

# ❖ PARDON'S PROGENY II ❖

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In America.*

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Fear Not"*

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## **Historic burial site and grave stone of Elder Pardon Tillinghast: owned by us and must be preserved by us**

By Bruce Tillinghast  
(Warren, John, John, Stutely, Clarke, Stutely, Pardon, John, Pardon, Pardon)

*Editor: In preparation for the 2011 Tillinghast Reunion in Providence, RI,, Bruce Tillinghast prepared the unique gravesite of Pardon Tillinghast for visiting family members. Here we learn about our ownership of the site and our responsibility to maintain it.*



**Tombstone, 2011 after cleanup**

Last year - 2011 before the reunion - several local Tillinghast Family members commented about the sad condition of the Tillinghast Burial Site on Benefit St in Providence, RI Overgrown grass, urban trash and tree limbs down...not an attractive site for family visitors who would come to Providence to view the hallowed ground ...the final resting place of Elder Pardon Tillinghast, from whom we all descend.

If you are regularly reading Pardon's Progeny II you have heard about "Pardon's Plot"...If you haven't visited Providence you may wonder....what is this place?

A bit of background....

By researching Tillinghast history, you know that our common ancestor, The "Elder" Pardon Tillinghast, left England for religious freedom and came to America in 1643. He came first into Connecticut, but traveled to RI after hearing about Roger Williams who left Massachusetts and had established a town called "Providence" with a promise of religious



**2011 cleanup with  
Tom Morgan, Providence Journal**

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freedom. Elder Pardon bought a lot at the north end of the village near what is now Olney Street. His first stay in Providence lasted about 10 years when he moved his young family to Newport. It was a brief stay and Elder Pardon moved back to Providence, finally settling his family at the south end of Towne Street...now South Main Street ....near Wickenden Street.

The City of Providence started as a village on the hillside on the east side of the Providence River. Early settlers had houses along Towne Street (now South/North Main Streets). You should know that Towne Street was at the bottom of the hill (now College Hill). Parallel house lots went east up a hill that had a steep grade with lot lines that became paths, that became alleys, that are now streets like Waterman, Angell, Power, and more. Towne Street was above the shore line...but with easy access to the river. There Pardon established the first commercial wharf in Providence on his return from Newport.

It was common for the Angells, Bowens, Olneys, Watermans, and Tillinghasts ... to bury deceased family members up the hill in family grave-yards. What is now Benefit Street was called "Back Street" as it meandered around these family grave-yards on the hill. As the town grew in the mid to late 1700's and family members as well as new arrivals built houses on land up the hill, these grave-yards were in the way of progress and development. The Town of Providence wanted to straighten Back Street to accommodate this growth. A straightened Back Street was planned as Benefit Street with graves being exhumed and moved to the North Burial Ground....all EXCEPT the Tillinghast site.... Was it not in the way? Was a family member on the committee? It was left alone. We don't know....but it was left in place.



**The gate on Benefit Street**

No burials took place in this grave-yard after the early 1800's. What happened with care and maintenance of The Tillinghast Burial Site is unknown during this time and it appears from records that it was largely neglected and abandoned as family members moved away from the "homestead."

By the 1880's, Providence had become a major industrial city and development had moved beyond Benefit Street up the hill to fashionable Prospect Street, Brook Street, and Hope Street, with "fancy" houses of the Victorian era. The Tillinghast Family hillside graveyard on the river side of Benefit Street had become very neglected...grave stones broken, deteriorating and crumbling (mostly slate and other soft easily chiseled stone). "The teeth of time has eaten out the work of the chisel" was the way James Goddard Tillinghast described the stones remaining on the site in 1887.

A group of Tillinghast Family members rallied...and at the first Committee meeting held on "Saturday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1887, it was proposed to consider ways and means to improve and preserve the Tillinghast Burial Ground – about 40 X 100 feet, fronting on Benefit Street, which is in an entirely neglected state, much overgrown with shrubbery and briars...."

The Tillinghast Burial site is a unique Rhode Island site. Scattered across the state, there are lots of historic Tillinghast Burial sites, and many rural grave-yards devoted to other individual families, but this site is a single family burial site located *within the city limits*. As we discovered at the reunion last year...the Tillinghast Family OWNS this site. Because it is a grave yard, we don't pay taxes (WHEW – as Benefit Street is prime property in Providence, and YIKES...40x100 is a house lot!)

