



NABS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF BLACK STORYTELLERS
"In The Tradition..."

SPREAD THE WORD

National Association of Black Storytellers

P.O. Box 67722

Baltimore, Maryland 21215

www.nabsinc.org

Spring 2016

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1919-2007

Mama Linda Goss

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Photo: JT Smith

Dear NABS Family,

Peace and Blessings!

My bells of love and healing are ringing!

Ring-a-ling-ling!

TO LOOK UPON THE BEAUTY OF THIS DAY

Ants on the counter

Anansi in the mailbox

Caterpillar on the geranium leaf

AND PONDER ABOUT THE MYSTERIES OF LIFE.

Hares nibble on sweet grass

Tiger swallowtail flit across my eyes

Cherry blossom pebbles lay at my feet

SPRING tugs my ear

"I don't have time for your musings

SUMMER is coming early this year

I GOT WORK TO DO!"

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Peace and Blessings NABS Family,

My oh My oh My... What a Membership we have!

Through our stories we impact the world

With our love we care for one another

We connect, We make a difference, We Do.

Steeped in the African Oral Tradition

Members widen the outreach of NABS each and every day

We endear ancestral memory, We open third eyes, sharing old, telling anew

Blessed with our God-given gifts, we touch souls and elevate minds

And yes, our quilt is woven with research, authority, and knowledge

We are on purpose, We know the mission, We are story-true

Even when the tales stretch beyond belief

And laughter rises to heal

We are on point, We are present, We are Black Storytellers through and through.

I honor being able to thank each and every NABS member for being your
"fantabulistic" selves!

That's right we can do that.....make up words and such... We be Black Storytellers

As Always, Remembrance, Reverence and Respect to the Shoulders we Stand Upon!
Enjoy this stellar edition of Spread the Word!

Much Love and Many Stories,
Karen "Queen Nur" Abdul-Malik
President

“In the Tradition...” the 34th Annual National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference

The Way We Tell It Is the Way it Is!

Jambo, Storytellers! Get ready! Pack your bags! Bring your shekere and your djembe! It's that time again. We're going to congregate, testify and jubilate. From November 2-6, at the Wyndham Philadelphia Historic District hotel, storytellers, story listeners and story lovers will gather for the “In the Tradition...” 34th Annual National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference. Festival goers will have an opportunity to experience a tour of historical sites, on Wednesday, November 2nd, including the Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church, founded by Richard Allen in 1794.

National Youth Co-Director, Mother Elisha Minter's Youth Program will focus on a Tribute to the Elders and the Ancestors and introduce the youth to stories told by Mother Mary Carter Smith, Brother Blue and Elders in our storytelling community. The youth will also tour some of the historic sites in Old City Philadelphia.

Ceremony, ritual, concerts, workshops, smiles, songs, hugs, food and more. Because it is a NABS Festival! Because “The Way We Tell It is the Way it Is!”

See you in Philly!

Sis. Dr. Caroliese Frink Reed
Festival Director, 2016

TAHIRA
Local Director, 2016



NABS NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM - COLLEGIATE AFFILIATES

NABS Board of Directors during their February 2016 board meeting approved a new National Program entitled Collegiate Affiliates. The Collegiate Affiliates National Director is Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley. The National Program's purpose is to establish Collegiate Storytelling Affiliate organizations on university and college campuses that will preserve and promote the art of storytelling and the oral tradition of African/African American storytelling.

We have started the process for establishing and chartering our first Collegiate Storytelling Association at Howard University, Washington, DC. The organization's official name will be Howard Collegiate Storytelling Association. The organization will be an approved and recognized campus organization by the university. Our goal is to charter Howard Collegiate Storytelling Association as our first Collegiate Affiliate during the 2016 Festival/Conference in Philadelphia, PA in November.

The establishment of collegiate affiliates was one of my goals during my tenure as National President. I am so excited to make my dream a reality. Collegiate Affiliates will help to bridge our multi-generational storytelling family that is rich with knowledge, experience and maturity. It will also create expansion in our membership base.

