

THE BAPTIST HERITAGE

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SHE ENDURED, HAVING SEEN SPRINGTIME IN KENTUCKY

A Tribute To My Mother
Written in 1993
on the day of her homegoing.

The mountains and valleys of Southeastern Kentucky are sculptured from the very bedrock of the land itself. The plows do not run very deep in the fields of Southeastern Kentucky for the ground most often seems to be but a few inches of poor brown soil thinly spread over a few feet of yellow clay--all sitting on layers upon layers of solid

gray rock. Among those mountains and valleys of Southeastern Kentucky, the seasons are clearly defined and strongly declared. The summers rush in quickly and come either hot or dry or

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If present social trends continue, in a couple more generations, the familiar term 'mother' may be only a biological term. The description of a loving caregiver, a patient teacher, a gentle nurse/doctor, a wise administrator, a diligent housekeeper, a skillful manager and a giver of hugs may be only a memory found in ancient his-

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tory. There most certainly seems to be a 'plot' to make women ashamed to be mothers. Children are to be considered only after self fulfillment and material acquirement—the thought that a woman might actually want to give birth and personally rear a child is foreign to contemporary feminine culture.

I am thankful to my Heavenly Father that I was privileged to know what a good mother was and that my children know what a good mother is. □



This and That

I am not at all certain how to express in words what I think as I look on the national/inter-national developments of recent months. America—bombing an aspirin factory and killing innocent workers, launching missiles across neutral countries to kill 'suspected' terrorists in training, instigating a war to bomb a nation into submission, selling classified materials to a sworn enemy, attacking a foreign embassy, daring North Korea to 'start something' and out-smarted by two fifth-rate gangsters in Iraq and Yugoslavia—no longer has the moral high ground. I have written before concerning the coming Funeral of America (reprinted 1/99); it is even more obvious that the internment is not too distance. □

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A Meandering Mind In The Merry Month Of May

May is a month of memories for me.

As a young boy, my favorite month was May--the Kentucky Derby ran, the Indianapolis 500 whizzed, the school-year ended, Memorial Day (when summer began) arrived, jacket weather was over, the flowers produced by April's showers were everywhere,

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drier and hotter. Summer settles a blanket of dust over the ground that stifles the grass and chokes the flowers.

Just when the ground seems almost smothered, the arrival of fall bathes the land with its cleansing rains and Kentucky comes to life with vibrant colors. Fall proudly flexes its strength and seems to promise deliver-

ance, only to be cut down in its youth by the frosts of Jack. The winters arrive strong and bitter, crushing the life from fall. Winters come wet and cold, and seem destined to stay forever. The frequent snows of winter fall heavy; frequently lie deep, and very often linger long. However, just when winter's rule appears everlastingly established, spring begins.

Spring must struggle and fight to free the land from winter's harsh grasp and for a while every year, the battle hangs in doubt. Then for a few wonderful wondrous weeks, the land gives itself into exhaustion producing an unbelievable transformation. From the tops of the rounded mountains, across the sloping meadows, through the covering forests, out of the darkest hollows, even from the tiniest of cracks in solid walls of stone come the sweetest fragrances--perfumes from a kaleidoscopic carpet of blossoms and flowers, richer, thicker, and more lovely than any ever designed for the royalty of Persia.

Few places on this earth, if any at

all, can equal this yearly canvas of beauty that God in His grace paints upon Southeastern Kentucky. A Kentucky spring is a promise from God that winters do not last forever. Every Kentucky spring is a reminder that God still sits upon His throne. Each Kentucky spring is a prophecy of Heaven. One who has witnessed this indescribable loveliness of springtime in Kentucky would

She was a woman of faith--she lived long--for and expecting to hear the Trumpet announcing the return of her Lord.

