Arbuckle Stories

Belle Vue Farm 

Chapter 3 **Note: Scroll down for Cousin May**

*The Cave Meadow & Cousin May*

*The following is a page of the 1992 story and video I did on Belle Vue- The Cave Meadow.*

Hello, my name is Jim Arbuckle and this is a written description of my Sunday afternoon ride around a field I call the “cave meadow.” That was the name I gave the large field when I was a boy because it has a cave. Years later, I heard my granddad and uncle refer to it as the “Pool Lot.” But I continued, and still do today, call it the “Cave Meadow.”

It is one of the many fields on the farm that is fed by underground streams, and the only field on the farm that has a cave. It is small cave where I used to like to go as a boy. The opening of the cave is wide, but soon narrows a few feet within. With its small size, plus a small stream of water flowing out, it is not suitable or possible to explore.

To see a condensed film of my ride, click on **“My Video”,** “The Cave Meadow.” Or go directly to YOU TUBE and type in **Arbuckle Belle Vue,** and scroll down to see the two part video of “The Cave Meadow.”

Before you read about the cave meadow, I’d like you to share a few facts about the outside of the house. To see pictures click on **My Photos** “The Arbuckle House II.”

I hope you enjoy and welcome to Belle Vue farm.

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As one walks in the front yard of Belle Vue farm the big red brick house is before your eyes. The old 19th century home is surrounded by large old green maple trees that help cool this specific area on hot summer afternoons. The calm and serenity is evident as the beautiful hand carved architecture on the house’s eves and doorway. At the front gate of the house you see an old riding stye that is gradually falling into ruin, and once was used to assist a lady if she rode a side saddle.

Looking through the green of the old maple trees, you can see the front door of the house. Natural sounds of birds chirping and a cow balling in a distant field can be heard as one stands and appreciates the close-up beauty of the old red brick and white columns and portico area. In the quietness, one can almost go back in time to early and mid 1800’s, and picture Alexander Welch Arbuckle coming on the front porch to speak to his wife Julia, as servants scurry to the attention of the house and yard.

Turning around on the front porch, one can see a shot of the pond to the distance and down the hill from the house. Walking down to the front yard fence you get a better view of the pond, where as a boy I used to fish and catch blue gills and an occasional bass. And on some days one can see cows making their way to the pond to drink.

Passing by the east side of the house, you pass by an old smoke house, a garage and chicken house. One can easily see the large old wooden barn built in the early 1800’s. In the old barn one can capture with the eye, large square hued logs that are the structure of the barn. In a hall way between horse stalls there is an old 19th century hand water pump that is still used today.

On a hot day it is nice to walk back down to the front yard, for more time to appreciate the beauty and age of the house and the old maple trees.

To see this slide show, go to **Video** and click on *“The Arbuckle Belle Vue House Part II.* Or you can find it under the same title on You Tube.

You will also see my mother, Louise Arbuckle standing on the front porch in the 1940’s, plus one of my Uncle Lockhart Arbuckle with an old 18th century plow, with a wooden moldboard.

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About one quarter mile east of the house is a portion of the farm that I call the “cave meadow.” Below is a written account of my ride.

You can then click on video **“The Cave Meadow”** to see a condensed film of that day.

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A RIDE AROUND THE CAVE MEADOW

*On a hot, sunny and windy afternoon, I am riding in a field that I call the “cave meadow.” It is a large field with a green canyon or deep hollow in the center. The cave meadow area is probably a fifty plus acre area, and best described as giant sinkhole or canyon if you will, that divides two pasture areas on each side.*

*PLEASE SCROLL DOWN*

The Cave Meadow

Written by Jim Arbuckle

Created by Jim Arbuckle

Music by David Rose

Cameras – Charlie Hamrick and Pam Suttle

Photo development – Sandy Beasley

Filmed on Belle Vue Farm, Arbuckle Lane, by Signature Video –1992

To view a condensed portion of this day, click on VIDEO- Arbuckle Belle Vue “The Cave Meadow”, or go directly to YOU TUBE and type in “Arbuckle Belle Vue” and scroll down until you see the two part video of The Cave Meadow.

Be sure to scroll down and read the visit from May Arbuckle.

