – ED’S PLACE

The fame of “**Ed’s Place**”, as he proudly called it, spread rapidly. On Sunday afternoons especially people came from many miles around to see the building operations, being built of huge blocks of solid coral rock, by the work of “the little man” – as he was called – all by himself.

He would show his work. **He made no secret about the work that he was doing – except how he did it.** He talked freely – but never once did he let the slightest word fall that would shed the least bit of light on the “how” of his building. He let his work stand by itself, just as he let everyone guess how he did it.

The big blocks of rock, weighing several tons each, continued to pop into place. **Neighbors and visitors would see Ed hard at work** – from a distance. They’d hear him also – and the shrill squeaking of his chain hoists. When close enough, for him to see them, they would find him wet with perspiration and showing the effects of this efforts.

Several persons tried watching him work through binoculars and even a telescope, to try to find out how he did his amazing feat of cutting and lifting and moving into place such enormous masses of solid rock. Somehow he sensed such interest and such spying. As a result, **he made many unnecessary movements and apparently took great pains to fool or mislead such inquisitive ones.** He very plainly took much delight in misleading the overly inquisitive. Undoubtedly he knew he was creating something great, something that would cause much comment and wider interest.

Of course, there was never the slightest doubt in anyone’s thought but what Ed did all the work by himself, and he readily admitted it.

Occasionally there would be a skeptic who would say to Ed, “**Who helps you? You couldn’t possibly have done all this by yourself.**”

Ed would straighten up, look sternly at his questioner, plainly displeased, and reply, slowly and with great dignity, “**I did it!**” – and turn his back on whoever had questioned him.

He was believed chiefly for two reasons: First, many persons saw him actually at work, although always from a distance, and, secondly, ever one knew that no one within miles who could have helped him would have kept their tongue from wagging.

Much of the moving of the big rocks from the increasingly large hole in the ground to their finished position was done at night. **The rock wouldn’t be there when darkness descended, and it would be neatly in place in the morning.**

When anyone, no matter who, even the Mosers, arrived at Ed’s Place, he would immediately stop work, regardless of what he was doing. He would walk quickly toward them, with a cordial word of welcome. If there were women in the group, he always removed his hat and bowed to them. He would have a special word of greeting for each one.

He was consistently pleasant, with a contact smile lighting up his thin face. He was willing, even anxious, to talk. He never hurried anyone away. **But he would never do any work, of any kind, no matter what his immediate task might be, as long as the visitor or visitors remained.** That became a well-known characteristic. Yet no one ever got the slightest impression from him that he felt they were intruding or that they were not really welcome. Strangely perhaps, everyone always carried away the feeling Ed was truly glad they came. And, understandingly, he was.

He plainly loved “company,” though he never deliberately tried to “make friends” with anyone, not even the Mosers.

Where he dug out his first block of coral rock, he widened that hole as succeeding big blocks were removed. He did not go deeper than the single layer – although later on he did.

He would carefully remove the thin soil from on top, level off the stone underneath, then cut his block the size, shape and weight he wanted.

**Just how he cut his blocks has never been completely revealed**, from those who profess to know such work, it is believed he bored holes for the corners of the block the size and shape he wanted, to the depth or width, then he would insert some sort of tools of his own design and manufacture which were connected with a wire. He apparently would saw away with this wire until he got to the depth desired and repeat the process for the sides, and then for the bottom or underside of the block. **After the block was cut, he would raise it through the use of flat chisels and jacks until he could get chains or cables around the block.**

He would lift the block or rock out of the hole by a simple home-made hoist of logs set in the form of a tripod with many pulleys and chains. His lifting was done so smoothly and gently, he never chipped the edges – a feat of marvelous accuracy.

After the big block swung free of the hole, he would settle it onto rolls, and with a complicated system set of chains, pulleys and levers, he would move the stone to the spot he wanted.

The hoisting into position took another series of blocks and hoists, with more chains, pulleys and levers.

It was all done quietly without fuss or seemingly great effort – but it was done.

No one ever found out how he got the chains under the blocks, especially without chipping or marring the edges; how he actually lifted the rocks out; how he moved them into position, or how he fitted them together, nor exactly how he cut the blocks. That also is still a mystery and always will be – now. The results are there to prove he did.

However he did it, his work was always accurate. He never split a rock – as far as could be seen. **Stone splinters were conspicuous by their absence.** This in itself proved he made no unnecessary cuts, that he did not waste time or effort.

In some unknown way, the big blocks would find their way to their finished position. **Only after each block was in position would he start on the next one.**

The craftsmanship of the true artist in stone was evident everywhere. The edges were amazingly smooth, and that in itself is quite a feat for coral rock is porous and uneven. The surfaces were also as smooth as it was possible to cut such rock. There was no clash or lack of harmony in anything he did, from the earliest to his last work.

**So the mystery surrounding how he did it mounted steadily** – and the interest in him and in his work brought a steadily rising tide of visitors.

# CHAPTER FIVE – SWEET SIXTEEN

**Ed's house was finally finished, after about two years of work.** It was a square two-storied, two-room affair, with one room above the other. Each floor had flooring made of flattened rock, neatly fitted together. An outside stairway of stone led to the second floor, with the main entrance on the front or north side.

"What's next on your program?" Moser asked as he finished inspecting Ed's new home.

"Another building, only bigger," Ed said simply.

"For your **'Sweet Sixteen'?**"

"Of course. Who else?"

Both men laughed.

Ed never called her anything but that. He never mentioned her by name. She was always, "My Sweet Sixteen."

The Mosers early knew his expression, "**My Sweet Sixteen**" did not mean that in "intended" was a sixteen-year-old girl but that was his way of expressing the innocence and sweetness he wanted to convey about her. He explained it rather plainly to them one day in this way: "I don't mean a sixteen-year-old girl. I mean a brand new one." By that he meant, as he put it: "One who has never made love with a fresh boy."

**He talked to me a lot about her, yet with all his talking, he gave no real information about her, any more than he did about his working methods.** They got the impression, for he never said anything directly that would explain it, that his "Sweet Sixteen" lived on a farm near his boyhood home near Metei in Latvia, that they had known each other for many years, that he had left her, after the death of his parents, to seek his fortunes in the New World of America – the goal of nearly every Slavic peasant – and that he was to send for her as soon as he had a home prepared for her. **He never referred to any other woman – not even to his mother – or showed any interest in any other.**

Yet everything he said about "My Sweet Sixteen" could apply to any girl or woman, or to women in general. He showed in his talks and in his writings the strict code of ethics he believed in, for himself, for a perfect marriage relationship. Loyalty and faithfulness were the basis. He phrased his "code" this way:

"Everyone's Sweet Sixteen should be so high in one's estimation that no temptation could induce one to act behind her back."

All this time, he continued working on the foundation for the home he was building "for her." He worked slowly, carefully. **Every bit of his work that went into this foundation showed tender care and infinite patience. It was very evident that much thought was going into every move.**

As the foundation grew toward completion, the Mosers sensed his growing excitement.

He'd say to the Mosers, many times, "**Nothing is good enough for my Sweet Sixteen.**"

Many evenings during this period in his life, Ed would drop in on the Mosers in the early twilight hours. He would chat for a few minutes, cheerily and with his constant smile, and leave abruptly, with hardly a "Good night" or a "So long." They sensed his mounting excitement.

"He's like a cat on hot bricks these days," Moser said one evening.

"It must be because the time is nearly here when his 'Sweet Sixteen' is to arrive."

"How do you know that?"

"Only by his manner. He's plainly jittery and that could be only that she will be here shortly."

"At least, he can't sit still. That was very evident tonight. He wasn't here more than five minutes, if that."

"I'm very happy for him. He's such a thoroughly good man."

# CHAPTER SIX – JILTED

Then came silence. Several days went by and Ed didn't call on the Mosers nor did they see him or hear him at work.

**"Something must be wrong,"** Moser said on the evening of the fifth day without word from Ed or about him. "Maybe he's ill. I think I'll run over and see."

He jumped to his feet, grabbed his hat, and hurried down the road. He walked fast. He was genuinely concerned about the little man. All sorts of fears and anticipations of disaster flashed through his thinking as he strode rapidly down the road – a half mile or so away.

As he neared the dark tower-like structure of Ed's place, he saw a gleam of light from the upstairs room.

"Thank God, for that," he breathed, and quickened his pace. He saw the door was closed. New forebodings hit him. He called loudly, "Ed! Ed!"

The door popped open, and Ed was framed in the light from the kerosene lamp inside.

"Mr. Moser?"

"Yes, Ed. Are you all right? Is anything wrong?"

Ed slowly came down the stairs to meet him. Moser couldn't see his face, for he was looking against the light.

"Of course I'm all right. What could be wrong?"

**Moser sense that Ed's voice was not his usual buoyant, cheerful tone,** that there was a seriousness there he had never heard before.

"I don't know, my friend. When we haven't heard from you or seen you for the past week we became worried."

Ed laughed, but it was a very small laugh and sounded to Moser as being very forced.

"Oh, I'm fine, Mr. Moser. Nothing is wrong, nothing at all."

That made Moser feel there was something very wrong, but what? **He had the feeling that Ed would not tell him, that he would have to guess, if that were possible, and it would still remain a mystery.** He knew Ed would say nothing is he didn't want anything known.

"Are you ill, Ed? Have you been?"

"Oh, no. I've been working each day." Ed laughed again that short little laugh that sounded so unnatural to Moser.

"Perhaps I've been so busy I just went to bed."

"Okay, Ed. Perhaps you did, but I doubt it," Moser gravely replied. "If you won't tell me, you won't. But I want you to

know that we have been very worried about you, and if there is anything we can do, let us know.”

Moser heard him swallow, hard, and Ed turned abruptly to go up the steps again. He stopped and Moser could hardly catch the words that came, **“There’s just nothing wrong, nothing I can talk about.”**

“All right, Ed, but remember we’re nearby. Do come in, and soon.”

There was no mistaking the earnestness or the concern behind Moser’s words, and Ed responded quickly. He stopped and turned back to face Moser. His manner became more relaxed, and he agreed quickly, “Oh, that I will, very soon. Thank you, so very much, for coming over.”

With that, he ran quickly up the stairs, and close the door gently behind him.

As Moser walked slowly back home, he thought over Ed’s words and pondered what it all meant. **He knew something had gone wrong.** He knew it couldn’t be about the land, for he himself had cleared that deed. Ed’s food needs were simple. It couldn’t be that. Ed’s home life was also of the simplest. Plainly he hadn’t been injured. There was no evidence of that. He might have been ill again, and just didn’t want to cause more worry or concern for the Mosers. That seems hardly likely, after all that they had done for him. No, that didn’t seem possible. What then?

When he told all this to Mrs. Moser, she suggested that something might have gone wrong about Ed’s “Sweet Sixteen,” but her husband only “Pooh, poohed” that.

“That’s ridiculous,” he exclaimed impatiently. “Ed isn’t a moon-struck kid.”

“All the same, he’s sensitive and he seems very much in love with her.”

“Bosh,” was all her husband would say.

But as the weeks went by, Ed’s silence continued. He did, however, stop all work on the foundation structure that was to be her home. The foundation was well along, but not even near completion. **He never again resumed work on it.**

Ed now turned his attention completely from that building to puttering around his place, **taking an unusually long time with everything he did.** There was a grimness, a lack of his usual gaiety about him that made the Mosers more and more concerned about him. It was so unlike him. **They knew him well enough not to ask questions.**

Ed said nothing and volunteered no explanation.

For several months he kept more to himself than ever before. His smile was not quite so quick – nor so wide. He would stop in at the Mosers, talk on whatever came to thought or was expressed by them, stay only a few minutes, and left.

Mrs. Moser said over and over again to her husband, “You know, **I believe Ed’s ‘Sweet Sixteen’ has jilted him.** He’s stopped all work on what he said was to be her home. He’s changed. He’s much quieter. There just isn’t the old Ed here at all. Even though he’ll never say anything about it to us, I feel sure that’s what’s happened.”

“If you’re right, and perhaps you are, he’ll never again mention his ‘Sweet Sixteen’. Then we’ll know you’re right.”

“Oh, he’ll mention her,” and Mrs. Moser’s tone was positive. “Ed’s a proud man. You wait and see. He’ll talk about her as if she will be along most any day.”

And her prediction came true, sooner than she thought possible. Rather abruptly his grimness slid away and his ready smile returned.