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This was corroborated in records from 1887 by the Committee who petitioned The Providence City Council to investigate ownership. Long story short....The Council RESOLVED: That the claim of title be released to the heirs of the late Rev. Pardon Tillinghast on condition that the heirs, within one year, put the grounds in good repair with proper enclosures. Ultimately a one year extension was granted allowing the Committee to raise the necessary funds for the work.

The appointed Sub-Committee made a report after site consultation with professionals. “This Committee finds this ground difficult to deal with, in view of proposed improvements, being situated on the west side of Benefit Street, upon the hillside sloping somewhat abruptly from the south and west.



**Front of the site, Benefit Street slope**



**Transit Street at south corner**



**From front slope south, not changed**



**Transit Street with deep slope to west**

“Your Committee recommends the adoption and execution of the plan, estimated to cost \$5000. With an additional \$1000 to be invested in trust for perpetual maintenance, this equaling a total of \$6000.”

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The initial plan called for building a 12 ft rough granite retaining wall at the back end of the site to raise up the grade. Right and left sides of the site called for the same material. The front or Benefit Street side would retain the same south slope as what was the street level. The Benefit Street front proposal was for finished or “dressed” granite curbing and posts 2x2 feet square and 8 feet in height. The entire site called for wrought iron fencing surmounting the granite walls.



**Rough cut granite used on sides and back**



**Front corner stone with dressed or finished edges**



**Dressed granite column on front  
Bruce Tillinghast**

There was also a proposal for the “substantial” monument 4x4 feet square and 8 feet in height. Much as we see it today.

In the fall of 1887 a subscription letter went out to known Tillinghast Family members.....keep in mind there was no telephone book, no internet, Google or a Todd Lawrence for quick reference to the vast network of family members that had become scattered across the country by 1887. Locating Tillinghast Family members is much easier today. This first collection effort fell short of the goal. “The Plan” was revised recommending the granite be replaced with ledge-stone (aka: big local field stones), and the back and sides were to have no iron fence. The front and monument were left unchanged.

A second appeal for subscriptions went out – hence the extension from City – and although there are no detailed records as in the first call of who gave what...it must have proved fruitful to some extent as it ended up that all the walls are granite and there is iron fencing around the entire perimeter.



**Louise next to monument at spring cleanup**

*(Continued from page 4)*

Understanding what the original site was like and looking at the present Tillinghast Burial Site, it is remarkable the amount of work and the quality of construction that went into the site for \$5000.

Yes 1889 dollars...BUT.....isn't this a testimony to the quality of craftsmanship we have lost today?

And even more impressive that here after almost 125 years (it was finished about 1890) it is very much intact as constructed.

Yes there are issues....the iron fence in wet shady areas has rusted its footings, the "grass," well not a lawn by any means, needs attention. I am amazed how well the 12 foot rear retaining wall has weathered time....beautiful stone work...large, rough granite stones...."dry wall"...no mortar and 2 feet below ground as footing...10 foot rise above. There are some sweet perennial plantings, two rhododendrons and two Chinese dogwoods that don't appear to be original plantings (c. 1890) but are very mature. Late May early June is best time to visit.

Even though it was part of the original 1887 plan there is no record of a perpetual maintenance trust ever being established. And who has taken care of the site for all these 125 years is a mystery. I was 14 or 16 when my dad took me to the site and we made a grave rubbing. Frankly I don't recall the condition of the site at that time...it was about 1963.

Certainly I would have remembered wading my way in as we did to clean up in 2011, but no memory of that. And we have heard stories about neighbors picking up trash to help clean up the neighborhood and keep it looking clean.

In an effort to keep the site a proud place for us all, we did another clean up this spring.

May 12<sup>th</sup>, Shaw Tillinghast and Louise Tillinghast volunteered to join me along with handyman, Bobby Camera in a spring cleanup of the Tillinghast Burial Site on Benefit Street in Providence.

Fortified with some coffee and sweet munchies it took us about two hours to remove fallen branches, rake leaves, cut the grass (aka weeds) and plant some things around the monument. We used a few perennials this year hoping that they will come back next year and make maintenance easier.

