



**Waller Funeral Home**  
"An Oxford Tradition"

# SEASONS

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Summer 2008  
Volume XXV, No. 3

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## HAPPY MEMORIES

As we get older, we have more time and inclination to enjoy the happy memories of times passed. But the bank is not full, and we have opportunities to add to the storehouse. I have had occasions this summer to store more precious keepsakes in my heart and also to recall precious days of the past.

On Friday, July 4, the family gathered at the home of my sister Ava and her husband Ed Bonds. What a crowd—my and Don's children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren along with Ava and Ed's children and grandchildren with a few cousins and friends sprinkled in for good measure. The circle for the blessing wove in and out of two rooms. There was such an abundance of food that Ed brought in a table from outside.

During the meal and afterward from a choice, out-of-the-way chair, I watched the crowd, especially the children, as they interacted. I watched two little girls take Grayson Bonds (who is almost three and is like a China doll with blond ringlets and always a hair ribbon) under their wings and guide her to their play area. Ava's other three grandchildren, three tow-headed boys, surfaced from their outside play from time to time. Our great-grands found bosom buddies among their little cousins several times removed.

The day after the glorious 4th, our entire family went to be with the Jackson Wallers at Bill Waller's cabin on Lake Kic-A-Poo. All of Bill and Carroll's children and grandchildren

*The heart, like the mind, has  
its own memories and in it  
are stored the precious  
keepsakes.*

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

were there. Their four daughters-in-law had planned and coordinated a bountiful meal, and my daughters and I took some fill-in-dishes. We gathered on the front porch for the family circle blessing. It came to me that it isn't necessary for me (with my hearing impairment) to hear what is being said. I can feel God's presence in the spirit of the gathering. I am grateful for the peace and harmony that exists throughout the family.

Again I watched the children playing, with the older ones sheltering and caring for the younger ones. I smiled as I saw 3 1/2-year-old Waller and 2 1/2-year-old Houston being carried by their Waller cousins. Six-year-old Murphy Grace found and played happily in her own niche in the crowd. Brother Ed Briscoe could have told me the degree of kinship of the cousins. Later the children donned their swimsuits, the younger ones in life jackets, to swim in the beautiful lake. A pier served as a perfect diving board, and the small beach added another pleasure to the special play. The mothers went along to watch over the activities and got in some good visiting. When the crowd trooped back to the cabin, trays of

brownies and individual boxes of ice cream hit the spot. Although "Great Aunt Patsy" can't always call the names of each child, I know to which family they belong.

As I watched the children at play, I remembered the summers Bill and Carroll's children spent at Clear Creek in the more carefree days when children could be allowed hours of freedom to roam the hills, play in gullies, climb trees, swim in the "crick," and swing on grapevines, entertaining themselves without watching television or playing computer games. I enjoy listening to the generation of our children telling their own tales of "remember when."

Another reunion is planned after this writing in Jackson with Don's first cousins of his mother's family who will come from Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and North Carolina. My memories include many such reunions.

Don's mother was the oldest of ten children. In the early and mid-fifties her brothers and sisters would come with their families for times of reunion at Grandmother and Granddaddy Waller's house. My, oh! the cooking that went into those days! In the earliest days of my marriage I did not realize the tremendous amount of work which fell on Grandmother Waller. In time she began to share some of this with me. I made cookies by the gallon jug and cakes and pies to freeze in preparation for the days of company. The cousins will relive these happy days at this summer's reunion. Someone will

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## HAPPY MEMORIES

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surely tell tales of Uncle Charlie, who was quite a character to be reckoned with until the time of death at age 89.

Homecoming at Clear Creek Baptist Church has provided lasting happy memories. On September 7 we will again gather for this occasion at the 172-year-old church. My mind drifts back to 1950 when I attended my first of these homecomings as an eighteen-year-old. I was thrilled that Don had invited me. I fell in love with the event and this love has grown deeper as the years have passed.

These homecomings have changed, moving from out on the hillside beneath the big trees into the inside comfort of air conditioning. I wish my great-grandchildren could experience drinking ice water from the big barrels provided by Mr. Byron Locke and later by A. T. Bunch. Invariably a small mud puddle would form beneath the spout of the barrel. The children would persuade their parents to let them take off their shoes to feel the mud squish between their toes. Some families brought playpens and highchairs. Others spread quilts for their babies. I was thrilled when Don and I had children, then grandchildren, then great-grandchildren to add to the joy of this wonderful day.

