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Aaron Clan Watches Hank's Assault on Babe's Record

By Jacqueline Durham

ATLANTA (BP)--How did it feel to be Henry Aaron's sister and live in the team's home city where Hank came within one home run of matching Babe Ruth's all time major league record of 714?

"I felt quite jittery," says Alfredia Aaron Scott, librarian at the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

"I didn't think too much about it in the beginning," she says of Aaron's assault on the record. But as the season progressed, the idea began to grow that "he might do something that no one else has ever done."

Alfredia and practically all the Aaron family gathered in Atlanta during the closing games of the 1973 season to watch Hank try for homers number 713 and 714.

Even Alfredia's eight-month-old daughter, Danya, went to the games. The child's father wanted to make certain she was there for the historic event.

As the final crucial games approached in late September, the local Aarons rented hotel space in anticipation of the arrival of more family members than the Scotts and Henry Aaron could accommodate.

Members of the family had the privilege of sitting in a box seat at Atlanta Stadium, but they sometimes sat in the stands, especially Hank's father, Herbert Aaron. "It's more like being at a ballgame," says Alfredia.

Despite all the rooting the Aaron clan could muster, Hank could come up with only homer number 713 in the season-ending series of games in Atlanta. He and his homegrown fans will have to wait until 1974 when, at age 40, he'll begin the season one short of Ruth's homer record and 72 short of Ruth's major league runs batted in record.

But the Atlanta Braves' superstar had no reason to be ashamed of his 1973 efforts which resulted in 40 home runs, 98 runs batted in and a late season hitting streak which raised his batting average to .301.

Hank's parents frequently come to Atlanta from Mobile, Ala., for the Braves' games. "They stay with me sometimes and with Hank sometimes," says Alfredia. His mother often stays home, she explains, "but Daddy is going to be there" when Hank is playing in town.

"We're close-knit," says Alfredia, the next youngest in the nine-member family.

Although Hank left home before Alfredia started school, they have developed a close relationship. She lived with Hank's family for awhile in Milwaukee and frequently joined them during the summer.

"When the Braves won the pennant in Milwaukee, and Mama came up, and everybody was so excited," Alfredia says she began to realize for the first time her brother was "somebody special."

When the Braves changed cities, Alfredia, then a college student, spent her summers with Hank's family in Atlanta.

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Actually, it was Hank, a Roman Catholic, who found out about the librarian position his Baptist sister holds at the Home Mission Board. She had worked at the Mobile Public Library after graduation from Florida A and M University in Tallahassee and a short stay in Philadelphia. She was engaged to a young man working in Atlanta and wanted a library position there.

"Hank is a quiet, family man," Alfredia says. But he likes his privacy.

"I even heard about his engagement on the radio," says Alfredia, "while I was getting ready for work one morning. The newscaster said, 'Wedding bells at Atlanta Stadium,' and I thought 'What?' Then he made the announcement." Alfredia had met Billye Williams and knew marriage was a possibility. But she had not been told of the engagement.

Alfredia takes great pride in the fact that her brother "has always been in the Braves' organization. He's never been traded."

She is also proud of her other baseball playing brother, Tommy Aaron, who is closer to her in age. Formerly with the Braves, he now manages the Braves' farm team in Savannah, Ga.

"We're really proud of Tommy," she says, frankly discussing his disadvantage at being in the shadow of one of the greatest stars in baseball.

This season, as Hank seriously threatened the Babe's record, there were a few surprises and pressures on family members. At a recent Braves game, for example, Alfredia was surprised at the awe of a group of little boys who learned she was Hank's sister.

"I am always reluctant to ask the questions everybody wants to know about," says Alfredia. One day, however, she asked Hank, "Are you going to break Babe Ruth's record this year?"

"I'm going to try," was the basic answer he gave her; but there was some other talk about just going out there to play baseball and letting it come natural.

