

## **Big Anne's Childhood**

Anne Huntley Hardison was born on December 16, 1919 in Carter's Creek, Tennessee. She was born at home, and the attending physician was her grandfather Hardison. Her birth certificate reveals some interesting facts. First of all, someone changed the spelling of her name on the certificate to "Ann." The certificate was completed in the good doctor's handwriting on Christmas Eve—perhaps his first opportunity to get caught up on his paperwork. Her father was a 35-year old rural letter carrier, and her mother was two years younger.

Anne was the fourth child in her family, but since the oldest child was stillborn, she was greeted by only two siblings: a brother, about six at the time, James Hayden, and the ultimate Big Sister, Jane McKay. Since "Tutter" is likely an infant's attempt to say sister, Big Anne may have given her sister a life-long nickname.



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**CERTIFICATE OF BIRTH**  
612  
File No. 56  
Registered No. 56

1. PLACE OF BIRTH  
City of Murry  
Dist. 2  
Town \_\_\_\_\_  
Registration District No. 44600  
Primary Registration Dist. No. \_\_\_\_\_  
(No. \_\_\_\_\_ St. \_\_\_\_\_ Ward \_\_\_\_\_)

FULL NAME OF CHILD Anna Hattie Hanson  
If child is not yet named, make supplemental report, as directed.

Sex of child Female 4. Twin, triplet, or other? \_\_\_\_\_ Number in order of birth \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Legitimate? Yes Date of birth 12 16 1919  
(To be answered only in event of plural births) (Month) Day Year

<b>FATHER</b>		<b>MOTHER</b>	
11. FULL NAME <u>Herschel H. Hanson</u>	12. FULL MAIDEN NAME <u>Jane McKay</u>	13. RESIDENCE <u>Carters Creek</u>	14. COLOR <u>White</u>
RESIDENCE <u>Carters Creek</u>	15. BIRTHPLACE <u>Tennessee</u>	16. AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <u>38</u>	17. OCCUPATION <u>House wife</u>
COLOR <u>White</u>	10. AGE AT LAST BIRTHDAY <u>35</u>	19. BORN AT FULL TERM <u>Yes</u>	
BIRTHPLACE <u>Tennessee</u>	15. BIRTHPLACE <u>Tennessee</u>		
OCCUPATION <u>Rural Letter Carrier</u>	17. OCCUPATION <u>House wife</u>		

Number of children born to this mother including present birth 4  
Number of children of this mother now living 3

20. CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDING PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE  
I hereby certify that I attended the birth of this child, who was \_\_\_\_\_ at 3 P. M.  
day above stated.  
When there was no attending physician or midwife, then the father, householder, etc., should make this return. A stillborn child is one that neither breathes nor shows other evidence of life after birth.

(Signature) J. H. Harrison PHYSICIAN OR MIDWIFE  
Address Carters Creek  
21. Date Dec. 24, 1919  
File No. \_\_\_\_\_ Registrar J. H. Taylor  
Post Office Address \_\_\_\_\_

REGISTRAR

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I hereby certify the above to be a true and correct copy of the original record on file in this office. (Not valid unless countersigned by Acting Director, Division of Vital Statistics)

W. C. Williams  
State Registrar of Vital Statistics

Sam A. Finkle  
Acting Director, Division of Vital Statistics

Date Issued 12-17-41

Childhood in the 1920s was considerably different than in the 21st century. For one thing, children spent much, much more time outdoors. Since they had no computers or television and fewer toys, there was less reason to stay inside. And since there was no air conditioning, it was likely to be just as comfortable outdoors as indoors. Plumbing facilities were more basic, also necessitating trips outdoors to the outhouse. For another thing, parents spent little time entertaining children (e.g., driving them to school, ballgames, or lessons), but lots of time working with (and supervising!) children. So it is a safe bet that, growing up on a small farm in Middle Tennessee, Big Anne really learned to do all kinds of hard work. But she also developed an up-close-and-personal appreciation of the creation and nature that many of us lack. The old house on top of the hill was a great place to see the sun go up and down and to watch the fireflies and stars come out at night. At any rate, Big Anne never cared much for air conditioning her living quarters.

Big Anne was a very slender, not unattractive little girl. Her father gave her the nickname “Humpy,” although no one seems to remember why.

When Big Anne was about 3, she was joined by little brother Harold and then when she was about 6, by baby sister Cora Beal. Finally, when she was 9, her youngest brother Jack was born. No one in the family has ever told me very much about Jack. He died of some illness at age 5. It must have been a very painful experience to lose such a small child. However, early childhood deaths were all too common in those days.



**A youthful Big Anne in the side yard at her parent’s home at Carter’s Creek.**

John A. McMeen, a first cousin, recalls an incident that foreshadowed several themes prevalent later in Big Anne’s life: family, service, and work. The McMeen family (Granddaddy

Hardison’s older sister, “Big”, was John A.’s mother) lived on an adjoining farm. Once when the entire family was sick with the flu, a young Jane McKay (“Tutter”) and a younger Big Anne were dispatched to care for house and household until the sick recovered.

## Musings about Anne's growing up

*Cora Beal Shields*

Since Anne was not joined by a younger sister until she was six years old, her first six years will not be included in this account of her childhood. As a matter of fact, Cora Beal remembers little of Anne's childhood until six more years had passed. Anne was about 12 years of age by that time. She then was old enough to be left in the kitchen to "finish up supper", or perhaps to clean up the kitchen after supper. The older sibling telling the younger what to do was her reward for these unpopular chores.

Most of the time, as I recall, very little officiating was done by our parents during the usual family disagreements. And when officiating was done, it was done by only two words. That was all that was needed: "That's enough!" were usually the two used.

