

From: Phil McLaughlin <philandtaffy@gmail.com>

Date: Tuesday, July 30, 2013 8:45 PM

Subject: IOH Stories from Sonny McLaughlin

Noel:

I have tried to consolidate all Sonny's stories in one e-mail and in the order that he wrote them. Hope you find them interesting.

Phil McLaughlin

To Noel,

Thanks for the 1951 image. What memories it brought back to me. For the cousins who might not know the Roebling's story.

The Roebling family owned the cable co. that became famous for building the Brooklyn Bridge. Robert, a Grandson, acquired a large three mast schooner, built of steel. He, with family, sailed south, with help from a diesel engine.

Arriving in Georgia in the mid 30's, took the Skidaway River south. Got stuck in the narrows about a mile south of Isle of Hope. With the help of the incoming tide, the ship floated, turned around and traveled back to the north end of Skidaway. This was the end of the line.

They anchored and set up housekeeping in the river. Robert negotiated the purchase of the north end of Skidaway Island.

It had been a former plantation until civil war times. Soon a house was built. He and his family moved to dry land. His intentions were to bring the plantation back to its original stature, with modern machinery, not slaves. Over the next few years, this was accomplished.

In the late 30's, early 40's, you could view the ship from the south end of the bluff; you could also see the Oglethorpe Hotel, on Wilmington Island.

More to come.....

Sonny

Hi Cousins,

On this Halloween weekend, looking at the 1951 image, memories of another time, 1942 came up.

Halloween came early on the Modena plantation and for the Roebling family. It was early summer; they had their celebration early.

On Friday, the farm hands got paid and were transported back to the Modena dock on Isle of Hope.

At the dock they had 2 workboats, "Tar-baby" and "Bur-rabbit", which was piloted by the foreman, who also lived on the plantation. While they were gone, a dense sea fog swept in. He had to slowly navigate back home. He was late, things had changed. The fog crept through the big, mossy live oaks. It was scary.

That night, someone said voices of former slaves, singing in the field, could be heard.

The fog lifted early Monday morning. The foreman took one of the boats to pick up the work crew. He came back empty, the work crew had vanished!

I'm sure Robert was thinking of the song, "It's a bad time to leave me, work crew, with all of the crops in the fields", and so on.

Labor was almost impossible to find, with 3 shipyards building the Liberty and Victory ships, as fast as they could. Most capable men were in the service. Robert would not fail; he began looking for a labor source.

After a short time, he found one, right under his nose, "The Isle of Hope kids".

Child labor laws were exempt for farm workers during the war. He came to Isle of Hope recruiting. Some were hired right away. The only requirement, a Social Security card. I was one of these kids. We jumped on the next streetcar to town, got our cards so we could start work the next Monday morning. The Paxton girls, Douglas girls, Rodewalt boys, myself and several others made up the crew. Early Monday morning, we met on the dock for the boat ride to work. Most of us knew what we were in for, "hard work". Most of us were used to it, coming out of the depression.

When we arrived, the foreman took us on a tour of the farm. When we got to the animal stalls, he introduced us to, what he called, "The star of the show". In a fairly large stall was a huge animal, the size of a half-grown elephant. When it turned around, we realized it was a giant black bull. Later, we were told he was an Aberdeen Angus.

If, "a picture is worth a thousand words", I have a few left. I have confidence in my memories, all.

Characters mentioned have vanished.

Thanks Cousins for the gift.

Love,

Sonny and family

Dear Cousins,

Back to the saga of the baby farm hands...

Mr. and Mrs. Roebing took us under their wings. Made us feel at home. We were lucky to have a boss like we did.

This young man was a U.G.A. graduate, with a major in agriculture. He was exempt from the draft, due to being an essential farm worker. Each day he scheduled work for us. One group had simple duties like picking peas, beans and other vegetables. The other two or three would be assigned to more complicated duties, that he could train us on a one-to-one basis. Jobs like taking care of chickens. Feeding, gathering eggs, cleaning pens. There were two chicken houses, one for fryers, and the other for eggers.