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Jacqueline Durham is a freelance writer in Atlanta and wife of J. C. Durham, director of the department of audiovisuals at the Home Mission Board.

BP PHOTO mailed to state Baptist paper editors.

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Missionary From Chile
Optimistic About Future

10/2/73

RICHMOND (BP)--A Southern Baptist missionary to Chile expressed optimism here about the future of Chile and mission work in that country following the recent military takeover.

John McTyre, an evangelist and pastor in Santiago, Chile's capitol, and his family felt they were in no immediate danger during the takeover, but they could hear "the ringing of bullets" and the sounds of guns firing near their home.

"My first night in Richmond was the first night since June 29 that I spent without hearing dynamite and gunshots," McTyre said in an interview at the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board here during a visit planned before the military takeover.

Some Chilean Baptists have been wounded and some are dead, reported McTyre, one of 49 Southern Baptist missionaries assigned to Chile. "We know of no Baptist people who were killed as a result of the political situation directly. Instead, they were killed accidentally with stray bullets because they were in the wrong place at the wrong time," he said.

Mass arrests have taken place and have included Baptists, McTyre reported. The president of the Baptist youth organization in Chile was included in a mass arrest along with several "leftist extremists" because he lived in an area where these people lived.

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On the day of McTyre's departure from Chile, word came that the young Baptist was being released from an island where he had been taken. At least two members of the church where McTyre serves as pastor are missing. "They may be in prison or they may not be alive," he said.

The curfew has had a direct effect on churches. "Our Sunday evening church services start at 8 P.M., also the time of the curfew. Therefore, we have not been able to conduct them," he said.

Asked about reasons for the coup, McTyre replied, "The military has stated that their action was a patriotic move to restore law and order and to bring back productivity and put the country on the move."

McTyre, who also serves as treasurer of the Chilean mission, questioned news reports of indiscriminate executions by the new government. He said those who have been killed or executed were alleged to be guilty of "illegal acts" such as sabotage, distribution of arms, attacks on police and military authorities and similar forms of resistance.

Commenting on the future of the country under the new government, McTyre said, "The outlook for Chile is optimistic. The Junta has stated they will present a new constitution and the people will be able to decide on a new government." However, no date has been set for either of these actions, he noted.

Responding to questions on church life under the government of former President Allende, McTyre said, "Allende did not persecute the churches or religion. He openly stated he was not opposed to them. However, everyone knew he was a Marxist and did not believe in God."

Although churches experienced no direct interference during the Allende regime, subtle economic pressures were brought to bear, primarily including taxation on equipment or the prevention or slow down of importation of equipment for use in church-related organizations.

When asked about the future of mission work in Chile, McTyre responded, "Last July, due to recommendations from Chilean Baptist churches and based on what we knew about the situation, we felt led to tell missionaries on the way to Chile to look for other fields. But now we urge and plead with missionaries to come to Chile and also urge the Foreign Mission Board to look for other personnel to come our way."

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Francis Martin Named
Editor of The Deacon

10/2/73

NASHVILLE (BP)--Francis A. Martin, recent doctoral graduate of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, has been named editor of The Deacon magazine, quarterly publication of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here.

Martin will succeed George Knight who recently became editor of the board's Home Life magazine. Martin will also edit pastoral ministries products as they relate to the board's deacon ministry and will be responsible for the board's Summer Youth Program materials.

"It is exciting to see how deacons respond to suggestions about their work as members of the church's pastoral ministries team," said Ernest Mosley, church ministries section supervisor of the board's church administration department. "The rate of increase in the number of deacon retreats and conferences conducted by Baptist associations has exceeded our expectations. Deacons have responded in the same way to the materials now being produced for them," he said.

A native of Missouri, Martin is a graduate of Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Mo., and Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee. He holds master of divinity and doctor of education degrees from Southern Seminary.

He formerly served as minister of education at Lyndon Baptist Church, Louisville, and minister of youth at First Baptist Church, Bowling Green, Ky.

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