

Martha's brother, Sam, reflects on his childhood in New Bern in a note to their mother. The following is a portion of that note.

### Growing Up In "A Great Little Town", New Bern, North Carolina

- Rivers (not just one but two, Trent and Neuse)
- and creeks
- and boats, we always had boats
- a big tank with plenty of gas for the boat, right in the yard
- and skiing from sunrise to sunset
- and swimming from sunrise to sunset,
- great sunrises over the river at breakfast if you were up early enough to see it,
- the Milky Way at night was so bright I remember once being REALLY scared that God was signaling He was ready to come straighten things out on the earth right NOW, I ran home as fast as I could because I knew He would straighten ME out also.
- geese and duck, owls hooting at night, frogs and crickets singing at night, fireflies in a jar, Junebugs flying on a string, fish and crabs, a giant turtle on the crab line, an alligator near our dock and even once there was a shark warning for the Trent River
- woods everywhere to play in,
- We had camps everywhere in the woods, foxholes, tree houses, forts
- I was a soldier, explorer, a cowboy, Davy Crockett—whatever I wanted to be
- My friend Roddy and I built sails for his dingy and sailed it on the river –sort of .
- We built a raft and it sort of floated –until we got on it.
- We each had telescopes and were astronomers.
- Once we were archeologists and thought we found an Indian burial mound. Actually it was a burial mound for an old mule, maybe from the plantation nearby. We dug it up, took the remains to his house and tried to assemble all the bones. His dad came home and gave us both tetanus shots and made us get rid of the skeleton. .
- We had huge July Fourth picnics on the beach at our house with fireworks (REAL fireworks, not sparklers and bottle rockets)
- Pop taught me to respect guns when I was a very little kid. He taught me ALL guns were ALWAYS loaded and to never hold one without checking and NEVER point one at something you do not intend to shoot. Real guns were not toys. I shot guns when I was a kid and never killed myself or anyone else because we had real "gun control" at our house—proper training for responsible handling of all weapons.
- We had NO FENCES to keep us in our yard—ever
- There was no rule to make me stay in the yard unless I was in trouble
- We had a yard big enough for a baseball field
- and a basketball court
- We lived in a nice town where a kid could ride a bicycle anywhere and not have to worry about being kidnapped by a pervert
- and just about anyone would go out of their way to help someone else's child
- I was not aware of any crazy people to worry about (except Shootin' Nxxxxx Hxxxxx, and that was an adventure when he came after us. We barely escaped.).
- I hitch-hiked home from middle school nearly every day and never worried about who was picking me up.
- I never met a stranger.
- We really had a really great little town.

