

Growing Up on The Edges

A memoir of growing up in
DeKalb County Georgia

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Joe Greear

INTRODUCTION

I grew up on the edges: the edge of Brookhaven, the edge of Peachtree Creek, and the edge of Tullie Smith's property. When we moved in, it was like living in a wilderness, surrounded by woods and farms. When we moved away we were surrounded by high-rise office buildings. My brothers and I had spent our childhood in these woods, playing, exploring, and not knowing that our situation was so unique.

If you were to search for the history of Brookhaven, Georgia the internet will show you information about Atlanta's earliest planned residential development. It will show you pictures of golf courses, large homes and celebrities playing golf, fine private schools, and the Veterans Hospital, all located on the Northwest side of Peachtree Road. But there is another Brookhaven: literally, the "other side of the tracks", the unplanned, often ramshackle part of a town that wasn't a town. Brookhaven was only recently incorporated into a city. In the not so distant past it was just a small commercial center along Peachtree Road, where North Druid Hills Road intersects. Railroad tracks divided the area known as Brookhaven into two distinctly different neighborhoods. This is the story of my experience growing up and watching the Brookhaven area around me change. These memories are just that, a recollection of life from a childhood in the woods. Many of the details are based on what I knew then, complimented with a few details added that I learned later in life. I have not conducted extensive research because I want this story to stay true to what I knew or experienced at the time.

CHAPTER ONE – A Home in the Woods

My parents met in 1948 on the U.S. island of Guam, where they were working in civilian jobs constructing a new military base. My dad was a draftsman from Georgia and my mom an architect from Washington State. They were later to describe their life on Guam as being like the Broadway musical "South Pacific", romantic but rustic. They dated just a few months before my dad popped the question. They were so in love they could not wait to get married on the mainland with family and friends; instead they got married in a small white chapel on Guam with co-workers in attendance. When their contracts ended and they were scheduled to move back to the States, they decided that

Georgia would be their new home. After a brief visit to Seattle where my mom's parents lived, they arrived in Georgia around 1949.

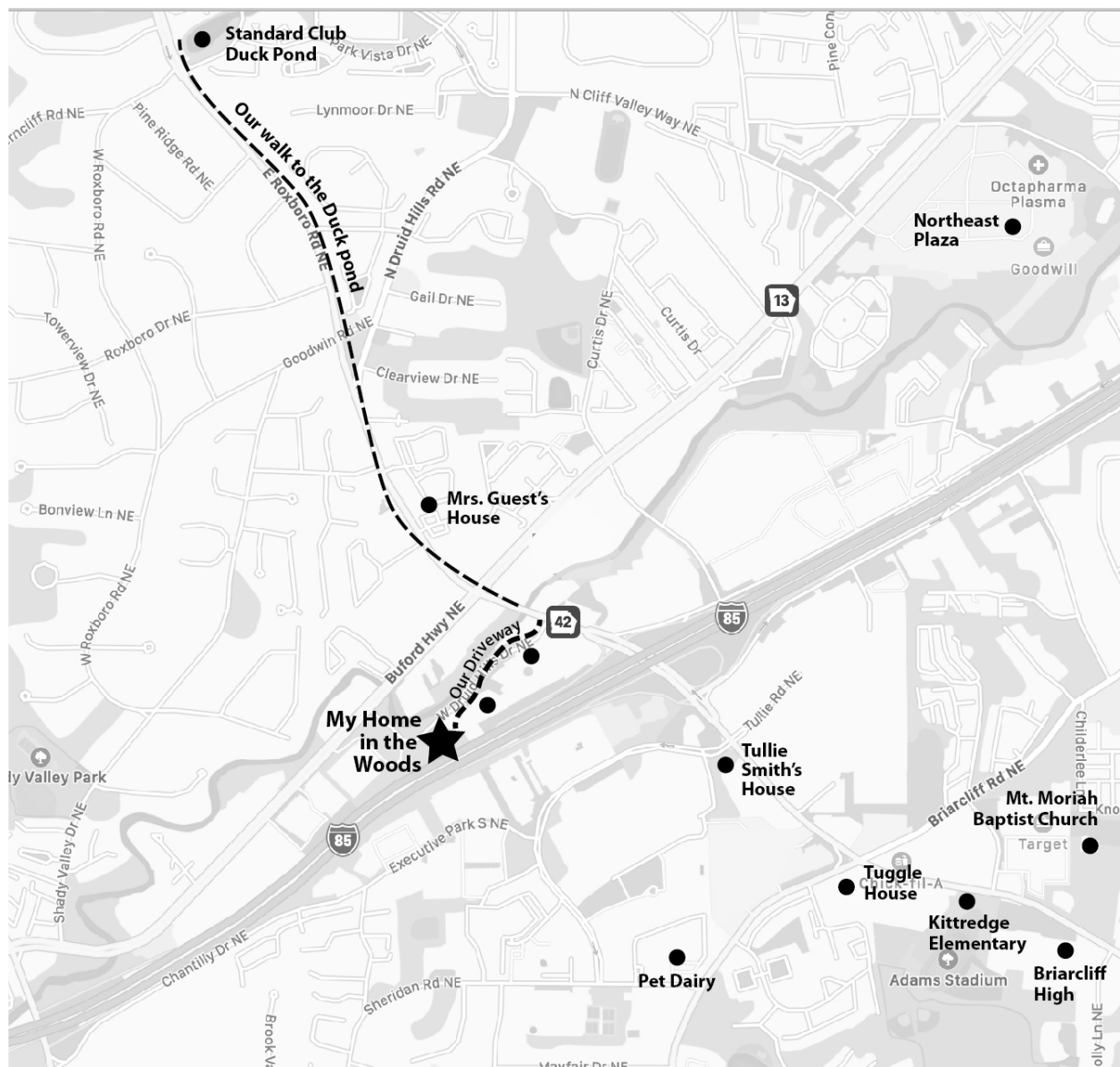
My parents first moved into a four room cottage on my grandad's farm in Helen, Georgia, an extremely rural town in the Georgia mountains — the very definition of a one-horse town, a strip of stores on the road to Hiawassee without even a stoplight. They lived in this cottage for about a year before moving to Atlanta where job prospects and health services were much better. It was in Atlanta that my older brother, Sol, Jr. and I were born. Our first home in Atlanta was the Oglethorpe Apartments, about 1/2 mile north of Brookhaven. In the 1950s, Oglethorpe Apartments was a new housing concept: a planned "complex" of rental units consisting of about a hundred sturdy red brick buildings that spread along Johnson Ferry and Ashford Dunwoody roads. It was filled with young families, their children (myself included) representing the "Baby Boom" that occurred throughout the U.S. when GIs returned from the war. Our apartment was a small unit that suited my parent's needs as they searched for jobs and began raising their two sons. Family photos show a proud, happy couple with their toddlers in tow, walking the sidewalks of the complex.