We learned to clean animal stalls, load manure on a mule drawn wagon, take it to the spreader, which was pulled by a tractor. Each of us learned how to operate the spreader, I was first. To do this job, it was messy. This story is not over yet.

Mrs. Roebing, a fine genteel woman, with no other woman on the island, she was lonesome for female friendship. This came naturally; she had all the tools necessary. Veggies, fruits, melons, eggs and soon she didn't need tools. She was a very nice, well-educated, interesting lady. However these items were rationed during the war, they were extremely appreciated!

One day, she was talking to one of these ladies, who lived on the bluff. A question came up, "Eight white kids were on the boat going to work, when the boat returned, there were seven white kids and one black kid?"

We soon figured out who the black one was. It was me, after working on that darn spreader!

Other chores included, canning veggies, the girls job. Processing chickens, a hundred or more at a time. There was a circular device, like an old clothesline. Chickens were hung up by their feet. The device was manually turned to the next station. The chickens, wings flapping, trying to fly, they didn't like it at all.

I was assigned with this job several times. "Heading Station Attendant", off with the heads, falling in a bucket, blood spraying everywhere, another messy job. But it didn't have the stink of the spreader job.

The two Roebling kids, our age, worked right along with us the entire summer. They knew the work and helped teach us. We must have done a good job; we were called back for the second summer.

Mrs. Roebling remained good friends with the bluff ladies. She made several visits every week, for years.

"All work and no play!" but not in this case. Everyday, lunchtime was an hour. We had bareback rodeos on the donkeys. This was fun, even though we would often be bucked over the fence. Donkeys were used with horses to make mules, so we were told.

We turned a section of a pasture into a softball field, the cows provided bases. We often played boys against girls. We made our own rules. One was, "No sliding into bases." The balls and bats were provided.

What we did with the big money we made. A dollar a day, minus money used at the company store. Cokes, peanut-butter crackers, we soon learned to bring our sandwiches and drink water, to get our full five dollars at the end of the week.

Most of us would catch the streetcar Saturday morning. First stop was Tanners on Broughton, for a big glass of OJ, and free big, redskin peanuts. They were in a big bowl on the bar. Somehow handfuls of these nuts fell into our pockets. We were now ready for the "Double-Features".

We all liked Cowboys and Indians. There were four movie houses up-town, the Bijou, the Odeon and the Lucas, all on or near Broughton. The Savannah was a couple of blocks away. Movie tickets went for 10 or 15 cents. Orange juice-10 cents.

Next, in the 1951 photo, Brady boat-works. I will tell of my memories of that time...

Thanks to my Cousins, who appreciate hearing old tales of Isle of Hope...

Love,
Sonny & Family

To our Cousins, "The Barbee's Story"...

I will start off with an article that was in the local newspaper called, "The Islands Close-up", printed December 15th, 1988.

The Barbee's salt water swimming pool was located next to the southside of the pavilion. This pool was fenced in by wooden boards on three sides. It had a large deck on the top end. Mr. Alexander Barbee called it "Where the pretty girls go!" A small fee was charged...

There was the terrapin operation, where the family raised that special species of land turtle for commercial purposes. Some of the meat was sold fresh, some in cans; it made delicious terrapin soup. An Evening Press editorial in 1958 noted that "famed palates, from those of presidents of the United States to epicures in prominent but less exalted positions, have known the delight of terrapin a la Barbee."

After the pool fell into disuse for swimmers, the family kept terrapins in it. A fascinating pastime was to drive to the pavilion, buy a soft drink or an ice cream cone, then stroll out and watch the terrapins in the old pool.