Submitted by
Cheryl “Sparkle” Mosley
Collegiate Affiliates National Director

YOUTH STATEMENT

PROFILE ON NABS YOUTH MEMBER

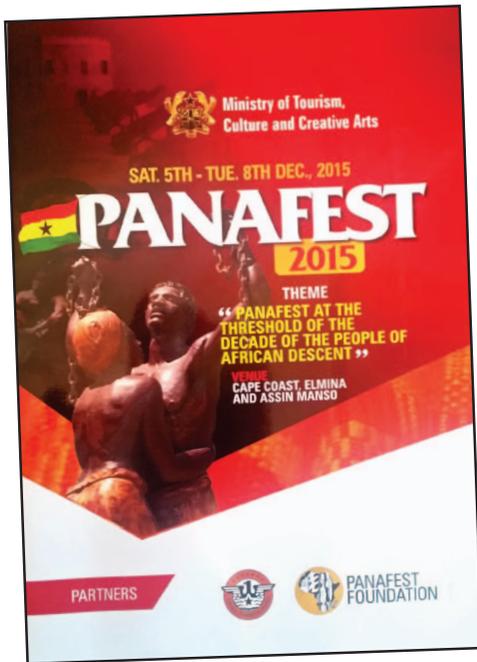


ELIJAH JOEL-AULS

The National Association of Black Storytellers gave me opportunities to connect with my culture. Whenever I go to a NABS event, I learn something about my people and our culture. There are always well informed teachers and entrepreneurs who share their knowledge in an interesting way. Whether it is art styles, drum making, or traditional stories, I can always be certain that I will learn something at NABS.

The featured storytellers are very engaging and proficient in their craft. The best part is that every story is a piece of my culture! It's really inspiring to hear both fictional tales and factual accounts that give a glimpse into a culture which is often overlooked. Also, the tellers are always willing to help aspiring storytellers both in storytelling and with life lessons.

Storytelling, to me, is the most effective way to convey important and culturally significant ideas. Besides, it is the first way we were all taught, by being told fictional tales that carry an important message. Being able to create stories and learning the stories of others is important to me because it allows those stories to live on through me and allows me to be able to interact with my culture in an all-important, but often forgotten way.



We went to represent the National Association of Black Storytellers (NABS). We were changed and will never be the same. Black storytellers from the present and past called us to retrace the footsteps of our ancestors back across the Atlantic to a place located below the Ivory Coast; to the right of Burkina Faso; above Togo to the right; the Gulf of Guinea to the left and Atlantic Ocean along its right coast. That place is Ghana which means "Warrior King" in Mande. The Mande language is a part of the Soninke people who founded the Ghana Empire c. 300 until c. 1200.... a long long time ago. Let's just say it was before the ships came.

Our goals and plans were to expand the reach of the NABS Adopt-A-Teller program to International audiences; explore the possibilities of implementing the mission of NABS in African countries; and begin the groundwork for future affiliates on the continent.

The experience was richer and fuller than anything we could have placed on paper. The unexpected happened and so too did the unimagined. Our ancestors welcomed us home. Their spirits were ever present as we sojourned from Accra to Kumasi and back. At the University of Accra we participated in "The Way We Tell it – The Legacy of African Storytelling." Our illustrious leader, Queen Nur, shared with students, faculty and dignitaries the history, vision and mission of NABS. She wouldn't be illustrious if she didn't illustrate just how she incorporates rhythm, music, lyrics and dance in her storytell'n. She sho'd out!!

Queen was not the only panelist. We also heard from Dr. Edward Nambigne and Esi Sutherland-Addy. Dr. Nambigne discussed storytelling in Northern vs. Southern Ghana. Ms. Sutherland-Addy explained how "Storytelling confronts reality by going into a world of imagination and using that world to confront situations that may be difficult to deal with if you were dealing with it in reality." The second half of the program was the beginning of performance. Ilene Evans and Vanora Legaux told stories in the tradition.

And then there was PANAFEST 2015. This celebration was created by the late Efua Sutherland in the mid-1980's as a cultural platform for Africans throughout the diaspora to come together to address issues caused by the trade of humans. There is no other word to describe the opening ceremony of PANAFEST but glorious. The Chiefs and their entourage came from across Ghana and the Ashanti Nation. The gold, colors of kente cloth and Adinkra symbols melted into a tapestry of beauty. Hundreds of royalty with open hearts and the women with open arms honored us as those who came back on the wings of Sankofa.

