

### It Really Blew My Mind

In September of 1989, I saw my old friend Charlie. He had come to prison around 1945 and served a term of 26 years and 8 months. He had been out of prison now for almost 20 years. I don't know if people actually live a lot more time back then, but the images were there that made it seem that way. I remember one man who had come to prison in a stage coach in 1911, and another who had been in for 38 years. It was a time when everything you owned had to be in one box under your bed and most prison schools only went to 8th grade. When Charlie came to prison a relative bought him a 25 year subscription to a daily newspaper. The newspaper went out of business before he was released in 1971.

As we talked, I asked Charlie: "What was the most amazing thing you ever saw in prison all those years?" He thought for a few moments and you could almost sense the months and years passing through his mind. Then he responded: "What really blew my mind more than anything else, was back in 1968 when I saw the first men in prison go to college. I don't think anyone at that time believed you could go to college while in prison. In the whole 26 years, I never saw anything like that. It really did blow my mind!"