So many things happened at Barbee's. The Isle of Hope streetcar line from Savannah terminated at the pavilion. In good weather, the power company put an open-sided trolley car on the Isle of Hope line. You boarded it with your best girl at the moment (in those days, young people dated around) and enjoyed the ride that crossed the Muny golf course and Sandfly on the way to the bluff.

Alighting at the pavilion, you and your best girl went in to eat snacks or dance; occasionally to roller skate, depending upon whether at the time the Barbee's were using the dance floor for a skating rink.

Dances there were magnificent. Jan Garber's band was among those to play there. There was a nickelodeon on the premises, tuneful ancestor of the jukebox. And "nickel" was the right prefix--that's all it cost to call up a dance record.

Families sometimes rented the pavilion for private parties. It had so many uses. In the late 50's and early 60's, the Little Theatre staged one musical production there each summer. "Destry Rides Again," "South Pacific," "Can-Can," were some of them, performed "in the round" with special stage lighting that challenged the LT's backstage volunteers, who were better accustomed to working in their permanent quarters. Each production, the audience would see the crew moving silently in the background, adjusting this spot or that one, dimming a light here, intensifying another there, striving continuously throughout the two week stand for lighting perfection.

What, though, brought on Barbee's? The property on the bluff wasn't always owned by the family, but, before the Barbees bought it, by Savannah Electric, operator of the local transit system until selling its buses to new-formed Savannah Transit Co. in the 1960's, streetcar lines have been discontinued shortly after WWII.

The property across the road from the pavilion site, on which residences

now stand, was first a railroad yard, owned by George Parsons Sons, operators of the Savannah, Thunderbolt & Isle of Hope Steam Railroad.

Alexander M. Barbee moved in 1888 to a little house in the vicinity of the railroad and formed an association with the Parsons family that continues to this day through his grandson. Alexander Barbee first became acquainted with the Parsons when he drove horse cars from the Savannah City Market to Thunderbolt.

In 1890 he built a little store in the vicinity of the railroad yard, and then conceived the idea of moving his business out over the water, of course with permission of the property's owners.

Barbee rolled his little store across the road to what would have been its permanent location had not a fire in 1902 destroyed it. Next year, Barbee launched a rebuilding program and constructed the pavilion as part of the new "Barbee's" according to an account in News-Press files.

Alexander Barbee developed a recreational center that became known beyond the bounds of Chatham County. His terrapin farm (which closed in 1968) evolved, and the story persists that he knew terrapins as well as he understood the mood of a public seeking recreation. Once, knowing precisely when a certain terrapin named Toby was to lay an egg. Alexander Barbee demonstrated that by handling the terrapin to the famed William Jennings Bryan, the turtle obligingly laying an egg in the palm of Bryan's hand.

As a teenager, William M. Barbee joined his father in the business and assisted in further developing the entertainment center, which added dining to its customer services. When William Barbee reached 21, he became a partner, and the business became A. M. Barbee & Son.

The elder Barbee died in 1929, and his son assumed sole management, continuing an association with the Parsons family. Daughter Gertrude Magee now lives in Florida, her younger sister, Ann McIntyre, still holding forth on the Isle of Hope.

The younger Barbee, known affectionately as "Mr. Willie", ran the pavilion with the help of his beloved wife, the former Rose Lasky of Savannah, who survives him. In 1945, he acquired ownership of the property from its then-owners, Savannah Electric.

His son, Alexander W. Barbee, became the 3rd generation to enter the business and operated the pavilion and terrapin enterprise for another 10 years after "Mr. Willie's" death in 1958. Grandson Alex now wears the diamond terrapin on a stickpin his father inherited from the elder Alexander.

The property was leased to the then-operators of Brady's Boat Works in 1968, and ultimately the pavilion was razed, the swimming pool filled in. Before "Mr. Willie" died, he gave to Isle of Hope for use as a public park the land on which the amusement park operated near the pavilion.

The third generation Alex Barbee, grandson of Alexander M., still maintains the family's association with the Parsons as manager of Wassaw Island and other properties of the Parsons family. Like his father and grandfather, the younger Alex Barbee became an expert on terrapins.

