

THE BROKEN BARN DOOR

By John F. Hall

Last December, 2021, a tornado demolished the Candle Factory in Mayfield, Kentucky and destroyed the small town of Dawson Springs. I had several doctor appointments in Benton, Kentucky during the month of January 2022. The doctor's offices are next to the Marshall County Hospital. My rheumatologist, Dr. Hammonds and my orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Fulbright, share the same office building. Last year, I wanted to write a story about an old barn that is painted with a bright red paint. The barn is located directly in front of the hospital. I was not sure why I wanted to write about the old red barn.



I've repaired the old stock barn next to my old Kentucky home. The stock barn is also called a cow barn. It has stabling areas for horses or mules, a hay loft, and a small corn crib. Years ago, when my father-in-law sold all of his cattle, I modified the hay loft into a tobacco barn for air cured burley tobacco. I made a small room in the hay loft to strip the tobacco. This was for my son's Future Farmers of America (FFA) school agriculture project. We raised about an acre of burley tobacco. I had lights, a small kerosene heater, a phone line, and a small black and white TV in the stripping room. Access to the stripping room was up wooden steps to a door/floor. You opened the door which is part of the stripping room floor. I built a revolving tobacco stick holder that held four tobacco sticks. I would strip the bottom leaves first. I called them trash leaves. Then I would strip the bright leaves and then the tips. I had three compression boxes and I would use an old 'car jack to pressure the leaves in the boxes and then tie them into a bundle to sell "at a tobacco floor in Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

I came across an old picture when I was dating my future wife, Paula Oakley. She was 18 at the time and I was 19. She is standing in front of the old stock barn. It shows one of the barn doors needing some repairs. Paula is holding a twisted stick to chase away a cow if it came too close to her. I'm a city boy and she is a farmer's daughter. We live in our old Antebellum house in the middle of the old widow's farm. We own one acre of land and that is about all I care to mow. My great nephew puts all his building materials in the stock barn now. The stock barn has sustained a lot of wind damage, but it is still standing.



Jared Morris wrote the song "The Barn Door." These are some of his lyrics: "My daddy never went to war but he cut his hands on glass, so we could always be together. Your daddy treated water for the school, so they'd have class. You skipped barefoot through the heather. Do you lie awake in bed? And circle through your debt? What happened to your innocence? Will we look back on this and say, what happened to all those Sundays after church we'd just sleep away. This is my battle cry a wolf howling at night. Every high school senior keeps up the fight. Born in a different small town, moved to this one for awhile. Stood still as it just passed me by. So passions fleet and riders strong, did we

ever get a long? Got caught in the maybe and the might. We use to light candles for the poor, but we don't do that anymore..." "Someone lights one somewhere just for us. In just another year we'll have the money to get out of here. We're spending it here buying time. Anywhere but here, I'm going and I'll tell you where, when I know it. I'm good at cussin' but I never learned nuthin'. Down at the barn door. Oh..."

I went to see Dr. Fulbright about my poor foot. I had two surgeries on that foot in Nashville. My surgeon, Dr. Henning use to be the Titans football team physician. He wanted to do a third surgery. It would entail breaking four toes and inserting a six—inch small stainless steel rod in each toe. I told the doctor, "No!" I don't run anymore and my shoe inserts allow me to walk without much pain. To my surprise, the deadly tornado hit all around the Marshall County Hospital and only did some damaged to a back door. It



moved the AC units on the room some. Dr. Fulbright said it was a miracle that more damage had not occurred. The red barn that I wanted to write about, looked like someone put a bomb in the middle of the barn and blew it to

smithereens. I drove over to get a better look at the damage to the barn. The builders of that old barn have long since passed away. I should have taken a picture of that red barn before it was demolished by the tornado. I went ahead and took two pictures of the remnants of the barn.

I talked to some people that had their homes damaged by the tornadoes. They said they had no warnings and they escaped to their basement seconds before the tornado hit. In Matthew, Chapter 24, Verse 44, are these words: "For this reason you also must be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think He will." I was a Boy Scout once, and our motto is to be prepared. I'm reminded of the words found in Psalm, Chapter 39, Verse 4: "Lord, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; let me know how transient I am." My dad, Charles J. Hall died in his sleep at the age of 75. He made his own funeral arrangements. He told me that the only ones that benefit from a person's death are the florist and the funeral home. No one knows how much more time will be given to this old writer when Christ decides to call me home. Only two barn doors are left on the stock barn next to my old house. The other four doors broke and fell down. The widow woman that now owns the stock barn is not making any repairs. Wind damage and rain are taking a toll on the stock barn and its years are numbered.

I will continue to write stories and continue to give honor and glory to Jesus Christ for all the grace upon grace and inspiration Christ has given to me; to be able to become such a prolific a writer in the December of my life. I've more than left a large footprint that Jade, Skyler, Lexie, Trish, Audrey and Dr. Butler can attest to. I believe that Christ has

intervened in my life; that there is power in prayer and that faith and hope will sustain a person in times of adversity.

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