

Grove Hill Eleven – by John Barton

Due to my habit of quoting my elders, where it involved one or more of the Harvey ancestors (the "Grove Hill Eleven"), "A.C.", has, on more than one occasion, asked me to record what I recall of those known to me. Now that I attempt to do that, I realize how pitifully limited is my store of incidents worthy of the telling and how few of them I came to know really well. But when we consider how utterly the grave terminates and obliterates the deceased, very soon thereafter, nothing survives except what an individual may see fit to record concerning himself or what a surviving acquaintance may tell or write of those "...hid in death's dateless night," hence, every crumb of one's memory concerning those now with a "chamber in the silent halls" takes on an importance far beyond its intrinsic value.

Had great Uncle Ferd not come, in his latter years, to live with us at the McHarg House, my close acquaintance would have been limited to my grandmother, "Miss Angie" and her two brothers, Lewis and Moore, also residents of Radford, who made frequent social calls to partake of Aunt Mackie's reputation for good conversation and excellent cooking.

During his sojourn with us, "Mr Ferd," a bachelor, was president of the Farmer's and Merchants Bank of Radford and had a rather wide reputation of being a "pinchpenny" conservative. He never owned an automobile and hence traveled via public transportation or taxi and is said to have offered one driver a dime and told him to keep the change. He was a gentleman of the "Old School" and I never saw him dressed otherwise than in a white shirt and brownish suit. He had a habit of standing in the hall before a large mirror that was part of the coat hanger facility, critically regarding himself, until, in a gesture of disgust, using both hands to obliterate the image, he would walk away. He liked verbal riddles, and one I recall must have been his favorite, went "Algey met a bear and the bear was bulgy and the bulge was Algey." That one wasn't very difficult to figure out. He was quite deaf and a lot of energy was expended in any effort to communicate with him. He spent his evenings before the open fire in the big living room reading the New York Times, cover-to-cover. He was somewhat a

particular eater and would often pointedly ask, (when a dish was passed to him), "What's in it?"

When asked on occasion if he slept well, he would deny it saying, "I turned over a time or two."

The January morning in 1931 he was found dead abed, I was in the 6th grade at Old McHarg grade school. This grade, occupying the SE room of the second floor, I had a clear view of McHarg House. The state of my innocence at that stage will be evident by my unconcern to see a black hearse parked at the front gate. Big headlines in the local paper announcing his death estimated his estate at two hundred thousand. In the lean year of 1931, that was quite a fortune. It was divided among his nearest of kin. I believe he was the last one of the eleven to own the Grove Hill home place, situated on a timbered ridge overlooking a square mile of rolling grassland and creek bottoms.

Recollections of Grandma Ingles (Angeline Rorer Harvey, or "Miss Angie") are both from direct and indirect sources. As the wife of McClanahan Ingles, she was a long-time mistress of Ingleside." As a widow, surrendering that in favor of her son, Lewis, she and single daughter, Mary McClanahan ("Mackie") removed to a home they purchased in central Radford, thence to the McHarg house acquired later. At Ingleside, Miss Angie had a reputation of being a shrewd and efficient business woman, overseeing both household and farm. She was a tall and regally handsome woman. Portrait photos of her and McClanahan, taken in their prime, represent two of the handsomest people I ever recall seeing. When time for public schooling came, to avoid bussing, all of her Barton grand children were sent to reside with her, by which time past 70, "Miss Mackie" had assumed head of the household. Both were widely known and had reputations for their warm hospitality, both mother and daughter had many callers. By far the most interesting of these happened to be another of the "Eleven" – brother Lewis, of what had come to be known as the "Harvey House" at 8th and Harvey Streets. Mr. Lewis Harvey was a real home-made character, and following retirement, strode about the city with a six-foot staff for a cane, reminding one of both Moses and Major Hoople, escorting a pack of barking dogs. He'd invariably stop

off for a rest and conversation at Mackie's kitchen where he would often (to emphasize a point) whale away with his staff at a pot or teakettle on the stove, knocking lids askew and denting the pots. Both he and Miss Angie were very opinionated and positive personalities, though differing somewhat in their philosophies to a point where Miss Angie was in the habit of responding with a loud resounding "NO" whereas Mr. Lewis' favorite was drawn-out "YEAHHH!" To one a little distance away, all that came through was a series of YEAHHHs and NO-O-Os punctuated by an occasional bang as the staff would put yet another dent in the kitchen ware, and he would end the declaration with a final "THAT'S WHAT MAKES ME DO WHAT I DO!"