He did, occasionally, speak in a casual sort of way about “My Sweet Sixteen” – but they sensed **not with quite the same lighthearted anticipation as before.**

They knew, without Ed telling them, that his “Sweet Sixteen” would never come – that she was now completely out of his life – but not out of his thought – or his memory.

# CHAPTER SEVEN – FURNITURE-CARVER

Ed turned his energies again to work – but more methodical and slower than before. He sunk the well deeper. The steps and walls were cut from solid rock. **How he worked below the water-line, he never explained**, but there are several steps under water.

He began, stone by stone, to erect a wall around his acre. **This seemed only “spare time work”**. He didn’t devote much time or effort to the wall, putting in a block every so often, just to keep the job going.

Several intriguing objects started to dot his grounds. A rocking chair, weighing about three tons, was from a single block of coral rock.

When the Mosers first saw this chair, Ed was all grins. He stood proudly beside it, smiling broadly.

**“Come, Mrs. Moser,” he welcomed them. “Sit in it – and rock.”**

Rather reluctantly, she sat down. She hesitated, then slowly relaxed. Rather cautiously she lifted her feet and started to rock.

“It’s unbelievable,” she exclaimed in frank astonishment, racking back and forth vigorously. **“It’s really very comfortable.”**

“Isn’t it?” Ed beamed. “I’m going to make others.”

Undoubtedly this was the original “contour rocker” – at least 25 years before this type of chair became popular.

**Ed followed up this chair with a series of others**, in varying sizes which he called “The home of the three bears.” This was from the nursery story of the three bears whose bowls of porridge were eaten by a young stranger, each bear having a bowl, a chair and a bed to fit his size – the Papa Bear, Mama Bear and Baby Bear – and Ed made the bowls and chair but not the beds.

He made a table of stone in the shape of a map of Florida. He surrounded it with twelve chairs “for the Governor and his cabinet.” He showed Lake Okeechobee in its correct geographical position but as a huge punch bowl, **“for the officials all drink a lot while thinking up ways to raise taxes,”** he would explain to visitors. Each chair was cut from a single block of coral rock. All were really form-fitting and strangely comfortable.

Contrary to what would be expected, his rock “furniture” was neither grotesque nor unsightly. All had a use, a function. Every one was neatly finished and smoothly.

**It was during this period, in the mid 1920s, that Moser died.** Ed felt the loss of his friend very deeply. He continued his visits to see Mrs. Moser and her small daughter, Lois, but gradually these visits grew further apart.

Ed made an outdoor bedroom – of rock. He fashioned twin beds, even to stone pillows, and a cradle that rocked. He would say, with a laugh, as a part of his talk routine to visitors, “Twin beds for a family is the modern way. First, people had big beds, then twin beds, now some use separate bedrooms. Soon a family will live in different countries, or even on different planets.”

He always said every object he built had a purpose. He would sit in the chairs, and rock, as he talked, or he would lie on the beds. He even had a small stone rectangular basin, with the inside painted black, filled with water which made an amazingly clean mirror. **He would demonstrate that, often going through the motions of a man shaving, to the delight of his “guests.”**

There was one place he never showed to any one. That was the inside of his living quarters, the second floor of his house. **That was a part of the “new Ed” – the Ed that was emerging from whatever his experience was that changed him.**

**This was increasingly indicative of this “new Ed.”** He was more self-contained, quieter, living more within himself. He still talked a lot, on any topic anyone would bring up but there was no longer the old buoyant enthusiasm which had radiated so noticeably from him. **He was more reserved, more restrained, and he appeared older, not so much in appearance as in his manner.**

On their way home one afternoon, Mrs. Moser said to a friend, “I’m glad Ed is finding a new interest. It’s taking his mind off his Sweet Sixteen. It has taken a long time.”

“Oh, he got over that long ago,” the friend exclaimed heartily. “He’s too sensible a man to let anything like being jilted by a girl throw him.”

Mrs. Moser stopped and faced her friend.

“Really, you don’t know him at all.”

“I think I do. Why don’t I?”

“If you did know him, you’d know Ed never gets over anything quickly. **Everything that impresses him makes a deep impression.** He’s very deep, you know, very deep.”

“Of course we know that,” the other exclaimed impatiently, “but what’s that got to do with this girl affair? He’s no schoolboy, you know.”

“No. He’s no schoolboy,” she agreed, “but when he’s hurt, he feels it more deeply than most people would. In that, he’s still a child.”

“Work’s the best solution for that. He’s back at work now, and that is good.”

“Yes, that’s good. His interest in making those unusual stone chairs is certainly doing much to take his thought off her.”

“Good. Best thing for him. His stone furniture is certainly unusual. How he does it beats me.”

And the more of the rock objects that appeared to sight, the more unbelievable all of Ed’s work became to everyone who saw Ed’s Place. **Each person went away with the firm belief he had seen a wonder of the engineering art and of stone sculpture,** something to see and to talk about but not to understand how it was done, and, certainly, not something to be copied.

# CHAPTER EIGHT – ED AS HOST

Ed liked people, especially children. He encouraged everyone to come – and to look. He thoroughly enjoyed these visits.

His gentle ways and constant smile attracted people to him. He was always most courteous to every one, although it was obvious he liked some visitors better than others. As an example, **he sold postcards he had made, showing his grounds, and he appeared in several of them.** If he liked a person, he would give him a card for free. **If he didn't like a person, he would charge that person ten cents.** His usual charge was five cents.

He developed a little formal talk he would give, about the work and what each article of piece stood for. He would talk very rapidly. His heavy Latvian accent and his rapid-fire delivery often made him rather difficult to understand and to follow. **A listener had to pay strict attention or he lost the major portion of his talk.**

When starting his talk, he would warn his hearers not to interrupt. If anyone did or asked a question before he finished, he would show annoyance but would answer them in detail, **then go back and start his talk all over again** – as if he were speaking a piece.”

**He also proved he had an amazing memory for faces and names.** He would ask each visitor his or her name and where they came from. Later, sometimes many years later, when these people would return, he would recall their previous visit, to their surprise and delight. Often he would even call them by name.

A few would say, “why, Ed, I've never been here before.”

And he would answer, as he did to one such reply, with his disarming smile, “You may have forgotten. You were here with three others. One was a little girl with bright yellow hair and a big hair-ribbon. This was in October, about six years ago. Yes, on Columbus Day. I'm sure you remember now?”

They'd explain in amazement, as did the people who heard this one, “Why, Ed, yes, you're right. I do remember now. How could you remember that?”

He very plainly got real enjoyment from such praise.

**It was at this time, he started a curious little custom he was to carry on throughout the rest of his life.**

Ed's Place was on the eastern edge of The Everglades. During the summer, mosquitoes were numerous. He always like to have visitors feel at home and as comfortable as he could make them.

**He made a dozen or more fans from palmetto leaves.** He would hand these fans to visitors “to brush away the mosquitoes,” he would tell them. He did not kill bugs; he only brushed them aside. When the visitors were leaving, he would carefully collect the fans from them, and neatly stack them near the front entrance for the next group.

In between visitors he went on with his work – his furniture, the wall, improving his land and doing much reading and writing. He even started some electrical experiments which were to be carried on more intensively years later. He lived a simple life – and a frugal one. His wants were few, and his chief pleasure was talking to visitors.

**“You never saw a man with such simple wants,”** his neighbors would remark, “and one who eats so little A few vegetables, some fruit, a couple eggs a week, oatmeal without milk, but never meat. Some bread, yes. He’s fond of fresh raisin bread. Why, I eat more at one meal than Ed does in a week, and that’s a fact.”

Years later, it developed Ed had acquired an unexpected liking for frankfurters and for canned prepared meats of the “spam” variety, but no amount of coaxing could ever get him to eat fresh meat in any form.

One sidelight to Ed’s many sided character and his eating habits is **a favorite story of the Mosers’ daughter**, who was then a small child but is now Mrs. Lois Moser Small, a teacher in Miami. She tells it this way:

“Ed had many ideas that seemed queer to us. I remember particularly one Christmastime. **We wanted to do something for him. So we prepared a surprise package.** We used a small box, wrapped it in paper and decorated it with native fern. In it, we have placed various articles of food. We thought they would relieve his rather monotonous diet with consisted largely of oatmeal. We included also a five dollar bill.

“My father’s nurse – yes, my father was very ill at that time – and I took the package to Ed’s Place.

**“We were fairly in hysterics when we returned home. Nothing was right to Ed.** The package of bacon was not right because the slices were too thin, so he’d have to use two slices, and that was wasteful. The sweet potatoes weren’t the right size. One was too large and if cut in half it wasn’t large enough.

“But, with all the fuss and all the criticism, we knew Ed deeply appreciated it, and was touched by it. The money, characteristically, he handed back to us – without comment.”

All this time, extending over a period of eleven years, the number of visitors constantly increased. More engineers, builders, construction people, even historians and archaeologists found their way to Ed’s Place.

Nearly all of these visitors tried to draw him out on how he did his amazing work, what tools he used, and how he developed his uncanny leverage and where he learned his engineering skills.

When his inquirers got insistent, as they often did, on how he accomplished his wonders in stone, he would say simply, with his constant smile, “It’s very simple. A wheel, a man and a pry.” But he would refuse to go into more detail by starting to talk on something else, or, **if the inquirer got too insistent, as happened occasionally, he would turn away to speak to someone else.**

To each and every one, he would readily admit he did all the work by himself. He would say plainly that there was no great strength or even skill involved. He always let it be known that it was knowledge of how to do the work, not just physical labor, **“of which, of course, there is plenty,”** he would add with his little laugh.

He had the charming knack of talking freely about his work while giving no worthwhile information about his methods of his techniques. **He would parry the too inquisitive with his simple, “It’s just in knowing how,” and he would tap his forehead significantly.**

He also quickly but firmly squelched all questions about his personal affairs or his background. It was always, “No one could be interested in that,” which only served to whet the appetite of curiosity more keenly. **He never talked to anyone, not even to the Mosers, about his family or his background.** He never showed anyone any pictures of his Old

Country home or any of his relatives, and no one knew whether he had any such pictures.

He kept the conversation always to the present, to the work that could be seen. He talked about what he hoped to do, but never the slightest word about how or methods.

Finally he decided that he should not be operating a free show just for visitors to “come and gape” and “trod down” his flowers and plants.

So he erected a column of stone, near the street, which was merely a dirt road running off another but large road several hundred yards to the west. **He cut the words, “Drop 10 cents in the pipe” on the face of the six-foot tall rock.** Underneath a slot ran diagonally downward through the foot-thick block to a little money box he built inside. He fastened it with a padlock on the back side.

“An ingenious device,” all agreed when it was finished. “Very ingenious.”

Later visitors told friends, though Ed charged ten cents, he always gave “a full dollar’s worth of interesting conversation.”

That was the beginning of the legend that spread throughout the area that Ed was a wealthy man, though a miser, who did not believe in banks, that he had a rich treasure-trove cached away somewhere on Ed’s Place.

“Of course,” one of his neighbors said, “nothing could be further from the truth. **All Ed has is a small pension, which I believe is from the mine up north** where he got his cough. It’s small, very small. I’m not sure how much it is for I have never cashed any of these checks for him. But somehow I’ve had the impression it was only a few dollars a month. Certainly no one lives a more frugal life than Ed – with fewer extras and fewer wants and on less money.”

# CHAPTER NINE – ATTACKED

One Sunday afternoon, as it was beginning to grow dusk, with the sun already starting its rapid descent into the vastness of The Everglades, a group of young men, perhaps a half dozen, was all that were left of the day's visitors. These youths were gathered, with their heads close together, over to one side of Ed's Place.

Ed was tired. It had been a long, very active day for him. There had been many visitors, and he had talked more than was usual – and that was always a considerable amount. So he stood, rather impatiently for him, before his stone house, one foot on the lower step. **He was watching the young men as they slowly drew closer to him.**

"Is there anything else I can show you – or tell you?" he asked pleasantly, looking into their faces in the rapidly gathering dusk.

"Why, yes, there is," one of the youths said, edging up close to him. **"We've heard that you're a very wealthy man. Is that true?"**

Ed looked the blank amazement he felt.

"Why, you must have heard fairy tales," he replied earnestly, sensing something was wrong, very wrong. **"Everyone knows I have no money."**

"We've heard differently," and the youth drew nearer, in a threatening gesture with his hand, as if to hit Ed the face. "Where do you keep all this money? We heard it ain't in banks."

"You're mistaken, completely mistaken," and Ed's voice rose just a trifle shrilly.

He was beginning to realize the youths were intent on robbing hi, perhaps doing something desperate to him if they couldn't find the money they sought.

