

THOUGHTS ABOUT HOMECOMING

John F. Hall

It is a Sunday evening in my old house on Dyers Hill. I'm trying to make a decision to attend, with my fellow Racer Alumni, from near and far to Murray State's Homecoming on October 14, 2023. The College of Education hosts a Homecoming Breakfast at the Murray Middle School. It was formerly the Murray High School, and Murray College held its first classes in that building, back in 1920. I transferred from the Hopkinsville Community College in 1968. I joined Alpha Kappa Psi, a professional business fraternity that year. In 1969, I was the Vice President of that fraternity. I was commuting to the college from Cadiz, Kentucky. I worked part-time at the campus Post Office. As I had to drive by the former town of Golden Pond, where I lived from 1964 to 1966, I was dismayed to see the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)



bulldozers at work demolishing all the buildings in that once thriving town. At the age of 24, I was going to college under the GI Bill of March 3, 1966. The government assistance only paid for my tuition, fees, and books. I had to take out student loans to survive. My wife, the former Paula Andree Oakley of Golden Pond, had a trainee job at Jennie Stuart Hospital in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Our son, John was two years old. One day, I was at a table in the campus library. Someone left a Louisville Sunday newspaper on a table next to where I was studying. There was a several page article about the demise of the town of Golden Pond.

I read the article and got the inspiration to obtain a Kentucky Historical Marker for Golden Pond. At that time in history, Trigg County did not have a Historical and Preservation Society. The Director in charge of the Land Between the Lakes, was rogue. He did things back then that, today, would get him fired and thrown in jail. I made an appointment to see him. I asked if he would help me get a Historical Marker for Golden Pond. The Kentucky Historical Society would pay the \$2,600 for the marker. That LBL Director got angry and said that he would not help me because he was using the name of Golden Pond for his Headquarters. I thanked him for taking the time to see me. I was on my way home and I stopped in the former site of Golden Pond. I parked next to what was called the "Flower Garden." The town's people use to plant flowers there, among the trees.

It was a nice Spring day. So I got out of my car and sat on the hood of my Chevy II. In life, one really has just one eternal friend, and that friend is Jesus Christ. Family and friends will pass away, but He is the Alpha and the Omega. If He is for you, it makes no difference who is against you. I was not asking for something for me alone. The Marker was to commemorate the former residents of Golden Pond. There is power in prayer, so I prayed: "Please God! Help me." I did not have a clue as to what I wanted God to do. I was like David in the story from Scripture. The LBL Director was like Goliath. I'm fairly sure that when I left his office, he was laughing at me. I've tried in previous stories to communicate what happened a few minutes after I prayed. There is courage in one's

heart when their faith is placed entirely in God. In Revelation, Chapter 11, Verses 3-4, is one answer, about two individuals who will accomplish God's will.

In verses 3-4, as found in Revelation, Chapter 11, are these words: "And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth. They are "the two olive trees" and the two lamp stands, and they stand before the Lord of the earth." Christ will use, at times, two people to accomplish his work on earth. In Matthew, Chapter 18, Verse 20, are these words: "When two or three are gathered together in My name, I am in the midst of them." The strangest thing happen to me as I was sitting on the hood of my Chevy II, and I asked God to help me. The two things that I did not know, before I prayed, was the ownership of Highway 68/80 in Golden Pond, and whether or not the "Flower Garden" was on highway right-of-way. I did not know what made me get off the hood of my Chevy II, to ask the two state highway workers a question. They had just come down the hill leading into the former town of Golden Pond. They got out of their dump truck, with their lunch buckets, and sat under a shade tree, in the "Flower Garden" to eat their lunch. I prayed a simple four-word prayer, and Christ gave me a nine-word question to ask the two highway workers.

One could say that the two state highway coming to eat their lunch, a few minutes after I prayer was purely a coincidence. But the question about the "Flower Garden" is a different matter. I had no prior knowledge that TVA did not own Highway 68/80. I had no prior knowledge that the "Flower Garden" was on state right-of-way, and was not deeded to the TVA. I'm just a lay Christian writer of nonfiction stories. People with little or no real faith in Christ, will dismiss what happen that day, as a figment of my imagination. I feel that the LBL Director may have lost the smile on his face, when I did an end run around him. In the end, he was fired, along with the TVA employees that did his unfair and unlawful bidding. The TVA was removed from the supervision of the LBL, when it was transferred to the U.S. Forest Service.