We visited Cape Coast Castle and paid homage. Next we went to Ekumfi Atwia, a storytelling village established by Mother Efua Sutherland. They told and we told. We told and they told. We all danced and sang together as one. WE- BE - AN - African People. We were predestined to go to Kumasi. There the Nana Kwame gifted us with the history of the Ashanti people and then challenged us to keep it, by tell'n what he told. Our goals our plans were changed.

Submitted by Arthuretta Martin

COPYRIGHT, COPYING, AND OTHER PEOPLE'S WORK

Storytelling in this day and age can be quite tricky when it comes to sharing material. Luckily, storytellers do not regularly sue each other because of copyright infringement, but it is very bad form to hear a story, take that story, tell it exactly as you heard it, and not tell the originator you are telling that story precisely as they do, or misrepresenting the story as one you crafted yourself.

There are no storytelling police, so you aren't going to be arrested for taking a story out of a picture book and telling it, but it is way better to get permission to tell an original story than it is to have to explain to the author, who might just be sitting in your audience, why you are using their tale without giving them any credit. Folklore in picture books is fair game so long as you don't tell the book word for word.

What about tales that are part of a living culture, like Native American tales? Can you do anything at all you want to them? I would argue that you should not without permission. Any story that is part of a living culture is changing and growing with the people who are living in it.

We know that it can take a long time to select, craft, work, and then present a story. It is quite a lot of work, and by the time we are done we've put ourselves deep into that story. I love it when people call and ask if they can tell a story they heard me tell. Sometimes I say yes, of course. Sometimes I say that I got permission, and they will have to get the same permissions.

I have on occasion been quite annoyed to hear from a third party that someone is out there telling a story I crafted. I have heard other storytellers who are displeased with hearing about this as well. Know that if you do this, it will most likely get back to the person in question, and they will get quite salty about it!

When people contact me about telling the picture books I've written, I always say yes. I write with the intent that the stories should be told. Not every author feels that way. Check if you can. Books with expired copyright are fair game!

Working with pre-crafted material can certainly be a tribute to another teller. I've picked up bits of tale, expression, accents, dialects, sound effects, and frameworks of tales from Bobby Norfolk, Jackie Torrence, Willa Brigham, Len Cabral, Nancy Shimmel, Janice Del Negro, Carrie Sue Ayvar, Carmen Deedy, and many other wonderful tellers. I incorporate those bits and pieces into my own variants of tales. I would never, however, tell an entire story exactly as one of these tellers told it.

There are many tales to be had out there, and many stories to share. Let us share them with as much respect and understanding as we can.

Donna Washington
CEO DLW Storyteller Inc.

Just Like Him by Oni Lasana

Nov. 23, 2015

(Dedicated to Hugh "Brother Blue" Morgan – the Storyteller, who reminded me so much of my daddy)

As I organize stories for a school assembly, I compiled my choice stories and poems on index cards. I want to tell them all. I paused to reflect on something I read years ago. It's come to light in my present consciousness. Finally, at 62, I am re-connecting with my past to write of childhood memories, before I forget.

Once I read, (and I paraphrase), "Whatever you have a passion for as a child, under the age of 10, it would, or should be the occupation you pursue as an adult." Today, remembering the quote brought tears to my eyes. On this day, I am switching off my historical fictional character of Paul Laurence Dunbar's "Lias' Mother." Turning on my modern new school persona of "Oni Lasana, The Storyteller."

In joyful tears, I call my big sister Scheryll to ask her if she remembers how old I was when our mother would stand at the screen door. I can still see mommy watching me as I skipped the three houses down to Mr. & Mrs. Clark's front porch on Huntingdon St. in North Philly. Scheryll says yes, I was about 3 or 4.

I asked my sister if she knew I use to act out for the neighbor's, pretending I was Shirley Temple? How I would sing all her songs and could recite Nursery Rhymes by heart? We laughed. She said it was her job to comb my hair and dress me up, and I was way cuter than Shirley Temple.

