

# "Those Days Are Gone Forever"---By George Ham

The scene opens at the home of the James Reynolds in the year 1990. Since tonight is the night that James Reynolds, Jr., is to graduate from high school, the entire household is astir. John Reynolds, the grandfather, is seated in the large armchair, entirely oblivious to the surrounding commotion. Mary, the mother, is rushing around looking for something.

MARY REYNOLDS (walking into the room hurriedly): Oh, my goodness! Where is my hat? Here it is nearly 7:30 and we are not ready yet!

JAMES, JR.: Oh, Mom! Where is my cap and gown? I left them at the head of the stairs and someone has misplaced them.

MOTHER: Oh, nonsense! Will you never learn to hang your things up? They are in the closet in the back room. (to Annette) Now, Annette, remember not to smile at your brother while he is on the stage. You know how easily it is to make him mad with your silly acting. I do so want him to look reserved to-night. Now run up stairs and tell your father to hurry. Now, father (to grandfather), are you sure you will be all right while we are gone? I wish you could go with us. We will be right back immediately after the exercises, so don't get worried.

GRANDPA: Oh, run along, I'll be all right. (Groan.) But if it wasn't for this lumbago and cold, I'd be right along with ye.

FATHER (enters): All right, Mary, I'm ready. Let's go. (Pause as they leave.) So long, Dad; we'll be right back. (Door slams.)

GRANDPA: I was graduating once. I'll never forget that moment when I walked down the aisle, grabbed the sheepskin with one hand and waved goodbye with the other (cackles). (Pause.) You sure don't realize what a good time you used to have until you get off by yourself and think about it.

Someone knocks.  
JOHN: Come in.  
Enters old man and lady.  
JOHN: Come in, Jack and Sarah, (rising to meet them.)

SARAH: Now, sit back down, John. We don't want to cause you any trouble with your lumbago. We just thought we'd drop in to sit a spell while your folks have gone off to get Jim graduated. (They sit down.)

JOHN: I was just sittin' here before you came in, thinkin' back when we were graduatin'. You know, you and Jack and I were in the same class.

SARAH: Isn't it the truth? I'll tell you, Jack, but you went to the health room a week before you found out it wasn't a class.

SARAH: Now, Jackson H. Smith, that's enough out of you.  
JACK: Yes, pet.  
JOHN: I'll never forget the officers we elected the first year. Now there was Jabie Heyward, who was elected president. Even though he didn't come up to the bag in your pants, that boy could ever more preside!

SARAH: And there was James Crone, vice president; Jack Wharton, secretary; and George Ham, treasurer. The cheer leaders were Reese Bailey and Norene Johnson. Jabie even decided that he didn't feel like waiting a couple of years longer to exercise his executive powers, so he became vice president of the Club Federation. That boy was destined to go places and do things before he finished those four years.

JACK: Pet, may I put in a word?  
SARAH: Yes, you may. But be sure it is pertinent to the occasion, and when I say pertinent I don't mean impertinent.

JACK: Well, I think it was pretty tough when James Heyward and James Crone got defeated in the Giddens' Cup semi-finals. They were two mighty fine speakers.

JOHN: Isn't it the truth? But they had three more years to get revenge in and so that little set-back didn't daunt them. Oh, yes, and there was the school supplement drive we staged with the other classes. Because of the depression we had along in 1932-33 our school term was shortened, our teachers received great pay cuts, our library suffered badly, our classrooms were crowded and, in general, we had just the worst conditions possible for turning out well-educated students. But we students, realizing just what such conditions were doing to our future, and our parents, knowing the importance of good education, staged a drive for such a supplement for our school. The supplement was acquired through the levying of a small property tax. (Pause.) And then there was the sophomore year. We started out strong by selecting officers. Now let's see. It sorta skips my mind just who those officers were. Jack, how about going over to the bookcase and getting those bound volumes of the HI NEWS. They'll give us the information we need if anything will.

JACK: Sure thing. (He goes to the bookcase and gets the volumes.)

JOHN (after inspecting the volumes): Ah, here it is. George Ham, president; Bobbie Anne Sanborn, vice president; Frances Coward, secretary; James Crone, treasurer; and Evelyn O'Brien, cheerleader.

James Crone and George Ham defeated the Freshmen in the semi-finals of the Giddens' Cup debate. However, the Juniors, who were competing in the finals for the first time, in turn defeated them.

JACK (looking at the volume): Our boys didn't confine themselves to scholarship. Why, I think we had as good a set of athletes as any other school in North Carolina. The year I went out for baseball Thomas Snyper and Speed Hollowell received letters. And then there were the track and swimming teams. Dick Daughtry and George Ham received letters in track as runner and manager respectively; Bob Dawson received one in swimming and Robert Thigpen and Claiborne Pate in football.