My parents found jobs downtown, my dad as a draftsman, and my mom as an architect. They then began their search for a more permanent home that would meet their specific criteria: close to downtown yet having space for a vegetable garden and privacy from neighbors. They searched for nearly two years for this elusive ideal, looking in nearly every part of town. It was a standing joke for years afterward when we were in an unusual part of town, they would say to each other "Didn't we look for a house around here?" no matter where in town we were. It became one of our family's "inside jokes".

They eventually bought a house on two acres in DeKalb County, in a semi-rural area located just off North Druid Hills Road. It was a two bedroom wood sided house at the end of a 1/4 mile long single-lane dirt road which was shared by two other houses. The three houses were perched on the ridge line of a small hill that overlooked the North Fork of Peachtree Creek. On one side of the neighborhood (the west side) was the creek, on the other side (to the east) was a seemingly vast woodland. Our driveway began at the edge of a wood bridge that spanned Peachtree Creek, a few hundred feet from where North Druid Hills Road crosses Buford Highway. The driveway dropped

steeply down from North Druid then followed along the creekside through thin mixed woods, then climbed the hill to end at our house.

Although I did not realize it at the time, our “neighborhood” was unlike other neighborhoods in this part of DeKalb County. The “developed” neighborhoods had houses with paved driveways lining both sides of a street, shoulder to shoulder; our neighbors’ houses were invisible from one another, separated by woods. Margret Young’s house was the first, set back from the shared driveway on the hill overlooking the creek. I remember that her house had a book-filled living room with a big picture window that offered a view the creek and driveway below. Mrs. Young was single and I think she had an academic job but I never really knew what she did. She was a good neighbor and even gave my brother and me some of her books which I have to this day.



Next was the Brown's house which looked like a cottage out of a Fairy Tale, the windows overgrown by shrubs, and trees towering close to the house. The inside seemed cluttered and felt claustrophobic. Their source of heat was a coal-burning pot bellied stove which had a glass front that emitted a warm red glow all winter long, the coal smoke making the inside air a bit hazy. The Browns may have been in their 60s and for the most part seemed to be alone but since we could not see each other's homes, we knew little of their life.

Our house sat at the end of the ridge overlooking the shallow valley in which Peachtree Creek flowed sleepily by. In winter, from our living room, we could see the creek winding through the woods about 100 yards from the house. In the summer you could not tell that the creek was there. The driveway ended at the front of our house. We had no lawn or front yard, just a gravel turn around at the "front" of the house surrounded by the woods of mostly pine trees with a few dogwoods. The house was itself was a typical post-World War Two wood sided home with two bedrooms, one bathroom, a small kitchen, and similarly small living room, all perched on top of an open basement carport. At first my brother, Sol, and I shared one bedroom and my parents slept in the other one.

Almost immediately after moving in, Dad started a garden in a flat, cleared area on one side of the house. He leveled and tilled the soil, revealing the Red Georgia clay, and planted corn, tomatoes, collard greens, and other vegetables. As a three year old, I have little recollection of his efforts to create the garden, but in later years I was to help plant the tomato seedlings, sow the corn seeds and harvest the crops. Whenever I walk through a row of corn today, the smell of the corn stalks takes me back to that garden patch of my childhood. My mom had the unenviable task of "putting up" the produce that Dad grew. We had home-grown corn from the freezer all winter long as well as home-made tomato sauce, vegetable soups, and pickles all canned in our kitchen.

Dad also began tearing down the two tiny porches at the front of the house to replace them with one large one. This new porch ran the full width of the house and was about half again as deep. At first it was just an open porch with a railing with chicken wire screen to prevent kids and pets from falling off. The front, or long edge, faced our driveway turn-around and was raised about ten feet off the ground. What had been the two front doors of the house now opened to the porch and we would exit

the porch down steps on either end. The porch would remain like this for a few years while my dad, with Mom's design help, slowly enclosed it with floor to ceiling glass at either end and a row of windows about head high along the front side. This evolution of the house took many years. Dad did the carpentry and electrical work himself, usually on the weekend and sometimes in the long summer evenings after work. I was too young to remember much about the construction of the porch that became our living room, but I do remember Dad seemed to be working all the time. My mom, working part-time, would come home from work and immediately started cooking, cleaning house, and ending the day reading the boys to sleep nearly every night.

About My Dad: Sol Greear, Sr. grew up in a rural part of western Virginia. He learned to be self-sufficient at an early age; anything that his home needed was usually made from scratch. Around the time of the Great Depression, my grandad found work and moved the family to Helen, Georgia, a timber harvesting boom town in those days. When my dad was about twenty he moved from Helen to Atlanta where he found work writing reviews for the Atlanta Journal Arts section but what he really wanted to do was to be an artist, so he applied to and got accepted into the Arts Student League in New York City. Toward the end of the 1930s, he quit his job and drove a motorcycle to New York City to take painting lessons from Hans Hoffman, a leading proponent of Abstract Expressionist Art. He lived in Greenwich Village and was in school for a couple of years. After war was declared, he worked as a draftsman and illustrator at various factories producing war material. His work eventually took him to the Pacific island of Guam and it was there that he met and fell in love with a woman architect from Seattle, Washington.

Dad never made a living from painting though he continued to paint for the rest of his life. He was a great family handyman, making nearly everything we needed from scratch, and much of it from his own imagination: a family camper van, home additions, a treehouse, even our stereo set up. He was creative, industrious, and stubbornly frugal.

Being so remote had both its advantages and disadvantages. We had the privacy that my dad so desired, but the isolation sometimes made things difficult for my parents. Delivery people hated our driveway with its winding path, rutted surface, and encroaching woodland plants. Occasionally, when driving up or down the shared driveway, we would encounter a neighbor, visitor, or delivery truck. One or the other would have to back up the dirt road to a spot where we could pass each other. Often the lowest part of the driveway, along the creek bank, was flooded by a few inches of water from Peachtree Creek. We soon learned that the taxi drivers knew our address by heart, and called it “the Hole” due to its steep descent from the paved thoroughfare of North Druid Hills Road. (Mom did not drive until she was around forty due to a traumatic car accident when she was a teenager. She eventually overcame her fear, but that is another story). I think today about our portly pediatrician, Dr. Thompson, who would drive down that dirt road to make house calls, his black bag filled with instruments, medicines and everything he might need to treat our ailments. It must have been a great imposition to come to our house, but any time one of us was seriously sick, he would make the trek. In second grade I was so terribly ill that I was confined to bed for a couple of weeks. Dr. Thompson made regular house calls to check up on me because I was too ill to be taken to him. This practice of making “house calls”, was literally a life-saving service to our family in those times.

Not only did we share a driveway, but we also shared a single telephone line, called a “party line”. Each household’s phone had a distinctive ring, such as two short and one long, that would identify the call as being intended for your house. If you were dialing out, you had to pick up the receiver and listen to hear if there was conversation before dialing. If one of our neighbors was already on the line, we were expected to hang up and wait until their call was over to make our call. There was no other way to tell that the line was occupied and it sometimes meant eavesdropping unintentionally on conversation. In case of an emergency you would have to interrupt your neighbor’s phone conversation and tell them of your emergency and they would hang up so you could then dial out. It was an odd arrangement that lasted for a few years until we each got a separate “line” that allowed each household their privacy.