One time Mama left home to be gone overnight or longer. Anne was the chief cook. Tutter and Bubber were no longer at home for a lengthy period of time. Presto Pressure Cookers were now on the market, and were a very popular item amongst the home demonstration club members. We enjoyed having something that cooked so quickly! Potatoes in only 15 minutes! Potatoes cooked in the pressure cooker were certainly on our menu that night. I am not sure that Anne read the instructions. I am sure I did not. At the end of the 15-minute cook time, Anne was unable to get top off the cooker. I was happy to assist her in the task. A loud WHOOM noise sent our attention upwards. We observed small pieces of potato and some water dripping from the ceiling over the stove. Our reaction was not fright, just puzzlement as to why that had happened. Surely we must have then read the instruction book.....surely.

Being six years younger than Anne, I admired her beauty, many friends and she always got permission to go anywhere she wanted to go, I thought. Of course this was not really the way it was. But when she lovingly told me I could go too, when I got older, was enough to cause much wrath and indignation on my part.

Our family's willingness to level with one another in our verbal interaction may have possibly sharpened our wits some. But when we all left home as we grew older, our verbal interactions seemed to be far more congenial when we were able to be together again. We were much more willing to demonstrate our deep love and concern for each other. This depth of love and concern was never talked about much. It was manifest in our genuine interest in the personal lives of each other and being willing to make any sacrifice necessary to assist one another when there was a need. Our mutual love and respect for the Lord and our parents were the two things that were a mutual bond for us.

## Big Anne, the Basketball Player

While attending Spring Hill High School, Big Anne was a part of the Lady Red Raider basketball team. All the children in Big Anne's immediate family played basketball except Tutter. Tutter wanted to play, but Grandma Hardison was afraid to permit her because of Tutter's heart condition. Bubber played basketball for Columbia High School, and Anne, Harold, and Cora Beal all played basketball for Spring Hill high school. In addition Harold also played baseball and Cora



**Starters, 1939 Spring Hill High School Lady Red Raiders. Anne stands just to the left of the coach. On the back of the photo, Anne wrote the names. She wrote “Bill Fowler—Blessed Coach” for the gentleman on her left.**

Beal was an SHS cheerleader. Now, lest you think that we come from a family of incredibly handsome athletes, please understand that these young people were endowed with Depression-era nutrition and the Hardison body type. Their thighs and calves were the same size. Once, many many years after high school, Anne was looking at a picture of her basketball team and told Olivyn that she drank cream to make her legs look like the other girl's legs. Jersey cream is only slightly thinner than whipped butter. Before you laugh, think about the protein shakes, etc. that you or your teenagers down today.

Girls' basketball was played with six players to a side in those days, and two of the players would play only defense, kind of like fullbacks in soccer nowadays. Scores were much lower, due to the slower pace of the games, heavy emphasis on defense, and the lack of three-point baskets (all field goals counted two points, regardless of where they were shot). Kneepads were standard issue for all girls, and were part of the uniform.

Even though the times were much simpler then, competition between high schools was just as keen as it is today. Students, teachers, and lots of people in the community would take a keen interest in the outcome of games. Anne was very fond of the coach Bill Fowler who was also the Principal. His personality was very much like [Bob Neil](#). He was tall, slim and compassionate. Anne said he was a good coach. Players wanted to excel and win just as they do today. Big Anne once told Douglas that the last game of her senior year was disappointing to her because she committed a foul near the end of the game that gave one of the opposing players a free throw that caused (Alas!) the Lady Red Raiders to lose and to be eliminated from the tournament.

Travel to away games meant that Big Anne would come in late some nights, after everyone had gone to bed. [Mailmen](#) tend to go to bed and get up early, particularly if

they [run a dairy farm](#) on the side. But when Big Anne would come in, Granddaddy would wake up, and say, “Who won your game, Humpy?”

“We lost, daddy.”

“What was the score?”

“22 to 18.”

“Well, get to bed.”

And Big Anne would go upstairs to bed.

## The Day Big Anne was a Community Hero!

*Editor's note: The Hardison family home burned to the ground about ten years prior to this incident, and was rebuilt on the same spot.*

*Harold and Cora Beal*

It was in the summer of 1939, Saturday afternoon, milking time. Mama, Tutter (Jane McKay), Anne, Cora Beal, Harold and Eddie were at home. On the way to feed the chickens, Cora Beal turned to look back at the house and saw smoke coming out from under many shingles over Tutter and Anne's bedroom. After excitedly announcing the obvious to those in the house, a loud panic stricken announcement was finally heard at the barn. While milking, Harold heard the loud voices from the house. At first they thought someone was calling the chickens. But then Eddie saw smoke on the roof. "Let's go! Bring the bucket of milk, I'll bring water", he said.

Meanwhile, Anne was ringing the old fashioned phone off the

wall so everyone on the line would pick up. Then she screamed, "Our house is on fire! Please come help us put it out!" I am not sure she identified herself.



**Granddaddy Hardison in front of the house several years after the fire. The fire was under the roof on the back of the house.**

When Harold and Eddie got to the house, they found Anne upstairs trying to open the window in the upstairs hall over the porch. She and Eddie crawled out onto the porch roof. Harold handed the 2 buckets to them to throw contents on the fire that was next to the chimney. Realizing that the milk and water thrown on the smoking roof had no effect on the source, they realized this was very serious. Serious enough for a "plan B". So our hero rushed back into the house and grabbed the quickest thing she could grab that was big enough to smother a fire. It was Mama's eiderdown comforter, a treasured possession given to her by her mother. It was a lovely floral pink satin heirloom, and perfect for the job at hand. When able-bodied neighbors rushed over to help they found Anne wielding that comforter and slapping it against the roof with great intent. The very willing able-bodied neighbors were found carrying water upstairs and on to the roof in ice trays!! Only a few buckets and vessels were found, so they were using everything they could find. I guess they thought ice trays were better than nothing. Some people even rushed down the hill to get water from the spring at the foot of the hill. Our poor water pressure at the house was very slow filling even an ice tray.