"You wouldn't expect the little Hunky [?] to tell ya, would ya?" shouted one of the young men.

"Nah. He won't tell," another said.

**"There's one way to make him talk?"**

"How?"

Ed was hearing all this with the instinctive feeling that they were talking entirely for his benefit.

"You watch," the youth snickered.

He moved still closer to Ed, until their faces almost touched.

"We've been wondering, little man, how string you really are to do all this heavy work – all by your lonesome. Are you really so strong?"

The youth gripped Ed's arm, as if to feel the muscle, but, instead, **he lunged suddenly forward, hitting Ed sharply in the face and in the body.**

Shocked and surprised, Ed backed quickly away, raising both arms to protect his face.

As if by a pre-arranged signal, all of the young roughs moved in as a swarm, swinging fists and even kicking Ed in a whirlwind of blows.

He tried desperately to defend himself, blocked what blows he could, but **he was overwhelmed so quickly he didn't have time to turn away or to run.**

The fury of the attack and the savagery of it were so sudden, so unexpected, so bewildering, he was not even conscious of the terrific beating he was getting nor of the individual blows that are raining on him.

He knew he was on the ground, and he heard, as if from a great distance, someone say, **"Go through his pockets. If the cash isn't on him, it must be inside."**

The world around him started to move in circles, then spin faster and faster. Suddenly, a tidal wave of blackness engulfed him.

# CHAPTER TEN – DECISION

A bewildering buzzing sounded around him. As he listened, the droning gradually became voices. He shuddered and mentally withdrew still further within himself. Any moment he expected to feel the thud of more blows and kicks.

He waited fearfully, eyes tightly closed and lips. Nothing happened.

Surprised and wondering, he opened his eyes, and blinked.

**It was broad daylight.** The sun was almost directly overhead.

He blinked again and found he was looking up into the familiar faces of **two of his neighbors who were bending anxiously over him.**

He heard a heavy voice, from a long way off, say, “Thank God, he’s still alive! He’s taken an awful beating.”

He knew he was lying on the ground. He rolled his eyes to see where. He realized he was in the bushes some little distance from his front steps. He started to get up. Strange, he couldn’t move. He seemed to be pinned to the earth. He tried again. The effort was too much. He fell back, exhausted and fainting. Every muscle, every bone, every inch of his body were screaming a medley of protests at every movement.

**“Don’t try to move,”** a voice above him said softly. **“Just relax, Ed, just relax.”**

He closed his eyes again, and lay quietly. It was easier that way. The pains in his body were less noticeable.

Slowly big strong hands slide under him, ever so gently. As his little body was screaming in anguish, he seemed to float into powerful arms.

**Half conscious, he knew he was being carried.** He didn’t know where and he didn’t, at that moment, care. He knew he was not being taken into his home, but was being carried some distance away. He didn’t protest. He didn’t even speak. In fact, he didn’t even try to move. He was perfectly willing to be limp and inert.

Later on, he realized **he was being taken to a neighbor’s home,** more than half a mile away.

The gentle hands stretched him out on a cot. As cool water began to touch his bruised, bloody body, he became painfully and fully conscious.

He looked around, and tried to smile. The effort brought out new pains in his face and neck. He tried to relax again, to lie quietly, with every muscle “at ease,” as he quickly found that gave him the greatest relief.

As he looked up at the kindly concern in the faces above him, tears of gratitude welled up in his eyes, even if no words came. **He was deeply grateful, for the kindly attention they were giving him and for the facts he was not alone.**

“Don’t try to talk, Ed,” one of the men said soothingly. “We understand.”

“Could they?” he thought, his eyes going from face to face. “What kind people they are. How wonderful to have such friends. Can they possibly know what their attention and kindness to me really means to me?”

Tears were now flowing more freely.

A younger man burst into the room, and seeing Ed he stopped, and demanded, “What happened? Who did it?”

“I know,” one of the men said. **“It was that gang of young toughs from Florida City.** I heard them yelling and carrying on late last night.”

Ed blinked his eyes in agreement, then closed them. It was much more comfortable that way. The light, even in the dimness of the house, was too bright, and he felt so very tired. If only he could sleep!

“But why’d they beat up Ed?” the younger man insisted. “Why?”

Ed opened his eyes and looked up into the young man’s face. **Slowly he spoke, and with effort, which was almost a whisper, “They wanted to rob me.”**

“Rob you?” one of the older men demanded sternly. “Rob you? Why that puts a different light on all this.”

“Yes,” Ed agreed faintly. “They searched my pockets. I heard them say something about ‘If the cash isn’t on him, it must be in the house.’ I remember that.”

“That takes this case out of mere devilishness of young toughs, into assault and robbery,” the older man told the others. “Notify the sheriff.”

Quickly Ed’s mind began working. A new resolve was beginning to take form. **He closed his eyes again, then opened them to look up into their faces.**

“This – this could happen again,” he began slowly, weighing carefully each word. “They seemed to enjoy it.”

“Undoubtedly they did,” one of the men remarked rather drily. “Lucky for you, you’re still alive. That’s certainly not because they didn’t do their best to kill you. You took an awful beating.”

“Yes. That I know.” And the men laughed. “But why? Why would they want to beat me like this? **They didn’t have to do that just to rob me.**”

“You’re a lone man, Ed, and you’re small,” one man explained. “It’s just like asking a tough kid why he enjoys tormenting a little kitten or tying a tin can to a dog’s tail. It’s the cussedness that comes out in some people.”

“Some people call it sadism,” another put in.

“Some just love being cruel.”

“I see,” and Ed looked around at them again. He didn’t see nor understand. **He believed so strongly in the fundamental goodness of all things and in all people,** he just could not comprehend anything that was different. “I want to thank you

all. You've been wonderful to me, really wonderful."

He was near tears again, and his voice choked.

"Ah, forget that, Ed," one man said kindly. "We all like you, you know that."

"Thank you," and he swallowed hard. **This feeling of friendly anxiety more than off-set his pains and aches.** He suddenly gasped for breath as the pain and his emotion caused his throat to contract. He closed his eyes, slowly opened them, and added, "This could make a lot of changes in my plans."

"What plans?"

**"I was going to enlarge Ed's Place, but not now.** That's finished."

The doctor came before he could say more, and motioned the trio away.

All the time the doctor worked over him, washing and bandaging his wounds and making him as comfortable as he could, Ed was thinking about his plans. He was hardly conscious of what the doctor did – his thoughts were far away.

The plan beginning to formulate in his thinking grew into something quite definite. Ed had it in form when a deputy from the sheriff's office came rushing into the room.

**"What's happened to Ed?" he boomed out, hurrying over to the cot.** "My god, man, what happened?"

Briefly the men told him about the attack on Ed and the robbery motive.

"Robbed him, eh? How much did they get, Ed?"

"I don't know," He replied. **"I only had a few dollars in my pockets,** and in small change. I don't know if they got a few more dollars from inside."

"This is serious. Who'd think anyone would imagine Ed had money."

"Oh, I wouldn't say that," one of the men said. "You know there are a lot of wild stories going the rounds about how Ed is a wealthy man who doesn't believe in banks."

"That's utter nonsense," Ed chimed in. "I just wish I had some money to put into a bank. That would be wonderful."

"Yes, Ed," one agreed. "I imagine these stories began when you started to charge a dime to show people around Ed's Place."

"Maybe so. **But no one could ever get rich on those few ten-cent pieces.**"

"Just the same, it started people talking – and everyone who told it probably added something until it became quite a story – and you a very rich man."

“Apparently these young men believed those stories.”

“Maybe so,” one neighbor agreed, “but **I’m rather inclined to believe they’d have attacked Ed sooner or later anyway.** Ed’s alone there – and you and I are his nearest neighbors, We couldn’t possibly hear what would go on at Ed’s Place.”

“You’re probably right.”

Later that afternoon, after going over the whole experience again for the sheriff and the deputy, Ed insisted on going back home. Slowly, but contentedly, he did – with their help.

After he was stretched out on his own bed and while they were easing a sheet over him, he said to the deputy, “**You know that tract of ten acres that’s for sale some three or four miles north of Homestead, on highway One?** The place you saw me looking at?”

“Yes, of course, I remember. Why?”

“Do you know who owns it?”

“No, but that’s easy to find out. Why?”

“**I want to buy it.**”

“All ten acres?” Both men showed their surprise.

“**Yes. All ten acres.**”

“What for? They still couldn’t believe Ed was serious.

“**I want to move there.** I don’t know if I can sell Ed’s Place, or not. But that doesn’t really matter.”

He looked at them for some time in silence, then asked quickly, “How soon do you think I could get that land?”

“Why, today, if you like,” the deputy replied.

“Yes, I do like. **I’d take it, if I can pay for it, a little at a time.**”

“I’m sure that could be arranged. It usually is, but what’s the hurry?”

“This attack on me has changed my plans. I won’t do anything more to improve Ed’s Place. **I want to move now, just as soon as I can.** Today, if I can.”

So began the next milestone in the mystifying revelations revealed by the little genius with stone from Latvia.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN – THE MOVE

“What are you going to take with you?” Ed was asked the day after he bought the ten acres north of Homestead, some ten miles away. **“You certainly can’t cart those big rocks over there.”**

**“But I can, and I am,”** Ed replied with a laugh. “Does that amaze you, my friend? I’m going to move all my outdoor furniture.”

“Why, man, that means moving items weighing many tons!”

“I know that, but I’ll do it.”

“But, how?”

“Easy. You’ll see.”

**Ed wouldn’t say more, but peddled away on his bicycle to what was to be his new home.**

It was now 1939, just over 20 years after his arrival as the sickly little man that coughed his way into the Mosers’ home – and heart. He was husky and active – for him – **and weighed around his top weight of 125 pounds.**

Everyone got the feeling Ed was glad to leave Ed’s Place.

“I’m not surprised,” one friend said to another. **“He wants to escape from his memories – especially from his Sweet Sixteen and from his beating.”**

“I’m sure he has been quite happy here – and certainly all the neighbors like him.”

“Yes, of course, everyone likes him – but those two experiences affected him deeply – enough so, it seems to me, to over-balance all the joy and happiness he’s had here.”

“Isn’t it a shame that two little experiences like that can change the entire outlook of a man – and even affect his judgment and his entire future.”

**“Do you think he’s making a bad move?** That his judgment is wrong?”

“No, I wouldn’t say that. If he’ll get down to work now, and do the things he’s said he wants to do, he has a far better location that he ever could have in Ed’s Place – so far off the usually traveled roads.”

“You mean he can attract more visitors to his new place?”

“Oh, I don’t mean just that. You know Ed doesn’t do his work in stone just to attract visitors,” and this friend’s voice expressed the impatience he felt over such a point of view. **“Ed works to please himself – as all great artists do.** I believe he knows he is creating something wonderful – something that no one else on earth can do. That alone is his real satisfaction. That I believe.”

"I agree," the other nodded quickly. "I agree with you, but I believe also he loves to show visitors what he's done."

"Naturally."

**"I think I'll crop in on him tomorrow at this new place.** He's already at work on it, and he won't waste much time."

However, it was several days later before one of his closer friends, John Neafsey, had the time and the opportunity to drive to Ed's new place. **He saw that Ed had already cleared away the underbrush and giant weeds, and had erected a wooden shack,** near the center of his ten acres.

"Howdy, Ed," he greeted him warmly. "I see you've already made some improvements."

"You mean the shack?" laughed Ed, pointing to his new house. "Yes, I've moved in. **I'm keeping house now, so I can get back to work.**" Standing in the bright sun, stripped to the waist, he looked healthy and vigorous, **showing no after-effects from his beating, and all the bandages had been removed.**

While they were looking around, Ed explained where he was going to build his new house. "The house will be near the front, over here," and he pointed to the spot. "Then I'll put up an eight-foot wall around this front part."

"Not around all ten acres?"

"Not at first. I'll wall in about three acres as a home spot first. After I got that done, I may wall-in the entire plot."

**They were interrupted by the arrival of a boy on a bicycle.**

"Ed," the boy said badly out of breath. **"Your truck load of stone is stuck in the sand about a half mile down the road.** You'd better hurry."

He nodded his thanks to the boy, and rushed toward his wooden shack. He dived inside and emerged with his arms full of ropes, chains and pulleys and dragging **a long length of steel cable.**

"Can I give you a hand?" Neafsey asked, reaching out for some of the tackle Ed was dragging out of the shack.

"Yes. Thank you."

