



S.C. Hall of Fame Transcript

Maude Callen

In the early 1920's, for many South Carolinians living in Pineville and the surrounding countryside of Berkeley County, becoming ill, or needing health care was a nightmare due to it's very non-existence especially for lower income residents. One courageous woman... a midwife...with a physician's skill, healing hands, loving heart, and grace...changed many such nightmares...for hundreds... into "twilight dreams" and a sense of relief, where one would wake up knowing someone cared. That someone who took care of them was their "Angel in Twilight" she was Nurse - Midwife...Maude Callen.

Maude Evelyn Callen was born in 1898, in Tallahassee, Florida. Orphaned at the tender age of (7) seven, she was raised by her Uncle, Dr. William J. Gunn, a physician. Under his tutelage, young Maude would tend to and care for his patients...creating a thirst for medical knowledge that would take her to nursing school at Florida A&M University, from which she graduated in 1922. She then completed a Nursing Course at Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. By 1923, that same spirit of giving followed young Maude, as she married, and moved to South Carolina. Sponsored by the Episcopal Church, for 13 years, Maude Callen served her community as a nurse and midwife in Pineville, which is located in Berkeley County.

Well I Grew Up in St. Stephens...which is about eight miles east of Pineville. And Pineville is a very peculiar community. It's really a community without a main street. But it's in an area that was a place where there were plantations...some of the largest plantations in South Carolina. Some that had as many as five-thousand slaves. And of course, after the Civil War, these slaves were liberated and...they had no place to go. And so that was the background that made up where Maude Callen Served.

I've always said that she's the "Mother Theresa" of Berkeley County because she gave so much. And sometimes we always see the name Mid-wife... because she did that too...and she trained midwives especially after she became an employee of Berkeley County, but midwife demeans her experience...because she knew enough about medicine that Doctors respected what she



knew...and she was a Nurse...and she gave so much...even beyond that experience...to the community where she lived.

In 1936, Maude Callen joined the Berkeley County Health Department as a Nurse. Here she trained hundreds of women in the art of “Midwifery” and traveled to all parts of Berkeley County.

In 1951, Life Magazine published a 12-page essay by Eugene Smith, which generated thousands of dollars in contributions and brought national attention to the work being done by Nurse Maude Callen.

Well, I think it made her a national hero. But more than anything else, Smith was an “Award-Winning Photographer. And he captured the essence...when I look at these pictures....he just captures the essence of the area...the personality of Maude Callen.