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In 1964, cousin May Arbuckle came from Waynesboro, VA for a visit. This story is a carbon copy of May’s personality. Although her visit was true, this particular story is a fictional account of one of May’s visit. Many years after this 1964 visit, she stopped coming by bus, and instead my Uncle Lockhart would fly over to Virginia in his plane and bring her back to Belle Vue for a visit.

**Chapter 4**

Cousin May 

 *Alex Arbuckle had no sooner finished the milking and breakfast than his wife Carrie reminded him that that the bus from Waynesboro would be arriving in Lewisburg in less than an hour.*

*“I have plenty of time,” Alex said with a frown. “I’ll be in town by 10 o’clock.”*

*“I just do not want you to be late,” Carrie said with a smile. “You know May does not like waiting.”*

*The impatient lady Carrie they were referring to was Cousin Marian Dabney Arbuckle, known to the family as Cousin May. She was an elderly lady and the daughter of Dr. James Edward Arbuckle and lived in Waynesboro, VA. She came for a visit most every year and always called and told everyone when she was coming. Some years my Uncle Lockhart would fly over and bring her back in his plane, but this year May announced that she was taking the bus to Greenbrier and that Lockhart could fly her back. She always stayed with my granddad Alex’s sister, Emily Sydenstricker, but this year my grandmother Carrie was hoping that May would stay with them at Belle Vue.*

*“Alex, I declare it is nearly time for May’s bus to arrive,” Carrie said as Alex came in from the barn an hour later.*

*“I know what time is,” Alex said hurrying to change his clothes. “May will just have to wait!*

*Where in the thunder is my darn shoe horn?”*

*A few minutes later, Alex’s blue 1963 pickup arrived in town and the bus from Waynesboro had not yet arrived. No sooner had he parked and began talking to Alex and Waller Caldwell along the street than the big Greyhound bus pulled up and backed in the bus station parking lot.*

*As Alex made his way to the lot, people had begun filing off the bus as Alex spotted a thin elderly lady, dressed in an overcoat and hat.*

*“May, how are you?” Alex said welcoming his cousin. “You look well and how’s your trip?”*

*“I suppose I am alright,” May said with a little sarcastic laugh. “I’m not sure how I look, but I suppose the trip was alright. The bus was crowded, hot and several colored people. Here are my bags!”*

*Placing May’s bag in the back, Alex opened the door as May got in his truck as they headed out of town.*

*“Why are you going up the back road?” May asked a few minutes later as Alex drove out of town. “Why not the highway? Then you could drop me off at Emily’s as we pass by.”*

*“We thought you would stay with us,” Alex said. “Carrie is sure hoping you will stay with us.”*

*“I will stay with Emily, thank-you!” May said. “I told Emily I would stay with her, so that is where I will stay.”*

*Ten minutes later, Alex turned in his sister’s Emily Sydenstricker’s driveway. A minute later Emily appeared on her front porch as Alex and May got out of the truck.*

*“May, it is so good to see you,” Emily said waving. “How was your trip?”*

*“Crowed, hot and several colored people on the bus,” May reply. “Alex, just take my bag up to my room.”*

*A few minutes later, Alex saw Carrie in the garden as he drove up to the house. Walking to the house Lockhart yelled from the barn that he was going to rake hay.*

*“I suppose May arrived okay.” Carrie said as she came in the house carrying fresh rhubarb. “And I can see that she will not be staying here. I had her room all prepared! I wished she would have stayed with us.”*

*“Well that’s May,” Alex said with a laugh. “I’m going to the field to help Lockhart. What night are you having May over for dinner?”*

*“I suppose tomorrow night or the next,” Carrie said as she began washing the rhubarb in the kitchen sink. “It all depends on what day it suits Virginia. And also what night suits Thomas Alex and family.”*

*“You’d better let it depend on what night suits May the best,” Alex laughed. “I’m going to the field.”*

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*A quarter of a mile out Arbuckle Lane, May spent the afternoon resting as Emily talked to her niece Lynn from Florida on the telephone. As May came down the stairs, she seemed to be annoyed that Emily was talking on the phone.*

*“Long distance must be less expensive around here,” May said as Emily asked if she felt better after her nap.”*

*“I felt fine before my rest,” May said as she sat down. “Who is that I hear in the kitchen?”*