He loaded as much as he could on his bicycle, and pushed it beside him. Neafsey carried a couple large pulleys.

Working as briskly as they could, they soon saw, beside the road, a huge trailer truck loaded with gray stone. **As they came closer, they saw the driver, big, jovial Bob Biggers, standing on the road, looking hopelessly at the stalled truck.**

"I'm glad you're here," Biggers greeted Ed. "I'm stuck."

"What happened?" Neafsey asked as he stopped beside the driver.

"The shoulders are soft – too soft – and when the wheels got off the road, I couldn't get back on the pavement. **The**

**more I tried, with that big load, the deeper I got into the sand.** So here I am – with the wheels in sand up to the hubs.”

Ed walked briskly around the truck, stood for a second looking around but said nothing. He started untangling his maze of ropes, pulleys and cables. He straightened them out, ran some of the cable through the pulleys, **and went across the road to attach one end of the cable to a tree.** He ran the cable around the rear axle at an angle, facing toward the front. He tightened the cable until it was taut.

**By this time quite a crowd was beginning to gather – silently watching.** Usually in such situations a lot of loud and free advice is given by many individuals, all trying to vie with the others in giving free and unwanted advice. **Everyone in this group, however, was much more interested in seeing Ed at work** – all for the first time – than in trying to tell him what to do. His business-like approach was readily recognized by all. Many of the men present realized the technique Ed was using – and silently approved.

“Start up,” Ed told Biggers. “Go slowly and watch my signals.” Ed held one end of the taut cables.

Biggers swung up into the cab, and started the motor. Slowly he eased in his clutch – as Ed tightened the tautness on his cable. Gently but surely – as if he were pulling the big truck like an invisible giant – the truck started to edge back on the pavement.

“Keep going,” Ed called to Biggers. He spoke sharply, **“Now cut in toward the center of the road.”**

**Almost effortlessly the truck, loaded with many tons of stone, slide back onto the road.**

Ed loosened his hold on the cable, and called to Biggers, **“That’ll do. You’re out of the sand.”**

One of the men who had watched the entire procedure said so nearly all could hear, “That’s the slickest job I’ve ever seen. Twenty men couldn’t have done that work so easily as Ed did it – all by himself.”

“Oh, boy,” another exclaimed excitedly, **“I’ll believe now everything I ever hear about Ed.”**

Silently Neafsey helped Ed load the big tangle of equipment they had brought into the cab beside Biggers, then he climbed in to ride back to Ed’s new home. Ed jumped on his bike and was off, **without a word – to anyone.**

“My first load of furniture,” grinned Ed, hurrying forward to meet them, mentioning to Biggers where to stop, at the same time.

“Well, Ed, here you are – at last,” called the burly Bob behind the wheel.

As Neafsey climbed down from the cab, Biggers said to him, “I see you’ll like to see Ed unload?”

“Yes, that I would like to see.” **Both men laughed, for they knew Ed would find some excuse so no one could see him move a single block of rock** and certainly not this load of sculptured pieces.

“Just leave the trailer,” Ed told the driver, as if he did not hear what was being said.

“For how long? Until morning?”

“That’ll be fine. **Yes, until first thing tomorrow morning.**”

“Okay, Ed,” Biggers answered cheerily, swinging down from the cab to unfasten the trailer. “I’ll see you bright and early.”

Both men walked around the trailer, while Ed stood and watched them. **Both were frankly amazed at the amount of stone furniture Ed had piled on that trailer.**

“How do you load all that?” Neafsey asked the driver.

“Are you kidding?” Biggers demanded, straightening up after unshackling the trailer. **“You know Ed does all his own loading – at night.”**

“No, I didn’t know, but I can imagine, from all I’ve heard, that you’re right.”

“Sure, I’m right. Say, when I got to Ed’s Place yesterday afternoon, he ran me off as soon as I got there. **He didn’t want me – or anyone else – around when he moved all that stuff on board.**”

“So you came back today, to find your trailer loaded and waiting for you?”

“Sure did. Loaded just as you see it.”

**“So Ed loaded it during the night?”**

“Must have. I know I didn’t help him.”

Ed who had been silently listening, grinning broadly, laughed aloud and said, “You men make a big mystery out of my moving. Really, it is all very simple.”

“Simple. Sure. To you, who know how to handle that stuff.” The driver shrugged and climbed back into the cab of his truck. He leaned out and said, “After all, I’d probably break or chip your stuff. I couldn’t accept such responsibility.”

Neafsey laughed heartily, “No chance of Ed ever giving anyone such responsibility.”

**“I just like to do the work myself,”** Ed grinned along with them.

“And only you know how,” Biggers called out, starting his motor.

The same procedure was followed with the loading and unloading of the other pieces of stone – his chairs, the map of Florida, a big heart-shaped table through which a tree was to grow, even the twin bedroom suite and his other yard creations. **They all found new and more spacious settings in Ed’s new home.**

Ed began the new Ed’s Place, which was destined to grow out of all proportion to the original, even to name, to become one of the greatest engineering wonders of the world.

# CHAPTER TWELVE – A LEGEND EXPLODED

Shortly after Ed moved to his new place, an incident occurred that gave a new and unexpected insight into his character, at least the latent part, and exploded some beliefs about him which had become almost legendary.

**Among these traits were that no one had ever seen him angry, swear or raise his voice.** Also he had the greatest respect for the government, for the purpose of government and the government officials, along with a reverence for American justice.

To him, voting was a privilege and the responsibility of citizenship, something to be cherished as a priceless possession. He spoke many times to many people about his gratitude for all he had received from this country, for “this great and beautiful country.”

He said, over and over again, **“It’ll be the proudest day of my life the day I become a citizen.”** He outlined his views in his book, “A Book in Every Home,” about his philosophies. He said:

“It has been told to you that the government is for the purpose of protecting ‘life’ and property, but it really is to protect ‘property’ and life. **Nobody wants your life but everybody wants your property.**”

“In International dealings, when an army conquers the land, they don’t want the people, they want the physical property and so do the thieves and the bandits. They want your money and property and if you will submit peacefully they won’t harm you.

“Now you see, nobody wants you, they want your property so really the property is the one that needs the protection and not you. **You are the protector yourself.**”

**“Government to be lasting will have to be just.** This means it will have to protect all the property alike and all the property will have to pay equal taxes, which means big property, big taxes, and small property, small taxes. **Government cannot exist without taxes so only those who pay taxes should vote and vote according to the taxes they pay.**”

“It is not sound to allow the weaklings to vote. **Any one who is too weak to make his own living is not strong enough to vote,** because their weak influence weakens the state and a degenerated state cannot exist very long, but every state should be sound and lasting.

“By voting, the voters dictate the state’s destiny for times to come and then to allow such a weak influence to guide the state, it is not wise and so you see **one should vote according to how he is carrying the state’s burden.**”

“Another unwise thing about equal voting is that it gives the loafers and weaklings the power to take property away from producers and stronger people, and another unjust thing about equal voting is that it gives the loafers and

weaklings the power to demand an easy life from the producers and leaders.”

Even the experience which was to follow could not shake his gratitude for this country or lessen his determination to become a citizen – **which he did become shortly afterwards**. It did, however, undermine his confidence in governmental officials and in American justice.

A quietly dressed, middle-aged man, wearing a dark, soft-brimmed hat, approached Ed one day and introduced himself as represented the County Road Department.

“We’re planning to cut a road through to connect up with U.S. one,” he explained to Ed. **“To do that, we need a slice off your land.”**

“How much?”

“We’ll pay whatever the market price is for your land.”

“I don’t mean payment. I mean how much land do you need?”

**“Just a narrow strip, some twenty feet or so.”**

“Where? What part?”

“Over here,” and he pointed to the extreme southern corner of Ed’s land.

“We haven’t completed the surveying yet, but we know approximately where the line will go.”

“Sure,” Ed nodded. “I’ll be glad to give you the land.”

“We’ll pay, of course, and pay you well.”

**“Don’t want any money for it,”** Ed replied firmly. **“I’d consider it an honor to have the County accept it from me for nothing.”**

The man looked the bewilderment he felt. This was a new experience to him.

“Anyway,” he compromised, “we can go ahead with our plans for the road?”

“Of course.”

**And Ed really meant that he would be honored to have the County accept the land from him for the road.**

So after much more talk to some unbelieving officials, Ed deeded the land for the road to the County – for free. Dade County abstracted title to the land and that gave Ed a perfect title.

He felt good, he said, to show this little appreciation of his gratitude “to this wonderful country.”

The road was put in – and then the blow fell.

**Ed got a formal bill for \$80 [?] – as his share of “road improvements.”**

No one had ever seen Ed angry, swear or raise his voice. Even after peddling into Homestead to the tax office, **that couldn't ever again be said of Ed.**

When he waved the bill to the clerk, he was so angry his face was livid. **His swearing was in Latvian** – but plainly and pointedly was swearing with, apparently, a rare collection of words – and his voice was shrill and strident – and very loud. Finally, after the initial outburst, he quieted down to say, **“This is really an injustice, outright robbery. I give the land, as a gift, then I must pay.** How unjust can public officials be?”

There was nothing anyone could say that would pacify him, and there was nothing he could do to help, the clerk explained, helplessly.

However, the matter was taken up with Dade County authorities. Though they gave Ed a most sympathetic reception – **in the end Ed paid the bill.**

With all that, his gratitude for this country did not lessen his desire for nor appreciation of citizenship. Perhaps this incident made him a trifle more anxious to be a voter – to vote against all of the County officials involved in what he felt was “un-American injustice.”

It also exploded for all time the belief he never got angry, swore, or raised his voice. He did all three – at the same time – but this experience did stand alone in his recorded record.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN – POTATOES

Another reaction to the road incident was the draw Ed closer to his neighbors, especially to one who was to become one of his few closer friends. This was Gerald Eichar.

Eichar ran a little general store, mostly groceries, just across the railroad tracks to the west of U.S. Highway 1, perhaps 300 yards or so from Ed's new home.

Ed went to Eichar's for his provisions, which finally settled down to Tuesdays and Fridays. His order for a long time did not vary. His weekly purchases amounted to about ten pounds of potatoes, fresh raisin bread, cream of wheat cereal, oatmeal, chicken-and-rice soup, but no milk or butter. **He never bought fresh meat, coffee, tea or other drinks.**

One day Mrs. Eichar was unpacking a box of frankfurters as Ed entered the store. She called him over.

"Ed," she said, holding up a package of the wieners. "Do you like these?"

**"What are they?"** Ed was curious, and looked carefully into the box.

"They're frankfurters, usually called wieners or franks," she explained, taking one out of the package for him to examine it. "They're really very delicious. Haven't you ever eaten them?"

"No."

**Ed looked rather skeptical but he still seemed intrigued by them.**

"Will you try a couple? I'd like very much for you to." Mrs. Eichar knew how limited was his menu and its variation.

"Well, I don't know," Ed hesitated, looking again into the box. **She didn't say anything more, but wrapped them and put them in the bag with Ed's usual purchases.**

Ed watched her in silence, paid his bill, and walked back to his home, carrying his bundle of groceries – with the wieners inside.

**He came back the following morning, grinning widely.**

"Mrs. Eichar," he called to her, "the frankfurters are wonderful. I ate one last night, and I'll eat the other tonight."

**That was the beginning of Ed's interest in canned prepared meats.** He got to like those of the "spam" variety. As with the frankfurters, he liked these meats from the first, but no amount of coaxing could get him even to try any kind of fresh meat.

**He admitted he was a great potato eater.**

"They're the best all-around food," he'd say. "Anyone can live indefinitely on potatoes and oatmeal."

He was especially partial to sweet potatoes.

He went into Eichar's store one afternoon bubbling over with enthusiasm.

**"I've been given some sweet potato seeds from India,"** he exclaimed excitedly. "They're supposed to grow to huge size. I've planted the seeds this morning. I can hardly wait to see how big they'll grow."

Eichar smiled at Ed's outburst.

"I'm sure they'll surprise you," he replied diplomatically, **feeling sure Ed was allowing himself to become overly enthused.**

Neither spoke about these "sweet potatoes from India" again, for several weeks. Though every few days, Eichar admits, he did wonder how the seeds were growing.

One morning Ed entered the store carrying a big bundle, carefully wrapped in newspapers. It was heavy. Ed had carried it on his bicycle's handlebars. It looked even heavier because of Ed's small size as he carefully laid it on the counter.

Eichar and his wife, and a couple customers, moved closer.

