
SWAMP GRAVY



GOOD, GOOD MEDICINE

WHAT YOU TAKE IS UP TO YOU...

Swamp Gravy: Folk Tales of South Georgia — Good, Good
Medicine — stories of real people, home remedies, and rural life
in the early 20th century — Colquitt, Georgia

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SWAMP GRAVY

Folk Tales of South Georgia

GOOD, GOOD MEDICINE

WHAT YOU TAKE IS UP TO YOU...

Edited by Debra Calhoun Jones



Colquitt, Georgia

Editor's Note

— *Debra Calhoun Jones*

Like its predecessors, the first two Swamp Gravy books, **Good, Good Medicine** is made possible because many people give unselfishly of their time and talents. It begins with willing storytellers and dedicated storygatherers, and a strong storygathering chairperson, Sara Ann Keaton. Most of the stories come from taped interviews, and the rich southernness of our speech is glorified in this text. While the ideas of the book committee, Becky Braswell, Debra Heath, Joy Jinks, Ferrell Keaton, Karen Kimbrel, Betty Miller, and Charlotte Phillips, shaped the book, the composition expertise of Sharon D. Worsley and Christy Gray completed it. I thank Becky and Debra for their editorial assistance and Christy for the cover design.

Finally without the support of the Colquitt/Miller Arts Council, there would be no book. A word of immense gratitude goes to Jo Bush, president; Barbara Clearman, first vice president; Linnie Gibson, second vice president; JoAnn Calhoun, secretary; Ed Flynn, treasurer; Carol Sizemore, reporter; Sandra East, Swamp Gravy Council representative; Vic Hill, Sara Ann Keaton, Mary Powell, Debra Heath, and Johnna Cannon, directors.

Good, Good Medicine focuses on a topic important to all of us, our health. We all want to live full, productive lives, and good health is the first step toward general well-being. The 1998 Swamp Gravy play, **Good Medicine**, an earlier play, **The Blue Doctor**, and this book look at different ways of healing and curing. This third volume of **Swamp Gravy: Folk Tales of South Georgia** includes medical stories, home remedies, folk cures, comfort foods, and other restorative measures. Enhancing the text are photos from the 1998 play, provided by Charlotte Phillips and others.

As Karen Kimbrel's song lyrics indicate: "Good medicine's a personal thing; what you take is up to you." I hope you find just what you need in this new Swamp Gravy book, **Good, Good Medicine**.

What you take is up to you

— Karen S. Kimbrel, ©1998

(Chorus)

Good medicine is everywhere
It doesn't have to be a pill.
It can be a hug or a lot of good love
It can be a home cooked meal.
You can sing a song
Or dance a jig
Or you can walk around with the flu
Good medicine is everywhere
What you take is up to you.

People go around saying, "I feel so bad"
And they give you a list of ailments
Everyone they've had.
What you say with your mouth is what you'll be
Sick or well, enslaved or free
Good medicine's a remedy
But, what you take is up to you.

Everybody says, "I feel so good"

(I feel so good)

And I'm gonna do everything I know I should
I'm gonna laugh and sing and do good deeds
I'm gonna watch and pray and hope and dream
Good medicine's a personal thing
What you take is up to you.

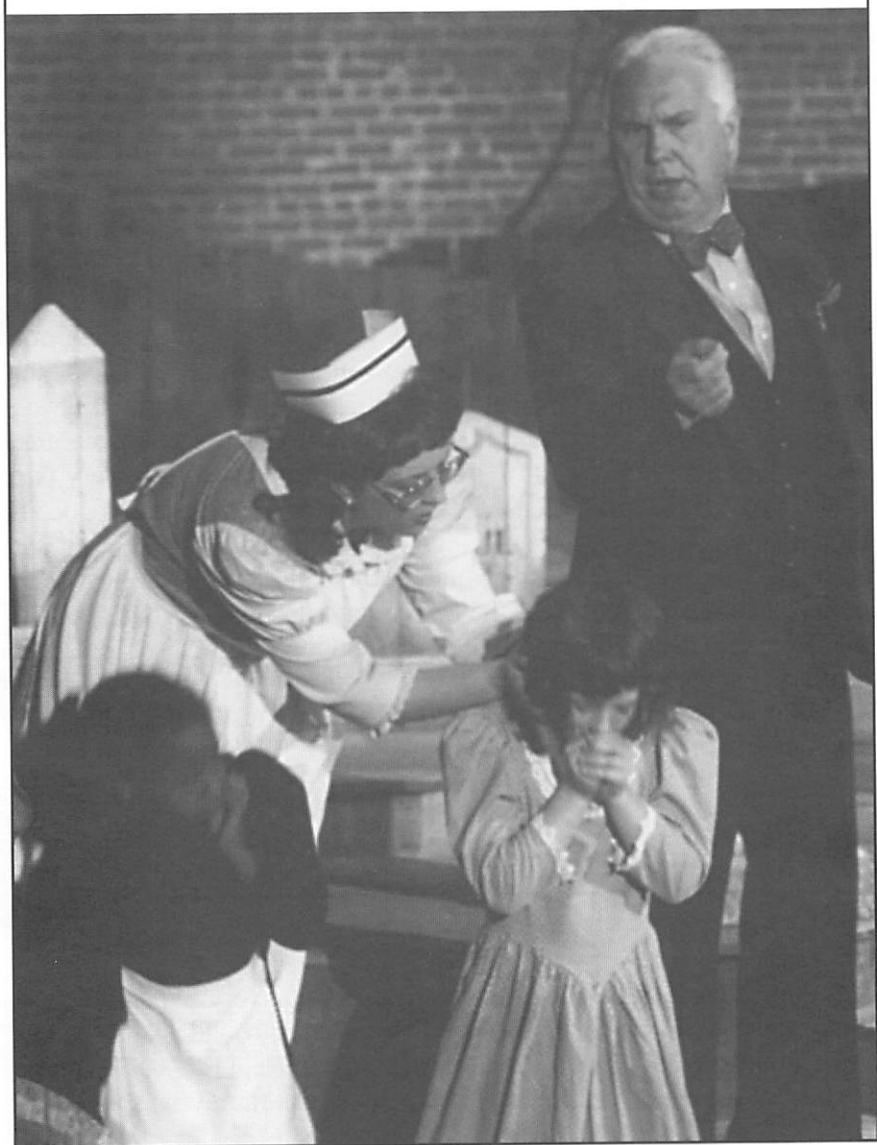
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GOOD, GOOD MEDICINE

*Volume Three of
Swamp Gravy:
Folk Tales of
South Georgia
is dedicated to
Lewis Haire and
Lois Houston
and is in memory
of Bo Miller.*

GOOD MEDICINE IS EVERYWHERE



Penicillin

— Jane Merritt

Penicillin was discovered during my senior year of nursing school at Baptist Memorial Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, at least that was the year it was first used there, early 1944.

A boy, twelve years of age, was a patient with osteomyelitis (infection of the bone) who had been on the “charity floor” since before I entered school. He must have been in the hospital at least three years at the time. Treatment for osteo at the time was with sulfur drugs and injections of gentian violet. Insertions of maggots into the bone marrow were even tried. Nothing was successful in this boy’s case.

I do not know whether his family had given up on his regaining his health or were too poor to visit (they lived in Arkansas), or what the problem was, but it was very seldom they ever came to the hospital. The nurses were his family. It was very depressing to be there and watch him fading away day by day, and no one could help. We carried him games and were the only contact he had with the outside. Of course, he was in lots of pain most of the time. We had even taught him to swallow pills when he first came in. This disease was very tortuous and caused high fevers and painful muscles. It seemed to affect every part of the body. It is usually caused by a staphylococcus or streptococcus infection.

It was almost certain that he would be there until he died. When penicillin was discovered, he was the first to get injections. At that time the medicine was given in very small doses, and it seems that we gave it to him every four hours.

Miraculously, he was much improved the very next day, and I got to see him go home, a healed boy. This was unheard of in those days.

A Nurse’s Story

— Donova Smith-Collins

In my nursing career I’ve been witness to some very sad and humorous events. I’ve lost patients that I became attached to, and it was like losing a family member. Some instances are remarkable. I had a patient who was in a coma and was not expected to live. His family was predomi-

nantly patriarchal. Although most of his family accepted that he would not live and was willing to give him up, his oldest son who would have to step into his shoes would not agree for him to die. He fought against any notion that his father would not recover for some time. Then one day he visited with his father and talked to him, admitting that he was now ready to give him up. The son walked out of the room, and five minutes later the man died. He was waiting for his son to be strong enough to let go.

I experienced the same sort of phenomenon with my own father when he was at death's door. He was comatose and had not responded to anything until I walked into the room. Then he tried to sit up. After my visit with him, he died. It seemed as if he was waiting for me and was trying to tell me good-bye.



Angie Lane, Emanuel and
Veronica Haire in "Blue Doctor"

....

A lady patient of mine had an out-of-body experience while we were trying to bring her back. She lived and a few days later asked me if I had thinning hair. I said, "Yes . . . why?" She told me she'd been floating on the ceiling watching while we brought her back. The orderly working with us would not go back into her room after he heard that.

....

In some hospitals codes are given over the intercom to mean different things; like, for instance, calling Dr. Red means there's a fire, or Code 9 means life or death emergency, and so on. Well, I was the only nurse on duty at the small hospital where I worked so I was attending a Code 9 and couldn't leave to call for assistance. A young woman who worked in housekeeping was close by, and I told her to get on the horn and call for help. The only thing she could think of to say was, "Mayday! Mayday! Mayday!" But it worked because help soon arrived.



Good Medicine

— Charlotte Phillips ©1997

Baby's got the colic and ma a sleepless night.
Pa's got arthritis.
Brother's been in a fight.
The old cow kicked Grandma,
Now she's black and blue.
Sister fell and broke her _____,
Doc, what will we do?

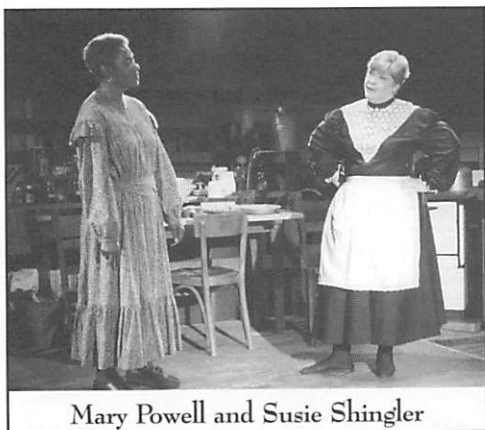
Aunt Martha's got the rheumatize;
A dog bit Uncle Jack.
Grandpa got skinned up real bad
when he fell through the crack.
If aches and pains and
stress and strains is what is ailing you,
Good, good medicine is what we need to do.

We need good, good medicine
to make us well again.
We need good, good medicine
on which we can depend.
There's a cure for all that ails you.
It's the way it's always been.
It's up to us to find a way to make good medicine.

Splinter, The Reluctant Nurse

— Ann Addison

Everyone called her Splinter since she was a little girl. Granny never weighed over 90 pounds soaking wet even after she was grown. The community had decided that Granny was going to be a nurse. Every time Doc Houston had an emergency, from the time Granny was just a teenager, he came and picked her up to assist him.



Mary Powell and Susie Shingler

Well, Granny really never wanted to be a nurse at all but hated to tell Doc no after he drove all the way to get her while somebody really sick was waiting and besides, who else would go at these ungodly hours of the night? So, Splinter just took it as her plight in life and crawled in the buggy and went off to “who knows where” and “gosh knows what.”

This stormy night Granny said Doc came knocking on the door a little out of breath; and as she opened the door, he grabbed her and exclaimed, “Come quick, Splinter, a patient has a ruptured appendix, and you’ve got to help me operate. My nurse is too sick and just can’t help me.” “Wait a minute, Doc, you know I can’t stand the sight of blood, and I ain’t gonna help with no operation and that’s final.” “Splinter, this man is going to die, and you are going to help me, and that’s that. Go get in the wagon,” he said. Splinter said she turned to her mother to rescue her only to find her mother waving her on, “Splinter, go help Doc save that man’s life. You can do it.”

“Me nor Doc spoke a word all the way to the man’s house. We walked in, and I was light-headed just thinking about it. He got his ether ready and waved it under the patient’s nose who moaned in terror with severe pain. Me and doc almost went out, too, the fumes were so strong. Then what I had dreaded most happened. Doc took out his big surgeon’s knife and split that man’s belly wide open.

'Oh, Jesus,' I screamed, 'I can't take this.'" "Splinter, you behave yourself, you can and you will help me until I am done with this operation!" the doctor said. (Granny's pulse would get fast as she continued with the story.) "Somehow I swallowed real hard and was actually able to stay on my feet . . . then the most disgusting, nauseating, and unforgivable thing happened. Doc took several feet of that man's guts and threw them at me and said, 'Here, hold these, Splinter!'" Granny said.

"Suddenly, I wasn't sick or weak any more, I was made as hell! I'll hold these stinking chitlings this time, but God is my witness I will never, as long as I live, help you, I don't care who dies! After what seemed an eternity, Doc finished up the last stitch with that cat's gut black string. The man was already kickin' by now, and I was fuming to high heaven. I took my apron off, slung it in Doc's



Ted Ary and Lesley Davis

face, and said, "You can find you another nurse. I never wanted to be a nurse before now. I don't want to be a nurse, and I ain't gonna be a nurse, I quit!" she said.

That ended Granny's nursing career. She lived to be over 90 years old and still would break out in a cold sweat every time she told about helping Doc with that operation and her short nursing career.

Another Reluctant Nurse

— Debra Calhoun Jones

My grandmother, Minnie Lee Rentz (Mammie), was also a reluctant nurse. She spent her life managing a household, a farm, and a restaurant before becoming a sales clerk at Wilkin's Department Store. She enjoyed her job there very much, delighted in meeting the public and was a terrific sales person. Her baby daughter, Mary, had gone off to college, and this mother of eight

was alone for the first time in her life, with no one to look after. Then her daughter Garnett, who was my mother, became very sick.

Since her teenage years, Garnett had fought against heart disease, and by the time she was twenty-nine, she was losing the battle. Her badly enlarged heart from a defective valve was failing. She was bedridden, needing constant care, and she was brought back to Colquitt to her mother's home to live out the last months of her life as comfortably as she could.

Here she had her very own hospital room and medical staff. Mammie found a hospital bed and oxygen supplier and changed the spare bedroom into Garnett's hospital room. Dr. Turner Rentz, Mammie's son, became the attending physician, making house calls daily and prescribing Digitalis to keep his sister's heart working, and Demerol to keep the pain minimal. Aunt Maggie Bell, Mammie's oldest daughter, was an LPN at the time (later an RN), and she offered her assistance as well.

However, these two were not enough to suit Garnett. She wanted Mammie to become her nurse. Mammie and other family members tried to reason with her, to assure her Maggie and Turner's staff could take care of her medical needs, but Garnett was known for her stubbornness. "I want Mama to give me shots," she informed them, and Mammie's department store job was replaced with a nursing career. It was on-the-job training with Maggie as instructor. Mammie practiced, with shaking hands at first, on oranges. As is usually the case when you do what you have to do, Mammie became very adept at shot-giving. She could give a painless injection. Garnett never flinched once. I was the ten-year-old nurse's assistant who took nurse's notes, and Mammie administered oral medications and injections. Garnett was satisfied.

In addition to giving shots, Mammie also had to sterilize the needles and syringes. This was 1960; so a sterilizer on the stove in the kitchen was her equipment. Her house had always been the center for family gatherings, but now that Garnett was so sick, there was a constant flow of traffic, family and friends, with a grandchild or two always on hand. On this particular day, Mammie was hard at work at her other jobs of cooking and cleaning while the newly-sterilized hypodermic needles lay on a clean cloth drying on the table. Sarah Bell, who was five years old, saw those needles and decided she would "play nurse," too. With Mammie bent over the sink, immersed to the elbows in dishwater suds, Sarah came up behind

her and plunged a needle in her grandmother's fanny. She wanted to make sure she did a good job and pushed the needle in up to the hilt. Mammie let out a scream that could be heard in the next county. Sarah, who became an RN herself, following in her mother's footsteps, was on her way to a promising career at the age of five!

Six months later Mammie gave up her nursing duties just as reluctantly as she began them. She stopped nursing when she lost her beloved daughter.

Influenza

— Charlotte Phillips

In the early thirties there was an influenza epidemic that came through here. Sometimes entire families were wiped out. You might go to a man's house and find the mama dead in the kitchen and the daddy at the barn and one of the kids in the yard or at the woodpile. It was funny how it struck some families and passed right by other families. There were men in the community that would go out to see about a man and his family if he wasn't seen in a day or so by somebody.

It was a real scary time because you didn't know where it would strike. 'Course there wasn't a cure for it even if you caught it in time for the old country doctor to see you. In many cases houses would have evergreen and different herbs and plants and medicines known

to ward off diseases around all the entrance ways. After a bout of an epidemic, the houses would have to be scrubbed down, and everything in it taken out.

Mama cleaned up after a family that died with either the flu or tuberculosis. She was with them when the breath went out of the last man and as the breath left him the fire in the fire-



Krista Smith and Spud Bush

place flew up the chimney. Daddy and them were working in the field several miles away, and they thought the house was on fire.

Mama said that cleaning that house up was the most awful thing she'd ever done. The sick folks didn't have anyone tending to them so they spit on the floor and walls and everywhere to keep from choking to death. Mama said the men had to bring sand in and scatter it around to be able to stand up and scrub everything, even throw sand on the walls they scrubbed with potash soap.

A Good Country Doctor

— Mr. Horace Killebrew
As told to Sara Ann O'Neal Keaton

After church (Damascus Baptist Church) one Sunday, Mr. Horace Killebrew walked up to Ferrell and me to tell us a story about Ferrell's grandfather, Dr. Pat Keaton. Dr. Pat Keaton was an old timey country doctor who made house calls in a horse and buggy. He was loved by many people in the southwest Georgia counties of Early, Baker and Miller. This is how the story goes.

Mr. Horace married when he was only 16 years old! (Wonder how old she was?) He bought a "two-horse farm" just about nine miles outside the then thrivin' south Georgia town of Damascus. Almost a year exactly from the day they were married, early one spring morning, the young Mrs. Killebrew woke Mr. Horace and said, "You'd better go find a doctor, Horace, I believe it's about time." Mr. Horace said that he was so young he hardly realized "what it meant to have babies!"

So, in the middle of the night, he hitched up the horse and buggy and set out to drive the nine miles into Damascus to fetch Dr. Keaton. It was in the wee, early morning hours before daylight when Mr. Horace rapped on Dr. Keaton's front door. Miss Vardelle answered his persistent knock as Mr. Horace said, "Tell Dr. Pat to come quick 'cause my wife's goin' into labor!" Vardelle replied, "Well, Horace, Dr. Keaton's not here. He's off on a call up in Baker County. So, Mr. Horace said to Miss Vardelle, "If Doc Keaton should come home before I find him, please tell him to go directly to my house; however, I'm headin' up toward Baker County to fetch him." Vardelle agreed to pass the message to Dr. Keaton as soon as



Tammy Richardson, Pat Bush, and Ted Ary

he returned home.

So, Mr. Horace got back in his horse and buggy and started out for Baker County to find Dr. Keaton soon. Well, when he got to the house, lo and behold, Dr. Keaton had already left. Now, when Mr. Horace couldn't find the doctor, he decided that he'd drive a few miles further and pick up his mother and bring her back to help his poor young wife deliver her first child. He picked up Mrs. Killebrew, and they both started the long ride back to the other side of Damascus.

By the time they got home, it must have been close to 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. Mr. Horace let out a yell for joy because when they got close to his farm, he saw Dr. Keaton's horse and buggy parked in his front yard with the Doc's oldest son, Li'l Peyton (who also drove the doctor's horse and buggy) asleep in the buggy. Li'l Peyton had been driving Dr. Pat on his house calls that whole night and was exhausted. Little Peyton was only about nine or ten years old. Mr. Horace ran inside . . . it was still way before daylight. Dr. Keaton told him to light the kerosene lamp and to bring it close by! (One kerosene lamp was all the light the young Killebrew family had.)

All of a sudden, Dr. Keaton said quietly but firmly, "Step over here, Horace, and take Sam." Mr. Horace took the baby from the doctor and, in amazement, handed Sam to his mother. Dr. Keaton

was once again helping the young Mrs. Killebrew, and he turned to Mr. Horace and handed Horace a second baby saying, "Here, Horace, take John!" Mr. Horace was astounded and handed John to his mother. Mr. Horace again looked back and saw that Dr. Keaton was again turned to Mrs. Killebrew, and Mr. Horace exclaimed, "Now hold up heah, Doc, there's no need to go back to the well for the third time!" However, Dr. Keaton was just completing his task, and there were only the twin babies, Sam and John! No third child! Mr. Horace exclaimed, "We didn't know too much about those things back then!" He continued, "I just sat down, ate me some breakfast, hitched up my two mules and went about doin' a full day's work while my wife and Mother looked after Sam and John."

Ferrell asked Mr. Horace how and why Dr. Keaton named the twins Sam and John. Mr. Horace replied, "Well, Dr. Keaton had always known all of our folks . . . he knew both my father and my wife's father all their lives . . . so he knew exactly what to name my boys!"