I told my sister about the quote and how I was feeling overwhelmed with joy as I prepare to honor my role as a storyteller. It felt like a sacred moment, how I am presently overwhelmed with gratitude. To be hired and compensated for something I have loved doing, since I was 4 years old? Why didn't I think of doing this storytelling thing sooner?

Mr. & Mrs. Clark was a black couple that lived on our block of row homes. They both worked on the "main line" for the same wealthy white family. I always admired them in their black and white uniforms walking to the Lehigh Avenue bus stop together. Sometimes, Mr. Clark drove a big black car and wore a shiny black Captain Kangaroo cap. I just knew he was a general or a captain of some huge ship that sailed the seven seas.

In reality, he was a dapper chauffeur and Mrs. Clarke an elegant very well-dressed maid. Mrs. Clarke wore a little dead mink animal around the collar of her winter coat. His eyes glared at me when she lifted me up and kissed me on the cheek. She was very stylish, even out of uniform.

Next door to the Clark's, lived Mr. & Mrs. Smith, a white couple, I had no idea what they did for a living. But whenever Mr. & Mrs Clark wasn't around, Mrs. Smith would coax me onto her porch with sweets and cookies so I would entertain them, front row center. The warmth I felt from Mr. & Mrs. Clark and Mr. & Mrs. Smith, fulfilled my longing for grand parenting love. My mother's mother lived far away in Louisiana. My daddy's kinfolk, in Cross, South Carolina.

On both couples day off, they would sit on their steel iron gliders and rocking chairs on adjacent porches. Separated by a rose designed cast iron railing. I would sashay up and down from one porch to the other. March in place, dance and twirl...while hollering out at the top of what voice I had. "The ants go marching one by one Hoorah, Hoorah!" "Ten little Indian's sleeping in the bed, and the little one said, "Roll over, roll over!" "Davey, Davey Crockett, king of the wild frontier," "On the Good Ship Lollipop, what a nice trip to the candy shop!

I'd go on and on...acting out and singing every song I knew and telling every story and rhyme I could remember. Mother often read to me from our leather bound red Child Craft books. We were also the proud owners of The World Book Encyclopedia and Mother "scrimped and saved" to pay "on time" for both sets of books.

When I was older, mother use to tell me I would pretend that I could read. My little finger moving across the book. I would sit on our front step, book in hand and retell the story so animated, people in the neighborhood often asked my mom, "Can that little girl really read?" long before kindergarten.



Just Like Him by Oni Lasana

Nov. 23, 2015

(Dedicated to Hugh "Brother Blue" Morgan – the Storyteller, who reminded me so much of my daddy)

My most favorite story was "Kitty Konga." I knew it by heart. Kitty Konga's story was recorded on one of the many red 45 records my mom would play to engage me for hours, trapped in my playpen in the living room. A ladies voice (the storyteller) told of a girl who was an outsider in her town, because she walked so strange. She and I danced and sang out together on the daily. "Nobody love me, nobody like me... cause when I walk, I walk like 1,2,3 kick, 1, 2, 3, kick!" Kitty Konga eventually found acceptance and love when a music band came to town. She was the only one who naturally walked in sync with the music. In the end, everyone in town lined up behind her and copied her style of walking. Everyone sang along with Kitty Konga in a Spanish accent. "Everybody love me, everybody like me.."Cause when I walk, I walk like, 1, 2, 3 kick, 1, 2, 3 kick."

I loved Kitty Konga's story of overcoming. Triumph of the underdog. I thought she was a real person. It wasn't till I was much older that I realized it was a recording that taught the popular "Konga" line dance in the mid 1950's. I googled "Kitty Konga" a few years ago, but had no success in finding my muse. Guess I'll have to re-write the story myself. Maybe you storytellers can rewrite and tell it too.

One day, Mrs. Clark took me inside to her spotless kitchen. Sometimes I'd stay so long chatting up a storm, eating all the goodies and delicious food she serve me on her flower trimmed china. My mother would call her on the phone to send me home.

