



ENID'S POWERS FAMILY

Tom, Jim, Frank, Kay, Gertrude, John, Teresa, Theresa, James J. Powers, Joe and Mary

JIM POWERS
SPORTS EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK NEWS

September 15, 1954.

Dear Everybody:

"Would you like to meet Mr. Billingsley?" asked Sally Steele. Sally is the wife of Earle Steele, an ex-Enid journalist who, as a member of its Washington staff, now plays an important role in the affairs of the National Chamber of Commerce. His wife is a former Powers model. She and a fellow veteran from that regiment of pulchritude were re-living glamorous New York days, while we were having a late afternoon cocktail at the Stork Club, and invariably the name of the proprietor of that colorful establishment crept into the conversation.

"In view of the fact that the guy and I were both born in Enid, Oklahoma, I would like to meet him," I answered.

"He is eating dinner at the next table with Mrs. Billingsley," she announced, so we strolled over and Sally introduced us. Sherman Billingsley gave me a long look.

"Oh! You are the bird who has been sending me all that propaganda about the town where I was born," he recalled. Mr. Billingsley has been on my mailing list for a long time, put there at the suggestion of a mutual friend.

"You know," he added, "there are some more people around New York who should be on that list - Steve Owen for one."

I assured him that, as one of my oldest gridiron buddies, Steve had been on the list for years.

"And," he added, "there is Jimmy Powers, Sports Editor of the New York News."

For many years I have been a reader of

the pre-mailed Sunday issue of that paper because I cannot wait until the following Sabbath to follow the fortunes of my favorite comic strip characters. Somewhere along the years I had become accustomed to reading the sports column by Jimmy Powers. Many times I have listened to his radio and television broadcasts, but this was the first inkling I ever received that the famed sports editor was a member of the devoted Catholic flock of Powers children who grew up on West Broadway. They were all considerably younger than myself and I never had opportunity to know them intimately as they grew to maturity and scattered to various activities across the nation.

Following Mr. Billingsley's suggestion, I added Jim Powers to my mailing list. That was several years ago. Recently I walked through the lobby of the Bass Building on my way to lunch. Dr. Avery Wight was eating a sandwich at the lobby fountain and was perusing a pamphlet. I was interested to note it was a copy of my last monthly letter.

"Doc," I asked, "how did you happen to have that?"

"It's a heck of a note," answered the doctor, "that I should office in the same building with you, yet have to wait and get this letter from my brother-in-law in New York to read it."

"Who is your brother-in-law?" I queried.

"Jim Powers."

No more interesting family was ever

reared in Enid. The mother of the family passed to her eternal reward at the time this family group picture was made, but James Joseph Powers can enjoy his declining years with the full realization his ten children are a glowing tribute to the success with which his life has been crowned.

Jim is the oldest of the ten. Immediately upon completion of his schooling, he plunged into a journalistic career, to be followed in the same profession by four of his five brothers. While still a very young man Jim proceeded to New York and became a favorite of Joseph Medill Patterson, founder of the New York News. Soon he became sports editor for the paper which enjoys the largest circulation of any in the Western Hemisphere. There he remains today with his comparative youthfulness presaging important roles in American sports for many years into the future.

Tom Powers is with the Chicago Tribune, Ray with the American News & Magazine Service, John works for the J. Walter Thompson Advertising Company while Frank divides his time between freelancing and writing racing reports for the New York News. Reverend Joseph is Dean of Men at the University of Portland, Portland, Oregon.

Sister Theresa Joseph Powers is serving as Dean of Our Lady of Lake at San Antonio, Texas, Mary is secretary of the C.I.O. organization of the United Steel Company at Kansas City, Gertrude is the wife of an Army Engineer stationed at Texarkana, Texas, and Toressa Powers Wight is the only one of the ten remaining in Enid. She divides her time between the multitudinous duties of a doctor's wife, rearing seven children and worrying about what Harold Taft's engineers are going to do to her front yard as they prepare plans for constructing the Van Buren Street by-pass.

#####

Thirty years ago the nation was encouraged to loan money but allowed Interior Secretary Fall a million dollar advance (\$200,000) in exchange for an oil lease on some government property. Federal agents of that size in the twenties rocked the nation and gave the lily-white Democratic campaign ammunition for three decades. Now the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and Federal Housing Administration over-

tions make Fall and his playmates look like a bunch of pantywaists. So injured to graft and so far down the moral ladder has the American public slipped, robbing the treasury of millions, hardly gains a notice in the public press much less the years of headlines engendered by "Teapot Dome."

Story after story is being unfolded about unearned profits garnered by thrifty builders on W. H. A. projects. Self-righteous Congressmen are criticizing builders and bureaucrats. I am not inclined to be too harsh on these last two groups. The real culprits are the Congressmen themselves who took, and continue to take my hard-earned tax money and then throw it away on any crackpot scheme that imaginative promoters conjure. So tremendous are the sums being thrown away by Congress and spendthrift Presidents, there is no possibility the scandals can be properly investigated. It was only by the grace of unfriendly bureaucrats I missed falling into the luxurious web which was entrapped so many builders. At the time Vance Air Force Base was reopened, Enid was woefully short of living quarters. I have been mixed up with apartment houses these past thirty-four years, and so far as I am concerned they are only a pain-in-the-neck. But so concerned was I with the relations between the army and Enid, I purchased a two block tract on which to build four apartment houses to help relieve the dwelling shortage.

I even went so far as to have plans and specifications prepared for these buildings. One of the recurring mortgage shortages developed and I was unable to find a lender willing to make a loan commitment. In conference with W. H. A. officials I suggested one structure be started on the chance of eventually getting a loan. I was willing to enter into an agreement to build the other three as soon as I found some financial institution which would agree to let me have the money.

Nothing doing, objected the smart-alecky Federal boys. I started all four buildings right now or I get no loan guarantee commitment from the government. Vainly I pointed out builders in Enid and other cities who were permitted to construct one building at a time. I knew the gentlemen very well and they were perfect-