Ed looked around at them, grinning broadly, and said, **"Mr. Eichar, I know you thought I was just raving about my sweet potatoes from India. Look at this."**

Dramatically, he ripped open the newspaper covering. The largest sweet potato any of them had ever seen was lying on the counter before them.

**"It must weigh all of twenty pounds!"** Eichar gasped in astonishment.

"At least that."

**Ed was laughing gleefully.**

"Wonderful, isn't it?" he exclaimed. "What do you say now?"

Eichar could only gasp, but Mrs. Eichar put in, "I hope, Ed, it'll taste as good as it looks."

"We'll both know tonight," Ed replied, still smiling broadly.

He reached over and picked up the big cheese knife that was on the counter. **With a swift stroke, he cut the big potato in half.** He pushed one half toward Eichar who was leaning forward from behind the counter. "This is for you and Mrs. Eichar to try. I'll start on this other half tonight." And he carefully re-wrapped his half in the newspaper.

**As a follow up to his "big potato," as he always referred to it, Ed included his "potato cooker" in his prepared talk to visitors.** He's show his "stove" – which was a curious outdoor fireplace. It looked like an old-fashioned "old oaken bucket" sort of well for water – with a peak roof, circular, with the open part of the "well" about waist high.

**Suspended in this “well” was a curious arrangement that looked like the rear axle of an automobile – and that is what it was.** It was divided in the middle and held in place with chains on either end. A slight lift of the hand, and the axle came apart. It was fitted together so perfectly that when in place it could not be pried open. It proved a most efficient “pressure cooker.”

Ed would build a fire under his cooker, put in his potatoes, and by the time the axle-box was hot but before his food could possibly burn, **his cooking was finished – under pressure.**

His meals were simplicity itself. A few times, during the following years, when he admitted he felt ill – which was very seldom, indeed – he didn’t eat at all. He’d say about his condition, “The Devil is in me.” **His philosophy was not to eat while ill, and he advised every one never to eat when they had a cold or were sick.** He carried this to such extremes that it, undoubtedly, contributed heavily toward his eventual death.

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN – ED’S WALL

All this time Ed was continuing his work, busy from early morning until sundown, often long after dark. He placed, first, his stone “furniture”, then he started a wall around a three-acre part of his ten-acres, the three acres closest to the main highway, U.S. 1.

He said he was planning eventually to wall in the entire ten acres. **He never got started on the second stage of this project – around the other seven acres.**

The work on the wall was as amazing as the construction of his home at Ed’s Place had been. Whether Ed knew he was making one of the four greatest walls in all history, or not, no one can ever be sure. He did know he was creating great works of stone art. That he knew – and freely admitted.

**The wall around the three acres was to be eight feet in height and about two and a half feet thick.** This meant huge single blocks of rock weighing from 10 to 30 tons each.

When each rock was put in place, it fitted exactly its next neighbor. The stones never failed to fit. **They were so perfectly matched, a knife-blade could not be inserted between the blocks.**

The excellence of his workmanship contrasted sharply with the other three greatest walls of antiquity. These were Stonehenge in England, which cannot rightfully be called just a “wall”, the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, and the wall around the Temple of Jupiter at Baalbek in Syria.

**Who built Stonehenge is still debatable, for it was an old ruin when first mentioned in the earliest of English history.** It far preceded the early Saxons and Picts, and was probably built around 1700 B.C. It is usually considered a work of the ancient Druids. Undoubtedly it was a temple – to some unknown god. The mortises and tenons forming the toggle joints of Stonehenge are very crudely done as is the inside finish of the stones. The outer side is relatively smooth but shows rough tooling. Not one of Ed’s creations is so primitively executed. The largest stones in Stonehenge are about 20 tons. The average is eight feet in height, the tallest 16 feet, compared to 30 tons in weight and 28 feet in height in Ed’s grounds.

**The Wailing Wall, built by King Solomon, is 150 feet long and 56 feet high.** It is composed of huge blocks. The tallest is 16 feet high, as at Stonehenge. The seams of the Wailing Wall show plainly. Centuries of running by pious hands have given a smoothness and a polish to the lower portion which contrasts sharply with the more roughly hewn upper sections.

The wall around the Temple of Jupiter, some 30 miles from Damascus, the capital of Syria, in the size of blocks used, **holds the all-time record, with 59 of the largest stones ever quarried.** Built around 150 A.D., after the Syrians’ conversion to the gods of the Romans from the god Baal, they wanted to build a greater temple than anything to be found in Rome. For sheer massiveness, they achieved their goal.

This wall is 30 feet above the ground level. **Three of the biggest solid blocks of stone every cut by man are in this wall.** The largest measures 63 feet long by 13 feet high by 10 feet thick. Each of these blocks weighs around **1000 tons.** How these blocks were moved from the quarry, about a mile away, it still a mystery. It is the belief that it took thousands of men three years to move one of these stones from the quarry to the building site at Baalbek.

**Undoubtedly Ed knew how these big rocks were moved – for he proved he could do similar work.** Probably he could have moved as large blocks if he had had help.

**In this quarry at Baalbek can be seen today the largest block of stone ever cut out – 68 feet by 14 feet by 14 feet.** Apparently it was being prepared for the Temple, then abandoned some 1700 years ago. Today the Temple is in ruins. Only a poor little village stands where once was a rich and prosperous trading and cultural center.

But Ed was not much interested in comparisons with antiquity. He seldom mentioned the stone wonders of the far gone past, then only in answer to some question about them. He made it apparent by such questioning that he had considerable information and understanding of these great construction feats of the long dead past – but he found nothing about their building or about them to amaze him or to incite wonder in others.

He did not work steadily on his wall, piece by piece, section by section, but spasmodically. He turned to building other things and **began to devote a lot of time with his experiments in magnetic currents and cosmic forces**, which were to consume more of his time in later years.

Ed made the south and west walls in 65 sections, making a total weight of about 420 tons, or an average 6½ tons for each stone used.

**The east wall contains four huge creations** – “Crescent of the East”, weighing 23 tons, a gigantic monolith tipped with a star and crescent; the Planet Mars, 18 tons, Planet Saturn, 18 tons, and an obelisk weighing an estimated 28½ tons, all carved from single blocks of solid rock. The weight of the east wall is well over 240 tons.

**The north wall has the largest and heaviest block in all his rock creations – 30 tons.** There is also Ed’s special delight – the Polaris telescope – to sight the North Star, 25 feet tall and weighing 28 tons. The total weight of this wall is around 150 tons.

Asked why his walls were curved, he would reply, “So I can be in the cool and in the shade, regardless of the time of day.”

**He would point out to visitors that there was no angle of the wall where there is not shade.**

He boasted a lot about how cool his place was, claiming it was the coolest in all the Redlands area of Dade County. He would invite visitors to go under his Brazilian Oak trees to see how much cooler it was there than elsewhere, or to stand in the shade of the wall while he talked.

Also during this period he built a circular lounge of stone which pivots, to turn at any angle for sun bathers or to keep in the shade.

**He talked many times about his being “a Mason.” Once he said, “I’m a Shriner.” Yet he never attended as far as is known, a Masonic Club meeting.** But he put secret symbols all over Coral Castle Park that only a Mason would recognize.

And Ed did all this work by himself – with most of the larger stones, such as the monoliths, going in at night – with even greater wonders still to come.

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN – CORAL CASTLE

Before the wall was half finished, Ed Leedskalnin turned to what he, at first laughingly, then serious, referred to as “**my Coral Castle.**” No name could have been better chosen or more appropriate.

For two long years he labored on the two-story, two-room affair, with its “perfect pitch” outside stairway of stone. Like its smaller predecessor at “Ed’s Place”, **there was no provision for water, electricity, sewerage or a bathroom.** His bathroom was outdoors, with a tub of stone and water heated by the sun. His “mirror” was made by hollowing out a block of rock, blackening the inside and filling it with water as a reflector – which worked amazingly well.

His tower home also was entirely of stone. **It was made up of an estimated 243 tons of coral rock**, averaging nine tons to each of the **27 big blocks he used.** There are innumerable smaller stones, including the flat slabs composing the floors and the roof, with small square blocks to form three turrets on top of each side of his Castle. The windows are slits in the east, west and north walls of the second floor, with the doorway on the front or north side. The ground floor has only a doorway, facing east.

This construction meant that Ed lifted 10 ton blocks of solid rock 20 feet or so into the air, and while suspended – and, most amazingly, at night – fitted them together with the nicety and accuracy of a jeweler piercing intricate jewels. This was all in the day’s work to Ed. He did this work with the casual, methodical simplicity that marked everything he did – with one exception. **This was the actual lifting of the big blocks – which was all done at night.** The block would be seen on the ground when the last visitor left in the late afternoon – and it would be in place in the building in the morning. **How Ed lifted those big blocks is still unknown today.**

Probably no one will ever know – now – the details of how he worked, for Ed left no written record, not even notes, about his building operations. **He had no machinery, no cranes, no lifts or hoists to move the big blocks.** All that is known – for a certainty – is that he did it – mostly at night – for the results are there for all to see today.

**Nearly all Ed’s final placings were done at night.** This was his usual custom with his major bits of construction. In the closing stages of each placement, in the dead of night, he did his work without mechanical apparatus other than the simplest of tools he made himself. Even these, as well as their operation, had to be simple to get the results he got in the darkness, with only a small lantern to light his way.

**Perhaps that part of his labors – the work at night – is even more remarkable in many ways than many of his great achievements.** The finished works speak for themselves. He couldn’t have been more accurate under the most brilliant of lighting conditions.

Occasionally he would stop work on his Coral Castle to resume building his wall, or turn to a new piece of stone sculpture for his grounds.

Rock after rock went into place. So his Coral Castle began to take form. Comparison with the other great stone masterpieces in the world’s history became more and more evident as work progressed, especially with the Great Pyramid of Egypt.

When you think of comparisons, you think of size of rocks. The average blocks in the Great Pyramid are 2½ tons each, in Ed’s “Coral Castle Park”, as he now called it, the average is six tons. **The heaviest stone in the Great Pyramid is 16 tons,**

**in Ed's park, 30 tons.**

However, in the King's Chamber, deep in the heart of the Great Pyramid, there is a row of great blocks of stone weighing around 30 tons each. Whether these blocks were moved in from outside or whether the chamber was quarried out in front of them is not known.

The one thing that is known is that Ed's work was done by Ed – and the proof is present for all to see.

In all, Ed used about 1000 tons of coral rock in constructing the wall and his Coral Castle, and nearly half that again in his stone furniture – an achievement in building unequalled in all history as the work of one man.

# CHAPTER SIXTEEN – ROCK GATES

As amazing as all of Ed's work is to us today, the most mystifying is his pride and joy – **his two "rock gates."** One is inside the front wall, at the entrance, a triangular rock weighing three tons. His masterpiece is in the center of the rear or east wall. This is a **nine-ton block of solid stone** – nearly seven feet tall, about five feet wide and nearly a yard thick. It is one piece of coral rock – set on end and balanced in the center of the top and bottom. **It is so perfectly balanced the gate swings open or close at the touch of a child's finger.**

**The construction of this huge gate speaks volumes for Ed's uncannily accurate engineering knowledge.** He had to know the pivot points exactly – without guesswork or trial and error. He had to hang the gates to perfect balance. He would never have the opportunity to correct the slightest error in his figuring or in his work. When he hung the gates, as he did without help from anyone – they had to hang perfectly – or they would never hang at all.

Every engineer who has tried to figure balance points for stone – any stone – knows the difficulties even when specific gravity, density and weight are known and he has smooth surfaces to work with. Ed's rock gates are of porous coral rock – uneven, with far more opportunities for error than would be present in most other types of stone.

Yet the gates were hung. **They were correct the first moment they were put in place.** And this without machinery or modern equipment or hoists other than his own home-made devices. The gates are perfectly balanced.

**Few people realize how easily the big rock gate in the rear wall opens.** This was proved conclusively one afternoon. A group of people with several small children visited the park. Ed gave them the usual "tourist talk", demonstrating the various objects within the grounds, lying on the beds, rocking in the stone chairs, even going through the motions of shaving before his "mirror" reflected in water – to the visitors' amusement, especially of the children.

**As the group was leaving, one little girl of about five was found missing.** Her mother called, but no answer. **Ed joined in the search.** The group spread out, going over every spot where a little girl could possibly hide.

"I don't understand it," the girl's father said, stopping alongside Ed, to wipe the perspiration from his face. "She just disappeared - as if into thin air."