Savannahians who reminisce about Barbee's recall days when the pavilion was leased as a training site for such bigtime boxers as Philadelphia Jack O'Brien, Danny Dougherty and George Munroe. They recall puzzlement over Jack Dempsey's personal appearance there and his failing to draw a capacity crowd, though at the height of his boxing career. Part 4 will be along shortly...

They recall marathon dances, the roller-skating and the Little Theatre plays.

Mostly, though, they recall their own good times, whether at a Saturday night dance or on a casual stop to buy the delicious ice cream that the Barbee family made and scooped up into tasty cake cones.

They recall conversations with Mr. Willie and Rose, who themselves would recall earlier days and would tell interesting stories of life at the Isle of Hope.

Gone now is Barbee's. An afternoon ride along the bluff imparts an eerie sensation to those who remember. That something-is-missing feeling wells up inside. A link from the past is gone.

Gone indeed. Forgotten? Never!...(End of article)

This was a good article, however, I don't agree on some of the facts. One was, the diamond back terrapin is a land turtle. They live in the salt marsh. You can see them sunning on banks and mud flats. They laid eggs on land just above the high water mark, usually a dozen or so at a time.

The terrapin farm was more for show. The terrapins used for meat, soup, etc. were caught in the wild, using nets. They were brought up to the docks, live, then slaughtered. Meat in one bucket, shells in another. Shells were sold as souvenirs. Live hatch-lings were also sold with children's names on their backs. These were 25 cents each.

William Jennings Bryan's turtle, having an egg laid in his hand? I don't believe it was an egg! All turtles, when they find the right spot, they can't stop until all eggs are laid.

I have seen this happen in the sand dunes on the beach. They cry, tears

running down their faces...

Love,
Sonny & Family

To my favorite cousins, and others...

Mister William Barbee and Mrs. Rose Barbee announced the birth of a son on Valentine's Day, 1929. They were excited that a son would continue the Barbee tradition. Three weeks earlier, my parents, and all grandparents announced the birth of their first child and grandson. The Nation went into the Great Depression, that year.

We were fortunate; our parents had work during that time. Dad was a Postal worker, the Barbee's had their enterprise.

A few years later, Alex went to Catholic schools and then went to Benedictine. Jack, Nan and I went to the little old Isle of Hope Elementary, later to Jr. and Savannah High.

The little two-room school was located at Parkersburg and Central Ave. The first through third grades were taught by Mrs. Harmon. Forth through sixth by Mrs. Downing, the Principal. When I reached Jr. High, I quickly learned that I didn't learn as much as my fellow students from other schools. Alex and I became friends when we were around six years of age. We remained friends until he died several years ago. Alex's Father, Mr. Willie, had a shed built opposite the pavilion, in the area where the streetcar ended.

Then came Alex's pony. He would ride almost daily. Kids our age ran after him hoping for a ride, we never got one. However, we learned to run long and fast.

He and I played at each other's homes. His family lived on the second floor, right side of the building. On the left side was a large sized room, used to store items like labels, cans, etc., for canning terrapin meat or stew. Also his electric train, a very large set-up, we played for hours.

As we got in our teens, we hunted ducks in winter, on the river, and trips to Wassaw, in the summer.

A Boy Scout Troop 79 was established on the island. We were of the age to join, as well as a number of local boys. We learned quite a lot the first year or so. One of these probably saved my life.

One summer, Mr. Willie, custodian of Wassaw, arranged to have a yacht take us to Wassaw. Alex, Bucky Locket, and I arrived. We unloaded our provisions and the yacht left. The only resident there was the caretaker, Charlie Polite, he was up in age. On every trip Mr. Willie sent a 6-pack to

Charlie, he was glad to see us. He cranked up the generator, put us up in the "big house" we had electricity, we settled in.

