

Dixie Divas

Lately, I've found myself in mourning over the escalating loss of something that clearly distinguished the South from the rest of America's regions for over 200 years.



"Where," I have mumbled repeatedly to myself, "has the beauty of our language gone?"

It comes and goes — mostly it goes — like the fog that settles over the Smoky Mountains on an early morn then burns away with the sun's hot glare. Once, though, our pretty words lingered on our lips and fell sweetly on our ears. I so enjoy

my conversations with my beloved Southern mentor, Miss Virgie, who hails from Pascagoula, Mississippi and still salts her stories with words like "mirth", "shan't", "hearken", "prance", "here forth", and "tis". Her language, once the norm not the exception in the South, is lyrical, poetic and just downright interesting.

After I read a quote in Time magazine by Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour, from the horrendous after throes of vicious Katrina, I was more perplexed by this, even deeply saddened.

He pointed out that so much attention was being focused on New Orleans in the horrendous aftermath, "but it was Mississippi that received the most grievous blow."

OH BEAUTIFUL LANGUAGE, WHERE FORTH ARE THOU?

Grievous blow. What a unique way to say what others would have said by using more generic adjectives like "terrible", "biggest", "worse", "horrible", or "massive."

Having been enthralled by Gov. Barbour during a speech he gave at the Peabody Hotel in Memphis, I consider him to be a great orator and vigilant protector of the Southern language.

For months, I pondered that our beautiful language, though not yet lying in repose six feet under, is definitely struggling for the breath to survive. It occurred to me that perhaps it was that we are so many generations removed from our Scotch-Irish and English ancestors that we had simply, over time, lost the memory of their lilting, poetic

words that had traveled with them across an ocean's span.

Then, suddenly without expectation, I was able to pinpoint what is happening.

I was reading a biography of the legendary *Atlanta Constitution's* Pulitzer Prize-winning editor Ralph McGill. There, buried in its pages, I found the answer.

McGill, raised a Calvinist Puritan, retreated from religious beliefs for many years, but eventually the roots of his Tennessee raising returned him to the Bible's ancient truths. Even during the time that he was agnostic, according to the book, he faithfully wrote and spoke in the language of the Bible Belt's people.

The riddle was solved.

What has happened here is that the Bible Belt is no longer reading the King James version of the Bible. It, with its difficulty in language, has been traded in by the majority of Southerners for simpler translations that tell stories straight out by using today's contemporary language. These versions are bland, uninteresting but completely understandable.

By moving en mass to plainer versions of the Bible, we have sacrificed our gorgeous language, laying it, without thought or concern, at the altar of simplicity.

Though I have always preferred the King James Bible, I must admit that I, too, own less complicated Biblical tomes, all of which have been gifts. I, too,

own up to the fact that I have read them.

But going forth, I shall embrace exclusively the poetic language of King James and pray — in my simple language — that I absorb the mystical beauty of its words.

I started this morning. And now I have a new mantra, courtesy of the book of James.

Be ye doers of the word, and not just hearers only.

So it is my hope that I will do unto my words as my blessed ancestors did unto theirs and as Miss Virgie still does unto hers.

'Tis important, I believeth. *Ronda Rich is the best-selling author of What Southern Women Know (That Every Woman Should) and The Town That Came A-Courtin'.*

Lucy Adams



It was bound to happen. Post a website and publish my e-mail address, and I couldn't help but lure a few crazies out of cyberspace.

I opened an e-mail last week, presumably from a woman (these days, who can tell), who claims to be me.

It announced, *I just ran across your website, and thought it was cool that my name is also Lucy Adams! Have a great day.*

Whatever! The moment I read it, my index finger snapped to

attention, pointed at my right ear, and circled in a counter-clockwise motion.

My mama and daddy told me that I'm one-of-a-kind. God made me from a secret recipe. Now that I'm an adult, I realize, despite turbulent adolescent years, how right they were about *everything*. So how could they be wrong about this?

They couldn't. And to prove it, I Googled myself. There are many other search engines, but Google is mine. When I enter key words, it tenders an infinite quantity of optional realities from which to choose.

I clicked GO. Holy guacamole, a schizo-

phrenic number of results popped onto my screen. One million, four hundred thirty thousand, to be exact. Frantically, I scrolled, meeting the many mes.

Where to begin? Born in 1785, 1792, 1841, 1888, 1968, 1984, and so forth, I've been born again more times than a backsliding Baptist and lived more lives than an alley cat.

But successes come and go. Nollie Extreme Girls named me one of the top 50 girls who rock. Yes! The Royal Bank of Scotland predicted I would become a millionaire 10 times over by the age of 36. I'm 38. Where's my money?