My thoughts upon hearing this story were "isn't it wonderful to have had a family doctor who knew, cared and loved both families well enough to feel comfortable naming their children without ever once consulting either of the parents."

In the Hospital

— *Mary Rentz*

In cardiac care, you see a lot of touch and go situations. I'll be standing over a woman talking to her, and she will go into cardiac arrest, and we don't bring her back. But this particular man came in, and he actually was at a family reunion with his wife, and he had a heart attack. I want to tell this because it's - we don't ever know. The doctors didn't think he would go home from the hospital. He waited until he got back to Albany and came to the doctor. He had extensive muscle damage; and when you have the muscle damage like that, you go into congestive heart failure. He was in cardiogenic shock. It was terrible, but I was standing right there with the doctors. They were telling the family he wouldn't ever go home. He wouldn't leave there, and that man left there. He walked out of there and that went on to prove to me that we don't know. That man medically should not have gone out of there.

....

I remember when one woman came in, when she had been cut by the son. I remember I bet I drew three pints of blood. Her other son told me, "I told her not to trust him. I told her that he may do this. I was afraid that this would happen." I still didn't know what had happened to the woman, and finally, after about three pints of blood that we got back there to her, I finally asked one of the other nurses - I said, "What happened to her?" And she told me. I never will forget when the woman first got over it, when she got back to her room - the first person she wanted to see was that son. Mothers never stop loving their sons, never stop wanting to help. Of course, she was scared. She knew he was sick, and, you know, he went up to the courthouse and told them what he had done, but that's the first person she wanted to see when she got to where she could.

....

I remember one person that really stands out in my mind is Dr. James Merritt. I was a young woman coming out of medical technology school, and there were so many things that I had to set up in the lab. We had what we called a walking blood bank. If somebody got in a wreck, and so forth, then donors came. Most of the time the people came, but if they didn't come, I had a list that we had to call, but most of the time they came, and I just remember Dr. James. He was such a kind, gentle man. I was a young woman out of school. I was under a lot of stress at times trying to get blood ready and things ready. He never once yelled at me, lost patience with me. I remember one time I was called back up there, and they had a motorcycle accident. One of the young boys was killed, and he was in the ambulance. We didn't have EMTs, and we used the funeral place's vehicle as the ambulance - to go get them. I remember somebody said go out there and look at that young man in the ambulance, how he's messed up. Dr. James wouldn't let me. He said, "No, she doesn't need to go out there."

Everything I remember about him is positive, is good, the way he was with his patients, the way he was medically, professionally, and then he was funny. He had a good sense of humor. One of the funny things about Dr. James that I heard was about him taking this man's temperature. Dr. James had put the thermometer under the

arm and about a week later, (so the story goes, but I don't know whether it's true or not) the man came back in the office and said, "Doc, how long do I keep it under here?" And Dr. James said, "Uh, I think about 15 more minutes will be enough."

....

I loved Dr. Houston, too. My brother came back and went into practice with him, and Dr. Houston delivered me at home. I remember I got my finger caught in the car door, and they had to take me to the clinic. I remember walking in, and I told them I wanted to see Dr. Houston. They thought it was funny, and they said, "You don't want to see your brother?" I said, "No, Dr. Houston is my doctor," and Dr. Houston was my doctor until he died.

....

This is not on healing, but it's a funny medical story. A patient of my brother's, Dr. Rentz, was what you might call a hypochondriac, and she had a son that lived with her. Back in those days, they made house calls. They called and then, you know, they'd meet you at the hospital later, but this day, they called Turner at home. He really didn't care about going out and seeing her because it was probably, if it was like the rest of the times, not anything really seriously wrong. On a Sunday, he really didn't care about going to see what was wrong. So he told his child who had answered the telephone to tell them that he had hurt his foot, and he couldn't come. In a little while, he decided to go out in the back yard and hit a few golf balls, and the lady and her son drove up. The children went out there with him, and they looked and one of them said, "Oh, my goodness, we told her your foot was hurt." So they said that Turner limped over to the car.

....

My brother, Buddy, was given streptomycin penicillin or something like it, and then just before you turned around, he was gone. He was out, and Turner was desperately trying to pull him back, you know, to save him. Turner was working on his brother. They did not know he was allergic to this drug. Turner knew it was anaphylactic

shock. He knew that when it happened to Buddy, but he was talking to him and he said, "Come on, Bud. Come on, come on, Bud, come back, come on back to me." Then my brother, Buddy, the one that it happened to, told me that it was so easy going out. It was very hard coming back. He said it felt like somebody was standing on his chest and wouldn't get off, trying to come back. He said it was so hard to come back, but he could see Turner saying, "Come on, Bud, come on, Bud."

....

When I heard the siren, I knew it could be some of my people so when I saw the ambulance go by, I knew I was on call 24 hours a day, and I knew I had to get up there. So I did, and this time it was my nephew, Wayne Rentz. Wayne had a scooter back then, and he was excited, going to tell somebody some news, and he ran out in front of a car and was thrown on the windshield and cut his nose and broke his leg. Turner, his daddy, was working on him and actually sewed his nose up. He wanted it to be where you couldn't see the scar, and it was a horrible cut, all the way across his nose, and Turner did that and did a really good job. He went right in there, and he worked on him. It was his child. He wanted to do the best that could be done, and he felt like he could. Dr. Hinton Merritt was always that way. He felt like he could do the best, if it's some of his family, his children. He could do it best, and that was great confidence to have, to be able to do that.

....

There were times, though, when Turner couldn't work on his family. Mama had congestive heart failure about five years before she died, and one night she saw that she was really getting in trouble so she went and unlocked the back door and called Turner. He started this questioning like how long have you been doing this now and how bad is it, and she said, "Turner, you'd better get over here quick." Freddie, Turner's wife, said that she came in her housecoat. Turner got there, and by that time - they called the ambulance. They remembered to do that, and I believe Billy Rathel might have come down there, but Turner was there, and he could not hit mama's vein he was so nervous, and Billy did it. They got her this medicine in

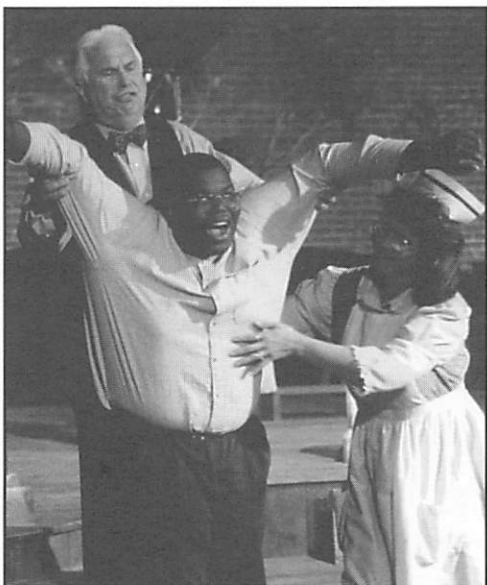
her vein, got her to the hospital. He had enough - Turner told them when he called the ambulance to call Dr. Hinton. He remembered to do that, and they said he could not walk into the hospital he was so nervous. He almost - he could barely get in there. It got him so upset, but Dr. Hinton was there by the time they got her to the hospital, and Dr. Bradley Merritt came in on it, and that was a touch and go situation. That was a horrible thing for him to have to go through.

That was a miracle to me that mama made it through that. I remember me going out the back ramp with her at the Miller County Hospital and saying to her, "Mama, I'm so glad you lived to see how much people love you." The people in Miller County, her family - she could have died, you know, and never known that. Instead she was near death, and she lived and she saw how much she was loved.

Not Just a Doctor, a Conduit

— Ferrell Keaton

Mr. Horace Killebrew, who died at the age of 94, said that he remembers many a night Dr. Pat Keaton had a pallet on the floor beside the patient's bed. He said that it was not necessary that Doc Keaton stay there beside the bed of the sick family member. But Mr. Horace felt that part of the healing process was the confidence that my granddaddy gave not only to the patient but also to the family. The laying on of hands: just being able to reach over and touch him if he had difficulty breathing or any difficulty during the



Burnell Grant, Jr., Billy Kimbrel,
and Angie Lane

night.

I can think of something that my father said that my grandfather said. He was a country doctor. So often, he was complimented on and thanked for what he was doing. And, my dad said that invariably his response to this compliment was, "When you look at me with thanks, look at me and look straight up." He said, "If I am successful in the healing process, it is because all I am is a shining water pipe." He didn't say unshining. "And, God is sending his Light down, through me, through this pipe and into the healing process. I'm not healing. I am only His conduit." He said, "The thanks must go to God." I thought to myself, "Now here's a man of science who had it in perspective, who believes and had the understanding of his role."

....

In a family letter dated 1937 a reference was made to Dr. Keaton's tombstone. The motto of a doctor's life he often said was "ready." So this is the epitaph:

READY

Ready to go, ready to stay

Ready your place to fill;

Ready to serve your fellow man

Ready to do God's will.



Ted Ary and Andrew Heard



Billy Kimbrel and Jane Hill

IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE A PILL



Special Salesman

— *Bernice Chambers Cross*

Rumor had it that a salesman from Bainbridge could get rid of warts. My twin sister, Vernice Braswell, and I had our doubts, but when we looked at her daughter Debra's poor hands all covered with warts, we thought it was worth a try to ask for the man's help. When he delivered groceries to Cross Grocery in Iron City, I told him that we had heard about his unusual ability. About that time Debra came running by and I said, "There she is!!" The man said that he did not want to see her and refused to look at her.

I was appalled that I had dared to suggest to this dignified man that he could talk the warts off of someone. Whether he had the power or not, I'll never know, but I do know that Debra's warts disappeared within a few days and have never reappeared.

Chicken Pox Cure

— *Vernice Chambers Braswell*

When my daughter Becky was a year old, her granny, Decia Odom Braswell, suggested a cure for her chicken pox. She suggested that I take her to the chicken coop at daybreak while the chickens were still roosting. Granny said to "stir up a ruckus" so that the chickens would fly over Becky's head. She assured me that this would cure the pox, but I was afraid that they might peck her so I took her to the doctor instead.

Talkin' the Fire Out

— *Bernice Chambers Cross*

Have you ever been burned with hot grease from frying fish roe? Well, I have and "Miss" Myrtle Rathel, my mother-in-law, was there, and she kept trying to rub and blow on the burn. I kept moving my hand and trying to go outside where it was cool. Finally, I went to the doctor.

Later, “Miss” Myrtle’s sister, Allie Cross, told me that Sister (“Miss” Myrtle) could talk fire out of a burn. I don’t know if this is true because I could not stay still long enough to give her a fair chance. If she had told me that’s what she was trying to do, I might have stood still longer.

“Miss” Myrtle told me later that a man told her how to talk the fire from a burn, and she would be allowed to teach one man how to do this. According to her, the power could only be passed to one other person and that person had to be of the opposite sex.

Home Remedies & Folk Cures

I myself always try to find an easy and fast cure for anything. A common cold would get chicken soup and a big blanket. Heartburn would receive mustard. I sprained my ankle once, and the cure for that was taking red clay dirt and mixing it with water to make it mud-like, then taking it and placing it around the ankle like a cast. The old folks, as we call them, say that dirt will draw the swelling out by the next day. These are just a few quick cures.

— *John Price*

A little wine works for a sour stomach.

— *Chris Jones*

For the mumps sardine juice on the mumps. Then tie a cloth around the area - makes the swelling go down.

— *Natasha Brown*

Drink pickle juice for an upset stomach.

— *Dracory Butler*

Use the aloe plant for a bee sting.

Peel a cactus and place the fleshy part on a carbuncle. Cover this with a bandage.

I’ve never tried this, but I have been told that sore eyes should be washed in a trough where mules have been drinking.

— *Hazel Roberts Ard*

To clear chest congestion, combine Vick's salve, beef tallow, and tar from a fat splinter in a bag and place it on the chest. Warm it up from time to time.

Use cobwebs to stop bleeding.

Rub horse liniment on sore muscles.

Sassafras tea can be used as a tonic for the body.

— *Lucy Lane Hornsby*

Croup rags were made by cutting flannel to fit the chest. These rags were soaked in a mixture of tallow and camphorated oil. After being soaked, the cloths were tied around the neck. They were worn all winter. When it was time to go barefooted (May 1), the croup rags could be removed.

— *Barbara Chambers Clearman*

Mix vinegar and clay together and apply thickly to a sprain. Pour some more vinegar over the cast of vinegar and clay. Wrap with an Ace bandage and cover with a sock.

— *R. L. Grimes, Jr.*

A treatment for mumps was to combine the oil from sardines and turpentine and to rub the mixture on the swollen gland.

Asafetida combined with moonshine was given for indigestion.

The root from a red bark tree mixed with red clay was used for sprains.

— *Edna Thornton*

This homemade potion was given to new born babies. It might be used to prevent colic. Roast an onion on an open fire using oak wood. Mash the onion and give the juice to the baby.

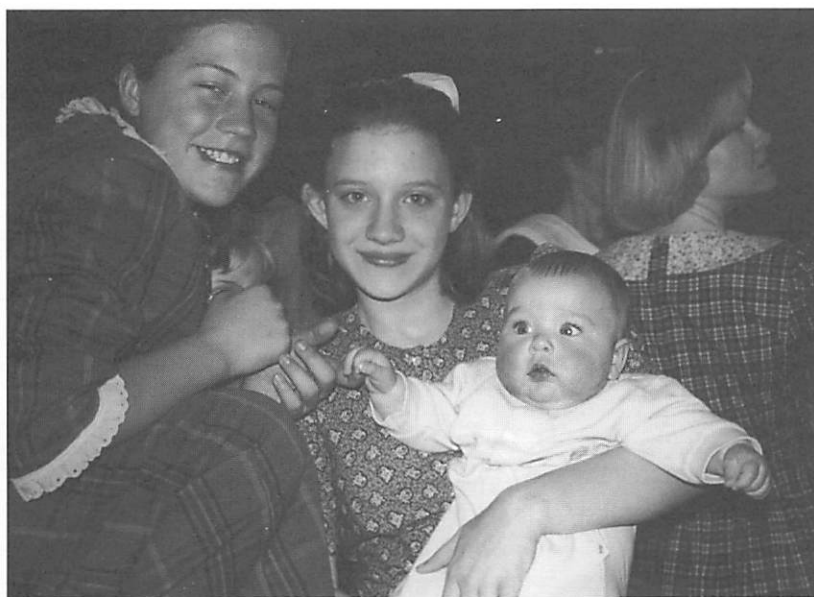
Given to babies to treat colic: Put a drop of asafetida in breast milk and feed the crying baby. Put two or three drops of paregoric in milk and feed the baby.

Treatment for whooping cough: Kill a turtle. Drain some blood from the animal in a bowl. In a separate bowl measure one teaspoon sugar and add a dozen drops of the turtle blood. Mix and give all of the medicine to the patient.

In my parents' time, my grandparents thought that it was important to keep their "systems" purged. They never felt like playing on Saturday.

Friday night - One Calomel tablet
Saturday morning - a good dose of castor oil or
Black Draught granules worked well as laxative

— *Nancy Davis as remembered
by Talbert and Carolyn Widner*



Leigh Middleton, Keisha Tully, Jeremiah Tabb, and Sherry Callhoun

Make a tea with fever grass for fever.

Sassafras tea will make measles break out.

Use chewing tobacco or snuff for a bee sting.

Bust open hog jowls and rub the inside on mumps.

Scrape the hoof of a hog, make a tea, and drink for fever.

Boil bitter weeds and bathe the baby with the liquid to bring down fever.

—*Vinetti Miller*

Rub the baby's throat with fatback for thrush.

A pinch of Black Draught can be used as a liver regulator.

Use sugar and turpentine for a sore throat.

— *Anonymous*

Hemorrhoids have always been an embarrassing problem. No one wants to admit that they have them or ask for a cure. A cousin of mine mentioned her problem to an elderly nurse at Phoebe Putney Hospital. She said that no doctor would admit it, but a "sure fire" cure was a combination of petroleum jelly, alum, aspirin, and quinine. The alum shrinks the hemorrhoids, and the petroleum jelly softens them. The aspirin was for the pain, and the quinine takes the place of an antibiotic. If these ingredients are not readily available, try some cranberry sauce for immediate shrinkage.

To stop bleeding: Dip a cut finger in a cup of flour . . . the thick paste will enable the blood to clot. Put a slice of tomato on an infected cut to draw out the infection. Sprinkle black pepper on a thin strip of salt pork and tie it to the wound.

To draw out a thorn: Grate an Irish potato and hold the pieces over the thorn or place a copper penny over it.

— *Vernice Chambers Braswell*

Although I never tried it, some said to heal a wound, you should put wool rags into a bucket and set "em" on fire. As the rags begin to smoke, you were supposed to hold the wound over it.

I have chewed gopher grass for kidney infections.

We were all willing to drink tea made from pine straw during the flu epidemic.

Make a mixture of cornstarch and water for diarrhea.

Sometimes home remedies didn't work. My husband George told about a woman who had a deadly cure for an earache. The man insisted that his wife pour turpentine into his ear. He died within a few minutes.

— *Eddie Lou Roberts Chambers*

For ringworm, burn a piece of paper in a plate. Take smut left in plate and put on ringworm.

For an infected sore, take an Irish potato, cut it and mash it until juice comes out. Place on infection and cover with bandage. This draws out infection.

Use a grated potato to remove bags from under the eyes.

To remove a splinter, apply Elmer's school glue and let dry. Pull the splinter out.

— *Debi Spurlock*

According to Aunt Nancy Houston, the way to cure morning sickness was to crawl over your husband in bed, and then he would have it instead. This never worked for me, though.

— *Angela Heard King*

Sprinkle sugar on an open wound, then smear petroleum jelly around the wound to hold the sugar in place. Put a little sugar in the wound, cover with a bandage. Change the bandage once or twice daily.

— *Cyndi Moore Yates*

To get rid of a wart, combine a crushed vitamin A capsule with water to make a paste. Put this directly on the wart in the morning.

Apply a drop of lemon juice in the evening.

My mother told me that a quick cure for a baby that's having diarrhea is to take some warm water and then take a tablespoon of cooking flour. Pour the flour into the warm water and mix it well. Give the baby a teaspoon of the flour water, and it will surely check the baby's bowels.

— *Emma D. Young*

The quick cure in our family when someone has a cold is it's time for castor oil and turpentine. My mother would give us castor oil to work all of the cold out; then she'd place a saucer of turpentine underneath the bed, this would draw all fever out of the body. This is the quick cure for the Holloway family.

— *Ruth Holloway*

The cure for asthma, according to Grandmother, is putting a frog down your throat and breathing on it. She says the frog helps the wheezing and coughing. When he makes that sound, "nee-dee," I was always afraid that the frog would leap down my throat.

— *Sheri Harris*

For a bad cold, you can get some Seagram's gin mixed with a ball of peppermint and cut up a lemon and let it sit overnight. It helps get the cold out. You have to sip on it.

— *Ja'net Peters*

Put an egg in a baby's sock when it is a newborn to make the baby's teeth come through; it eases the pain from teething.

— *Rhondalyn Burke and Katrise Mathis*

My dad had broken pieces of hard bricks into fine chips and laid it in a cloth and folded it and soaked it in vinegar, Blue Star ointment, and camphor, and wrapped it around my right hand to draw the soreness out. I wore it tight on my hand; and because of it, my hand was healed. I had hurt my hand sawing wood. My hand slipped on the side of the boards, and I felt like my hand was broken, but it was twisted a little, but it's straight now.

— *Adella Thomas*

Sip lemon juice when sick. Some people use it instead of Penicillin.

— *Gregory Mims*

Ginger is good for gas.

Take a piece of brown paper bag and put it on the forehead for the hiccups.

Spider webs will cause a cut to heal fast; it grows a scab.

Vanilla flavoring is good for a toothache.

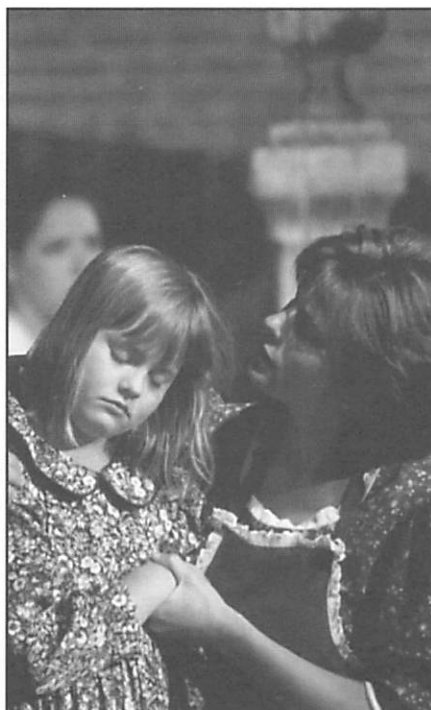
— *Larry Lamar*

Peach leaves are good for headache.

— *George Barnes*

Put salt in your coke, and it will make your headache go away.

— *Wesley Tarrer*



Ashley Sammon and Jane Hill

When you have a “risen,” use the inside of an eggshell to draw the infection from it.

— *Tiszoney Franklin*

When your blood pressure is up, eat some mustard.