With a couple of hours of daylight left, Bucky and I decided to walk down to the beach. One of Charlie's cats followed us. About a half-mile away, I stepped on something I thought it was a cat. Pain hit me in my right foot, looked down and saw a snake hanging on my foot. I shook it off, it disappeared into the brush. It was a rattler!

We ran back to the house, wrong thing to do, but we knew a tourniquet had to be applied as soon as possible. Bucky, Alex, and Charlie helped take off my shoe. One fang penetrated the shoe tongue, the other into bare flesh. The tourniquet was tightly applied just above the knee. With a small knife, sterilized, by fire from a match, cutting began. I started it, with X's cutting deeply into flesh. Blood and some black venom came out; this was the time I passed out.

Next thing in my memory, was waking up sick at my stomach, vomiting. There was a little pain in the leg, but it was swollen three times its normal size. We had no outside communication. We were the only people on Wassaw.

The closest humans were several miles away on another island. They were game wardens for that area. Two brothers equipped with radio communication to the mainland. Charlie had a rowboat at the dock. I was loaded in a wheelbarrow down to the dock. Charlie rowed to the game wardens. They radioed to Thunderbolt. Their powerboat rushed me there. On arrival an ambulance, as well as my Mother, were there waiting. They helped me get into her car and to the hospital we went. I got anti-venom shots and foot pumped out. Swelling was reduced; I was released that afternoon.

Odd things happened shortly after this. The game warden brothers disappeared, they were never found. Alex and Bucky blamed each other for saving my life.

I always said, "He bit me and HE died!" I'm sure he is dead, 70 years later!

Love,
Sonny and Family

This Thanksgiving reminds me of the one in 1943. We were at war on two fronts. We had a leader, Franklin Roosevelt, as he sat in his wheelchair, which he tried to hide from the media.

He put his free country in tremendous debt. Taxpayers were told it would take years to pay off. This was the greatest generation, we were Americans. Not republicans or Democrats or selfish protesters. We had to fight, work hard to keep our freedom. Ships had to be built. Auto factories made tanks, trucks, anything to help the war effort. Our parents worked in the shipyard 7 days a week, also our Grandparents. Uncle Phillip and Aunt Marg, went into the service.

Poppa Mac was the timekeeper in the last part of the story...

In 1943 rationing was in full effect, food, gas, and other commodities were in effect. Sugar was on the list; each family was issued ration coupons. If I remember, a family was allowed one five-pound bag of sugar a month.

Sugar was not important to most Isle of Hope families, after this incident. The sugar boat incident: Once a week, the Savannah sugar plant would send a vessel south, loaded with five pound bags of sugar heavily loaded on the aft-deck. We knew it was coming because of the particular sound of the engine.

On this occasion, it came around the bend, out of control, on fire in the wheelhouse and the engine room. It crashed into a public dock at the end of Rose Ave.

The fire dept. was called. The only dept. was in Savannah. It took them an hour to arrive. In the meantime, we decided we couldn't let all that sugar go down with the ship. We later learned, the crew jumped ship and swam to shore.

We formed a sugar brigade. Two boys jumped on the aft-deck throwing bags to people on the dock. They passed them along and built a sugar mound, about five foot tall.

When the firemen arrived, the sugar was gone. The boat was about gone too. They pulled hoses down to the end of the dock. Two firemen ran down the dock with a hose, one signaled to turn the water on, and he did. The pressure knocked the firemen off the dock, into the mud. Most of Isle of Hope people didn't need sugar coupons for the rest of the war.

The other visiting boat was the porgy boat, also on a weekly schedule. It was filled with porgy fish, un-refrigerated, to be delivered to fertilizer factories in Savannah. This we knew, not by sound, but by odor. They came up from the south, with south winds; we knew it was on the way. A slow boat, depending on the velocity of the south breeze, we knew when to close windows and stay inside.