I paid Bobby \$350 for clean-up, hauling 12 bags of leaves/debris and a pickup truck full of branches to the dump (he pays dump fees) as well as three extra mows for the season. I donated initial plant material and Shaw contributed. Louise brought some "Chinese Lantern" shoots from her yard for back of lot that should provide some fall color in another area of the site. It's a start, but not what I would consider a fine tribute to Pardon and his extended family (that would be all of US) to match what transformed a colonial hillside family grave site into the well-constructed, very simple and elegant site existing today.



**Leaves and branches from cleanup**

There is no water source on site so in dry weather it requires carrying in

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jugs of water to keep plant material alive. Last year was a challenge – especially to have site looking good for the reunion and we started late. This year, even though we started earlier, watering has been more of a challenge with nation-wide heat ...locally we have been lucky with a fair amount of rain, but high temps do require extra water. I do this. It was easy with my restaurant close by last year as my travels took me by Pardon's Plot on a regular basis. Since I don't own New Rivers now it is more of a challenge to keep on top of water needs.

So here we are today....The Tillinghast Family...owners of this rare and precious site we all have a direct connection to...somehow it is "home" to all Tillinghasts and ultimately it's care and maintenance falls to us.

Perhaps it is timely to establish a new committee to plan for the future of The Tillinghast Burial Site

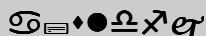
*Editor: Jeannine Dietz reminds us of her article in the Summer 2011 issue where she invites Tillinghast men to participate in a DNA Study. Participants are still needed for this study.*

#### **A Reminder to Join the Tillinghast Study**

The project needs males of Tillinghast descent. All you need to participate in this project is Y-chromosome DNA, a test kit and a few minutes of your time. Only men have Y-chromosomes, so only male Tillinghasts need apply. The Tillinghast Project also encourages women to participate and this can be done if you have a male Tillinghast relative such as a brother, cousin, father, uncle or grandfather provide a sample for your line.

The Tillinghast Project seeks paternal ancestors and descendants of Pardon Tillinghast, who settled in Providence, Rhode Island by 1645. If you are unsure of how this works, email the project administrators and a chart can be sent to you and assistance provided in completing it. Members may join or leave the project at any time and privacy is assured and anonymity provided if so desired.

This project would like to standardize on the 37-marker test. The more markers present will translate into greater cost but also yield more meaningful results. Visit the website <http://www.familytreedna.com> for more information the phone number is (713) 868-1438. All three of the project administrators have a Tillinghast connection. You may contact them also. Their email addresses are: Jeannine Jacaruso Dietz at [jjdietz@hotmail.com](mailto:jjdietz@hotmail.com), Todd Lawrence at [tcl12065@aol.com](mailto:tcl12065@aol.com) and Linda MacLachlan at [ggrandmac@verizon.net](mailto:ggrandmac@verizon.net).



#### **Special request from Jeannine:**

Also, my co-administrator on the project, Linda, asked me for some help. I wondered if you had enough space, a paragraph, to put a request in the upcoming newsletter specifically aimed at the **locals and /or scholars of Providence**. Linda MacLachlan, who is related to Judge Benjamin Tillinghast, grandson of Elder Pardon Tillinghast, is preparing to publish her article on the founding of Providence, R.I. in September or October for a genealogical journal and the journal is requiring **a photo of where Roger Williams pitched his tent**. She lives here in northern Virginia and has no idea where this sign would be. Following is the exact description of the location where this occurred and maybe someone who reads PPII might just be familiar with the spot and willing to snap a photo. She is offering to credit the photographer by putting the photographers name under the photo in the article. "The spot in Seekonk where he pitched his tent is believed to have been at "Manton's Neck," below where the modern Phillipsdale and not far from the mouth of the Ten-Mile River, where a spring of cold water still bubbles up... The place is marked by a tablet suitably inscribed and fixed to a tree by the roadside." George H. Tilton and Leonard Bliss, *A History of Rehoboth, Massachusetts: Its History for 275 Years, 1643-1918*, in Which is Incorporated the Vital Parts of the Original History of the Town. (Boston, Mass: The author, 1918). This location later became part of Rehoboth, Massachusetts. With state boundaries redrawn, the land is now contained in East Providence, Rhode Island near the bridge for Roger Williams Avenue over the Ten Mile River. Greene, "When Was Providence Founded?" *NHR*, 4:28. Her email is [ggrandmac@verizon.net](mailto:ggrandmac@verizon.net).