— *Wanda McGarrah*

For a sore throat - gargle with Listerine and vinegar three times a day.

— *Gloria Bond*

If you have a bad cold, get some lemons, honey and gin. Boil all of it together on top of the stove. Drink it while it's hot like coffee and go to bed. The cold will come out of you. I know for a fact it works.

—Wanda Young

If a baby has thrush, then someone who has never seen the father should blow in the baby's mouth.

—Tonya Jackson

Give a baby a pinch of baking soda so that they don't have gas.

—Darnisha Brown

Pour milk on the skin or make a paste out of soda for a sunburn.

-- Sue Smith

When I was little and would get a cough, my mother would get a big pan, boil some water, put some peppermint in it, put a big towel over my head and over the pan, and it would always soothe my cough.

— Donna McWaters

Family Medicine

— Charlotte Phillips

We had to get wet in the first spring rains, which was fun for all us younguns. We weren't raised with the notion that going barefoot or without the proper seasonal clothing would make you sick or make you catch cold or many of the notions a lot of folks have.

....

A good cleaning out with castor oil would be sure to cure what ailed you. Lydia E. Pinkham and Grover's Chill Tonic were the two remedies that my mama swore by for woman's ailments. Grover's Chill Tonic was supposed to build your blood and take the kinks out

of a growing youngun so they'd be strong instead of puny. I was a little on the frail and puny side as a young child so I took Grover's Chill Tonic by the case. It was worse than Lydia E. Pinkham to taste. It had what felt like grains of sand in it. At least with Lydia after a couple doses, you began to feel no pain so you could drink the whole bottle. Daddy'd make corn buck a couple times a year, and he'd give all us younguns a big dose of that. It was supposed to purify your system and help your immune system throw off all kinds of diseases.



One time me and my cousin was playing doctor, and I was the doctor. I gave her I know at least half a bottle of Lydia E. Pinkham and Grover's Chill Tonic. We were around six years old. She didn't want to take it, but I kept insist-

ing, and at first she just started falling around and acting a little crazy. Then she crawled underneath this real high porch that we had been playing under and just lay there real still like. I tried to make her get up, but she wouldn't move. She was asleep I guess, but I couldn't wake her up so I thought she was dead, and I was scared to death. I was afraid to go tell Mama and Aunt Minnie, and I was afraid not to tell. I knew I'd made her drink all the Lydia E. Pinkham and Grover's Chill Tonic.

I just knew I'd killed her, so I ran squalling to Mama. She couldn't understand a word I said, I was carrying on so, but she heard the word "dead" and came running like a bat out of Hades. When she got there, she pulled my cousin out, and she was as limber as a dish rag, and Mama couldn't get her awake either. Mama said she was breathing, so she got to cross-examining me on what I did to her. She could smell alcohol so she thought I had given her corn liquor. When she told me she wasn't dead, she finally got me hushed crying enough so she could find out what I'd done. There wasn't much they could do except keep a close watch on her and let her sleep. I never did think she would wake up. I was miserable all afternoon

besides getting my butt blistered for playing with medicine. Finally about dark she woke up and was just as spry as a morning cock, and I guess that big dose of medicine helped her 'cause she put on a growing spurt like you never seen. She was a full head taller than me when we got in third grade, and she was as puny as I was to start with.

....

My oldest brother died when he was eighteen months old, and my daddy got down in his back. The doctor came to see him, but they couldn't find a reason for him to have that kind of pain and not be able to get up and move about. He was down with his back for about three months. Mama called for an old black woman who was known in the community as a granny woman, and she came to see Daddy. She said some pains can't be treated with medicines. She got the little cap that belonged to my brother, who had died, and took it into the bedroom and put it in Daddy's hand. Big tears welled up in Daddy's eyes and ran down his cheeks. Aunt Henrietta's big, black hands wiped the tears off Daddy's face, and she turned around and walked out of the room. The next morning Daddy got up out of the bed and went to work. He was grieving in his back for the loss of his first born son.

Another time Daddy was separated from his oldest brother, Emmett, due to a misunderstanding concerning their father's will. Since he was the oldest heir, Uncle Emmett felt he had been mistreated in the handling of the will. Even though he didn't have a personal problem with Daddy, he severed all connections with his family. Daddy loved him so dearly and sorely missed him. For years there was no communication. No one knew where he was. Daddy put in to find him, and somehow through the FBI he was able to locate him. Uncle Emmett came home for several days' visit after that and stayed at our house. Of course, Mama laid out the red carpet such as it was, her best sugar-cured hams and prize-winning canned vegetables and delectable cakes and pies were made to insure Uncle Emmett's visit would be most pleasurable. The day he had to leave, Mama and Daddy and all the younguns went out to the big road and watched him drive away. They stood and watched until all the dust cleared away, and no sign of the car was visible. They all went inside, and Daddy took to his bed. He was down for several days with his back. His heart was broken to say bye again to the brother he'd just found, but the pain was in his back.

This same thing happened to Daddy when his Mama died. So call it imagination or psychosomatic or anything you like, but some ailments just can't be treated with medicine, and the pain is just as real as if you'd hit your finger with a hammer.

....

My sister was very frail as a child. She was prone to have passing out spells if she got over-excited or tired or hurt or angry or any emotion like that. One day the kids were playing and running, and my sister who passed out ran into a chair and hurt herself and passed out. My older sister got blamed for her getting hurt and got a whipping for it.

Another time my sister passed out in the yard, and no one was around and an old black man named Uncle Si, who worked for Daddy and lived right there on our place, came across her lying in the yard. She'd already turned blue, and he got her up and worked with her, resuscitating her and all and got her to breathing again. So he actually saved her life. He was the sort of protector of all the children. Anyway he loved them. There was a house full of 'em, and they loved him. He was all alone, no family to speak of. He told them stories and sung songs to entertain them. He always had a place set for him at the main table, but he chose to eat in the kitchen at the cooktable, and all the little younguns would eat in there with him.

....

My dad could bring down the milk in mothers whose breasts had risen by rubbing their breasts. It is said that he got the power by smothering a mole in his hands. He was raised on a sheep farm, and he had a way with animals. They would calm to his touch.

My daddy also talked to owls, or so I thought, when I was a little girl. We had a big pecan tree out by the well, and every morning real early and every evening just before dark, there would be a big owl that came to that tree. It wasn't snow-white, but it was a whitish-grey color. We all got up early before daylight at our house, and some mornings I'd start out the back door, and I'd see Daddy pacing around the tree or squatting down underneath the tree. When he saw me, he'd say, "Go back inside, honey." I would step back inside. Then I'd just stand there and listen. I'd hear the owl some-

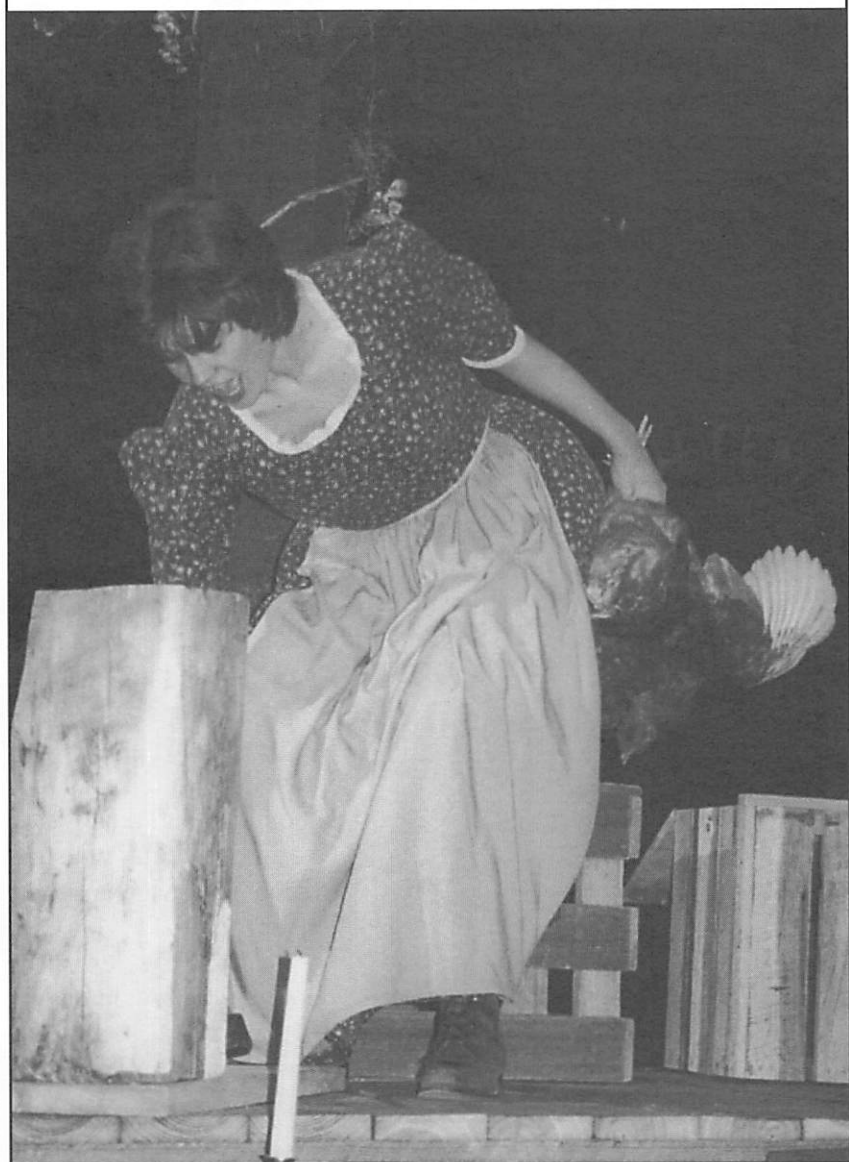
times make what sounded like chattering noises. When I grew up, I asked Daddy about it, and he told me he didn't talk to the owl he just listened. I've often wondered if listening to the owl had anything to do with the gifts of healing that Daddy was blessed with. He was a spiritual man, a good man, a man of great faith, and he helped many people.

Belief

—Charlotte Phillips

I rest my head on Mama's breast
My fever is raging
There's a cold in my chest
My body is lifeless
But I know I'll be okay.
Through a whispered hush
I hear my mama say,
"My dear sweet baby
You're gonna be just fine.
For the dear Lord who turned
The water into wine,
Is going to take this
Bad ole sickness away,
And tomorrow you'll be able to play."
She stroked my hair and murmured,
"You're gonna be all right,"
As she held me close and
Rocked me through the night.
I listened to my mama.
I believed every word when said.
Soon my illness passed
I was fit and well again.

IT CAN BE A HOMECOOKED MEAL



Eat the Whole Thing

— *Wattie G. Hays*

During the late 1920's or early 1930's, Dr. W.C. Hays made a visit to a lady who was very ill with some type of stomach virus - (seems she was also pregnant). After examining her and writing a prescription for the medicine, he advised the patient to stay on a soft diet for a few days.

"What do you mean, Doc, by soft diet?" she asked.

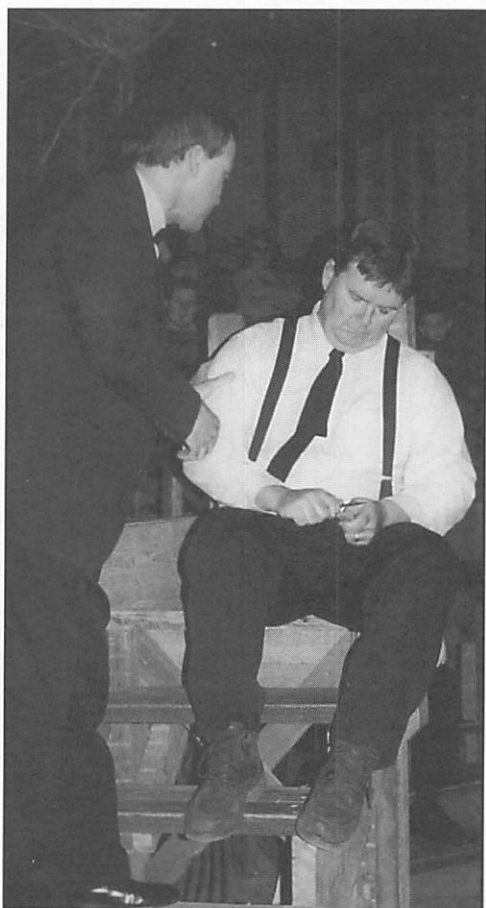
"Well, it means easily digested food, perhaps grits, eggs, toast, etc. - nothing heavy," replied Dr. Hays.

"Okay, Doctor," the patient said.

As the doctor gathered up his bag, the patient said, "Doc, how about telling my husband about the soft diet?" Dr. Hays repeated the meaning of the soft diet, and the husband nodded as if he knew and understood.

As Dr. Hays was at the gate, leaving, the husband yelled, "Say, Doc, 'bout that soft diet, will it be all right if my wife has some turnip greens and sweet potato?"

Dr. Hays, exasperated by the question, replied, "Hell, yeah, eat the whole thing - anything."



Ted Ary and Kent Richardson

My Sick Feeling Soup

— *Karlie Freeman, Fifth Grade*

When I'm down in the dumps and not feeling very well, I call for my mom and tell her that I want some of Granny's famous vegetable beef soup. As always a parent has to ask if you're going to eat every last drop of it, and, of course, I have to think a little while. When I've made up my mind, Mom goes into the kitchen, gets Granny's recipe and gets it ready for me to eat.

When it gets done, Mom brings it to me downstairs where I am lying on the couch resting. It always makes me feel better, especially when it is hot and fresh. My granny is very special to me; I love her very much.

Granny's Recipe

1 lb. stew beef
1 small onion
1 can of tomatoes
4 or 5 cut up potatoes
4 cut up carrots
water
salt and pepper

Wash stew beef. Put in a large pot and cover with water. Cook until beef is almost done. Add tomatoes, potatoes, and carrots. Cook until all is done and tender. Then for the last final step - eat and enjoy!

Egg Gravy

— *Nancy Davis*

This is a rich "soup" that gives strength to ailing bodies. Mama used to, and still does, serve this to me when I'm "under the weather."

Cut your chicken into pieces or purchase desired pieces. Put chicken in a heavy boiler, cover with water, and boil until tender. Remove chicken from broth. Set aside chicken and broth.

Boil six to eight eggs. Chop eggs, not too fine. Put broth back on burner. Bring to a rolling boil; pour eggs into broth. Simmer for fifteen minutes. Serve hot with the chicken and cornbread.

No Chicken Soup, Please

— Jack Boyd

When I was a boy on the farm, we always had a brooder full of chickens. At the appointed time, we would kill and dress all that we had. First we had to hang them on the clothesline and cut their throats and let them bleed. Then we would scald them in boiling water so the feathers would come off easily. I will never forget the smell of chicken feathers in hot water. 'Til this day I cannot eat chicken soup, even when I am sick. Potato soup does the trick for me.

Chicken Soup

— Sheila Cook Williams

This is a chicken soup recipe for feeling better when one has an upset stomach, nausea, or cold symptoms. It was used by Cullie Sheffield Williams, mother of Ada Mae Williams Davis. Ada Mae was born on September 6, 1900, and currently resides at the Miller Nursing Home, where she is still able to walk, talk and control her three children as she has always done even though it is from a different location.

The following recipe was told by Ada Mae Davis using different variations in voice level and her hands for emphasis. She also had tears in her eyes when she finished relating the way her mother made them well in the early 1900's.

When we would get sick, Ma used to always prepare chicken soup and egg bread. She would take a small chicken and cut off the wings and legs. Place him in a boiler and boil him until the meat would fall off the bone. She said you had to add a little salt and pep-

per. Next, you roll out your dumplings. If you like them thin, add a little water. If you like them thick, leave off the extra water. Drop a few dumplings in your chicken broth because it will give you some strength.

Next Ma prepared the egg bread because when you eat chicken soup, you have to eat egg bread with it to get your strength back. Put two eggs, one cup of meal, a cup of sour milk (and it has to be sour), and two teaspoons of baking powder into a bowl. Remember to take the two teaspoons of baking powder and level it off with your finger even with the spoon edges. Stir together and pour it into a greased black frying pan. It should pour almost like water. Bake until it is brown. Slice the egg bread like you would cut a pie, and serve it with the chicken soup. Don't forget to drink a little cold tea with it.

When Ada Mae was asked if that usually made her well when she was a young girl, she answered with cloudy blue eyes, "What made me always feel better was to have Ma's small, warm hand cupped across my forehead to see if I still had fever. If I could just feel that warm hand touch me like that again, it would be so wonderful."

Chicken Rice Casserole

— *Tina Grimsley*

After that chicken soup takes effect and you are feeling better with your appetite back, try this delicious dish.

- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 (10 3/4-ounce) can cream of chicken soup
- 1/2 soup can milk
- 1/2 c. chopped onion
- 4 cups cooked rice
- 3 cups cooked chicken, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 1/2 cups grated sharp cheese
- Small jar chopped pimiento

Mix broth and soups. Heat and stir until smooth and hot. Add the remaining ingredients. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Glorious Gruel

— *Charlotte Phillips*

Meal gruel made from a base of chicken broth or ham broth was used to give strength back to sick folks.

Pretty Little Cornbread

— *Eddie Lou Roberts Chambers*

There were seventeen children born to my parents, Cliff and Vesta Roberts. Only eight of us lived to be adults. I was afraid to argue with my brothers and sisters because we never knew who was going to die next. When I was a child, our family was plagued with a form of malaria called hemorrhagic fever. Hard chills and fevers were the first symptoms. Shortly afterwards, blood would pass from the kidneys. I lost one sister, Leslie, and three brothers, Henry Clifton, Luther and Willie, to this horrible disease. When Luther died, it took two grown men to hold him, and he said “Lay me down and let me die easy.”

I had this same fever but was sustained by the loving care of my mother. I refused to eat, but I would take my medicine. I wasn’t aware that what Mama was calling medicine was just chicken broth that she fed to me with a teaspoon. As I began to improve, I’d eat pones of cornbread cut in pretty little squares. The squares were so pretty that I wanted to eat them, and they kept me alive.

After I had grandchildren, they would beg me to make a another special kind of cornbread. They thought it was magic because as it fried in the lard and browned on one side, it would flip itself over. To make this fried bread, you mix up the following:

cornmeal
a little bit of baking powder
a pinch of salt
a little bit of sugar
and some sweet milk.

Life-Saving Turnip Greens

— Karen Smith Kimbrel

My mother, Ruth Sheffield Smith, is one of the best cooks in the world. I know everybody thinks this, but she is REALLY. As a matter of fact her turnip greens saved my life one time.

I had had my wisdom teeth removed, all four at one time cause nobody in their right mind would go back if they only did two at the time. Also, mine were impacted which

means they had formed under the gum line, turning sideways pressing on my other teeth. Long story short, I had a heck of a time!

I had put this little procedure off for seven years because my sister Helen had hers out; and when I went to see her, she moaned that she had rather have a baby than have another wisdom teeth extraction.

Anyway, after my extraction, I was sent home with some pain medication with codeine. Since I have never been too sick in my life, I didn't know that codeine should also be labeled with a skull and crossbones. It made me deathly sick. And since I was already in bad shape, I just knew I was on the way to Glory, and on top of it all my husband, Billy, was out of town doing an equipment auction.

So I called my mama and daddy and told them they had to come get me because I was dying. My daddy, A.W. Smith, drove that twenty miles from Mayhaw to Belleview in about ten minutes. They loaded me up in the car and took me home.

When we got there I crawled into their bed (they had to sleep on the couch that night), and my mother cooked a pot of fresh turnip greens with corn dodgers. She fixed me a bowl of the turnips with



Karen Kimbrel and other cast members

a lot of pot liquor and the cornbread. It was so good. I had not eaten all day. Thinking about it now makes my mouth water. I went to sleep that night and slept like a baby, and the next morning the world looked a whole lot better.

Over breakfast I told my mother that her turnip greens had saved my life. She smiled at me and replied, "Honey, that's not the first time I've saved your life."