In the 50's people came early in the week before Homecoming and lingered on into the week following. Life it seems moved at a slower pace so people could spend more time visiting family and friends.

For Homecoming women cooked at their best with platters and platters of fried chicken and country ham. I always spread my food in a hurry and then went from table to table for my favorite things including Marjy Hewlett and Miss Dorothy Shipp's from scratch coconut cake made by Miss Dorothy's 1-2-3-4 recipe and Ms. Ruby Landreth's fried apricot pies.

Traditionally Homecoming has been on the Sunday before Labor Day—a date established long years ago to allow travelers to come on a long weekend. Some of us here at home wished for a different date so we could use that long weekend as a time for a short retreat with our children before school began, but Mr. Bud and Miss Annie McElroy remained

unmoved by our pleas for a change.

I treasure my home movies of these Homecoming days. Years ago I had these little Super 8 tapes transferred and combined on VCR tapes. Friends have borrowed these to enjoy seeing their relatives and themselves at Homecomings in the past.

I feel the importance of passing our memories on to future generations. These days I am walking through our house recording on cassette tapes (which I am having transcribed) the background of pieces of furniture and other items which have been handed down through our families. Few of the pieces have much monetary value but the memories of individuals and their lives are priceless.

I recently came upon notes I had made from talking with Don's parents and my parents in which they shared the information about the personalities of their parents and their memories of their lives from early times through their marriages and rearing of their families. I find these thoughts endearing and I will include them in the records I will leave for my children and their children.

In my log cabin, which my family has dubbed "Mama's Museum," I have collected a variety of things which tell of lifestyles long passed. Among many items included are a cotton sack, a lard can, sausage mills, dishpans, wash pans, dippers, a milk strainer, butter molds, and ice trays. I am numbering these items and I will tell on tape what each is and how it was used. My generation may be the last to know the importance of these items in the past. I love the memories these items bring to me.

Also in the cabin I have placed clothes that are special. Among these are my daughters' last "little-girl" Easter dresses and hats, my wedding dress and Don's navy blue wedding suit, the clothes each of us wore for Don's brother Bill's inauguration as governor in 1972, one of my mother's and of Don's mother's last dresses, boxes of my hats from the days when ladies always wore hats to church. Even now our children and Ava enjoy touring the museum and recalling the days these clothes represent. Our son Andy has promised to move the cabin to his yard when I am gone.

My memories are not all of people

and possessions. I can close my eyes and picture a family of geese gliding across the lake with one parent goose leading the way, followed by five little goslings with another parent bringing up the rear. I like the memory of the cows silently grazing in the early morning with little calves on their wobbly legs nursing.

Etched now in my memory is a scene from the dusky quietness at the end of a recent day. As I walked to the kitchen window and looked out into the yard, I was spellbound. There sat a small rabbit with a squirrel just a few feet away. They exchanged quick looks then the rabbit hopped away just a bit. He turned to look at the squirrel and the squirrel scooted a little closer. They seemed to be measuring each other up. The rabbit then began hopping away, and the squirrel ran behind him. Then came a game of chase and catch-me-if-you-can. I was filled with awe. A warm, fuzzy feeling enveloped me. I knew what I had seen, nevertheless, it seemed unreal. I felt God had given me a glimpse into the kingdom of small animals.

At the funeral home we encourage families to bring pictures and other special memorabilia to share during visitation. We also prepare a video presentation, "A Life Remembered," if the family provides photographs. We note the sharing of memories that takes place among families and friends as records of the past are viewed. There is something touching about pictures of the deceased taken when they were young when they have lived into their 80's or 90's. When we fail to memorialize one we loved, we are depriving ourselves of a time of healing.

We are thankful for our happy memories. We are also thankful that our children want to share in the times of reunion and create new memories for us all. The bonds of love formed during these times are strong.

I hope your summer has provided opportunities for keepsakes in your heart, both new and old. I hope also that you enjoy sharing and recording your memories for future generations.

*Sincerely,*  
*Patsy*

## VISITATION

Visitation is a traditional part of expressing condolence and concern at the time of death. The practice of scheduling definite hours for visitation is a relatively new practice, developed because of the difficulty of family and friends managing to spend time together in the busy time between a death and funeral service.