## Tillinghast love story becomes life story, novel

### I'll Never Leave You by Nancy A. Prieston

(Anna, George, George, Benjamin, Thomas, Thomas, Thomas, John, Pardon, Pardon)

**Editor's note:** When I learned from Nancy A. Prieston that she was writing a book based on the love story of her parents, Anna May Tillinghast and Dan Jasensky, I asked for more information. While the purpose of writing her parent's life story was to depict their enduring relationship, I asked for more details about the Tillinghast family she wrote about. One detail that comes to light is that several generations of Tillinghasts known to Nancy, including herself and her son, have a dental condition believed to be passed down through Tillinghast genes. As editor, I have not uncovered other Tillinghast lines who claim to have this gene. It would be interesting to hear from others who can give us more information.

Following, you will find the press release for Nancy's book which will be available in October. Next is an excerpt from the book describing the dental condition.

Nancy says, *They will be able to purchase a book at Xlibris Corporation 1-888-795-4274, [www.Xlibris.com](http://www.Xlibris.com), [Orders@Xlibris.com](mailto:Orders@Xlibris.com). Also they can email me at [nancyp18union@gmail.com](mailto:nancyp18union@gmail.com) if they would like updates on the publishing date. Cost: \$19.99*

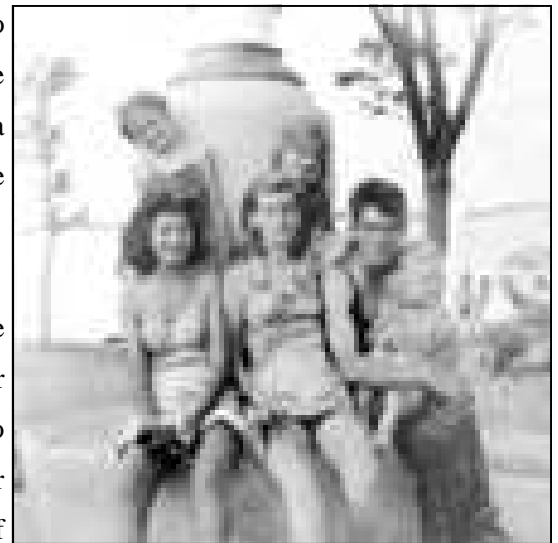
## Timeless, Bewitching, New Fiction is of Love That Refuses to Die

*Nancy A. Prieston, inspired by her parent's exemplary love, has written a magical tale of generations that replicate past love into an eternal present*

STAMFORD, Connecticut – Imagine a love so powerful that it refuses to die. Nancy A. Prieston's bewitching novel *I'll Never Leave You* is of love that runs through lifetimes and transmutes into an everlasting sacrament, a spiritual bedrock that encompasses a family, and defeats time's inexorable advance through the magical medium of a book.

Anna travels between later years in search of her cherished book and the former years of youth, where her world as a baby drastically changes after the shock of her mother's early death. Anna suffers from abuse, adding to the effects of an erratic heart and **lives with a genetic, rare oral disease**. Her mother leaves her in prayer with a request that Anna will have a life of love. This inspired novel is based on a real story of true love.

In 1938, Dan an accomplished woodworker sees Anna on a street corner in



**Anna, center and unsmiling with her father to her left. George, born in 1897, angry because of his wife's early death withheld love from Anna.**

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Greenwich, Connecticut and he is powerfully drawn to her, despite the fact that she is many years his junior. He sees past Anna’s shy exterior, dirty face and clothes, captivated by her beauty, despite the discoloration of her teeth. Their bond grows in secret while Dan loves her unconditionally, protecting her with his patience, kindness, and gentle nature until she is old enough for him to be introduced to her father. Their unique connection and faith deepens as they are separated during WWII, where Dan writes Anna “The Cherished Book.” (Which the author, their daughter, Nancy A. Prieston, presents within the novel) Faith, hope, and endurance encompass them as they journey through all the seasons of life. But will Anna find the book in time, before her final destiny?