Ruth Smith's Life Saving Turnip Greens with Corn Dodgers

1 bundle of fresh turnip greens
4 fresh pork chops
water, salt, pinch of sugar

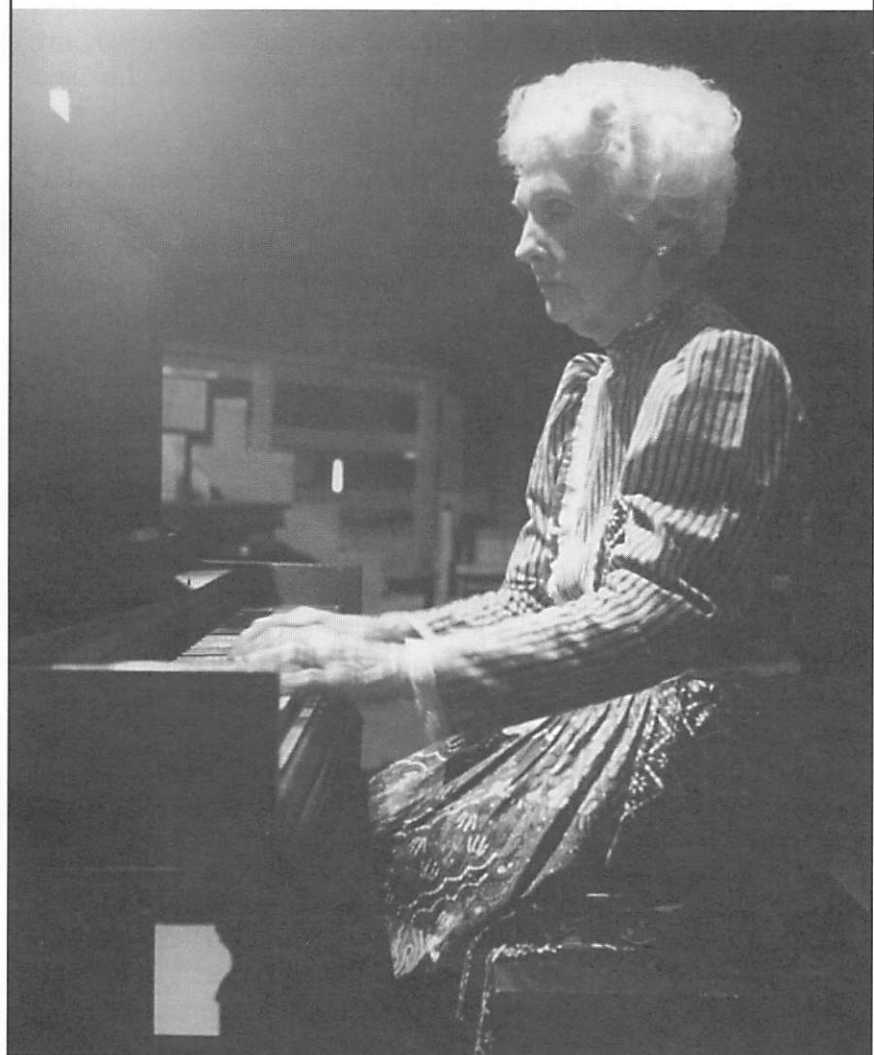
Place pork chops in large pot, cover with water, add salt and sugar. Bring to a boil and boil while cleaning greens (at least thirty minutes). Wash greens thoroughly (three to four times) remove tough stems. Place cleaned, trimmed greens in boiling water. Cook on medium heat for thirty minutes. Remove pork chops from pot. Debone, remove fat, and finely chop meat. Place chopped meat back in with turnips.

Corn Dodgers:

1 cup cornmeal
1 teaspoon salt
Water (enough to make a stiff batter)
2 T. finely chopped onion (optional)

Mix cornmeal, salt and water together. Take about two tablespoons of batter, place in your hand and shape it into a "doughnut" shape. Bring turnips and pork chops to a boil. Gently place corn dodger into boiling pot. Cook for about twenty minutes. Makes five to six corn dodgers.

**I'M GONNA LAUGH
AND SING AND
DO GOOD DEEDS**



Laughter and Love

— *Betty Sloan Miller*

My husband, Lamar Bo Miller, and I had a wonderful relationship and all during his bout with cancer we were able to laugh and to share our love with each other and with those around us.

One of my favorite stories was the story of the hot lips. During radiation for the recurrence of his brain tumor, his hair came out. In the weeks following the radiation, it began to come back. Well, all during his illness, I patted him on his little bald head, and I would kiss him. One night, he looked up at me and said, "I know why my hair's coming back. It's those hot lips." And I just laughed and laughed.

During this time I would send our doctor, Dr. Dozier Tabb, good news messages from time to time because I knew that doctors didn't receive much good news. I would choose a time that I knew the Tabbs weren't at home and would just leave a message. Well, this particular time I had to share the message of the hot lips. Bo and I planned on our next visit to the doctor that he would take my red wig into Dr. Tabb's office in a paper sack. When Dr. Tabb came in, Bo would have that red wig on his head. So we did that. Dr. Tabb came in that door and looked at Bo and backed up with his hands on his hips and said, "Hot Lips Houlihan!" We all had a big laugh. Bo wore the wig out of the office to the car. We saw several of our friends, and it was fun.

The night we were coming from Albany after we had gotten the results of the MRI and had been told that Bo's lung cancer had spread to his brain after only six months, we, of course, were devastated. And we were sitting there in the dark coming home in the car, and I looked at Bo, and I said, "Bo, this is a bitter pill to swallow, isn't it?"

And he said, "Yes, Betty, it is. I'm disappointed, but I'm at peace." And that was just Bo. His whole attitude was one of courage and faith all during the sixteen months of his illness.

We had an appointment with his oncologist right after Bo's recurrence of the cancer and we walked in and the doctor said, "Mr. Miller, I'm sorry to hear of your bad news." And Bo looked at him and he said, "Heck, Doc, I'm just glad I wasn't on that jet that just crashed in the Everglades. I would be an alligator's supper by now."

And I would be so amazed. I would wonder, “Where do these thoughts come from?”

Bo had been listening to a tape entitled “The Greatest Thing In The World.” This tape was based on the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, which is the chapter on love. That particular Friday afternoon, hospice had come with the hospital bed. We realized that it was now time, and Bo knew, too, that this would help in his care so very much. As he got ready for bed and was talking to me he said, “Betty, where are Marcia and Daryl?” And I said, “Well, they’re here in the house.” He said, “Go tell them to come here; I want to talk to them.”

We came into the room where he was, circled his bed and were holding hands. He started talking to us about love and how important it was for us to love each other and to show our love daily. He told us how much he loved each one of us and then he asked Marcia to pray. We sang a song, and then we could tell Bo was getting tired; so Marcia and Daryl left the room. I realized that he was telling us goodbye. I thought, “What a blessing we have had that this precious man wanted to share this moment with us,” because later on I realized that one week later he would not have had the strength to have done what he did that night.

Marcia had had a dream in which angels came and lifted Bo up and she said, “Mama, after that dream, I knew everything was going to be okay.”

Bo died on Valentine’s Day - on the day of love, and it was quite appropriate when you think about it. He had so much love to share and I was blessed by being able to share that love with him for thirty-eight years. Bo died when he was fifty-nine years old, and lived a life full of laughter and loving others and caring and sharing. We miss him, but we have been blessed.

Make a Joyful Noise

— *Becky Brooks Nash*

When I was eight years old, Daddy Green took my cousins and me to Blue Springs, which was a little spring on his farm. I had asked my mother permission to go swimming, and she said no. Well, I disobeyed my mom and went swimming. It was many, many, many years ago when cars had big running boards, and

Paschal and I were sitting on the running board dragging our feet like kids will do on the way back to the house. And, unlucky for me, my foot hit a rock, and it threw me under the car, and my leg was caught between the axle and the steering rod. Every time Daddy Green would turn the steering wheel, it would break my leg. All the kids began to scream, they said, because I don't remember anything, for him to stop the car. The way the car stopped is my head stopped the car; it lodged the tire because I had tire prints all over my face. It took them thirty to forty-five minutes to get me out from under the car. They put me in the car and took me to Daddy Green's house. My Aunt Marie, who was Daddy Green's daughter, was there and her sister, Aunt Fanna, was there. They got me out of the car, and Daddy Green told them that they thought my leg was broken, and she said, no it was not broken. So she wanted me to walk for her, and I took one step and fell. Anyway they put me in the car and took me up to the old Miller County Hospital, which has since been destroyed, and was between First Street and Cuthbert Street. My dad had his dental office right next door. So he saw Ruby pull up in a hurry and ran out and wanted to know what happened, and she said, "Well, Becky has been involved in a little accident." He took one look at me and knew that it wasn't a little accident. So they took me in, and the doctors checked me and wanted to take me straight into surgery and put a pin in my leg.

My dad being a doctor, a dentist, said no. He called my uncle in Atlanta, Dr. Billy Grimes, who was head of Georgia Baptist O.B.G.Y.N. and asked him to find a bone man. So they found a bone man at Emory University, Dr. Lovell was his name. They wanted to take me by ambulance, but I didn't want to go by ambulance. So Dr. Turner Rentz and my Aunt Bertha Tabb, who was Daddy's assistant, put a baby mattress in the back seat, and me, Mama, Daddy, Dr. Rentz and my Aunt Bertha went to Atlanta; they gave me shots all the way.

When we got there, Dr. Lovell took one look at me and said I didn't need surgery. He set my leg. I had a crushed shoulder. Both collar bones were broken - one in three places and one in two places. I had a severe brain concussion and a blood clot behind my right eye. My head was swelled the size of a basketball.

But one thing I can say is my childhood faith was greater than my adult faith. I played a little ukulele at that time, and my mom brought it with us, and I entertained the doctors and nurses by singing, "Do Lord, Oh, Do Lord, Do Remember Me."

Music Soothes the Savage Beast

— Sara Ann Keaton
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It is said, "Music soothes the savage beast." Whether this beast happens to be an actual physical beast or an inner beast of our spirit, I know that music is a powerful healer. I've witnessed music bring people out of their terrors, their darkness, their fears and hurts. An example is the story we shall call "A Lament - Heal Thyself."

Somebody's got to heal me, Lord! Lord, Lord, who is it gonna be? You? Me - myself? Who, Lord? Who? And, how?

Everybody's leavin' me, Lord - my brother has gone West after being here nearly a month; and, oh, Lord, what a respite his visit provided in helping me with everything concerning the care of our 90-year-old aunt who requires constant care, not that I don't gladly give that care, Lord, but sometimes the "regularness" of all the situations and errands that must be done daily make me bone weary . . . things like paying all the bills and handling all the finances, being sure all the sitters are coming on duty and finding replacements when they cannot come, buying the groceries, taking her to all her doctors' appointments, being sure the automobiles are in good driving order . . . all the daily chores that keep me running, when what I'd rather be



Spud Bush and Sara Ann Keaton

doing is sitting and visiting with her . . . hearing her wonderful stories and listening to her sing and play the piano. But, this I never have a chance to do, because by the time I finish the errands, it's time for me to go home to my family. And, Lord, I feel my family is gettin' "leftovers" now.

My mother, Lord, she left me long, long ago: her eyes tell me this as they look right through me when I visit her. Many's a time I actually pinch myself to be sure I'm really standing in front of her. Her harsh, clipped, unsmiling voice and stern manner tell me that she left me behind long ago, and she only waits for next year's visit from my brother to smile again.

Now, I love my brother, Lord! Oh, how I've always loved him - ever since he was born! I had prayed for a little brother for as long as I can remember, and when he was born, he was "my baby." When he cried, I, as his big four-year-old sister, would reach my hand through the small, white, iron bars on his crib and gently pat him back to sleep - all the while softly crooning a lullaby and speaking to him in a quiet voice, soft and low. And, oh, I was so proud that I could comfort "my baby brother!" I loved it when I comforted him. However, my mother, who was brought up in the old-world, German tradition, that "children should be seen and not heard," and that "babies should be allowed to cry themselves to sleep or else they'll be spoiled," didn't love my comforting him. She'd find me sitting on the floor beside my brother's baby bed, snatch me up by the hand, take me out of the room, scolding me all the while and harshly telling me to "stop spoilin' that baby!" "It'll do him good to cry himself to sleep." I'd cry big alligator tears (not understanding her reasoning no matter how hard I'd try; and as soon as she'd go to another part of the house, I'd quietly slip back into my brother's room and pat and sing to him some more. After all, he was "my baby!" You'd given him to me, Lord! I'm convinced, Lord, that the reason we're so-o-o close today, is because I sang to him, told him stories, and "thoroughly spoiled him" a long time ago.

My husband's left me, too, Lord: oh, not actually. He didn't physically walk away; but, he's as good as gone because he escapes into his own world of work and words . . . how can "words" be both a way to escape and a way to heal, Lord? I'm beginning to see both the dark and light side of "words," Lord. For the saddest times, the times I'm most alone, is when he shuts me out with his "reading" while the happiest times are when he'll say, "Listen to this" . . . and

proceed to read or to tell me a story. Even though I'm approachin' my "golden years," a good story is powerful medicine . . . it brings powerful happiness, Lord! It's music to my ole ears!

All my children've gone and left me, Lord. Oh, it's good that they've gone on and have families of their own . . . my mind says this, but my heart breaks. I long to have them close by to touch. They didn't mean to leave me behind, Lord. That's just the way it is. They don't even realize what they've done because it's just the natural order of things; but they have, and I ache.

My best friend's husband's gone and left me, too, Lord. Why did you have to take him so early? He was such a good man, always laughing, jokin' and helpin' others. I just can't stand it, Lord, if very many more people I love just up and go!

Sometimes, Lord, my daily burdens and responsibilities seem just too heavy to tote all alone. So, I'm asking for your help - begging, pleading - Lord . . . don't let me travel this road alone and don't let those who've left me leave me for very much longer . . . find a way to send those I love the most in this world back to me.

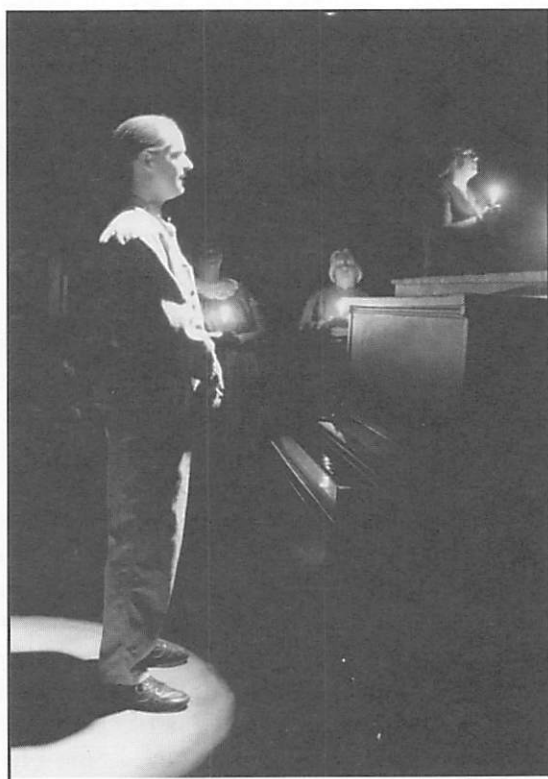
Sure enough, in the wee hours of the morning after talkin' to the Lord for quite some time, He sends me answers - healing answers - through the gift of music and words which He gave me long ago when I was born. I've decided that it just takes us both, Lord, to heal hurts. I think it's just up to me to listen and to find the answers.

So now, Lord, with tears running down my cheeks, I'll go to my old piano and play and sing all my favorite songs, lullabies and classics for hours. Lord, this gift of music you've so generously and graciously given me transports me from a "sad plane" (hell) to a "thankful plane" (heaven). It is a gift to be enjoyed in solitude or shared with friends and enemies for it transforms enemies into friends.

How lucky we are here on earth to have this medium which transports our souls to another realm. Music has the power to heal the dark side of individuals whether in the privacy of our homes, in crowded towns and cities, in medical centers, in mental hospitals, or in our churches. Music is the healing dance of life. Music is the color of our dreams! Music heals emotions and energizes; music is like laughter - a powerful healer. Music is blessing from God. So, Lord, I play until my sadness turns to gladness, and I feel comforted because I spiritually visit with my loved ones who've gone on before me, and the distance and loneliness I felt before completely

disappear. Playing the "Travelin' On Medley" brings pure joy to my soul! So, Lord, as I play and pray, "If I die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take" please let my soul be accompanied to St. Peter's gate with music. Whether it be the jazz of Memphis and New Orleans, the gospel tunes of the black congregations, the charm and frills of Mozart or the story/songs of Swamp Gravy's "That's All That Matters," please, Lord, let my journey to the other side be alive with music.

When I've finished playing, I feel sunlight in my soul and lightness in my spirit. All the mournful darkness has disappeared! The beast is gone. I can face another day, Lord, with a song. You've healed me, once again . . . or was it me who healed me . . . or . . . was it both of us, Lord?



Steve Hacker singing "Amazing Grace"

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed!

Thro' many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath bro't me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we first begun.

Through the Eyes of Children

— *Jean Watson*

It was 1:00 A.M.; I was in the delivery room with a friend in labor, her first baby. She'd had trouble throughout the pregnancy; now she was grappling with her greatest fear, would the baby be healthy, normal? She squeezed again, another hard contraction; I thought about my mother giving birth to me, the middle child of three. Both my brothers? "Normal!" I was not. When my mother first saw the cloudy film covering my eyes, she didn't know I was legally blind, had no idea the challenges she'd face as a mother.

As I waited to witness the birth of a new life, my past kept coming back to me. How different I was now from the child who grew up in Skipperville, Alabama. The only girl and blind, but when it came to discipline, blindness was no excuse; my parents treated us



"Born Blind" scene from "Good Medicine"

all the same. They always encouraged me to try things and supported me when I failed. It was not easy for them to stand by and watch me flounder, but how fortunate I am that they did.

My friend broke into my thoughts and suggested that I take off my ring, afraid that her squeezing was hurting my hand.

"Go ahead squeeze; I can take it," I said.

"You sure?" she questioned.

"Cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my . . ."

I soon wished I had taken it off, but I knew the pressure of her squeezing couldn't compare with her pain. For my mother, the "birthing" pain might have been the easiest part. How horrible for her to have to take a tiny infant for cortisone shots. I've often been told how the doctor stuck needles in my eyes to clear the film that covered them. We made the long trip to Montgomery weekly, alternating from week to week the eye that got the shot. They constrained me in a sheet to give me the shot - difficult for my parents and perhaps why I can't make myself finish the childish chant, "stick a needle in my . . ."

Soon came decision time: to send me to public school or to a school for the blind hundreds of miles away, an agonizing decision for my parents. They chose public school - to keep me at home. The doctors did not know if I could do it nor did my parents, but they wanted to see how it would work. The teachers in this small school were wonderful. They took me on as a challenge. They found ways for me to survive in public school. The doctors had made me a real

thick pair of glasses, and then I had a magnifying glass that fit over my glasses. If I held a book right up to the tip of my nose, I could read it if the print was large enough. I could read the print in the first grade books. This was how I learned to read. My grandmother and my mamma would read to me at night. I had a memory like an elephant. If I ever heard it once, I could recall it. Even though I had friends, I always chose to be the family dog when we played house at school. School wasn't easy for a homely little girl wearing "Coke bottle lens" glasses. My classmates loved to see me grope around; they often stole my glasses. Where would I find them? In the coat closet, in a trash can, in a dirty toilet! I was the butt of many cruel jokes. With my glasses, I could see shapes, but not facial features and certainly not the blackboard. I could see large letters if I held the book to the tip of my nose and focused with one eye; so I did learn to read in the first grade. However, the lettering in the second grade books was too small. So from the second to the sixth grade, I was sent back to the first grade for reading - another reason to be teased and definitely not good for my self-image.

There were no laws then that ensured a handicapped child a public education, but in Skipperville, there were some dedicated teachers who cared. My sixth grade teacher saw potential and decided there must be a better approach to my reading problem. After that I went back to the first grade only for story-telling; I had acquired the reputation as a "good story teller." Maybe I couldn't read the stories, but I could make up some funny ones, and to my delight,



Jean Watson(center) and cast

everybody seemed to love them. I began to realize that I could handle teasing better if I laughed along with those laughing at me. Humor has been a survival tool for me ever since. That was a turning point; I quit cowering in fear and began to gain my peers' respect in positive ways. With encouragement from family and the devotion of my teachers, I graduated third in my class.

That commencement address emphasized the importance of never giving up on my dreams, which became my motivating thought. My aunt was a college professor. That was my dream, but how could a blind girl go to college, much less become a professor? Unbeknown to me, the school counselor sent in an application for me to Troy State. I was accepted. Maybe it was because so many people believed in me or just because I was so bullheaded, but I was willing to try..

How frightening for my parents to leave me all alone on that large campus! My mother kept thinking of reasons not to leave. She even walked me around to all of my classrooms; she knew I could find places I had been before. My first day of class was terrifying. One class had changed rooms, and I couldn't read the numbers over the door. I didn't want to ask for help. I couldn't read the book for that class, but I could tell that it was blue. I looked for someone with a blue book and followed her into a room -fortunately, the correct room. In my next class, I had to write an essay. The professor recommended that I drop the class, said I'd never make it. He didn't know the determination of Jean Watson. I finished that class with a "B." Of course I might not have made it without my roommate, who read all my assignments to me. She became my eyes. God sent Carolyn to Troy State to be my guardian angel; twenty-one years later, she's still my dearest friend. Even with her wonderful support, there were times when I wanted to call home and tell my parents it was too hard - "Come get me" - but stronger than ever was my desire not to give up on my dream.

I started experiencing pain in my left eye that first quarter. My doctor recommended a cornea-transplant. Three months later I received the eye of a ten year old girl. The love of family and friends during that ordeal was unforgettable: hundreds of cards and letters, untold calls from well-wishers, and a hospital room like a florist's shop. Meanwhile, back at home, some of the men were talking about how wonderful it would be that I could see, but how terrible it would be when I saw how ugly my daddy was. This was all in fun

[big boys being boys]. As it turned out, up on the seventeenth floor as the doctor was looking at my eye under the microscope, he asked my daddy if he wanted to look. About the time my daddy got in front of me, I fainted from over-exerting myself. So as the story goes back home, I fainted when I saw how ugly my daddy was. My sight was still limited, but a whole new world opened for me. I had never seen my mother's face or my daddy's smile before. I cried when I first saw an uncle wink at me.

