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Weather



TODAY:
SUNNY

HIGH OF 2
LOW OF -3



TUESDAY:
SNOW OR RAIN

HIGH OF 4
LOW OF -9



WEDNESDAY:
SUNNY

HIGH OF 0
LOW OF -10



THURSDAY:
SNOW OR RAIN

HIGH OF 3
LOW OF 2



FRIDAY:
PERIODS OF RAIN

HIGH OF 10
LOW OF -2

Hometown legends of my childhood surface in my mind



THE SCOOP

MABLE HASTINGS

Television and news feeds are inundated with Corona virus and Covid-19 reports and the dismal sharing of dread and doom found me, on this sunny Saturday morning looking for a diversion from it all. Sitting and facing my still damp keyboard and computer screen only moments ago wiped down with disinfectant, my mind begins to wander. Initially asking myself, "What will I write about this week," only to feel a tugging of nostalgia and vague memory at my heart and mind.

I am walking up the country road less than half a mile from my home toward the Miltimore Family Cemetary where only someone who knows about the small site of stones representing the history of one family would even think to glance. Just beyond the ditch, up past the "prickly" bushes, the small graveyard sits. I suspect it is rarely visited and likely few give it a second thought.

In my mind I am a teen again meeting up with William (Pete) Miltimore on the streets of Mansonville. He was born in 1913 and likely appeared to most as a recluse. He fascinated me. I say hello and he answers; he is not friendly but nor is he rude. In my mind I reflect on the stories told by my family and I wonder about this man's life. Did he truly have the rinds of side pork tucked behind his ears to chew upon like bubblegum when he had the inkling? Mr. Miltimore died in 1989 and while I never got to know him, he has remained with me for over thirty years.

Raised in a family of story tellers and self proclaimed musicians and songwriters, the legends of my youth tumble forward into my mind as if they'd been awaiting the invitation.



The Schoolcraft twins on either side and my Uncle "Clint" in their youth, where legends and stories were born.

Gordon Newell who was affectionately nicknamed, Batman. Born in 1929, I remember my Mom telling me that Mr. Newell had once been a famous and prosperous inventor. Watching him as a kid, riding up and down the roads on a failing bicycle wearing a garbage bag as a cape, I wondered if the story as told by my Mom was true. Gordon died in 2006 while living in the Knowlton House, taking his legend with him and leaving me to ponder fact from fiction.

Clyde Schoolcraft born in 1902 was another mystery to me. He offered my siblings and me peppermints that were dug from his pocket trapped in lint, tobacco and time. We were always told not to eat them but I did and you know what; they tasted pretty darn good. Mr. Schoolcraft died in 1986 and his sweet wife, Stella followed a year later.

In honesty, when it comes to Mable's people of legend, I boast a family of unique, odd and precious candidates that I hold dear to my heart who were as diverse and wonderful as those mentioned above.

In a past article reflecting on "climbing my family tree," I spoke about my Great Uncles, Joe and Ira Brown (my Grandmother Etta Bell Brown's brothers). These two men stood a meagre four foot something in height, spoke much like leprechauns might and while both were shy and reserved, their weekly jaunts into Mansonville from

their home on Peabody Road found them tipping their hats at the ladies and patting the heads of every child they met; ours included. They would arrive at our home each week with a treat for the kiddies, a caravan chocolate bar and a bottle of John Collins soft drink for the adults. Uncle Joe died in 1970 and Uncle Ira in 1991.

Two of the last true legends of my childhood were my mother's youngest brother, Colon Clinton Davis who passed away in 1992. Pickled drunk and a heavy smoker for most of his life, Uncle "Clint," frequented many neighbour's homes, far and wide with his guitar (Old Betsy) flung over his shoulder, a cigarette stub dangling from his lip and a handful of hope for a beverage or a meal at each stop along his path. He was glad to sing for his supper although that remained undefined as pleasure or pain to the listener.

Dexter Davis, (Uncle Dick) passed away in 2001 taking with him the person we all strived to be. A man true to his word who taught some of us how to shoot a 22, others how to bake the best baking powder biscuits and apple pie crust and the techniques for survival in almost any situation.

I feel a great sense of gratitude to these people who have left my memory richer and my imagination still active all these years later.

Ben by Daniel Shelton

