Three Different Author Biographies of James Hurst

From gradesaver.com:

James Hurst was born in Jacksonville, North Carolina on January 1st, 1922. He grew up on a coastal farm. After attending Booker T. Washington High School in Atlanta, Georgia, he went on to study chemincal engineering at North Carolina State College. His career trajectory changed, though, after he served in World War II; following his service, he decided he wanted to be an opera singer, so he studied at both the Julliard School of Music in New York and in Italy. Hurst continued as an opera singer for three years until 1951, when he decided he lacked the necessary talent and instead became a banker in New York. This occupation lasted for 34 years. He died at the age of 91 in Jacksonville, North Carolina in 2013.

In his spare time Hurst wrote short stories and plays, but *The Scarlet Ibis* was the only work of his that became famous. This story was originally published in the July 1960 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly,* but it gained recognition immediately by critics and now appears in literature textbooks all across the United States.

From Houghton Mifflin:

Musical Beginning James Hurst grew up in North Carolina on a farm near the sea. After attending North Carolina State College and serving in the United States Army during World War II, he studied singing at the famous Juilliard School of Music in New York. Hoping for an operatic career, Hurst went to Italy for additional study, but he soon abandoned his musical ambitions. In 1951, he began a 34-year career in the international department of a large New York bank.

Literary Breakthrough During his early years at the bank, Hurst wrote and published short stories and a play, mostly in small literary magazines. "The Scarlet Ibis" was first published in The Atlantic Monthly in July 1960 and won the "Atlantic First" award that year. Quickly recognized as a classic, the story has appeared in virtually every high-school literature textbook series published since the late 1960s.

His Own View Hurst lived not far from the place in North Carolina where he was born. In his garden grew many of the flowers mentioned in "The Scarlet Ibis." Hurst said that there are three "characters" in the story— Doodle, the narrator, and the setting, which comments on the inner action. When asked about the meaning of

the story, Hurst once replied, "I hesitate to respond, since authors seldom understand what they write. That is why we have critics. I venture to say, however, that it comments on the tenacity and the splendor of the human spirit."

From Encyclopedia.com:

Author Biography

James Robert Hurst was born in 1922 on a farm by the sea near Jacksonville, North Carolina, the youngest of three children of Andrew and Kate Hurst. He attended North Carolina State College and served in the United States Army for three years during World War II. Though he had studied to become a chemical engineer, he realized that he preferred music and became a student at the Juilliard School of Music in New York. Aiming for a career as an opera singer, he traveled to Rome, Italy, for further study, living there for four years. On his return to the United States, he soon decided that he lacked operatic talent and abandoned his musical ambitions. In 1951 he began a career in the international department of Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, where he continued to work until he retired in 1984.

During his first ten years at the bank, Hurst wrote in his spare time. He published short stories and a play, mostly in small literary magazines. "The Scarlet Ibis" was his first story to appear in a national magazine. It was first published in *The Atlantic Monthly* in July 1960 and won the magazine's Atlantic First Award for fiction that year. The story, as Hurst said in a telephone interview with this reviewer, "took on a life of its own." It was quickly granted the status of a classic and has been published in many high-school and college literature textbooks since the late 1960s. None of Hurst's other stories achieved similar recognition.