I went back to college and realized for the first time how truly wonderful my friends had been. We would be walking around campus, and they would say walk around to your right; there is a mud hole in front of you, or watch your step; there is a curb here. I could now see that mud hole and that curb. I think of all the things I saw for the first time, the thing that amazed me the most was seeing a bird fly. A little sparrow was on the ground and as I approached it, it flew up into a tree. I stood there in absolute awe. Not only had I seen a bird fly, I also saw a tree with a trunk, limbs and leaves. It was one of the most beautiful sights in the world.

One night a bunch of my friends and me went out partying. Everybody got drunk but me. I insisted they needed to let me drive home since they were so drunk. Well, I could not see well enough to pass the eye test to get my driver's license, but they were so drunk it really didn't bother them too much. They gave me the keys, and I cranked the car and headed down the road. About the time I got in the road, the blue lights came on, and I pulled over. The officer asked to see my license. I politely told him I did not have a license. When he inquired as to why, I just told him the truth that I could not see well enough to pass the eye test. I then advised him that all my buddies were too drunk to drive. He then asked if I knew why he pulled me over, and I told him I had no idea. He advised I was driving with no lights on, and I advised that when you were blind you didn't need any lights. He was a good sport, and, thank goodness, he didn't give me a ticket. He politely called another officer, and he drove us back to campus.

Ultimately, I graduated from Troy State in criminal justice; I wanted to make a difference in the lives of children less fortunate than I. I had the degree; I had the drive - but I couldn't drive. I could-

n't find a job that didn't require a driver's license. I was discouraged; I couldn't see well enough to pass the driver's test. I went back to my surgeon, and he agreed on a transplant in my other eye. My second transplant came from an eight-year-old boy. My world became even bigger and brighter. I was literally seeing my world now through the eyes of children - children I knew nothing about, except their ages.

I went back to college, received my first master's degree in criminal justice while working at a youth development center and have since received another master's degree in psychology. I'm now teaching criminology, psychology, and sociology classes at Bainbridge College in Georgia - a dream becoming a reality.

Did I ever pass my driver's test? At the age of twenty-five! On that day my parents presented me with a brand new 1979 Pinto. Tears of joy flowed from me, family, and friends. What an awesome feeling, getting into that red car for the first time and driving away alone, not far from the excitement of delivering a baby!

Another squeeze on my hand brought me back. It was time for the baby.

"Do you want to help?" asked the doctor.

"Yes!" I replied, not fully understanding.

"Put on these gloves; stand here," he began. A baby in my shaking hands! My first words: "It's about the size of a ten-pound bag of 'tators!" She weighed nine pounds, fourteen ounces. What an experience! Not only did I see the birthing, I actually delivered her. Whitney has perfect eyesight and won't have to face the challenges I did, but I pray she will have the same vision for dreams and reach for hers with all her childlike energy, never giving up.

"Would you change your childhood if you could?"

"Not on your life!"

"You sure?"

"Cross my heart, hope to die, stick a needle in my eye!"

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Surviving

— Philip A. Hines

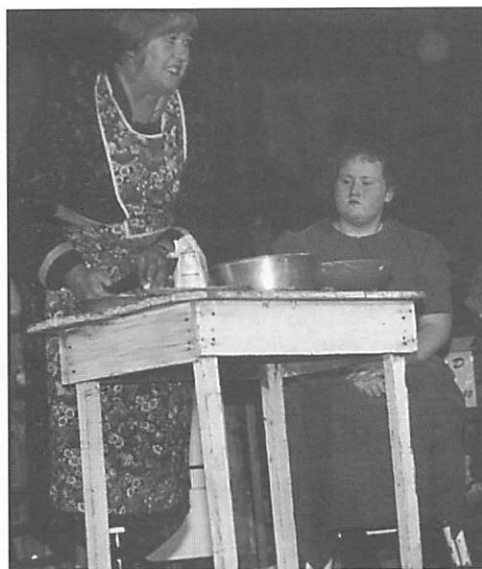
When I was nine years old, our daddy died, leaving my ma with several children to raise by herself. I knew she had to have help with the family so at the age of twelve I decided to find a job to help. As we lived in Baker County then, I went to the ASCS office to look for a job. This was the first year they began using large, full-scale maps. After talking to Mr. Oscar Irvin, who was the spot check man, and Mr. Paul Etheridge, Mr. Irvin carried me with him throughout the county to see if I would be able to do this work. Later when we returned to the office the two men were inside discussing my work. Mr. Irvin told Mr. Etheridge I could do the work, but I was just too little to carry the map; and to this I replied, "Well, am I too little to perish to death?" They hired me.

Burn

— Sareen Coleman

My mama was a little girl about eight years old when her mama died, and my daddy married again. His wife was a hard, mean woman. She had several older children, and they treated my mama really bad. They made my mama do all the work. She never got a chance to go to school. She had to get up early and milk the cows, feed the livestock and chickens, and do field work. One day the stepchildren tied my mama to a tree and set the tree on fire.

My daddy got to her



Charlotte Phillips and Stephanie Golden

and put out the fire. He took her and put machine oil on the burns. Her legs were badly burned. It took a long time for her legs to heal, and one day she got up real early, took her little knapsack and hid it in the barn. She took the milk pail to the barn like she was going to milk, but she just kept walking. She went to the neighbor's house. The neighbor hid her in the bed with the daughter who had just had a baby. When her stepmother came looking for her, she was swinging an axe and muttering, "I'm gonna kill her, I'm gonna kill her."

The next day the neighbor hid her in a wagon under the cotton he was taking to gin. He took her to her older sister, Mary's house, and she lived with her sister until she married at a young age.



Charlotte Phillips

Helping Friends

—Eric Sizemore

I've got one friend. I think I have one true friend. I have a lot of acquaintances. But the older you get, if you've got one real friend, you are rich.

Bob and I met at band camp when we were both little seventh graders. He played at the Auburn band; they had a walk band. Every year at camp we were always good friends, and then I went to Auburn, and his father was a professor at Auburn. We were just like brothers and a lot of times, when I was on starvation, which was most of the time, they would have me over to eat. We played in the ensemble together and the Auburn band. He was Musicmaker and, as a matter of fact, after we got out of college, he started the McIntosh School in Albany. He did a real good job, and I was in Birmingham.

We might not see one another for eight or nine months, but when

we came together, it's just like we stepped out of the room. He got married, and then I got married, and we didn't see each other very much. Those early years were really a struggle financially. I didn't owe anybody anything when I started the ministry, but I haven't been out of debt since. I couldn't afford health insurance, and he was making it well. He was working with the State Department of Education, drawing a huge salary, by parking his vehicle to death is what he said. He paid my hospital insurance about three or four years.

Then when my child was dying, Bob kept in contact all the time. He took off from work and stayed with me the week my child died. Bob was with me the moment my child passed on. He's just a part of me. I mean that's been going on since 1953. That's a long time.

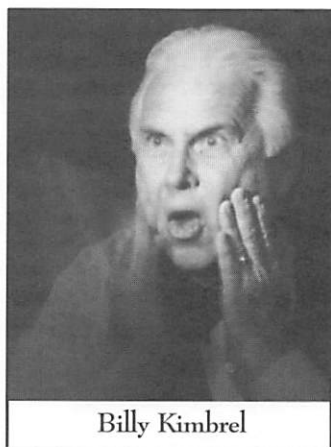
Right now, I could go to that telephone, and I'd call him up, and I could say, "Hello, Fatso," and he'd say, "Hey, Skinny." He's kind of roly poly like me. He's instrumental. That was a friendship. Bob was a rescue story. He really was.

Healing Power

— Charlotte Phillips ©1997

There's a healer on the mountain.
There's a healer by the sea.
There's a healer that lives
Inside of you and me.
Just one small act of kindness,
A handshake or a smile
Will help someone go
Another mile.

Aunt Henrietta was as wise
As she could be.
She could see the cause of
pain
That others could not see.
She picked up a small cap
And laid it in his hand.
Tears flowed down his face



Billy Kimbrel

And the healing began.

Moriah shared a spirit,
A power oh so sweet.
As she fell upon her knees
And washed her brother's
feet,
A strange thing then hap-
pened.
Old scars began to heal.
Fears gave way to trust.
It was love they would feel.

(Chorus)

We all have the power
Living deep within.
And all we have to do
For that healing to begin
Is to reach out and touch
A foe or a friend
To start a healing cycle
That will never end.



Pat Bush

Moriah

— Sakim

Story of a Mixed Blood Creek Woman

Along about the end of the war years, that's World War I, not the big World War II, a fair amount of problems were developing in the south; you know, a lot of Jim Crowism here and there. A lot of rural white folks could take advantage of the school system; black folks couldn't. Those mixed blood Indians? Well, some could get educated and some couldn't. This tale is about Moriah, a mixed blood Creek woman—there were two Moriahs, a mother and a daughter. One—the mother, didn't read or write, hardly spoke English and had no last name that was really ever known although she was the

daughter of the famous Milly Francis, the Creek heroine, who saved the lives of American citizens during the late Indian Wars. The other Moriah, one of her daughters, is the woman in this story. She was known to all as "Old Moriah." However, she was often called Coweta as she was known in the Creek language. Old grandma Moriah or Coweta was one of those educated mixed bloods; I don't rightly know if she actually went to school much or if she learned from others or was self taught. I suspect the latter, but she was just as finely educated as can be. Yes, indeed—we're talking about this Moriah.

Well, at this time when people were sorta cutting up and carrying on and being nasty about this, that and the other, Moriah had a black woman that came to her house and worked with regularity and competence, as great grandma would later tell us. Old Moriah could play piano a little bit. Every now and then she would play; this black woman would enjoy the music while she went about cooking fancy meals, cleaning and washing. It was a real interesting time. That black woman was named Emma Burney (or Birnny, I think). These two women got along reasonably well and they did things that were looked down upon by the neighborhood—hell, they were looked down upon by the whole darn county which was mostly rural farm white. Those things that were looked down upon usually came about in the middle of the afternoon. Grandmother would fix some tea or coffee which she only served in good china cups. She saved real hard for that china—she wasn't gonna have her meals out of anything chipped and busted up. She had to have good china cups and that was just the way it was and the way it was gonna be! What a gloomy day it was when one cup and saucer had the misfortune of being in the path of a falling pie roller. Odd numbers weren't to her liking; that had something to do with her Indian ways—you can bet one pie roller was cursed into eternity.

So, in the afternoon, she'd fix a pot of beverage herself, make up a tray and tote it out on the front porch where there were a couple of rockers and some straight back lattice chairs. Then, she'd call Emma out to sit down—Miss Emma would always protest a little and Old Moriah would say "Nonsense..if you're good enough to be in my house and care for my family, you are good enough for my tea and I don't care who knows it." Moriah would hand Emma a cup of tea or sometimes coffee, and they'd share that pot back and forth. There wasn't much ice to be had in those days; when it was

on hand, it was in the kitchen-cooler during the middle of summer for things that absolutely had to be cooled. Yes, ice was a commodity that was in short supply even when spring houses often went dry. For several years these women cut up and carried on as real “equals of heart” with each other. Local white folks got pure riled up that Moriah would serve one of “them” and in good china, too!

Moriah quite often would go to church—out of duty—mind you—but certainly not out of belief. That she made very clear! She wasn’t much of an actual believer but had married a man that leaned toward Presbyterianism of which Moriah was highly suspect. In our youth we heard her mention many a’time that she had her problems with any minister of any congregation that had a view of Creator where a woman did not have the right to make up her own mind—where supposedly, it had been made up for her in advance. She just thought that if Creator had a leaning toward Presbyterian that she could have no leaning toward Creator and that was all there was to it—a fact that she made abundantly clear. Calvinism wasn’t a religion she said—it was an excuse! Nor she did not hold too much with her Baptist neighbors because it was her recollection that the God of the Baptists might be something of a hollow headed individual who didn’t have his or her business in order because apparently that deity had presented the world with a group of people that had so much time on their hands that they could not only mind their own business but everyone else’s business, too. Those Baptists even proposed to tell everyone else what God was thinking. She just would not hold to or be bound by any conversation to propose to tell any of your neighbors what God was thinking; to believe that, she firmly uttered, was a *^%*\$%* poor attitude. No, she sure wasn’t much of a believer but she was richly spiritual—especially in the ways of her Indian background which she kept faithfully, privately and quietly.

Now she went to an Anglican church periodically (now that means Episcopal) because she liked the singing service called “Evening Prayer” and “Morning Prayer.” It was quite exotic and she liked that—said the song service was a like warm feather quilt on a cold night . . . and you know . . . they have so much of that beautiful ceremony and music that it didn’t leave much time for preaching. She could take church if they didn’t have much preaching which she defined as “the last thing religion needed—more words.” She thought preaching was an infliction the world would

be better off without.

Well, this was a time of fairly tough years. Some people in her neighborhood lynched a man, a black man; that was something she was very unhappy about and spoke to on every occasion she could belittle her so called Christian neighbors for allowing it—and from a church tree, too! Moriah did not actually see it but knew it was going on at the time. People would come hurrying by the house all excited and sweaty and running to make sure they got there in time and dragging their little children along behind by their tender little arms.. She talked about that all the way up to the time she died, and just how awful it was that they actually dragged their children along, took them out of school, to see some poor man meet a wretched end all because of rumor. The day of the lynching, when word came, Miss Emma just stiffened up and bit her bottom lip. Moriah told us there was a tear or two in the corner of Emma's eye. Emma said she had a job to do and she was going to do it—duty demands it! Now, Moriah was very unusual in many ways. Other people were paying these domesticate women about 15¢ or 20¢ a day for doing all that work—heating sad-irons on a wood burning stove and ironing clothes. It was totally unheard of, but Moriah would not have Emma come over unless she could pay her a decent wage for the day which she considered to be at least 75¢ a day; this was at a time when many a grown white man working only made \$1.20 a day. Moriah was very clear cut about not taking advantage of another person, no matter what their circumstance or the fact that someone might have a different skin color or culture. She said that was no excuse to be an ass. That's was about the only time you ever heard her use a strong word—when it came to human abuse, animal abuse or religion. Moriah treated everyone decently. She would say, "You do right by everybody all the time in all situations and you ain't ever got to remember anything or bow your head in shame before your Creator. You won't have to worry about doing an accounting, because there won't need to be an accounting—your record will be clear and balanced. You just do right period." That was her basic creed.

Well, on that lynching day Emma finished her work and left real quickly to go home. That night Moriah found out the person hanged was Emma's half brother, and there wasn't anything anyone could do about it now—nor did any try to prevent it earlier. The guy wasn't very bright—not naturally smart and attuned to the broader

world around him—in fact, he couldn't tell daylight from darkness without it being pointed out to his dimmed eyes. Yes, he did have some severe problems, not the least of which were a bunch of red necks who needed someone to blame for their own sins and crimes. Years down the line, all that came out, and fortunately for the people of north Florida and south Georgia, in that one case justice did get done—eventually. It may have taken 20 or 30 years, but some white folks did get picked up and did some hard time in some real prison camps.

It was about a week before Emma came back—there was a lot to be done in the black community. They had a burial as best as could be done. They didn't have a black funeral home so the people got laid out and dressed at home and then buried. It was big doings in the black community—almost no blacks showed up anywhere for work for about a week—a purposeful original slowdown strike. I don't remember being told the exact day, but I've got relatives who were there and they could tell you to the hour. But, I do know it was either planting or harvest time because the absence of the black community made a very indelible impression on the larger white community; those black people had always performed very valuable work—necessary work. Poorly paid, but nevertheless they were very valuable hard workers. There were a lot of white people



that had to break a sweat for the first time in years. Well the rest of that year, and those that followed, moved on like a great slow heart-break. It did not take long before word got out that the poor boy wasn't guilty of anything other than his hair was kinky, his skin was black and some bucked tooth hate ridden white ignoramus thought to use his name. There was no real crime anybody could lay at his feet, umh, grave. I found one paragraph about him in a local history book; he was crippled and also blind, I might add. Not only this, but he split stove wood for a living. That's pretty remarkable. He could set up a log on end, feel it, and split the wood clean as you please. The poor fellow ended all hung up and dead; it was a pretty sad time. There were a lot of people in the community, especially wives and sisters and the younger kids who used to buy firewood from this lynched man and fetch it home. Sometimes, they would just send their kids to fetch this fellow right to their own houses where he would cut a winter's worth of firewood in about three days. Little by little, it occurred to them that a great injustice had occurred; nobody could undo anything about it because death kinda has a finality to it, you know. Of course, their miseries from inadequate firewood and cool weather helped them reach that conclusion—too bad warm weather isn't conducive to clear thinking. As Moriah put it—any weather that breeds and promotes mosquitoes can't be all that good.

Emma had always appreciated Moriah and was constantly performing little extra kindnesses for her. Emma occasionally worked for another lady across the county line. That lady got herself some new china and gave Emma her older stuff, which happened to be the same kind that Grandma had. Since the pie roller incident, Moriah had had an odd number of cups; even though Emma really liked having her own fine six cup set, Emma took one of the cups and saucers and brought it to Moriah, who had always felt an odd number must surely be the work of the devil. I guess she was pure superstitious about such. Well, Emma brought it down there and Moriah thanked her profusely and insisted that she stay for supper—one that Emma hadn't had to cook herself. Anytime that Emma had a meal with the family, Emma had a seat at the table with everyone else, none of this business of standing and eating in the kitchen or the back door. When Moriah and Emma talked, they both sat on the front porch in front of God and everybody else who could gawk. Moriah said the only thing that they had to hide stayed under

their skirts! Why if her ankles showed, she turned red.

During the next few years, nobody discussed the lynching at all. Emma and Moriah still got along right well and Moriah's feelings against organized religion continued to blossom and to be well known thereabouts. To describe Moriah—in her youth, she was a taller than usual woman who grew right short and bent in old age; like many members of her family, she had turned gray in her teens but was always very graceful with her hair wrapped in a bun. Moriah was her English name—in Creek, she was named Coweta after the Indian capital where her great-grandfather was once known as Emperor Brim of the Creek Nation. Her mother and grandmother use to tell her all about it.

At any rate, her views on organized religion were extremely well known as was her strong but not necessarily Christian spirituality. When sicknesses arrived and her wonderful healing herbs were needed, even the most devoted church woman conveniently forgot Moriah's outright paganism—life's like that you know. And people were always believing that if you were Indian you just automatically had a parcel of secret herbs and cures—Moriah, though, usually did.

Now back to religion: Moriah had some pretty powerful words about the Methodists, saying that anyone who thinks that Jesus would trouble himself with bringing forth grape juice when the finest wines would serve more to the purpose was inane or addled. She had something to say about just about anyone. About Pentecostals, that new religion in the county, she said she didn't even want to walk on the same road as a church that she could hear half a mile away—if God wasn't born deaf, she was surely deaf by now! Her own people's natural religion, as she called it, was banned by the government; still, she felt even a church had something enriching to offer if you didn't take their silly doctrines too seriously—she strongly believed in worship as a communal act of collective thanksgiving but thought preaching was an invention of the devil—fewer sermons, she said, spreading fewer ignorant misconceptions would surely lead to a spiritually healthier people.

In spite of her opinions, at least the first Sunday of every month, Moriah was churched somewhere—much to the horror of some 'quote' Christians. She felt a moral obligation to make an appearance, even if she disdained the sermons. Praying just seemed to be stronger with other people, even if they erred in their fast held



views. So, with no forewarning, she did walk into a Baptist church on occasion, step into a Methodist church, and she even set foot in a Presbyterian church once or twice but she still much preferred an Anglican or Episcopal church. But at least every first Sunday she was somewhere, as she thought she had an example to set. She must have liked giving preachers a false hope of her eventual salvation then tying them all up with their very own words—she was good at that, you know. If she ever heard a sermon, she could quote it for weeks after—word for word. You can bet Bible scholarship in that county took a decided turn for the better over time. The midnight study oil burned bright if any preacher suspected she'd be in his church Sunday. Come to think of it, no one could ever remember a "first Sunday sermon" that wasn't well researched and well delivered. Well, one particular first Sunday, it was really not convenient for her to go into town—there was no transportation as they did not own a car, had a busted wagon axle and it was too far for her to walk on a gray misty day. She wasn't gonna spend a half a day walking to town and back. She figured that God, unlike some of her vegetables, would keep a whole week without her.

