

Anna Pearl (Jared) High Story

SHE'S HIGH ON LIFE: by Beecher Hunter, Cleveland Daily Banner.

"When did Methuselah come in?" a 90-year-old patient in Room 301 of Cookeville General Hospital – mischief twinkling in her dark eyes – asked her attending physician last weekend.

Perhaps Mrs. Pearl High, because of her age, feels some identify with the Jewish character, who lived to be 969 years old, the doctor mused.

"Well, the Bible tells about him, in the Old Testament, I think," Dr. Thurman Shipley responded.

:I know that, but what book>" Mrs. High insisted.

"I want to see who his doctor was."

Tossing her white hair and re-positioning her head on a very soft pillow, Mrs. High grinned at the doctor.

She likes to joke with those who enter her room. At the moment, Dr. Shipley was her target.

"My gracious, you're dressed up," she told him as he finished the examination. "Well, it is Sunday, you know, and the doctor ought to dress up once in awhile." He smiled and waved goodbye.

"he looks like a \$40 horse," she chuckled as she turned to address the family of the patient in the next bed.

"But don't tell him that. He'd give me some medicine that would make my pay for that, sure enough."

That's the kind of woman I found Mrs. High to be.

There to visit my mother-in-law, who had undergone emergency surgery, I learned some lessons about growing old graciously.

Beset with a chest ailment and other problems associated with age, Mrs. High was far from being counted out by life. In fact, she is carrying the fight as vigorously as ever.

"Life has its problems, but I love it. I tell my granddaughters – and they're find Christian girls – to live it to the fullest without overdoing it."

What were the happiest moments of her long life?

She thought for a moment, then broke into a broad grin.

"Why, having sweethearts, I guess. I was right popular with the boys."

"But I love books, too, and I always used to read at every opportunity. I can't now, because my eyesight is failing."

Mrs. High, a lifelong teacher, is a member of a family which etched its name in the business and political annals of Putnam County.

Her brothers were Wirt Jared, a cattle rancher, and Walter Jared, a merchant in the Buffalo Valley section of the mountainous western end of the count, toward Nashville.

A nephew was the late Jared Maddux, a Cookeville lawyer who served several terms as lieutenant governor of Tennessee. A grand niece, Virginia Lane Maddux Moore, is continuing the lawyer tradition in Cookeville now.

While her body is aging and wrinkled, Mrs. High's mind continues to be resourceful.

"I want to ask you a favor," she said to one visitor.

"Will you bring me a chicken feather tomorrow? You may think I'm crazy for asking that, but the bathroom door squeaks."

"How would a feather help?" asked the visitor. "You don't have any lubricating oil."

"No, child, but I've got some hair oil here, and it'll do the job."

Mrs. High's husband died 20 years ago. He was a salesman for Ragland-Potter, a wholesale grocery house. She sees today's grocery prices as a sign of a coming depression – "it can't be helped."

"There's a better day coming," she vows, her jaw showing some of the determination which has brought her through 90 years. "It won't be in my lifetime, but it may be in yours."

And when it comes for Mrs. High, life-despite all it can throw in a person's path – will have lost one of its strongest advocates.

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