One day, Mrs. Clark reached up high over the fridge for the envy of my eye, the white ceramic, Aunt Jemima Cookie jar. The brown face on the cookie jar looked stern and scolding, it made me laugh. Her head was a brown knob that lifted up from her folded arms resting under her bust at her waist. Her wide dress had "Cookies" written across the bottom of the pleated stone skirt.

Mrs. Clark had given me cookies from inside her dress for years. I was about 7 or 8, on this very special day. Mrs. Clark took her beloved Aunt Jemima Cookie jar and placed it in my arms. She wrapped both my arms around the cookie jar. She said, "Here sweetheart, this is for you, you take good care of her ok."

I was finally speechless. I looked inside and it was filled with Mrs. Clark's homemade oatmeal raisin cookies. I put my cheeks to the warm cookie jar and cried. I carefully put the jar on the table and pulled Mrs. Clark to me, hugging her tightly. I looked up at Mrs. Clark's loving brown face and saw tears in her eyes. Mr. & Mrs. Clark had no children. I was their one and only big mouth wanna be Shirley Temple little storytelling girl.

I clutched the cookie jar to my heart and carefully ran home. Jumping for joy as I danced in to the living room. I ran and plopped down next to my mother on the sofa, hugging my cookie jar, half sitting in her lap. I was elated. Mother was sitting on her French Provincial plastic covered sofa on the phone. "Look, mommie, Look! At what Mrs. Clark gave me!" She was on the phone talking to her mother in French creole. "Shhhhhh, I'm on the phone!" She put her arms around my shoulders and gently covered my mouth with her soft hand. She spoke back to her mother in English I clearly recognized. "Yes, it's my baby, the littlest one, Wild Billy, she's so crazy and full of stories, just like him." She laughed.

William Henry Morris of Cross, South Carolina was my daddy. When I was born he asked my mom "Where's me?" I looked so much like my mom. I still look just like my mother, on the outside, but on the inside, I'm just like him. Wild Bill. I've always remembered that day. Especially what my mother said about my intelligent, vivacious, gregarious, charming dad. But the story telling part never made any real sense to me, until today.

(c) Oni Lasana 2015

AFRICA'S APPALACHIAN HILLS

Africa's memory peaks from Appalachian hill

earth that once was Grandmother of Mother Africa

coal here was born there where traces of now began as dreams

potential diamonds hidden in land massed as the core of continents

rifts and breaks and slow collisions celebrated The World's Mother

once we all were one

We were not told that when we walk the Appalachian Trail

we touch earth that was Africa memory set in stone heritage of eons

once we all were one

rifts and breaks and slow collisions...transformations and separations

Grandmother's heart quivering shuddering quaking shaping mountains

Grandmother's tears flowing forming rendering oceans

in time before time

Now

Ancestral elevations of sacred homeland are Appalachian hills

where rifts and breaks and slow collisions...

once we all were one

Stand here now and know these hills are still our mother she was waiting here to uplift us

Spirit of that place of birthing beyond generations

We who are Afriliachia must speak testaments

Stories formed in the Soul of the Grandmother of Mother Africa

We are we are we *are* all one

NOTE: The birth of the Appalachian mountain ranges marks the first of several tectonic-plate collisions that culminated in the construction of a supercontinent given the Greek name Pangaea ("all earth"). Pangea's development was completed when Africa ("Gondwana", named by Austrian scientist Eduard Suess; this name had first been used in a geological context by H.B. Medlicott in 1872) drifted into the continental clustering. The then-majestic "Appalachian-Oachita" mountains and neighboring Little Atlas Mountains (now in Morocco) rested near the heart of the supercontinent 480 million years ago.

Lyn Ford

RACISM: UNDERCOVER, UNCOVERED OR DISCOVERED

Cynthia G. Tompkins

We, all five children, were simply aware that the dishes and utensils in the top left corner of the glass door kitchen cabinet, which was over the sink, were for Daddy. Daddy had special items reserved for him.