SARAH (taking up a volume and blowing the dust off it): You should take better care of these HI NEWS. You know very well what a lot of work and time it took to make them. You should look at them more. The very idea of letting dust collect on the tops of such valuable books. We had some pioneering journalists in our class. Remember the HI NEWS, Jr.? As good a little paper as ever smelled of printer's ink and put out entirely on the resources of our journalism class. Yes, sirree, we were mighty proud of it. Not only did we learn how a paper was put out, but we were able to make enough on the advertising and circulation to pay for it. Here's a list of the staff. (Shuffles pages.) James Heyward was editor, Ridley Whitaker and Reese Bailey were associate editors, Ross Ward was sports editor, and Helen Moye and Nancy Pipkin were feature editors. Harry Hollingsworth was circulation manager; Ed Luke, advertising manager; George Ham, business manager; and Jack Wharton, Club Editor.

JACK: I hate to interrupt you, pet, but we progressed along art and drama as well as journalism. Homer Ball was attracting a good deal of attention with his pictures of Will Rogers and of "The Torn Hat." Also in the "Birds' Christmas Carol" Frances Coward gained recognition as Eily and James Heyward as Don. (Pause.) Very well,

pet, you may continue.

SARAH: While we were sophomores the school held its first school fair. Almost every subject taught at high school was represented at the fair. The purpose of the fair was to give the parents an insight into the work we were doing out at high school. I surely believe it accomplished its purpose.

JOHN: Sarah, let's see that '36-'37 volume there. I think we can find some very interesting material there.

Ah, here are the officers we selected for our junior year. William Thompson, president; Ted Burwell, vice president; Jean Edgerton, secretary; Harry Hollingsworth, treasurer; Jimmie Weathers, cheerleader. My, but we had a hard-working group of officers that year! And with a big schedule consisting of plays, socials, not to mention the regular duties of a class, we surely needed a wide-awake group of officers. I wouldn't be wrong in attributing a large part of our success to the work of our officers.

SARAH: Sakes alive, here's a list of those who participated in the Christmas play the Juniors gave: Ross Ward, James Heyward, Ridley Whitaker, Oscar Williams, Laura Helms, Evelyn O'Brien, Harry Hollingsworth, Helen Moye, Claiborne Pate, Genevieve Hodgkin and Anne Holmes.

JACK: Yes, (looking at the papers): James Crone debated with James Heyward for his third time as a participant in the Giddens' debates. Unfortunately, we tried time to the Atlantic Coastline. The coach Westray and Lassiter Bell

my play school. Congratulations to the Seniors  
NEIL JOSEPH

was ours. There was enough talent in that class for two Junior Plays. I remember Jabie Heyward as Paul Hollis, taking the leading part; and there were Scottie Dameron, Mary Louise Schweikert, Harriet Noel, Frances Coward, Harry Lee Thompson, James Crone, Anni Staps, Betty Carrere, Helen Moye and Jack Wharton.

JOHN: George Ham was chief marshal in our junior year, wasn't he?  
SARAH: Yes, he was, and here is a list of the assistant marshals: James Heyward, Margaret Peacock, Bobbie Anne Sanborn, James Crone, Ross Ward, Jean Edgerton, Anni Staps, Ruby Whitley, Sarah Cox, Tilly Horton and Nancy Pipkin.

JACK: Don't let us forget about the Junior-Senior Reception! That was an affair I'll not forget; and I've been forgetting things for well nigh seventy years now. A mere passing thought of the occasion brings back happy memories. James Crone led the big-eaters, who saw to it that all platters were empty and the waitresses not wanting for requests for seconds. In addition to the swell entertainment provided by the program committee, we had a fine time dancing.

JOHN: In sports we were tops. Outstanding juniors in track were Dick Daughtry, Percy Thigpen, Eddie Mansour, Joe Pearson, and Jim Manly. In swimming there were Robert Dawson, Jimmie Weathers; in baseball, Claiborne Pate and Hardy Lee Thompson; in tennis, James Crone and James Heyward.

SARAH: The staff allowed its junior members to put out the HI NEWS all by themselves. Those juniors who supervised the editing of the paper were Ridley Whitaker, Nancy Pipkin, Ross Ward, Helen Moye, Harry Hollingsworth, James Crone, James Heyward, Mary Louise Schweikert, Bobbie Anne

Sanborn, Harriet Noell, Jean Edgerton, George Ham, and Edward Luke.

JOHN: That was the year the Student Association was in its infancy. We elected James Heyward in the spring as president of the Association to serve during the coming year. There were several others of our class who held offices. James Crone was vice president; Scottie Dameron, corresponding secretary; and Harry Hollingsworth, treasurer.

