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Biographical Sketch

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Carrie Ford's Barbeque

Linda G. English, Ph.D.
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Carrie Ford made the best barbecue in town, in Prescott, Nevada County, and southwest Arkansas. In the early 60's, I was not quite school age and could usually get Daddy (owner and operator of Brown's Grocery and Station) to take me to Miss Carrie's for a sandwich. The much anticipated sandwich was chopped pork, probably loin or shoulder with a sweet Carolina-style Sauce. The treasure was served on white bread, what Miss Carrie called, "light bread", with coleslaw on top. Miss Carrie would always cut mine in quarters and supplied a fork lest a stray morsel escape.

The roasting and smoking wood had to be aged hickory, and the sauce was a multigenerational, family secret known only to Carrie Ford. I happen to know the sauce was vinegar based, and the most precious ingredient was Jack Daniel's Black Label. I know because Daddy always slipped Miss Carrie a fifth each time she asked. What I remember most is the joy of sharing food that Miss Carrie had lovingly prepared and visiting with the characters who frequented the dining establishment located just on the edge of a dangerous part of town.

There was no telling who would be there when we arrived, whether city or county officials, police officers, or just plain ole community folks. If I couldn't get Daddy to take me to Miss Carrie's, Mother's only brother and my favorite uncle, Loyd, would. Uncle Loyd was retired military, a twenty-year man with a medical discharge. He moved home to live with his mother and my grandmother, Mabel Dickerson Arnold, as his years in the Service ended. Uncle Loyd had a wonderful scandalous past, allegedly having been married five times and having lived with numerous women. He was a rounder, but a safe rounder, who could be trusted with a

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young and impressionable child. They lived next door to the store and our home. He and Daddy were two of my best friends and confidants in childhood.

With the help of Daddy and Uncle Loyd, I managed to eat with Miss Carrie at least twice a week for most of my childhood and early adolescence. By the time I learned to drive, I could drive myself to see Miss Carrie on my way home from Henderson on Friday afternoons. Mother always worried about me being in that part of town alone. I knew, with Miss Carrie around, no one would hurt or harm me; she would see to it.

Miss Carrie Ford was in her fifties, rotund and slightly stooped at the waist. She wore crisply ironed shirtwaist dresses with a white apron. The pockets of the apron held her ticket book on the left and a paper towel on the right. Each time she stirred the sauce, the baked beans, or the potato salad, she rinsed the spoon, dried it with the paper towel and returned the paper towel to her pocket. She was meticulous in her food preparation and caring in her plating and service of the food.

Miss Carrie was the color of milky coffee. Her smooth skin fell in folds from her jaw line and chin decorated with light brown freckles and tiny black moles. Her salt and pepper hair was drawn into two side braids, woven and attached, just above and behind her ears. She always smelled of whatever just came out of the oven or off the stove, and faintly of lavender scented soap and cologne, with just a touch of whisky and a pinch of snuff. When she hugged me, she gathered me within the folds of her clothing, and I felt loved and treasured.

In addition to the best barbecue in town, Miss Carrie's was the hub of activity, particularly in the African-American part of town. In those days, there were two black towns, one called Old Town to the southwest of the town that I was not allowed to enter at all. Old Town began just behind the home of Doff and Allene Morrow's, Granny's friends and confidants. Granny and I were frequent visitors to the Morrow home, much to Mother's disapproval. The other settlement was north of town and called New Town; that was where Miss Carrie Ford's barbecue place was located. I was only allowed to go there during the day. Miss Carrie lived and served just on the edge of danger in this dangerous part of town. In retrospect, she and Granny did this on purpose. As far as I know, neither were ever harmed or even threatened. All folks respected Miss Carrie.

When I first began going to Miss Carrie's, I was not aware of the racial tension and the Civil Rights issues going on all around me. Miss Carrie served and taught daily about the plight of her people living during these troublesome times.

I can remember going to the Prescott Hardware on Saturdays or weekdays (before I started to school) with Daddy and being amazed at the items in those little glass squares which held nuts, bolts, and washers of every kind. Those small bins were just high enough for me to see into, but not low enough for me to reach. I remember the screw and nail display, which were bought and sold by the pound. The sizes ranged from upholstery tacks to railroad spikes. I can remember wondering if that is what they used to fasten Christ to the cross. At the front of the store, the brides registered their selections for gifts for their bridal showers. I remember picking out my stoneware pattern as a child, Blue Willow with matching cobalt water goblets. I purchased it and placed them within my hope chest, and I still have them today. [The old Prescott Hardware building has fallen into disrepair. The City of Prescott has applied and received a grant to begin restoration, beginning with a new roof.]