CHAPTER TWO – My Expanding World

One of my earliest memories of spending time with my dad was a walk through the nearby woods when I was about four years old. He loved the outdoors and would often take us on nature walks. We followed a faint dirt road not far from the house, enjoying the fall color in the trees, not another soul or house was in sight. I now know that we were walking on Tullie Smith's land but back then I thought of it as being part of "our" woods. Dad at one point stopped to admire the color, saying "Bend over and look at the world upside down" and demonstrating this unique viewing angle, bent over double with his head hanging down. "Doesn't it look completely different?" he asked. I followed suit and, sure enough, the woods looked very different from their "upright" view. My dad was like this, he observed the world as an artist does, looking at it from different angles, literally and figuratively.

For Sol, Jr. and I, the woods seemed like a paradise since we were free to wander, create forts, play in the creek and explore without much supervision. We would eventually get to know every substantial tree, every bend in the creek, and every little hill within a half-mile radius. The creek held our interest the most. It had its own musty smell and wildlife and plant life that was not like those in the woods. Tree roots jutted out from the creek bank, making "rigging" for us to stand on over the water playing "pirate ship". We would watch tiny minnows, crawfish, and water spiders dance across the surface of the water. We would set things afloat and watch them disappear downstream, possibly on its way to the ocean, or at least to the Chattahoochee River a few miles away. We would wander so far afield in these woods that my parents strung up an empty camp stove canister which they would strike with a metal rod to produce a ringing "clang" loud enough to be heard no matter how far we had wandered. This "bell" summoned us whenever they wanted us home, usually for dinner. It was in these woods that my older brother and I would make all kinds of discoveries including one that would bring dozens of police cars; and it was at the edge of these woods that my family would see the strangest creature I've ever seen running loose. But more about those events later.

My mom worked for a local architectural firm as one of Georgia's few registered female architects in the 1950s. It was rare enough that a woman worked outside the home, but to be in a male-dominated field such as architecture was nearly unheard of. But Mom was ambitious, tough, and determined to earn a good living for her family.

When I was about four my mom started working full-time so we needed someone to take care of the boys and clean the house while my parents were at work. They knew of a woman from my grandad's "hometown" of Helen, Georgia who was looking for domestic employment. Her name was Cora Lee Bates. My grandmother knew her family from the Bean Creek area near Helen and Cora Lee knew my dad. Cora Lee proved to be a good care giver for Sol and I, and a great cook and also. In our pre-school years she spent the day cleaning the house and watching out for us. After we started attending school, she would be there when we got home and stay until my parents arrived from work. Then my dad would drive her home, just about a half mile from us off North Druid Hills. To me she seemed kind and tolerant and a part of the family.

About My Mom: Unlike my father, Helen Coleman Greear grew up in a very urban setting: Cleveland, Ohio. She and her sister were raised by her mom and step dad. Her family moved to Seattle in the 1930s and she started attending college while working at night. She earned an architectural degree from the University of Washington when few women even went to college, let alone study what was then considered a man's occupation. Her first job took her to Alaska then to Guam where she met my dad. In Atlanta, she worked for a couple of architectural firms including Robert and Company and finally with the Georgia Board of Education as a school planner. Even while raising three boys she took evening classes to advance her career. She was a tireless worker even late into her life, taking multiple art classes, creating the Chattahoochee Hand-weaver's Guild, and helping to set up the Helen Arts Center. She passed away in the home she designed for herself at the age of 99.

When we were still pre-schoolers, Cora Lee would occasionally take Sol, and me for walks up North Druid Hills, across Buford Highway, and then turning left up Roxboro Road to "the Duck Pond", on the grounds of the Standard Club's golf course, where we would feed the ducks. This outing offered entertainment for us boys and an opportunity for Cora Lee to make a stop at her small home along the way. Cora Lee

and her husband rented a small shack from a Mrs. Guest who owned land on North Druid Hills. Cora Lee's house was located across the back yard behind Mrs. Guest's house and may have once been a servant's quarters when the grand old house had family living in it. When we entered Cora Lee's house, we walked right into the room that served as their kitchen/dining/living room and that must have been not much bigger than a bedroom by today's standards. To either side of that room there were very spartan bedrooms. I don't remember much more about it other than the smell of bacon or fat-back grease that permeated the indoors. Sol and I went inside only a couple of times; usually we waited in the yard while Cora Lee completed some task inside. On occasions we were invited into Mrs. Guest's house which proved to be an eye opening journey of its own.

Mrs. Guest's house was vastly different from Cora Lee's tiny shack. It was two or maybe three stories tall and had a porte cochere (covered drop-off) on one side where a driver could pull up to unload passengers under cover from the weather. The car would then be parked around back in a free-standing garage. I now think of the house as echoing the size and appearance of the grand houses of the Druid Hills Historic District. Surrounding the house were a few decorative shrubs otherwise the whole yard seemed shaded by tall trees, the shade making a lawn impossible. Peacocks wandered the yard emitting eerie cries like a cross between a screech and a whistle; their long tails drooped behind them in the dirt until they would suddenly perk up, raise their rainbow hued iridescent tail feathers and spread them out like a fan. As exotic as the yard seemed, the interior of Mrs. Guest's house bordered on the bizarre. It was filled with a myriad of bird cages decorated in Victorian fashion. These cages housed a variety of small to medium sized birds; cockatoos, parakeets, love birds, parrots and mynah birds. The smaller birds created a constant delicate chatter throughout the house. On the other hand, the parrots and mynahs would suddenly screech, or shout "Hello!" or emit short phrases such as "Polly wants a Cracker", which could be startling if you weren't expecting it. I would wander from cage to cage admiring their beauty, constant motion, and chatter. Mrs. Guest would sometimes allow us to offer food to the birds while instructing us on how to stroke their feathers without getting bit. My memory of Mrs. Guest is a little blurred but she reminded me of a character from the Disney movie "Pollyanna" with dowdy dresses and "old fashioned" hair style. The walks to The Pond and Mrs. Guest's home came to an end as we started school but a year or so after our visits ended, my mom read a story from the Atlanta Constitution about one

of Mrs. Guest's rarer birds having babies. Apparently this was newsworthy since it was the first time an egg of this particular breed of bird had hatched in captivity. I wish I remembered what kind of bird it was and whether the hatchling survived to produce young of its own.

Later when Sol and I were old enough to care for ourselves, Cora Lee's family eventually moved on, but my connection to the Guest home would resurface years later. An elementary school classmate, Randy Thompson, and his mother moved into Mrs. Guest's home as renters. When I visited Randy, I would have to pass through Mrs. Guest's living room, once again negotiating the elaborate bird cages amid a constant cacophony of bird chatter and/or shouts. It felt somewhat like walking through a jungle from a Tarzan movie. Randy and his mom eventually moved away and we lost contact with them and our connection with Mrs. Guest. The Guest property was sold and developed in the 1970s and would eventually be replaced by a Red Roof motel and a private Hebrew school. Today the motel still sits on that hill but the school has been replaced by condos and office buildings strung out along North Druid Hills Road. I will always remember Mrs. Guest's house full of birds, the yard of peacocks, and the little cabin that served as Cora Lee's home.

