

5/7/68
Dispatch

Aunt Polly



missing hour

About this time each year Aunt Polly gets all hot and bothered because they move the clocks ahead and she can't figure out what happened to that hour. I tell her not to get too concerned over it. It's not the first time she ever lost an hour. Knowing Aunt Polly as I do, though, I'm sure she'll make up for this lost time in no time at all!

The movement of time is fascinating, and the ticking away of the clock tells us that the present becomes the past in the twinkling of an eye.

As Aunt Polly and I were talking the other day about where this "lost hour" went, and as we listened to her clock on the mantle tick-tocking away, it occurred to me that every time the hands of that clock move 13-1/2 seconds, there is a net gain of one person in this country. Last November 20 at about 11 o'clock in the morning, the 200 millionth American was born. The Russians reached this number in 1955, India in 1875, and China in 1762.

In another 30 years the Census Bureau tells us we will add another 100 million. One hundred million in just 30 years! It took this country 300 years--to 1915-- to reach the first 100 million. We've doubled that number in just 52 years. What will life be like in 30 more years with 300 million people in this country? How many schools, highways, hospitals, and houses will have to be built? How many parks, libraries, and churches will be needed? If you think on this sort of thing you'll lose sleep, according to Aunt Polly.

What does all of this have to do with social security, you ask. Probably a great deal. In 1915 when our population was at the first one hundred million, our cost for social welfare was very little. It's increased a hundred-fold--to \$90 billion. As more and more people live longer and longer, always demanding the best of care per the American way, we are apt to become more deeply involved in programs that provide for medicare, re-

tirement, and disability.

In the year 2000 most of us will be living in large urban areas and there will be nearly 50 million over age 65. Social security checks will put a great strain on the post office, Aunt Polly says.

For the present though, social security provides protection for the young and old when death, disability, or retirement occurs. Together

with life insurance, savings, and other investments, the average American family--young and old--can be assured of financial protection--protection that makes for even more security for us who have not yet had to experience these critical events.

In the meantime, with each tick of the clock, there's another cradle to rock.

Date 10/16/68

Form HEW-123
(9-54)

Aunt Polly Says:

By Bishop Holliman
Social Security Manager
Cookeville, Tennessee

Where did it go?

It was only yesterday that Aunt Polly was counting the days until the warmth from the sun would tell her it was time to set out tomato plants or that tomorrow would be the day to plant asters or marigolds; or that next week she could get on with her spring house cleaning. Now it's all gone. Summer passes so soon, and you wonder where it went.

William James, the philosopher, said the most beautiful words in the English language are "summer afternoon", and who can disagree? Summer afternoon-words that conjure up beautiful images in one's mind and paint pictures of happy, carefree afternoons by a babbling brook; green meadows with flowers blooming; or children playing on a hillside with the cool breezes whistling across their paths.

But now it's autumn, and Aunt Polly, like all the rest of us, is asking where did all the summer afternoons go? They vanished so soon, and there were so many things we were going to do -- so many places to see and friends to visit.

Fall is the traditional time of the year when people begin to think of retirement. Aunt Polly says this concern stems from the natural desire to "store up" for the winter, and I suppose she's right. Bring in the firewood, fill the cellar with apples, pumpkins, and canned goods. Let the north wind blow!

A monthly social security check is the modern way of fortifying oneself and family against the winds of adversity. When retirement comes, a monthly check is more important in today's world than a smoke house filled with hams-- (It's good if you can have both!)

What do I need to do to get my social security started is a question Aunt Polly has heard many times -- (What do I need to

So, I will. First, a person should file a claim with us at least three months before he is ready to retire. Both men and women can get payments at age 62. A widow of a deceased worker can draw at age 60.

We always need some proof of the person's age. A record established soon after birth is usually the best evidence. If there is no birth certificate, or a baptismal record, the next best evidence may be a federal census record, an old insurance policy, or other old family document. You should not delay filing a claim even though you do not have proof of age.

So if you're soon to reach that golden age of retirement, you should get in touch with the Social Security Office any day now. This is a matter you should take care of before winter sets in. We'll be looking for you.

1969

Aunt Polly

By BISHOP HOLLIMAN
Social Security Manager
Cookeville, Tennessee

It was bound to happen!

With all the uprisings in the cities, on the school campuses, and everywhere else, I guess you couldn't expect the aged to be immune to such goings-on. And so, it was tongue-in-cheek that Aunt Polly told me of an incident she'd "read about."

It seems the police had to be called out to a Home for the Aged to quell an uprising that was taking place when 70 and 80 year old residents "re-volted" against the "take over" of the Home by young 35 year old whipper-snappers.

Aunt Polly, hardly able to contain herself, she was so amused by it all, said the "report" claimed that some of the more determined activists burned their Medicare cards; others flung bottles of Geritol all over the place, and a few, to show their contempt for the Establishment, smashed the TV set when the Lawrence Welk program came on.

The demonstration became more violent when wheel chair patients clashed over who would be first in line to see the social security representative when he came out to answer some questions about Medicare.

It all started, so the story goes because some of the folks turned off their hearing aids when the manager at the Home tried to talk to them on observing the rules about turning in early, etc.

Now, I don't believe any of this really happened, and I know Aunt Polly doesn't either, but it does make a good story.

It did provide me with the occasion to tell Aunt Polly that in some cases folks in a skilled nursing home can have some of their stay there paid by Medicare-Not all of it, perhaps, but some. In some cases, up to 20 days can be paid for after a person has been in the hospital and his doctor prescribes further treatment by a skilled nurse in a nursing facility. If extended treatment is necessary, Medicare may pay for additional days, but it will not pay at all for custodial care in a nursing home.

From now on I intend to exercise more caution when I'm around Aunt Polly and others like her. I understand Medicare beneficiaries don't trust anybody under age 65!

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Aunt Polly

Aunt Polly was furious the other day when she read the news there was a shortage of fruit jars! Who would have ever thought the day would come when this item would be in short supply?

In the long-ago time before deep-freeze boxes, TV dinners, and frozen foods came on the scene, getting the jars ready for summer canning was as routine as getting ice out of the electric refrigerator is now. In Aunt Polly's younger days, housewives took pride in the number of jars of peaches, beans, and tomatoes they filled each growing season. What one canned during the summer became an essential element in how the family fared during the winter as far as good food was concerned. Even though canned goods sold for six for a quarter on Saturdays in the chain stores, the food put up in the summer was a big factor in helping the family make ends meet, because, as some of you remember, wages were all of 20 cents an hour on many jobs, and a lot of folks weren't making enough to buy much at the store.

But the last 25 years have seen us bursting at the seams as far as progress is concerned, and canning stuff sort of went the way of men's straw hats and passenger trains, as super-markets developed and deep-freeze boxes become common place items.

But, now today, with the cost of living on the upswing, more and more families are putting in gardens and canning produce to help them fight the battle of inflation. All of that is well and good, except they can't buy the jars to put the stuff in. (Aunt Polly surmises they have to can as the freeze boxes are probably full.)

"How do folks on social security get by these days?" Aunt Polly asked the other day as we talked about this dilemma.

Not easy, I replied. Everybody on a fixed income must be having it rough as the cost of everything seems to go in only one direction and that is up.

Fortunately, though, social security checks will be raised in the future as the cost of living goes up. As the consumer price index rises, social security checks will be increased automatically to provide additional income to cope with price rises. July 1975 is the earliest such an increase can come about under this provision in the law.

With that bit of information, Aunt Polly set out to round up some more fruit jars!

summer go?



Aunt Polly

By Bishop Holliman

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The first tinge of autumn each year raises the question for Aunt Polly: "Where did the summer go?"

It was just a few short weeks ago, it seems, that the first daffodils were bursting in bloom. The dogwoods were blossoming all over; and new ground was being plowed in preparation for planting. Life was so full of promise and hope.

But now it's all passed. The corn stalks have dried up; the tomato vines, while still bearing, no longer look green and hearty, and thought and concerns now have to do with gathering in, as the "melancholy days" are come, portending even more lonely, depressing days as winter looms just a couple of full moons away.

That's the way life is, though, as Aunt Polly so well knows. At best, life is short, and what we do must be done quickly. If you don't believe it, ask one who has seen upwards of 80 winters come and go and he'll tell you "it seems like only yesterday that it was the springtime of life."

The kind of philosophy is so well expressed about Cecil Rhodes, the British scholar and explorer. On his tombstone are carved these words: "So much to do, so little time in which to do it."

What does all this have to do with a recitation on social security? Well, Aunt Polly, it has a lot to do with it.

Unfortunately, many people believe that social security benefits will take care of all their economic needs when death, disability or retirement of the breadwinner occurs. But that is not the case. Social security, while serving as the base on which economic security is built, was never intended to solve all economic needs at these critical times. Other forms of savings such as bank accounts, insurance, and home ownership, will be needed if one is to live adequately when earnings have stopped.

Instead of asking "where did the summer go?" so many of us are asking, "where did all the years go? There were so many things we meant to do."

Before too many summers and winters have elapsed, it's a good idea while one is still on the young side of life to establish a savings account, or invest in bonds or life insurance, so he will have enough, along with his social security, to tide him over the lean years when income from a job is no longer there.

The years are going to pass, whether we do anything with them or not. We may as well fill them up with something. Aunt Polly would urge me to suggest not only should we provide during our working years investments to be reaped when we retire, but she would say also that "when all is said and done, all we have left is what we have given away."

I'm sure, as usual, Aunt Polly is right.



Cookevillian recalls invasion of Sicily in '43

Bishop Holliman served as a radioman aboard a destroyer

By BISHOP HOLLIMAN

Special to the HERALD-CITIZEN

July 10 marked the 60th anniversary of one of the decisive battles of World War II. It was on that date in 1943 that American forces invaded Sicily, an action that presaged the defeat of Nazi Germany.

I still have vivid memories of that event, recently refreshed from reading again an account I wrote of it at the time. There were 3,300 ships of all kinds in the invading fleet, and I was a radioman on one of them, the *USS Butler*, a destroyer that had been in commission less than a year.

Winston Churchill called the Sicilian invasion "the end of the beginning" in the fight against Hitler, as that operation paved the way for landings that would follow in Italy and France.

The invasion was plagued by a fierce storm that came up the morning of Friday, July 9. We had been in the Mediterranean since June 22, and all that time the sea had been almost as calm as Center Hill Lake. But on that morning the waves were

breaking over the bows of the ships, and the little destroyers were bouncing up and down.

The weather report from the bridge, speaking nautically, said we were in for a "stiff blow." That was an understatement. The gods of war were conspiring against us, it seemed.

By nightfall the sea was so rough and heavy we could hardly stand or move about. A special "last meal" had been prepared but most of it was wasted. Even the old-timers who had been at sea a long time were reeling.

We wondered how the army troops in the crowded transports would have the stamina to wade ashore and fight. If I could have, I think I might have joined them just to get my feet on land again.

The captain had explained earlier what the *Butler's* role in this invasion would be: We would shell the beaches at Gela on the southern coast ahead of the invading troops, conduct anti-submarine patrol and defend against German bombers that were expected before daybreak.

We would man battle stations at 11 o'clock Friday night; zero hour was set for 2:30 Saturday morning.

The captain also told the crew he expected to fight the ship to the last man — and "there will be no thought of giving up or abandoning ship," he said.

None of the crew doubted his word. The "Old Man" was a regular navy man, only 39-years old. To this day I shudder to think of the responsibility he had in leading a bunch of rag-tag sailors like myself into battle.

In spite of the forces that seemed to be working against us, we were able to carry on, and at 5 o'clock I went on watch in the radio shack, which was also my battle station. When my watch was over at 10, I used my life belt for a pillow and lay down to await the call to general quarters.

At 11 o'clock, I roused up and heard the captain speaking from the bridge, describing the scene from his vantage point. He reminded us again of what our job was about, and then he read some verses from the Bible, recited a religious poem and the Lord's Prayer.

He added that he had wanted to hold a church service that evening but the rough weather had made that impossible.

In spite of the raging sea, the invading troops went ashore as scheduled. The biggest threat the navy had that morning came from the German air force. Some of our ships were hit and suffered casualties. Some of our own planes veered into the wrong airspace and dropped bombs on allied ships.

The order came over the TBS (telephone between ships) to "quit firing on friendly planes," which all the ships were doing. Our captain called back: "Tell those friendly planes to quit dropping bombs."