One creative person opened a hole in the roof to get to the source of the smoke with an axe. The flames then leaped upward immediately. Very early in this saga the Spring Hill fire department had been called. They came finally with the very best equipment they had which was an old fire truck carrying a large tank of water. The tank was too heavy, they could not come up the hill, so they had to turn around and back up the driveway. By now the blaze was quite big. The firemen did manage to put the fire out by chopping bigger holes in the roof to get to what was burning and dousing water on the burning timbers.

Meanwhile, Mama was so upset. She rarely cried, but she did that afternoon, along with a 12-year-old Cora Beal who didn't have enough sense to do anything constructive except stand close to Mama and cry too. Harold and Tutter were trying to keep the precious able-bodied neighbors from bumping into each other in the kitchen and on the stair steps! I don't suppose we even owned a hose. But Anne and Eddie remained on the frontline of battle until it was under control. Later whenever the story was related, the main item of the event, which was never omitted was the brave teenager Anne Huntley wielding that eiderdown comforter for all she was worth! What bravery! To do this, standing on a very slanting roof, was no small challenge.

Someone was finally able to get in touch with Daddy. As was his almost weekly job, he had gone to Columbia after [finishing his mail route](#) to get the car repaired and ready for the next week's job of carrying the mail. His question on the phone was, "You put it out, didn't you?" As always he manifested an air of calmness that quickly pervaded the crowd. We soon saw his car driving slowly up the road. One driving along sightseeing wouldn't have gone slower. He was met by Anne who said, "Daddy, hurry up! Go see Mama in the back yard." When Mama saw Daddy, she began crying again and said, "Herschel, where have you been?" She knew where he had been, but what she said was not important.

Sleeping that night was difficult. You could see the sky through the holes in the roof. The smell was terrible. That ole' house went through hard times including the [survival of a tornado](#) in 1962. But alas, this old house, the venue for so many happy times is only a memory for all of us in the Hardison family. May we all cherish memories of our sweet Anne, James Hayden, Millie, Jane McKay, Ewin, Mama and Daddy. Thankful for what influence each of them had upon us.

## Felix Ray

Big Anne may have had many boyfriends in her day, but they were before most nieces and nephews came along. One possible exception is Felix Ray. Felix was a basketball player of some note. He was 6'6" tall—a real giant for his time, and he played basketball at David Lipscomb College. His physique undoubtedly contributed to his nickname, "Rope." Felix was evidently a fun-loving good old boy who had little interest in marriage or getting ahead. Felix later became some kind of businessman in Columbia. Big Anne saved a couple of newspaper clippings that mentioned him that were found in a box of her photo albums.

Felix was well known for his passion for fishing, and evidently Big Anne enjoyed this recreation with him at least once. Doug, Sr. recalled that Felix loved fishing so much that he left a request for his ashes to be spread over one of his favorite fishing lakes after he died. His friend took the ashes up in a small plane and when he flew over the lake, released the ashes as promised. Unfortunately, most of them blew back into his face. Felix the practical joker had the last laugh!



## Big Anne and College

After Big Anne graduate from Spring Hill High School in 1938, she followed her mother and older sister to David Lipscomb College, at that time a two-year school strongly affiliated with the churches of Christ in Nashville, Tennessee. The first day of the first semester was devoted to registration—at that time students stood in long lines to pay fees, sign up for classes, etc. While in line, she met Jean Shields (later to become Mrs. Jean Starling), the older sister of Doug Shields. Of course, these two eventually introduced their younger siblings to each other. Jean and Anne remained friends the rest of their lives. Jean sat beside Anne's beside a day or two before she died.

While they were Lipscomb freshmen, Jean lived at home, which was at 1012 Gale Lane, only a few blocks from campus. While on campus, she made Anne's dorm room her headquarters. In those days before permanent press and even longer before the grunge look, the ironing board was a standard piece of furniture in a girls' dorm room. When Jean and other friends stopped by Anne's room between classes, they would deposit books, coats, and belonging on and below the ironing board, and things rapidly became chaotic. When it was time to rush to class, Anne would hunt for her friends' belongings—earning her the nickname “Hunter,” which she kept among certain Nashville friends and family for the rest of her life.

After completing the two-year degree at Lipscomb, Anne was one of the most educated women of her generation. Very few had the money, drive or family encouragement to attend any college at all during those days of the Great Depression. After graduating from Lipscomb in 1940, Anne and Jean got jobs doing office work in Nashville for the new Defense Transportation Administration, where they remained throughout



**Jean Cosby, Anne Hardison and Jean Starling on their trip west in 1946.**

World War II. When the war was over, they decided to undertake a great adventure and follow their girlfriend, Nancy Porch to the West Coast. Their plan was to go to Los Angeles and get jobs in sunny southern California.

When they got to California, they found that they could live on campus at Pepperdine University more cheaply than renting their own apartment, and they signed up to take one course as part time students. But eventually they were recruited to enroll fulltime and completed their bachelor's degrees.

## **Big Anne, The Business Woman**

*Harold and Olivyn Hardison*

Anne's early life helps us to appreciate and understand the businesswoman she became. While living in Carter's Creek work was a way of life. Chores were to be done every day without question. Anne earned to work as a child. Some of the work was in the garden; other tasks were to help at the barn, or jobs in the house and yard helping Mama. The work she did was usually with a brother or sister, which made the job easier.

There were also happy times and some very enjoyable leisure times consisting of baseball in the front lot or the yard, and games of tennis on a dirt court at Big's house. Basketball was sometimes played with an over-used football and coat hanger fastened to a tree for a goal. Daddy was a big baseball fan and occasionally played with us, even though he had a bad foot and knee. That was fun. Anne was very complete.