*“That is Ruth Wade,” Emily said with a smile. “Dear girl offered to come and help and I accepted. I just spoke to my niece Elizabeth Price McLaughlin in Florida and then my niece Lynn Unger and her husband Bill, and they all send their hellos.”*

*“Aren’t those Julia’s girls?” May asked as Ruth came in from the kitchen to say hello.*

*“Yes, those are Sister’s girls,” Emily said. “My niece Emily Becker called long distance this morning. That’s Charlie’s girl you know. Anyway, she, Dutch and John send their best. Her brother Charlie Jr. and wife Jean were on a trip, but all are fine.”*

*An hour later, Ruth called to say that supper was ready.*

*“So we are eating in the kitchen?” May said after Ruth announced that she had burnt the rolls.*

*“Well, we can eat in the dining room if you like,” Emily said with a little laugh.*

*“When you come to Waynesboro, I always serve you in my dining room,” May said.*

*“And you also take me to splendid restaurants,” Emily said. “Ruth dear, do you mind?”*

*“Why, I don’t mind at all,” Ruth said as she began carrying food and plates to the dining room.*

*“And you can eat in the kitchen!” May told Ruth. “Hurry now! I am hungry.”*

*“Lord, we thank you for this food,” Emily said as the two ladies sat and bowed their heads. “We thank you for the hands that prepared it, and I thank you that May is here with us. Amen.”*

*“These green beans and peas look good,” May said. “Are they from your garden?”*

*“May, you are my cousin and guest,” Emily said as May began serving herself. “But May, Ruth is a friend who helps me, and I insist that she eat in here with us.”*

*“The colored lady who helps me is also my friend,” May said. “But she eats in the kitchen! But this is your house, so if you want her to eat with us – have her to set a place.”*

*“Oh that’s okay Ms Emily,” Ruth said as Emily looked distressed. “I like eating in the kitchen – that way I can be close if you all need anything.”*

*As the two ladies enjoyed Ruth’s delicious dinner, Emily recalled and talked about the wonderful restaurants that May took her to on her visits to Waynesboro. May gave a quick smile when Emily said that the “Southern Restaurant” in Waynesboro was her favorite.*

*After Ruth’s cherry pie and ice cream dessert, the two cousins retired back in the living room to watch TV. May just shook her head as the two watched “The Real McCoy’s.”*

*“Hello!” Emily said as the telephone rang an hour later. “I’m fine Carrie! How are you? Yes, May and I had a fine dinner. Oh, I think that will be wonderful. Let me ask May.”*

*A few minutes the phone rang.*

*“May, this is Carrie,” Emily said holding her hand over the phone. “She’s called to see how we were and to invite us over home for dinner tomorrow night. Would tomorrow night suit you?”*

*“I suppose!” May said. “Tell her that will be fine and not to go to any trouble.”*

*As Emily gave Carrie her answer, Emily continued to talk to her sister-in-law and once she hung up she called her nephew Andrew McLaughlin in hopes that he and his family could also attend dinner. But Andrew and his wife Dottie had a meeting and would not be able to attend. She also phoned Alexander and Virginia McLaughlin, but got no answer. For the next hour, Emily filled May in on Andrew’s three children Philip, June Price and Alice Ann as well as Alex McLaughlin Jr. Lee and Julia and Judy Unger.*

*After Emily had Bible reading and a short prayer, May went up to bed as Ruth came in and talked.*

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*The following day, Alex and Lockhart were busy preparing to go to the hayfield. Thirteen year old Jimmy rode over on his pony just in time to jump on the wagon with his granddad as Lockhart drove the tractor to the hayfield.*

*Virginia came down to help her mother Carrie with the dinner. Emily drove May down to visit Fil and Betty Arbuckle in her 1950 Dodge car. She and May had no sooner returned home at noon when Andrew and Dottie McLaughlin came to visit. Anna Arbuckle called to say she would come and visit May before she went home.*

*Emily and May arrived over at Belle Vue at 4 p.m. as Carrie and Virginia were still busy preparing the evening dinner. Alex, Lockhart and Jimmy came from the hay field as Lockhart backed a wagon load of hay in the barn. Alex quickly called the cows for milking.*

*Cary Lewis and his children arrived at 5 p.m. and soon afterwards Thomas Alex, Louise, Davis and Mr. Sharp arrived as all spoke and greeted May. Alex came in from the barn and was glad to see Johnson, Jane, Davis and little Alex as he went to his bedroom to change his clothes.*