This Thanksgiving reminds me of another time. Still in the 1940's. There

were no turkeys; we were lucky to buy a chicken from a local farm. My brother Jack saved the day. He came home with a monkey! My question was, "what in the hell are we going to do with it"? This was not a little one, he was about 40 lbs.

We had no idea how to prepare him to be our Thanksgiving monkey. Mom had a number of cookbooks, no monkey recipes there. The oven was also too small.

Our house was built about six feet off the ground. An old coal bin had been converted to a pigeon coop. This would be the place to keep him.

He did well for a few days, but he wanted to get out. Shaking the door kept Dad awake at night. After a few nights, one morning we found the door wide open, monkey gone. We started searching the neighborhood. The neighbors directed us to the Methodist church. Here was our buddy on top, hanging on the cross, playing King Kong!

The authorities were called. They took care of the situation. They also rounded up the rest of the monkeys. We found later these monkeys were left on Burn Pot Island, to live on their own. Burn Pot is the first island south, on the opposite side of the river.

They came from Johnny Harris restaurant, at that time there a curb service behind the restaurant. We occasionally visited having a hamburger and seeing the monkeys in their cages. About two dozen of them. Some time later the ownership changed, the curb service ended, the monkeys were retired...So we were told...

Love to all,

Sonny and family

I feel like I'm being selfish going back seventy or more years of my memory. My aches and pains go away and I feel stronger. Like a dream that I sometimes have. In this dream, I can walk normally, can walk fast and sometimes can run. In a real good dream, I can fly.

I am going back to my first memory. We lived in the old McTeer house on the bluff. It was in the location where number 21 is now.

My first Christmas present was a new, bright red pedal fire truck. I was about five. I couldn't drive it in the yard, but the paved bluff drive was excellent. My Mom sat on the front porch watching out for me.

Then in the mornings I rode back and forth, 2 lots down and 2 back. I met some nice people passing by. The Grimble Point kids walking to catch their school bus, at the end of Parkersburg. They were going to the only colored high school in Savannah. We developed a special friendship, as they passed

we joked and told stories.

One morning, the kids came by, I was doing my favorite thing. One of the boys said, "You know you have a flat tire?" I jumped off my fire engine and ran up to my Mom. I was very upset and told her of the problem. She said, "Don't worry, it's April Fool's day!"

Our Mother, Martha Kinsey, "Slim" and Father Julius McLaughlin, "Jukey", were children of parents who went back to the late eighteenth centuries on Isle of Hope. When they were young adults, other young people formed a group. This group did the following things together.

On weekends they sailed to Warsaw on a big sailboat with Chief Benou, who lived on the bluff at the end of LeRoache. The group took picnic lunches to have on the beach. Other times they took the streetcar to town, then caught the train to Tybee. At that time there wasn't a road there. Sometimes they took they took the streetcar to see silent movies.

They fell in love and wanted to marry, they had one big problem, the church's difference between Catholic and Episcopal. Both families were very religious. Dad knew he would have to leave the church. After a lot of serious thinking, they decided it had to happen.

They ran away to Ridgeland, S.C. This was the place to go for quick marriages, and still is.

Pat Paderewski, one of the group members, later a very prominent dentist, had a relative working in the Ridgeland courthouse. He called Pat, the news was out. When Mom and Dad came back, Pat was running down the bluff yelling the news, everyone knew! The surprise was gone.

Some years later, Dad and I were fishing near the north end of the bluff. We heard Pat in his fancy speedboat on his way back to his dock. He saw us, picked up a string of nice-sized trout, about two dozen or so. He held it over the side of the boat taunting us. The bottom fish on the string slipped off and slowly the rest of them fell in the water. I will always remember the look on his face as he sped up and went home. We both had to laugh!

Next I will write about the old McLaughlin house eighty years ago....

To our Cousins and others...