ALL OF WE

In a fifth century life, my father had the unfortunate name, Eliphalet Adams. (If born a boy, or I could have ended up today as Count Eliphalet Adams, VI, instead of Lucy Adams the countess.)

Although I hate to brag, I've worked as a circus midget, so tall on talent that I earned enough money to buy a cottage on Martha's Vineyard, where other freak show regulars, like the Clintons, vacation. These days, however, I use my entertainment gifts as a sword dancing, clogging ballerina with a group called The Black Adder.

The me that doesn't squirm at the sight of a loose tooth has

a degree in nursing. And the me who lives in a fantasy world gives financial support to the Medieval Academy of America.

I'm an equestrian, a journalist, a high school volleyball player, a skateboard circuit diva, a life coach (ha, ha), a web forum moderator, book author, housemaid, filmographer, actress, kindergarten teacher, artist, human resources director, and environmental scientist.

And, oh, the men I have known. Don't tell my husband, but I married Stuart McMinn on August 26, 2006. Tony Hart, a vagabond who fought on the side of the Union in the War of Northern Aggression, whom I married in 1855, fathered 21 children with me. I wed Johann Phillip Nail on January 18, 1806 and Brad Adams on January 16, 1993. Shortly after marrying

Abraham Steele in 1822, I up and married Eben Berry in 1825.

On top of all that, I've even clogged on *Rice*, which sounds like a rather slippery proposition.

Discovering all of me, or, shall I say, we, I thrilled over my magnificent, adventurous, multiple personalities. I'm even more special than my parents ever said.

So I responded to the e-mail: *Dear Lucy Adams, you won't believe the things we've done, the lives we've lived, the history we've made. WE are an amazing woman (presumably). Sincerely, Lucy Adams.*

S/he answered: *Whatever (E-mail Lucy at lucy.adams@lifeslittlelesson.com or visit her website at www.lucyadamsonline.com)*

Shipp

Georgia is desperate for someone with people-helping expertise. Georgia has one of the poorest records on consumer protection in the nation. Our failures to shield consumers grow worse by the day, even as neighboring states try to reform their protection laws.

In a state election race, a good-deed media type with a solid people platform might be able to overcome the media curse. Clark's fans don't think of him as a reporter. They look at him as a friend who can help them avoid personal financial problems.

While conventional candidates rail about stem-cell research, immigration, evolution and gay marriages, Clark Howard could turn to other matters to attract immediate voter interest:

How to avoid credit card fraud, how to buy a car, what the banks won't tell you, etc. And, of course, he would take on the big utilities at every turn.

Suppose Clark Howard had been in the driver's seat in the Capitol when the following oc-

curred: Last week, Georgia public health workers left more than 280,000 birth certificates sitting curbside, perhaps for days. The certificates contained parents' names and Social Security numbers. A spokesman said the state Public Health Division once employed a "competent and dependable person" to shred old vital statistics, but that person died several weeks ago and has not been replaced. So no one apparently bothered to destroy the records.

Stand by, because here come the identity pirates, ready to steal official records and create entirely new accounts and credit histories using unprotected folks' personal identification to buy heaven-knows-what.

Last month, Dallas-based Affiliated Computer Services lost a compact disc containing names, birthdates and Social Security numbers of 2.9 million Georgians on Medicaid or PeachCare for children. So more precious information booty is floating around, just waiting to

be filched and used by data pirates, who have already found Georgia a fertile ground.

In 2005 (the last year for which figures were available), more than 260,000 Georgians were victimized by identity thieves. Each victim lost an average of \$1,000 in cash, and each incident of mass theft cost businesses at least \$10,000 to repair.

Allison Wall, executive director of Georgia Watch, a non-partisan consumer advocacy group, says the Georgia Legislature has refused for two consecutive years to institute a "credit freeze" law that would allow consumers to shut down identity thieves in their tracks. Not surprisingly, Big Business' best buds in the Georgia Statehouse want no part of consumer-protection measures, though our state ranks ninth in per-capita rate of identity theft. Thirty-five states and the District of Columbia already have credit freeze laws.

Apro-people governor — say, a Clark Howard — would not hesitate in demanding credit freeze legislation to stop the

major credit reporting agencies — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — from releasing any information to potential creditors when identity theft is suspected.

This is not nuclear-science legislation. It has worked elsewhere. Why hasn't it been tried here? Perhaps because the big-three credit reporting agencies maintain a huge presence in Atlanta and are known to be oh-so cozy with the governor and key House members. The reporting agencies understand that credit freeze legislation might cause them additional corporate headaches. Too bad that we ordinary consumers do not engender such concern about our welfare.