"We've looked everywhere, all over the grounds," Ed agreed. "There's only one place more where she could be, where we couldn't see her – and that is inside the Coral Castle. We'll look there."

The two men opened the door into the lower part of Ed's home. Aside from his bicycle, some boxes and crates, all open, and parts of a big electrical static machine Ed was building, there was no other place for a child to hide – **but there was no child.**

Ed turned and bounded up the front steps to his living quarters. He flung open the door. Quickly he looked around inside.

"There's no one here," he called down from the doorway, hurrying down the steps.

The others fanned out again, going through the grounds once more. **They looked under, around and over every stone object.**

It was a rather forlorn looking group that gathered in the growing dusk of evening near the front rock gate, nearly an hour later.

"I just can't imagine where she could be," Ed said, apologetically that such a disappearance could have happened in his park.

The mother started to cry, sitting on the steps that led to Ed's living quarters.

A shout behind the caused all to turn quickly toward the rear wall. The huge rock gate was swinging open – **and the missing little girl was pushing it open – easily and effortlessly** – and seemed to be enjoying the "game."

"Where have you been?" the father called to her, sprinting toward the gate.

"Why, nowhere," the little girl replied in astonishment. **"I pushed open the door – and went outside."**

"Impossible," and the father walked quickly to the gate, as he grabbed the little girl by the hand. He touched the gate, and gave it a push. It swung away from him, easily and silently.

"Well, what do you know?" he exclaimed in amazement. "She really could open that gate – all by herself."

The others crowded around, several walking through the revolving gate and back to join the group.

**"It's amazing,"** one of the party told Ed, who have been quietly watching and listening. "It's just like a big revolving door, It's truly amazing!"

**This amazement was not limited to this one group – and to "the case of the missing child" – but includes engineers from many lands who have examined Ed's work of genius.** Many expressions of how he did it have been heard. No one, however, knows his secret – how he knew how to balance his gates so well and so perfectly – just as with all the rest of his work – but all admit he "must have known" engineering and mathematical secrets unknown today but perhaps may have been known by the great builders of antiquity. This knowledge has never been fully regained.

# CHAPTER SEVENTEEN – LOVE OF CHILDREN

For a shy man Ed loved an audience. It was an everyday performance, certainly every Sunday occurrence – for him to “lecture” visitors to his park.

He knew what he wanted to say, and he would say it so fast that with his heavy Latvian accent it was often difficult to follow his words. **That he had his talk memorized was shown by the way he would start over again, to the beginning,** if anyone interrupted him by questions or otherwise while he was giving his talk.

He was a born actor also. He would “illustrate” his talk by demonstrating the use of his various stone creations – with one exception – his bath rub. He would sit in the chairs and rock, lie on the stone beds, climb upon the wall to better show his big rock forms that were perched high above the ground.

His pantomime of going through the motions of a man shaving before his water – reflecting “mirror” was always good for a lot of good natured bantering and laughter from his audience, a laugh in which he enthusiastically joined.

**He especially liked having children visit his park.** One of his chief delights was standing in the middle of his “Patio of the three bears” with a group of children surrounding him – and singing softly – in Latvian – to them. Usually he sang nursery rhymes in a low, throaty voice.

He loved little children, and encouraged in every way he could their coming to his park. He’d even allow small children to watch him work, but never grown ups. **He said children were not cruel or critical of “someone who is different.”**

The children responded to this quiet, self-effacing little man by being, usually, on their best behavior. Even the many school picnics the children held in Rock Gate Park, as he now “officially” labeled it, were quite orderly but happy occasions.

**He did everything he could to make the children happy.** They responded by feeling completely “at home”. They romped around the grounds, climbed all over his stone creations, playing “tag” and “follow the leader”, whooping and often hollering enough to shatter a bystander’s ear-drums. But Ed would stand to one side, watching and grinning broadly, very apparently enjoying every minute. He was plainly delighted the children were enjoying themselves.

**Probably no one felt as good, inside, over these youthful “get-togethers” as did Ed.** At times, he would seem to be everywhere, talking to the children, showing them how the various stone objects could move that were made to move, **and singing** whenever he was asked – and sometimes without being asked.

**Yet even the most puritanical of mothers could never find the slightest fault with Ed’s conduct toward her children.** In fact, he was such an extremely moral man, who radiated so much fundamental goodness, that no one even thought him capable of anything but the best and highest intentions toward all children.

One of his greatest joys was Saturday afternoons when, regardless of the number of visitors to his park, he would peddle away on his bicycle to Homestead. He would stop in front of the movie theater, sit on his bike, with one foot on the curbstone, and watch the children going into the theater. His face would be wreathed with smiles. **He would sit there, watching and smiling, seldom ever speaking even when spoken to, and wait for the children to come out.**

He would watch them, happily smiling. When a child would speak to him, his smile grew bigger. When the last child left the theater and went romping down the street, he would climb back on his bicycle and puddle on back home.

He never approached a child, and as far as is known never seen patted a child's head or otherwise touched them. But it was very apparent he got real enjoyment from watching children at play, hearing them, and seeing their youthful exuberance.

**That go to be a regular Saturday affair – and continued for many years.** He became an accustomed sight and an increasing number of people went out of their way, each Saturday afternoon, to pass him and to speak to him. He liked that, and seemed very pleased, but he never did more than answer, with his ready, infectious smile.

**His reputation grew as “a thoroughly good man”, as one woman commented about him.** Yet he continued, right up to his last days, as a lonely figure. He never sat down and “visited” with anyone after the Mosers, and he never went anywhere, except by himself. **He never would accept gifts, not even food, from anyone,** unless at Christmas time when he would share a box lunch with those who thought they knew him best.

He remained the lone man, the independent man, the unknown man.

# CHAPTER EIGHTEEN – ENTER; F.B.I

The World War II years brought out three incidents which did much for Ed and helped to spread his fame still further.

The first involved his being investigated by the F.B.I.

Ed was delving deeply into electronics and the study of cosmic rays and magnetic currents. His cosmic theory was published in the Miami papers more than a year before Einstein came out with his Theory of Unity – and the two theories are amazingly similar. **In the process of Ed's experiments, he had copper wires strung from his Coral Castle to trees.** There were many of these wires, going in various directions from his upstairs windows. His electrical devices were quite obvious, especially in his lower-floor room, to all who visited the park.

This started many rumors, which spread quite rapidly.

"He's doing broadcasting – by wireless," said some rumors.

"He must be sending messages to the German subs off the coast," said others.

Almost immediately thereafter, a quietly dressed, very pleasant youngish man came in with a group of tourists. He waited until he could get close to Ed and said in a close voice, **"May I talk to you – alone? I am from the Federal Bureau of Investigation."**

"Certainly," Ed responded quickly, "Come over here," and he led the F.B.I man to a secluded spot near the wall, away from the others.

When they were in the shade, Ed said, inquiringly, "What can I do for you?"

The man showed Ed his credentials.

**"We've been told that you have a wireless set and have been sending out messages. Is that correct?"**

"Of course not," Ed responded with a laugh, and he went into a long explanation of his electrical experiments, and wound up by showing the F.B.I. man his apparatus. "So you see," Ed explained seriously, "that I don't have a sending set, nor a wireless or anything else that could broadcast messages."

The F.B.I man apparently knew much about such things, and after looking over thoroughly all of Ed's equipment, he said, **"You are doing some very interesting work. I wish I had time to listen to a more thorough description.** It is fascinating, Perhaps some time soon, I can come back and we'll talk again, at more length."

"I think it is very fascinating. There's so much about electrical and magnetic currents and the forces around us, especially in the air above us, that we don't know. The textbooks are all so old and out of date that we can get little from them now. I want to write a textbook on electricity. At least it will be accurate."

The F.B.I man nodded his agreement, shook hands warmly with Ed and said, "I'm sorry to have troubled you. I find nothing wrong. Good luck with your experiments, and thank you for showing me what you are doing."

**Word about this visit got around very quickly – with many different interpretations to it.** It caused much comment – both pro and con, such as:

“You know Ed is a German spy? He’s sending messages to subs. The F.B.I is keeping tabs on him.”

“So Ed must be German, after all, and not Latvian as he says.”

“No, Ed’s working for the F.B.I, not against us.””

“Ed’s getting messages from the German subs to pass on to the F.B.I.”

“This place is a blind for Ed’s work for the N????s [?].”

“This place is a blind for Ed’s work for the F.B.I.”

And so conflicting contrary rumors went the rounds again.

**Few persons were neutral.** They either believed the worst about Ed – or the best – and as Ed was so well liked by everyone, there were very few who did not believe in his loyalty.

But this talk did have an amazing aftermath – that became a “seven day wonder” to all that area. Suddenly and with all the appearances of undo haste, three families hurriedly left Homestead – without leaving forwarding addresses. As soon as these families left town, and as quickly as the rumors had started, they abruptly subsided.

\* \* \*

**It was about this time that Ed decided to fix up his living quarters.**

“I’m getting some new furniture,” he confided to the Eichars. “I owe it to myself to live better.”

The next day, a delivery van from a Homestead store **brought an expensive mattress and bed**, and they disappeared into Ed’s living quarters.

The next day the van was back – took the mattress and bed out of Ed’s upstairs quarters – and brought in another mattress and bed.

“**I’m living now in real luxury**,” he said, acting rather sheepishly about his “luxury.”

It wasn’t many days later when heavy smoke was seen pouring from the slots that served as window in the second floor of Ed’s Coral Castle.

**The neighbors rushed over to find Ed running up and down the stairs with buckets of water.** He’d throw the contents of the buckets into the room, and run down again for more water. The neighbors helped by passing buckets of water up to him as he worked in the doorway.

The flames gradually died down.

“Are you all right?” Ed was asked, as he leaned against the door jam, blackened and grimy from his efforts.

“Oh, yes. Thank you,” he nodded wearily, brushing his hair from his eyes with blackened hands.

“What happened?”

**“The oil lamp must have blown over.”**

“Did you have it lighted? In the daytime?”

“Oh, yes. I do a lot of reading, early.”

“But you were in Homestead this morning.”

“Yes, of course. I must have left the lamp lighted. When I got back the room was all in flames.”

**“What did you lose? Everything?”**

“I’m afraid so,” Ed signed heavily, still leaning against the door jam.

“And your bed?”

“I’m afraid that’s gone, too.”

“And your clothes? And papers?”

“Yes. They’re probably gone also.”

**Later Ed admitted that all his notes on his experiments with magnetic currents and cosmic forces were destroyed.**

“That means I’ve lost several years in my work,” he explained sadly.

“In all of your electrical experiments?”

“Yes.”

**The neighbors got together enough clothes and cooking utensils for him to continue living as he had, and bedding.** He did not buy another bed but made one for himself, hanging from one side in his living quarters, so it could fold up against the wall when not in use – as he had had at Ed’s Place. It was more of a cot than a bed, but Ed used that as long as he lived. He never bought another bed and mattress.

**His table also folded against the wall.** The only other article of furniture was a rocking chair, made from spare strips of metal. It is amazingly comfortable

It was during this period that he built his “repentance corner” as a small room in the back corner of the rear wall. It was in the shape of a small room, with narrow openings. **It was like a small jail for a very thin person.** (he explained this in his talk to visitors as something the person or child being punished would remember. “They might forget a whipping,” he would say, “but they’ll never forget a few hours in here.”)

He also fashioned a curious 500-pound table, shaped like a heart. This he called his “consolation place.” He would say, “If anyone has his feelings hurt, he can sit here and think. He’ll soon find consolation and peace.”

**All during this time, he kept increasing his picture-taking.** He would set his little box camera, on time exposure, and take his own picture. He would stand on a slab with “Ed. L.” or just “E. L” carved on its face, attired in his blue serge suit. He kept this suit just for such an occasion. **He would take his photograph only when the sun was absolutely right.** He would never waste film.

\* \* \*

And Ed followed up this experience by a marked change in his routine of living. **He was doing much more studying, much more reading, and seemed quieter,** more intense with his own thoughts, although the ready smile was still there.

Every afternoon at three o’clock, he would announce to whoever happened to be in his park at the time, **“Please excuse me now. I’ve got a date.”**

If the visitors did not leave as a result of the announcement, Ed would take his bicycle from the lower room of his Coral Castle, carefully padlock the door, adjust the pants guards so the bottoms of his trousers would not catch in the chain drive of his bicycle, and peddle briskly away – in the direction of Homestead.

This again started the rumor factory going full blast, with such as:

“Ed’s got a girl in Homestead.”

“That so? How do you know? Who is she?”