Our fun was made-up games many times because we were not going anywhere. There wasn't anywhere to go. The 1930's were hard times financially; everyone was recovering from the Great Depression of 1929. No one had money in his pocket. Anne finished high school in the spring of 1938 and enrolled in David Lipscomb College in the fall. She, as her sisters and brothers, worked while she was in college. Even though "hard times" were the norm, she had many friends at DLC who were financially well off. Her Lipscomb friends remained her friends for her entire life. When Anne finished DLC she worked for the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation in Columbia. She stayed at home and sometimes spent the night with Sissy Beal. World War II brought better job opportunities. Anne and her first cousin Mary Hill began working in Nashville--Anne for the Federal Office of Defense Transportation, Mary Hill for the American Red Cross Recruitment Program. Anne lived at home and rode the bus to Nashville every day. She met Gus Pradus of Spring Hill on the bus. Later when she bought a car he rode with her. She said that would help pay for her car.

Later Anne and Mary Hill shared an apartment in Nashville. When Miss Alice Shields (Doug Shields' widowed mother) upstairs became available they lived in her home on Gale Lane. This arrangement resulted in many lifelong friendships, not only for Anne but all the Shields and Hardison family.

On June 17, 1946 Anne, Mary Hill, Jean Shields and Jean Cosby went on western vacation trip, seeing some of the sights along the way. They arrived in California August 5, 1946. They were in the Pepperdine University area looking for a place to stay while sightseeing. They learned that if you enrolled in class you could stay in the dormitory on campus. Anne and Jean Shields did enroll and worked for the University. They graduated in the spring of 1948, and Anne returned to Middle Tennessee.

Back at home the Anne worked for Monsanto Chemical Co. in Columbia and lived at home with her parents. In 1950 she began working for Mr. Creighton, owner of Super Service Trucking Company. She was secretary for the company and also took care of his personal and family finances. Even when the children wanted money they came to Anne. Mr. Creighton was very kind to Anne. I am sure he knew he found a jewel. After Mr. Creighton's death she began to work for Caroon and Black, one of the largest

insurance companies in Nashville. She was the receptionist, helping the officers, agents, customers and visitors when they needed help. Eventually Anne became something of an administrative assistant for the President, Mr. Hunter Armistead, Mr. Armistead had a big party for Anne at his home in Belle Meade when she retired in the early 1980s. The family was fortunate to be invited to the retirement party.

After retirement Anne was active in Lipscomb Ladies (a club associated with her alma mater), other Lipscomb activities, Hillsboro Church of Christ, and traveling. Anne of course worked harder than ever to take care of her mother, our Grandma Hardison, who died in 1985.

Anne and [Bob Neil](#) were married in 1985. They lived in his house on Dustin Lane. After Anne began to lose her health in the winter of 2002 she wanted me to help her pay bills and other money matters. She showed me the file drawer of her desk. Everything was filed properly for every company with whom she did business. The executor of her will and her bookkeeper asked me to bring the records and other papers to them. They asked, "Have you found the black notebook"? I found it and took it to them. The notebook was an accounting of all her business down to the penny. For tax purposes she had a record of the postage stamps to mail charitable contributions. Anne left all her assets to her nieces and nephews.

## Big Anne and Her Sisters

Big Anne maintained close relationships with her two sisters for her entire life. Her life and interests were obviously far different. Tutter, the eldest, was a farmer's wife with a son while Cora Beal was also a housewife, but married to a college professor with four children. Tutter was always the leader (read boss), and Cora Beal was the strong willed youngest, while Big Anne was the middle child. The interests of a single professional woman were obviously different, but the three loved one another and shared several key interests.

Perhaps food was their most pleasurable common interest. All three were accomplished cooks and enjoyed protracted discussions of food and cooking. All three liked to set a beautiful table. Pleasant hours were spent discussing the best way to make ambrosia.



were accomplished was also similar. Any one of the three could go in the other's kitchen and stir around in a productive way without any direction. I guess it is because all learned their kitchen procedures from the same source!!! I think each of them felt most comfortable in the kitchen. The best visiting times seemed to happen in the kitchen especially during clean up!

Family was another strong common interest. Big Anne had a license to spoil Tutter and Cora Beal's children, and took a strong interest in their peaks and valleys. The relationships that were forged by staging dinners and picnics and weekend festivities were later severely tested. As their parents aged and gradually required more and more assistance, the three collaborated in making difficult decisions and providing the best care they could for Grandma and Granddaddy. Big Anne carried the lion's share of the load in this effort, but they all worked together with each other and with the rest of the family, particularly Harold.

Big Anne married [Bob Neil](#) when she was 65. For many years after that she and her two sisters enjoyed the kind of visiting that married couples do. This was a particularly happy chapter for all involved. Douglas recalls a touching memory of



**Anne and Tutter in front yard at Carter's Creek about 1949. When you grow up in the country, you learn to watch your step in the yard.**

It is interesting to remember what the kitchens of each sister looked like. Big Anne's was small and tidy. Tutter's was always kind of cluttered. I remember wondering how she got anything done in that kitchen. Cora Beal's was tidy between meals, but there was almost always a meal either in preparation or being cleaned up!! It is amazing, though, that the smells in each kitchen were similar and the way things

visiting Clarksville late one night in April 1999. He rolled up outside Tutter's house as Tutter and Big Anne were pulling together some supper after spending the day at the hospital caring for Ewin, who was suffering from terminal cancer. The picture of sisterly love through the glowing windowpane was inspiring.



## Big Anne and Automobiles

Big Anne had no family—she was not married until age 62, and never had children of her own. So she had a little extra money to spend. However, she tended to be rather frugal with a couple of exceptions. One involved gifts, etc. for nephews and nieces (particularly her namesake, Little Anne) and another involved automobiles or “cahs,” as she would say. Perhaps being the daughter of a rural [mail carrier](#) who had to take a lot of pride in owning and maintaining a reliable vehicle to deliver the mail led her to a life-long interest in nice cars.