In the hardware store, there was a water fountain. I was taught to not drink from water

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fountains in general and to be careful where you placed your mouth (germs, disease and all that). There was a sign (before I could read) which said Whites on one side and Coloreds on the other. This particular day, I tried to drink from the wrong side. Daddy was busy moving me to the other side with me wiggling and protesting the whole time. I wanted to drink from the left side, unknowingly labeled Coloreds. Needless to say, I did not get a drink that morning and was told “we will discuss this in the truck on the way home.” The truck was a 1963 red-over-white Ford pickup with custom made cattle frames.

Safely in the sanctuary of our truck, I asked Daddy, “What the sign said?” He replied, “In the Hardware, we drink on one side and coloreds have to drink on the other.” With tears welling, I sobbed, “that means Muggin (my Nanny and family friend) and Miss Carrie cannot drink out of the same water fountain I can, remembering the countless meals both women had prepared and served the family. Daddy tried to placate me, saying, “Well, you know Mother and I do not like for you to drink from water fountains anyway.” It didn’t work, but I let the issue pass for then. Daddy didn’t. “Maybe we just don’t need to drink from that fountain if that is how the Pittman’s feel about Muggin and Miss Carrie,” concluded Daddy. That seemed to satisfy me, and we went on.

Within days of the incident at Prescott Hardware, Daddy and I made our weekly sojourn to Miss Carrie’s for a sandwich with slaw, cut into quarters with crinkle cut dill pickles on the side. I always got a real coke in a real coke glass with soft crushed ice and a straw. Now we had cokes in the store, mind you; they were just not as good as the ones Miss Carrie made. She always placed a maraschino cherry or a slice of lemon, or lime, in my glass.

As we approached the front porch and entrance, there was a sign over a new side entryway which stated: Whites Only. As Daddy and I tried to enter via the front door, Miss Carrie barred our way physically and pointed to the sign and new dining area. No words, just gestures and a serious and stern expression. Several customers from the black community were already seated upon the barstools at the bar, already enjoying their sandwiches and rib plates.

Daddy and I dutifully obliged. As Daddy and I took our seats at the back corner of the eatery, Miss Carrie spoke directly to me. She took me by the hand and said, “This is not your fight, chil’.” You did not cause this, and if I have anything to do with it, you will not inherit this fight.” Your daddy has to sit there, but you may sit where ever you’d like.” She raised a place in the bar between the newly designated area and the bar that I might pass through to the front of the restaurant. She finished with, “You may even get your food and go in yonder and watch television if you’d like. One day, you will remember this day and will know just what to say and do. Today is not that day and this is not your fight. Be at peace, chil’; be at peace.”

Even as a child, I realized the significance of what Carrie Ford was doing to, for, and with me. I gently replied that if it was OK with Miss Carrie, I’d like to sit with Daddy and eat just like always. She smiled sweetly, lifted the place in the bar once more, and we ordered and ate our meal as we had done countless times. This time, we finished our meal a little wiser, with a little more understanding and tolerance for the paths and journey of others.

In the simplicity and loving kindness of a fine old black woman beat one of the bravest and most fierce hearts I ever knew. She was the first Civil Rights activist that I ever knew personally. Daily, she lived, loved, taught, and guided all who came into her presence and under her influence.

As I aged, grew, and matured, I continued to drive myself to Miss Carrie’s for a barbecue

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sandwich on Friday afternoons on my way home from Henderson. I got to where I would just come through the front door just like black folks.

One of those days, when I was around 20 years old, a young black man commented to Miss Carrie that I apparently “didn’t know my place.” Miss Carrie leaned across the counter, gathered his shirt at his throat in her right hand and said, “I raised that one, and she can sit where ever she pleases.” When he offered no resistance, she released her grip and smoothed his shirt collar. Carrie continued with, “This is not her fight nor yours, neither. You or she will not inherit this, if I can help it. I raised both of you the same way. It won’t do no good to fight among ourselves. Neither of you is the enemy to the other. I will not tolerate one mistreating the other, neither.”

