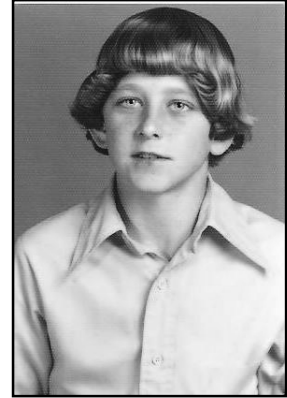


At Age 12

Don't ask me to explain the haircut; longer hair was "in", but when you have curly hair, the attempt seems to grow "up"...and "around".



Besides the hair is the less-noticeable, but still present wider color of the day. It was 1973 and wide ties, wide collars, and wide automobiles were typical. What is probable is that this picture was actually 12; it could have been 13. **Let's just say it was in the ball-park of 12.**

Living in the Low Country of South Carolina was not of particular interest; but now that I reflect on it, the area's uniqueness and local offerings are more evident. Like northeast Florida, the weather was usually humid or muggy most of the time. Swamps (hence, the "Low Country") had the scourge of many earlier settlers and farmers in that such stagnant waters are the breeding grounds for mosquitoes and those notorious gnats that not only attack the skin, but downright dig through your hair to the scalp. To say that these creatures are pests is an understatement.

Even so, this region had much to offer for a boy. Fish, shrimp and crab were the regular staples from the brackish waters of Broad River. The massive Live Oaks that somewhat resemble an octopus gave every reason for tree climbing – if just on the dare of one less daring. I remember climbing-out of a few of these far-stretching limbs to either jump or basically hop-down to the ground. Other than rubbing-out the seat of your pants, the experience was everything a boy would want: excitement under girded by the strength of limbs as old as the ages – and roots extending quite possibly to Georgia. Live Oaks made great tree houses – even if you didn't actually build a house.

Sports had also been a diversion; or least until a hurt my back playing football. Just a year earlier, I had given my body to the game under the coaching of such names as Groziano (check spelling) and Hammermeister (check his sanity). Along with a few friends of mine, the old pigskin became our centerpiece for scrimmaging and the weekly games with Ridgeland, Hilton Head, and Parris Island to name a few. At one time I played both offensive and defensive end; and *talk about* confused – as there were times when I didn't know whether to block, run a route or just stand there and wait for someone to arrive. Maybe the huddles helped...but I don't remember.

So much more could be said: an occasional girlfriend or affection, the endless experiences at school, the camping trips with the scouts and others, and so on...

It was 1973, I had two teenage siblings, and life was groovy.

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