

A VENT WINDOW VIEW
Gable, Gardner, Gorillas, and Rudolph
April 2016

As a teenaged freshman attending a state college approximately 100 miles from home I was less than enthralled with the idea of spending two plus weeks of vacation over the Xmas Holidays back on the farm. Nonetheless, with the college cafeteria where I was employed closed for the duration, home was my only source of food.

The one bright spot in this gloomy two weeks of isolation back on the farm was that I'd have access to Dad's turquoise and white 1955 Chevy 210. The car had only six cylinders, but its overdrive transmission boosted its speed. (In a test six months earlier I had found that it could do 100 mph on Missouri's two-lane concrete highways.)

Within hours of arriving home on Dec. 23, I was counting the hours that had to pass before I could return to my campus home. Dad apparently recognized my gloom and suggested I contact some of my high school classmates.

This struck me as a great idea except for the fact that most of the guys from my class had joined the Navy or the Air Force. That's when my sister mentioned that one of the girls from my class, Della Mae, was spending the Holidays with her parents.

"Bingo!" I borrowed Dad's car and drove the ten miles to the town where she lived just two blocks from the edifice in which we had attended high school. It turned out that Della Mae, who was as bored with home life as me, was quite pleased by my offer of an outing. On Christmas Eve I collected her in Dad's car and headed for the county seat. Like most every burg in that rural corner of Missouri that small city was covered with Christmas decorations and bright lights. However, it was graveyard quiet. As I circled the courthouse square, not another car was stirring, *not even a mouse*. There was a vehicle parked in front of the theater and, upon noticing that, I parked nearby, bought tickets, and led my date into the theater where I chose seats in the center section about five rows in and next to the right-hand aisle. Another couple had seats midway down in that section; otherwise the theater was empty.

The featured movie "***Mogambo***" starred Clark Gable as a big-game hunter in Kenya where Ava Gardner falls in love with him. Trouble ensues when Grace Kelly and her guy hires Gable to take them on a safari after gorillas. Jealousy and spite soon becomes the focus of a battle for Gable's attention between the two females. Soon Gable is eying Kelly and Gardner's temper flares.

The movie had neared its midway point when Della Mae and I departed; we had decided that we'd rather listen to Christmas carols on the car radio. Such tunes are hardly romantic, but on that Xmas Eve we enjoyed a friendly kind of companionship. Carolers sang and sleigh bells rang as Christmas music poured forth from the car's AM radio. Certainly, with the volume turned up, that was not a *Silent Night*.