

# Nine-Tenths of a Century

April 2025. Fred Gielow

[1] When I was in the **shower** just a couple **weeks** ago,  
A **thought** popped in my head: soon I'll be **90. 90! Whoa!**  
That's **no** big deal I thought, because a birthday comes each **year**.  
But **wait**, perhaps it **is**. I never **thought** that I'd **get** here.

[2] I'm **older** than Joe **Biden**. Yup. And **Donald Trump** as **well**.  
Each **one** is no spring **chicken**, as we **all** can clearly **tell**.  
I'm **older** than **Alaska**, as a **state**, **Hawaii**, **too**.  
Since I was **born**, the flag has added **stars!** **Well**, just a few.

[3] When I was **born** in '35, the first canned **beer** was sold.  
Then, **later**, ballpoint **pens** could write a story you wish told.  
And **Teflon** **also** came along **improving** our **cookware**.  
Why, I am **older-by** **ten full years** than **old-timer** **Smokey-the-Bear!**

[4] I'm **older** than the **helicopter** and jet **engine**, **too**.  
And **TVs** showing living colors: red and green and blue.  
I'm **older** than the **Colt** Revolver, **but** just by a **year**.  
I'm **older** than the **Jeep!** My gosh, I'm **older-than** Bud Lite **beer!**

[5] I'm **older-than** polyester, that appeared in '41.  
And **older** than **the-electric** guitar, that Les Paul played for fun.  
I'm **older-than** cans of aerosol **spray**, that were **invented** then,  
And **silly** putty, that we played with in those days back when.

[6] I'm **older** than the atom **bomb** **and-the** oven **microwave**.  
I'm **older** than transistors and their **products** that we **crave**.  
I'm **older** than the **Frisbee**, **Velcro**, **video** tape, and **more**.  
I'm **older** than the **Phillips-head** screw, that never existed before.

[7] I'm **older** than the **hard** disk and the **floppy** disk, 'tis **true**.  
I'm **older** than the **solar** battery, **lasers**, **Kevlar**, too.  
I'm **older** than the **slinky**, Rubik's **Cube**, and **GPS**,  
And **lithium-ion** **batteries**, and the World Wide **Web**. Oh, **yes!**

[8] I'm **older** than Burt **Reynolds** and Glen **Campbell**, **many** more:  
Jim **Henson**, Julie **Andrews**, Dustin **Hoffman**, old Al **Gore**,  
Bill **Cosby**, Kenny **Rogers**, Robert **Redford**, Natalie **Wood**.  
I **wonder** if I **should** go on. I **don't** think that I **should**.

[9] Good **grief**, I'm **older-than** **Superman!** → Three **years** **older-than** **he** am **I**.  
I'm **also** **older-than** **Batman** and that side-kick **Robin** guy.  
I'm **older-than** **many** comics folks, including **Charlie Brown!**  
I'm **older** than **McDonald's** and the **Ronald-McDonald** **clown**.

[10] I'm **older** than "That Old, Black **Magic**," **song** of '42,  
And **also** that old **favorite**, "**I've-Got-a-Gal** in Kalamazoo,"  
And **even** that old-timer, "Don't Sit **under** the **Apple Tree**,"  
And **Crosby's** "I'll Be Home for **Christmas**," **written-in** '43.

[11] And "**Oh**, What a Beautiful **Morning**," **also** **written-in** '43,  
The **Gershwin** brother's hit: "They Can't Take That **away** from Me."  
I'm **older-than** "Pennies from **Heaven**." → Older, **too**, than "**Once** in a While,"  
And Jimmy **Durante's** hit, "You Gotta **Start** off Each **Day** with a **Smile**."

[12] I'm **older-than** **M&Ms**, that famous, **tasty**, **candy** treat,  
And **Almond Joy** and **Hershey's Krackel**; aren't **they** fun to eat.  
I'm **older-than** packaged **cake** mix, like you buy **right** at the **store**,  
And **too**, **Bazooka bubblegum**, that I'd **chew** '**til-my** **mouth** was sore.

[13] The **years** have added up and they now number quite a **few**.  
And **time** has done some **dirty** work, as you'd **expect** it to.  
My **hair** is now **transforming**; it is turning rather **gray**.  
My **memory** slips. My **sight** has clearly **seen** a better **day**.

[14] My **hearing's** dulled, my **strength** has waned; I'm **not** who I once **was**.  
Time's **degradation** **slowly** takes effect. It **always** **does**.  
I've **visited** the **hospital** for physical **repair**  
And had some **surgeries** or **tests** done **each** time I was **there**.

[15] Of **course!** That's the **agreement**. That is **simply** how life **works**.  
It has so many **twists** and **turns**, **unknowns**, **surprises**, **quirks**.  
But, **life** rewards us **all** with **blessings**, **bountiful** and **rich**,  
While **also** tossing **here** and **there** a **discomforting** **glitch**.

[16] My **brother** died at 82 and **Dad** at 83.  
Who'd ever think I'd outlive **them** and **90** I would **see**?  
I **told** myself at 88 I'd **not** see 89.  
I'd lived a **long** and **fruitful** life, so **that** would be just **fine**.

[17] But, **fate** has **smiled** and sure **enough**, I'm **here** and still **alive**,  
Though there were times I **wondered** if **indeed** I would **survive**.  
It's **strange**; I sure don't **feel** as though I'm **90** years of age.  
I **am** not yet **prepared** to make an **exit** from this **stage**.

[19] So, **90** maybe **is** an age that's **special**, **after** all.  
A **time** to **celebrate**, before that **final**, **fateful** **fall**.  
So, **is** a celebration planned? And grand **festivities**?  
With **guests** and **food** and **merriment**, and fun **activities**?

[20] **Last** year, I was just 89, **but-a** **special** treat was planned:  
A **stay** at a **resort**, right on the **Gulf**, and it was **grand!**  
The **hotel** was **luxurious**. We had a **dandy** time,  
With **Bob** and **Tim** and their wives, it was **first** rate! It was **prime!**

[21] **This** year, will there be **something**? → Maybe just a **gathering**?  
It **doesn't** have to be a big **affair** or fancy **fling**.  
I'm **wondering** if **Leo** and **Brianna** could be **there**.  
How **nice** if we could – **all** of us – a **tasty** **dinner** **share**.

[22] But, I don't **need** a party. → I don't **need** to celebrate.  
It's **just** a day in April. It is **just** another **date**.  
My **family** is **busy**; one and all have things to **do**.  
A long trip **here** is something I don't wish to **put** them **through**,

[23] So, **look**, it seems, **amazingly**, I've reached a **milestone**:  
Nine **tenths** of a whole **century**! My **gosh**, my mind is **blown**!  
That's **32-thousand-8-hundred 72-days** that have gone by.  
Or, 10-**thousand**, 4-**hundred**, **64-times** the **value-of pi**.

[24] I've lived a **long** and **lucky life**. My **blessings overflow**,  
**And** 1935 just doesn't seem that **long** ago.  
The **seasons pass**. Time marches **on**. The **days** skip quickly **by**,  
For **90 years** of **lifetime**. Goodness **sakes**, how **lucky am-I!**