

Tom Marshall's Weekly News, November 17, 2008

Miss South Carolina, 1965: For several years in the mid-1960s, the perennial chaperone for Miss South Carolina contestants who were headed for Atlantic City used our Holiday Inn near Ogetown as a staging area for the Miss America competition. The party of about five, including the attractive young contestant and often her parents, would usually stay for two nights, away from the bustle of the pageant about to take place just two hours away.

Nancy Moore of Aiken was Miss South Carolina in 1965. I was at the front desk when she and her party walked into the lobby. With great self-confidence, she walked to the desk, introduced herself, and then introduced the others with her, including her parents. To say the least, this 20-year-old was a very attractive young lady. She had actually been born in Delaware, where her father worked for the DuPont Company. With his transfer to Aiken in the 1950s, she grew up in South Carolina, and her southern accent told of that.

All of us liked Nancy, and while they were with us, I gave her a ride in my father's Model 87 Stanley. Then we sent flowers and wished her well on her quest for the Miss America title. She did well but not well enough; I think she came in fourth.

About a month later, to my complete surprise, I got a letter from Nancy Moore, saying how much she enjoyed being with us in Delaware, and she would like to come back for a longer visit. She was soliciting an invitation. Realizing the great difference in age (I was 41, she was 20), I thought, "I'm not going to pursue this," and I never replied.

There was a man in South Carolina named Strom Thurmond. In 1945, Ol' Strom had married a 21-year-old when he was 45, and she died about 18 years later. Still having his eye on young women, he married Nancy Moore about 1967, when he was 67 and she was 22. As I recall, they had three daughters together, and the marriage lasted for many years until they were divorced when Strom was nearly 90. It is obvious that she liked older men (but maybe not that old). Yes, that is the same Strom Thurmond who ran for president on a States' Rights ticket in 1948 and served forever in the U.S. Senate, first as an Independent and then as a Republican. He was nearly 100 when he finally gave up.