So, Clark, forget mayor. Being governor is a much better job. You can help many more folks who really need help. And you'll have your own state air force. You won't have to go to Birmingham anymore to find cheap flights.

You can reach Bill Shipp at P.O. Box 440755, Kennesaw, GA 30160.

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Letters to Editor

Thanks, DOOR

Editor:

The 'Boro Beach Blast was a huge success largely due to excellent planning by DOOR (Downtown Organization of Retailers).

Everyone there had a great time and the entire community may have shown up, or at least it appeared that way. As an invited entertainment, The Home Grown Band shared in the celebration. The band would like to say thank you to the people of Waynesboro for your support in our effort to make your evening a little more pleasant.

Home Grown is a ministry outreach of Waynesboro First United Methodist Church and, through our music, we hope to accomplish this. We want to thank you for your contributions to the Stained Glass Renovation project at First Church, our sponsoring agent. You have certainly aided in this effort through your generosity. The windows are a legacy in our community and have been for 70 years. From these and other contributions, they will quite possibly continue to be.

John Hamilton
The Home Grown Band
First United Methodist Church

cleaned up and made to appear as the resting place of so many old spirits and even that of an old Revolutionary War general. This individual first became aware of the project when an article was printed in the local weekly. Since then, many of those who have ancestors buried in the cemetery have donated funds on a regular basis.

In April of 2007 the members of the association gathered at Bark Camp for the 4th Annual "Meetin' and Eatin'" on a beautiful Saturday at 11A.M.

Rev. Quick, who served as a deacon and was ordained a minister at Bark Camp prior to its closure in the late 1950s, served as the new association's first secretary-treasurer. He has since been succeeded by the able Mrs. Smith.

The 2007 gathering, to me, seemed to have just a few less in attendance. It is remarkable what has been done to the church and cemetery. Besides a 50-year roof, the edifice, as we've said, has been brought back to life from the pits of decay.

As much can be said for the cemetery, which before it was cleared and now is mowed on a regular basis, looked like a wilderness.

The grounds as of a couple of years ago has separate bathroom facilities, for men and women. Now we need some of the younger members of the families who worshipped there since it's founding in 1788, many of whom are buried in the cemetery.

My kin there include a brother, Robert Lowe Gordy, age 22 when he died about 1914; grandparents, Nathan Gordy and his wife, Frances Sconyers Gordy; aunts, uncles, and as the saying goes, "cousins by the dozens," including Battle of the Bulge veteran Levin Clayton (Lev) Gordy, who suffered a wound and frost-bitten feet in

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RFD

what a special way.

Many of you may not know Lacy. She began Overeaters Anonymous at the Wimberly House and the group still meets on Saturday mornings.

Coradell's is available for weddings and receptions, bridal showers, class and family reunions and banquets. Full catering is available with tables, chairs, dishes and other amenities. There is a commercial kitchen on the premises.

Drop by for the open house and see for yourself.

A great big "thank you" to William Mizell, owner of William Mizell Ford for sponsoring the season opener of Movies Under the Stars.

It was a big hit with all who attended.

The next movie will be Saturday, May 26 at the City Park. Samsons Manufacturing will be the sponsor and the movie title

will be ... you'll have to come to see what it is!

All are invited to the Botsford Baptist Church Vacation Bible School (VBS) June 10-15 from 6:30-9 p.m.

It is for ages 3-adult and a nursery will be provided for workers and attendees.

The theme for this year's VBS is "Game Day Central Where Heroes Are Made."

A kick-off rally will be Saturday, June 2 at 5 p.m. at Botsford. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be served.

Commencement will be held on Friday, June 15 at 7 p.m. with refreshments and fellowship following the service.

For more information or transportation, call Angela or Kevin Petrea at 706-554-4610.

A great big thank you to Jone Wiggins for dropping off paint to me at my office when I could

not get there before McKinney's Do-It-Best Center closed.

I want to congratulate my brother, Sam Kelly, of Greenville, S.C. He placed 10th in the BMW Charity Pro-Am at The Cliffs last weekend. He played on the Fellowship of Christian Athletes team.

The three-day event raised \$3.2 million for local charities.

BMW Charity Pro-Am is the only tournament on the Nationwide® PGA Tour where amateurs and celebrities are grouped with Nationwide PGA Tour professionals in a three-day better-ball competition. The tournament has one of the largest purses on the Nationwide Tour.

I spoke with Sgt. Gary Roane with the Battery C 1/214th Field Artillery Georgia Army National Guard Monday morning about the rumor I heard over the weekend.

He confirmed all of the 171

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