

## Field Diamonds and Bottle Caps

I often look at the memory quilt that Mary Ann made sure I paid dearly for at a Lord's Acre of years past. There are many names on that quilt I never knew, but there are many that I did, and for each of those names it seems that a special memory is there too.

In years to come, if the ladies ever do another memory quilt, they can add Tom Harmon's name to it now, and if I purchase that quilt, I know what special memory will come along with it because it's the same one that's already been with me all day: bottle caps.

When I was a young boy, I was not permitted to walk all the way to Mays' store, but I could go as far as Morrell's Grocery. In the right hand corner of that store as you entered there was an old red Coke cooler with a little bottle cap opener built into it. I collected those caps, for what reason I can no longer recall; but I can remember that it seemed like every time I went to Morrell's and asked for the bottle caps that Tom Harmon was there waiting on me and he'd already emptied the thing out and had a bag full of them for me. I also remember going to the mailbox after Tom had been plowing and finding the field diamonds that he'd stop his work and pick up for me because he knew I liked them.

Field diamonds and bottle caps. Gifts that cost no money. Gifts that couldn't be bought with anything but the time that a grown man would spend looking through the freshly-plowed fields or emptying a store's trash. Would that more people today would take the time to look for field diamonds and bottle caps.



Tom lived for things like that. We might choose to remember his displays of Harmon temper for we've all got at least one Tom story about that. We might choose to remember watches and potatoes and Halloween masks just as he did. We might choose to remember a favorite story of stubbornness or sulling up or selling tickets or hanging around the various stores or of getting hooked with his cane, and those stories are fun to remember. But let's also remember some other things as well, some little things worth remembering and maybe even doing ourselves.

Let's remember the birthday and anniversary cards that came without fail. Let's remember the chewing gum and yellow bracelets that he always had. Let's remember the state quarters he was proud to share and the little money that he had that he gave away. Let's remember the warm and peaceful smiles as he returned to his church after too many years away. Let's remember the tears he wasn't afraid to shed. Let's remember a twinkling eye and a toothless grin that told us he was up to something again. Let's remember little acts of kindness and mischievousness and love all rolled into one. And let's remember the importance of unimportant things like field diamonds and bottle caps.