For several days after the invasion, we were at battle stations off and on, and we continued to fire on shore installations and enemy tanks. As the fighting moved inland, we patrolled along the southern coast, mainly dodging — and firing on — enemy aircraft that constantly harassed us. We moved back and forth

from Algiers to Palermo.

On one of our patrols we plucked a German flyer out of the sea. He had been shot down four days earlier, he told us. He was given dry clothes, fed and doctored and turned over to the army in Palermo.

As the fighting on land wound down, the role of the *Butler* diminished. We were able to return to Gela where a working party went ashore and collected a host of guns and other military implements the Italians had abandoned.

The souvenirs were given to the crew through the luck of the draw. I still have an Italian rifle grenade that's rested on my bookshelf these many years.

Rumors had been rampant that we would stay in the "Med" several months longer. But in only 39 days the army had run the enemy out of Sicily and the *Butler* was on the way back to the States.

We arrived in New York the last week in August. The ship had suffered no casualties nor damage from the enemy, and except for a mishap or two the night of the storm, no one had received a scratch.

Upon our return to New York, the airwaves were filled with tunes from a Broadway show that had opened in March. It was called **Oklahoma**. I picked up a free ticket at the USO and saw my first Broadway production.

Little could I have known then we'd still be singing "Oh What a Beautiful Morning!" into the next century!

All of that happened 60 years ago this summer.

How young we all were then!

Bishop Holliman is the former manager of the Cookeville district Social Security office — and a writer at heart. This recollection comes from his and his wife's Woodburn, Indiana, home.

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Sunday, July 20, 2003

www.herald-citizen.com

Depot Getting Up Steam

The announcement the other day that most railroads are dropping the cabooses from the end of their trains did not catch all of us train lovers by surprise.

For sometime now, we've known the end was in sight. The end of the caboose, that is. Last summer, as we drove through the Arizona desert, looking across what seemed like a 100 miles, we could see a Southern Pacific freight highballing down the tracks without the little red car tagging along behind. It was an odd sight.

Someone has likened the train without its caboose to a sentence without a period. That's a good comparison, I would say.

Several years ago in Europe, we saw freight trains rolling along without cabooses, and I thought the European railroads just couldn't afford them, that we were more advanced in this country in that our trains still carried what a respectable train ought to carry. I didn't know that Germany and France were that far ahead of us in technology.

Since the caboose, like the mainline express, will be a thing of the past, one wonders why we haven't been able to acquire one to go with our depot museum here in Cookeville.

Well, we're still trying. As you know, we were promised one by a Seaboard official. He told us the railroad would haul the caboose up here from Atlanta and set it on the siding by the depot and



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With
Bishop Holliman

12-8-85

not charge us a penny. A right neighborly deed, we thought!

But, alas and alack, Seaboard headquarters in Jacksonville, Florida, didn't understand it that way; so those plans were side-tracked before they could get out of yard.

We haven't given up hope yet and, surely, with the abandonment of all cabooses, one will become available and someday we'll see it resting beside our depot.

In the meantime, we are moving full-speed ahead in restoration of the depot, and plans to convert it into a museum are on schedule.

Thanks to city manager Luther Mathis and City Council members, central heat and air have been installed and other improvements made to the building.

A "Committee to Preserve the Depot" board has been appointed by the Council to oversee the operations of the depot and to supervise the pro-

(See ROUND, p. 2, col. 4)

'Round...

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grams and development that will go on there. This board will meet next Tuesday night, Dec. 10, at 7 o'clock at the depot to plan activities that will lead up to the Homecoming '86 celebration to be held June 29, 1986.

Jack Barton, head of the newly-appointed board, says the Tuesday night meeting is open to the public, and he invites interested persons who have ideas about developing the depot to come out and make their suggestions.

Other members of the Depot Board are Rob Schabert, vice-chairman; Don Cavin, treasurer; Robert DuBey, assistant treasurer; Mozelle Medley, secretary; and Joan Derryberry and Mary Jean Delozier.

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Pearl Harbor Remembered: "When they told me the Japs were overhead, I couldn't believe it," recalled Bill Badgley this week as he relived that experience which occurred 44 years ago yesterday.

Bill, now a math professor at Tennessee Tech, was an assistant engineering officer on the USS Aylwin, a destroyer, tied up at Pearl Harbor on that fateful Sunday morning, December 7, 1941.

"I had been in the Navy only 4 or 5 months, having completed my '90-day wonder' course that made me an officer," Bill said. "And since the chief engineer was ashore on weekend liberty, I was the only officer on ship that morning."

Bill remembers hearing all the shooting and shouting when he came up on deck...The guns firing...Planes in the sky...Smoke and fire

everywhere. "I saw both the Oklahoma and Arizona go down, and believe me, an experience like that will make you grow up in a hurry."

Well, Bill had a chance to do a lot of "growing up" before he came marching home again. He spent the next two years in the Pacific, dropping depth-charges on Japanese subs, shooting down planes and sinking ships.

By the time it was all over, his ship had engaged the Japanese in battle at Midway, the Coral Sea and in the Aleutian Islands.

Bill and his wife, Mary, who live in Sherwood sub-division, are natives of Birmingham and have been in Cookeville since 1962. "I was teaching in Ohio when Dr. Ralph Boles, head of the Math Department, asked me if I wanted to come back South again. I immediately jumped at the chance, and we've been here ever since," he said.

While talking with Bill about "where we were and what we were doing" on that day FDR said would "live in infamy," we discovered we'd both grown up not far apart in Birmingham. He did his under-graduate work at Howard College (now Samford University), a Baptist school on the east side of town, while I attended Birmingham-Southern, a Methodist school, on the westside.

In the days before Pearl Harbor, the annual Thanksgiving clash between Howard and Southern at Legion Field was the biggest sports attraction Birmingham put on.

But that was in a more simple, innocent time when we listened to the Hit Parade on Saturday night, sat in the balcony at the Alabama Theater on Friday night and heard Stan Malotte play the organ and went swimming at Cascade Plunge out in East Lake in the summer.

Has it really been 44 years, Bill? It seems like only yesterday.

Mr. Jim Recalled

A few years ago, Minnie Pearl, the Grand Ole Opry star, wrote a book about her life. In plugging the book on TV, she told of her humble beginnings in her mythical hometown of "Grinders Switch," and she made some profound comments that bespeak of a wisdom not generally associated with the entertainment world.

"Grinders Switch" Minnie Pearl said, "is a state of mind. "It's a place in our imagination where life is simple, love exists, and security is represented by family and friends."

As I listened to her tell about this place that exists only in her imagination, I concluded that all of us need a "Grinders Switch" in our lives to give us stability — the North Star that helps us set our course and gives us direction.

"Grinders Switch" can be our Rock of Gibraltar — the source of our strength and courage to face the vicissitudes of life. It can be the line we draw between right and wrong. It can be the spot beyond which we will not go and from which we will not retreat. It can be the establishment of principles and values that give orderliness and meaning to our lives



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in a very complex, confusing world.

Furthermore, our "Grinders Switch" can represent absolutes — things one can believe in, can hold on to, knowing, that come what may, there is a place of refuge where truth, love and security exist. A person, a truth, or a home one can believe in and always come back to.

All of us need a "Grinders Switch" in our lives, especially in the embodiment of a person we can look up to, respect, and emulate.

Standing tall and straight as a California redwood, he did not bend or break when the winds of doubt and uncertainty swept through the forest. You see, he had his own "Grinders Switch" and consequently he was

(See ROUND, pg. 2, col. 3)

the lumber. And her parents believed in the value of hard work—they let her find her own direction.

But none of this made her look or seem masculine, not even when

"I just work and keep my mouth shut," Carolyn says, smiling.

Asked for her opinion on the growing role of women in all fields of work, she laughs quietly and says, "I don't know—I never

Carolyn has already brought high honor to Putnam County and hopes to bring home the top national award.

She'll finish college next year and go right on working at the sawmill.

Round...

(Continued From Page 1)

able to serve his church, his community, his family and business with integrity, assurance and conviction.

My first recollection of "Mr. Jim" was of a visit we made — soon after I came to Cookeville — to a prospective church member. Being a newcomer myself, I was reluctant to go calling on others so soon, but off he and I went one night to invite this person to attend our church.

In the course of the visit, we soon learned our host was a member of another church, had no intentions of becoming a member of our church, and furthermore, was more interested in serving us alcoholic refreshments than he was in discussing the work of the Almighty.

Mr. Carlen and I retreated as gracefully as we

could, assuring this "lost sheep" that his name must have been given to us in error, and that we'd make no further attempt to entice him from his own congregation.

Mr. Carlen loved to tell about this experience when he and I were together and the matter of church visitation would come up. He would always laugh heartily and, of course, embellish the story more and more each time he told it.

As the years passed, and I had the privilege of working with Mr. Carlen in other church and community activities, I was impressed by his sincerity and faithfulness to those programs and issues in which he believed and to which he gave his time and money.

In more ways than one, he was a "tower of strength," and it was refreshing and heartening to look upon one who still adhered to those values that inspire us for the living of these days.

All of us need a "Grinders Switch" in our lives, and James Carlen was one for our time.

My Brush With History

The Day FDR Came To Town

The Highballer - 1995

September 19, 1940, was a date that stays embedded in your memory no matter how old you get if you were on hand to witness that scene in Jasper, Alabama, that day!

Jasper is a sleepy little town about 30 miles west of Birmingham and was the home of William Bankhead, the congressman, who was also Speaker of the House of Representatives in the Roosevelt administration. It was the memorial service in the Methodist Church, following Bankhead's untimely death, that brought FDR to town on a special train, with an entourage of cabinet members, congressmen and news media. It was that occasion that also brought three college students from Birmingham-Southern College and thousands of other Alabamians into town to witness the going on that day.

The Bankheads were prominent people in Alabama. The Speaker's brother was a senator, his daughter, Tallulah, was star on the Broadway stage at the time. As an important man in Washington, his death was sure to attract attention all across the nation, bringing so many folks into town the National Guard was on hand to control the crowd.

I was one of the three college students who decided to cut class and go to Jasper that day to be part of the excitement and hoop-la. We hoped to catch a glimpse of the president and other celebrities who would be there to pay their respects to the fallen Speaker. We did even better than we expected. Let me explain:

When we got to Jasper the town was running over with spectators but we made our way up to the church where the service would be held. One member of this derring-do trio was a member of this church and he knew of a back stairway that would lead us up to what would be the front of the sanctuary. That is, if there were no guards there to thwart our progress. Since admittance to the service was limited, there would be no other way for us to be part of this historic event. Should we dare to enter and go up? We dared and we did!

It's hard to believe now in the kind of world we live in that security was so lax in that time and place. We did not see any guards, no Secret Service men, and the church building was not cordoned off. People seemed to mill about as they wished, so we simply entered, walked up the stairs, opened a door that led into the choir loft, and there we stood, in front of a full house frozen in place and not knowing how we'd escape from this predicament, one we had not anticipated.

All eyes were on us and we didn't know whether to retreat or advance. But only for a few seconds. Everyone had now turned toward the back of the church, for coming down the aisle was the President of the United States, holding on to his military aide as he made his way to a pew that had been designated for him. In all this excitement we stepped down onto the main floor and fell in behind a group of men who had emerged from a side room who

were headed toward the balcony. We heard one of them say they were "the press," so there was nothing for us to do but join them. We did!

Our route to the balcony led right by the President's aisle seat. We could have shaken his hand as we walked by, that's how close we were to him. During the entire service we sat looking down on the President and other Washington big-wigs. Among those we recognized were Sumner Welles, Harry Truman, Madame Perkins. Believe me, that was heady stuff for young college boys in that day, to be in the company of such renowned figures.

All the time though, we were scared we'd be asked for identification or the name of the paper we represented. No one ever questioned our presence or seemed to know we were there. I don't know how we'd have answered or rescued ourselves if our charade had been recognized.

When the service was over, everyone stood until the President made his departure. I looked down from the balcony window and saw him get into the convertible that had driven up on a special platform built just for him. He waved to the crowds on the sidewalk as he drove off to board his special train to return to Washington.

When all had left the church I went down and sat in the pew where the President had sat. I knew that would become a hallowed spot and I could tell my grandchildren someday I'd sat where President Roosevelt had sat. Many years ago I visited the Methodist church in Jasper and there is a plaque in the pew where he sat that says "President Roosevelt sat here" There is nothing though that says Bishop Holliman sat there!!

WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME

This poem was published in the Social Security Magazine in 1976

the Nation's 200th Anniversary

It's parades and baseball on the 4th of July.
It's Irving Berlin and a Bing Crosby lullaby;
It's Thanksgiving, Homecomings and Saturday Football
And the World Series in the early Fall.

It's the school on the corner with its science and Art;
It's the right to work as we all do our part
To make the land better, her people more secure,
And to build a nation that will long endure.

It's her cities, her factories, her farms and her people.
It's the "Church in the Wildwood" with its lofty steeple;
It's your land and mine—the rocks and rills;
The great Smoky Mountains and Dakotas Black Hills
It's a covered wagon crossing the Plains
(Followed later by the streamlined trains).

It's a family outing on a bright summer day
When Mom and Dad and the kiddies play.
It's a boy growing up to be what he can
For in America, every boy can be a man.

It's Jefferson and Lincoln and Teddy and Jack
And Harry and Bess, and Mamie and Ike.
It's Gettysburg, the Alamo and the Lexington Green.
It's November elections and the Washington scene.

It's brotherhood and justice, and freedom from fears
And a trial by a jury of one's own peers.
It's obedience to law — to do or die — The obligation to serve with the right to ask why.

It's the fulfillment of a life to which our forefathers aspired,
Who gave their last measure—as was required—
To insure that we all live in a land that's free—
That's what America means to me!!

IF YOU ASK WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME —
THIS "HOME OF THE BRAVE," AND "THE LAND OF THE FREE" —
IN CASE YOU FORGOT
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT ~~IS~~
AMERICA MEANS TO ME:

WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME

~~WHAT AMERICA MEANS TO ME~~

(This poem was published in the Social Security Magazine in 1976- the nation's 200th anniversary.)

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It's Irving Berlin and a Bing Crosby lullaby;
It's Thanksgiving, Homecomings and Saturday Football
And the World Series in the early Fall.

It's the school on the corner with its science and
Art;
It's the right to work as we all do our part
To make the land better, her people more secure,
And to build a nation that will long endure.

It's her cities, her factories, her farms and her people.
It's the "Church in the Wildwood" with its lofty steeple;
It's your land and mine—the rocks and rills;
The great Smokey Mountains and Dakota's Black Hills.
It's a covered wagon crossing the Great Plains
(Followed later by the streamlined trains).

It's a family outing on a bright summer day
When Mom and Dad and the kiddies play.
It's a boy growing up to be what he can
For in America, every boy can be a man.

It's Jefferson and Lincoln and Teddy and Jack
And Harry and Bess, and Mamie and Ike.
It's Gettysburg, the Alamo and the Lexington Green.
It's November elections and the Washington scene.

It's brotherhood and justice, and freedom from fears
And a trial by a jury of one's own peers.
It's obedience to law – to do or die –
The obligation to serve with the right to ask why.

It's the fulfillment of a life to which our forefathers aspired,
Who gave their last measure—as was required—
To insure that we all live in a land that's free—
That's what America means to me!!

Cookevillian Recalls Invasion Of Sicily In '43

Bishop Holliman Served As A Radioman Aboard A Destroyer

Herald-Citizen – July 20, 2003

July 10 marked the 60th anniversary of one of the decisive battles of World War II. It was on that date in 1943 that American force invaded Sicily, an action that presaged the defeat of Nazi Germany.

I still have vivid memories of that event, recently refreshed from reading again an account I wrote of it at the time. There were 3,300 ships of all kinds in the invading fleet, and I was a radioman on one of them, the *USS Butler*, a destroyer that had been in commission less than a year.

Winston Churchill called the Sicilian invasion "the end of the beginning" in the fight against Hitler, as that operation paved the way for landings that would follow in Italy and France.

The invasion was plagued by a fierce storm that came up the morning of Friday, July 9. We had been in the Mediterranean since June 23, and all that time the sea had been almost as calm as Center Hill Lake. But on that morning the waves were breaking over the bows of the ships, and the little destroyers were bouncing up and down.

The weather report from the bridge, speaking nautically, said we were in for a "stiff blow." That was an understatement.

The gods of war were conspiring against us, it seemed.

By nightfall the sea was so rough and heavy we could hardly stand or move about. A special "last meal" had been prepared but most of it was wasted. Even the old-timers who had been at sea a long time were reeling.

We wondered how the army troops in the crowded transports would have the stamina to wade ashore and fight. If I could have, I think I might have joined them just to get my feet on land again.

The captain had explained earlier what the *Butler's* role in this invasion would be: We would shell the beaches at Gela on the southern coast ahead of the invading troops, conduct anti-submarine patrol and defend against German bombers that were expected before daybreak.

We would man battle stations at 11 o'clock Friday night; zero hour was set for 2:30 Saturday morning.

The captain also told the crew he expected to fight the ship to the last man — and "there will be no thought of giving up or abandoning ship," he said.

None of the crew doubted his word. The "Old Man" was a regular navy man, only 39-years old. To this day I shudder to think of the responsibility he had in leading a bunch of rag-tag sailors like myself into battle.

In spite of the forces that seemed to be working against us, we were able to carry on, and at 5 o'clock I went on watch in the radio shack, which was also my battle station. When my watch was over at 10, I used my life belt for a pillow and lay down to await the call to general quarters.

At 11 o'clock, I roused up and heard the captain speaking

from the bridge, describing the scene from his vantage point. He reminded us again of what our job was about, and then he read some verses from the Bible, recited a religious poem and the Lord's Prayer.

He added that he had wanted to hold a church service that evening but the rough weather had made that impossible.

In spite of the raging sea, the invading troops went ashore as scheduled. The biggest threat the navy had that morning came from the German air force. Some of our ships were hit and suffered casualties. Some of our own planes veered into the wrong airspace and dropped bombs on allied ships.

The order came over the TBS (telephone between ships) to "quit firing on friendly planes," which all the ships ~~were doing~~ ^{OUR CAPTAIN} called back: "Tell those friendly planes to quit dropping bombs."

For several days after the invasion, we were at battle stations off and on, and we continued to fire on shore installations and enemy tanks. As the fighting moved inland, we patrolled along the southern coast, mainly dodging — and firing on — enemy

aircraft that constantly harassed us. We moved back and forth from Algiers to Palermo.

On one of our patrols we plucked a German flyer out of the sea. He had been shot down four days earlier, he told us. He was given dry clothes, fed and doctored and turned over to the army in Palermo.

As the fighting on land wound down, the role of the *Butler* diminished. We were able to return to Gela where a working party went ashore and collected a host of guns and other military implements the Italians had abandoned.

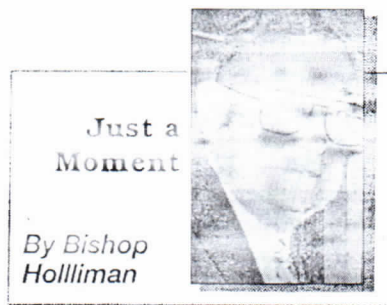
The souvenirs were given to the crew ^{THRU} through the luck of the draw. I still have an Italian rifle grenade that's rested on my bookshelf these many years.

Rumors had been rampant that we would stay in the 'Med' several months longer but in only 39 days the army had run the enemy out of Sicily and the *Butler* was on the way back to the States.

We arrived in New York the last week in August. The ship had suffered no casualties nor damage from the enemy, and except for a mishap or two the night of the storm, no one had received a scratch.

Upon our return to New York, the airwaves were filled with tunes from a Broadway show that had opened in March. It was called ^{OKLAHOMA} Oklahoma. I picked up a free ticket at the USO and saw my first Broadway production.

Little could I have known then we'd still be singing "Oh What a Beautiful Morning!" into the next century. All of that happened 60 years ago this summer. How young we all were then!



~~Live~~ A Year In The Live Of Bishop and Ellen - 2004

With apologies to those who don't give a flip about a year in the life of Bishop and Ellen

January brought the snow---Made our nose and fingers glow.
To escape all the frigid air---We went to Florida to a time-share.
In February, we welcomed back---Grandson Jonathan from Iraq.
He's on duty now in Washington---Standing guard at Tombs of the Unknown,
March brought us quite a thrill---With the birth of Lithe WILL.
A great-grandson, and you can bet---He's the prettiest thing we've seen yet!
Then we cruised the Danube Blue---The Rhine and the Mosel too.
From Amsterdam to Old Vienna---We danced the Polka to a player-piano.

April sprinkled all the hills---With yellow, golden daffodils.
The Mayfields came from out of state---Just to look and meditate.
Then back to Indiana where the Wabash flows---And the new-mown hay accents the nose
Wonderful Woodburn, you're a gorgeous sight---No Wal-Mart here or traffic light!
I ride my bike over all the town---And watch for the train as it comes around.
In the merry month of June---Ellen joins the "Saints" who love to croor
Throughout Indiana---The youngest in the group, she sings soprano.

For Ellen's birthday we always go---Upstate to the antique show.
We stop for lunch along the way---At the "Garden-Gate" Café.
They serve a very tasty dish---and I always order "Fish."
In July I flew to Dallas---To see the Murphys, Bill and Alice
And the latest family heir---Who someday will our fortune share.
Then I rode the train---Through the night and through the rain
To the Capital of our nation---Glenn, Grace and Chris met me at the station.
When my weekend with them was through---Amtrak took me back to Waterloo.

Early on came words I dread: "You have a cataract," the doctor said.
"Not so," to him, I said. "It's a Lincoln Town-Car instead."
(I don't hear well---As you can tell.)
But I was brave and very game---Late in August, out it came.
Now I can see o'er vale and hill---But not clear enough to pay his bill!

Golden was the month of September---But not much that I remember,
Except free meals with the Henneys---(I've learned to count my pennies!!)
October's bright blue weather---Brought Becky, Paul and us together.
We fed them lots of Amish grub---Then took them to the local Pub.
Thanksgiving is a date---The Parks family loves to celebrate.
They use the church to spread the lunch---100 kin---Quite a bunch!
Don gives the prayer and reminisces---And there's not a memory he misses!
For family values, that gets my vote---Politicians, please take note •

Early in December---We made a trip we will remember
To the Great Falls at Niagara---(Ooops, where's my Viagra!!)
The Falls, they are an awesome sight---The water flows both day and night.
The spray gives off an icy chill---Gee, I'd hate to pay that water bill.!

Then back to Tennessee---In time to decorate the Christmas tree,
And to welcome all the family here---With lots of food and Christmas cheer.
And God willing, we'll do it all again next year!!

It Takes More Than "Good People" To Make A Good Town

Herald-Citizen

April 11, 2004

The Herald-Citizen runs an interesting feature each Sunday in which reporter Kathy Naylor "profiles" a different person from the community. She has them tell why they like Cookeville, and they give other fascinating information about themselves.

The response to the question, "What do you like about Cookeville?" is nearly always "the people" or some variation such as "the people are friendly" or "Cookeville has good people" and so on. Some say they like the climate or the location or "it's just the right size."

Kathy's column has caused me to ponder the reasons I have for liking this town and why I've been enamored with it, now going on 40 years.

I like the people of Cookeville too — most of them. I've lived in five other cities and I have liked the people in those places too. I have found there are good folks everywhere, friendly souls, law-abiding citizens, as well as some wayward characters.

I've decided it's not just the presence of "good people" in a town that makes a difference but, rather, it's what those "good people" in that town do that makes you want to call it "my home town." Every city has some worthy, lovely folks, but not every city has a university or a symphony orchestra or an adequate library. It's those extra things that "good people" create that make a city unique and give it character.

Cookeville is fortunate to have an abundance of good people who get things done when there is a call for action, who step up to the plate and deliver when there is need for a hit. Let me count the ways:

I knew there were movers and shakers in Cookeville the first time I came here when I drove up Jefferson Ave. to the Courthouse Square and saw the United Givers sign showing the amount of money raised in the fall campaign. I knew then I was coming to a place that had civic pride and where there was concern for others.

On the night of April 3, 1974, now 30 years ago, the Upper Cumberland was raked by a tornado, killing 11 persons in Putnam County. The next morning more than 600 persons lined up to give blood to aid the injured. At Judge Luke Medley's suggestion, the local Red Cross chapter went to work and raised \$25,000 in less than a week to help grief-stricken families. The Red Cross representative at the time was Miss Edwina Brown.

Other examples of "good people" doing good things:

Mr. Sam Bacon, whose age is now past the century mark, still helps deliver meals to shut-ins, and he continues to be an inspiration to folks who see him at church and at the Senior Center. His wife, Reba, left her mark on Cookeville with the development of an art center and cultivation of art appreciation for all of us.

