



Discussing the theatre with Miss Christians are Lynn Williams and Mary Wharton, members of the Salem Academy Dramatics Club.

Actress Charms Audience and Interviewer

by Joan Carter Read

A glamorous theatre star is not always what you expect her to be. She may maintain her stage glamour or she may not; she may be too-too sophisticated or she may not; she may be completely overbearing or she may not—as for Mady Christians the nays had it. She was not.

From the time she arrived at the train station until she made her entrance on the platform of Memorial Hall Miss Christians was relaxed, gracious, and at home. She might easily have been a casual acquaintance instead of a star of stage, radio, screen and television.

She was amused with her experience with racial segregation on the train and dumbfounded by the southern accents she encountered—

"It's like another language". She said that she was delighted to see clean cars and clean streets again after the New York water shortage. In fact she got so desperate about the dirt on her car that she went out to the country and washed it herself!

From behind a cup of Russian tea and over a long black cigarette holder she told students that an actress has no favorite part; her favorite is usually her current role. Miss Christian's last role was that of the wife in Strindberg's "The Father" and she preferred that to "I Remember Mama" which she played 2080 times! Also in case you've been wondering, Mady is pronounced as if it were Mary.

But "on stage" Miss Christians was a different and variable person.

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The Hill

I wish you could see the place where I lived thirteen years ago. It is one of South Carolina's smallest incorporated communities, Society Hill. I would not take anything for the year and a half that I lived there, and I never think of those eighteen months without a feeling of nostalgia.

Every minute of the day was filled with a new experience. On Saturday, free from school, we raced to the general store with our pennies for candy. On hot, sultry, summer days we splashed around in the mill pond, and in the evenings we followed our dad to the barn and caught the cow's warm, foamy milk in coca-cola bottles and drank it contentedly.

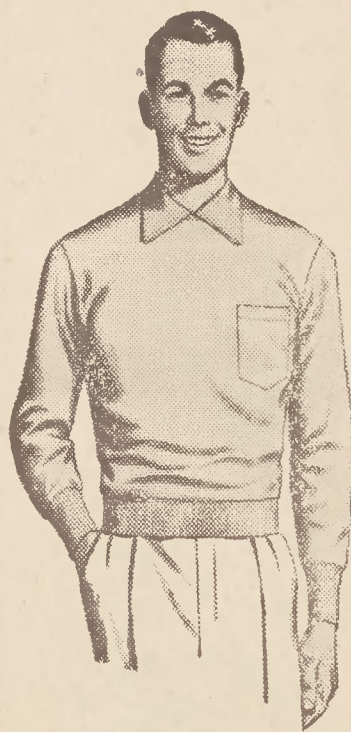
On rainy days we retreated to the attic. There were three rooms paneled in wide pine boards. The people who had lived there before us had left the rooms cluttered. In one there was a life size doll which frightened me. I never felt safe in the attic until the doll had been taken out and burned. There was also a tiny Chinese tea set which, to my dismay, was considered too precious for me to play with. I suppose the most valuable thing was a tall grandfather's clock which had been left lying flat on the floor. The face had delicate flowers painted on it, but the color was peeling. How well I remember leaning over that face, which struck me as being sad, and wondering why the clock would not run. I

never noticed that the works had been removed.

There was a colored boy named Tiola Bruce who worked for us. We promptly nicknamed him "T-Bone". To our childish sense of humor this was ridiculously funny. "T-Bone" could do anything. He cooked and cleaned. He chopped wood. He kept the yard immaculate. He particularly delighted in telling us stories. His imagination was ingenious, and under his spell we met kings, beggars, fairy godmothers, and Santa Claus. When we moved back to North Carolina, "T-Bone" came with us. He worked for us a while longer and then moved on to another job. I don't know what happened to him then.

One of our favorite sports in the fall was "skiing". This was not skiing in the usual sense of the word, but a game of our own invention. Early in the afternoon we flew from the house, tore across the gray stubble field, and scurried into the woods. Here we slowed down to a walk. It was quiet except for our steps crunching on the leaves. An occasional chirp of a bird sounded, and the sun through the trees made patches on our heads. Then at last we were there. We did our skiing on a small hill cushioned with a thick layer of pine needles. With coarse string we tied barrel slats to our feet and were ready for the take-off. Away we went over the slick needles!

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