

Reflections on Pantops...

by PG Cosby III, December 2009

4405 Boonsboro was the Cosby family home for more than eighty-two years. It was built in 1926 by a local contractor, and I recall moving in on Christmas Eve in deep snow and freezing weather. I was thirteen, Beverly a baby not one year old, the others in between. The Christmas tree was the first of many cedars gathered from the wooded land beyond. The home was in Bedford County then. Tuition had to be garnered for us to attend Lynchburg city schools. If memory serves, the ten-room brick home, with full basement and attic, cost \$12,000.

That area of Boonsboro Road was known as Pantops. I have not heard that name used in recent times. Pantops became the nickname for our home. I am not aware of the meaning of the name. There were then only a few homes in the area. What is now Greenway Court was a great sledding area in the days when it seems there were many more snows. There was always a great bonfire with roasting of marshmallows.

What is now the ball field on Spottswood, was a Boy Scout camping ground. There was a neat cabin and a tall tower. We would send messages by signal flags from the tower to the attic of Pantops. There was the exciting game of Capture the Flag in the woods by day or by night. To my memory no one was greatly injured over many years of moving stealthily through barbwire and rail fences. There were other games, exploration, hiking and camping in the woodlands.

The Great Depression came too soon. Our father suffered a long period of illness. He often reminded us that it was the love, kindness, and generosity of many family and friends that brought us through and raised us to adulthood at Pantops. In high school, brother Gordon kept one or two cows on the property and sold milk to families in Peakland and Rivermont. Even at that age he felt the call to Christian service and became the minister of a small black church on Walnut Hollow Road.

All five of us children graduated from the old E.C.Glass High School, which many years later the Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship restored and renovated into apartments for elderly and low-income persons and families. Gordon was a chaplain in World War II, then became founder of The Church of the Saviour and its minister for 62 years. Ida Gordon married a minister. She lives today in Sarasota, Florida. Jack carried on the family insurance and savings and loan business. As we know, Beverly was founder and minister of Church of the Covenant until his death in 2002.



Pantops was a place of hospitality and welcome. Friends and family were always there, whether for a visit, a meal, a week or two, or all summer long. There were always discussions of many subjects, with inspiration and encouragement for some, visions of what might be through patience and waiting, seeking the way of God for all of us. Conversations around the dinner table often continued around the fire, or in summer on the porch with its rockers and swing.

There was fun and fellowship, with ping pong, pool, and pump organ in the basement, where the gathering of youth became a nucleus for the formation of Lynchburg Christian Fellowship, later renamed the Lynchburg Covenant Fellowship. There were many gala occasions, and a share of sickness, grief, and sorrow, in the days when funeral services were sometimes held in homes.

Pantops was a place of beauty. Our mother loved beauty and worked ceaselessly in the flowers she loved. Pantops was a place of healing and hospitality. Pantops was a place of searching and striving, of vision looking toward a better day for our world. Pantops is a place that some of us remember with deep affection. Pantops is a home that a family, now scattered, passes on with gratitude to those who will enter into, fulfill, and enlarge this heritage.