CHAPTER THREE – Old Brookhaven

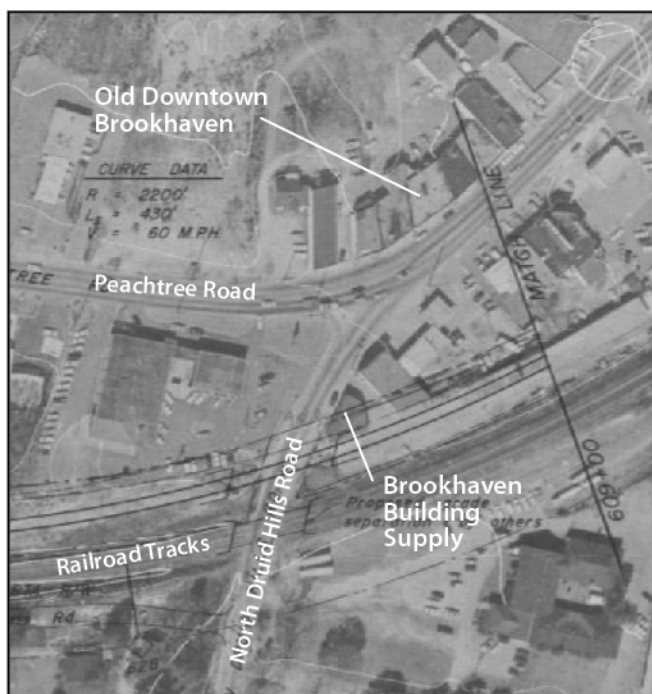
As I grew older my world expanded to the village of Brookhaven, where North Druid Hills Road ended at Peachtree Street. Approaching Peachtree Street from North Druid Hills Road required negotiating a railroad crossing that rattled car and passengers. Often we would have to wait on either side of the tracks while a long freight train chugged slowly past. As a kid, it was fun to watch the train cars roll by, but for my parents it was a major inconvenience. Just past the railroad tracks was the Brookhaven Building Supply, located on a small parcel of land between the railroad tracks and Peachtree Street. I recall it as one long loading dock with an order counter and a warehouse behind. There was minimal product on display but I remember seeing large bags of livestock feed stacked on the floor. When shopping at Brookhaven Building Supply, my dad would order his lumber and supplies at the front counter and the employees would load the order into our 1940s Willys Overland. The Overland was a forerunner of today's SUV. It was a ruggedly built tall station wagon with a split tailgate



"Downtown" Brookhaven in late 1940s



Brookhaven Theater



Aerial view of Brookhaven - 1960s



Oglethorpe Apartments around 1952

that allowed building material to stick out of the back. Dad would tie everything down and the lumberman would put a plastic red flag on the projecting lumber to warn other drivers to keep a safe distance and off we would go down North Druid Hills to home.

A random collection of stores and buildings ran along Peachtree Street from North Druid and the Brookhaven Building Supply to Dresden Drive. At the corner of Dresden and Peachtree Street was the A&P grocery which became our first family grocery store. The A&P building was pretty old and I remember that it had a stamped tin ceiling, a few aisles of shelves and glass cases which displayed meat and poultry. There were no “self serve” freezers or coolers. Customers were helped by staff that stood behind the glass cases. My mom’s weekly routine was to call the A&P from work with her grocery list which was packed in paper bags and waiting for my parents to pick up on their way home. Between the A&P and Brookhaven Building Supply were various businesses that changed hands occasionally.

Behind the A&P, down Dresden Drive from Peachtree Street, was an odd assortment of small wood sided houses referred to as “Indian Village”. This name came about because the side streets were named for Georgia’s rivers such as Coossawatte, Oostanuala, Conasauga, Etowah, and Tugaloo. These homes stood in stark contrast to the grand homes on the other side of Peachtree Street, in what is called Historic Brookhaven. Some of the houses were simple “shotgun shacks” so named because the house consisted of three rooms, lined up front to back so that one could see clear through the house if all the doors were open. One house I remember was made of wood logs. I often wondered if this was one of the first houses there. The wide variety of houses and people of Indian Village made it a unique and interesting neighborhood which I was to learn more about as an adult.

Across Peachtree Street from the Building Supply and A&P was another cluster of businesses including a post office and a movie theater. The Brookhaven Theater was where I saw my first scary movie: the original version of “The Fly” starring Vincent Price. I was about six or seven and I remember being so scared that I couldn’t watch the end and left my seat to wait in the lobby for my brother to emerge, steaming mad that I had abandoned the movie before the end. The Brookhaven Theater was not an elaborate movie house like the Fox, it had only a few embellishments but despite its simplicity, it was a nice place to watch a movie and I always loved the smell of the popcorn in the lobby. Also on this side of the tracks, behind the theater, was the

Capitol City Club and golf course, surrounded by stately homes built in the early 1900s. This was a neighborhood that I knew little about as a child, since we had no reason to go there but it is the one that people refer to today as “historic Brookhaven”. Further north on this side of Peachtree Road was Oglethorpe University whose stone stadium and classroom buildings I could see from the car as we went by.

In the 1960s, a strip mall, Cherokee Plaza, was built about a half mile south of old Brookhaven. The A&P and the Post Office moved in to become the “anchor” stores and several of the small shops and restaurants joined them. In the 1970s an underpass was built at North Druid Hills and Peachtree so that cars didn’t have to wait for the trains to pass. Over the next decade Peachtree Street was widened and straightened, the Brookhaven Supply and several of the original businesses were demolished. Today, very little of the old Brookhaven remains. The MARTA station stands where the original A&P, the pharmacy, and Brookhaven Supply once stood. But I’m getting ahead of myself.

CHAPTER FOUR– The Northeast Expressway Arrives

When my family moved into our home, North Druid Hills Road was a rural two lane road that ran from Peachtree Street in Brookhaven all the way to Lawrenceville Highway. Leaving After crossing Peachtree Creek it passed Tullie Smith’s “House on the Hill” just about a half mile from our driveway. Mrs. Smith’s house itself was hard to see from the road, but a homemade mailbox, a replica of her farmhouse, clearly identified its location. As a preschooler, I had no idea who lived there or that the house was anything special. It was just a mailbox and driveway that we passed from time to time.

The closest neighborhoods to ours were located along Briarcliff Road near North Druid Hills Road, so there were no other kids around for about a mile or more. Growing up without other young neighbors meant that Sol and I had to entertain ourselves for the most part. Because the Browns were the closest neighbor to us we saw them quite often. Sol and I would visit their house to play with their dog, help them with some chores and just enjoy their company. When they learned that we didn’t have TV in our house they invited us to their house to watch “Sea Hunt”, a show about scuba diving adventurers. My parents, who thought that TV was generally a bad influence, figured there must some educational quality to this particular show, so they reluctantly agreed



Our home in the woods showing the "great room" that my parents added.



Interior view of our "great room" with my dad at his "hifi" stereo setup.