agree that "to live in West Virginia is to live right next door to heaven." Springtime in Kentucky makes the oppressive summers, the tantalizing falls, and the onerous winters endurable--it is the joy set before Kentuckians. On those rocky old rugged mountains, in those dark dreary hollows of Kentucky, badgered and beleaguered by these cycles of seasonal extremes, are somehow produced the most magnificent hardwoods. Some stand stately and tall, marvelous in splendor; others are gnarled and twisted, marvelous in strength. And, each is unique. In spite of, or more likely because of those battering continual seasonal extremes, trees grow everywhere in Kentucky: in the middle of a lush meadow, out of the crevice of a boulder, amid the darkest hollow, even out of the bare bedrock itself. Designed by the all-wise Creator to withstand harsh winters and hard summers--to survive through the floods and the droughts, to live facing bugs and blights--the trunks of Kentucky trees grow stronger and the roots drive deeper.

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Kentucky trees bend with the strength of the wind, bow under the weight of the snows, but they rarely break--and when they do, from the twisted ruins of the stock, the tree starts anew. From that broken trunk, the limbs once more reach toward heaven.

These same laws of creation that have sculptured those mountains and valleys of Southeastern Kentucky with the chisel of time and the hammers of wind and rain and that have polished them with the freezing cold and the boiling heat--and those same seasonal extremes that so shape and form the extraordinary trees--have also produced a different breed of person. They are a people who resemble those Kentucky hardwoods, but a people who are called "Briars"--a name, given in derision--that Kentuckians proudly accept. Wherever

these magnificent trees grow in Kentucky, right beside them grow the humble briars. In fact, briars grow everywhere and thrive anywhere--in rich soil or the poorest, in time of abundant rain or when the droughts reign, defiant in summer, stubborn in winter. Where nothing else can survive, the lowly briar will thrive.

These men and women of Kentucky, these "Briars," prove as durable as their beloved land, as enduring as their trees, and as indestructible as their namesake.

Storms do not discourage them--they have seen springtime in Kentucky.

Droughts do not defeat them--they have seen springtime in Kentucky.

Winds do not disturb them--they have seen springtime in Kentucky.

Floods do not displace them--they

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Mothers' Day came, and my Mother's birthday was on the twelfth. No month could ever offer more. As I sat down to prepare The Baptist Heritage for May, my mind returned to those wonderful days of old. You will have to forgive me as I ramble on a journey retracing those long ago trails.

Growing up in small town 1940-50's Indiana had many benefits that, only now, in this stage of older age, am I able to begin to appreciate. I enjoyed advantages that I sincerely wish every child

There never were better days to be alive, and there was never a better place to be alive than in the backwaters of Indiana in a small town.

could continue to enjoy today. Those wondrous "advancements" that stole those advantages were not the gains that most seem to believe, rather they were deep loses.

I believe that my childhood era was the absolute greatest time to be an American. There never were better days to be alive, and there was never a better place to be alive than in the backwaters of Indiana in a small town. The present history revisionists have painted those years as terrible times. They describe a time when all children hid all day under their desks at school and trembled under the covers all night long in fear of Atomic War. That was

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have seen springtime in Kentucky.

Disease does not destroy them--they have seen springtime in Kentucky.

Time does not dissolve them--they have seen springtime in Kentucky.

"Briars" can and do, everywhere and anywhere, survive and thrive--they have seen springtime in Kentucky.

Among these stalwart men and women of Kentucky, the Harrisons, the Lees, the Lainharts, the Brumbacks have never been known for being found wanting where duty calls or danger waits. My Mother carried that blood and she bore her Kentucky heritage both proudly and well.

Indeed, strength and honor were her clothing.

She was not strong in body--though she spent well over seventy-nine years:

- living with and caring for three brothers and four sisters and their wives and husbands--all but one younger than she;
- keeping her home and one husband for more than fifty-six years;
- raising a son and a daughter;
- inspiring three grandsons and three granddaughters;
- even holding a great grand-

Her character was a godly character that had been formed by the long study of the Word of God and fashioned by the leadership of the Holy Spirit--she had seen springtime in Kentucky.

daughter;
and caring for twenty-eight nieces and nephews.
To have accomplished all that, shows some strength--the strength of having seen springtime in Kentucky.