I received a text from Trish Cunningham, in regard to a statement that I made. I said, "The older I get, I see that I am not as significant to the younger people that I use to be. But that is life." She replied: "As we grow older, the significance is less, until we are needed, and then, we are the ones they look for." My brother-in-law, Bruce Oakley lives in Murray, Kentucky, with his wife, Brenda. He is disabled from a fall, and he is one week younger than me. He texted me that their pet cat, Bubby died at 7:00 P. M. last night. The cat was 13 years old, and Bruce said it was like loosing a member of the family. I thought about going to the Homecoming Parade, and then going to visit Bruce. He said that he is coming to Cadiz that morning, for a 60-year high school reunion, to be hosted at the Cadiz Restaurant. He wants me to bring him about a dozen quail. My son, John Andrew raises quail, for the eggs and to eat. I called my son and asked him to drop a dozen quail at my house. I will give them to Bruce after he attends the reunion. I checked the long range weather for the Homecoming Parade. It calls for a low of 48 degrees. My wife, Paula is too ill to attend. So, rather than sit in the cold, in front of the elementary school, I can watch the parade online. That is one of the modern signs of the times.

I came across a photograph that I took two years ago. It shows my concrete block well house that was built in 1947. Burwick Downs lived in that well house when he first married. Inside are two large freezers and two refrigerators. Only one refrigerator works. The others are full of plumbing fixtures. My son started working on a storage building to be attached to the south side of the well house. Construction stopped as he became over worked with plumbing jobs. He is a Master Plumber. Nearly three years ago, my wife decided that she wanted to buy one last new car. At the start of the Pandemic in 2020, the government was giving, just about everyone, a \$2,000 check. So we used both checks as down payment for a new car. Several months later, Paula was diagnosed with the eye disease of macular degeneration. It is a loss of central vision due to age related damage to part of the retina. She decided to rarely drive her new car. My son decided to build me a two-car garage off the north side of the well house. I keep Paula's car in that garage. Today, the car has 3,500 miles on the odometer.

I paid for the metal that was used for the sides and roofs of the garage and storage building. My son put a wooden floor and shelves in the storage building. It's a small warehouse for his plumbing fixtures. I believe that we should always leave a place better than we found it. The well house served its purpose when it was built 76 years ago. It continues to serve a purpose of stability for the garage and the storage building. Electrical wiring from the well house was extended to the garage and to the storage building. I asked my son to put in a new well house door. The old one has seen 76 years of use. The garage has a gravel floor, next year I plan to have a concrete floor.

I've written many stories about the place where my wife and I have lived for the past 45 years. I've shared these stories with my family physician, and friend, Dr. Daniel Butler. I tell him that he keeps me alive. He reminds me that God keep me alive, he just does some tinkering. I also share some of my stories with Dr. Natalie Curcio, she did save my life once, and we continue to keep the skin cancer from coming back. Space does not allow me to mention all of my younger and older readers, but they know who they are. I would remiss not to mention Mrs. Audrey Lambert and her husband, Mike. I guess they never realized how many stories that Audrey would put on her web page.

I was looking for a good way to end this story. Thanksgiving is next month, and I like the lyrics of the song written by Al Stillman and Robert Allen called, "(There's No Place Like) Home for the Holidays. These are some of their lyrics: "Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays. 'Cause no matter how far away you roam, when you pine for the sunshine of a friendly gaze. For the holidays, you can't beat home sweet home. I met a man who lives in Tennessee, and he was heading for Pennsylvania and some homemade pie. From Pennsylvania folks are travellin' down to Dixie's sunny shore. From Atlantic to Pacific gee, the traffic is terrific. Oh, there's no place like home for the holidays. 'Cause no matter how far away you roam, if you want to be happy in a million ways for the holidays, you can't beat home sweet home... For the holidays, you can't beat home sweet home...".

*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:

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