We were living on the first floor, right side, of 377 Putnam Avenue in the borough of Brooklyn; seven other families lived in this small building of railroad apartments. In a railroad apartment the family was able to see the street from the living room, turn around and walk through another room into the hallway. Midway down this hallway, to the right, was the bathroom, with its small black and white tiled floor and its wooden pulley chained flush box which was high over the toilet. It also had a very convenient center, floor drain. At the end of the hallway was another room, which exited into the kitchen. When allowed, we were able to climb out of that window into the back yard. From there we could see straight down to Tompkins Avenue. Some backyards were fairly neat while others had 'storage stuff'. Although white families lived on our block, none lived in our building

One night our very naked ceiling light bulb was turned on, waking us. My mom, apparently very upset, told us to go back to sleep. We did. But not before we were able to see this very tall white man and a white female, opening our closet and looking under our beds, searching.....

That was the only time (after these intruders left) I heard my Mom, with her very Jamaican accent, curse - 'Dee am itt to Hell'. As we got older we learned that these two welfare social workers were making their much hated midnight raids hoping to find a hidden man or boyfriend. These midnight raids were very insulting and cruel, knowing my dad was hospitalized with a terminal illness.

Yes, Dad had special items reserved for him because he was sometimes an outpatient at Sea View Hospital on Staten Island, another NYC borough. This was a very large institution for T.B. patients, where some were allowed to enjoy short stays at home, simply because they were not drastically ill. At least, not YET! I seem to remember my moms' description of this place as having some outdoor seating areas, possibly to allow much needed sunshine to aid in the healing of these afflicted persons. This was late 1939 or early 1940's.

I remember my father playing the piano in the dark, no sheet music, just lovely tunes that I wish I could remember. At times, my moms joined him in four hands playing. We always had a piano and everyone took music lessons. My brothers took piano, saxophone, and drums. My sister played the piano and I, the violin.

I also remember my sister putting on my pop's "spats"! . Spats were an off-white or eggshell colored, stiff, apron-like laced-up covering for the instep. It was worn half-over your shoes and about 2-4 inches above or near the ankle. I think only men wore these. It really made him look elegant. I like how Dad looked: pressed, nice and good-looking. He also rolled his own cigarettes. Moms, who did not smoke, sometimes commented about those 'nasty cigarettes'.

Soon we moved one block over to a brownstone at 467 Putnam Avenue, with one very large front window. We were on the parlor floor, or just above the ground floor. It must have been quite large but I can't remember where the kitchen or bathroom was located. We had a large console radio, which had a dim light behind some old, pilled, black and gold tapestry just below the dial. Sometimes we sat around it, on the floor, pretending to see him saying, "Look, I can see him" or "I see Daddy". I really thought I WAS seeing him. Daddy never moved with us to this parlor floor apartment.

RACISM: UNDERCOVER, UNCOVERED OR DISCOVERED

Cynthia G. Tompkins, February 2015

I was too young to accompany my mom on any trips to Sea View, but my sister Delores, only a year older, was allowed to visit a few times. These trips began with a long walk to the subway at Nostrand Avenue and Fulton Street for the long subway ride to the Ferry in lower Manhattan. Once in Staten Island, busses were boarded for the ride to the hospital. After visiting for an hour or two, the long ride back home began. I can't remember who babysat with us, but it was an all-day trip. My mom and sister stayed much too long. Sometimes we waited at that large parlor floor window, four of us who were left at home. My baby brother Eugene, who was no more than 2 ½ or 3 years old, does not remember our father at all.

My sister does remember taking these trips, but Daddy was always in the bed during her visits. I guess his time was drawing near.

After a while my dad no longer came home for visits. He eventually died at age 43 in 1943.

No more trips to Staten Island.

Since we had no telephone, a telegram came saying that my dad died- and it was three days after the fact. I remember my mom, totally, totally heavily grieving. My uncles were there to steady her. I can still recall the funeral scene at Siloam Presbyterian Church, and that I cried only because my mom was. Moms mentioned that Dad always said that he had hoped to die first because he wouldn't be able to care for their five children. Five children in seven years. My mom was really, really strong and able.