Mary Jean DeLozier led the movement to turn a vacant train station into a first-class railroad museum, now a destination point for visitors to our town. Our collection of

rolling stock and train memorabilia rivals that found in many other places.

Margery Hargrove brought Broadway to Broad Street each summer, entertaining us with toe-tapping tunes and glamorous stage settings that transported us back to another time and place. My younger daughter and I were in "Oklahoma," which Marge staged in 1971. I was an old farm hand dancing to one of the catchy tunes and I turned left when I should have turned right, throwing the whole skit out of kilter. My stage career ended then and there.

I like Cookeville because it's a bridge-playing town, and I like to play bridge. When we moved here, the three most oft-posed questions to my wife were — "Where do you go to church?" "Where does your husband work?" And "Do you play bridge?"

Most of my closest friends are those I've met around the bridge table. A foursome of "grumpy old men" have had a weekly game going since 1972. Bill Arnett, Ralph Boles and Bruce Plummer, now all gone, were charter members. That was 32 years ago.

I like Cookeville because of the church I attend. When I saw the stained-glass windows and heard Ms. Louis Johnson play the pipe organ, I knew the First

United Methodist would be my church home. My family has had three weddings and a funeral there.

I like Cookeville because it has Maddux Hardware, a store that still has the smell and flavor a hardware store is supposed to have. I don't buy much hardware stuff, but whatever I need, Maddux always has it.

I enjoyed trading at Poteet's Hardware. Once I complained to Bob that the grass seed he sold me didn't come up. His reply: "Well, if you had brought 'em back, I'd have returned your money." Fair enough, I thought.

I like Cookeville at Christmas time because the Courthouse Square and the West Side look quaint and old-fashioned, with street lamps and buildings decked out in holiday lights and yuletide trappings. It shows we're doing our part to help little folks build good memories of their home town.

Those are few reasons I have for liking Cookeville. Some big, some little. But little things are important too. It's the little things you remember and boast about and laugh at when you look back on life in a small town — a town made up of good people.

Bishop Holliman is a former manager of the Cookeville district office of Social Security and a man of many interests. He originated the Social Security question-and-answer column still published in the Herald-Citizen, was at one time a regular feature columnist for the paper and now in retirement continues to write occasionally.



Just a
Moment

By Bishop
Holliman

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A Cure For The Winter Blahs - Baseball Fan Goes To Florida For A Couple Of Spring Training Games

Special To The Herald-Citizen - April ~~11, 2004~~ 2003

Early in March, I joined my son, granddaughter and her husband in their annual pilgrimage to Florida to see the baseball teams in spring training.

At first I was reluctant to make the long drive —700 miles— but then decided that as long as your children want you to be with them, you'd better jump at the chance. So with my wife's blessings I set out for Orlando on a Thursday morning.

The only trouble with that plan was that everyone else wanted to go to Florida at the same time. Interstate 75 was a long parking lot all the way. Driving to Florida during spring break was surely not the best idea I've ever had.

On the way down I stopped in Perry, Ga., for the night. Perry is a popular stopping point for Florida-bound tourists because of its well-known hotel and good food. The next morning the rain and heavy traffic drove me to US 41, the route folks used to take before interstates came along.

For about 80 miles I drove through pecan groves, passed stately homes set far back from the highway and meandered through little towns that remind one of a time when life's tempo was not so fast.

Cordele is just one town like this that Highway 41 takes you through. It seems to have the character that we like to think all of our little towns in the Old South had.

The railroad, of course, cuts right through the middle of things, just as railroads always do. A tourist train that runs from Cordele to Plains, Ga., was standing in the station and a freight was switching around, eager to get on the main line and head out of town.

I drove around the courthouse square and down past the Baptist and Methodist churches and marveled at the white columned homes that grace the avenue.

The whole scene reminded me of a black-and-white postcard that people used to send back home to friends who couldn't afford a Florida vacation.

The heavy influx of visitors to the Orlando area did not deter us from our appointed rounds. Saturday we went to Tampa to see the Yankees play the Pirates and Sunday to Kissimmee for the Mets-Houston game.

When I entered the stadium and gazed out on Legends Field in Tampa, my mind suddenly raced back to the time I was 10-years old, attending my first professional baseball game at Rickwood Field when the Birmingham Barons played the Nashville Vols.

As I sat in the stands and let my mind wander I could see the ghosts from yesteryear scampering around the bases, and I heard the fans cheering for Ray Caldwell and Jim Poole as they did on that long-ago afternoon.

There aren't many absolutes left in life, it seems to me, but the game of baseball still has them, and that is a comforting thought in these trying times. It is still 90 feet between bases, three strikes and you're out and the umpire's call is still law.

The ball parks for the spring games are clean and well kept. The grass after a brief sprinkle, is so green it shines like diamonds and the infield is immaculate. If you are a true-blue fan you'd think anyone could play the game in such a sanitized setting. The crowds for these spring flings begin to gather long before game time. They do not want to miss batting practice and per chance they may get

an autograph from one of the stars. We had bought our tickets in advance and it was good that we had.

By the time the umpire calls out "Play ball" the stands are nearly always filled. Our seats were near home plate, so we got a close-up view of the players as they came to bat. We were especially interested in the Yankee and Mets players since we had seen them so often on TV. But no matter where you sit, you're close to the action.

That's the way it is at the spring games.

Some of the mystique that cloaks the players, though, is lost from seeing them up so close. When they shed their caps and helmets and you can see their faces they are not the 'larger-than-life' figures you had perceived them to be. They all look so young and ordinary you have to ask how they can command the adulation we heap upon them and why the sports media sing their praises so fervently.

An afternoon at the ballpark can run into money for a family with hearty appetites. While the hotdogs and popcorn are the best one can find anywhere, they do not come cheap. I observed that some folks come not to see the game but to eat and drink. But we did both — until the last pitch was thrown.

I asked my son Glenn why they charge such outlandish prices for practice games. He said it was because they have to pay such outlandish salaries. Why do they have to pay them so much, I wondered. I would have played for nothing. Jason reckoned it was the law of supply and demand in

operation. "Not many guys can hit a ball coming at them at 90 miles an hour," he said.

The folks who come to spring practice games are mostly old timers who remember when baseball was played mainly in the daylight hours, as God intended it to be. They are a very subdued and well-behaved bunch even though the public address announcer kept telling us that anyone who misbehaved would be thrown out of the park. Maybe Ins warnings were for security enhancement?

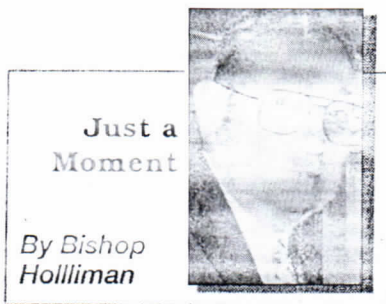
Lots of folks were there from New York, and they cheered lustily for their teams. They applauded appreciatively when a player threw a ball into the stands for a take-home souvenir. You would have thought he had performed a great humanitarian act. Granddaughter Grace was on the receiving end of such a toss from a Yankee player — we've forgotten which one — and that was a thrill for her beyond measure. And for her grandfather too.

Parking for the games is very convenient, meaning you don't have far to walk to get to the stadium. The men and women who handle the parking are from an older generation and that's an encouraging sign. The games give them something to do until their next Social Security check comes.

The usual trappings for a regular season game are present at these spring games. The sun shines brightly on the field, and after the national anthem is sung, the 'boys of summer,' dressed in sparkling clean uniforms, spring from the dugout to take their places on the field and you sit back in your seat, ready to witness the unfolding of a drama that has captured the nation's fancy since 1839.

It's a sure way to cure the winter blahs.

Bishop Holliman of Cookeville is the former manager of the Cookeville district office of Social Security — and a former columnist for the Herald-Citizen. Bishop also started the popular weekly question and answer feature on Social Security back in the 1960's and it continues today.



TAKE OUT

Baseball – That’s Where Decline In “Family Values” Really Began

Herald-Citizen

October 17, 2004

Finally, Bush and Kerry are getting some help in their quest for a return to “family values,” a cause to which they’re devoting countless hours and the bushels of money.

It’s this: Major League baseball is returning to Washington, D.C., next year, and what could be more “family friendly” than baseball?

Once called the nation’s ‘pastime,’ baseball surely is a broad strand in the country’s historic social fabric, right up there with the railroads, country music and Mother’s Day. Anything that diminishes the game, in my opinion, weakens the national spirit.

Now that we’ll have a team back in the capital city ought to renew our hope for better things ahead, no matter who’s elected in November.

But the fact that we need to return to “family values” begs the question: “When did we depart from those values?”

There must have been a time and place that this perceived erosion began. I think I know the answer to that question. The drift began at the end of the Eisenhower era at the beginning of 1960. Ike, you see, was the last president to throw out the first ball to open the baseball season each spring, a tradition that began with President Taft in 1910 and continued until Kennedy became president.

As an ardent fan of the game, who remembers the year Babe Ruth hit his last home run, I am saddened to see the games’ decline and I blame it all on our Presidents.

There was a time in our long-lost youth when the picture of the President throwing out the first ball heralded the coming of spring. We knew that summer was just around the corner, God was in His heaven and all was right with the world.

But not anymore. Presidents who preach about values don’t seem to know or care about the most fundamental one of all, and there seems little likelihood they’ll return to their base.

Franklin D. Roosevelt knew what it was all about, being present and pitching for nine seasons until he was stopped by World War Two. A true fan of the game, FDR was in the stands at Wrigley Field on an October day in 1932 when Babe Ruth made his homerun call — a shot heard ‘round the baseball world.’

Old Harry Truman knew. And General Ike knew. But look at what we’ve had since. The Kennedy clan played touch football, and you have to wonder about them. Johnson loved Beagles and bourbon. Nixon should have been coach of the Washington Redskins. And then there was Clinton. Do I need say more?

Since 1971, there hasn’t been a team in D.C., so it

hasn’t been easy for a President to make the first game each April. But I maintain that if the President, whoever he was, had been serious about family values, he would have gone up to Baltimore to do the honors. Amtrak has a train going up there every 30 minutes.

The President has time to go all over the world, attending summit meetings, entertaining foreign potentates in the White House, making speeches. His absence from the old ballpark tells us what his priorities have been. Not family values, that’s for sure.

The game itself has fallen on hard times since our Presidents no longer give it their endorsements. The players are too ‘picky’ and they’re overpaid. They spit and scratch too much and their pants, like the season, are too long.

The game also has strayed from the traditions and absolutes that gave it such distinctive character. Look, we have lights at Wrigley Field, a designated hitter and a chance that the pennant winner won’t get a shot at the World Series. Can anything be more untraditional than that?

Baseball was once the number one sport, but recent polls show that football is now more popular, and I say that’s a sad day for our country. More and more folks are turning to soccer for their kicks — or to hockey. George Washington warned us against foreign entanglements. No wonder we’re in such a mess.

The future does not look all that promising either Back in the summer, at Fenway Park, ~~Kerry~~ tried to throw the ball and he couldn’t get it to home plate. That does not bode well for the nation if he’s elected.

Bush, when he owned the Texas Rangers, let Sosa get away, and that tells you something about him.

So, my conclusion is, until we get a President who will restore baseball to its sacred place, as is required by the Constitution, we will never return to the faith of our fathers.

Bishop Holliman and his wife divide their time between homes in Cookeville and Auburn, Indiana. He is a former director of the Social Security Administration district office in Cookeville and writes an occasional article for the Herald-Citizen.

Just a Moment
By Bishop Holliman



their

KERRY

You Can Go Home Again

Cookeville Herald-Citizen

May 8, 2005

It was Thomas Wolfe, the writer, who told us we couldn't 'go home again'. But on a recent sun-filled afternoon a couple 'old-timers' did their best to prove Wolfe wrong.

I was one of those 'old-timers' and my long-time friend, 'Huck,' was the other one, and on this particular afternoon we were just two young boys again, trying to recapture a moment of our youth at a place that was dear to our hearts — Rickwood in Birmingham, once the home of the Birmingham Barons baseball team.

Huck is James Pugh who lives in Birmingham. He and I grew up together, played ball together, hiked in the woods together and acted silly around girls. I've always called him 'Huck' and he calls me 'Tom.' That's the way it's been 'as far back as I can remember.