So far as I know that phrase is unique to him as I have never heard it employed by another speaker. Also unique to Lewis Harvey was his countenance, broad, almost circular matching a fulsome head, face pliable, weathered, leathery, shrewd small eyes, light in color, set far apart, with a few props, he could easily have made a claim to be really a full blooded Sioux or Cheyenne Chief. And his mind-set may have been American Indian as well, for, though having lost a son in an armed conflict, I heard him say once that wars were good things, "They bring new people to the front." One day, afoot with staff and dogs, he stopped by to see me at an office in west Radford. I asked, "Where have you been today, Uncle 'Lute?" Typically, he said, "I've just been up to the cemetery to see who my neighbors are going to be." Earlier on, before so many of his loafing friends had passed on, one of his favorite spots to linger and talk in the manner of Socrates, was the triangle formed by the convergence of First Street with Arlington Avenue, then vacant except for a goodly number of shade trees. There he would hold forth for hours, surrounded by a motley bunch of cripples and idlers. Once, when passing there at such an hour. My dad said, "Well, I see that the League of Nations is in session again." A long time after he gave up driving his shabby old Model-T Ford, he grew confused as to his whereabouts and would become homesick. His son, "Bob" would at such times take him for a drive on a meandering course, bringing him finally back to the starting point, whereupon he would be perfectly satisfied and would go to bed. Now he lies buried among his "neighbors."

Uncle Andrew Moore was the colorful member of the Eleven by reason of his varying adventures, range of travel and departure from the usual land-owning tradition of the family. A general contractor, he worked quarries in Spain, Mexico, and Cuba. In Cuba, he met and married Edith Woolston, an English lady from Cambridge. When he retired, he settled his family of five on "Harvey Street" in Radford. Like his older brother, Lewis, he soon discovered that Miss Mackie's house was the happiest place to be late on Sunday afternoons where he could always be confident of having an "appetizer" and a tasty supper to follow his narration of seemingly endless store of adventure stories. Unfortunately, his mumbling speech had by that time become so difficult to follow I soon gave up listening and as a consequence have none to retell and not a single quote from him that I can recall. On the other hand, from Uncle Millard Fillmore, whom I hardly knew at all, comes an amusing story that characterizes him. It seems that he was telling my dad somewhere about this perfectly lovely young lady he had met – that he just couldn't get her off his mind. Naturally, my dad asked the obvious question: "So, why don't you ask her to marry you?" Uncle Millard sadly replied: "She don't love me," to which Mr. Dave asked: "How do you know that?" ...came the heart-rending verdict: "SHE TOLD ME SO." Daughter Lila (Lemmon), as daughters so often are, must have been very like her father in his gruff manner. From her comes a quote that through me has spread far and wide. When they were in the process of leaving the farm due to Robert Harvey's bout with polio, someone (probably Aunt Mackie) phoned Lila to see how the preparations for the move were progressing. With an abrupt "I can't git nothin done for doin somethin else" she made it plainly known that she wasn't getting on at all. Uncle Millard had a walrus mustache and a decidedly cocked eye. As a teenager, I remember I was about half afraid to get very close to him.

Uncle Nathaniel Burwell, I knew only slightly – mostly that he was the typical Southern gentleman, and was perhaps the handsomest of the lot, with his great height and copious white hair,, he put one in mind of Mark Twain or Colonel Saunders. He was a highly successful farmer and owned one of the finest spreads of farm land in Pulaski County. Unfortunately, there were no suitable successors to it among his children.

And finally there is the most memorable and lovable member of the lot, Estelle (Shelburne) or Miss Essie. A personality of many facets, she is nevertheless difficult to describe. Fully six feet tall, she added to this towering effect by piling her very plentiful hair atop her head. Perhaps her most unique feature was her uncommonly long, nearly chalk-white face, very deep eye-sockets and small, pale, bird-like eyes, all of which put one in mind of portraits of Queen Elizabeth I. She was a complete extrovert, ever solicitous of everyone she knew, and could not converse with anyone without holding on to their thin garments with a possessive grip. Once, when I chauffeured Aunt Mackie out to visit her, Cousin Paul Ingles was with us. All four of us settled onto the parlor sofa. Immediately she wanted to know about Paul's condition and, said to Mackie: "Honey, how is Paul?" Mackie said, "He's sitting right there beside you. Ask him." Aunt Essie came back with, "No, honey, I want to hear you tell it." Another remark typical of her was the observation she made on hearing what was considered Brother Lewis' terminal illness. "If Brother Lewis has to die, I hope he'll go on and die before the ground freezes."

J. I. B.

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It might not be inappropriate to conclude these rambling memories with two other not so ordinary facts associated with this large household of siblings. Julia, by choosing to marry Andrew Lewis Ingles (a near cousin of McClanahan) made the children of Angie almost double first cousins to hers, thus complicating the relationships of succeeding generations.

Then, complicating the deed books as well, Mr. Lewis Harvey and his brother-in-law, Jordan Trolinger, agreed to swap farms upon discovery that their differing management programs would best be served by that transaction. Lewis Harvey was a crop farmer, whereas Jordan Trolinger's chief interest was in livestock. Thus, the Trolinger family cemetery ended upon the Lewis Harvey place near Graysontown. In like manner, the Harvey family cemetery is on what was once the Trolinger place on Meadow Creek.

So what's in a name? ...often a very great deal indeed.

J. I. B. Solitude

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