

**FINDING YOUTH: ONE
MAN'S LIFE EXPERIENCE
TOLD TO GERTRUDE
NELSON ANDREWS**

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Finding Youth: One Man's Life Experience Told to Gertrude Nelson Andrews by Gertrude Nelson Andrews

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GERTRUDE NELSON ANDREWS

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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

Finding Youth



ONE MAN'S LIFE EXPERIENCE

Told to

GERTRUDE NELSON ANDREWS

And written by her into story form



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CALIFORNIA

Finding Youth.

THIS STORY is told because others need to know it. They need to know it now, when all the world is making a blind struggle to find youth—a new creative spirit.

It is the experience of just a common, everyday man—myself. But thousands of others have gone through my same experience. They are not finding the help, tho', that I found. It is because I found this help—found something that man has always been seeking—that I feel impelled to tell my story.

My name is Harvey Allen. I was born in New York City and had lived there all my life. When the Big Thing happened

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ANSON, AO

I was sixty years old. My wife and I had two sons—both married. We had six grandchildren.

We had lived in the same Harlem apartment for twenty years—with front windows looking out on the street, side air shafts and a rear view of clothesline and fire-escapes. I never see a clothesline now that I don't think of that day in October.

The neighborhood had changed since our coming. The Ghetto had expanded and taken us in. The color line was drawn just a block away, in the next street. But the place was home and we had stuck there.

One of our sons—Walter—lived in Yonkers. The younger son—George—lived over in Brooklyn. We didn't see either of them often. They both worked hard to support their families. Evenings and Sundays they had their different family interests; and

their wives had their own relatives to visit.

My wife, however, made frequent trips to their homes. She helped our daughters-in-law by doing most of the sewing for the grandchildren. But she always returned in time to have my dinner ready at night when I got home tired from my day's work. She has never neglected me. Our youthful love affair was a good deal romantic, and we have always been real pals. She is a descendant from one of the old New York families of the best American pioneer blood.

Sometimes of an evening we went to a picture show. But we had dropped into the habit of spending most of our evenings at home. Occasionally some old friend would call. Or Miss Marsh, who had a small room in the apartment across the hall, would drop in for a few minutes. But I usually read aloud and my wife sewed. We both have

always been great book lovers.

I have never lost my youthful satisfaction in just being with my wife. I liked to look and see her seated there by the table, her white head bent above her sewing, and the rays from the droplight falling across her hands. Her slight figure always carried the air of the thoroughbred; and her hands were shapely and delicate, in spite of all the hard work she had done. Her hair still kept its girlish curl, and she wore it in a loose Grecian knot at the back of her head. She wore her cheap clothes, too, with the distinction of a New Yorker.

Whenever she felt my gaze, she would lift her eyes and smile at me across the table. I waited for this smile. A certain light in her soft brown eyes has never failed to fascinate me.

Whenever Miss Marsh dropped in I would

let my wife entertain her. I would smoke my pipe and read to myself. Miss Marsh got on my nerves. She was from the south, had seen better days, but was now clerking in a drygoods store on One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Street. She was a thin, little old maid who tried to be girlish. She laughed and gushed a good deal, and dyed her hair and painted her face. But my wife, who is kind to everyone, always defended her,

"Poor little thing! If she didn't try to keep up her spirits and look as young as possible, she'd lose her position in the store. And she does say some sharp, bright things. She leads a lonely life. And I don't believe she has enough to eat."

I can tell these things now about Miss Marsh; for later she and I came to understand each other better.

I worked in a downtown printing plant.