

THE GREAT EASTER EGG FIGHT
IN THE NAMELESS COMMUNITY

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'Writer's Corner'

One of the great days for school kids in the Nameless community was Good Friday. On that day was the annual Easter egg hunt at the little two room school house. It was a time before plastic eggs filled with treats, foil-wrapped chocolate eggs and all the other artificial things that came with modern times. Back then, the Easter eggs were farm-raised hen eggs, boiled and dyed pretty colors. The prize egg was a big goose egg supplied by Mrs. Draper, teacher and principal of the little two-roomed school.

I loved finding a bag full of the eggs. They were delicious peeled and eaten right out of the shell with just a sprinkle of salt and pepper. And there was always deviled eggs at home that night if I found enough. The only thing I didn't like about the hunt was the little room got a head start of about five minutes over the big room.

Baby Hewey, who was my uncle and a year younger than me, though he was bigger, was still in the third grade. He had been held back three times, which gave him an edge over all the younger kids. Ma Haney's baby boy didn't have to go to school unless he wanted to. So that was usually special days when he could mess up all of the kid's fun.

Ma Haney made sure that everyone's parents knew he was special. He was the preacher's boy and of a delicate nature. He got to grow his hair long at the time before anyone knew about the Beatles. She called Baby Hewey her "Little Samson" and all the other boys hated him like old Judas his daddy often condemned from the pulpit.

The kids from the big room stood on the line and waited helplessly, watching as Baby Hewey snatched up a dozen of the prized eggs by the time we were told to "Go!" Six of us ran in different directions, each snatching a purple egg from a typically hard-to-find-spot. The hunt continued until all the eggs were found. Totals of each basket were counted and, as usual, Baby Hewey found the most.

"Fifteen eggs" Mrs. Draper yelled, proclaiming him the champion finder. He got a shiny quarter, as did the little girl who found the prize egg. The total count was made and found to be 128. Oddly enough, Mrs. Draper thought there had been 125 from her original county, but suspected a miscount. Numbers don't lie. The hunt was over though the secret six suspected three eggs were unaccounted for. One thing you could say about Mrs. Draper was that she knew her fingers.

A couple of moments passed and it was echoed, "Egg fight!" As he yelled it, Baby Hewey struck both me and Junior Rodgers in the back of the head. He caught Hilt Brown in the face as he turned around to see what was going on as the rest of us sought cover.

We considered our strategy. Though there were six of us, we just had two to four eggs each for a total of 18. Baby Hewey still had near three dozen, having scared his smaller classmates into forking theirs over. He stepped forward with a egg in each hand and his tote slung over his shoulder.

“Draw, you cowards!” he bellowed.

His challenge was accepted. We had secret weapon: the six little ugly purple eggs. Simultaneously we launched the six purple eggs, all catching Baby Hewey in the face. Even at 20 feet I could smell it as the ooze of the uncooked eggs rolled down his head. Baby Hewey rushed home in tears.

Within 20 minutes, Ma Henry showed up screaming, “Why did you let those big bullies egg my little angel?”

She roared and raved about pagan children of sinners picking on nice church-going boys. She cried that she might have to shave his God-given glory to rid him of the Devil’s stench. All we could say was that he cast the first egg and we didn’t know where the rotten ones came from.

As Ma Haney stormed out in a huff screaming, “Spare the rod and spoil the church!” Mrs. Draper assured her we would all get a paddling, a dozen licks each. As she left, I knew it would be worst for me. My mother would believe whatever tale my mean old grandma might spin as to what had happened to her precious little brother, the next destined to be a preacher in the family. And of course we would all hear a special sermon on Sunday already putting together.

The other kinds were dismissed as Mrs. Draper ordered, “Boys, line up and assume the position!”

She lifted her faithful oak paddles, Old Blackie, who was rumored to have blackened many a bottom with bruises. Gentry she swung, tapping Hilt a dozen times before moving on to do all of us in turn. They were gently love taps.

As she said, “Boys, go out and have some fun,” we realized she disliked Ma Haney and Baby Hewey as much as every other kid in the little community.

Over time the stench disappeared from Baby Hewey’s hair. Some of the color was bleached out, as it was given many good washings. It left him with a white streak down the top and along the sides, giving him a skunky look.

Eventually the black grew back out.

*See more ‘Writer’s Corner’ at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>