



Points East

By: Ike Adams

I'm writing this on Martin Luther King Day. I worked today, no disrespect for Dr. King intended, the same way I normally work on Columbus Day, President's Day, Veterans Day and most other times when the banks and government shut down to honor whomever. I usually do take off 4th of July because a figure that day symbolizes pretty much everything the other guys stood for.

And with that said, I'd like to reflect a little on this Holiday because it is at least as appropriate as the others and ought to be treated with the same dignity.

I'm more than a little put out by the comments some school superintendents had in yesterday's paper where they rationalized about why they had decided to hold classes on Martin Luther King Day. Some of them were legitimate. Holding classes on holidays to make up for or to hedge against days that will surely be lost to bad weather probably isn't a bad idea as long as there is no discrimination involved.

But what isn't legitimate is the notion that, as one superintendent put it, "we don't have many minorities

and the ones we do have don't mind us having school."

In other words there is at least one idiot dividing a superintendent's position of a public school system in Kentucky who believes that Martin Luther King Day should only be important to "minorities." I'll bet he's also wondering why the rest of the world considers Kentucky's public education system to be near the bottom of the heap.

The Civil Rights Movement that Dr. King organized and initiated will very likely be viewed by historians at the turn of the next century as the single, most important thing that happened in the one the just ended. It will probably take the rest of this century to eliminate bigotry from our society and at least several more generations but Martin Luther King is the person historians will point to first when discussions center around the subject of when America began buying into the fact that all people are created equal.

I have never been able to understand bigots. I went to college with 1500 people in Pikeville where I was,

surrounded by seemingly intelligent folks. They made excellent grades. Many of them went on to become respected doctors, attorneys, engineers and teachers. But in the fall of 1967 three young black men were recruited to join the men's varsity basketball team and given athletic scholarships.

I could not believe it when several of my classmates boycotted basketball games because three freshmen had skin that was not the same shade as theirs. I could not believe that normally level-headed people could harbor hatred the way I saw and heard it expressed to these guys. I cannot print in a family newspaper the names I was called because I hung out with them. Many of my peers attended the basketball games and cheered wildly but they refused to socialize or befriend the new members of the team. They spent a year at Pikeville College, much of it in fear for their well being. They did not return for their sophomore years and the blunt realization that they had been frightened away because of their skin color was the saddest lesson I learned in college.

I still don't understand it but I know that bigotry is rampant still in today's society. I know that it is ugly and I know that it is patently stupid for anyone to believe that he or she is better and more deserving of preferential treatment than somebody else simply because of the color of his or her skin. Bigotry has easily been the most profound and debilitating social

disease in our country's history. Martin Luther King beganto make us

believe that it had to be cured and he put this country on the road to that cure. Maybe the day will come when all Americans realize that we are all Americans and exactly what that means—that we all "be judged, not by

the color of our skin, but by the content of our character." There is at least one school superintendent in our state who hasn't quite yet grasped that simple concept and that's what scares me.

The over night trip by train to Ohio when I was five years old must have been the beginning of "Mama's box" where I began to store my experiences of life. For the new sights and sounds and smells of the train puffing up a mountain, gliding into a station in a strange town, the acid smell of smoke coming from the engines, or the smell of someone eating their lunch brought from home, but most of all I remember the beautiful Ohio River coming into view at the break of day. This was all new and enchanting to me. Just recently I had and I talked about this train trip, it was the first for both of us and his memories were a little different from mine. He remembered Mom holding and nursing the baby, Thelma. And how we cuddled on the seats to sleep. I also remembered when he saw Dad and Jim, our oldest brother, beside the train as we arrived. His reunion with dad was his happiest moment, and I think mine was when

Sweet and Sour

By Zi Graves



Memoirs of Childhood
Last week's article of special memories brought back others from somewhere in the almost forgotten past that Polly suggested I share with you.

On our way to the farm yesterday she opened Pandora's box of memories and they came tumbling out when she asked about other memories of my childhood I had stored away.

My childhood was one of moving often so the memories are a mixture of many different places; beginning in the hills of Kentucky, close to Olive Hill and sending in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, Mt. Vernon. The irony of this, I had never heard of Mt. Vernon, Kentucky, until I met Mat. Although there are not many miles separating Mt. Vernon and Olive Hill those few miles made a world of difference in our lifestyle. The people from Carter

County migrated North East, to the upper Ohio Valley and Pennsylvania, where bricklays, potteries and steam mills furnished hard work and fair wages for those needing work, including the migrants from the south. The ones from Rockcastle County headed for Cincinnati, Chicago, Detroit, Indianapolis and the big cities where factories were more abundant and living conditions much different. The big cities may have been more exciting but the crowded living conditions must have been a surprise to people seeking a living wage and a better way of life.

Our move was to an area where small towns filled the valleys along the banks of the Ohio River. Each of them having its own distinct identity. Streetscars, small red ones for local connections, and large yellow interurbans were used for transportation from farther away places. When we lived in Wellsville the interurbans connected Steubenville with East Liverpool, some fifty miles apart, and ran every hour, the local ones every fifteen minutes. These ran on tracks in the center of the highway within ten feet of our front yard. Across the alley in back of us was the steam mill that furnished the best paying jobs in the area. On the other side of the mill was the railroad and directly below that the Ohio River with steamboats and barges signaling their approach to the dam, "Number 8." It was an interesting location for a kid straight from the hills of Kentucky. I loved it.

I saw Jim running beside the tracks yelling to the top of his voice, Mommie, Mommie. He was only about sixteen years and had been gone from home and working at the brickyard for over a year. His leaving home to go to work was the reason for us being here. My dad was a family man and when Jim left home for a job in Ohio and didn't return during the year Dad would go around humming the song, "Oh where is my boy tonight," so he made up his mind to find out and caught the train for Ohio. He soon set out for us to join them and Ohio became our home.

The whole valley along the river was teeming with activity and every one who wanted work did so. Men did the strenuous back breaking work in the steel mills, brickyards and potteries. Women mostly worked in the potteries while older siblings or grandparents took care of the little ones. Remember back in those days, there was no such thing as a day care center. My sister, Polly, and my Dad worked at Homer Laughlin, a pottery located across the river in West Virginia. She hand painted china while Dad, as a kiln fireman, supervised the operation of the gas kilns. More about this area next week.

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Our Readers Write

Dear Editor:

I'd like to extend a thank you to every concerned citizen who has shown up at our Mt. Vernon City Council meetings recently, voicing their concerns about the proposed payroll/net profits tax that the council and Mayor are about to incorporate if the votes hold up for the second reading scheduled for the second meeting scheduled for our February monthly meeting.

Although it is down from 1.5% to .5% I still voted no and stated why before I voted. As one concerned taxpayer stated, "How are we supposed to trust the city that this money will go to pay off bills you already have or that it will go for something

like a city swimming pool?"

I stated I wanted a specific purpose put in the ordinance for the need for the tax and not just deposited in the General Fund where it could be spent for whatever the Mayor wants to do with it. The Mayor and clerk were still making changes on this ordinance at 7:30 p.m. Monday night when the scheduled time for the meeting was 7:00 p.m. Also I was told that a lawyer (John Clontz) had looked it over and it was O.K. He might have looked it over earlier, but I was sure the changes made after he looked it over? When I asked why he wasn't attending our meeting, I didn't get an answer.

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