Our driveway was often underwater. Peachtree Creek is on the left and North Druid Hills Rd. is in the background

that once a week Sol and I could walk down the wooded path, flashlights in hand, to the Browns cottage where we would watch the small black and white images of Lloyd Bridges in scuba gear on their old TV.

Other than Ms. Young, our next closest neighbor was Tullie Smith, about half a mile down North Druid Hills. Then just beyond Mrs. Smith's house, across Briarcliff Road, was a tiny community of homes clustered around a church. They were simple wood structures and were known as the community of Mount Moriah, which was the name of the church. This was one of the few black communities in North Atlanta; the two others that I knew of was Lynwood Park and an unnamed community near the future site of Lenox Square. I was told that the Mount Moriah homes had been deeded to former slaves by their owner(s) and was occupied by their descendants. This community was surrounded by developing neighborhoods of middle class white families and therefore was unique and unto itself. An indelible memory from that time is of seeing a black man steering a mule-driven wagon down a four-lane North Druid Hills Road toward this neighborhood. It was an unusual sight and seemed out of place in the booming suburbs, something that you would more typically see in rural a setting. Eventually the neighborhood was replaced by a large discount retail store called Richway, which was later to become a Target store. I never learned what became of the residents of the Mount Moriah community, but the church building and cemetery still exist today. Some of the oldest grave sites can be seen scattered in the woods adjacent to the church and must date back hundreds of years.

When I was about five or six one of the strangest experiences of my life occurred in front of our house. I don't remember who saw it first but my family was quickly summoned to witness a commotion in the trees just beyond our clearing. We could see what appeared to be an apparition: a monkey or some sort of primate swinging high overhead from tree to tree through the woods. It looked like something out of a Johnny Weissmuller "Tarzan" movie. It was startling to see this creature so close to our yard. We watched in amazement as it made its way across our view at the tree tops until it disappeared. We were used to seeing squirrels travel from tree to tree as if they had their own elevated highways, but we had never seen anything like this! My whole family even wondered if we might be seeing things. It created a stir in the family for about a week but we eventually forgot about it. In adulthood I came to think that it might have been a dream, not something I had really experienced. Then many years later, as an

adult, I read an article that explained this apparition. Emory University had once kept primates isolated on an island in Candler Lake, on the Emory campus, which was about five miles from our home. I'm not sure why Emory kept primates in this way, but at some point around the time of our sighting, several of them had escaped and were spotted exploring the area for miles around. It was such a revelation to see this article and realize that what I had come to dismiss as a dream had actually occurred. I can still picture that monkey swinging freely through the trees as if he were on his way home.

On another occasion my mom looked out the kitchen window and saw a black, spaniel-like dog sitting under our Chinaberry tree and staring into the window as if expecting something or someone. Mom stepped out of the kitchen door and the dog came right up to her. He was very friendly and since our immediate neighbors did not own dogs, and the next nearest neighborhood was about two miles away, we thought he must be a stray dog. He had long, sleek black hair and floppy ears and he adopted us as if we had been his family all along. We named him Mike and the boys became quite fond of him. My dad had grown up not allowing dogs in the house and he required us to continue this tradition. We fed him regularly and built a crude dog house but he was free to come and go as he pleased. Since Mike would sometimes disappear for a few days, we speculated that he might have two "homes", but we never knew for certain.

Mike was a great pet for a few years but when the Northeast Expressway (now I-85) was built, we had to give him up, a difficult decision for my family. Around 1955 or 1956, crews of men started clearing a swath through the trees next to our property. I suppose my parents knew about it before hand, but I remember being surprised by the teams of men and equipment showing up and starting to cut trees. Sol and I were still pre-schoolers so we could spend hours watching the crews work from a safe distance. One of the most interesting pieces of equipment was a machine that processed whole trees into lumber. The crew would feed a tree in one end of the long machine and a piece of lumber came out the other end. Over several weeks the tree cutting crew crept slowly through our woods, leaving behind a treeless swath that seemed hundreds of feet wide. Once the trees were removed, the earth movers took over; big yellow machines dug into the hills and filled in the valleys to make a level road bed. Just yards from our house the earth movers removed some of our nearby hill, creating a canyon that would contain the road bet. Shortly after the work began, I could stand at the edge

of the embankment and gaze down on the hustle and bustle of the earth moving equipment below.

This highway signaled the end of having a free-roaming dog. No matter what we did, we could not keep Mike from wandering across the construction site to destinations unknown. Sol and I even tried a turn at espionage, watching Mike from a distance as he wandered away, across the field of raw dirt and up the other side of the construction site. We tried keeping him on a chain but it seemed cruel torture for our dear dog friend. My dad decided that Mike had a “girlfriend” across the way and that he probably would not stop trying to visit her, putting his life at risk once the Expressway was open to traffic. It was decided to give Mike to one of my dad’s co-workers who was looking for a dog. Sol and I were devastated, but Dad persuaded us that it was better to give him away than to risk his life.

CHAPTER FIVE – Expressway impact

The Northeast Expressway (I-85) was to impact my life in many ways. First was the most obvious; the Expressway was within sight of our house which had once been isolated in deep woods. Now we had a Expressway about a hundred yards from our home. Once it opened, the noise of the rushing vehicles became a constant sound in our yard. It wasn’t loud enough to hear in the house but when outside the sound prompted visitors to ask “How can you stand that noise?” Our reply was “It’s like living next to a waterfall or the ocean; once you got used to it, you don’t even hear it”. Sometimes we would answer this question with “What noise?”. At first Sol and I would find it entertaining to stand at the top of our hill, peering down onto the traffic below but soon we came to just ignore the road, the noise and the lights. At night the lights from the passing cars shone up in the trees, flashing faintly by as if some eerie ghost lights from a mystical fairy tale.

Another important impact was the drastic change to North Druid Hills Road. The wood bridge that carried North Druid Hills over Peachtree Creek was replaced by a concrete bridge and the road was widened from two to five lanes. Between our driveway and the new Expressway access ramps a Howard Johnsons Restaurant and a gas station sprang up. Across the Expressway the Tullie Smith farm became more visible since she lost some woods in the widening of North Druid Hills. Mrs. Smith’s

property had originally included land on both sides of North Druid Hills and may have stretched from the edge of the new Expressway to Briarcliff Road. She quickly sold her property on both sides of North Druid Hills to developers but kept the land around her house. Her mailbox still stood at the side of the road, but office parks, banks, and gas stations sprung up and down North Druid Hills between Briarcliff and the Expressway. Over the years, Mrs. Smith would sell off more of her property, bits at a time, but kept her house intact, which made it so that I would one day meet her and get to play in her yard.

As soon as the Northeast Expressway was completed, in the late 1950s, the intersection of Buford Highway and North Druid Hills was developed. The Pure gas station that had been the sole business at that intersection was joined by a Russel Stover's candy store, an Old Hickory House restaurant, a car wash and a pizza place. A small strip of stores was added along Buford Highway, their backs facing Peachtree Creek, across from our dirt roadway. This string of stores included a seafood restaurant built to look like a shrimp boat, a convenience store, and a Honey Baked Ham store. Their back doors towered over Peachtree Creek on an infill of boulders that made the stores level with Buford Highway.