SARAH: When we were seniors, the following year, several members of our class were chairmen of important Association committees. William Norris was chairman of the Athletic Committee; Bobbie Anne Sanborn, Activities Committee; James Crone, Assembly Committee; Betty Carrere, Lost and Found Committee; Jane Smith, Cafeteria Committee; Joe Pearson, Property Committee.

JOHN: Jack, you know I'm not an exponent of betting, but if you'll name our senior officers without referring to the HI NEWS, I'll make you a present of a dollar bill.

JACK: Brother, start digging it out! Ross Ward was president; Jim Manly, vice president; Sarah Cox, treasurer; Helen Moye, cheerleader; and, ah, let's see, (pause) ah um (Sarah pinches him.) re hurting.

What? You mean to say GOLDSB... You are hoirtin'— That's her name! on was the secretary. (Takes YOU. I need to get that hat at Emerson's.

JOHN: You certainly surprised me. Your memory's not so bad after all. (Pause.) Or Sarah's either. (Laughs.) (Pause.) That senior year two of our members were voted the most representative students at GHS: Helen Moye and James Heyward. Both deserved it. They had been very active in school work.

JACK: Speaking of active students, we had several class members selected to the NHS on a basis of scholarship, service, character, and leadership. They were Jean Edgerton, James Heyward, James Crone, Jack Wharton, Ross Ward, Jane Smith, William Thompson, George Ham, Bobbie Anne Sanborn, Helen Moye.

SARAH: Don't let's forget the Hobo Convention which we sponsored. Everyone had an excellent time seeing its fan dancers and grave diggers. And, to top things off, we cleared a nice little sum of money. Another social event of our senior year was the Senior Banquet. All the girls came dressed in their evening gowns and the boys in their Sunday suits. In addition to having a fine time, we were able to get acquainted with all those seniors with whom we had been associating, but never really knew.

JOHN: We had several seniors on the HI NEWS Staff. They were Helen Moye, who was editor; Nancy Pipkin, associate editor; Harry Hollingsworth, managing editor; Bobbie Anne Sanborn, feature editor; Ross Ward, sports editor; Jean Edgerton, alumni editor; Angeline Casey and Tilly Horton,

staff artists; Marjorie Westray, staff typist; Ed Luke, business manager.

SARAH: We had nearly all of the athletic captains the senior year. Speed Hollowell was the captain of the football team; Jim Manly, and Dick Daughtry, track team; Jimmie Weathers, swimming team; Gorman Lawrence, basketball team.

JACK: Our football team emerged victorious at the end of the season with ten victories and no defeats. We did not have a chance at the state crown since we were not in a conference.

JOHN: You can't talk of sports and leave our swimming team out. Why they won the state championship both our junior and senior years! Our swimmers were some of the best in the south.

SARAH: In music the boys' quartet was outstanding. Two of the members were seniors. Let's see, they were James Harris and Jack Wharton.

JOHN: During our Senior year the school held Open House to replace the School Fairs of previous years. For about three days we gave parents the liberty of the building and showed them the work we had been doing in the classrooms. Also we gave a program on the last night of the Open House presenting outstanding chapel programs of the year.

I believe that was the year we had an addition to our building. That building addition surely lightened the crowded conditions of our classrooms. Why, before it was built, we had classes in the auditorium, the lunch room, the boiler room, and even the base.

JACK: And THEN we graduated! We waved good-bye to the friends we'd made these four years, and left; some to go to college and some to work.

SARAH: Oh, dear, (looking at the clock). Here it is almost 9:30, way past Jack's bed time. We must be going.

JACK (leaving): And to think we used to go to parties and come in at the wee hours of the morning.

SARAH: Well, good-bye, John. We've enjoyed it.

JOHN: Goodbye. Come again.

(Pause.) Yes, sir, those were the good old days. I'll never forget that night of graduation. Boy, we set a precedent and gave a play on Democracy. Let's see now. Who received those prizes that were given? There was a Weil prize, the Royall essay prize, the American History prize. Who got those prizes? Goodness sakes, the HI NEWS doesn't carry it. My memory must be going bad. I'll think about it for a couple of days. Maybe it'll come back. (Enter Mother, Father, Son.)

MOTHER: How did you get along while we were gone?

JOHN: Oh, some of my school chums dropped in and we had a little chat.

MOTHER: Well, James was graduated. And now he insists on going to the Commencement dance. We never thought of such a thing in my day.

GRANDPA: Yeah.

MOTHER: What was that?  
GRANDPA: Oh, nothing! Just my cough coming on again.

FATHER: Let's go to bed, Father; you need all the rest possible in your condition.

GRANDPA: Very well. Leave as curtain closes.