“He goes in to see her every afternoon. He must be very serious about her.”

He never told where he went, but **it soon became evident who his “date” was with – the Homestead Public Library.** He would go directly to the Library and spend from one to two hours reading the latest magazines and books on electricity and electrical applications and on engineering subjects. He never read fiction or popular “light” magazine.

Yet he was a great reader. He read the newspapers, rather completely, and he had a phenomenal memory for what he read. He could talk, and talk well, on the latest news and what it meant, especially on the scientific topics in the news. **Often he would amaze his listeners with his knowledge and understanding.**

Again and again visitors would say, “How do you know all that?”

And he would reply with his characteristic tapping of his forehead and the comment, “I just know.”

# CHAPTER NINETEEN – PHILOSOPHER

Ed had definite opinions on many subjects. He spoke out strongly on self-restraint, on the need to improve one's self especially through the criticism of others, on education, on religion and marriage. Whatever he believed in, he believed in strongly. There was no half-way or neutral positions in his thinking. **He was intense – though individual.**

Some of his wording is quaint and sounds strangely unfamiliar to us, but the thought of the independent thinker is always present.

"People who want to shine will always have to restrain themselves," he wrote, "because if they don't, their actions won't be graceful. Even when one's looks are good, if he abandons restraint, the performance won't be good. It is more likely that the person himself won't notice but others will.

"The first thing I notice about other people is, if there is something wrong and if it could be improved and the same must be true about other people noticing my defects and neglects. To correct these neglects, somebody will have to point them out, but to do it directly will not do, because they would think you are mean..

"In a looking glass you will never notice all your neglects and defects. They will have to be pointed out by someone else.

"It is painful to hear other people pointing out our neglects and defects so do not entrust your friends to do it. Your friends may not always be your friends. The best way is to leave that to your own family. Your mother and father will do nothing to embarrass you."

**He admitted to belief in a Supreme Being.** He readily admitted there is a spiritual power higher than man. **Yet he thought organized religion "was the bunk"**, and he did not believe in a material church organization. He would say, over and over again, he could believe only in what he could prove. Yet his neighbors and those who knew him best called him **"a very spiritually minded man"** and one who certainly lived up to a very high moral code.

Ed had strong ideas on what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is not. There was no compromise in regard to any of those with him.

He said:

"All our ideas should produce good and lasting results and then anything that is good now would have been good in the past and it will be good in the future and it will be good under any circumstances, so any idea that does not cover all this broad base is no good.

"My definition of right is that right is anything in nature that exists without

artificial modification and all others are wrong."

He gave his code regarding fidelity and marriage in a single sentence:

"Everyone's sweet sixteen should be so high in one's estimation that no temptation could induce one to act behind her back."

In talking about education and the need of knowledge, Ed wrote:

"Now a few words about education. You know we receive an education in the schools from books. All those books that people became educated from 25 years ago, are wrong now, and those that are good now, will be wrong again 25 years from now. So if they are wrong then, they are also wrong now, and the one who is educated from the wrong books is not educated, he is misled. All books that are written are wrong, the one who is not educated cannot write a book and the one who is educated, is really not educated but he is misled and the one who is misled cannot write a book which is correct.

"The misleading began when our far distant ancestors began to teach their descendants. For you know they knew nothing but they passed their knowledge of nothing to the coming generations and it went so innocently that nobody noticed it. That is why we are not educated.

"I will tell you what education is according to my reasoning. An educated person is one whose senses are refined. We are born as brutes, we remain and die as the same if we do not become polished. Some are too coarse to take it. The main base of education is one's "self-respect". Any one lacking self-respect cannot be educated. The main bases of self-respect is the willingness to learn, to do only the things that are good and right, to believe only in the things that can be proved, to possess appreciation and self control.

"Now, if you lack willingness to learn, you will remain as a brute and if you do things that are not good and right, you will be a low person, and if you believe in things that cannot be proved, any feeble minded person can lead you, and if you lack appreciation, it takes away the incentive for good doing and if you lack self control you will never know the limit. So all those lacking these characteristics in their makeup are not educated.

**Ed was just as positive about our need for personal experience rather than accepting that of someone else. He believed just as strongly in the strong being leaders and producers. He said:**

"People are individuals. For instance, if you want an excitement you have to test the thrill yourself, or if you have a pain you will have to bear it yourself, or

if you want to eat you will have to eat for yourself. Nobody can eat for you and so it is that if you want the things to eat you will have to produce them yourself and if you are too weak, too lazy, lack machinery and good management to produce them, you should perish and that is all there is to it."

However, he felt just as strongly about our proving our comfort and the right to ease and to enjoy the benefits of our labors.

"It is natural tendency for all living things to take it easy. You watch any living thing you want to, and you will see that as soon as they fill up, they will lie down and take it easy.

" The physical comfort, the ease, that is the only thing in this world that satisfies. It cannot be overdone and it is the real base of all our actions. We all cannot take things easy because there is too much competition from other people only those who possess good management will succeed by exploiting domestic animals, machinery, other people and natural resources.

"Everything will have to be produced that is consumed and to those who have to produce the things themselves, they are consuming the easy days are not coming to them.

# CHAPTER TWENTY – THEORIES

Ed would have been a truly great fundamental or research scientist provided he had had the modern, elaborate equipment of our better laboratories today. **He did continuing studies in electrical and magnetic currents and with cosmic forces.** His only equipment was the crude homemade apparatus he could make himself.

He was, at heart, a scientist, a researcher, a seeker for the truth of everything that could be proved, a man thirsting for knowledge, searching continually for what he could prove and could do. He expressed this in many ways. He said our textbooks were out-of-date and therefore wrong for use today. He said “the one who is educated from the wrong books is not educated, he is misled.”

He wrote a great deal. **He had several pamphlets published, a book, and even a long write-up that was printed in the Miami Daily News as an advertisement.**

In this ad, he explained the research work he was doing in electricity – and advertised the fact he had **an 8000-word pamphlet for sale – at one dollar – on “Magnetic Current”** – along with which he would give another booklet on “Mineral, Vegetable and Animal Life.”

Ed’s work on cosmic rays and cosmic force would be especially important today. All the work going on with satellites and study of outer space included vital studies of cosmic rays, cosmic radiation and cosmic forces that are pelting the earth as a continuous barrage. **Each of the satellites thrown into outer space by us and by the Russians made elaborate provisions for studying and recording cosmic forces.**

Unfortunately Ed’s notes on his cosmic studies are only fragmentary and chiefly through his brief writings. His experiments might have been helpful today.

**He wrote on “Cosmic Force”:**

“Here is additional information for those who read my advertisement in The Miami Daily News, February 3rd, 1946. The North and South pole individual magnets are the cosmic force. They are the building blocks of nature's perpetual transformation of matter, and they are so small that they can pass through everything. They pass through the earth from pole to pole, and around the earth.

“If the North and South pole individual magnets could not pass through a vacuum tube the same as the Thomsons electrons cannot, then they could not be the building blocks. The Thomson electrons are very small parts of matter which come out of the cathode while the cathode is burned up or consumed in the vacuum tube.

“Without the general circulation of the building blocks there would be no change. Everything would remain in the same way as it is now. The building blocks from a matter that go to pieces could not get in the general circulation for the new construction.

“I think the Radium and Uranium were built up inside the earth with high

pressure, and heat, while the North and South pole individual magnets were circulating through the earth. During the time the Radium and Uranium were inside the earth they absorbed more of the individual North and South pole magnets than they normally could hold, and so now while they are on top of the earth they let the magnets go so they can become normal again.

"Gravitation must be caused by the matter in the middle of the earth, and more concentrated than Uranium. When Uranium atoms burst they release the North and South pole individual magnets that held the atom together, then the magnets scatter all around, but when the atoms burst in the middle of the earth, and many burst at the same time, they can only run from the middle to the outside.

"When the North and South pole magnets are running alongside each other and in the same direction, they have no attraction for the other kind. They only attract if they are running one kind against the other kind. When the magnets are running out of the middle of the earth, as soon as they meet an object they attract it, on account of the fact that in any object there is both kinds of magnets in it.

"It can be seen by rubbing hard rubber or glass until they get hot, then they will attract sand, iron filings, salt, and other things. To see how it functions, move a salt crystal a little, if it happens to get on a different magnet pole, then it will jump away. Another way is to rub hard rubber until it gets hot, then it will be a temporary magnet.

"The difference between the rubber magnet and the steel magnet is that the magnet in the rubber comes from the magnets that hold together the rubber, and both North and South poles are in the same side of the rubber and the magnet poles are small and there are many of them close together, but in the steel bar the attracting magnet is not the magnet that holds together the steel, but the surplus magnets the circulating magnet that was put in it.

"Attract the iron filings with the rubber magnet, then approach with the steel magnet. Change the poles, then you will see some of the filings jump away. This means the steel magnet changed the magnet poles in the iron filings, and so they jumped away."

His theory regarding cosmic force was published more than a year before Einstein came out with a relatively similar cosmic theory which Einstein called "Theory of Unity." This proved Ed must have conducted his experiments along lines since recognized by other scientist.

#### **He said about "Magnetic currents":**

"Before my research work I knew nothing about electricity. The only thing I knew was that nobody knows what electricity is. So I thought I am going to find out why they do not know. I thought that if electricity could be made and managed for over a hundred years, then the makers do not know what it is, there is something

wrong about it. I found out that the researchers were misled by wrong instruction books, and by one-sided instruments. Voltmeters and ampere meters are one-sided. They only show what is called by instruction books, positive electricity, but never show negative electricity.

"Now you can see that one-half of the electricity escaped their notice. If the researchers had used the same kind of equipment I use to demonstrate what magnetic current is, they would have found out a long time ago what electricity is. The positive electricity is composed of streams of north pole individual magnets, and negative electricity is composed of streams of south pole individual magnets. They are running one stream of magnets against the other stream in whirling right hand twist, and with high speed.

"Protons and electrons--Are you sure they are not the north and south pole individual magnets. If we have anything we have to show that we have it. Show the base where it came from, and show how the thing functions. We can find concentrated north and south pole individual magnets in the earth, in a metal.

"With the metal we can demonstrate that the free north and south pole individual magnets are circulating in the earth. In the North Hemisphere the south pole individual magnets are going up, and the north pole individual magnets are coming down. Those free circulating north and south individual magnets are the building material for the magnet metal we find in the earth.

"This should show that the north and south pole individual magnets are the real atom builders, and not the protons and electrons. I think the north and south pole individual magnets are running in an orbit around a common core in an atom the same way as they run in an orbit around a common core in the perpetual motion holder that I made. The only difference is that an atom has a small orbit, but the perpetual motion holder has a big orbit.

"I have never seen an atom, but I think the atom drawings are wrong. They should be drawn to fit the earth on account of the fact that the atom is a part of the earth. The earth has two magnet poles. This means that each pole has an equal pull and push to hold the earth together, and so each atom should be built as it could have two poles. In that case both forces that make magnet poles should run around a common core (the core could be a particle of sunlight). If one-half of the force that makes up the atom is in the core, and the other half of the force run around the core, then in that case the atom could not join the other atoms to make a metal that could hold two magnet poles.

"I believe that if some enterprising man would analyze the magnet metal which comes straight from the earth he would find that the metal is not built up by protons and electrons, but by north and south pole individual magnets. I think anyone who excludes magnets and calculations about things that this earth contains, he is wrong. Those who want to know how North and South pole individual magnets contract the muscles. Connect each end of a fresh terrapin muscle with each terminal of a battery, then you will see how the muscles are contracted.

"This is for biologists. I can see chromosomes without a microscope. To see I close my eyes and then I open one eye just a little to look at the blue sky. Then I can see chains of beads floating in the liquid in my eye. Some chains of beads are longer than others. Most of the chains are folded over in irregular shapes and between several beads in a chain there is a bigger bead and sometimes there is one, two or more beads hanging outside the chain, and sometimes I can see one, two or more beads floating separately. Each bead's center is light, and the outside rim dark, If I open my eye a little more and look sharper, then I can see round shining things running in every direction in jumpy paths. Some leave shiny wave like a path before they disappear. Each shiny thing is many times smaller than each smallest bead. They are not crowded, they all use the same speed, but the speed is a little too fast for good observation.

"To see finer things yet I look in a gray cloud with the eye open until I see a darker spot. When the spot begins to boil in the middle, then I can see tiny multi-colored streaks running out of the middle. The scene lasts about a minute and when it is gone then nobody can know when the next scene will come around.