I'll take my memory back almost 80 years. The present house at 15 Bluff Drive was known as the "McLaughlin house on the bluff". Mail was delivered to mail boxes identified by name only, no zips, no street names. I.O.H., Sav, GA was only the necessary identification needed.

This house with the "Gingerbread" and the porch running around it was easily recognized. Back then everyone knew everyone and most of their

business too. A big green swing was located up the front stairs, near the front door. The three of us kids loved that swing and used it for hours, in the cool breeze coming off the river. Second best was swinging on the Wisteria vines out by the road and covering most of the front yard. I remember the spring blooming of the Wisteria as well as the large Japanese Magnolia up by the front steps.

Across the road was our swimming hole. Leading to the water were stone steps. Dad had a big rope swing hanging between two pilings. Sometime 6 or 8 people would be sitting there on near high tide. Marg and her friends from town would swim with us on the weekends. The three of us kids learned to swim at a very young age. Our good friend, Anna Beckman, had the kindergarten on the island and held swimming lessons for her pupils here.

A few years later, I was about 10 or 12, Dad would send me down to Barbee's to get a couple Eslinger beers, 2 for a nickel and Mom a coke, called a dope in those days. He always seemed to have empty bottles in the car. Bottle coke was a nickel.

Back to the house--

Front steps to front door. First floor, hallway led to upstairs on the left. To the front left was a large room which covered from the front to the back of the house. This is where formal dining was held. On special occasions, holidays, etc. Christmas and Thanksgiving, a big turkey, ham, or both were on the table. There was a large table with seating for 10 or 12, with high-chairs for the kids. A model "Sail-ship" was on a shelf on the south wall, it was about two feet long. We were told it was built by Uncle Frank. There was always a big gathering of Family, Aunts and Uncles. On one occasion, I couldn't eat all on my plate and "Poppa Mac" told me, "Your eyes are bigger than your stomach!"

On every occasion, a plum pudding was served, a specialty of Moma Mac's. Everyone bragged about how good it was. I was too young to enjoy it. Moma Mac had a very good helper, named Dealia. She lived in Sandfly and came to work on the streetcar every day. She was with Grandmother for many, many years. She called Grandmother "Miss Maisey", so did some family and friends.

On the other side of the house was the front room. It was used mostly during winter a big fireplace was in the back, right side of the room. Behind that was the everyday dining room. This reminds me of watching Moma Mac, at the table, checking the grocery receipt, after going to town.

When I was older, and big enough to carry bags of groceries, I would take the streetcar with Moma Mac and Dealia to town. Dealia always sat in the back seat, I often wondered why. We got off on Broughton Street,

walked several blocks West. We shopped at the Groceteria and the "City Market" for vegetables. Each of us, carrying 2 bags, would walk back down to catch our ride back home.

We would check out the department stores' show windows. One day, I spotted a toy racecar in one of the windows. I wanted it badly, but it cost too much. Every time we went, I stopped to admire that racecar. I got so attached to it, they wanted to walk on the opposite side of the street. I resisted, so they let me have my way.

Time went by and Christmas came. Under the tree was a box with my name on it. You can imagine what was in it. It was the best present I ever had! I played with it for years.

The kitchen was in the back, far right. I remember the large, black, wood-burning cast-iron stove along the back wall, in the right corner. On the opposite wall was the sink. My Dad put a window in that wall, so a view of the river could be seen. A door to the left led to a screened-in section of the porch. It was used to store non-perishable food and other items.

Beyond this were the backstairs and the back doors of the house. A small room on the porch was always wet. It had a pull-cord light, when you turned it on you got a heck of a shock! The small room, just inside the backdoor, at that time, was used as a passageway.

Later on, when Poppa Mac couldn't use the upstairs, a bed was put in there for his final days. My Dad was frequently called down to help with him. Some time I went with him. It seemed like every time we went, he had lost another section of his leg. I was in my late 20's or early 30's. It was the saddest time of my young life.

He knew what was coming, but surprisingly he was in the "good McLaughlin" spirit!