Fast forward to the late 1960's... I decided to pursue my Master's Degree because many, new, younger teachers were entering the profession with that second degree! The College of Staten Island was my choice. During some research in one of my courses, I discovered that those long trips to Sea View Hospital were based solely on my father's skin color. No Blacks were allowed in any T.B. institution in New York City except Sea View Hospital in Staten Island.

I live not too far from Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn, and remember seeing some outdoor terraced, seating or strolling areas on the higher floors. They are now rusted and very much in disrepair, no longer being used. Could that have been the area for Kings County's T.B. patients? When were Blacks allowed to be admitted? It was probably some time after my father died. Perhaps I'll get time to research that information and learn when families no longer had to travel such distances.

Imagine that! Those long, long lonely trips, which took so many, many long hours, were based solely on the color of the patient's skin. I was in my thirties, and could not believe, such was happening in this "God Bless America", New York City!!! **"Stuff"** like that only happened "Down South"!!!

MY DOG BLUE

Thomas Southern

The first story is entitled MY DOG BLUE which I wrote and told at one of NABS' Jackie Torrence Tall Tales Contest (Liars).

MY DOG BLUE: When I was around ten years old down in Turkey Creek, Georgia I spotted a beautiful puppy dog floating down the creek on a log. Didn't know how he got there. I swam out, rescued and took him home. He was midnight black with a little tail that curled and wagged. The cutest most friendliest puppy I'd ever seen. I knew right then and there he belonged to me. Didn't know what I would name him. I looked up at the blue sky. I heard a voice say, "name him Blue." I called to him, "BLUE!" he immediately jumped into my arms and licked my face. I was a loner. He filled that void and became my best friend. We were inseparable. Blue had a natural instinct for hunting rabbit, 'coon, possum and we would chase them through the woods and swamps. Great fun! Many hours spent basking in the hot summer sun or just watching a crackling blaze in the fireplace during the cold wintry months. After twenty years together, Blue went to Dog Heaven. I was sad and felt so alone but Blue's memory kept me going.

Sometime later I was walking in a field when all at once I was pulled down by something from behind. It was sudden. I was startled and frightened. I looked around and saw just a few feet away in front of me a huge sink hole. Had I not been stopped I would have fallen in probably killed. I didn't know what saved me. There was nothing around that could have knocked me down or I could have stumbled over. When I examined my clothes there were marks of a dog's teeth on my coat and clinging to my coat was some dog's hair the same color as my old dog Blue.

RAP

*I had an old dog....his name was blue...he saved my life...and that's the truth.
I betcha four dollars he's a good, good dog....cause he save my life
and that's the truth...HEY BLUE! HEY BLUE!
He saved my life and that's the truth. -Thomas Southern*

A MUSING/REFLECTION: Telling riddles was one of the favorite pastimes of slaves. It was second only to telling animal tales. Riddle telling carried on into the reconstruction period after Emancipation. It became a wish telling about freedom. When one solved the riddle, one would be free. Here is a typical slave riddle.

Was twelve pear hangin high
An twelve pear hangin low.
Twelve king come ridin by.
Each he took a pear,
An how many leave hangin there?

ANSWER/Begin with, there were twenty-four pears.
A man called Each took one pear.
That left twenty-three pears hangin there.

- Black Folklore/submitted by Thomas Southern

I grew up in an old Southern Irish town which was settled by the Irish and I've heard my Uncle Buddy tell many very scary ghost and supernatural tales and Irish superstitious stuff. My hometown is Dublin and Turkey Creek is on the outskirts. But at that time I grew up the city of Dublin didn't have one traffic light. But now there are malls all over the place with traffic lights and Turkey Creek is no longer as I knew it. But the area is still called Turkey Creek but there is no longer a creek. Tee, hee, hee! But it is still called Turkey Creek.



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NABS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF BLACK STORYTELLERS
 and Keepers Of The Culture
 Present
The Way We Tell It,
Is The Way It Is!
"In The Tradition..."

34th Annual National Black Storytelling Festival & Conference
 November 2 - 6, 2016 in Philadelphia PA

Co-Founders:
 Mother Mary Carter Smith
 Mama Linda Goss

For more information visit us at:
www.NABSinc.org

The Authentic Voice Of Black Storytelling