So, she hit upon the idea of going to Emma's church because it was just a short mile down the road. Moriah had never heard a word from or about them—never "endured" one of their sermons. Well,

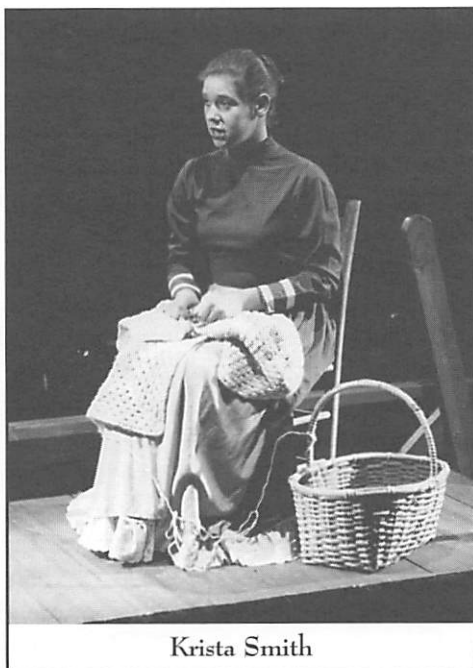
why not—church is church she thought. There had always been a sign on the Black church's door that said "St. Mary." That bothered Moriah for as long as the sign had been there—that it didn't have an "apostrophe S." Later in life she concluded rightly so that white churches used the "'s" and black churches didn't—one more unnecessary subtle way of marking differences Moriah would say. Anyway, she got dressed up and started down towards the church then turned right around and came home. She had remembered that Emma said they never got their service started till around 12:30 or 1:00. Moriah had asked why so late, and Emma answered that almost all the members of the church worked in service. Rich white folks go to church on Sunday, pray and then wanna come home to a hot meal, and who do you think "fixes them meals" Emma added. Moriah thought about it and from that point on there was never another Sunday dinner fixed in that house by an outsider until night-fall. To this day, we don't have Sunday dinners at home if it means someone else not being at their own home or with their own families. [Moriah's aside: Preacher, you take note of that!] Well, Moriah came back home, did some work, and then started down the road to Emma's church later. She opened the door to a service under way and sat in the back just inside the door on a little rustic homemade pew.

A few heads turned to look, and there was a gasp or two. It was the first time a non-black had ever been in that church except for an occasional funeral for a really "good domestic." They were startled but the preacher, brother "something another" never lost his place, never missed the beat. Moriah may have disdained religion, but she was truly a Bible Scholar who knew a little Greek and must have had the self taught equivalent of a college education. She often said preachers were frothed (or frocked?) with great ignorance which they shamelessly displayed with emotions of the heart when facts in the head would suffice just fine, thank you.

She sat there and listened most attentively. The preacher must have been an honest man about scripture because Moriah said he was learned in his heart and clear in his head just like spiritual knowledge ought to be. Primitive Baptist churches, especially black ones, sang differently than most other churches; lining out its called. Starting with a slow low key they build up to a good fevered pitch, with a long repetitions. The preacher warmed to his work, and did a good job. He preached what Moriah called double bar-

reled blast. He preached about being a light in a dark world and being like the lamp in a window for neighbors or weary travelers on life's dark nights. He also preached hard on the parable of the vineyards and the workers which he interwove making the players in that parable not only workers but each and everyone a lighted lamp, too. By Moriah's understanding—he knew the truth in that parable and got it right on the button. Creator planted the vineyards and was the vineyard master who treated all that came in to work equally and rewarded them equally without partiality—"being one of God's children" gives you instant equality and heavenly justice even if you don't get it here. That black preacher gave the clearest rendering she ever heard: with God, all things are equal and that's that—she said! This church had a fine flock of broad hatted women folk intently holding down the front pews on the woman's side, young and old alike. During each preaching episode they hummed out by "lining" the appropriate music. Mostly, it was the old slow original lined out version of "Let this light of mine shine for all to see all the time."

Moriah sat there and listened transfixed—a sermon she could follow, a sermon she could believe, a sermon of truth because it must have come from Creator directly to this man's heart—for his every word had a ring of truth firmly stuck to it which didn't fall off with all his animated shaking and prancing around the upright plank that served as a pulpit or as Moriah used to call it, a bullpitt. This happened to be their sacrament day, very special for that church. Everyone was dressed up



Krista Smith

in their best white-folk hand-me-downs, some of which Moriah recognized as once her own—and she once again admired her own

good taste and how nicely the garments fit upon all these weathered black frames belonging to a bevy of courtly matriarchs. The deacons brought forth all the required implements—this was the day of foot washing. They sang, prayed and blessed the water and the oil and everything else in creation that had a name that could be called. The preacher and his wife knelt down together and reached over to take a frayed shoe off an elderly woman, an ex-slave sitting in the first row—a woman said to have been 100 years old, called Sadie. No-one knew if she had a last name—she herself certainly didn't know. As a small girl she belonged to a Dr. Woodward up at Milledgeville and then was the wife of a Creek Indian over near Hitchiti. Moriah talked real good Creek and said she spoke with that woman sometime later and she sure did talk real good old time Creek, too.

They must have felt a kinda sisterhood. At the end of church Moriah lifted up her face, stood up tall and straight and firmly announced, "Thank you, Creator, for teaching me." One of the ladies started to sing—"Let this light of mine shine, let it shine, shine, shine." They all began to sing and were dismissed by the preacher. Moriah went home and cooked supper her own self this day and every Sunday to ever follow. Afterwards, there wasn't a whole lot said and done about it that you could make note of. There were no tales about it in the community until much later—white folks were too outraged or shocked to believe it or even admit that she actually went to "N-church." We can suspect, though, that a few white preachers were grateful! What did happen was that a lot of the members of the congregation took note of the fact that Miss Moriah had always treated every member of that community exactly as a respected human being—like someone important. For the first since the union troops left back in the nineties, some blacks felt a sense of future hope. That day, some had at last tasted not superiority which none really wanted but suckled pure equality and the taste was eloquent, worth fighting for in years to come. It became obvious that the color of the woman's heart was the color of equal. Emma continued working over the next few years until she had to slow down; then, Moriah would send stuff for mending and things like that over to Emma's house instead—with good pay attached.

In the early thirties, Moriah's husband, broken of body from having served in France, had died in an accident. There was a bad turn in the weather that lasted not a season but for several years locally.

A major depression growing like kudzu. Moriah could no longer work by herself because of arthritic oldness; times were tough. She had lost a few children to influenza, etc., but she had always held together somehow. Soon, the first of her grandchildren came to live with her. He was around five years old and there just wasn't a lot of food especially with an extra mouth however small it was. The most Moriah could manage was a little back door garden plot where she could lean on a fence to plant, hoe and weed. In fact, not just food but there was plenty of stuff in short supply those bleak days. How anyone found out wasn't told but Moriah and the boy got to a morning in the 30's when there was just enough in the house to feed the youngun' breakfast, and that was it. Some of her land had already been lost because of taxes and other parts sold off.

That afternoon, a black man came by on a horse, stopped, walked up to the house, and set a couple of jars on the steps, got on his horse and left without so much as a howdy-do. A while later, an old beat up truck stopped and put out a little splinter basket full of greens. Over the next few hours, many black folks from all over the county came by and dropped off some food, eggs, fresh butter, a wrapper of lard or whatever they had to share. By the time the sun set, there was a porch full of food and a heart full of gratitude.

Another thing forgotten at the beginning: Moriah loved parables, even though she disdained religion—a parable, she would say, is the way Creator puts a right warm thought in a cold heart. A parable is a gift to be given. Moriah also used to make a lot of things and grow a lot of extra things each season. She made her own soap and fancy candles as well—she wasn't sparse about giving away and sharing—all the Indian folks seemed to do that better than most whites. Even when they got electricity, she still would like to have a candle or small oil lamp beaming out the front window. Most of her favorite songs were about light; she used to sing a lot when she was working. Although it was a relatively new song, the night all the members of the little Black church had come by the house, they stood out in the yard and one woman began singing this new little song "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." And they sang and sang—Moriah caught right on, too.

Moriah had always burned a light every evening, and said even the worst dog walking down a dusty road deserved light at night—never mind they could see just fine in the dark. Moriah could be as stubborn about ignorance as she could be about facts—mostly

truthful, she cherished two lies. She said God forgave a woman a lie if she be of "age" or "income." Anyway, from there on out, till the day that Moriah died—112 years some say—only about 88 others say, someone of those families came by often and put a jar of food, etc. on the porch. When the time came for her burial, a lot of the members of the black community were gone, but some of their grandchildren came—all the way from Milner down to Jacksonville. And they all agreed that their grandparents regarded this one woman as a living light, because wherever she went, the rooms lighted up and truth would be spoken. They just sang one song at the burial: "This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine." Why you asked? It's a simple answer. When Moriah went to that little St. Mary Church, without the "apostrophe S," and the preacher began the foot washing service and was taking off the frayed shoe of that ancient 100 year old ex-slave woman Sadie, Moriah got up and marched right down to the front of that church and took her own shoes off and just drop-knelt down on her knees right there in front of that black congregation, Creator and everyone! "Preacher," she said, "I know my duty and I need to do this." She took out her silver hair combs and placed them in Sadie's hair, unrolled her own long luxurious gray tresses which fell into the little granite ware pan and ever so gently began to wash a slave woman's feet and then dried them on her own white linen dress. Never rising from her knees, Moriah went to every willing member of that Black congregation, washed their feet and dried them on her own dress. If an old dog had come in, she would have washed his feet, too, no doubt. It was finished and Moriah returned to the rustic pew in the back. That church wept mightily. Power came down and walked about and touched every heart and lighted every dark crevice in that place. Some hummed out prayer chants or moaned that "Little Light of Mine" song as others sat stunned in tear-soaked silence. But, each and everyone was moved that day—personally cradled by the hand of Creator—through a woman who dared to think for herself and follow her heart in all things. Moriah, whenever I hold a lighted candle in the darkness, I remember you!

I'M GONNA WATCH AND PRAY AND HOPE AND DREAM



Preaching in the Woods

— *Herbie Hightower*

On Sundays we would ring the bell to alert everybody of the time. It was near time for Sunday School. We had Sunday School on Sunday morning, and the first bell would mean a time that you should start preparing yourself, and the second bell would be Sunday School is ready to start in 'x' amount of minutes. Those bells were to alert people to come over for Sunday School, and I'd build the fire in the stove, and we had a stove in the middle for the heat, and I would build the fire, sweep down the carpet and cinder. Then I would get up,



Heath McNease

and I would preach my sermon. I thought Reverend Huffman was the greatest, and I would get there and get on the pulpit, and I would do the sermon, and I really thought I was caught. I could feel it. I was screaming and hollering. I was doing the four horsemen and the jaw bone is connected to the knee bone and I had a full head of steam going and Miss Cutiss Jones opened that door, and I slid down behind the pulpit on my knees, on my belly, out the back door, and you know, I didn't know if she had seen me until a few months ago. I asked her while we were on the telephone. I told her about this and she thought it was funny, but she had not seen me that morning and that had been — I thought it was mine and her secret, but it was my secret alone. That was really something.

After that, I never got up there. I built me a little altar down in

the woods, and I continued my preaching. I had me a little altar out in the woods. I had cleaned it up. I had one of those stumps. It was on the way to the Monterita. I couldn't get it close enough where people could see it. I had it kind of stashed away back in the bushes. I had a little path where I could get in there. I had some very low times, and I would go in there, and I would have my devotion, and I would sing and do a song.

Those were some solitude times for me because I would go there when I was telling the Lord I had problems. It served its purpose.

Healed of Childhood Wounds

— *Anonymous*

It's a terrible thing when someone you trust misuses you when you're at a tender, vulnerable age. I was eight years old, innocent and full of life, when someone I loved and trusted took advantage of me and robbed my innocence.

Years went by and the guilt was unbearable. Satan whispered in my ear, "It was all your fault; he would not have done it if you had not led him on. You are dirty and no good." I believed the lie because the man was a fine, upstanding man in the community and in the church. It must be my fault.

Finally, under a brush arbor, on the sawdust at the altar, I begged God to forgive me and cleanse me. In my mind I saw Jesus on the cross and He was saying, "You are forgiven. It doesn't matter whose fault it was; now forgive the one who hurt you." The healing began. I made the decision that day to forgive, and I knew I was forgiven. Over twenty years later, I talked with the man and told him I had forgiven him. He asked me to forgive him. The healing was complete. The thoughts no longer haunted me. I was free.

Falling to Grace

— *Karen S. Kimbrel*

It took a bad accident to make me realize how lucky I truly am. We were in Atlanta performing Swamp Gravy at 7Stages Theater. This was a high point in our lives, and everyone was so excited. It

had been a hectic week, getting everything in line for the tour. On top of everything else, I had a terrible cold.

We arrived in Atlanta on Thursday evening, rehearsed all day Friday, did a stunning performance Friday night and were elated and exhausted. Richard Geer, our director, insisted that we rehearse on Saturday morning. So we reluctantly agreed.

We were rehearsing, and I was still nursing my cold. We were at the part of the rehearsal where we light the candles and sing "Amazing Grace." I stepped up to one of the platforms and lost my balance and fell off a four foot platform.

The first thing to hit was my head, then my lower back. I have never felt pain like this. I was in and out of consciousness. (I thought Billy, my husband, was Kent Richardson). I remember asking for Charlotte Phillips. Charlotte came and was on one side, and Annette Eady was on the other. I remember Charlotte holding my right hand and Annette holding my left. Annette was crying and her tears were falling on my face. She was praying, "Please, Lord, no broken bones." She then prayed, "Satan, get behind me. You can't have her today." Charlotte was praying silently. At some point the cast and crew joined in a circle around me and began praying. And as they prayed the pain took shape. It was a bright triangle of light over the pain. There were two rays of light coming from the left and the right to the triangle. As they prayed, the light lessened in intensity and the



Joy Jones, Joanna Richardson,
and Erin East

pain shifted from unbearable to bearable.

I don't know how long it took . . . maybe twenty minutes. I was able to get up and sit in a chair. My niece and her husband, Teri and Claude Ashley, came to my rescue. They took me to the emergency room at Emory Medical Center.

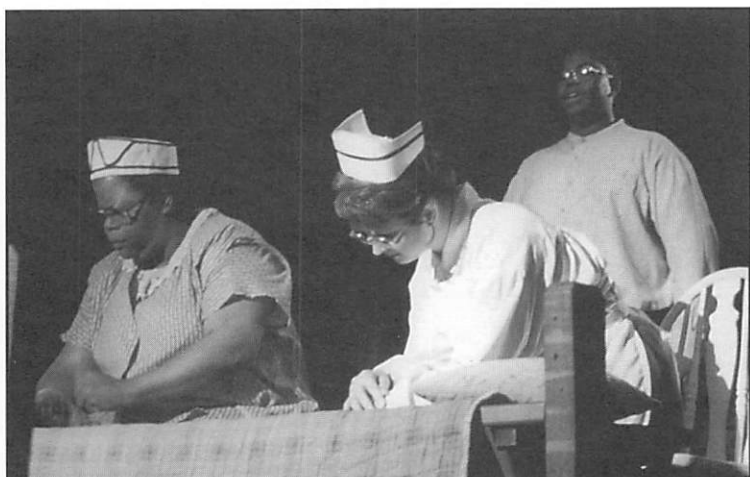
When the doctor on call heard that I had fallen four feet he ordered a full skeletal x-ray. When he read the x-ray, he came in and told me that I was very lucky I had no broken bones. I didn't feel very lucky at that moment. However, I have thought about that fall many times. And now I know how "lucky" I am. I am lucky to be blessed to know first hand the healing power of God. And I am lucky to be blessed with the love of my Swamp Gravy family.

Healing Prayer

— John Blessinger

One of the things that's so interesting is how believers for the most part really aren't believers. People who go to church on Sunday do all of the things that they propose is the right thing to do, and yet, they don't really believe. The Bible tells us so many times over and over again that God will provide whatever it is that you need, that God is the need supplier. We want God to be a want supplier. I want this. I want to live near the Joneses. I want to do this. I want to do that. It's amazing when you really truly get some believers. You can break down walls; you can get well when you're sick; you can be rich when you're poor. I'm reminded of a story that's so scripturally based. Second Chronicles, Chapter 7, around verse 14, deals with that kind of thing. It's just some good basic things in there. Whatever it is they need, God will take care of it for them, but you've got to believe it.

My daughter has a degree in psychology. She was visiting and said, "Dad, I came down to go to church with you." So we went to this little church out on Salem Church Road. It's a little building, never really got finished, started a long time ago. After church, my daughter said, "I'm going home, Pops." I said, "No, we're going to the hospital. We've got to see some folks." She said, "Well, what are you going for?" My responsibility is to do as Matthew said, visit the sick, go by the jails to see those who are incarcerated. "Well, what are you going to do, Dad, when you get there?" she asked. "Going



Veronica Haire, Angie Lane, and Burnell Grant, Jr. in "Paul"

to heal them," I replied. "Do you really believe you can heal somebody, Dad?" she asked. "No, I can't, but God can. Look, honey, if you've got some problems with this, I'll drop you off home. I don't need any negativeness in my car," I told her. She speaks several languages, has a good job, and can't even understand why I'm here in the first place.

So we get there. She comes up with me. She's very pretty, very charming. She can sing "Amazing Grace" in Spanish, French, in beautiful detail so here we are. People are standing there. They are already counting up the sick man's estate. They're dividing it. There are some folks mad because they're not going to get what they think they should get. The doctor just finished telling them that the patient is not going to make it. He's not going to live. Well, he's 92 years old, had a pretty good life, been drawing social security since he was 65. We walk in, and everybody is crying, gloom and doom in the room, and I said, "Hi, how is everybody doing?"

Nobody would say much. This one son, who has always been a pain in the rear in church and board meetings and thinks the pastor takes all of the money, is there. I said, "I came down to have a word of prayer, sing a song. We want you to join in." He said, "There's no use; he's gone. He hasn't responded since Friday. The doctors say it's just a matter of a few hours. We appreciate your coming, but there is nothing you can do."

I responded by saying, "The doctor just doesn't know. He's

going to die one day himself. Bet you his health is bad. I want all of the people that believe that God is real to stand up. Everybody who don't think that prayer counts, don't think that prayer helps, leave. I didn't come all the way out here for no foolishness. Get out." They were looking at me like I'm crazy. "Get out of here, son," I said to the one I've been wanting to kick out a couple of years anyway. Most of them left, and I told my daughter, "Give us just a little bit of 'Amazing Grace.' Slow it down real slow and close the door. We don't need any negative influences creeping in. We are getting ready to do some serious business with the Lord." They are thinking who is this clown; he's a slick preacher, don't mean nothing anyway. I just kind of pushed them out and said to the sick man, "Uncle Paul, the Bible tells us in the fifth chapter of James when there is sick among you, call the elders of the church. Let them come. Let them anoint the body with oil. Let him pray the prayer of faith, and God will forgive you of your sins. God will give you an opportunity, and he will heal your sins. I'm here today because I believe God is ready to allow us to do some serious trading with him."

I got down on my knees in my good suit, didn't worry about how long it took, and I prayed what I consider one of my most serious prayers to my God. As I prayed, I grabbed a hold of one of his feet, the one closest to me, and I just held it in my hand. As I started to really talk with God and believe God for a miracle and trusted him on my knees and truly understood that the day was pregnant with opportunities for me to let my light shine so all of those doubting Thomases outside could really see God work, I believed it. I started to perspire. I could feel him, could feel him moving his toes. At that time, I got up and said, "Thank you," and rubbed some oil on his forehead and looked around, and there were two or three in the room and I said, "Sing a song," and we sang, and I shook their hands, and I said, "Be encouraged. I'll see Uncle Paul when he gets home." They thought I was talking about in heaven, and in about four or five days, they called me and said, "Daddy is coming home." I said, "Why are you calling and telling me? I knew that." They said, "Well, we want you to know." I said, "I knew it when I was there." Then two weeks later, I stopped by to see him. There he was sitting up, recovered from a stroke, a massive stroke. He said, "Reverend, they are mad at me. I hope you understand. It is pecan harvesting time; so I had to go shake a few pecans out of the tree." That was at least three years ago. True story. He's alive today.

A Prayer for My Niece

— *Mary Rentz*

One of the main things that comes back to me about healing involves my niece, my brother's daughter. She developed aplastic anemia, and we didn't know why and all of these people - they brought her to the doctors in Albany, and they couldn't determine why. They said that possibly it could have been some chemicals that - she was fanatic on cleaning and she used to get down and scrub her tile, you know, to clean it. It could have been a combination of cleaning agents that she used and maybe the fumes or whatever, but there was that and there was some speculation on possible poisoning. It got to the point that they didn't think she was going to live.

She had three sons. I was in Albany living at the time, and I also had a pretty busy life. She wrote me this letter, and I was kind of shocked to get this letter, but she said that everybody was praying for her, all of the churches. Everybody was praying for her because they actually thought she wasn't going to live. And of all things, she asked me to pray for her. Well, I believed in God, and I did a lot of praying, but a lot of it was for myself at that time, you know, because I was trying to work through some things, and I had a big walk-in closet, and I used that walk-in closet as my prayer area, and I would go in there and I would kneel and I would pray. Well, when I got that letter, I did. I went in, and I really said some prayers for her. I was already praying for her, but I said some real special prayers for her. I thought it was so touching that she thought my prayers would get to heaven more than hers because at that time I was doubting whether they were getting there myself. Well, I thought, maybe mine may not be getting there. You know, maybe I've got to get some help so I sat down and wrote to a Methodist pastor. I wrote him a letter and I told him what was going on about my niece and told him that she had asked me to pray for her and would he pray for her. Our prayers must have been answered because she was healed. I sincerely believe that she was saved by prayer.

Guitar Player

— Ann Addison

We were really doing well as a singing group and getting ready to record our first album when we began to notice a man in his sixties showing up at every concert regardless of where we were performing. We thought that was a little strange, and finally one night he came up to us and said, "Would y'all consider letting me try out to play bass guitar with your group? Well, we paused, looked at each other and said, "Why not?"