NEXT: I will do the upstairs and the backyard!

Back to the No. 15 Bluff Drive. My mistake was the price of the "Eslinger" beer. Although not a premium, it was worth more than I quoted, "2 for a nickel". Actual price was 2 for a quarter!

I had planned to make this my last letter, then I received an email from Lisa Bogard, after the last story, she and her brother, Rick Fletcher enjoyed the Isle of Hope stories and they said something to the fact that they would like more. I guess I'm the only one left to do that, so the saga goes on.

Lisa and Rick's mother was our mother's sister and niece, I'll explain later...Back to the story...

Up the stairs to the second floor, to the front was a small door which opened to the deck on the roof. The floor was actual roofing that covered a portion of the downstairs porch. It had nice looking railing that matched the house. It was nice to sit on this deck. Nice breeze and a good place for viewing the surroundings, but when the sun hit it, the floor burned our feet and we got out!

The door to the right was the grandparents' bedroom. This room and the back boys' room were about the same size. They covered the entire half of the south-side of the upstairs. It was nicely furnished and included was a crib and a youth bed. They would babysit me; I was about three or four.

Barbee's, at that time, was buzzing with big bands, dancing and shows on summer weekends. I remember getting put to bed before dark and having trouble going to sleep. Traffic was heavy and loud music from the pavilion. I was later told that during some of those dances, the palmetto trees would sway with the music.

The boys' bedroom had four single beds lined up on the inner wall. This was in 1932 or 1933. Uncles Frank and Phillip were there. A big graduation picture was on the south wall. I was told it was my Dad's.

Sailing, in Savannah, was centered in the Isle of Hope River at this time. Later, it moved to the Wilmington River. Sailboats competed in two classes. Most popular now called lighting class. Boats in this class were about 15 or 16 feet in length. Frank and Phillip wanted to get into the larger class, so they built their boat in the backyard. Without modern materials, such as fiberglass, materials were limited to wood, canvas and a lot of paint. A wooden frame was constructed, with a slot for the centerboard. Then, the deck and bottom was covered with canvas. Many, many coats of paint were applied. Here another ingredient was a must, "patience", waiting for each coat to dry.

They were lucky to have a sail maker on the island. He worked with them to make the best sails for their boat. Finally, ready to race! They named it the "Flirt". The only other boat in this class was owned by the Ross family, on the south end of the bluff, it was called the "Demon". Every week, for a couple of years, they raced. It was exciting, watching from the riverbank. Twenty or so smaller craft and then came the two larger class, the "Flirt" and the "Demon". I don't ever remember the "Flirt" ever winning, but that was not the point.

The bedroom on the back north side was occupied by "Uncle Teddy", at that early time. I was told that he was related to the family, either to Moma or Poppa Mac. I never saw him out of bed and on another visit he was gone.

I believe Frank was next to occupy this room.

The front bedroom was Marg's. It was furnished with a ladies decor, windows covered with colorful, lacy material. In the early spring, you had a beautiful view of the blossoming of Japanese Magnolia.

Later, Marg took us kids crabbing. There was always an old bateau down on the bank. Oars were kept in the "Delco" house, which was used to generate electricity years before. A big washtub, packed with crab-lines. The bait was chicken necks..."Don't forget the scoop net!"

The tide was nearly low as she rowed directly across the river. She taught us how to feel crabs on the line, how to pull them up slowly and how to scoop them up with the net. We were catching big male crabs, two or three at a time. Didn't take long to fill that big tub.

When we got home, Dealia had a big wood fire going in the back yard. Water and salt were added and the tub was put on the fire. The crabs didn't like it at all and tried to get out. We had plenty of crabs for all and Dealia took some home too.

A few years later when, "Gone With the Wind" came to Savannah, she took all three of us kids to see it. We always had good times at that old house and we miss them and the beautiful family.

See you next time...Love,
Sonny