With all the new developments on Buford Highway, sewer lines were added that crossed Peachtree Creek near our house. One of them was large enough for Sol and I to use as a bridge across the creek bed. At first we would "shimmy" across on our bottoms, then crawl across on our hands and knees and, finally we developed the courage and skill to walk across the pipe upright. Using this pipe, we could get across the creek without getting wet. Our explorations were thus allowed to expand to the "far" side of the creek where we could climb the massive cliff created by the infill boulders used to build up the land along Buford Highway.

One adverse effect of this construction was that the infill constricted the flow of the creek, resulting in our driveway becoming a flood zone. Peachtree Creek flooded several times in my boyhood, leaving styrofoam and other debris on the creek bank. Sometimes the flooding was so severe that we could not use our driveway to get to school. Because of the Expressway there was no other way to get "out in the world". For Sol and I these were great events since we had a "free" day off from school. On these occasions we could see the rushing waters from our house and often we would don rain gear to watch from the creek bank, as various objects would sweep by; patio

furniture, toys, styrofoam coolers and wood boards. The flood waters would usually subside the next day but sometimes it would be a couple of days before we could drive out. Eventually an official floodplain was created downstream in an unused area and our “free” days off from school due to flooding came to an end.

Upstream from our house, Peachtree Creek provided a path for Sol and I to hike to Northeast Plaza, one of Atlanta’s first “strip malls”. We would begin by crossing under the North Druid Hills bridge, passing an aluminum fabricating business along the creek bank, and continuing upstream to the back of Northeast Plaza. There was no path, we just walked along the creek bank, scrambling over downed trees and shrubs, making our way as best we could. Since we were on the opposite bank from Northeast Plaza, we needed to cross the creek at some point. On our first foray to our destination, we discovered a pair of steel cables that spanned the creek, situated one above the other about four feet apart. Sol and I would stand on the lower cable, hold onto the upper cable and shuffle our feet until we were on the other bank, about twenty feet across. From there it was a short walk to the shopping center where we would wander the shops, play mini golf, or go bowling. Today the Peachtree Creek Greenway nearly duplicates our route alongside the creek to Northeast Plaza.

Around 1955, my dad decided that the Willys Overland station wagon was too dangerous to keep; the brakes didn’t work when they got wet, and with our driveway flooding routinely, this presented a serious hazard. He had heard about a German made car that was supposed to be reliable, economical and safe. So he replaced the Willys with a 1956 VW bug purchased from a car dealer in Buckhead. It was one of the first VW’s sold in the Atlanta area and was unlike any other car on the market. The VW at that time was so rare that when we saw another one on the road, the drivers and passengers would wave at each other like excited old friends. These early VWs were so rustic and simple that they did not even have a gas gauge. When the car started to sputter from lack of gas, my dad would flip a small lever that emptied a “reserve” tank to give him another 30–40 miles to get to a gas station. One of my favorite features of this VW was the semaphore turn signal that flipped out from behind the door on either side of the car, blink yellow, then flap back down once the turn was complete, a feature that was eliminated the very next year. My dad’s favorite feature was that the engine was located in the back of the car, which was unheard of in those days. He would get a great kick out of asking gas station attendants to “check under the hood” just to watch

the expression on their faces when they opened the front hood and found nothing but a spare tire where the engine should be. Each stop for gas became a source of comedy and conversation for several years until the VW became so common that everyone knew the engine was actually in the back. This VW became just one of my dad's "foreign" car purchases through the years, each one having it's own story of trials and tribulations.

Around 1956, Sol and I started attending elementary school. We first attended Briar Vista school which was already overcrowded. The area was growing so fast that the school system could not build schools fast enough. By 1957 our new elementary school, Kittredge Elementary, was completed near the intersection Briarcliff and North Druid Hills. Our parents would drop us off in the morning, and Sol and I would catch the school bus home, the circuitous route winding down Briarcliff to Sheridan Lane, weaving its way up and down the many side streets, eventually dropping us off on North Druid at the top of our driveway. Getting off the bus, we would then wander up our driveway, usually making side trips to check out various spots in "our" woods and the creek before getting home to be greeted by Cora Lee.

The walks home up our driveway could be a mini adventure in itself. In the spring, golden orange day lilies would rise up on the sides of the driveway. In the fall, muscadine vines produced "grapes" that dangled overhead, their ripening odor perfuming the air all around. We loved stopping to eat one or two of the purple fruits on the walk home, popping the leathery skin open to get to the sweet juices inside. On one walk home up our driveway Sol and I discovered a tiny pink animal wriggling on the ground. We brought it home and my dad immediately recognized it as a baby chipmunk. We begged my parents to find out how we could save it so they called our vet who told us how to feed it a milk formula from an eye dropper. We saved that little pink baby and were able to raise "Chipper" into adulthood and keep it as a pet for about four years. The vet told us that was the longest time he had heard of a chipmunk living in captivity.

As we got to know our fellow school bus riders, we would sometimes get off at one of the streets they lived on and spend the afternoon playing in their neighborhoods, primarily the side streets from Sheridan Lane. Visiting their homes was an eye-opening experience for me since my only playmate up to that point had been my brother Sol. I also got to learn how different my house was from the typical suburban home of the

time. My house was out of view from our nearest neighbor, down a long, winding dirt road. My classmates houses had paved streets and driveways that were not much longer than a car. The houses stood nearly shoulder to shoulder compared to my “neighborhood” and everyone had other kids to play with. Aside from that, the interior of their homes were also different. By that time my dad had finished enclosing our porch into a large one-room living space that served our den, dining room and living room. Each end of this living space was enclosed by floor to ceiling glass walls with sliding glass doors allowing unobstructed views of the out doors. By contrast, my classmates houses had separate living and dining rooms as well as a den. In many of these houses, children were not allowed in either the living room or dining room since these rooms were reserved for entertaining adult guests. We were usually confined to the den or my friend’s bedrooms. Usually we played outside, riding bikes, jumping on trampolines and kicking balls. It was such a luxury for me to be able to play and bike on paved surfaces that I probably overstayed my welcome on many an occasion.

As I grew older I realized another difference between the lives of my classmates and myself. Our house did not have a lawn to mow or landscaping to maintain. My chores at home didn’t involve mowing grass or raking leaves, but we did work in my dad’s garden. Where my classmates learned the fine art of lawn maintenance in their early teens, I was learning how to grow and prepare fresh vegetables for the family meal.

At times I looked back on my isolated childhood and wished that I had grown up in a neighborhood with other kids close by. Social skills are hard to come by when contact with others is so limited. But guess I came out OK, and just maybe I learned how to be a little more creative and to think for myself because I never felt the pressure of peers trying to get me to conform to their ideas.