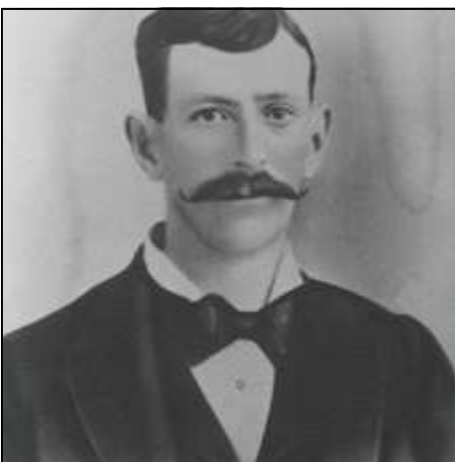


**Anna is rescued by Dan for a life of love**

*For more information on this book, interested parties may log on to [www.Xlibris.com](http://www.Xlibris.com).*

**About the Author**

Nancy A. Prieston owns an educational program for toddlers in Stamford, Connecticut. So inspired by the reading of “The Cherished Book,” she has based this novel on the story of her parents’ exemplary love. It is her hope that others will feel the intensity of Anna and Dan’s journey and with faith and hope find the same true love.



**George Allen Tillinghast  
Son of Benjamin born 1844**



**Sophie Tillinghast  
Wife of George**



**Brother and sister  
Anna and George Tillinghast in front  
of his Ford Roadster**

All enjoyed dinner, and the aroma of coffee now filled the air while I washed the dishes and Dan insisted he dry. Uncle Mike surprisingly took a towel and was wiping dishes along with Dan. I wished I had a camera to capture this as Aunt Julia and I looked

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*(Continued from page 8)*

on in astonishment. Soon, we all sat again and enjoyed all kinds of conversation over the sweet bakery goods. But suddenly, without warning, a piece of sugary fruit touched my back molar and saliva began to fill my mouth while tears filled my left eye. It was as if a spring of water erupted from this very tooth to wash itself of the painful reaction. Jumping up quickly, I ran and promptly turned on the hot water, hoping it would become warm fast. Tears now filled both eyes while saliva dripped from my throbbing mouth into the sink. Forming a cup with my hands, I sucked warm water into my mouth to bath the aching nerve. After a few minutes of rinsing the tooth, the agonizing pain seemed to settle down. Dan and Aunt Julia towered over me, holding a towel. Dan was speechless as Aunt Julia attempted to wipe my eyes and mouth. Tears filled my eyes as I ran to the bathroom, feeling embarrassment, and I realized I would have to explain this unusual incident to Dan. "God, why did I have to have these teeth? I will suffer the physical pain but please deliver me from the emotional trauma they bring along with them," I pleaded. "What is Dan going to ask me, say to me? I can't even bear to glance at these teeth in the mirror, and now I must be constantly aware of their presence. Lord, I can't face him." My heart began to palpitate as I realized I was on the floor behind the door. My body automatically slowed my breathing to deep, slow breaths, and the palpitations started to subside. These incidents always worried me since there had been too many in the past.

*"What is wrong with Anna? We must go to her!" I exclaimed. Aunt Julia laid a hand on my arm as if to say, "Let her be. She will be fine. Just give her some time." Obviously, Aunt Julia and Uncle Mike, who stood by silently, had witnessed this behavior in the past. "Well, what was that all about?" I asked.*

*"Don't you know? Didn't Anna tell you? You must have noticed!" replied Aunt Julia as Uncle Mike walked to the bathroom. "Have you noticed how Anna covers her mouth frequently when she talks or laughs? Have you noticed her teeth, Dan?"*

*"I have, but we never actually talked directly about it. I could never bring this up to Anna as I sense it would upset her terribly," I admitted. "To tell you the God's honest truth, it doesn't faze me at all, except for the fact that it affects Anna."*

