

Albert Bender
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Two Miles South of Paranoia

Located on the outskirts of Palmerton, two miles south of town, is a cemetery where no one is buried. The land, fifty-five acres of ^{nice} snarled pigweed, decayed garbage, and ^{nice!} rats the size of terriers, was to have been a well-maintained, grass-carpeted final resting place for all the good citizens of Palmerton, North Palmerton, and South Palmerton, when the three towns were chartered in 1837.

Then trouble began. Although all three towns had equal ownership of the land, Palmerton, being the largest, felt it should get the nineteenth acre since, as its mayor put it, "fifty-five doesn't divide equally by three." North and South Palmerton immediately responded that it does divide if each town were to get eighteen and one-third acres. Palmerton accused North and South of collusion and broke off any further discussion until it was no longer two against one.

But the North and South alliance was short-lived. During their talks about the land development, surveyors reported that the southern sections were by far the most arable, with deeper wells, better drainage, and more natural nutrients in the soil. South claimed this parcel of land, citing geographical proximity as its right. North argued that anyone should be able to be buried anywhere in the cemetery, and then accused South of thinking itself better than anyone else. Both promptly broke off any further discussion until Palmerton could act as an impartial negotiator.

So over the years ^{nice} communication remained as dormant as the land, and eventually, by the turn of the century, North Palmerton became New Providence;

South Palmerton became Superior Park; Palmerton stayed the same. And to this day any traveler wondering why three such clean, prosperous towns allow such a disgrace to exist would, depending on where he asked first, get decidedly different answers.

This reminds me of
the township troubles
we had while living
in central Pennsylvania.
Only there it was Buffalo
Township, E. Buffalo Township,
& of course W. Buffalo
Township. I saw this
story as a metaphor
for ~~the~~ the ~~feuding~~
past & ever present
between small
neighboring
towns.

Nancy X

Nice
experimental
fiction. Good
to always
read
something
new.