It is true that she was not strong in body--but she was just strong enough to do whatever her hands found to do and to do that heartily as to the Lord--she had seen springtime in Kentucky. and she was just strong enough to raise two children and to nourish uncounted and unknowable numbers of others--others recorded only in heaven's ledgers--she had seen springtime in Kentucky. and she was just strong enough to teach Sunday School for nearly sixty years--she had seen springtime in Kentucky. and she was strong enough to devote herself to the distribution of the Eternal Word of God--she had seen springtime in Kentucky.

It is true that she was not strong in body--but she had strength because she had seen springtime in Kentucky.

Her strength was not physical--though she rose while it was night to

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give meat to her family. Her strength was not physical--though she did work willingly with her hands. Her strength was not physical--though she stretched out her hand to the poor and to the needy. Her strength was not physical--though her candle went not out by night. Her strength was not physical--though she laid her hands to the spindle, and her hands held the distaff.

Her strength was the spiritual strength of character--a Kentucky character sculptured with the chisel of time and the hammers of the winds of adversities and the rains of trials. A Kentucky character polished by the cold of duty and the heat of responsibility--she had seen springtime in Kentucky.

Yet even more, her character was a godly character that had been formed by the long study of the Word of God

and fashioned by the leadership of the Holy Spirit--she had seen springtime in Kentucky.

In her strength of character, and with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, she lived a life of honor. She was a woman of virtue--the heart of her husband safely trusted in her and she did him good and not evil all the days of her life. She was a woman of purity--she covered herself with the tapestry of modesty. She was a woman of wisdom--she opened her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue was the law of kindness. She was a woman of principle--her word was a promissory note. To her, right was right, because it was right, not because it was easy, popular or without cost. She was a woman of prayer--some of my earliest and deepest memories are of hearing her pray. Sitting on the

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not the case in Connersville, Indiana. We did not tremble or hide. A. T. McCormick would have warmed our britches, if we hid under our desks. We were far too busy with lessons at school to take time out for bomb drill and too active, after school, in chasing fireflies, catching craw-dads and croaking (pun intended) frogs than to tremble at night. Besides, we had homework, chores and the Lone Ranger, and the Saturday Matinee with Gene Autrey or Roy Rogers--the Reds we worried most about played ball at Crosley Field. I do not recall any bomb drills; if we had them, they made no impression.

Instead, my Junior High science teacher had me out on the roof in broad daylight taking Geiger counter readings after every atomic test in Nevada. There was a normal daily reading that served as a base and I was to report how long after an announced test the "ticks" increased; how much of an increase it was; and how long it lasted before the normal returned! Once I recall an increase when none was expected and that, we discovered later, was from a Russian test. Say, I wonder if I could now sue the school system of Fayette County for exposure to radiation?

Instead of all the fear and complexity often portrayed, we lived a life that was simple, and by today's standards would be con-

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basement steps of the Woodland Drive home of my boyhood, just out of her sight, I often heard her pray as she washed the clothes on the old wringer washer. Over the years, I "caught" her praying as she swept the floors, prepared the meals, or mended the clothes.

She was a woman of faith--she lived longing for and expecting to hear the Trumpet announcing the return of her Lord.

In her strength of character, and with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, she lived a life of love.

She loved her God, communed with Him as daughter to Father, and was found doing so even as she was carried into His presence.

She loved her husband--he was

her concern and was a covering to her eyes.

She loved her children--they were her jewels and her cause.

She loved her brothers and sisters--they were her kin by birth, but they were her companions by choice.

She loved her friends--they were her interests.

She loved her church and, like her Saviour, she willingly gave herself for it.

She loved her six decades of Sunday School boys and girls more than any material thing on this earth, and no less than anything else on this earth.

She loved her nation--she was a patriot who trembled for the future of her native land.