Big Anne would buy her cars new every 4 or 5 years. When used, the cars were often passed on to siblings at a fair price. Doug and Cora Beal purchased a couple of these jewels. One was a green blob-shaped Dodge, which they owned briefly in the 1950s. Another was a 1957 two-tone Dodge Coronet with huge tail fins. The Dodge, cream colored with a brown roof, featured a push-button automatic transmission and power fan (but NO air conditioning). Identical to the car driven by Broderick Crawford and the other good guys in the television series, “Highway Patrol,” the car was used by Cora Beal for 7 or 8 years in the 1960s, eventually trading it for \$25 as part of deal to get a 1969 VW beetle.



**Cora Beal in front yard of her home near Oxford, Mississippi about 1967. Dodge Coronet purchased from Big Anne is in the background.**

Many of Big Anne’s cars featured new technology, like air conditioning, years before the rest of the family was able to get these gadgets. When she passed away in 2002, she was driving a Cadillac that she was particularly proud of that included the “Onstar” GPS-based system for emergency assistance.

## **Big Anne, the hostess**

One of Alice Anne's earliest memories of Anne was from the times she and Hayden would ride on the train from Chicago to Nashville to spend two weeks on the farm in Carters Creek. Anne would meet their train always standing right at the door where we detrained. She drove them to the farm driving through what was then sleepy Brentwood. They always looked forward to her coming home on the weekends. Often on Saturday she would take them to Columbia swimming and one time her boyfriend [Felix](#) went with us.

Ron remembers when he first was transferred to Nashville in 1972 he was living in a motel, on several occasions Anne arranged with Thomas James and John A. McMeen for the four of them to play golf. Also, when Alice Anne came one weekend to house hunt, Anne and Jane McKay took charge of showing them around and suggesting areas they might live and houses they might like. That was a fun day for all of them.

Anne was always showed great interest in whatever her nieces and nephews were doing at every stage of their lives. She was a loving aunt to her 10 nieces and nephews, as well as a good friend and advocate.

## Living with Big Anne

In about 1961, Big Anne bought the duplex that still stands at 4400 Lealand Lane in Nashville, Tennessee for about \$20,000. She used one side as rental property and lived in the other side. Her side was just the right size for her. It featured a small kitchen, dining room and living room arranged in a line from back to front of the house. There were two bedrooms alongside these three rooms with a bathroom in between. The back bedroom was Big Anne's and the front room (twin beds) was used for guests. Guests were usually family, and might be nephews and nieces who stayed a single night or several months while attending college, graduate school or passing through Nashville. Many of us can still remember where the emergency key was hidden (under a brick near the gutter downspout on the far side of the house from the driveway, wrapped in aluminum foil).

Living with Big Anne meant receiving ample doses of spoiling, mothering, and unsolicited advice about life, love, religion, politics and other sundry topics. Of course, Big Anne was always happy for a drop-in visit. She was a big believer in the hearty breakfast. Unfortunately, she was also a believer in dry toast well done (crunchy!) and the guest seat in her kitchen was strategically located below a shelf that was good for banging your head whenever you got up.



Big Anne holding Huntley at Carter's Creek about 1949

## Big Anne and the trip to the Holy Land

*Becky Shields*

Bert Bradley says she toured the Holy Land in June of 1994 with Marlin Connelly (a David Lipscomb professor and expert on the Holy Land) along with 2 busloads of people. She does not recall [Bob Neil](#) being on the trip but says Anne and Jean Starling were there. She recalls Anne being tired at Masada, which is about 2,000 feet above the Dead Sea. Many of the tour group hiked to the top of the great Masada Rock, and Anne doggedly made the hike despite some problems with her foot. Seeing her struggle, Bert offered to carry Anne's water bottle and Anne took her up on that offer.

I spoke with Jean and she currently does not recall Anne being on the trip she took to the Holy Land. Perhaps Bob was with Anne since Jean remembers rooming with another friend.



## Big Anne and graduate school

*Doug Shields, Jr.*

In the fall of 1975 (actually it was August, which was far too hot and humid to be called fall in anyone's book) I moved to Nashville to begin graduate school at Vanderbilt. This was a major change for me after growing up in little Oxford, Mississippi and attending college for four years in little Searcy, Arkansas. I was moving to the big city. And all I had was an un-air-conditioned Chevrolet Vega two-door grass green sedan, a stereo and some books and clothes. No girlfriend and certainly no wife. But I was far from alone in the big city. For one thing, I had my paternal grandma (Beebaw) who treated me like the returned prodigal whenever I darkened her door, and I had my Aunt Big Anne.



I had decided to live in the caretaker's apartment upstairs at the University Christian Student Center. But as is typical, I could not move in for a few days, so I spent my first two or three nights in Nashville in Big Anne's front bedroom, which was furnished with twin single beds. I followed (by several years, I think) a similar but longer residency with Big Anne by Huntley and another stint by Ross. She made me feel right at home and commenced to serve me very good home cooking and her opinions on most everything in similar generous portions.

Big Anne had a comfortable home in one side of a duplex that she owned at 4400 Lealand Lane. She was fond of taking breakfast at a small table in the kitchen, while the dining room was reserved for larger meals. I would eat with her at that table and invariably bump my head on a shelf that was over the "guest seat" whenever I stood up.

At any rate, I excused myself from Lealand Lane after a few days and moved into the somewhat exciting new life at the Christian Student Center across the street from the campus, where I lived until I completed my coursework in December 1976. However, Big Anne was not content to just let me go. Wary of the nutritional deficits of bachelor graduate students, she often prepared and delivered large glass jars of the most delicious white bean soup known to man. Now, if you never had any of this soup, you may think that white bean soup does not sound very tasty. Let me say that you are simply a poor, benighted soul. This soup was made with the best ham, beans, carrots, spices and lots of love. It literally kept body and soul together.