But the cord that's helped hold us together all these years has been our love of baseball as played by the Birmingham Barons when baseball was king in Birmingham. That takes us back to about ¹⁹³⁰ 1920, and that's a long time by anyone's yardstick.

On this spring day a few weeks ago Huck and I finally got our act together and went back to Rickwood Field to our 'field of dreams,' and we could hardly hold back the tears. The ballpark was just as we remembered it from days of long ago when going to Rickwood was about as close to heaven as two young boys could hope to get. If there is such a thing as 'stepping back in time,' this was it.

Rickwood Field is the oldest baseball park in America, having opened in 1910. The Barons played there until 1987 and the Birmingham Black Barons used it for their games until 1963.

Many of the game's great players came through Birmingham and some got their start there. Willie Mays grew up not far from Rickwood and played there in 1948 at age 16. Both Babe Ruth and Ty Cobb cut a shine on its base paths.

Now on the National Register of Historic Places, Rickwood Field is open to the public, and visitors are free to roam the grounds and wander through the stands as ^{their} ~~their~~ memories and dreams lead them. And that's just what Huck and I did. We roamed and we remembered. Huck had played on this field when he was pitching for our high school team in 1939 and 1940, but I had never set foot on the hallowed grounds, and I have to tell you it was a thrilling moment. We began our tour at home plate, stepped on the white bag that was first-base, checked the dugouts where our heroes of yesteryear had sat, then meandered down the foul line all the way to the right-field stands.

From right field we crossed to the deepest point in the park to the center field wall, 421 feet from home-plate.

We left our fingerprints there, as we did on the score board in leftfield that still carries the names of Southern League teams from that golden age, such as Little Rock and Mobile.

But most of what ^{Huck} Huck and I did in our visit to Rickwood was remember. We sat for a long time in the box seats section of the grandstand and looked out on the field and remembered.

We remembered the time we had to walk home after the game because spent our last nickel for a cold. We remembered seeing Ted Williams and Stan Musial in exhibition games on their way back north.

We remembered, faintly, the 1931 Dixie Series game when 43-year-old Ray Caldwell beat a young upstart Houston pitcher whose name was Dizzy ^{DEAN ON HIS} way to ^{the MAJOR LEAGUES AND} overflow crowd witnessed that game, and 50 years later every baseball fan in Birmingham still claimed he was there that day.

We remembered the giants of the game who played for the Barons, such stars as Walt Dropo,

Jim Piersail, Bobo Newsome, Burleigh Grimes, Uncle Bud Clancy and the manager, Clyde Milan.

We remembered the double-play combination that graced the Baron infield when we were young lads: 'Cortazzo to Bancroft to Sturdy.'

And we remembered Art Weiss, the left fielder, who could be counted on to cut off the runner at home and for the clutch hit when it was needed.

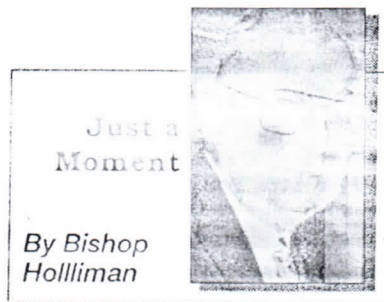
We remembered our first time to see a game under the lights. We think it was 1937 or 1938. We remembered how we knew the batting averages of all the players and how we studied the box scores in the afternoon paper each day and how we sat glued to the radio to hear 'Bull' Conner call the out-of-town games.

Finally, we both knew it was time to go. It was the ninth inning and the game was over. We had absorbed our limit of nostalgia for one outing.

As we made our way down the exit ramp, we looked back once more, probably for the last time, on field of emerald green that sparkled like, well — like a diamond.

We had done our best to 'go home again,' and we were not disappointed. We had experienced again the wonder, the innocence and romance of the game. The way baseball was meant to be played — at least, in the hearts of a couple of 'old-timers.'

• Bishop Holliman is a former manager of the Cookeville district office, of the Social Security Administration who has contributed to the Herald-Citizen for many years. He and his wife live now in Cookeville and in Woodburn, Ind.



STANDING IN THE NEED OF PRAYER

By Bishop Holliman

I never did understand all the commotion over the "prayer in school" amendment that swept the country not so long ago. Everybody knows that as long as they teach algebra and give final exams kids will pray in school.

The prayer squabble reminded me of the man who took his young son to Washington to see how Congress works. When the session was over, the little boy asked: "Dad, why did preacher come out, look over the group and then pray for them?" The dad replied, "He didn't do it that way. When the preacher looked over the group, he prayed for the country."

My grandmother, I'm sure, could have set the country straight on the issue of prayer, as she knew a good bit about praying. She lived to be 96, and her religion was the old-fashioned kind with a lot of common sense mixed with it. Born in the early days of the Civil War, she was a wiry sort of person, given to plain talk and plenty of it. She had the looks and vitality of "Granny" on the old Beverly Hillbillies TV show, and there wasn't any doubt about where she stood on any issue. It was her common sense, natural instincts and her faith that enabled her to live so long without the help of computers, TVs and diet colas.

My grandmother could predict the weather better than they can on TV. She could tell when it was going to rain by whether or not the "pot boiled dry." If her knees ached, that was sign of dry weather. Gardening was one of her specialties, and she knew to plan corn when the moon was "right." You didn't visit a doctor's office in her day, and none ever came to the house until she was passed 90 and had to go to the hospital for the first time.

During the week she always wore a bonnet and an apron—not matter where she went—a bonnet and an apron. Except on Sunday when she would dress in her finest, and that meant a blue dress and a hat with a wide brim. In my collection of unforgettable memories there is that picture of her sitting on her front porch on a warm Sunday afternoon, still dressed in her

"church" clothes. She had been reading her Bible and fallen asleep. The book was open and her hand was resting on the page.

My grandmother would not have understood the issues flowing from the prayer amendment, nor would she have perceived the effects such legislation would have on public education. But that would not have bothered her. She would have been astonished that the issue even came up, and she would have wondered why folks couldn't pray any time, anywhere. The assertion that "God has been expelled from the school" would have been a bunch of foolishness in her mind, I think. Her God was too big to be expelled from any place, and I think her response to politicians and church leaders that "God has been outlawed" would have been "Your God is too small."

No Supreme Court could have kept her from praying because her God was not limited to the classroom, the principal's office or the Baptist church. God was everywhere she wanted Him to be and she prayed to Him, wherever she was—over the wash tub, the cook stove or at the kitchen sink. She prayed to Him at odd times and at odd places. No doubt she would ask why students can't do the same if they want to. I'm sure she wouldn't expect the government to come to her aid in the exercise of her faith and the development of her prayer life. In short, I think she would tell the politicians to back off and find another horse to ride.

Finally, I suspect my grandmother's assessment of the whole furor about school prayer would be summed up this way: "Not everybody who's talking about prayer these days is praying."

BISHOP HOLLIMAN HAS BEEN A REGULAR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE VILLAGER NEWSLETTER. HE HAS RECENTLY MOVED OUT OF STATE AND THIS IS HIS LAST CONTRIBUTION TO OUR PAPER. WE WILL MISS HIS HUMOR, WIT AND ABILITY TO SHOW US PICTURES OF BYGONE DAYS THAT ARE SWEETLY REMEMBERED. THANK YOU, BISHOP, FOR SHARING YOUR TALENT WITH US!

WORLD DAY PRAYER FRIDAY, MARCH 10:30 IN THE CH

Friday, March 6 is World Day of Prayer, observed in many countries and many cultures. World Day of Prayer is a worldwide movement of women of many traditions coming together to observe a common day of prayer each year, and women in many countries, have a continuing tradition of prayer and service.

It is a movement initiated by women in more than 100 countries and regions, symbolized by a worldwide day of celebration on the first Friday of March, to which all people are invited. The celebration is NOT exclusive; rather, it is all-inclusive.

World Day of Prayer is a time when women around the world share their faith in Jesus Christ, their hopes, sorrows, joys and needs. It is a time when we become more aware of the world's needs, and to be faithful to our faith and culture of our own. It is a time for taking up our cross and praying with and for our sisters and brothers in service to God.

World Day of Prayer is a time when prayer and action are joined together, that both have immediate impact in the world.

McKendree Village will observe World Day of Prayer on Friday, March 6, at 10:30 AM in the Chapel with a prayer service. This prayer service is led by the Pastoral Care Director, Rev. Dr. Retired Ministers Council, Methodist Women, an United. All persons are invited to come and pray.

*For more information
Carmen Lile-Henley
871-8407.*

The Holliman Reunion At Orange Beach, Alabama

June 8-10, 2007

At this special time we express the thought
About all the blessings God has wrought
For all of us along the way;
We're glad to see you here today
And we thank Al and Linda for the food they brought.

As we look back across the years,
On all our hopes and vanished fears,
We think of those who've gone before,
Who touched our lives, but are no more,
Yet, who gave us laughter instead of tears:

Mama and Daddy and Melton and Ida,
Vena and Robert and Euhal and Edna,
And Loudelle and Charles, and Motie, Jerry, Eric and little Philip.

They would be proud of us in many ways --
They who led us through our yesterdays;
Our hearts are heavy and our eyes are dim
For we cherish memories of all of them.

I remember Mama canning peaches on the 4th of July
And straining the seeds for her blackberry pie;
Daddy working from sun-up till sun-down
On street cars that ran all over the town.
"It was church on Sunday; the Bible was the rule;
Do what is right and behave in school."
Those were the roots from which we were sprung,
And that's how it was when Virginia and Ralph and I were young.

To the new generations the torch is passed,
And you'll collect memories that will last and last
Of lives that are good and are sublime,
And deeds and actions that mark your time
And a heritage that you'll hold fast.

So at this gathering of the Holliman Clan
We've frolicked in the sun, in the surf and on the sand;
And as we all go our separate ways
We'll long remember these care-free days.

So we're glad today that you are here,
You who've come from far and near;
You've set to music the joyful sound
That plants our feet on Higher Ground.
So in the fullness of time, 'til we meet again,
May God hold us all in the palm of His hand — AMEN!

Back Home Again In Indiana

McKendree Villager

November 2007

The northeast corner of Indiana in October and November is like a Norman Rockwell cover on "The Saturday Evening Post."

The fields are ripe with corn and beans, and farmers in their giant machines are harvesting crops, cutting, shucking and shelling, all in one fell swoop. October's bright blue weather turns the leaves to deep red and gold, and orange pumpkins are stacked like firewood in yards and on porches.

This is Amish country and little black wagons with prancing horses populate the roads that lead from well-kept farms into the little towns on the edges of Fort Wayne. Amish families are on their way to purchase household goods they can't make for themselves—a Saturday morning ritual in the heart of Amish Country, Woodburn, Indiana, where Ellen and I lived before moving into McKendree last May.

Woodburn, with a population of 1200, *is a town* without a stoplight. You can walk wherever you want to go, up and down tree-lined streets that lead to the bank, the post office and the library. Folks speak to one another when they meet. My daily trek took me by the one grocery store in town, up past the Lutheran church, and down by the hardware store. I always stopped to watch the local freight connect to the main line with its cargo of grain to head out to Chicago or New York

The biggest event of the year in little Woodburn, some claim, is the opening of the ice cream parlor each spring. That is, until we got a Subway and a Dollar Store. They've livened up things a good bit, almost as much as the city-wide yard sales twice a year when folks come even from Ohio to buy the trash and treasures the "Woodburners" have to offer.

Woodburn is the kind of town you like to look back on and say, "this is the town where I grew up." It produced educators, doctors, preachers, and other assorted achievers, including the recent head coach at Indiana University and the head of the Food and Drug Administration. Old timers gather each Friday night at the American Legion building for their weekly gab-fest. . . Americanism at its best!

In a few days Ellen and I will be going back home again to Indiana to celebrate Thanksgiving with her family. Over 100 of us will gather in the Methodist Church there, a festive occasion that's been going on more years than you can count on your two hands. Cousins, aunts and uncles into the fourth generation come each year from far and near to celebrate the Park's heritage and give thanks.

Ellen's brother, Don, and his wife Helen will have been up since before dawn preparing the turkey and dressing. Each family will bring a "covered dish" to go with these Thanksgiving goodies, and there'll be enough left over for every family to feast on for several days.

Don also emcees this family jamboree and he reminisces

a lot, often bringing tears to the eyes of some of us, while the younger folks remain quiet and respectful. Ellen's sister, Jeanette, pounds out a tune on the piano and we'll sing "Count Your Blessings," and another brother, Forrest, gives the prayer.