Before scheduling began, families usually tried to have family members at the funeral home "around the clock," which was difficult and still did not ensure friends could visit with all family members. At the same time, family members wanted to be available at home for the visitation of friends. Scheduling a definite time, usually two or three hours, has been found to be more satisfactory in most circumstances. Informal home visitation and spontaneous visits to the funeral home are still appropriate and are preferred by some families.

Visitation is often held at the funeral home with the body of the deceased present—with either an open or closed casket depending on circumstances

and preferences. In some situations, visitation is held at a church. Some families still prefer scheduling visitation for the family home.

Visiting with friends and other family members can provide consolation and closure, a time to acknowledge the life and death of a friend or loved one and recognition that the deceased will no longer be a part of the group. By their presence, friends show sorrow for the loss of a loved one and concern for the family. Reminiscing about pleasant experiences involving the deceased is appropriate and consoling. Photograph albums, photographs on an easel, or other memorabilia are appropriate if the family chooses.

Funeral home visitation is usually easier on the family. No extra preparations of home or food are required. Family members can leave when they are tired or upset. Parking is easy and facilities are comfortable, accessible, and spacious.

A warm gathering of friends and family, full of love and remembrance, can be very beneficial to all

concerned.

The personnel of Waller Funeral Home help with the details for visitation and are available on the premises during these times to welcome and assist families and friends.

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## MEMORIES

Grandpa had forgotten all about the team that he was supposed to be drivin', and the horses were takin' every advantage given them. No horse could have gone any slower and still have been puttin' one foot in front of the other. Every now and then Old Bell would reach down and steal a mouthful of grass without really stoppin' to graze. Nellie didn't particularly seem to mind goin' slowly either.

I watched the horses and glanced back at Grandpa, wondering jest how long he was going to put up with the situation. I think he had even forgotten *me*. I could tell that his mind was still mullin' over old memories. Many of them had been happy ones, but they brought sadness now that they were never to be again.

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## WHEN SOMEONE TAKES HIS OWN LIFE

In many ways, this seems the most tragic form of death. Certainly it can entail more shock and grief for those who are left behind than any other. And often the stigma of suicide is what rests most heavily on those left behind.

Suicide is often judged to be essentially a selfish act. Perhaps it is. But the Bible warns us not to judge if we ourselves hope to escape judgment. And I believe this is one area where that Biblical command especially should be heeded.

For do we know how many valiant battles such a person may have fought and won before he loses that one particular battle? And is it fair that all the good acts and impulses of such a person should be forgotten or blotted out by his final tragic act?

I think our reaction should be one of love and pity, not of condemnation. Perhaps the person was not thinking clearly in his final moments; perhaps he was so driven by emotional whirlwinds that he was incapable of thinking at all. This is terribly sad. But

surely it is understandable. All of us have moments when we lose control of ourselves, flashes of temper, of irritation, of selfishness that we later regret. Each one of us probably has a final breaking point—or would have if our faith did not sustain us. Life puts far more pressure on some of us than it does on others. Some people have more stamina than others. When I see in the paper, as I do all too often, that dark despair has rolled over some lonely soul, so much so that for him life seemed unendurable, my reaction is not one of condemnation. It is, rather, "There but for the grace of God ...."

And my heart goes out to those who are left behind, because I know that they suffer terribly. Children in particular are left under a cloud of *differentness* all the more terrifying because it can never be fully explained or lifted. The immediate family of the victim is left wide open to tidal waves of guilt: "What did I fail to do that I should have done? What did I do that was wrong?"

To such grieving persons I can only say, "Lift up your heads and your

hearts. Surely you did your best. And surely the loved one who is gone did his best for as long as he could. Remember now, that his battles and torments are over. Do not judge him and do not presume to fathom the mind of God where this one of His children is concerned."

...

Every twenty-four minutes, in our troubled nation, someone dies by his own hand. It may be fanciful, but I like to think that in the next world these unfortunate people may be given double opportunities for service, and the strength and joy to carry out such tasks. So that for them these lines from a poem by Edwin Markham called *Epitaph* would be appropriate:

*Here now the dust of Edwin  
Markham lies,  
But lo, he is not here, he is afar  
On life's great errands under  
mightier skies  
And pressing on towards some  
melodious star.*

—Dr. Norman Vincent Peale  
*The Healings of Sorrow*

# In Memoriam

We dedicate this issue of *Seasons* to those who died and whose families we served from May 16, 2008, through August 11, 2008.