Two other "Big Anne" memories stand out from this period in my life. The first had to do with my birthday. I do not know if it was in the fall of 1975 or 1976. My birthday rolled around in mid-October, and I had no special plans to celebrate with anyone. A few days before, Big Anne called with a plan to take me out to Sperry's steakhouse. Sperry's was (and I suppose, is) a very nice restaurant on West End. Like most residents of the third world, graduate students subsist on a diet heavy in carbohydrates and low in proteins. Especially low in steak-like proteins. We had a fabulous time at Sperry's, and my vague memory suggests Alfred and/or Alan, who happened to be in town at the time, joined us. I had such a nice big steak that there was plenty to go home with me in a doggie bag.... I enjoyed my birthday dinner for at least one more day, anyway.

## Big Anne's Care for Her Parents

*Doug Shields, Sr.*

Big Anne and my sister, Jean, were best friends from their association as students at Lipscomb. I am indebted to that friendship for introducing me to Cora Beal. As I remember it, and I can't remember just how old we were, but certainly teenagers, Jean and Anne were going to a carnival and Cora Beal was tagging along so they asked me to go also. I always looked up to Anne as someone special, but she was so much a part of our family that I always felt at ease around her. When I was in graduate school at Vanderbilt, and we were living with BeeBaw would usually go to Carter's Creek on Sundays and to [Beech Grove](#) to church on Sunday nights. They frequently called on me to lead a prayer, and Anne was always very complimentary about my efforts. One of the greatest compliments of my life was when she asked me to perform the ceremony at her and Bob Neil's wedding. Bob Neil was greatly beloved by any number of great preachers who would have been happy to fill that role so I accepted the invitation with fear and trembling.

Douglas has assigned me the topic of writing about Anne's care for her parents. One of the big events she helped Tutter stage was the [50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary](#). This was a very happy time for Miss Jane and Mr. Herschel and for us all. It is an event that I will always remember because as a young inexperienced brother-in-law I was given the job of driving to Nashville and getting the multilayered anniversary cake that had been made by cousin, Ruth Rucker. It seemed to me as I loaded it in the back of my station wagon that the multiple layers were leaning a little off center. I was very aware of the responsibility I had been given and the kind of mess I would be in if I did not get to Carter's Creek with that cake intact. I remember pulling up to the gate at the house with a great sigh of relief. Later in the day I realized how fortunate I had been to arrive with the cake intact. When cousin Ruth came to the reception she confessed that the bottom layer of the cake had crumbled when she was making it and she had patched it together with some pineapple.

Because she had no family responsibilities in Nashville where she lived and worked, we all looked to Anne as the primary care giver when Miss Jane and Mr. Herschel got to the point that they need assistance in their daily living. For at least 30 years, she spent every weekend with them making sure they had what they needed for the week ahead. As a single, attractive businesswoman, Anne could have had more a social life in Nashville. For reasons of her own she chose to go back to the farm more and more, and then when she was really needed, she did not shy away from the task of caring for her loved ones. At first, her trips home were a retreat from the busy life of big city Nashville. But year by year, as her mother and father became older, weaker, more



**Returning from church, Sunday morning, ca. December 1965. Grandma, Tutter, Granddaddy, Ewin, Cora Beal, Anne. Ben is little guy.**

forgetful and more dependent on her, she pulled a heavier and heavier load. I am sure that the last ten years were reversed from the first ten--it probably took Anne all week in Nashville to recover from the hard work and emotional load she carried on the weekend! When Mr. Herschel was on his deathbed, it was she who had to insist that he go to the hospital, and along with Harold and Miss Jane was with him [when he breathed his last](#).

Of course none of us would consider moving Miss Jane out of her beloved home when she got to the place where she could not live alone. However, it was Anne who bore the burden of seeing that there was a live-in companion and caregiver for her. This required considerable patience. It was very difficult for Miss Jane to accept someone in her kitchen, and difficult for Anne to keep someone employed for the job, but she was there with Miss Jane to the end also. Big Anne's ministry to her parents was a lovely embodiment of the command of Paul in 1 Timothy 5:3-5:

*But if a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God.*

## Bob Neil

Bob Neil and Anne married “late in life.” I felt that Bob Neil adopted our extended family as his. He was the essence of the southern gentleman, always greeting visitors with a warm welcome. I marveled at his self-restraint, he often had a box of chocolate candy by the kitchen table; he could take one bite out of one piece and put the rest of it away for another day. That’s one way to stay skinny. I recall he



“courted” Anne while they walked the track at Lipscomb. Theirs was a beautiful wedding with all of Anne’s brother and sisters in attendance plus many of her nieces and nephews. Jane Mckay and Cora Beal were her attendants, Harold was an usher, and James Hayden gave her away. Many of her nieces and nephews were also there. Before they married he and Anne attended different congregations of the Church of Christ. Bob was a longtime member of the Antioch congregation and Anne’s home church was Hillsboro. There was much discussion of which congregation to attend and the compromise was Antioch on Sunday morning and Hillsboro Sunday and Wednesday nights. When Ron and I lived briefly in Nashville we attended both Antioch and Hillsboro with them.

Whenever I called her she always acted like I was the very person she wanted to talk to, even when I would get the time mixed up and call at 6 a.m. !! When I would call and get Bob Neil he too was happy to talk. More than once he told me he was so happy he married into our family.

### *Excerpt from Brentwood Hills church of Christ Senior Moments vol. 2 No. 2, Feb 2003*

In late 1954, realizing a need for a Church of Christ congregation in the south Nashville area, several families gathered at the home of Bob and Martha Neil to discuss forming this new congregation. Others began to express an interest, and the search for a location led them to 5120 Franklin Road, the family home of Mr. W. L. Hailey. Mr. Hailey's son-in-law, Tommy Summers, represented the family in negotiating the sale and priced the property at \$100,000. Bob says his father, Hardee Neil, said, "Tommy, we wouldn't give you \$100,000 if you got down on your knees and asked." Summers replied, "Doc, if you gave \$100,000, I'd get down on my knees and thank you." A price of \$55,000 was agreed to, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in May 1955 the first worship service held in the old mansion was the beginning of Brentwood Hills Church of Christ. Almost 48 years have passed, and still a part of the worship services of this congregation is 94-year-old "Brother Bob," always smiling, encouraging, and lifting his melodious voice in song.