This year there will be a vacant chair at the dinner table because the patriarch of the family, Harry, passed away last February. He was 94. Harry never did say much at this family feast, but when he spoke, we listened. He will be missed.

After we've eaten, cousin Danny will gather everyone far a family photo so we can see next year how much we've aged. The women will clean the kitchen and the men will stack the tables to one side, and we'll tell everyone again how good it was to see them, and wasn't Aunt Lynne's casserole out of this world, and be sure to come to see us. Then we'll say good-bye for the tenth time and we'll *all go our separate ways rejoicing that if it's God will, we'll meet again next year. A perfect picture of Heaven was one!*

I wish those politicians who talk so much about family values could attend a Parks family Thanksgiving. They'd know then what "family values" really are.

I'll Be Home For Christmas

McKendree Villager

December 2007

Christmas 1942 was one of those times you store in your memory bank and revisit as the years pass.

America was entering its second year of World War II, and that Christmas seemed destined to be the saddest ever. The tide had not yet turned in our favor; hostilities raged around the globe, rationing of civilian goods caused hardship, and draft calls and casualty lists mounted. Hardly a household in the land escaped the sacrifices the war demanded, and not even Bing Crosby dreaming of a White Christmas could dispel the gloom.

It was against that backdrop that I entered my second year in the U.S. Navy, and it would be my second Christmas to be away from home. I was a radioman on the USS Butler, a new destroyer, spending our days escorting convoys to Europe and Africa and chasing German submarines.

It was from just such a mission that we returned to Norfolk, Virginia, Christmas Eve afternoon and awaiting the biggest Christmas gift we could imagine — a *we were* *Several days before* that meant that many of us could be home by Christmas night. Such a surprise gift was almost overwhelming, and only those who've been there can understand the joy this shipload of sad-sack sailors felt!

As soon as I could get there I presented myself to the ticket agent at the Norfolk train station and bought a ticket for the first train heading south. If all went well I'd be in Birmingham, my hometown, the next night to celebrate Christmas around the table with all my family. I would walk in and surprise them all ---what a happy time that would be! My anticipation was almost too much to bear

It was nearly dusk when the N & W Special pulled out of the station and already a stillness hovered over the land — the kind that is always present on Christmas Eve. As the steam locomotive chugged through the Virginia darkness there was time to pause and ponder the scene about us. Lights from the little towns and farm houses lit up the countryside a wee bit, and you had to wonder about the folks who lived along the way, how they were faring and how the war was affecting them. This was a somber time, remember, and there were only a few displays marking the season. On board the crowded train the passengers, I recall, were somewhat subdued, glad to be going home and I guess wondering where we'd all be next Christmas.

After a long delay in Lynchburg, my connecting train from Washington, D.C., finally arrived and I continued on to Birmingham, but by now it was early Christmas morning and I still had a long way to go. This train was so crowded the food and water gave out before we would reach the next station, and heavy traffic at every stop delayed us further. The minutes and hours added up faster than the miles.

As the day passed, it became apparent I would not get to Birmingham at the time I thought I would. There was too much mail and express and too many stops and too many travelers. My dream of surprising my family with an

unexpected arrival was fading fast and then, not far out of Atlanta, the conductor announced that our train would end its run in Atlanta, it would not go on to Birmingham. It would be six hours, he said before there'd be another one.

What to do now? Time was too precious for a homesick sailor and I couldn't wait six hours. At midnight I walked down to the Greyhound Bus station and bought a ticket and five hours later, the morning after Christmas, I was home!

My mother and dad were just sitting down to breakfast when I walked into the house. What a glorious surprise that was for them and what a happy homecoming it was for me!! They had thought I was on the high seas, doing battle with the enemy, but there I was, *SAR* and sound

— and *yes*, home for Christmas! *It was a time to rejoice and give thanks*

A year later when Christmas 1943 rolled around, I was still chasing submarines, my eldest brother was in the army in France and my younger brother was in the air force in England but now, it was Christmas 1942, I was home, and that's all that mattered!

It May Be Pretty But It Ain't Healthy

McKendree Villager



January 2008

If my cousin Jamie had been a preacher or a poet or a professor, he might have been written up in "Bartlett's Familiar Quotations." Instead, he was just a 12 year-old boy, living on a farm during the days of the Great Depression when he had his brush with literary fame. Yet, his profound utterance became a part of family lore and is alive and well to this day.

Jamie and I were the same age and were as close as little boy cousins could be, even though he lived in the adjoining county; about 35 miles from Birmingham where I lived. To spend a couple of weeks each summer with him on the farm was the highlight of the year for me when I was entering my teen year. We worked in the fields chopping cotton and thinning corn, and it was then I decided I wouldn't make it farming. It was hard work.

But it was a fun time back in that day for two little boys. We swam and fished in Kelly's Creek, climbed Bald Rock Mountain and picked watermelons from the field and *cooled them in the* spring water *that flowed through the* pasture. That's how our summers went during that idyllic time and place, and two little barefoot boys relished every moment of their time together.

Finally, though, it was time for Jamie to visit his city cousins, and one September, before school began and after the crops were gathered, he came to spend a few days seeing what life in the city was like. After all, we had street cars, picture shows and ten-cent stores and other contraptions denied folks down on the farm. Also, we had smog, noise and crime—things they didn't have where Jamie lived.

But now, it was our time to shine. We could hardly wait to begin our tour of the city that we knew would make him envious. After a drive through downtown we ended up on top of Red Mountain *for a* night view of the city lights below. This was a "must see" stop for every out-of-towner, and we knew Jamie would be impressed. He'd have to admit that St. Clair County had nothing to match the scene before him.

So we waited patiently for Jamie to say something. "Well, what do you think?" we finally asked, expecting him to do cartwheels, I guess. After a brief pause he said, "Well, it may be pretty but it ain't healthy." That's all he could say, "It may be pretty but it ain't healthy." Did we ever get our comeuppance!

We didn't know then but Jamie had just uttered a profound truth that my family remembers to this day--one we've applied through the years when confronted with temptation or some questionable venture we couldn't afford. We could simply bow out of a situation by admitting that though it looked good, it was not something we ought to do. It kept us out of trouble many times, and we owe it all to Jamie.

Well, the years went by and Jamie and I drifted apart as relatives often do, and we went 50 years without seeing

each other. Not long ago I decided to make amends and go by and visit him---a visit I knew I should have made earlier. He still lives near the old home place and still attends the Bethel Baptist Church where we went to singing school one summer. His health is not good but he survives, thanks to "Meals-On-Wheels" and the VA.

We spent a whole morning talking about those long-ago days, our families and what we'd done with the years. His mother and my mother were sisters so we had lots of catching up to do. Finally, I had to ask, "do you remember that time on Red Mountain when you said "it may be pretty but it ain't healthy?" Of course he remembers, and I told him how I'd used his words so many times through the years.

But now, I knew it was time to go. How do you say good-bye to one you haven't seen in *50 years and probably* not likely to see again. It wasn't easy. All I could do was put my arms on his shoulder and say, "hang in there and *keep* the faith" *I got in the car and started the motor and I* could tell he had something else to say. "Yes, what is it?" I asked.

Jamie was still at the top of his game: "Bishop, you may be healthy but you ain't pretty!"

I drove off as fast as I could—laughing and remembering two little boys swimming in Kelly's Creek.

All On An April Day

McKendree Villager

April 2008



Spring came early to most of the land that year. Down South, the daffodils had been in bloom several weeks and the cherry blossoms along the Potomac had peaked and were on the downside. At the Stage Door Canteen in New York service men danced to "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree," and "As Time Goes By" was still high on the Saturday Night Hit parade. The war in Europe was winding down and things were looking up everywhere.

And then, suddenly, it all changed. At 5:56 P.M. the CBS radio announcer came on the air with these ominous words: "We interrupt this program to bring you a special news bulletin, "President Roosevelt is dead." The date was April 12, 1945, and very few will ever forget where they were when they heard those words.

FDR had been president as long as some of us could remember and I guess we thought he'd always be there. His failing health had been kept secret from the general public, so his death was totally unexpected, and the news sent shock waves around the globe. Folks throughout the world would pause to pay their respect to the fallen leader, those in low places as well as high.

I was on board the USS Barker, a navy destroyer, in Iceland, that afternoon and I'll always remember the time and place. Our ship had escorted a convoy through the North Atlantic and I had just returned from an afternoon liberty in the town there. The Captain announced over the loudspeaker to the crew, "President Roosevelt died this afternoon at 3:35 in Warm Springs, Georgia." The next day a memorial service was held on the ship.

When we returned to New York a *week later* I went *2* up to the office of the New York Times and bought the edition that carried the news of the President's death—for a nickel. I knew it would have historical value, and I still have it, now enclosed under glass and in possession of a grandson, to remind him of a time and place that once was.

The Whistle Stop Revisited

McKendree Villager

September 2008

When the Whistle Stop Café first opened for business, Calvin Coolidge was in the White House, Babe Ruth was on his way to 60 home runs and the Charleston was the favorite dance craze. The year was 1927.

The Whistle Stop began as a hamburger stand, but as the years passed it evolved into a higher-class eatery, and finally in 1987 it attained national fame. That was the year that Fannie Flagg's best seller, Fried Green Tomatoes at the Whistle Stop Café, hit the market. And if that wasn't endorsement enough, the 1992 movie adaptation brought it world-wide acclaim.

I know about the Whistle Stop because I was part of that time and place. The setting for Miss Flagg's story is Irondale, Alabama, a small community on the edge of Birmingham, where I was born and lived until entering the navy in 1941. The café was operated by *Flagg's relative* who lived in the town and who passed *on to her: Tales* about the going on amongst all the folks who frequented the Whistle Stop in the 1930's when the Great Depression was rampant. The characters in the book and the movie are from real life, so much so I can recognize some of them in her fictionalized *account. ACCOUNT.*

The Whistle Stop was located across the street from the train depot, next to the hardware store and Dr. Brock's drug store. I passed it every day on my way to and from school, and the aroma from burgers frying on the grill always tempted me to go in and partake. But I never did because they sold beer in there and my mother did not look kindly on such an iniquitous place.

The café sat facing the tracks of four mainline railroads that came right smack through the middle of the town, and trains were running often four at a time. Rock Music was still out there waiting to make its appearance, but Irondale knew how to shake, rattle and roll long before. Passengers on the City of Miami from Chicago to Florida, the Southerner from New York to New Orleans and the Cotton States Special to Washington, D.C. could glimpse the Whistle Stop from their Pullman seats.

Folks no longer come by train to the Whistle Stop. No, they come now by tour busses and come from every state in the union. And even from other countries to taste the delicacies dished up by the kitchen crew and to say they've eaten at the Whistle Stop. In addition to the fried chicken, butter beans and creamed corn, the house specialty, of course, is fried green tomatoes, over 500 pounds a week.

The Whistle Stop still stands in the same location where it first saw the light of day, a more spacious and elaborate place now than before Fannie Flagg brought it fame. Not long ago I went "back home" to try to reclaim some of my yesterdays, and I stood out front and let my mind wander up and down a street filled with memories of a time long past. The depot was no longer there. Nor was the hardware store. Nor the drug store. The folks on the street seemed so young and I didn't know a soul.

Across the way a slow freight was working its way up to the rail yard on the east side of town where my friend "Huck" and I used to play ball. Soon, Amtrak's "Southern Crescent" came barreling through on its way to Atlanta and New York, the only passenger train left now. My eyes followed it until it disappeared around the curve. For a fleeting moment I was a 15 year old boy again. But a blast from the "Crescent" jarred me back to reality. I went inside the Whistle Stop and ordered a serving of fried green tomatoes.

My mother would say it was alright to eat there now as they no longer sell beer.

Revive Us Again

McKendree Villager

2008

SEPTEMBER NOVEMBER

NOVEMBER 5, 1945



The revival we had here in the chapel in September rekindled memories of the revivals we had in the church I attended when I was a teen-ager, back in the Dark Ages. The annual revival was usually the high-water mark of the summer in those Depression-plagued days, meaning we'd have a place to go each night for two weeks, to see and be seen and do a little courting. Those meetings played a big role in shaping our lives back then, and I still harbor many memories of hearing "Revive Us Again" sung from the heart.

The revival that stands out in my memory was the one called the "Bob Jones Revival," conducted by two evangelists from Bob Jones College, then located in Cleveland, Tennessee. It was a meeting like none other, the old-timers said. The preaching and singing stirred folks to new heights. Every night the church was filled—even some of the Baptists came to hear the word preached and to sing the great songs of Zion!

