

# Author's childhood marred by hunger and violence

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Ballplay native Ann Haskin has written a memoir about her childhood.

Ballplay is a small community near Piedmont, Ala., where author Hazel “Ann” Barron Haskin was born in 1952, the youngest of ten children. Her new book, “Ten Lost Children: A Story of Redemption,” is a memoir about how a family of children grew up in poverty, violence and neglect.

Just released by Xulon Press, it is rated five stars by readers on Amazon Books.

Haskin, like her five brothers and four sisters, somehow survived and, after growing up, thrived.

Several times throughout their lives, Haskin's mother and the mother's second husband yanked the children up from whichever town they lived in California, discarded most of their things and drove them across the country to Ballplay. They would live there for only a few months before they yanked them up again and moved back to California.

Their brief times in Ballplay, though, where they had a loving grandmother and extended family members, showed the children a different way to live and instilled in Haskin a hope of one day enjoying life instead of only surviving.

Currently, Haskin, 71, lives in Edmond, Okla., near her daughter. Now widowed, she has two adult children and four grandchildren. She has worked as a chaplain for juveniles and is currently building a ministry to help adults and children overcome trauma through religion.

She writes, "When we surrender to [God's] plan, our lives, no matter how lost or broken, can be saved and used for His good purposes."

Haskin also writes that she accepted Jesus into her heart at age 11 and that her faith gave her hope during her darkest days, especially as a teenager. She thought once or twice that dying might be better than living because of the level of violence and neglect in the home. Looking back, she said only her faith gave her the strength to move forward.

Throughout much of their lives, the Barron children were hungry. Their mother and her abusive husband would leave for weeks at a time without

seeing that someone fed the children. The children were forced to beg or search garbage cans to keep from starving.

The story shares with readers how others influenced Haskin's life. Her father died when she was two years old, but he procured a promise from the second oldest son Jimmy to watch over his siblings, which he did, along with his oldest brother Alvin. Haskin's sisters consoled each other after their mother's outbursts and bonded them closer than most siblings.

Several teachers encouraged and loved Haskin, church members, neighbors and relatives instilled faith in her.

As each of the children reached the teen years, he or she left. Finally, in the late 1960s, Haskin and her mother were alone, and Haskin vowed to her mother that she would leave if her mother returned to her abusive husband. He had already kicked her out of the house, and for the first and only time, her mother chose Haskin's will instead of her husband's.

Haskin dropped out of school to go to work and fell in love with her future husband who had graduated from college and joined the military to serve during the Vietnam War.

They would marry in 1971 and she enjoyed a fun life in Italy where the couple was stationed for many years.

Mixed into the stories of misery are ones of happiness and humor when the mother would relent and allow her children to go to a carnival or ballgame.

Eventually Haskin gained perspective and began to forgive her mother to find peace.

Haskin writes, “I now realize Momma never matured beyond a child-like understanding. Her growth was stunted by the sexual and physical abuse she experienced as a child. She longed so desperately to be loved, but she had no capacity for or knowledge of how to do that. I think deep down in her heart, she loved us but could not express it.”

In a recent conversation, Haskin said that surviving such a harsh childhood has made her happier than most people, even when life’s ups and downs occur.

Haskin’s paperback book is published by Xulon Press and is available from [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for \$22.49 and \$9.99 on Kindle, from Xulon at [www.xulonpress.com](http://www.xulonpress.com) or her website, [www.annhaskin.com](http://www.annhaskin.com). She plans to speak later this spring when she returns to visit family members in Alabama. She will announce the places and dates later.

Haskin welcomes readers to email her at [ann@annhaskin.com](mailto:ann@annhaskin.com).