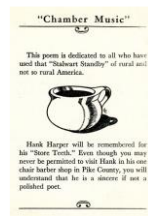


## Audleigh Doster, Greenfield's Own Popeye

by Susan Caplinger Thompson

(article appeared in the January 2025 Greene Country Towne Crier)

Growing up in the 600 block of North St in 1950's Greenfield was pretty aud... odd! It was a great neighborhood. Glenn Penn, owner of Penny's and one time mayor, and his wife Marguerite, were across the street. Next door to them was Herbert and Elizabeth Carey. Lovely people. Mrs. Carey was my beloved 4th grade teacher. Then on the corner was Harry Audleigh Doster, Aud to his friends. Audleigh was, well, odd! Audleigh's father was Coke L Doster, Attorney at Law, former mayor of Greenfield, former State Representative. His aunt was Fern Doster, long time nurse at Greenfield Municipal Hospital. Audleigh's claim to fame was being eccentric. My brother Mike, being 5 years older than me, remembers seeing Audleigh and his wife Garnet driving by in their black 1935 Ford sedan (even at that age Mike knew his cars) with just their heads appearing above the doors. Shortly after that, Garnet passed away. Heartbroken Audleigh would regularly visit Garnet at the cemetery and would come across the street to complain to my dad that the popping noise from the trapshooting at the Greenfield Sportsman Club on New Martinsburg Pike was bothering Garnet. The old man did not care, clearly was not amused, and came up with a nickname for Audleigh that I will not include here. It was obvious if Audleigh was upset with a neighbor. He would walk down the sidewalk until he reached the home of the offending person, cut out to the middle of the street to continue on, then back to the sidewalk once past their home. I have not verified this, but Tom Penn claims that when his father, Glenn, was mayor, he had Audleigh named a public nuisance. Then, there were Audleigh's photos and writings. All new arrivals to the neighborhood received an 8 x 10 photo of Audleigh, portraying Popeye, holding his cat, Spot. Some also received his self-published booklet Chamber Music, written under the pen name of Hank Harper. Chamber Music extolls the virtues of the chamber pot. We did not receive a copy of Chamber Music (refer back to my dad's feeling about Audleigh). There is also "Hank Harper's Kinfolk", a sheet of photos of different Audleigh characters. Audleigh placed a good size bolder on the corner of the North & 7th street intersection, painted it brown and silver and lettered on it "Flying saucer landed here July 4, 1947" apparently not to be outdone by Roswell, New Mexico. With his surplus silver paint, he painted a 1937 Ford school bus (thanks Mike), tricked it out as one of the first motor homes, grabbed his trusty chamber pot, I'm sure, and headed for Warm Springs, Georgia. Audleigh would return in the summer for a few years and finally made Warm Springs his home until his death in 1979. During those shorter trips he would leave Spot in care of a neighbor with the instructions that if Spot died before he returned to put him in the freezer and he would bury him when he got home. Different neighbor friends of mine only spoke highly of Audleigh. He was a good friend to them. One gifted me their copy of Chamber Music and Hank Harper's Kin, which I truly cherish. Our Popeye & Spot picture disappeared years ago. I purchased the one I have at B. R. Duckworth's auction. Paid way more for it than I expected because someone else was bidding against me! Mike and I have decided that, given the chance, we would have really liked Audleigh, no matter what the old man thought.



## From the Society's Files

In the historical society's Doster family file several newspaper clippings add to the Audleigh story. One from a Warm Springs, Georgia newspaper talks about a "burlesque beauty show" put on by the Ladies Aid Society. It featured fourteen men and boys dressed as women movie stars or comic strip characters with 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes given for most beautiful. Audleigh won "booby" prize dressed up as Olive Oyle, Popeye's girlfriend. A second article a few days later from the same paper, talks about people wondering about the strange disappearance of "Miss Olive Oyle" as people have not seen her around town since the show. It then reprints a letter received by one of the pageant's sponsors from Olive explaining her story: " I' glad for al you dunn and I think you had me dunn pretty. Wen I loked in the glase I eventhot I was bootiful. But, spownser, everybody laffed at me and I got the boobee preyse and I can't stand it and I'm goin two end it al. Don'luk for me in Hamilton wel or Kold Krek. I am goin to go to Bogar Bottum and live with the Boogars. Gud Buy Forever, Olive Oyl" A third article is from the Greenfield Republican. The newspaper received a letter from Audleigh telling about a tornado that went through the part of Georgia where he was vacationing. It was written on the bark of a tree that was knocked down by the tornado.

## More of Audleigh's characters