*"Let me explain Anna's condition to you," Aunt Julia said with a sad look on her face. "On the Tillinghast side of the family, there is a dominant gene that could be chosen at fertilization. Unfortunately for Anna, the gene was used at the time she was conceived, and fortunately for Georgie, it was not. She has one of the rarest forms of mouth disease known as amelogenesis imperfecta. So this disease affects all her teeth, and there is no cure except to have them all pulled and have dentures made. Her mouth would have to be fully grown to even consider this being done. She has absolutely no enamel, which causes the permanent yellow teeth. In addition, because of this lack of enamel, all her teeth have exposed nerves, which are highly sensitive to cold and sugars. Once contact is made with either, the pain can be immediate and excruciating. The gums will become inflamed, red, and swollen. They will bleed every time they are brushed, and sore pockets, like boils, can form on the roof of the mouth, causing deep wrinkles, which can be felt with the tongue. Only Paregoric or whiskey rubbed on the gums eases pain when they are at their worst. Chunks of tartar form on the teeth themselves and, at times, can crumble off, but mostly are permanent. To lessen the pain of contact with cold or sugar, you need to have access to warm water immediately. Without it, the pain remains excruciating until the saliva in your mouth sufficiently washes over the affected tooth or teeth. Biting food and chewing it takes more effort, and usually one side of the mouth is more cooperative. Softer foods, especially cold, candies, and sweets, are rolled back and forth with the use of the tongue against the roof of the mouth to prevent contact with any teeth."*

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*I couldn't hide my astonishment as I looked at Aunt Julia. As I thought about all she said, all I could say was "Dear God! Dear God!" Flashbacks of Anna holding a napkin up to her mouth and leaving for the ladies' room came flooding back to me. Now I realized early on why she tried to cover her mouth so much, but it truly did not bother me. Her beauty was far superior to any issue with her teeth. But the thought of poor Anna suffering quietly—with such courage—caused compassion to fill my heart. I wanted to run into the bathroom and grab her, enveloping her with my protection and love. How would I approach her when she was so terrified of exposing this disease to me? For crying out loud, we never faced it or even discussed it. Well, if she were going to be a part of my life, we would face it together and get this talk done with. There was no room for any added terror in her life, and I would do whatever I could to soothe her fears and wrap her in security and my love.*

*Uncle Mike appeared in the kitchen doorway and broke the silent trance of my deep thoughts. He looked at me. I said a silent prayer and slowly made my way to the bathroom.*

*"Anna," I said gently. "I love you. Please let me in. Please open the door, sweetheart."*

*Click went the door, and I realized Uncle Mike must have calmed and soothed her fears a bit. I slowly turned my body in toward a slightly open door and made my way into the bathroom. Anna was curled up on the floor, snug against where the door met the tub with her back to me. Gently touching her right shoulder, I spoke, "Anna," I said softly, "Aunt Julia explained the situation with your teeth, and the only thing I have concern about is the pain it causes you. You need not have any fears with me. I've already told you, I will never leave you. You are the most beautiful being to me. I love you. You are my precious redhead, Rust. Now, Rust, will you please turn around and hug me? And remember, any time you have pain or want to talk about your teeth, it is not taboo to me. We will face both our fears together. Nothing could separate me from you."*

Anna turned and hugged Dan, and slowly their faces met with a smile and then a smirk while Dan pulled Anna up off the floor. Anna held her composure and whispered shyly in Dan's ear, "I love you." This statement almost blew Dan through the roof. His excitement thundered through him with bolts of exhilaration. Their hug became so tight that it seemed as if their bodies and souls instantly melted together. They both lit like lightning. Dan was a bright light sent to Anna from heaven. Anna was stunned at the words that made their way out of her mouth and almost relieved that these words she had hidden finally blossomed into the open. Anna suddenly jolted as she thought she heard the first notes of "I Believe" played on a piano. They were so angelic in nature that Anna felt God's presence and complete peace, safety, and love.

Next, they found themselves walking on cloud nine right into Aunt Julia's kitchen. Uncle Mike was pretending to read the Sunday comics while Aunt Julia was scrubbing the already cleaned stove. They squinted their eyes as they looked at Dan and Anna, and the older couple witnessed such a changed disposition in the lovebirds. Uncle Mike then said, "How about another cup of coffee?" Within five seconds, all scrambled to the table and resumed immediate idle conversation, trying to relieve all the emotions that this day had brought.



**Nancy Prieston teaching toddlers**

***Editor: I have a few original copies of Pardon's Progeny to give away. Tell me what you want. Greta***