

THINGS IN MOTION...

All things are in motion and nothing is at rest ... you cannot go into the same (river) twice. —Heraclitus (540?-480?) B.C.

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GOING IN A NEW DIRECTION

I HAVE NEVER felt that I would be satisfied to live in a manufactured house. For three consecutive generations the men in my family were carpenters; builders of houses, bridges, or pie safes. In some areas of Randolph and Early County, Georgia, houses are still in use since my father built them in 1918. A manufactured house seemed “flimsy” to me—not a structure to live in permanently. For that reason, I never considered living in a retirement community in which the housing was “manufactured.”

Recent events in my neighborhood forced me to consider selling my 1960-built concrete block house. I had ridden out several hurricanes in that sturdy building and I had doubts about finding another place of equal strength—at a price that I could afford from the proceeds of selling my old house. The housing boom was in serious decline in my area—replacement homes were expensive; it was going to be a challenge!

Several years ago, I had visited one of my former high school classmates in a retirement community which featured these manufactured houses. His house was nice and included many pluses, I thought, although the fact remained: it was essentially a mobile home constructed on a permanent foundation. Other aspects of living in this retirement community were infinitely more appealing than the houses. Several hours later I drove home very much impressed by the planning that had gone into establishing that community. I promised myself then that if ever I left my present location, this would be where I wanted to hang my hat. Five years later, it

was time to seek out that hat rack. My friend had moved away in the interim, but my mind was set on finding a place there. I arranged to visit and to look at available houses.

Now I began to examine these manufactured houses with an eye toward living in one of them. I noted the construction, layout, ease of maintenance, and all the other things that enter into the purchase of a house. It was obvious that the builder had simplified as much as possible, yet had included all the features that make a house comfortable to live in. Except for withstanding hurricane winds, I felt the houses were adequate, to say the least.

How about the possibility of storm damage? If a hurricane struck, my house might be lost; there was no question about that risk. Yet, in the thirty-five years of this community's existence, no damage had been done by storms. After considering all factors, I decided to buy a home in the community.

Moving is never really a fun activity to me, and each move brings the promise that this one will be the last move I make. That last promise was good for thirty years, but at an age when no physical exertion is without consequences, I dreaded moving again. Nevertheless it came to pass in short order and suddenly I was meeting my neighbors, accepting invitations to various community functions, and becoming established as a newcomer. I soon realized that waving at everyone you meet is something that happens automatically here; voicing a cheerful greeting is almost as certain as the sunrise. There are more than two dozen active clubs in operation not counting the various sports teams that play year round. In short, I find that living in this retirement community is a way of life, a *lifestyle*.

As to the uncertain durability of manufactured houses, there is still an element of risk where storms are concerned, and insurance rates bear witness to losses that have occurred, yet the kind of living to be enjoyed and the spirit of human kindness that pervades such places as I now call home make it a certainty that no one here will ever feel alone and helpless whatever storms may strike—and that makes the matter of housing a non-issue. #

--Hugh Singleton