I was just beginning to think about college that summer, and when the Bob Jones team heard that, they immediately looked upon me as a prime prospect for Bob Jones College, to be followed by a career in the ministry. That would have pleased my mother mightily as she always wanted one of her boys to be a preacher. They said thirty-two dollars a month would cover all my expenses and they were sure I could get that many members from our church to cough up a dollar a month.

Well, I knew that plan would never fly, so I didn't pursue it. Besides, the focus of attention that summer was on one "Daddy" George and other wayward souls, and not on a likely struggling college freshman like me.

"Daddy" George was an old bachelor who worked for Mr. Burgess in the hardware store. He was well-respected in the town, didn't bother anyone and tended to his own business. The only fault people found with him was he didn't go to church, didn't believe in it and wondered why anyone else did. That was a strange attitude to have, folks felt, since Mr. Burgess was a pillar in the church and its treasurer.

So, as the religious fervor swept over the little town that summer, you can guess whose name was at the top of the list of those standing in the need of prayer—"Daddy" George's. "If only he would come and hear the preacher just once," folks said. Well, it was Wednesday night of the second week that their prayers were answered. 'While we were singing the second verse of "Dwelling in Beulah Land", "Daddy" George strolled in.

I don't know if there was rejoicing in heaven that night but there was at the Irondale Methodist church. Prayers had been answered! And "Daddy" George's presence energized the preacher, and when he spoke of the lost sheep being found we all knew whom he meant.

Now, we all wondered if the "lost sheep" would respond to "Just As I Am," come to the altar and repent. We sang

the first verse, the second and third. No movement. Surely he wouldn't let time run out. Finally, the last verse. "Daddy" George did not budge. After the benediction he walked out with his head held high. No mere mortal could tell what was in his heart, but it appeared he left just as he was when he came in.

"Maybe he'll come back tomorrow night," some ventured to hope. It was wishful thinking. He did not return that night nor the next. As far as I know, he never went to church again—anywhere. But for one glorious time he was there, and for a long time afterward, people talked about the Bob Jones preacher who got "Daddy" George to come to church.

The years passed. When I returned from World War II in 1945, both "Daddy" George and Mr. Burgess were gone and the hardware store was now called "Daly Hardware." The Bob Jones revival was a cover in history and no one mentioned it. (Many years later, after he became famous, I learned that Billy Graham had been a freshman at Bob Jones College the same year I would have been there had I gone. Surely in that small school our paths would have crossed and maybe some of his magic would have rubbed off on me and I might have amounted to something after all!

My mother would be pleased.

Keep Those Cards And Letters Coming

McKendree Villager

January 2009

One of the joys of Christmas is sending and receiving cards. This custom, I understand, began in England. I don't know who started sending a narrative report of family happenings along with the card.

You know the thing I'm talking about. It's usually a type-written, single-spaced, two page "to whom it may concern" sort of thing that tells you more than you want to know about the dear friends who have you on their list.

They start out so humbly: "This was just a so-so year for the Flintstones. Bob was made a vice-president of his company; now he'll have less time to play golf. Judy was homecoming queen, and after graduation she'll spend a year in Europe, you know, trying to see a little of the world before going into television work. Ha! Who knows—she may become another Barbara Walters. Robbie isn't sure whether he'll go to Yale or Harvard. It's *hard to tell* about him, even though he was voted 'most likely to succeed.' And oh yes, he caught the winning touchdown pass in their final game."

The letter goes on and on: "But this was a sad year for the Flintstone family. Aunt Clara who had been sick so long finally died and we've had to dispose of her things. Now we're stuck with another beach house. With all the volunteer work Ethel does we don't see how in the world we'll have time to use the house in Florida and one on Cape Cod too.

On top of that, the couple we met in Canada last summer want us to go on a cruise with them. Old Bob says we'd better live it up while we can!"

By the time you get to the finish line you've had about all you can take of this yuk and self-approbation, masquerading as glad tidings of great joy. Maybe I shouldn't be too hard on folks who use this method to spread good cheer at Christmas. If counting their blessings has a salutary effect, then the practice must not be totally void of value. And too, it's a natural thing to share good news with friends you care about, so maybe it's alright.

But one of these epistles we received last year I must tell you about, as it fit the mold like none other we've ever gotten. It was from our good friend Virginia, who sends this kind of report every year, so we were not surprised. The first thing to fall out of the envelope was a recent photograph of herself. That should have told us something right there. Right off, she told us she had taken up modeling at two leading department stores in town, and "this takes a big part of my time," she added. Big deal, I thought, so what else is new? "I have to take modeling lessons twice a week, so you can see how busy I am."

The she casually mentioned she had been around the world for the umpteenth time. "Singapore, Cairo, Hong Kong— These places you simply must see," she tantalized us, knowing we do well to get up to Indiana twice a year. Then she wrote of driving across the country all by

herself—not once, but twice, and then she told of driving to Miami once alone and to Houston. In her spare time she had done work for a number of volunteer agencies and had received special recognition from the mayor. The recitation of so many accomplishments sounded much like a Miss America contestant trying to impress the judges.

Finally, she wished us all a good Christmas and a prosperous New Year, closing with her usual hopes and plans for the coming year, which included, despite her battle fatigue, another trip to the Holy Land and speaking to the Gold Star Mothers at their national convention. At the very end she tacked on a personal note: "And I think that's doing pretty well for an *81* year old lady!"

Well, I think so too, Virginia, and I take back all those spiteful things that have been nesting in my mind. If I had your energy and talent I'd be sending the word to all the world too. You're entitled to that privilege. And more power to you!

Yes, Santa Claus, there is a Virginia!! And a lot of them are right here in McKendree Village too—Telling the Story of Christmas every day they live. So keep those cards and letters coming, folks, not only at Christmas but throughout the year, for you have lots to tell!!

School Days - Dear Old Golden Rule Days

McKendree Villager

February 2009

There's a blurb on TV—and I've seen it on a bumper sticker—that says, "If you can read this, thank a teacher." Well, I did just that a few years ago, and ~~if I~~ never do anything else in life that's worth remembering, I can say I did something right, at least once. I went back home and visited my 7th grade English teacher, and thanked her for all she had done for me when I was a young school boy.

The world was young—and so was Mrs. McClendon—when I was in the 7th grade. Babe Ruth was still hitting home runs and FDR was making fireside chats. The most popular radio program was "Amos an' Andy," and "Mrs. Mac," as we respectfully called her, was teaching a bunch of ragamuffins the basic rules of grammar.

When I visited her on a December day in her home she was as knowledgeable and articulate as I had remembered her many years ago. Her mind and wit were as sharp and clear as a May morning, and this gave me the chance to tell how grateful I was for the influence she had had on my life.

It was Mrs. Mac who taught Depression-plagued boys and girls the importance of speaking and writing correctly. She taught us to diagram and analyze sentences and to conjugate verbs. We learned the parts of speech and that a verb has to agree with its subject. Mrs. Mac drilled into our heads the rules of punctuation and the difference between a simple sentence and a compound sentence. We learned that an adjective modifies a noun and pronoun, and that a preposition takes an object.

Mrs. Mac was a strict teacher. When she spoke, we listened. When she pronounced a doctrine, that's the way it was, and we did not get equal time to debate the merits of the case. She reinforced her pronouncements with the application of a yardstick that was always handy, and most students could expect a trip to the woodshed when they got home if they got a spanking in school.

In that day and in that school, students and parents alike looked upon the teacher as an authority figure, and teachers had the support of the parents whose children were entrusted to their care.

Mrs. Mac showed me the old school bell given to her when she retired some years before. It was a hand-rung bell with a clapper—no electronics then—that was rung to call school to order each morning and too, to dismiss classes and to call us in from recess. When that bell rang, like the bugle call that summoned Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders up San Juan Hill, it commanded unquestioned obedience; and when it was tapped the second time that meant no more talking in line. We marched in quietly and smartly like soldiers, not off to fight a foreign foe but to do battle against dangling participles.

Mrs. Mac never had any children of her own so she always called her students "my boys and girls," and she kept up with many long after she retired. As we talked in her living room on that winter day I see some of her "boys

and girls" from that long-ago time.

Most came from homes riddled by the Great Depression, homes lacking in educational opportunities. Yet, most of her "boys and girls" had parents who viewed "getting an education" a passport to a better life and they knew that teachers like Mrs. Mac could make it possible.

Mrs. Mac succeeded because she cared, and she had the support of the community and the parents who also cared. And that made the difference, we concluded, as she and I measured today's school environment against that of yesterday.

Later in the year after my visit with Mrs. Mac, a group of her "boys and girls" honored her with a dinner and a special celebration where we each had the chance to tell her, before time ran out, how much she had meant to us. Boys and girls, now ~~women~~ ^{men and women} in advanced age, came from Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, and Tennessee to pay their respects to the "giant lady."

There was no merit pay, no bonuses and no special awards for teachers when Mrs. Mac was in the classroom, but if the state had paid her what she was worth, they'd have had to double the sales tax!

Now, if you have been able to read this, go thank a teacher while there is still time.

Standing In The Need Of Prayer

McKendree Villager

March 2009

I never did understand all the commotion over the “prayer in school” amendment that swept the country not so long ago. Everybody knows that as long as they teach algebra and give final exams kids will pray in school.

The prayer squabble reminded me of the man who took his young son to Washington to see how Congress works. When the session was over, the little boy asked: “Dad, why did preacher come out, look over the group and then pray for them?” The dad replied, “He didn’t do it that way. When the preacher looked over the group, he prayed for the country.”

My grandmother, I’m sure, could have set the country straight on the issue of prayer, as she knew a good bit about praying. She lived to be 96, and her religion was the old-fashioned kind with a lot of common sense mixed with it. Born in the early days of the Civil War, she was a wiry sort of person, given to plain talk and plenty of it. She had the looks and vitality of “Granny” on the old Beverly Hillbillies TV show, and there wasn’t any doubt about where she stood on any issue. It was her common sense, natural instincts and her faith that enabled her to live so long without the help of computers, TVs and diet colas.

My grandmother could predict the weather better than they can on TV. She could tell when it was going to rain by whether or not the “pot boiled dry.” If her knees ached, that was sign of dry weather. Gardening was one of her specialties, and she knew to plant corn when the moon was “right.” You didn’t visit a doctor’s office in her day, and none ever came to the house until she was passed 90 and had to go to the hospital for the first time. ♦

During the week she always wore a bonnet and an apron—no matter where she went—a bonnet and an apron. Except on Sunday when she would dress in her finest, and that meant a blue dress and a hat with a wide brim. In my collection of unforgettable memories there is that picture of her sitting on her front porch on a warm Sunday afternoon, still dressed in her “church” clothes. She had been reading her Bible and fallen asleep. The book was open and her hand was resting on the page.

My grandmother would not have understood the issues flowing from the prayer amendment, nor would she have perceived the effects such legislation would have on public education. But that would not have bothered her. She would have been astonished that the issue even came up, and she would have wondered why folks couldn’t pray any time, anywhere. The assertion that “God has been expelled from the school” would have been a bunch of foolishness in her mind, I think. Her God was too big to be expelled from any place, and I think her response to politicians and church leaders that “God has been outlawed” would have been “Your God is too small.”

No Supreme Court could have kept her from praying because her God was not limited to the classroom, the principal’s office or the Baptist church. God was everywhere she wanted Him to be and she prayed to Him, wherever she was—over the wash tub, the cook stove or at the kitchen sink. She prayed to Him at odd times and at odd places. No doubt she would ask why students can’t do the same if they want to. I’m sure she wouldn’t expect the government to come to her aid in the exercise of her faith and the development of her prayer life. In short, I think she would tell the politicians to back off and find another horse to ride.

Finally, I suspect my grandmother’s assessment of the whole furor about school prayer would be summed up this way:

“Not everybody who’s talking about prayer these days is praying.”

The old year is winding down. Come Wednesday night, when the clock strikes twelve, another year will have passed and it will take with it a flood of memories just as all the others have. The only thing different about this year from the last one is that 2008 went by at a faster clip. But that's what we said about 2007 and 2006 and all the other years.

I like the story Dr. Prescott tells about the committee that was appointed to plan the New Years Eve party. Like so many committees, they got all tangled up in their deliberations and couldn't decide which night would be appropriate for a New Years Eve celebration. Bob Turley has another way of illustrating the relentless tick-tock of the clock. He quotes an old timer who said, "This is the coldest winter I've ever seen and I guess I've seen a hundred."