"Matter: Every form of existence, whether it be rock tree or animal, has a beginning and an end, but the three things that all matter is constructed from has no beginning and no end. They are the North and South poles individual magnets, and the neutral particles of matter. These three different things are the construction blocks of everything. To begin, a meteor rock falls in the sun, the sun dissolves the rock to the final division of matter, the North and South pole individual magnets, and the sunlight then sends them out here. The vegetation absorbs some of the magnets and the sunlight, and then grows. We eat the vegetation products and build up our body, and then when we die and our body is cremated, the ashes can be made into a rock, and then the rock can be sent to the sun to be dissolved again.

"The North and South pole magnets can be detected while they are coming down from the sun by radio. The radio waves are made by the North and South pole magnets. They spread around the earth, and the North and South pole. Magnets that are coming down from the sun are hitting the radio waves across, and so disturbing their paths. That is the reason why we cannot hear the radio as well in the day time as we do at night.

"At night time we only get those magnets that are coming down from other suns or stars, but in the day time we get them all. Today, yesterday's sunlight is neutral particles of matter. If you had been high up above the earth yesterday there would not have been as much light there as there was on the ground.

"There you would have seen stars the same as at night time down here. In the empty space between the stars there is not much light, so the stars can be seen. Sunlight is light when it passes through some obstruction like the air, by going through an empty space it is not much of a light."

**He analyzed his concept of electrons by saying:**

"Millions of people all over the world are being fooled by the non-existing electrons. Here is how the electrons came into existence. Thomson invented an imaginary baby and called it an electron. Rutherford adopted it and now the men with the long hair are nursing it. The electron has a brother and its name is proton, but it is heavy and lazy. It remains stationary in the middle, but the electron has to run around it.

"To the electrical engineers the positive electricity is everything, the negative electricity is nothing, but to the physicists the negative electricity is everything, and the positive electricity is nothing. Looking from a neutral standpoint they cancel each other, so we have no electricity, but we have something. If we do not know how to handle the thing that comes through a wire from a generator or a battery, we will get badly shocked. Read the booklet "Magnetic Current" (MAGCURNT.ASC) then you will know what the thing is, and the way it runs through a wire.

"The invention of an electron came by a tricky method in using electricity in a vacuum tube. Normally whether it be a generator or a battery, the positive terminal will have to be connected to the negative terminal, but in the vacuum tube two batteries with different strength were used, the smaller battery was connected normally, but the larger battery's negative terminal was connected to the smaller battery's negative terminal, and the positive terminal was left alone. That connection gave the negative terminal a double dose of strength, and so it became hotter and could push more. It was called cathode and the positive terminal anode, and the electricity that passed from the cathode to the anode was called electrons.

"In case the inventor had used normally direct methods to find out what the electricity was he would have found out that the positive and negative electricity is in equal strength, and are running positive electricity against the negative electricity. That can be seen by connecting each of two pieces of soft iron wire with each terminal of a car battery and then by putting together and pulling away each loose end of the soft iron wire. More sparks can be seen coming out of the positive terminal than from the negative terminal. This direct method is more reliable than the tricky method in the vacuum tube. The trouble with the physicists is they use indirect and ultra-indirect methods to come to their conclusions.

"If the inventor of electrons had a vacuum tube in which his electrons could run close to the top of the vacuum tube from the west side of the cathode to the east side of the anode and then would hang a vertically hanging magnet that is made from three-inch long hard steel fishing wire, and then hang one magnet pole at one time right on top in the middle of his stream of electrons, then he would have seen the north pole magnet swinging north, and the south pole magnet swinging south.

"The same thing will happen if the magnets are held above any wire where the electricity is running through. Those two vertically hanging magnets prove that

the electricity is composed of two different and equal forces. Another way to prove this is to connect a flexible wire loop east end of the wire with positive battery's terminal, west end with negative terminal, raise the loop one inch above the floor. Put U shape magnet one inch from loop, north pole south side of the loop. The north pole magnet will pull in the loop. Put the south pole magnet in the same place. It will push the loop away. Put the south pole magnet north side of the loop, this time it will pull the loop in. Put the north pole magnet in the same place, it will push the loop away. This indicates that electricity the same as a magnet bar is composed of two equal forces, and each force is running one against the other in whirling right hand twist, but those forces in the wire have higher speed, and both forces are coming out across from the same wire.

"One of the forces is north pole magnets and the other is south pole magnets. They are the cosmic forces. Your electric motor is turned around on its axis by north and south pole magnets. Even you could not start your car without the north and south pole magnets.

"If electricity is made with north and south pole magnets and the electric motor is turned around on its axis by the north and south pole magnets as is the fact, then this will bring up a question, where then are those Thomson electrons. They are not around the electric motor. The plain answer is they are non-existing.

"Rays: When I reduce the material from which comes out the alpha, beta and gamma rays, so small when it is magnified one hundred times and appearing the same size as an average salt crystal, then there is no more rays, but has flashes the same as when a connected wire end is tapped on the battery's terminal, but without the red sparks. Depending on the size sometimes, I have to wait five minutes before I can see a flash. I think the flashes are caused by North and South pole magnets which are hitting and breaking the atom orbit, while the magnets are circulating in and around the earth.

"In the Northern Hemisphere, the North pole magnets are coming down, and the South pole magnets are going up. Wherever each kind of magnets are running in their way, they are hitting their own kind of magnets and are pushing them in the same direction. This can be demonstrated by a foot long magnetized hard steel fishing wire which hangs on a fine thread horizontally, and level. All that will have to be done is to re-magnetize the wire by changing the magnet poles. Then the wire will lie in a slanting position, the South magnet pole will stay higher. By using a coil and micro-ampere meter it can be seen in which direction the magnets are running the most.

"When I break the orbit of the perpetual motion holder which I made, then I get a flash of light from it, but that flash of light is made by the North and South pole magnets, and so I think the atom is built up by the North and South pole magnets, and when the orbit is broken, then the flash is made and the magnets are liberated to go somewhere else. The natural path to the North pole magnets in the Northern Hemisphere is to go down, and the South pole magnets to go up.

"I think it would be a good idea if the physicists while testing radium on the

photographic film for alpha rays, would put the radium on top of the film, and for beta rays the radium under the film, and then watch the results, or go to the Southern Hemisphere and experiment in the same way as they are doing now, and then notice if there is an difference. The gamma rays must be the same as the sun light, but stronger because they are used very close to their source.

"We have North and South pole magnets, positive and negative electricity, protons, and electrons, positrons and mesons and alpha, beta and gamma rays. Now why such a confusion? Does nature really need so many things in the perpetual transformation of things, on building up the matter and again taking it into parts? I think all that nature needs is three things, the North and South pole magnets and the neutral particles. Each kind of those three things can act differently with different speed and different combinations, and so they can accomplish different results. I believe the prospective physicists first should learn what magnets and electricity are, then they will have a sound base for their experiments and their calculations."

# CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE – TRAGEDY

Ed's later years were filled with his electrical experiments, with his writings, with a continuing of his works in stone. **He became more talkative, seemed more anxious to be neighborly, liked having more people around him.**

Gradually there seemed to be a loosening up in his tight little shell of self, so the friendly little man who wanted and practiced only good could appear more clearly.

He had learned one important lesson from the beating he got from the young toughs at Ed's Place. That was not to advertise the fact that he was charging admission. **From the first, at his new home in Coral Castle Park, he let visitors pay whatever they liked as "donations", not as an entrance fee. He also sold his postcards.**

There was a bell at the front entrance. Visitors would ring it, and Ed would hurry to meet them, from whatever job he was doing. As they entered through the front three-ton triangular stone gate, he'd tell them, "Don't turn the stone unless you use your little finger."

**Visitors would gently push the gate – with their little fingers – rather carefully and very gently at first – and be amazed** at how easily this slight pressure opened the gate. Ed would wait until all had filed through, then he'd close the gate – with a push of his little finger.

One of the finest ventures toward becoming more friendly with his neighbors started a year or so after he moved from Florida City. He had made no attempt to know his neighbors, to visit them or to encourage their knowing him. One day, as he was starting out for Homestead on his bicycle, he saw Mrs. Laura Thorpe, his next door neighbor on the south, tending her flower garden.

**He stopped, resting one foot on the ground, still sitting on his bicycle and called to her:** "Your flowers look beautiful this morning."

That started a friendship with the Thorpe family that continued and grew through the years.

**It was Mrs. Thorpe who got worried, that early part of November, 1951, when she didn't see Ed around his park** but did see a growing accumulation of newspapers at his front entrance. Her apprehension grew, so she hurried to investigate. She called, but no answer. She did, however, find a little note fastened to the front door, which read: **"Gone to hospital. Will be right back."** There was no date and no signature.

She telephoned the police and the search for Ed got underway. The police had no record of Ed's being hurt or killed, nor could they find a motive for a disappearance. Calls began to the hospitals in Homestead and South Miami areas, without success. Ed had said, "Gone to hospital" but he didn't say which one. Then calls went out to the larger Miami hospitals.

**The Jackson Memorial Hospital** reported to the police, Edward Leedskalnin had been admitted in a weakened condition and apparently suffering from malnutrition – of all things. The date of his admission to the hospital is recorded as November 9, 1951.

**Mrs. Thorpe notified Ed's friend John Neafsey, and together they looked over the park and into Ed's living quarters.** His bed had been neatly arranged and pulled up out of the way. His clothes were hanging on the hooks behind the door.

“Look,” Mrs. Thorpe said, “his good blue serge suit, the one he wears only to have his picture taken, isn’t here.”

**“No doubt he’s wearing it. Must be, for his work clothes are here.”**

“Together they went to the hospital to see Ed. He was in bed, looking thin but, as usual, very cheerful. He seemed touched – and pleased – by their coming.

These visits did much to cheer up Ed – but he died quietly in his sleep on December 7, almost a month to the day after his admission to the hospital.

# CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO – ETERNAL PROOF

After Ed's death on December 7, 1951, and his burial in a Flagler Memorial Park in Miami, a long tangled and confused struggle began – **to clear up legal aspects of Coral Castle Park and to find heirs.**

A search of Ed's living quarters revealed only chaos and confusion. The grounds were in even worse condition. Shrubs and small trees and nearly everything movable had disappeared, carted away – by someone.

The door to his workshop, under his living quarters in the Coral Castle, was closed but not padlocked. Inside was a complicated mass of wheels, chains, pulleys and iron bars and scraps of metal, and a few huge iron hooks. All were plainly what had been salvaged from junk yards.

**There was also the big static machine he had made for his electrical experiments.**

His bicycle was there, with his pants guards clipped over the central bar. The interior of his living quarters upstairs looked as if a hurricane had swept through. Papers and articles of clothing were scattered over the floor. **Too apparently others had been there before those legally responsible to make an inventory.**

Some notes were found among the wild confusion. On the back of an old envelope was scrawled "Where money is." It implied money would be found in a pipe under the stand on which his radio had stood – for that also was gone. His well-known box camera, his books and big dictionary were missing.

**An examination of the pipe under the radio stand revealed an old paper tube inside the pipe.** Inside this tube were \$50s, \$100s and \$500s, totally the unexpectedly large sum of \$3700.

**Further search turned up a little notebook in the sand above the door,** along with a few other papers. In this notebook were listed serial numbers which was thought, at first, to be of war bonds – but which proved on more minute examination to be the serial numbers of the bills. Apparently, according to these numbers, Ed had spent \$100 and forgot to take it off the list. There was also the apparent answer that Ed had taken this money with him when he went to the hospital.

**A check showed that Ed did not have a bank account.** No bank books were ever found. It was plain, as rumor had it for so many years, Ed did not trust banks.

Among the papers that were found was a piece of paper which turned out to be **a code map for a treasure cache in the grounds.** It began with, "**Start at the pump and go 20 paces**" and so on. Meticulous following of those instructions led to nowhere – and to no treasure. This cache has never been found – if it really existed.

All this time a search was going on for relatives. **Ed's will was found which left everything to "any living relative."**

**Ed had a visitor about a year before his death, who looked like him, although heavier.** He had admitted in a rather casual way to several friends this man was "my nephew." He said nothing further and they knew Ed well enough not to ask questions.

Who the man was, where he lived, and whether he was the only "living relative" – and therefore the sole heir – no one

knew.

With this to work on, the search started in earnest – among Latvians who might possibly know Ed’s family, with government immigration authorities, with police sources.

All this time a legal struggle was going on in the courts over the property.

**[Sorry, this is where it ends. There are probably at most only one or two more pages.]**