Mrs. Edna Smith Halloran . . . . .	May 16, 2008
Hayden James Gilbert . . . . .	May 21, 2008
Mrs. Virginia Quarles McCord . . . . .	May 28, 2008
Mrs. Eleanor Strowd Shaw . . . . .	May 28, 2008
Miss Audrey Jane Perry . . . . .	May 28, 2008
Mrs. Sarah Tolson Preston . . . . .	June 1, 2008
Mrs. Arline King Jetton . . . . .	June 4, 2008
Mrs. Peggy Carnahan Nail . . . . .	June 5, 2008
Mr. Larry Dale Walls . . . . .	June 7, 2008
Mr. John B. "J.B." Ray . . . . .	June 8, 2008
Mrs. Beulah Mae Winter . . . . .	June 12, 2008
Mr. Charles Cobb Dempsey . . . . .	June 16, 2008
Mr. Billy Joe Collier . . . . .	June 21, 2008
Mr. Morris P. "Pete" Lansdale . . . . .	June 21, 2008
Mrs. Mary Elizabeth Wait . . . . .	June 21, 2008
Mrs. Wanda Nelson Fox . . . . .	June 21, 2008
Mr. Charlie Kimzey . . . . .	June 22, 2008
Mr. Taylor Hunt Maddux, Jr. . . . .	June 24, 2008
Mrs. Francis Grose Bishop . . . . .	June 26, 2008
Mr. Horace W. Tatum . . . . .	June 28, 2008
Mrs. Rika van de Griend Gispén . . . . .	July 3, 2008
Mrs. Madge Irby Rikard . . . . .	July 6, 2008
Mr. Hulon Franklin Sparks . . . . .	July 7, 2008
Dr. James Robert "Bob" Woolsey, Jr. . . . .	July 9, 2008
Mr. Charles Ellis "Dave" Hurdle . . . . .	July 12, 2008
Mrs. Katherine "Kay" Schlessman Moorhead . . . . .	July 14, 2008
Mr. Clarence Criss Chandler . . . . .	July 20, 2008
Mrs. Grace Linder Tatum . . . . .	July 23, 2008

Mr. James Dorris Garrison . . . . .	July 26, 2008
Mrs. Ruby Denham Rogers . . . . .	July 27, 2008
Mr. Joseph Louis Supple, III . . . . .	July 28, 2008
Mrs. Emogene "Gene" Fudge Fancher . . . . .	July 30, 2008
Mr. Brooks B. McPhail . . . . .	August 2, 2008
Mrs. Ruthie May Pierce . . . . .	August 4, 2008
Mrs. Mildred "Millie" Fleming Phillips . . . . .	August 6, 2008
Mr. James Thomas McNeely, Sr. . . . .	August 7, 2008
Miss Lavell Mitchell . . . . .	August 8, 2008
Mrs. Christine Marie Gant Brummett . . . . .	August 8, 2008
Mrs. Christine Crenshaw Cox . . . . .	August 9, 2008
Mr. Frank Norris Russell . . . . .	August 9, 2008
Mr. Noel Arthur Childress . . . . .	August 9, 2008
Mrs. Juanita Edwards Turner . . . . .	August 11, 2008

## MEMORIES

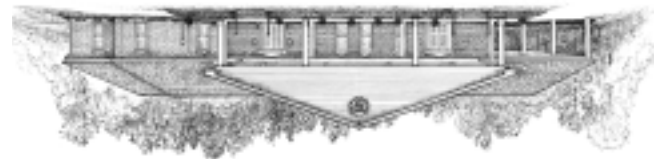
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Suddenly Grandpa roused himself and turned to me.  
 "Memories are beautiful things, Boy. When the person ya love is gone, when the happy time is over, ya still have yer memories. Thank God fer this special gift of His. Ain't no price one would settle on fer the worth of memories."

*If we savor the good times in youth,  
 We can enjoy them again in old age.*

They shall abundantly utter the memory  
 Of thy great goodness. Psalm 145:7  
 —Janette Oke  
*Father of My Heart*

2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007  
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