The passing of another year is cause for us to pause and reflect on where we have been and what has happened to us, where we are now and what we think the future may hold.

But the past is all we can be sure of; the present is too fleeting and to morrow may never come. Yesterday is all we can cling to. Henry Belamann, the author of "Kings Row," (a later movie that starred Ronald Reagan) put it this way: "Strive as we may with the present, it is always being destroyed, even in the moment of realization. We build moment by moment, living only on an infinitely small needle point of time....Our real home is in the past.... In the silent place of memory, itself a shadow, and ourselves but shadows, moving amid the uncertain ghosts of imperfectly remembered events."

Well, you've garnered a whole heap of "imperfectly remembered events" and seen many New Year Eves come and go if you can remember when: --An unknown classmate wrote in your high school yearbook "Roses are red, violets are blue, somebody loves you—you'll never guess who."

--The neighborhood butcher wore a straw hat and would throw in a soup bone free of charge when you bought a dollar pot roast

--No housewife was ready for Christmas until she'd baked at least six cakes and had bought a supply of Washington State apples.

--A gang of boys could start a sandlot baseball game in the summer without the aid of a Little League coach or a sponsor.

--Dating was called "courtship" and not a relationship."

--The biggest bargain in America was the penny postcard and mail was delivered to your door twice a day,

--The only cars in the school parking lot belonged to the teachers.

--The difference between a city and a small town was in the city there were some interesting things a fellow could do after dark without causing gossip.

--You kept up with world events by attending the local movie house every Friday night and seeing Lowell Thomas and Paramount News on the screen.

--It was a mark of distinction to take a train trip and come home and tell folks you'd eaten in the diner instead of taking a sack lunch.

--The only place where you could buy ice cream was at the drug store, and there were only three flavors: vanilla, chocolate and strawberry.

--Everybody hurried home at night to listen to Amos 'n Andy on the old Philco radio.

--Only poor people were on diets and they called it "doing wiiithout." And if they wanted something they couldn't afford, they didn't buy it.

--You knew you were in a pretty fancy restaurant when they kept the pies in a glass case so the flies couldn't get to them.

--A street sweeper could always get attention by telling folks he made his living "following the horses."

--The worst form of snobbery was two brides talking about their honeymoons at Niagara Falls in the presence of a third who spent hers in Kansas City.

--And before there were such things as credit cards, the national motto was "In God we trust—All others pay cash."

A lot of important events that some of us remember all too well!

(This article appeared in Corbinville Herald-Citizen in 1985.)

DEATH, TAXES AND CHURCH PICNICS

Old Ben Franklin gets credit for coining the phrase "The only certainties in life are death and taxes." If, however, he had lived into the 21st century he might have learned there are other absolutes that shape our lives ~~and our destinies~~. Granted, there are very few, but they are alive and well, so let me tell you about them.

It's still 90 feet between home plate and first base. Always has been and always will be. Three strikes and you're out, and the umpire's call is final, and there's no appeal. It's refreshing in these times of uncertainties to know that some things are as sure as death and taxes. Franklin would be pleased, I think, to know this.

Last summer there was an account of the Georgia governor on the capital steps praying for rain to relieve the terrible drought that covered the state. I submit that all he had to do was set a date for his church picnic and the rain would have fallen in buckets. It always rains when you have a picnic, especially if it's a church picnic. Every place I've lived it's rained on the day the saints and the sinners gather for their outdoor festivities. Always has and always will. It's as sure as death and taxes.

Another "certainty" that's entered our lives is ^{the} Murphy's Law, and it's still in operation: "If something can go wrong, it will." You can count on it. It'll never be repealed. If something can go wrong, sooner or later it will. It's as certain as death and taxes and rain on the church picnic. You can take it to the bank.

In Franklin's time there were probably no long lines to stand in as there were no check-out counters nor banks nor folks lining up to buy stamps. If there had been, old Ben would have had another gem for his collection. Let me explain: It doesn't matter which line I get in, at Krogers or anywhere else, the line on either side of me will move faster than the one I'm in. It doesn't do any good to switch lines, the one I get in will be the slowest. It's as sure as death and taxes and Murphy's Law.

A few other "certainties" Ben could add to his resume if he were alive today: The first person to exit a crowded elevator will inevitably be the one in the very back, behind everyone else. Never fails. You can depend on it. And it's a fact of life that the food we like the best will be the most hazardous to our health. Check it out. And when a speaker starts out with, "I want to share a few things with you," you know you'll be in for a long dissertation about stuff you're not interested in and don't want to know about.

*

But in some respects, Franklin's wise assertions ^{a disgruntled Best player} may prove to be correct. The way things are going in our world today, I look for ~~someone~~ to file a court case demanding that the distance between home plate and first base be reduced to accommodate slower runners. And the way things are going, I don't doubt ^{the} the "filer" will win, and thus, another of life's "certainties" will be consigned to the ash heap, proving old Ben was right after all!

And no matter what price you pay for gas along the interstate, you'll find that if you'd gone a few miles farther, you would have found it to be cheaper - if never fails.

(This article was written for the U. Hooper)

DEATH, TAXES AND CHURCH PICNICS

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By Bishop Holliman

Say what you will, we Methodists love to sing, and we are good at what we do! Just hear us when we open Sunday morning services with *Oh For A Thousand Tongues To Sing*, or *All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name*. If that doesn't convince you, attend the opening session of an Annual Conference and hear the preachers lift their voices in *And Are We Yet Alive*. You'll think you're hearing the Mormon Tabernacle Choir!

One of the features that attracted Ellen and me to McKendree was the Sunday night hymn sing. Those old songs remind us of our "Church in the Wildwood" heritage, of summer revivals, youth assemblies and church suppers. I'm sure there are many folks here who have such events stored in their memory banks, and when they sing "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go, Dear Lord, I'll Say What You Want Me to Say," they're ready to answer the call again.

It was Fred Waring, a big-band leader in the days when radio was king, who said, "The old songs are the best or they wouldn't have lived to become old." So come with me one more time for a stroll down memory lane for a visit with three old hymns that have played a big role in my

quest for "Higher Ground." Songs I still remember when and where I first heard them, and whose message resonates with me to this day.

Our first stop is in Memphis, Tennessee, the week after Christmas in 1935. Young Methodists from all over the South gathered for five days to hear the giants of Methodism proclaim the faith. I stayed at the famous Peabody Hotel, and I still remember how dazzled I was by the tall, lighted Christmas tree that stood in the lobby.

One of our speakers was the noted Japanese Christian, Kagawa, who ranked high in Methodist circles at the time. The theme song for this youth conference had not yet made its way into our old Cokesbury song book, but it was one that would become a classic: *ARE YE ABLE*. We sang it every day, and we still sing it with gusto! It's an "old" hymn now, but its message is always new and challenging.

Now, it's five years later, 1941, and I'm at Lake Junaluska at another youth meeting. I am now 20 years old and have three years of college behind me. War drums are being heard throughout the land and much of our attention is focused on world peace. But before the year is out, this rose-colored summer of my youth will be just a



Bishop and Ellen Holliman

memory, as I will be waging war instead of peace.

But sustaining us that summer at the Lake was a new hymn that many of us were hearing for the first time: *GOD OF GRACE AND GOD OF GLORY, ON THY PEOPLE POUR THY POWER*. What a powerful message those words conveyed, and they gave us young folks hope and encouragement that our "warring madness" could still be cured. It would be alright with me if we sang that song every Sunday.

It's now two years past that golden

summer of 1941, and I'm on a U.S. Naval vessel, heading for New York after taking part in the invasion of Sicily in WWII. It's a bright Sunday morning and we're still several days from home. Our ship doesn't carry a chaplain so one of our officers conducts a Protestant service, the first semblance of worship we've heard since the Captain's prayer the night of the invasion.

Ordinarily, sailors are not given to reciting prayers and singing hymns, but this Sunday morning was different. We had escaped unscathed enemy bombs and U-boats and we were thankful. The hymn we sang was one that was new to most of us, but yet was a very old one, and would become an American anthem: *AMAZING GRACE*. It was the third verse that touched our hearts and brought tears to some eyes: "Through many dangers, Toils and Snares, I have Already Come, 'Tis Grace Hath Brought Me Safe Thus Far, And Grace Will Lead Me Home."

That's a time and place—and a song—you never forget, no matter how old you are.

Yes, we Methodist love to sing, and we can thank John and Charles Wesley, Fanny Crosby and all the other saints who've inspired us to stay the course in our march to ZION.

Herald-Citizen
October 17, 2004

Baseball — that's where decline in 'family values' really began

Finally, Bush and Kerry are getting some help in their quest for a return to "family values," a cause to which they're devoting countless hours and bushels of money.

It's this: Major League baseball is returning to Washington, D.C., next year, and what could be more "family friendly" than baseball?

Once called the nation's 'pastime,' baseball surely is a broad strand in the country's historic social fabric, right up there with the railroads, country music and Mother's Day. Anything that diminishes the game, in my opinion, weakens the national spirit.

Now that we'll have a team back in the capital city ought to renew our hope for better things ahead, no matter who's elected in November.

But the fact that we need to return to "family values" begs the question: "When did we depart from those values?"

There must have been a time and place that this perceived erosion began. I think I

know the answer to that question.

The drift began at the end of the Eisenhower era at the beginning of 1960. Ike, you see, was the last president to throw out the first ball to open the baseball season each spring, a tradition that began with President Taft in 1910 and continued until Kennedy became president.

As an ardent fan of the game, who remembers the year Babe Ruth hit his last home run, I am saddened to see the games' decline and I blame it all on our Presidents.

There was a time in our long-lost youth when the picture of the President throwing out the first ball heralded the coming of spring. We knew that summer was just around the corner, God was in His heaven and all was right with the world.

But not any more. Presidents who preach about values don't seem to know or care about the most fundamental one of all, and there seems little likelihood they'll return

to their base.

Franklin D. Roosevelt knew what it was all about, being present and pitching for nine seasons until he was stopped by World War Two. A true fan of the game, FDR was in the stands at Wrigley Field on an October day in 1932 when Babe Ruth made his homerun call — a shot heard 'round the baseball world.'

Old Harry Truman knew. And General Ike knew. But look at what we've had since. The Kennedy clan played touch football, and you have to wonder about them. Johnson loved Beagles and bourbon. Nixon should have been coach of the Washington Redskins. And then there was Clinton. Do I need say more?

Since 1971, there hasn't been a team in D.C., so it hasn't been easy for a President to make the first game each April. But I maintain that if the President, whoever he was, had been serious about family values, he would have gone up to Baltimore to do the honors. Amtrak has a train going up there every 30 minutes.

The President has time to go all over the world, attending summit meetings, entertaining foreign potentates in the White

House, making speeches. His absence from the old ballpark tells us what his priorities have been. Not family values, that's for sure.

The game itself has fallen on hard times since our Presidents no longer give it their endorsements. The players are too 'picky' and they're overpaid. They spit and scratch too much and their pants, like the season, are too long.

The game also has strayed from the traditions and absolutes that gave it such distinctive character. Look, we have lights at Wrigley Field, a designated hitter and a chance that the pennant winner won't get a shot at the World Series. Can anything be more untraditional than that?

Baseball was once the number one sport, but recent polls show that football is now more popular, and I say that's a sad day for our country. More and more folks are turning to soccer for their kicks — or to hockey. George Washington warned us against foreign entanglements. No wonder we're in such a mess.

The future does not look all that promising either. Back in the summer, at Fenway Park, Kerry tried to throw the ball and he

couldn't get it to home plate. That does not bode well for the nation if he's elected.

Bush, when he owned the Texas Rangers, let Sosa get away, and that tells you something about him.

So, my conclusion is, until we get a President who will restore baseball to its sacred place, as is required by the Constitution, we will never return to the faith of our fathers.

~~We don't need another study or another commission or another government program. We need a President who, at the first crack of the bat, will be in his appointed seat ready to throw out the first ball when the umpires yell "PLAY BALL!"~~

~~Whichever candidate promises to be that kind of President will get my vote. If he won't make that promise, as far as I'm concerned, he's already struck out.~~

Bishop Holliman and his wife divide their time between homes in Cookeville and Auburn, Indiana. He is a former director of the Social Security Administration district office in Cookeville and writes an occasional article for the Herald-Citizen.

Just a
Moment

By Bishop
Holliman