And, yes indeed, it was always evi-

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Over the years, I "caught" her praying as she swept the floors, prepared the meals, or mended the clothes.

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sidered primitive. My playmates, schoolmates and I did not realize we were deprived or poor or disadvantaged. We ate cornbread and beans and "taters"; sometimes, we even had store-bought bread, mostly wore hand-me-downs, patched pants, collar-turned shirts, went barefoot and thought every one else did the same. At the same time, we, of course, thought we were living in the middle of the greatest days of "modern America." Why, our milk came either homogenized or with cream and was delivered directly to the front door! We had arrived. We did not have

to take a list to the grocery store and give it to the grocer to fill; we could walk up and down the aisles and pick from different brands ourselves. This was modern America. We picked up the phone (if we had one) and told the lady at "central" who we were calling and she plugged us in. While we waited, she asked how school was and had Billy behaved today. Telephones were not three or four to a house, but more like one to a block--and the good old party line reigned supreme. Three or four phones used the same line and each phone had its own ring (two longs or three shorts or a long and two shorts). Man, we had arrived! Cars had windshield wipers (that were on the bottom of the window and ran

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dent that Mother loved her Kentucky—especially, her Kentucky in the springtime.

Content on earth, she longed for Heaven--she had read its promise and seen its prophetic shadow in every springtime in Kentucky. Today, Mom is witnessing the fulfillment of the promise conveyed in every springtime in Kentucky. Today, she experiences that promise in reality--full and glorious and unending.

Strength and honor have been her earthly clothing and she shall rejoice in time to come.

Her children arise up today and call her blessed; Her husband also and praiseth her.

As a woman that feared the Lord,

she shall be praised. Today, let the fruit of her hands, her own works, praise her.

Content on earth, she longed for Heaven--she had read its promise and seen its prophetic shadow in every springtime in Kentucky.

Mother wore strength and honor as the dress of her life; now, leaving us, she has gone to be with her Lord. The "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" has been heard.

The time for her rejoicing has come.

Strength and honor are now her clothing forever more.

Pastor Manley

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on a vacuum line) and a starter button--the crank was history! Turn signals were available, if you could figure how to wire them and windshields were one piece!

Every day held new "miracles" of science, cars were beautiful machines, Roy Rogers was "King of the Cowboys," the Chicago Bears were the Monsters of Midway and the New York Yankees ruled baseball, and Milan could win the Indiana state basketball championship!

I was born in 1940--in those difficult days when the depression was still deep, employment was under twenty percent, but

barely (you read it right) and the start of the War was still over a year away. No one ever referred to the War any other way--it was always "the War" and this title separated it from "the Great War." I remember those great Armistice Day parades when the 40 and 8 "boys" put on their uniforms and marched or rode right up the main drag of town with the "older" men left over from the Spanish American War.

I do not recall much of World War II--I most remember my mother borrowing rationed items from a neighbor to fix me a birthday cake; I also remember hearing Harry Truman ask for prayer when he became President; and I remember going down-

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town to see the celebration when the announcement was made that the war was over. I have a few other memories of the war years--mostly of my parents listening to the fireside chats of Roosevelt and the nightly news on the radio. I still hear the tones of Edward R. Murrow, Lowell Thomas, Walter Winchell and others. I recall saving "tin foil" and making it into big balls (I recently discovered that all of that was busy work and those "balls" are buried in the Northeast.) I remember being present when my Dad received recognition from the military for his war work--the vast majority of jeeps used in the war came through the factory where my Dad was a welder.

I remember my Mother crying at the news from the European theater where her brother Marshall served and over the battles in the Pacific, especially, I remember those in New Guinea where her brother Earl fought. There was a flag in our front window throughout the war to recognize their service. My grandmother, Mom Brumback, always spoke of her boys "over the pond." I remember my Mother's nightly prayers with me for them and I vividly recall a question I asked her regarding soldiers who died in battle.