The teachable moment had arrived and Carrie's soliloquy began with, “I am a counting on Linda and you. When the time comes, you and she will know what to say and do. Ya’ll will not forget Carrie Ford and the principles that I lived before you.” Carrie ended her homily with a blessing and prophecy. “I have spoken 'words of blessing' over you all the days of your life. They will take root and grow, long after I am gone.”

Watching all of this transpire, I lifted the place in the bar and slipped quietly into the corner seat, at the corner table, in the back dining area. Miss Carrie just smiled.

Today, I teach the multicultural class at Henderson State University every fall. I was raised by loving parents and a host of caring community folks of all colors, creeds and walks-of life. Carrie Ford stands beside, within, and in front of me, still showing the way.

Thanks to Carrie Ford, I eat barbecue at least once a week, and twice, if I can arrange it on my way home from Henderson at Allen’s in Gurdon.

I do not know if I have made the difference that Carrie so carefully planted, watered, and predicted. I know that I will continue to live her truth and teachings every day. She purposed that I would know what to say and do when the time comes. The writing of this story is the continuance of blessing, the fulfillment of prophecy, and the keeping of a promise made many years ago in childhood.

Today, in preparation for the writing of this story, I spoke with Mrs. Barbara Allen about the Allen’s famous barbeque sauce. What she shared is that it is a “family secret and has been for many years.” She did share it is vinegar based. Then she leaned forward and said, “The secret ingredient is love,” hesitated a moment and then finished with, “and prayer.”

On my way out, I approached Miss Margaret Burton, head cook and resident wise woman, and asked what is the secret of Allen’s Sauce? Miss Margaret replied, “It’s not just throwing something together and hoping it turns out OK; it’s about caring what it tastes like and looks like to others.” Just for a moment, I saw Carrie Ford and heard her sweet voice.

Today, as I finished my meal in the corner seat of the corner table at the back of the restaurant with the Allen family and crew nearby and tending, it dawned on me that the most precious ingredient surrounds me today as it did in childhood. The most precious ingredient in Carrie Ford’s barbeque was Carrie Ford.

Biographical Sketch

Linda G. (Brown) English is a native of Prescott, Arkansas. She taught for twelve years within the public schools of southwest Arkansas prior to returning to her alma mater, Henderson State University in 2001 to teach. Currently, Linda is Professor of Counselor Education in the Teachers College of her beloved Henderson.

Linda has been published in numerous regional, state and national publications, both professional journals and socio-cultural venues including *The Old Time Chronicle*, *The Southern Standard*, *The Journal of Poetry Therapy* and *Tales from the South*.

Linda lives in the farmhouse, which is the setting for many of her stories with Buford and Babe, her silver-point tabby and black Labrador retriever, respectively.

Evaluation of the Dirichlet Integral by a Fourier Transform Method

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Abstract. The improper integral

$$\int_0^{\infty} \frac{\sin x}{x} dx$$

is known as the Dirichlet integral, named after Johann Peter Gustav Lejeune Dirichlet (1805-1859), a German mathematician. In this article, we will show, by using a Fourier transform method indirectly, that

$$\int_0^{\infty} \frac{\sin x}{x} dx = \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

Introduction

The function $h(x) = \frac{\sin x}{x}$ crops up in undergraduate and graduate mathematics courses. It is called a sinc function and is written as

$$\text{sinc } x = \frac{\sin x}{x}.$$

The sinc function has many interesting properties. In this article, we evaluate the Dirichlet integral, $\int_0^{\infty} \frac{\sin x}{x} dx$, associated with the sinc function, by using a Fourier transform method. We will conclude by sketching a proof that

$$\int_0^{\infty} \frac{\sin^2 x}{x^2} dx = \frac{\pi}{2}.$$

Basic Definitions

Definition 1 (R. K. Nagle, E.B. Saff & A.D. Snider [3], p. 355) A function f is said to be piecewise continuous on the interval $[a, b]$ if f is continuous at every point in $[a, b]$ except possibly for a finite number of points at which f has a jump discontinuity. A function f is said to be piecewise continuous on the interval $[0, \infty)$ if f is piecewise continuous on the interval $[0, \alpha]$ for all $\alpha > 0$.

Definition 2 A function f is said to be absolutely integrable on the interval $(-\infty, \infty)$ if