He came to our next rehearsal, and we were pleasantly surprised as he walked up and down that bass guitar and made us sound even better. We told him he was hired. "There is one thing I need to tell you," he feebly stated. "I have had four major heart attacks. My doctor has said I won't survive the next one, and I have prayed that I will be playing when the Lord calls me home." We all looked at each other in disbelief and were speechless for a few minutes and then kind of made a joke of it and said, "Oh, that's not gonna happen," and forgot about it.

Several months went by, and we were sounding great. The guitar player kept urging, almost insisting, we learn a song he liked.



"Quartet" scene

Finally, just to satisfy him, we bought the music and learned the song, "That Day is Almost Here." After we learned it, we really liked it and did it in almost every concert. Never would we have imagined what would happen just a few short months after our guitar player started with us. We were performing in Valdosta, Georgia, and had dinner on the grounds. Across the wire table, the guitar player stopped filling his plate and said to me out of the blue, "You are a nurse and a physician's assistant, what would you do if I had a heart attack while we were playing and singing?" Trying to lighten the mood, I joked, "Oh, we would just slide you under the piano and keep on going." I laughed, but he didn't and I realized he was dead serious. "Oh, you know I would do everything in my power to save you," I assured him.

A few weeks later we were in a little Baptist church near Lake Seminole in the middle of the afternoon sing after homecoming service and were singing the song, "That Day is Almost Here." We had just sung the words, "I've fought the fight, I've kept the faith, thank God, I'm going home" when I heard a loud thump behind me. I was playing the piano. I looked in disbelief to see our beloved guitar player slumped on the floor. I stopped playing and reached in his pocket, got a nitroglycerin out, and tried to put it in his mouth, and realized he was unconscious. I motioned to the guys to move him onto the floor and for twenty-five minutes did CPR alone before an ambulance came. He did not survive even though everyone in that church prayed the entire time. Healing doesn't always come in the way we would expect; yet, this guitar player passed to a better life with no heart trouble exactly the way he had desired.

Confessions of Healing

— *Compiled by Bishop A. R. Williams, Lane Avenue
Full Gospel Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee*

God said that faith in His Word alone will bring healing to your body - Psalms 107:20. When you make these confessions out loud daily, this is how you will be putting your faith in God's Word into action. This is how you release, activate or appropriate your faith. This is how you speak to your mountains (in this case sickness is the mountain), and tell them to be moved - Mark 11:23-24. This is

how you take God's Medicine and apply it to your life - Proverbs 4:20 -22. This is how much faith for healing comes to drive out that sickness and disease - Romans 10:17.

Take God's Medicine three times a day, Morning, Noon, and Night. Do this every day until your healing comes or manifest. You are making your confession (or profession of faith). Do not waver on your confession (to waver means get tired and quit). Hold fast to your confession because God will be faithful to what He promised - Hebrews 10:23.

You are the Lord that healeth me. - Exodus 15:26

You take sickness away from the midst of me and the number of my days You fulfill. - Exodus 23:25, 26

You take away from me all sickness. - Deuteronomy 7:15

I am redeemed from the curse of the law. - Deuteronomy 28 and Galatians 3:13

You heal all my diseases. - Psalms 103:3

You sent Your Word and healed me and delivered me from my destructions. - Psalms 107:20

I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. - Psalms 118:17

With long life You will satisfy me and show me Your salvation. - Psalms 91:16

Your words are life to me and health/medicine to all my flesh. - Proverbs 4:22

Surely He hath borne my sickness and carried my pains. Himself took my infirmities and bore my sicknesses. - Isaiah 53:4 and Matthew 8:17

With His stripes I am healed. - Isaiah 53:5

By His stripes I was healed. - I Peter 2:24

The life of Jesus is made manifest in my mortal flesh. - II Corinthians 4:11

The same spirit that raised up Christ from the dead quickens my mortal body. - Romans 8:11

Hands were laid on me and I am recovering. - Mark 16:18

I call my body healed/whole. - Romans 4:17

More Healing Scriptures

Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. - James 5:14-16

When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, LORD," they replied.

Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you," and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." - Matthew 9:28-30

Heal me, O Lord, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise. - Jeremiah 17:14

"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins . . ." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the man got up and went home. - Matthew 9:6, 7

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,

preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, the epileptics and the paralytics, and he healed them. - Matthew 4:23, 24

“But I will restore you to health and heal your wounds,” declares the Lord. - Jeremiah 30:17

Worship the Lord your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you. - Exodus 23:25

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. - I Peter 2:24

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. - Isaiah 53:5

My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. - Proverbs 4: 20-22

And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. - Matthew 17:20-21

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things [are] possible to him that believeth. - Mark 9: 23

And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall

come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive [them], and ye shall have [them]. - Mark 11:22-24

And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague. - Mark 5:34

And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way. - Mark 10:52

How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him. - Acts 10:38

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them. - Matthew 4:23-24

O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. - Psalms 30:2

Because thou hast made the Lord, [which is] my refuge, [even] the most High, thy habitation;
There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. - Psalms 91:9-10

Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. - Proverbs: 3: 7-8

And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the

Egyptians: for I [am] the Lord that healeth thee. - Exodus 15:26

And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. - James 5:15

Who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. - I Peter 2:24

Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I [am] weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. - Psalms 6:2

I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee. - Psalms 41:4

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; - Psalms 103:2-3

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he [was] wounded for our transgressions, [he was] bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace [was] upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. - Isaiah 53:4-5

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved: for thou [art] my praise. - Jeremiah 17:14

Red Suspenders

— Sakim

One of my first teaching jobs out of college was something else. More than thirty years later it's still talked about. I took a job at a little country school in a rural North Florida county—you know the type, about 30 miles beyond sunset—the kinda of place where the school board chairman with his third grade education wanted to hire Perry Mason to represent them. When the time change came each

year, you set your watch back one hour and one century. Good hearted folks mostly but trying to work with that school board was kind of like try to herd cats with a stick; you just can't do it. Ah yes, but there was some good times, too. To this day, I can take credit for really introducing a few country kids to the real joys of learning, researching and clear thinking. One of them, lets not call his name though its David, is the superintendent of education down there now—doing a good job, too.

Let me tell you about Jace, that's short for James Charles. Jace had come in the middle of the previous school year from parts unknown, spawned by a family of peculiarities with personalities to match. To say his life was rough is a gross misrepresentation of brutal fact. His life was hell. His face was slightly miss-shapedened from heavy forceps used at birth. A big crooked crease flowed at an angle right down his middle forehead. He had been a big youngun' born of a petit woman—petit nothing—she was downright skin and bones to look upon—a questionable pleasure I suffered once. Jace taught me a lot about life's trials and tribulations in his own way. He was bright of mind but dim of eye. The other school kids never got around to knowing the boy; they were too busy making his life hell—calling him ugly, crease-face, split head and the like...those were the good terms; I don't dare mention the other epithets. Jace wasn't long for that school, you know.

About a week after I got assigned an extra class, due to the untimely death of a drunken teacher; yes, some of those kids could drive you to drink. The principal brought Jace into to my room and loudly announced "I'm assigning this ugly varmint to your class; Miss Sands can't stand to look at'im!" That mean spirited principal stood right there in front of God, Jace and thirty-one rude students and shouted that directly into Jace's face as if he were deaf, too—which he tweren't. My heart sank a notch or two but Jace seemed to take it in stride. It was apparent that he'd faced all this before. The principal marched out of the room all a'whistling. Jace stood there silently a moment then timidly raised his hand. "Yes," I said. Jace asked, "May I have a chair at the front of the class?" I walked to the back and brought up the one remaining dilapidated seat and put it in the front corner row and returned to the lesson. As class dismissed, I asked Jace to come by after school and get the lessons he'd missed. With a smile that would have lighted up Chicago, young Jace promptly answered, "Yes, Sir!"

Over the next few weeks, Jace was treated just like all the other regular students. He wasn't ever any trouble, always did his lessons, never volunteered but always answered correctly any question asked. The tormenting continued to grow in newer more vicious ways daily. The secretary of the school board had her daughter moved to another class—said it was bad enough having her daughter sit by a black in school but she wasn't going to have her stare at some unchristian work of the devil all day long to boot! Thank God for small favors—"it wasn't any loss to my class"—that daughter was a snooty spoiled brat with a brother to match. You know the kind, every small town has a set doncha know. . . why, you're probably sitting next to one now.

Creator must have some weird ways when it comes to people. This body was given a heart so full of pity I couldn't even kill a rattlesnake that bit me. Could never turn away a mange infested dog or fail to give a handout to a hungry hand. This kind of heart is more of a burden than a blessing to me—it requires a lot of you. I even treat my worst enemy with more respect than they usually give their own mothers. Jace wasn't long for school—let me explain. One day, a loud commotion outside the door attracted my attention, as it should have. A big twelfth grader named Lawty had just knocked



Garrett Richardson, Andrew Wilson, and Emanuel Haire

Jace down and was about to stomp his head with his over sized and somewhat dung encrusted shoes when I stepped out of the room. "Hey teach" said Lionel, "This pervert was stealing from my locker!" I had long since figured out that Jace had a vision problem. His glasses were thick as coke bottles. You could start fires with those lenses! "Hold on there you wise-ape" I said. "The boy's half blind and his locker is next to yours; probably just an honest mistake—come to think of it, you're the one whose been trashing Jace's lunch bag every day, too." "Whatcha gonna do 'bout it" grumbled Lawty. Students snickered, hollered and slapped their thighs in delight and disbelief. Lawty was the school hero, football captain, you know.

"Well, for one thing," I said, "I think I'll pay a call on your daddy tonight!" Lot a good that did—the old man was truly the king of rednecks from what I could see—the epitome of awful; hell, if he were to become ignorant, it would have been an improvement. To help out a rural school without a winning streak, Lawty hadn't been graded too carefully that first month by most faculty. Me? That's a another story altogether and . . . well, Lawty didn't play football that Friday! Kinda touching to see a grown senior cry when he well deserves it; Jace's treatment suddenly improved a heap sight.

A few days later, Jace came to school earlier than usual and handed me a little white paper sack like they used to put your purchases in at Woolworth's. "It's for you" he said. The sack was opened carefully—he was a normal boy and one never knew what serpent, bug or other critter would leap out the of bag. Instead, a right decent but inexpensive pair of red suspenders tumbled out. "I don't see things too well," Jace said, "but I can see red okay. If you wear these, I'll always be able to find you—Mr. 'D' (that's what they called me back then). Sometimes, you're the only friend I got here and it sure gets lonely when I don't know where you are." The ping that was heard was one of my heart strings a'snapping in two. Good thing Jace could not see well, suddenly I knew what that was like because my own eyes teared up all blurry—like a fountain. I gave that boy a hug right then and there. They'd probably get me for child abuse now.

That afternoon, walking home, Jace missed his bearings and crossed the road at the wrong place. It was swift, thank God. A truck was moving at such a high speed that Jace was relieved of the miseries of a slow agonizing death—it was over instantly.

None could understand why I wore those red suspenders every-

day for the rest of my teaching career until I finally got so disgusted with the current state of some students and their parents that I walked out of school one afternoon and never went back to teach—all the pity, too, ‘cause I was a right fine teacher if a judgment had to be called on the matter. Those red suspenders came to mean hope to me and friendship of a deep worth—most importantly, they meant trust. I just couldn’t wear them too much any more lately. When I first came to Colquitt some years ago they were still a regular but faded part of my “always the worst dressed” apparel. I finally gave them to Charlotte Phillips for Swamp Gravy’s wardrobe collection so that maybe some trust would wear off on others—everyone can always use more trust. If you look around carefully whenever you attend a performance of Swamp Gravy, you may see them. I truly hope so.

(Some names have been altered to save embarrassment.)

Hope for the Future

— Vera Hines

I lost my son in a freak accident; two years later I lost my husband. My whole world fell apart. I kept asking the question over and over, “Why, why, why?” I’ve probably gone through every stage of mourning that is conceivable and I sometimes wonder if it will ever end. I was so spent with grief that sometimes I forgot that my daughter and daughter-in-law were also grieving. My son was such a good person and he was so young with his whole life ahead of him. My son left a baby daughter who has been my light in this tunnel of darkness that I’ve been through. She is so much like her daddy it’s scary. Not only does she look like him but she has his nature and temperament. My faith has always been very strong and I know God has helped me to live through my grief. I’ve had friends and family that have been there for me, but even with that I found out that grief is like a disease that keeps eating away at you. Some days you get up feeling pretty good and other days you want to stay in bed and never get up. Then there is that ray of sunlight that just won’t let you lie there. The ray of sunlight is the memories that surround. Everywhere you look or touch or feel there is something that reminds you of the presence of those who’ve gone on.

On the weekends I get my granddaughter who is practically all

grown up now and pretty as a picture and that beautiful bubbly little person lets me know that life does go on and no matter what happens to those you love as long as love and the memories live they will never really be gone. My son will live through his daughter and someday her children and grandchildren because we'll always have those memories to pass on.

My husband will live through his daughter and her children and grandchildren because we'll always have those memories to pass on. They are the memories that heal you.

On Mama and Daddy's Death

— *Dr. Ted Ary*

My parents died at two different times, ten years apart, and I was present both times. At the time it did not seem like much of a blessing, but now, a few years later, I realize what a blessing it was. It could have been a phone call describing some accident or catastrophe like a car wreck, but it wasn't. It was at bedside surrounded by family. As I think back on it, it was as if my parents were teaching me how to die.

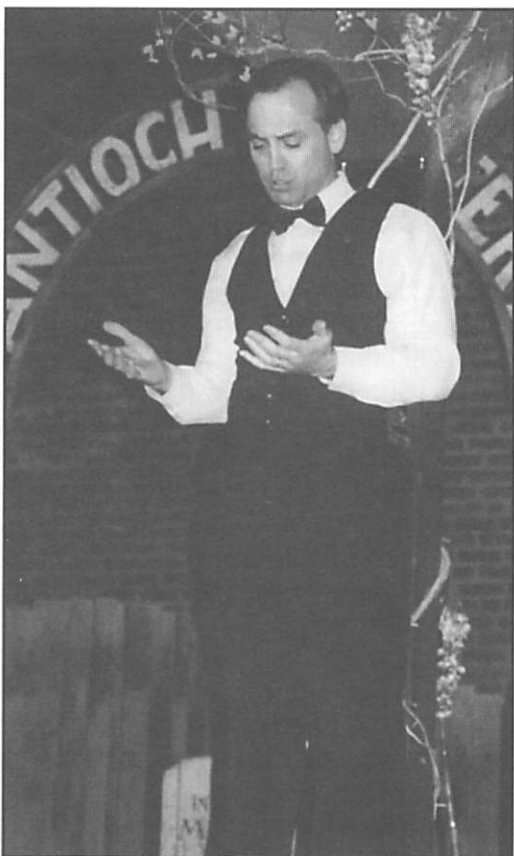
My mother's death had several mysterious or unusual, if that be a better word, events leading up to it.

In October, 1975, I awoke from a dream, to hear myself screaming, something that has not happened since, nor before. I had a dream where a human form was lying on a flat slab or table obviously deceased. I was observing this from a distance. A voice in the dream said, "The angel of death is coming to your family." At that moment, a mist covered the unrecognizable face and the shape of the face changed, but was still covered. It was obvious to me the dream meant two people would die. That was the end of the dream as I recounted it minutes later when I awoke. I was disturbed but did not tell my mother back in Georgia. I wanted to think it was just a nightmare, but I felt like something was about to happen.

Two days later, I was pulled from a college class to receive a phone call that my grandmother, whom I was extremely close to had died a few hours earlier.

My mother developed colon cancer in 1979 and as she told me the results of the biopsy, she also recounted a bizarre occurrence while we sat at the kitchen table. A few weeks earlier, before she had

seen a doctor, she washed her face in the sink and raised up and saw an amazing sight. Written in steam on the mirror, were the words, "You have cancer." My mom said it was in my handwriting. She blinked in disbelief, and it was gone. Now that made every hair on my body stand up. I didn't say anything for awhile but asked if she told daddy. She said he did not want it told. My mom had said she did not intend to tell anyone, and I certainly did not either. It was this mirror and its message that caused her to go immediately to a doctor.



Ted Arny

Six years later, in 1986, she lay in a hospital bed dying; she had been in this comatose state only one day. She could have lived hours or weeks; no one knew. I had stayed all day and went home a few minutes away at 11 p.m. I went to her house and left my dad and brother sleeping at her bedside in the hospital. I took off my clothes and put on pajamas. I was a few feet from the mirror in the bathroom, which is neither here nor there, but as I write this I find that interesting. I was exhausted and climbed into bed. A flash of light hit my eyes and a voice or thought said, "Go back to the hospital." A few times in my life I have had this experience, and I just credit it to inheriting some of my mom's clairvoyance. It's like a clear idea that suddenly bursts into your head with a strong command. I bolted up, Cindy came from the bathroom and asked what I was doing.

I told her I didn't know but that I had to get back to the hospital.

I entered the hospital room where my daddy and brother were sleeping. I said, "Get up, something's happening." I don't know why I said that, I just did. They both jumped up. She was breathing those long breaths like she had done all day. For some reason, I raised her eyelid, I don't know why. Her pupil was normal for so slight a second, then went dilated, indicating death. I looked at a clock, it was eight minutes until midnight.

I don't know how, but she called me back to the hospital so she could die while I was there. The doctor pronounced her dead fifteen minutes after midnight, but her real death was June 29 not June 28 as the certificate indicates.

Three days later, looking down at my mother in her coffin, I realized that the blue gown on the second person in the dream was my mother, though it happened eleven years after the dream. Now she was a very religious woman, a school teacher. I never saw her engage in anything, where prayer wasn't concerned. She had sat on the bed the night before cancer surgery a few years earlier and read the Bible and prayed.

I have analyzed and thought about that handwriting on the mirror for years. It resulted in my mom going to the doctor immediately and because of this six years were added to her life. Was it like Hezekiah in the Old Testament who saw handwriting on the wall? Was it the Holy Spirit telling her to go? Was it her own brain, maybe when we credit God, our own brain knows every little cell in our bodies. Was it some communication between myself and her? Was it her angel guarding her from sudden death? I know one thing, it was real, a really miraculous event in her life. She said steam was all over the room more than ever before and there in the mirror where she had looked at herself thousands of times was the sentence, and then it was gone.

....

My dad was a very active 77-year-old but developed lung cancer in May, 1996, and was told he needed surgery. I had a bad feeling about the surgery. I don't know; it was just a bad feeling, like something would not go just right.

Forty-eight hours after surgery, he was placed on a ventilator, after receiving blood at Emory University. He died a month later, never regaining consciousness.

At the end, I was called in Albany and told he was failing. He lived until I got there. I was with him about two hours. He was not visibly aware of anything although his hand moved somewhat. I was with Catherine and Elizabeth, which was strange. The two weeks they spent with me in the whole year was when he died. They were at his bedside.

I told him, in his ear, he did not respond, that I remembered when Mama was dying, he read the part in Revelation to her about streets of gold. I told him that he was going to walk those streets of gold. I left the room for a few minutes, as it was too much emotionally to stay in there for long periods. Elizabeth shortly came and got me and said, "Come, it's happened."

I entered the intensive care unit and went to the bedside; the monitor had a flat line indicating heart death, he was gone. I leaned to his ear and said, "Well, Daddy, we love you and we have always been proud of you." The heart monitor went into normal sinus rhythm and began beating while I talked for another two minutes; this was after straight lining for two minutes. I felt like this was his way of saying good-bye.

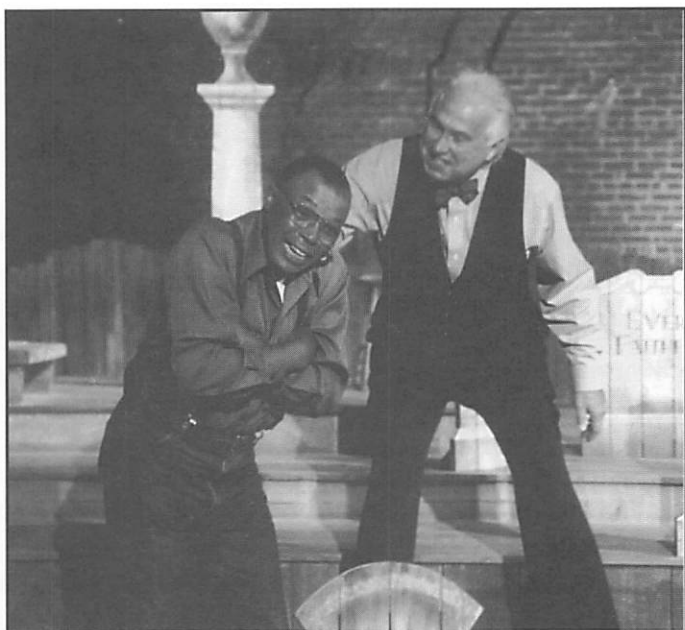
One month earlier, when I had left the pulmonologist office having received the bad news of his malignancy, I saw the most beautiful rainbow. The next one that I saw was on the one-year anniversary of his death. I thought that was strange.