*The families were busy speaking to May, who was smiling, frowning and trying to remember each of the children’s names.*

*“My goodness, four boys and just one girl,” May said with a smile. “There should have been four girls and just one boy.”*

*“Why is that?” Ten year old Johnson asked as Virginia and others laughed and looked on.*

*“Because girls are pretty and genteel,” May said with a smile. “And boys? Well boys are just boys! Johnson, you are an inquisitive young man!”*

*“Johnson, don’t ask so many questions,” Virginia said with a laugh.*

*“And here is the pretty lady!” May said looking at Jane. “Jane, how are you?”*

*“I’m fine!” Jane said smiling. “How are you cousin May?”*

*“Oh, I’m here!” May said with a smile. “And this young fellow here must be Alexander Arbuckle Lewis?”*

*“Just call me little Alex,” Virginia’s youngest child said with a laugh.*

*May smiled. “How old are you young man?”*

*“I’m six!” little Alex replied.*

*“And I’m Davis!” Davis said as he greeted May. “I’m Thomas Alex and Louise’s son. And Jimmy over there is my brother.”*

*“Yes, I’m well aware of whose son you are,” May said. You are a fine looking young man, Davis! And I know your brother Jimmy. He is the one on a pony! I cannot understand why anyone would want to ride a horse pony over here when he can ride in an automobile.”*

*“Maybe it’s because he’s not old enough to drive an automobile yet,” Alex said as all laughed.*

*“You all come! Carrie says dinner is about ready!”*

*As everyone gathered around the big dinning room table, Lockhart came in and spoke to Cousin May and told everyone that he was going to change his clothes and for all to go ahead and begin eating. Both Alex and Carrie told him that he was fine and to have a seat.*

*“Emily, you say grace!” Alex said as fifteen family members sat in the dining room.*

*“Our Dear God, we thank you for this food,” Emily said as all bowed their heads. “We thank you for the hands that prepared it. We thank you that all the family can be here this evening to be with their cousin May. We thank you for May and that she is able to be here with us. In Jesus name we pray! Amen.”*

*As all began eating, questions and conversation were directed toward May. As May was telling everyone about her property in Waynesboro, all the grandchildren were talking and laughing as they ate at card tables beside the adults. All the men listened in as May told about the recent construction and painting of her house. Carrie, Virginia and Emily enjoyed listening to May describe, both her front and back yard flower gardens.*

*“You’re flower gardens sound beautiful, Cousin May,” Virginia said as Alex yelled for more ice tea.*

*“They certainly do!” Carrie replied. “My patch by the fence has more weeds than flowers.”*

*“Well Johnny weeded my flowers before he left,” Emily said. “So for now, my flowers look fine.”*

*“Dat, can I go out and check my pony?” Jimmy said as May was talking about her bridge club.*

*“Jimmy, don’t talk while May is talking!” Alex said frowning at his oldest grandson.*

*“Well thank you Alex,” May said with a frown. “Young man, don’t you know it is impolite to talk when adults are speaking. To me, little boys are to be seen, not heard.”*

*“So?” Jimmy said. “All I was doing was asking my granddad a question.”*

*“Jimmy, you apologize to Cousin May!” Thomas Alex said as Jim got up and left the room.*

*“You all stop your giggling,” Alex said as Johnson, Alex, Davis and Jane, were all snickering.*

*“I’ll see where he went!” Lockhart laughed as he got up from the table. “I’ll bring him back. Maybe by the seat of his pants!”*

*As Thomas Alex apologized to May for his son’s remark, all began talking as Carrie and Virginia brought in lemon pie for dessert. After hearing more stories from May, all retired to the hall, as Virginia, Jane and Louise helped Carrie with the dishes in the kitchen.*

*“Let’s play hide and go seek!” little Alex said to Davis and Johnson.*

*“Okay!” Davis said. “You two hide your eyes for a minute then see if you can find me.”*

*After the ladies came to the hall to be with May, Alex walked out and began calling Kate, the Border collie dog. As Kate came barking, Alex put the dog in the chicken house for the night. Turning around he saw Jimmy coming out of the crib.*