Robert Gill (Bob) Neil was born in Allensville, Kentucky, to D. Hardee and Annie Gill Neil. Bob's father, a pharmacist, had previously operated his own drug store in Nashville before selling it and moving to Allensville to run the family farm. Bob's brothers, David and Winston, were also born there. In 1921 Hardee Neil decided to return to the pharmacy profession, and the family moved back to Nashville. In the summer of the same year, Brother R. C. Bell, a visiting preacher who had stayed in the Neil home, baptized Bob in Elk Fork Creek.

In Nashville, young Bob attended Clemons School, later entering 9th grade at David Lipscomb High School, where he played on the baseball and basketball teams. He graduated from David Lipscomb Junior College in 1929, where he played baseball, was class treasurer and yearbook editor, and sang in the college quartet and the Schubert Chorale. In the fall of 1930, Bob enrolled in the School of Religion at Vanderbilt University. He also maintained close ties to Lipscomb, and there he met Martha Walker, a student from Guntersville, Alabama. A job offer and an opportunity to complete his degree and play baseball carried him to Harding College. To his surprise, Martha had also enrolled there to complete her degree, and they continued their courtship, marrying on September 7, 1933.

Bob and Martha returned to Lipscomb, and for a period of ten years, Bob taught in both the high school and college and coached the baseball and basketball teams. During this time the Neils became parents to their daughter Ann, now Mrs. Bill Vander Linden of Fairview, and to their son Robert G. (Buzzy) Neil, Jr. After leaving Lipscomb, Bob taught at George Peabody College for Teachers, where he also earned a Master's Degree in School Administration. Later he accepted a position teaching and coaching in the high school department at Peabody. Next he entered public education, teaching at West High School and serving as principal at Clemons Elementary and East High School. He left the position of principal at East High to become Supervisor of Elementary Education for the Nashville public school system. Subsequently, Bob served as Director of Federal Projects and retired as Deputy Superintendent. At retirement he had devoted 44 years to private and public education.

Throughout these years, Bob traveled extensively, preaching and leading singing in gospel meetings. In demand for both roles, Bob participated in the first Church of Christ Campaign held in Syracuse, New York, where he led singing and Charles Brewer preached. In 1948, he became the first full-time pulpit minister for the South Harpeth congregation, a position he held until 1954. After the formation of Brentwood Hills in 1955, the Neil family became active in the new church. Bob and his father, Hardee, were among the original elders of the fledgling church. In the early days of Brentwood Hills, Bob taught a Wednesday night class that included all ages from 1st grade through high school!

The years 1984 and 1985 were difficult for the Neil family. Martha Walker Neil was diagnosed with cancer, and on February 15, 1985, she died. Although loneliness crept into Bob's life, this man of tremendous faith continued his walk

of faith in his role as volunteer minister at the Antioch congregation. Bob later remarried. He had known Anne Hardison when they were teenagers. In later years they both lived in the area near the Dustin Lane home he still occupies today. Their relationship blossomed on the walking track at Lipscomb, leading to their marriage. Anne Hardison Neil died in February 2002. We are fortunate at Brentwood Hills that Bob is still a vital part of our fellowship. We love you, Bob.

In his biography, *Brother Bob: The Life and Times of Robert Gill Neil*, (David Lipscomb University, Nashville, 1997) Jim Turner devotes 226 pages to this "southern, Christian gentleman." This single page, therefore, cannot adequately sum up Bob Neil's 90-plus years as a scholar, athlete, teacher, minister, song leader, and encourager to hundreds.

## Big Anne and [The Giving Tree](#)

*Doug Shields, Jr.*

When you went to see Big Anne, it was not unusual for her to present you or a family member with some type of gift (\$\$) or memento. Once when the Doug Shields, Jr. children were small, we went by to see Bob and Anne and she gave the children a recently published children's book, [The Giving Tree](#) by



Shel Silverstein. I am sure she ran into a nice bookstore and asked the clerk to sell her a nice, new children's book. She probably winced at the price, paid it without much a second thought and gave it to the kids. I would bet money she never read it. This is ironic, because I think the book has some pretty strong parallels to her life. If you have not read this book, I suggest you get a copy and read it so that you will appreciate the rest of this section. Following Big Anne's death in February of 2002, we found all three of our children at home around Thanksgiving time. The large oak tree that had been in our front yard when they were small had died and been cut down. We took the photo above of them sitting on the stump. Sarah Jane is holding the copy of the book that Big Anne gave them so many years before. If you want to get the "rest of the story," you will have to read that book.

## **Big Anne and Hospitality**

One time Big Anne served squash boats filled with creamed spinach. She put forth a great deal of effort into making a fancy meal. Cooking was an art as well as a science. For example, Sarah Jane Shields as a teenager removed toasted pecans from her salad, drawing a dirty look from her mother. Others can recall similar feasts at Big Anne's table.

## Big Anne and In-laws

*Sheila Shields*

For the longest time, I was sure Big Anne hated me! She corrected me, gave unsolicited advice and basically ordered me around. So much so that Cora Beal often had to run interference for me.



Big Anne once told me that I “should take cooking lessons.” For a new bride, that was harsh. Now I realize the Hardison Clan expresses love through food, a well planned and served meal.

She told me how to stir a pot, probably because she was trusting me to stir something special, but I was too immature to realize it.

She told me I shouldn’t want to move back to Arkansas so much, probably because she had been adventuresome and knew the rewards of trying new things before rushing back home.

I couldn’t understand why when I went to Tutter’s house I was the most welcomed guest, but Big Anne seemed to think I was imposing.

Thankfully a few years before we lost her, Harry Lehman told me that it wasn’t that she despised me, it was just that she loved Ben! What? Surely it wasn’t that simple. But it was. Did anyone ever love their nieces and nephew more than Big Anne? Was anyone worthy of such prized people? That one conversation changed how I viewed her. She was no longer a threat; she was someone I could appreciate. Anyone that loved my favorite person that much had to be ok.