CHAPTER SIX – I Meet Tullie Smith

At about the fourth or fifth grade Sol and I started walking home from school, foregoing the long, winding bus ride home. Kittredge Elementary School was about a mile from our driveway and due to the widening of North Druid Hills, there was sidewalk all of the way home. Daily, after leaving Kittredge we would walk down North Druid Hills Road, across Briarcliff Road, pass a shopping center, a bank, a gas station, and an office building until we passed the site of Mrs. Smith’s house. From there we

would walk across the Expressway bridge and down the on-ramp before stepping off into the quiet, green woods leading to our house. I was usually alone since Sol was a couple of years ahead of me in school and had his own schedule. I would sometimes stop at the gas station or the Burger King for a treat, but usually it was a boring, lonely walk at first.

One day, when I was in the seventh grade, on my walk home I encountered a lady standing on the sidewalk by Mrs. Smith's mailbox. She asked me if I would mind if her young son could walk home with me from school. I have long forgotten his name but the boy and I would meet in front of Kittredge and walk up North Druid Hills to his home on the Smith farm. Once there, we would sometimes spend about half an hour playing in the yard. and tool shed The boy and his mom lived in a small cottage behind Mrs. Smith's farmhouse. It, like Cora Lee's house, may have been a servant's quarters at one time. The front porch of Mrs. Smith's house faced North Druid Hills; the boy's house and the tool shed were in back of the home. The yard was sparse and mostly dirt and did not seem much larger than a typical suburban yard. By this time, the early 1960's, the pasture and woods that had once been part of the Smith property were long gone, having been sold to developers.

Occasionally Mrs. Smith would invite my friend and I into her kitchen for lemonade or water but mostly she would be doing chores around the house and yard. Her kitchen was an "eat in" country kitchen, large enough to hold a table at which we would sit. It reminded me of my grandfather's kitchen in rural Helen, Georgia. I think of Mrs. Smith as wearing a country style dress, often with a sweater on, her hair tied back and looking every bit like a character from TV shows like "Andy Griffith". I think my visits to the Smith House lasted just one school year. The next year either my friend was considered old enough to walk home alone or they had moved away, I don't know which, but my visits to the Smith house came to an end.

Back then I didn't know that Mrs. Smith's farmhouse was anything special, I just thought of it as another old farmhouse. Eventually Tullie Smith's house was identified as the oldest surviving farm house in the Atlanta area. It was subsequently moved to the grounds of the Atlanta History Center to serve as an example of a "Plantation Plain" style homestead of the 1850s. When I was visiting, there were no farm animals left and I don't remember even a garden as demonstrated today at the History Center; it just seemed like an old farmhouse like many that existed just a few miles outside the



The Smith House in the 1930s



Tullie Smith at her mailbox on North Druid Hills Rd. - early 1950s

Bridge over Peachtree
Creek at N. Druid Hills
where our driveway started

Approximate location
of Tullie Smith's House

Northeast
Expressway (I-85)



Aerial view of Executive Park early 1960s

Martin's Cinerama
Movie Theater

Atlanta area. By the 1960s, it looked out of place, surrounded by office buildings, gas stations and fast-food restaurants.

In the early 1960s there still were dairies in operation in the Atlanta area. One of them was on Briarcliff Road, just about a quarter of a mile for Tullie Smith's house. It had a "Pet Dairy" sign at the intersection of Sheridan Road and Briarcliff and the cows could be seen grazing the land that now is occupied by condos and shopping centers. Milk was delivered daily by milk trucks through the city. Over time, the dairies closed and the delivery trucks stopped running but many Atlantans remember one of the last local dairies, Mathis Dairy, which used to host school tours of the dairy operation and used a cow as a mascot. Over the 1960s, on the spot where Mrs. Smith's house once stood, a futuristic BP gas station was built to be replaced in the 1970s by an office building. The property behind her house became Executive Park, an early example of a planned office park with a tree-lined roadway and low-rise buildings. Across North Druid Hills from her house, a McDonald's restaurant and the Children's Healthcare Center now stand, along with an ever expanding and busy office park.

CHAPTER SEVEN – More Changes

By the time I entered high school, the population of DeKalb County had grown so much that schools could not be built fast enough. Because of this, my freshman year at Briarcliff High School was unlike any other year. Briarcliff was a few years old and very overcrowded. Lakeside High School was being built a few miles away to relieve the overcrowding. It was supposed to have been completed in time for the beginning of my freshman school year but when fall came the building was still under construction. The school board decided that Briarcliff would have to serve as two high schools; Briarcliff students would attend in the morning from about 8:00 until noon, and then Lakeside students would take over the classrooms until about 3:30. This meant that Sol and I had our whole afternoon to spend on our own. Usually we would play in the woods or the yard until my parents got home. Sometimes, we would go home, unload our books and schoolwork, and then walk three miles to the newly built Lenox Square Mall. This meant retracing our path up North Druid Hills, then up East Roxboro and past the old Duck Pond that we used to visit with Cora Lee. There was no sidewalk for much of this

walk and luckily there was room in the yards of the houses along the way for us to safely avoid traffic.

In those days Lenox Square was not an enclosed mall. It was more like a two-sided “strip mall” encircling an open courtyard. The primary stores at Lenox were Atlanta’s premier department stores: Rich’s and Davison’s but it also had a Kresge’s Discount Store and a Colonial Grocery. We would spend the afternoon walking around and window shopping at the wide variety of stores. I remember the record store that had “listening booths” where you could preview your record selection even if you weren’t buying anything; the Lenox Toy and Hobby store with its vast collection of modeling supplies; and the Lenox Pet Store where we would simply ogle the kittens and puppies up for sale. At the end of the day we would meet my parents at the Colonial store for the ride home.

During summers all through high school, Sol and I would routinely catch the “Express” Atlanta Transit bus at North Druid Hills and the Expressway for a ride into downtown Atlanta. We would meet my dad at his job with the State Highway Department and he would take us out for lunch, usually at the State Employee’s Cafeteria. Sometimes we would meet my mom at the Woolworth’s Lunch Counter, or Rich’s Magnolia Room. After lunch we would walk over to the Capitol Building where there were educational displays of Georgia history, industry, and geology and we sat in the visitor’s gallery and watch the proceedings (for about a minute). Then we would walk to Rich’s or Davison’s department stores, passing multiple stores along the way. In the big department stores, we would ride the escalators and do some “window shopping”. We would also visit the Carnegie Library to check out books or peruse the shelves.

The Holiday season would start at Thanksgiving with the lighting of the Rich’s Christmas tree on top of the pedestrian bridge over Forsythe Street. It was a major city event so Sol and I would ride downtown, do our Christmas shopping, ride the “Pink Pig”, and stay to watch the lighting of the tree and listen to Christmas Carols with my parents. In all our travels on buses and sidewalks, Sol and I never felt threatened or out of place and we enjoyed witnessing all the growing city had to offer and the variety of people that we encountered.

It was about this time that my parents decided that Sol and I were old enough take care of ourselves without needing Cora Lee to greet us at home. It was a sad departure and I remember my parents explaining it to us but we still felt like it was the end of a relationship that we cherished. My parents stayed in touch with Cora Lee for a few years but our lives took us in separate directions and we eventually lost touch. Though I never tried to find her or keep up with, she still holds a special place in my heart.