*“What are you doing in the crib?” Alex said. “Did Lockhart find you?”*

*“No!” Jimmy said walking toward his granddad.*

*“I want you to go in there and apologize to May,” Alex said. “You ought to know better than talk or blurt out when an adult is talking. Now, go on in the house and apologize to May!”*

*“I’m not apologizing to her!” Jimmy said.*

*“What did you say?” Alex said walking up and frowning at Jimmy.*

*“I didn’t say anything to apologize for!” Jimmy said. “Dat, why should I apologize for asking a question?”*

*“Because you talked out of turn,” Alex said. “And you did butt in while May was talking. Now for the last time, go in the house and tell May you are sorry for interrupting.”*

*“Alright! Jimmy said. “I’ll do it for you, Dat! But I don’t like that old lady, and I’ll be glad when she goes home!”*

*When Jimmy returned to the house, May was telling everyone about her church in Waynesboro. Jane had joined in playing hide and goes seek - as Johnson and little Alex were busy looking for Davis and Jane.*

*“May, I’m sorry for talking out of turn,” Jimmy said. “I didn’t mean to talk when you were talking.”*

*“Well!” May said. “Your apology is accepted, but while improving your manners, you do not address an older adult by their first name. In your case, I am not May, but Cousin May. You would do good to remember that.”*

*“He’ll remember!” Thomas Alex said. “Jim, you go on and ride your pony home. It’s getting dark.”*

*“Emily, I would like to go!” May said as all stood to give her goodbye. “I’ve stayed quite long enough, and it is way past my bedtime. Carrie, the meal was grand, and it was good seeing all of you.”*

*As Thomas Alex, Louise and Davis walked May and Emily to their car, Virginia, Cary and children said their good-byes as they headed home to Savannah Lane.*

*“Squirt, don’t fall in a groundhog hole,” Alex said laughing as Jimmy got on his pony. “I believe Davis has more sense than you do. He’s going to ride home in the car.”*

*As the hooves of Jimmy’s brown and white pony could be heard trotting down the road, Alex stood and looked at the stars for a minute before going back in the house.*

*The next day, Emily drove May around to visit family and friends in her 1950 Dodge. The first was a second stop at Fil and Betty Arbuckle’s. Fil was shoeing horses when they arrived, but came to the house to speak and talk to May.*

*From there, Emily drove May up to see the Arbuckle girls. Mary, Margaret and Emily served them refreshment on their large front porch, before going inside to chat and rid themselves from the hot sun.*

*The highlight of the day however was dinner with Emily’s nephew Andrew and Dottie McLaughlin. Not only was Andrew’s three children, Phillip, June Price and Alice there, but Abe and Virginia McLaughlin were there from Alderson. May enjoyed talking to Virginia McLaughlin and hearing about her many duties and trials of being the warden at the Women’s Federal Prison in Alderson.*

*“Aunt Emmy, maybe you should start home,” Andrew said. “I hate to see you gals leave, but you should start home before too late.”*

*“Andrew dear, you are right,” Emily said. “Alex and many are telling me that I am too old to drive, but I will continue to drive as long as the Lord allows me.”*

*Giving all good-bye, Andrew walked the two ladies to their car. Saying goodbye to May and giving his Aunt Emily a kiss, he stood and waved as he watched Emily’s old car pull out on Route 219, as the two ladies headed home.*

*May stayed two more days before returning home. But the two days were more of rest and relaxation. Virginia and Alexander McLaughlin were to pick them up and take them back to their home in Alderson for dinner, but May had a head-ache, and insisted that Emily go and spend the evening with her nephew and wife.*

*Emily had left food prepared for May’s supper, but Lockhart stopped by in late afternoon and talked May into having dinner again at Belle Vue. Seeing that he was there to pick her up, she agreed, got her pocketbook and got in the pickup with Lockhart.*

*Alex and Jimmy were just heading to the barn when Lockhart drove in. Telling Jimmy to get the eggs, Alex took two clean buckets and called for Kate to bring the milk cows.*

*“You going to help milk or ride around in the truck all day?” Alex said as Lockhart came to the barn.*

*“I picked Cousin May up for supper,” Lockhart said as he opened the door for her. “Aunt Emily went to Alderson with the McLaughlin’s, so I invited May to eat with us.”*

*An hour later, all assembled in the dining room as Carrie had another delicious meal prepared.*