Many early memories center around the radio. What a wondrous miracle! Smiling Ed McConnell and Buster Brown on Saturday, Fibber McGee, Henry Aldridge, Lum and Abner, Amos and Andy, Jack Benny, Allen's Alley, Baby Snooks, Dragnet, The FBI in Peace and War, and Gunsmoke--those and more were all family friends. The sound of the big bands on Saturday night and The Old Fashioned Revival Hour with Charles Fuller, B. R. Lakin and Cadle's Tabernacle on

Sunday made the week end. In my mind's eye, almost so real as to be able to touch it, I see the old radio, myself in front of it, on the floor, doing homework and my Mother out of the corner of my eye, sewing.

We burned coal in a large furnace in the basement. Somebody had to stroke the furnace in the morning and to bank it every evening. The floors were hardwood and uncarpeted and colder than you can imagine all winter. There were floor registers in every room and one huge register in the front room where during the cold winter's nights we sat in a circle with our feet on the register--Mother, her sister, Aunt Babe, and me singing Christmas songs and Zip-a-dee-do-dah and telling Bible stories--that is a fresh, clear, crisp memory.

Connersville was never a large city--though, to me, it was a very important place. After all, Connersville was the home of the Cord automobile (*arguably the greatest car ever built*) and other early cars. It was even called "little Detroit" and the greatest basketball games in the world were played in the old gymnasium of the senior high school.

It was a safe city to grow up in--I played outside, up and down the block as a small boy. Mother gave me a free run from a specific crack in the sidewalk to another specific crack. Once (*and only once*) I passed the eastern crack and got the apple Ma Rigor offered me. I had no more than eaten the first bite when my Mother had my arm. She used a switch on part of my anatomy--one whap for every step all the way home! The apple was good--but the stripes were not; and I learned that the punishment of disobedience was greater than the pleasure.

As an older boy, I was able to walk any-

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where in the town without any fear--except for an occasional dog. Early, so early, I cannot remember a time when I was not, I was a regular library patron. Andrew Carnegie had given the money to build it and it was a privilege to go there. Books were everywhere and along about the seventh grade, I was able to get into the adult section.

I remember the house where I lived until my sister started first grade--we changed a lot of things after she came along. To me, it was the biggest house on the block with a large front porch, a huge back yard, (A few years ago, I returned and was amazed at how everything had shrunk!) a wonderful Golden Delicious Apple tree, three bedrooms and, best of all, a full basement!

Well, not everything about the basement was "best of all". My Mother used a wringer washer and made her own soap. It was my job to fill the washer with water, fill the two rinse tubs with water, then to empty the wash water, and the rinse water and to refill them again! I had to carry that water by the bucket up the stairs and out the back door and pour it around the trees and flowers. Monday was wash day. As surly as the sun came up, my Mother washed clothes every Monday--rain or shine! The clothes were hung outdoors on sunny days and in the basement on the rainy ones. Some of my most vivid memories are of my Mother praying as she did the washing.

My Mother was an excellent cook. I seem to remember always having yeast breads and lots of pies and cakes. One of her great prizes was a stove with a deep fryer built in. It replaced one of the burners and was a wonderful idea.

In my early years, most homes had ice

boxes and not refrigerators. Two days a week a truck or a horse drawn vehicle brought blocks of ice through the neighborhood. Those who wanted ice, placed a large colored card in the window indicating how much ice. And in the summer, he gave us chips to chew on.

I remember how proud my Mother was the day we got our electric water heater and no longer had to boil water for baths, washing clothes or dishes.

My space is running out before my memories--life is like that. We cannot remain in place--the river keeps flowing and the current is so strong that what is upstream is forever upstream.

Mother is gone. She has been Home two (now six) Mothers' Days now--I wish I could give her one more little wilted pink petunia in an ice cream cup or bring home one more school paper with a gold star; but, I cannot. I would that I could hear her pray again; but, I cannot. All I have now are the memories from those days of so long ago.

Pastor Manley

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Good
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