

## A Herndon Song

*A Hometown Song Written by Walter Wiley, Jr.*

By Barbara Glakas

Walter Herndon Wiley, Jr. (1923-1995) was born in Herndon. His father, Walter Herndon Wiley Sr., (1894-1975) operated a small newsstand, candy and watch repair store in downtown Herndon on Lynn Street. The younger Walter attended Herndon High School where he had played in the orchestra, was in the Drama Club, and served on the Student Council. He was a Boy Scout and was an usher at Herndon's Congregational Church formerly located on Pine Street. He also penned a number of poems and songs.

Walter and his family lived on Coral Road. (That road has since been abandoned. It used to run parallel to the south side of W&OD trail, behind the current location of the Autohaus shop). Walter often wrote of his memories of his boyhood, growing up in Herndon. In his book *Gris Grin*, he spoke of his boyhood imaginations at Mrs. Belle Dudding's hardware store which used to be located on Lynn Street. He said:

*"When Mrs. Dudding dressed the show windows of her hardware store with all the toys, knives and B.B. guns, this boy's heart just yearned to hold them for even a moment. To try that bone handled Barlow knife with the pruning blade on a bit of wood just to see how keen it was. To think about it laying in the pocket if my corduroy knickers or snapped to the knife pocket in my high top boots. Or imagine how the other kids would admire that knife too, if it were mine. Well, that was dreaming, for even though I was nine years old I had my paper route and did odd chores about town by which to scarce up and buy something I wanted."*

Not too long after graduating from Herndon High School in 1941 Walter got married and then joined the Army. He served in World War II, which he survived.

Walter liked to write and was also musically inclined. We once published one of his papers, a story called "My Home Town," filled with his reminisces of life in his hometown, Herndon, Virginia.

We have also discovered a song that he wrote, similarly entitled "Herndon – My Home Town." The words and music were written by Walter and were arranged by Melinda Russell. A cassette tape of the song is in Herndon's Depot museum. The song was sung on Herndon's 125th anniversary in January of 2004.

Reprinted below are the lyrics to Walter Wiley Jr.'s song, "Herndon – My Home Town."

1. Rolling green hills all give way

To mountains in blue array  
Near the Nation's heart today  
And Dulles, the world's gateway...  
I speak of... (refrain)

REFRAIN:

HERN-DON

HERN-DON

HERN-DON V...A...

HERN-DON IS MY HOMETOWN.

2. When men joined in futile fray  
Long ago one dreadful day  
In the clash of the blue and gray  
Through every street and byway...  
Through old... (refrain).
3. Hear the whistle of the train  
Elden Street in snow and rain  
Church bells sing a familiar strain  
Through each peaceful village lane...  
That was old ... (refrain).
4. The folks' farms of yesteryear  
Memories may bring a tear  
Of summers and winters clear  
From the past we hold so dear...  
Memories of... (refrain)
5. The school days as a kid  
Sledding hills where we slid  
Our friends and things we did  
Leaving home and farewells bid...  
Farewell to... (refrain).
6. Many sons and daughters stay  
'Til in Chestnut Grove they lay  
Others of us chose to stray  
But when asked are proud to say...  
I come from ... (refrain).

7. Now I've gone with the Whip-Poor-Will  
No longer climb old school house hill  
But I dream of those days still  
And I guess I always will...  
I'll remember ... (refrain).
  
8. When the year is on the wane  
My heart sings an old refrain  
The feeling, it comes quite plain  
I long to be back home again...  
Back in ... (refrain).

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*About this column: "Remembering Herndon's History" is a regular Herndon Patch feature offering stories and anecdotes about Herndon's past. The articles are written by members of the Herndon Historical Society. Barbara Glakas is a member. A complete list of "Remembering Herndon's History" columns is available on the Historical Society website at [www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org).*

*The Herndon Historical Society operates a small museum that focuses on local history. It is housed in the Herndon Depot in downtown Herndon on Lynn Street and is open every Sunday from noon until 3:00. Visit the Society's website at [www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.herndonhistoricalsociety.org), and the Historical Society's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HerndonHistory> for more information.*

*Note: The Historical Society is seeking volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday. If you have an interest in local history and would like to help, contact [HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:HerndonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com).*