*“I should have helped Carrie with the dinner,” May said as all sat down. “But I became interested in an article that I was reading in the Life magazine.”*

*“Oh that is okay,” Carrie said with a laugh. “It is easy preparing for a few people. Did you men get all the hay up?”*

*“Got it all on the wagons,” Lockhart said as he passed the roast beef to May. “We may unload it tonight.”*

*“We’ll unload it in the morning!” Alex said as he passed May the mashed potatoes. “When you get to be 77, you can’t work like you used to.”*

*“Jimmy, were you good help today?” Carrie said as all began eating.*

*“I guess!” he said as all laughed.*

*“He drove the wagon tire in a groundhog hole,” Lockhart laughed as he reached for the bread.*

*“Ah, I guess he was pretty good help for a squirt,” Alex said as Lockhart and May laughed.*

*“I certainly wish that Eisenhower was still our president!” May said after all had finished eating. “I wanted Nixon to become our next president. That young Kennedy did absolutely nothing in my opinion.”*

*“I think that young Kennedy did a fine job. May, you must be off your rocker to want Nixon as president.”*

*“Well!” May said looking both shocked and angry. “Alex, you are certainly no authority on presidential matters, and I am not off my rocker!”*

*All looked shocked and surprised as May got up from the table and walked out the front door on to the porch.*

*“For pity sake Alex!” Carrie said getting up.*

*As Carrie walked in the hall, she saw May standing out in the front yard beside the big maple tree.*

*“May, I’m sorry!” Carrie said walking out of the front door. “Please come back on in.”*

*“I feel insulted,” May said.*

*“Oh May!” Carrie said walking up to her. “You know how Alex is! He says a lot of things that he really does not mean. You and Alex are cousins, and so much alike. You both speak your minds, and nothing is going to change that. I am going to go on in, and I’ll have Lockhart to drive you back to Emily’s.”*

*“I saw a bowl of custard in the kitchen when I came in this evening,” May said smiling at Carrie. “Would you mind if I serve?”*

*“Well of course!” Carrie said with a smile. “I’d love for you to!”*

*As the evening shadows of the summer day were coming to a close, the two ladies walked on to the porch and in the front door together.*

THE END

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I was around May Arbuckle off and on for over twenty years, and this was how she was. I, wanting to keep the memory of her alive, I wrote this story one year after she passed away. Having no children, she left her wealth and her large colonial brick home to the African American lady who lived and worked for her for many years. Sometime after her death, I found her grave in Waynesboro, VA.

Marian (May) Arbuckle was born on April 21, 1886, and was the only child of James Edward Arbuckle. She lived most of her life in Waynesboro, VA and never was married. She passed away on March 23, 1981 and is buried in Riverview Cemetery in Waynesboro, VA. The following is an inscription on her gravestone: *“In the dusk I felt the love of family draw near. And when night came into its cradles arms. My old house gathered me and crooned, Sleep Well! We have been longing for your home-coming.”*

**Arbuckle Family Members**

Grandfather Alex W (Dat) Arbuckle – 1887-1990

Grandmother – Carrie Arbuckle (Nana) – 1894-1975

Emily Arbuckle Sydenstricker – 1880-1980 May Arbuckle – 1886 – 1981

**Children**

Thomas Alex Arbuckle – 1921-2013 Virginia Arbuckle Lewis – 1924-1986

Louise Sharp Arbuckle – 1925-1998 Cary J. Lewis – 1917-1992

Lockhart Francis Arbuckle – 1932-2017

**Grandchildren**

James Alexander Arbuckle – 1951- Robert Davis Arbuckle – 1957-

Cary Johnson Lewis Jr – 1954- Jane Bell Lewis – 1956-

Alexander Arbuckle Lewis – 1958-

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For an old family picture of this story, go to PHOTOS “Cousin May,” and see a picture of Aunt Emily Sydenstricker to the left and Cousin May Arbuckle on the right.

Come with me next time, as Cochise and I ride in the woods, and show you more of architecture and antique treasures of the house in Chapter 5. Then a story of when Charles Creigh Arbuckle Jr. and family came for a summer visit in the early 1960’s in Chapter 6.

Written by……………………… Jim Arbuckle in 1982

Created by………………………..Jim Arbuckle

Photo…………………….. Sandy Beasley