Red Cadillac

— Ann Addison

The nursing instructor had assigned a couple of the nursing students to a gentleman who was critically ill. Several days passed and on one of the clinical days, the physician told the family the patient would not live through the night. By now, all of the students had gotten really attached to this sweet, little old man. One by one throughout the day they went into the room to comfort the family because the patient had now lapsed into a deep coma. The nursing instructor's father, who was a minister, came by and gently laid his hand on the man's head and quietly prayed for a miracle. Nothing happened.

The next morning the instructor and students entered the hospital tearfully expecting Room 20 at Miller County Hospital to be



John Blue and Billy Kimbrel

vacant after the prolonged suffering of the man. I heard one of the students gasp as she walked by Room 20 and reluctantly looked in. "Oh, my God!" we heard her exclaim. All of us instinctively rushed down the hall and could not believe our eyes. He was sitting up in bed eating breakfast with a big smile on his face. He delightfully told us the story. "Last night, I dreamed that I was dying, but someone came in my room, and I saw a bright light. Suddenly, I felt better than I have in years. Then, the preacher came in, and one of y'all (pointing to the students) rolled me out of here in a wheelchair, and Mrs. Addison was walking beside us, and the preacher put me in his red Cadillac and took me home," he explained.

While he was joyfully telling about his dream, his physician came in and was as astounded as we were. "I didn't think you were going to pull out of this one," the doc thought out loud. "I had a visitor last night," he said, and he told the dream to the doctor. "Well, that's good, but I'm not going to let you go home today, regardless of that dream." "But I've got to go. I saw in the dream that I was to go home today," the man pleaded. "Just relax, and we'll talk about it this evening when I make rounds," jeered the doctor, who left the room and motioned for the family to come out. We all listened

intently as the doctor told the family that it was not unusual for someone nearing death to suddenly appear to be better, have hallucinations, such as riding in a red Cadillac, then within hours expire. The disappointment was obvious, but everyone knew his preacher drove a blue Cadillac and maybe the doc was right.

When the preacher arrived to visit, the family told him what had transpired, and he broke into a wide grin and said, "This is truly a miracle." We were puzzled as he delightfully explained, "No one knows it, but yesterday afternoon I traded my blue Cadillac for a red one! This man has had a divine visitor, and he's going home today just as he says."

The charge nurse called the doc and relayed the phenomenal chain of events. The doc gave the order for discharge. This patient attended the graduation exercises of that year's graduating class of the Jinks School of Nursing and had his picture made with them. He lived several years, and his family has the picture hanging on the wall of their home as a reminder that miracles do still happen.

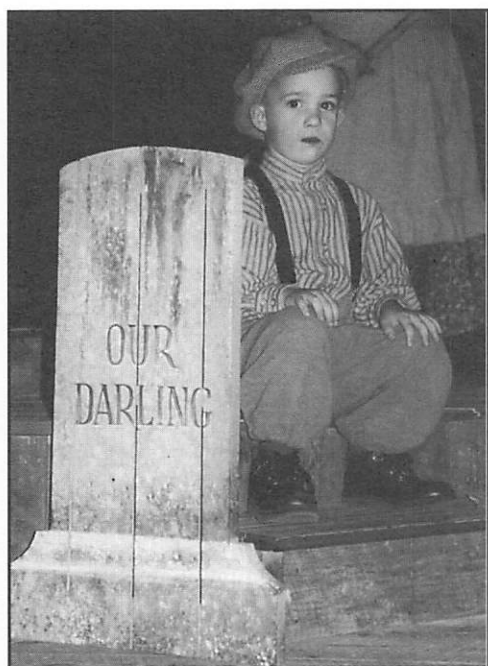
Reconciliation

— *Rev. Eric Sizemore*

My father did not know how to express love at all. I can remember the time - times in my life when I was little that I just wished he would go away and not come back because it always seemed like he was angry at me about something.

My daddy used to tell me that my uncle, Great Uncle John and my grandfather would come to visit one another, and they would sit on the porch and just smoke their pipe all day long, and if anyone said anything to the other one, it would embarrass them. They just were not people that communicated very well - really strange, and then my grandfather on my mother's side would not allow my mother and uncle to speak at the table, not at all. Children were strictly to be seen and not heard and if they were to laugh or anything, he would jerk them up from the table and wear them out with a razor strap. My father couldn't express himself in words.

My father was a very hands-on sort of person. He could do anything with his hands, but he didn't have much education. Since I was the only grandchild, my grandfather took a lot of time with me.



Philip Tabb

I could read and write when I was five years old, so I loved books, and I was sick all the time. I guess I was kind of a little wimp, and daddy always wanted me to go fishing with him and hunting, and I could care less about something like that. Killing an animal always seemed to be a very cruel sort of thing, and he probably said I was sissy about that.

I guess the real healing with my father came when my child, Jonathan, who was four years old, died of cancer.

He was fifteen months older than Jennifer, and Jonathan had six operations and two months of radiation. For nineteen months, he suffered with cancer. It was a trek from Columbus, Georgia Medical Center to Egleston Hospital, back and forth, back and forth. Carol basically was his mainstay, and I tried to hold the rest of the family together. Occasionally, when it was so severe, my folks would come up and take care of the kids on the weekend.

Jonathan was a character. He learned to speak. He was walking at six months, and doctors would ask him questions and he would say, "I have a cystic cerebella malignancy," and they would just gawk at him. You have a what? A malignant brain tumor, you know.

The child was probably a genius, but anyway, he and my dad had a real bond. My daddy liked to tease all the time. Daddy would come in and say, "How is old Charlie Brown?" And Jonathan would say, "My name is not Charlie Brown," and he says, "I'm the Hulk." He was the Incredible Hulk, and he would throw a net over daddy, you know, or he'd have a laser gun he'd shoot him with. Daddy just

thought he was the star. The day that Jonathan died, I think the real healing came. It hurt my father so bad. It hurt me, too, of course, but I had never seen my daddy cry and then came the funeral. They didn't go to the burial. They couldn't get out of the car, and I was so angry at him. "This is your grandchild," I told him, and he just began to weep. I don't know what happened, but from that point on, it was a real healing taking place.

♦♦♦♦

If I were to make a general statement, it would be plugged into that song in Swamp Gravy. "I've got a story and you've got a story. We've all got a story to tell." Sometimes we don't even realize we've got a story until somebody gets us to dig into our memory bank, and it seems like that when these things occur, when you're coming back in your past, that it brings up a whole flood water of emotions and memories that have healing in it. I think that the telling of our stories is probably the most - well, one of the most important things we can do, and you know, there's an old song that goes, "Are you weary; are you heavy laden; tell it to Jesus alone." I agree with that. We have to be honest with God and tell him just like we are and then not only to God. We have to see God in the flesh for some people. Everybody needs some person or persons with whom they can communicate and just be the person, the somebody that would accept the warts and all and invoke from them their story. Some of the stories are not all that dramatic compared to literature, but the story has to be told some day. It will come out one way or the other. That's why I feel real good about Swamp Gravy. These stories are being told, and they can impact on this community.



Heath McNease, Stephanie Bean,
and Daron Sloan



Dot Sammon and Joy Jinks in "Healer"

Healing and Curing

— *Dr. Nan Grow*

Healing has to be separated from curing. We don't cure, but we do heal. And, healing has to do not only with the response of your body but also the response of your mind and your spirit, and there is no healing that does not involve all parts of you. That's where the word healing comes from . . . to be whole, to be holistic is to be one . . . to be fulfilled in every part . . . that's what we're talking about, healing. Healing is a process, and a cure is something that can be done in a while. Healing is a process and to be healed means that you are in the process of appropriating the healing forces - the Divine energy - that creates and recreates.

Of course, the most important thing in healing is faith, faith in the healing process, faith that healing is natural and normal in the thing that is happening. Faith is a spirit energy force, certainly. It comes from, perhaps, expectations: certainly from trust. I don't think faith can be limited to a number of factors. That's rationality and logic, and that may or may not help your faith. Sometimes your logical process is going to pull the rug out from under you more than it is going to help you which is no reason to be illogical, but, faith has to

do with your emotional response; it has to do with your spirit. Like when I was a little kid who catches a "moon," when you fall down, and you're sure that you'll never be the same. Mine never was the same. My mother would say, "Just wash it off, Nan. Put some soap on it. And move it out to the sunlight, and it'll heal." And, if I still fussed, she'd say, "And you're gonna die after it!" And that used to make me so mad, because she was laughing! She'd say, "Well, you will die after having that cut . . . now, it could be in 70 or 80 years!"

God loves wellness; he loves the well-being of his children . . . her children . . . But God wills . . . God. The early word for God was, of course, "divar" which means divine energy . . . the field of "divine energy" that is within us. It is not we who are healing ourselves. It is the channel and that is what we do in the healing services; we call down the power of Jesus Christ, and the Father and the Holy Spirit (which is within you) to bring healing. And we claim that as a right; and we lay on hands; and, of course, the laying on of hands is very important.

There is an energy flow there. This is why the people who are more subject to blood pressure are people who live alone, people who do not "touch" another person. Through the constant touching, the hugging, there is something there that releases blood pressure. Now I don't know why. People are not meant to be isolated from one another. In the laying on of hands at the same time of healing is the placing of your energy . . . the inserting of your energy into the healing of this other person . . . the interacting with this other person, and it changes exactly. We go through a lot of this, because you can feel your energy draining, just as Jesus felt when the woman touched his garment.

We're coming back to this, I believe. There are many, many more doctors who pray with their patients now. And there are a lot more of them who realize the importance of touching. I can recall an earlier case when doctors admonished the caregivers of a small child who was dying saying, "This child is to be held and loved for an hour a day . . . this was an incubator baby . . . "Take it out of the incubator! Love it!" The baby survived!

We've gotten so smart and so scientific. But, of course, the scientists knew all along because they've gotten so far along that they are running into the "mystery." They can't tell why some people are healed and some are not. And, certainly, we are allies with medicine. We are not separate and apart. We are not saying, "Just come

and we'll lay on hands, and you won't need an operation!" That's ridiculous! God gives brains and medicine as much as He gives Faith. But I think that there does need to be a partnership. And, I think it is very important that the family are available. If the family is cynical, distrustful, they can do a great harm to a person in preventing healing.

One woman's healing is quite dramatic to me. She is an eighty-six-year-old woman who had smoked for thirty-three years. She had lung cancer. She admitted they kept her at home because she was so frail. And the last ten or fifteen years she had had anemia very badly. So badly that for the past three years, she'd had to have blood transfusions every four or five weeks . . . sometimes two pints of blood just to manage to continue living. She has not had a transfusion since last February . . . that is eight months! She accounts two things for this: the doctor thinks it's a miracle, and we started having healing services. She comes up to me and says, "Well, if I only could go to North Georgia, I could go to a healing service." I said, "We can have a healing service right here." The Methodist Book of Worship has a plan for healing services. All the instructions are there for this service. So we started to do that and a number of people came, including this older woman. It was not designed for her at all; it was designed for another person: but, in the process of the healing service (this includes the anointing with oil and the laying on of hands), she was healed, not cured, but healed. Time after time and many times she was taken in and she was so bad and in such pain and I was not always able to be there with her. However, I was with her once. We prayed for her and repeated the Twenty-third Psalm together. She wasn't even conscious. The doctor came in and he said, "Does she have a living will?" We said, "No, we don't know." He said, "You'd better find out because I don't think she'll live much longer." So we went out thinking, "Well, bless her heart. She's lived a good life and she's dead. She's smoked herself to death, but she's over seventy and she's okay." The next morning, I hadn't heard anything, so I went by the hospital and there she was - sitting up in bed in intensive care - and within a week, she was home. Her doctor called her "Lazarus." Still to this day, when he sees her coming, he says, "Well, there's ole' Lazarus!" Because he was so sure that her days were done. She is still getting up, coming to church. And she stopped smoking! That is, her blood condition is not right now. She does not have to worry about it with it in remis-

sion and she is operating as though she has no problem at all. She's not worrying about it! It's as though she has no problem at all.

I have a "cure" story. In 1971, I had a minor heart attack, and I was told that I would have to be very careful and to live with no physical exertion for the rest of my days! Well, later Bill and I were in India close to Fort Delauntabab in Bombay, which is the place where the Moslems ruled India. It is a very strange thing that a mountain appears out of nowhere, and the fort was built on the top. So it's very high up, and there is no access to it. If you want to get to the top, you have to climb up. And I said to Bill that that I was going to see it. Bill said, "Well, maybe we'll come back someday." And I said, "Sure, maybe we'll come back someday, right! If I'm gonna see it, it's got to be now!" And Bill said, "Why don't you try? I'll pull you. I'll push you. Whatever." And he did! So Bill pulled and pushed, and we got to the top. And it was really well worth the trouble!" But when we got back, I kept thinking to myself. There are a lot of things that I want to see, and I'm not going to say I don't feel like it. I'm gonna take it slow; but I can do it! Today, my cholesterol is fine and my heart is fine.

The realization was that I had a choice, and I think that choosing is always a part of healing. Had I chosen to be an invalid or a semi-invalid for the rest of my life or I could have chosen to be well. That is why in the healing services, we always give the person a choice.



Dot Sammon and children in "Cures"

We ask them what it is they really want . . . what is it that you are really asking? Is it to be cured? Is it to be healed? Is it to have the pain lessened? What do you want? Or, do you just want someone to hold your hand and be at your side? A lot of people want the latter, and they get it. And that's always a choice.

I say to people all the time, you need to believe that the natural thing is healing; the natural thing is not suffering; it is not death; it is the healing. And there are various deaths and sooner or later we all die; there's no question about that and to try to pretend that there's something different from reality that if you believe that there's something that's gonna get you - that you are "fated" to be ill or to suffer - then, you will suffer.

And, this, of course, this is where the role of affirmation comes and the role of envisioning and projecting the future. Yes, yes. To envision yourself whole. Do you envision life? Your life whole? To be well? Just last week - last Sunday - we had a healing service and this young woman who started it all - I say she's young, she's in her mid-fifties - was very nervous about the fact that she was having her last chemotherapy treatment. And she'd had such a bad reaction from the one before: she'd had to go through so much nausea and pain; she was really dreading this upcoming treatment. Partly, she was asking for the courage and the power to get through it.

She prayed that she would be able to go through this with a minimum of pain and also for strength. And those present prayed with her and for her. With individuals praying separately, but on the same theme, undoubtedly things change. She had no nausea. When she came down with cancer, she was just a basket case because her mother had died five years before her with cancer. Both her aunts and her grandmother had died of cancer, and she was just sure that her name was death. And once we got that changed, once we could get her past the "why me, why me, Lord, why do I have to do this, too," she began to see that she had an opportunity to really beat this.

When she was being operated on, her sisters, her nieces, were right there with her. They were just crying, and they didn't believe that she would live or come through that operation. And I gathered them around, and angrily told them, "You could cause her death by these actions . . . now just stop it. Stop it entirely! You have no right to suggest that she's going to die when the Lord God Almighty says she's going to live!" I said, "No crying in front of her! You can laugh, you can joke, anything you like . . . just don't be serious! She



Gayle Grimsley and Ferrell Keaton in "Healer"

be serious! She is going to live! We have that assurance." I did have the assurance that if they did hang around crying and weeping, that she would die.

When I was at the university, a couple of summers, in Mission Hospital, among the Indian people - halfway between Vancouver and Alaska - the people there were very superstitious, and there was a little girl maybe twelve or thirteen years old with tuberculosis. Now it was just the beginning of tuberculosis - it was not a serious case - but, as soon as she came into the hospital her grandmother came and sat beside her and put this very black hood over her head. The doctor chased her out of the girl's room; but then, he would have to go off to another island on an emergency call, and the Grandmother promptly came back into the little girl's room, and she sat there (the doctor was gone maybe a week), and by the time he came back that child was dead! There was no reason in the world for that girl's death! She had the first stages of tuberculosis. This must have been the late '40s. There was a cure then for TB, but simply because her Grandmother sat there wailing over her was enough to cause her death.

So I do know this. Even if the young woman should die later, better to insist that this is not the normal and natural way of things. It is not the normal and natural for a fifty-year-old woman to die of cancer. It just isn't.

When this woman's sisters said, "She will certainly die," I had them gather around her bed as soon as we could get her in the room and had each one of them lay a hand on her. So she was touched. Her body was touched by every single one of them and the value in this at that time was that they could feel . . . and so many of them said to me, "You could feel the Holy Spirit there." This is not some crack stuff. This is the truth. You could feel it, and her healing was done from this.

There was this man who'd just gone in for his regular check-up . . . he was having some discomfort. The doctor told him he had two months to live. You have cancer and there's no point in doing anything or looking anywhere for answers because you're not going to find any. Well, his two months were up in August, and he's still alive.

I talked to him yesterday, and I said to him, "Every day is a gift." And he said, "Yes, it is." And I said, "Every day is a preparation. Now, I don't think the last scene is written yet." At least he has friends, loved ones who are with him and has had four months longer than he thought he would have. Every day is a gift.

When he first started having treatments and we began having these prayer services we thought to ask him, "What do you really want to do with the rest of your life, however long it is?" He really wanted to go fishing. So he and his wife went fishing. They had a wonderful, wonderful memorable day at a stream at the edge of

their property. Now, that is healing rather than . . . one of his relatives sat down (when given similar words by his doctor) scared to death, faced the wall and did nothing. Now that is hard to deal with!

You've got to know what your part in the universe is; it is not because you're such a great guy that God doesn't let you die - He let His Son



Ferrell and Sara Ann Keaton in "Healer"

die - come on! You have a role to play and you do matter. You do matter very much! There isn't anybody who matters more .

The thing is we have a few short years on this earth. And some of us are given the option of conducting that in such a way that it makes a powerful gift. So your life is shortened but the influence is much greater . . . you have the same sort of things in all the great heroes. They have willingly shortened their lives to willingly accomplish something which they thought important: in large part, the will of God, if you like; the Force, if you like, whatever Quality you want to use. Very often the people who live long, live long because they are protecting their lives. When what they are doing is actually losing their lives which is what Jesus says, "If you save your life, you will lose it." Yet, you've got a chance to really make a difference, but, if you flub that and really try to protect it - your longevity - then you're blowing it, kid! I've found in cases, too, that "voice" heals. For example, I can't run down to Attapulugus every time that somebody needs me. This woman I've been speaking of was really desperate often, and, once about 10:30 at night, the phone rang and she said, "Please pray with me. I can't settle down. I can't relax. I can't sleep." And, we would pray together - over the telephone - and she would feel better also, just by hearing a comforting voice.

I was given a book called "Kitchen Table Wisdom," written by a woman doctor who suffered a great deal. She tells things like when she went to a doctor and found that she had cancer. She said, "What can you do for me?" And the doctor said, "Nothing. All you can do is hope and pray." She said, "Well, at least teach me how to hope and pray!" And he said, "That's not my field."

In the church we know how to deal with that. So I feel that medicine and the clergy have to work together, ministers and doctors - much more than social workers. Social workers have their place, and they do a fine job, but I feel that if you have these two working together, I feel that you can do the things that really are healing. That's one of the things that comes in the healing service. Assurance that you can change yourself and be forgiven. Your forgiveness is very important to your healing because if you're carrying a heavy load of guilt, it's difficult to be healed. An example is one mean person I knew. I mean, she just hated somebody and that person just irritated her to death. I said, "Now, look. You've got to let go of all that stuff. You are so tight and tense, that you can't heal. You've just

gotta let go.”

In fact, one of our healing services inserted humor. I just inserted a bunch of jokes and we laughed and laughed. Norman Cousins says that “laughing is jogging on the inside!” He was dying. The laughter healed him. Laughter does heal because it releases you . . . there is a powerful release in confessed sins.

Also, there is the power of stories. Certainly the more we tell of other people’s healing, the more confidence it gives people that they can be healed, too. Another story from “Kitchen Table Wisdom” is a marvelous story about the woman herself who had Crohn’s Disease from the time she was a teenager. For years, she had pain and surgery after surgery, and she was feeling sort of discouraged. She saw this doctor who was a specialist in Crohn’s Disease. He asked her to tell him her story. All the treatment, all the suffering, everything she had gone through. She then took thirty-five minutes to tell him, and at the end of that time he said to her, “Are you able to do any medical work at all now?” She said, “Doctor, I carry a full load - the same as you do!” And she said afterwards as she left the office she was discouraged, and she thought, “Well, maybe I shouldn’t. Maybe he’s trying to tell me that I’m worse off than I understand. Maybe . . .” And she got discouraged and depressed and worse and worse. But then, several weeks later, another doctor (a friend of hers) said, “You’re not looking well. What’s going on?” And she said, “Well, I went and told this doctor all that I’d gone through, and I just got the feeling that I probably shouldn’t even be trying to do what I’m doing.” And he said, “What did you tell him? Tell me.” And so she went through the whole thing again and he sat there listening, and when she finished, he said, “My God, Rachel, what a warrior you are!” She said, “I was healed!”

She had the acknowledgment that she could go on and live and do those things the right way, and this is why the attitudes and responses of the people around you are so important! They can be so destructive by negatives, by negative thinking.

When we contribute to the human story by proving that you can live, that you can be healed, that you can go on, it’s a whole different thing than thinking, “Oh, my gosh, I’m gonna die at fifty with cancer!” That they’re gonna live through this, and it is going to be helpful to other people. That’s the story.



Little Swampers with Nancy Tabb



Swamp Gravy cast

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