CHAPTER EIGHT – We Make News

When I was in the 9th or 10th grade two events in my life made the headlines. The first occurred around February of 1965 while Sol and I were exploring “our” woods with some friends. At that time we were members of the Civil Air Patrol, an organization affiliated with the Air Force. The C.A.P.’s primary role was to conduct search and rescue missions for lost or downed civilian airplanes. As cadets, we would search the ground for wreckage after it had been spotted from the air. That February, we were practicing establishing a “search line” through the woods with several other cadets. As Sol was making his way through the woods, he suddenly shouted “Joe, come here. I found a body!” Thinking he was pulling a joke, I thought he had piles up some rags alongside a football. It didn’t take long to realize that the football was actually a skull and the rags were clothes covering a skeleton. We all rushed home and called the police, then the TV stations and the newspapers. We thought we had found the news story of the decade, perhaps even a murder.

Since we lived at the boundary between Fulton and DeKalb Counties, both counties sent police to our house. It seemed as if the police cars kept coming all afternoon, crowding our driveway and yard with squad cars, all left running with their radios blasting at full volume while we led them, one after the other, into the woods to the body. As police officers and detectives gathered around the body I remember watching a detective search the remains, pointing out that several liquor bottles surrounded the body. At that time, DeKalb County didn’t sell liquor and Fulton County did, so not far from our house on the Fulton County side of the boundary was a liquor store. It was just about a quarter mile through the woods from the body to the liquor store and about another half mile to Briarcliff Road where there were apartments and houses. The police surmised that the man had walked to the liquor store from across the

Expressway, had stopped in the woods to enjoy his purchase, fallen asleep and had frozen to death. The case was closed without much fanfare but for a brief moment we thought we were part of a big news story.

Later that year, a real news making event took over our lives for about a week. One day during the Spring rains, the North Fork of Peachtree Creek became a raging torrent in minutes. Downstream from us, just before the bridge at Lindbergh Road, two young boys were swept away in the raging waters. A call went out to the community to help find and possibly rescue the boys. With our training, our group of Civil Air Patrol cadets and adults felt like we could be of help. With our parent's permission, Sol and I volunteered to help in the search after school was out for the day. We would come home from school, dress in our CAP fatigue uniforms and go to the staging center set up by the local Fire Departments. People were so moved by the parents plight, that teams of men and boys joined the search day and night. The Red Cross set up a food truck with hot coffee, warm donuts, space heaters, and bright lights. I had never seen such an outpouring of people risking such danger for others. We would scrabble along the creek bank in the rain, searching the underbrush for the boys while the creek waters continued to rise. This was a rugged stretch of creek with steep banks. It was tough going, trying to maintain your footing while looking under every bent over tree branch and bush. After about four nights, the boy's bodies were found much further down stream. It was a sad end to a desperate and brave attempt to save a family from such grief. We returned to our routines, but I felt as if I had been part of a community effort that had affected us all.

CHAPTER NINE – An End to the Woods

Development continued rapidly in the area surrounding our home. By my junior year in high school Toco Hill Shopping Center became the focus of my life. I was old enough to drive but my parents required me to pay for my own car so I got a job at a fast-food restaurant in Toco Hill called Hornette's, a spin-off from the Horne's motel chain. Several nights a week, after school, I would walk from Briarcliff High to Hornette's, don an apron and flip burgers or fry chicken until eleven at night. The job was largely uneventful and the customers few except on Friday nights when the high school football crowd would show up after a game. Three of my school mates worked

at Hornette's and in a year's time we became close friends. After cleaning up and closing out the restaurant at the end of the day (usually around 10 pm) we would sometimes go bowling at Northeast Lanes, located between the Northeast Expressway and Piedmont Road. My world was moving slowly away from the isolation of my earlier years and the world around us was changing as well.

Tullie Smith's house was relocated to the grounds of the Atlanta History Center and all of her once vast property was now office parks so developers turned their eyes to the three properties that made up our neighborhood. One by one, our neighbors succumbed to offers from developers. Margret Young was first. Her house was demolished and replaced by a restaurant and a high-rise hotel. The Brown's house was soon replaced by an office building that loomed over our tiny house. My brothers and I at first were infatuated with the construction as we had been with the building of the Expressway. After working hours we would roam the skeleton buildings under construction and explore the unique view of our property from several stories up. My dad was sure that our two acres would still offer some privacy and he refused to sell but the construction was just a few dozen yards away, and our driveway was now often swamped by run-off in heavy rains. The woods kept getting smaller and the offers for our property kept getting larger. Eventually, in my senior high school year, a developer made an offer my parents couldn't refuse and we moved away to another part of town. Brookhaven is now an official city with boundaries that go far beyond the original old "town" and includes the land where our house once stood. The intersection of North Druid Hills and Briarcliff has become one of DeKalb County's busiest intersections. Buford Highway has changed into an international thoroughfare lined by apartment complexes and restaurants. Our old homesite is now occupied by a high-rise building and parking lot. Thankfully, Peachtree Creek still flows peacefully within a small greenway although a paved road now runs alongside it where our driveway once was.

EPILOUGE

In the early 1970s, at age 23, I moved into Oglethorpe Apartments, a few blocks from where my parents had made their original Atlanta home in the 1950s. The apartments were now rather dilapidated and sad looking but the rent was cheap. Renters were told the property had gone into receivership so routine maintenance

would be nonexistent. When an apartment unit developed “problems” it was boarded up and left to deteriorate. Of the remaining buildings, nearly every one had a few boarded up units, making the complex looking like an apocalyptic movie set. The cheap rent attracted many creative people and I was to make quite a few lifelong friends there. After a couple of years living in Oglethorpe, I moved to Seattle, Washington where my mom had grown up, but stayed for just a year.

I returned to Atlanta and somehow ended up in Brookhaven again. In the late 1970s I purchased a house off of Dresden Drive, about a quarter of a mile from Peachtree Street and adjacent to the “Indian Village” neighborhood. I got married and we spent nearly 20 years in that house, watching Brookhaven change, slowly at first, then like a runaway train. Some of the older Brookhaven businesses had moved on but the “new” businesses were just as eclectic. One was Peachtree Quality Salvage, a “railroad salvage” business that sold items that had been left unclaimed in rail freight depots. One could find useful items of all sorts at very reasonable prices; it was a lot like shopping at a Flea Market or Rummage Sale. Another unique business was Voluparts which was a Volvo salvage yard that took over the location of the A&P at the corner of Dresden and Peachtree. I went through a period of buying used Volvos about that time and Voluparts became an invaluable source for information and car parts. Then there was Norman’s Electronics located near Voluparts where one could get their TV, radio, or stereo equipment reliably repaired. At the end of the 1970s, the Brookhaven MARTA station was built along Peachtree Street between North Druid Hills Road and Dresden Drive, displacing Voluparts and Norman’s. A new shopping center displaced Peachtree Salvage, and three story McMansions replaced the small houses that populated Indian Village. Today the hustle and bustle of Brookhaven stands in stark contrast to the quirky town center that existed along Peachtree Street during my earlier years yet I will always remember the quieter, quainter Brookhaven that made it special to me.