I quit trying to be “me” and started watching. She was a wonderful example of how to love someone completely, sometimes a little too much, but whole-heartedly.

I knew we were moving forward the day she invited us to Nashville and told me that I could bring “the dog” (it could stay in her basement). That was a huge concession on her part and I knew it. I NEVER took the dog, but I never forgot either.

What I am left with are memories of someone who loved fiercely, no matter who or what got in the way. There are lots worse things in life than being loved that much. And maybe just maybe, I understand her even more now that my nieces and nephews are getting married.

**Memories of our grandparents**  
**Herschel H. Hardison and Jane McKay Hardison**  
**Carter's Creek, Tennessee**

## Foreword

In the spring of 2005, before the great June 2005 HHH family reunion at Yellowstone Bible Camp near Pray, Montana, I issued the following invitation to my Hardison relatives.

“I would like to give my children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, etc. an idea of who my Granddaddy and Grandma Hardison were and what they were like. I do not believe in ancestor worship, but I would like to emphasize their basic values, which I believe were praiseworthy and worthy of emulation. This is a big job, so I would like to solicit your involvement. You will all get a copy of whatever final product is produced. Please pick two topics below or substitute your own and compose a paragraph on each one. Email your paragraph to me, and I will compile and edit the collection. You are encouraged to send any digital photos that relate (even imperfectly) to your composition.”

A draft was available for inspection and editing at the reunion, and this compilation is a result of the collective effort. Any errors or omissions are entirely mine.

If you were born after 1964 and suspect that this document represents an effort to influence your beliefs and values....you caught us red-handed. We admit it.

*Doug Shields, Jr.*

*Oxford, Mississippi*

*December 25, 2005*

## **Grandma's childhood and family**

My grandmother, Jane Jennings McKay Hardison, was born on April 7, 1888 in Carter's Creek, Tennessee, where she spent the rest of her life. Her parents were Cameron Hayden McKay and Annie Dabney Terrell McKay. Her father supported the family by farming and also ran a phosphate mining operation that employed 50 to 75 workers. She had two sisters: Margaret ("Peg") and Cora, ("Sissy") and one brother: the irrepressible Robert, who we called, "Uncle Buddy."

Her father, Mr. Cameron McKay, would take a corncob and wrap a one-dollar bill around it before going to an auction. To bid, he would wave what appeared to be a large roll of bills in the air. Leveraging, 1890's style!

According to Grandma, "Sister (Cora) was always sickly, so Mama never asked her to do anything. Peg was too small, so I was the one sent to the spring for water." There was a cook and a number of servants (but children still worked!!), with special chores and a little boy who stood in the dining room with a stick to which strings of paper were tied. He would move the stick back and forth to keep the flies off the food.

Grandma and her family pronounced their last name "Mackey," which may have some origins in old Scotch dialect (they were Scotch-Irish). This pronunciation was later seen as somewhat countrified by city folks who preferred the more accent on the second syllable McKay with a "long a" sound. This set of city folks definitely included Uncle Buddy.

The McKay family lived in a large, comfortable house not far from Beech Grove church of Christ. Her family had a little more money than the neighbors: they got a telephone early on, and there was a swimming pool near the road in front of the house which was pointed out to me when I was a child (1960s). However, I do not believe the pool was there when Grandma was growing up! The homeplace stayed in the family for some time as Uncle Buddy and his wife, Anne, raised their family there.

Grandma had a ladies' sidesaddle for horseback riding that she showed me when I was a child (it was in aged disrepair then), and she obtained a "college education," attending Nashville Bible School, the forerunner of David Lipscomb University. Needless to say, there were few women of her generation that obtained that much education. Despite their relative wealth, Grandma had to work hard as a child, like most of her generation. She told me one time that her sister, Peg was considered artistic by their parents and thus was allowed to do needlework and paint china while the siblings cleaned, chopped, and carried! Grandma was baptized into the Lord's church as a young person, although I do not have any details.

After high school, Grandma's parents took the unusual step of sending her to Nashville to the Nashville Bible School. She attended two years and earned some sort of degree. Her diploma, signed by several rather famous leaders in the churches of Christ, was on the wall in her home and now is at Harold's. She told me that David Lipscomb himself (called "Uncle Dave" by the students) was one of her teachers. He sat in a rocking chair in the front of the classroom, and evidently was rather imperious. He made a point of inquiring about absentees. "Where is Jane?" "If she is so sick, was she at dinner?" Once our Grandma was actually absent because some of her friends had

somehow placed her on top of a very tall wardrobe (kind of a closet-type piece of furniture), and she was afraid to jump down. While at NBS, Grandma obtained enough education in subjects besides the Bible to obtain a job teaching “elocution” or “expression” (we would call this subject, “speech”) at the small country school in the community of Theta, not far from Carter’s Creek.

The aforementioned McKay telephone played a part in Grandma and Granddaddy’s romance. Since they grew up in the same community, I think they knew each other at least in passing almost from birth. But I do not know when they started “dating.” At any rate, Granddaddy had a date with another young lady, and was seen by Grandma. He later made a rather anxious telephone call to her to make sure that this did not irreparably damage their relationship. I wish I could tell the story as Grandma told it to me, but that is all I remember. I can say that she certainly put him through the wringer (ringer?), and that she was not easily satisfied with his explanation of the situation!

## Granddaddy's family and childhood

My grandfather, Herschel Huntley Hardison, was born on December 4, 1884. His parents were Thomas James Hardison and Caroline Alexander Hardison. He grew up in a family of seven children—four boys and three girls. Everyone in this family had at least one nickname, which can be quite confusing when hearing and repeating old tales. The list, as best I can reconstruct it as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Nickname(s)</u>
Dr. Thomas James Hardison	Tover (or Tarber--many spellings have been suggested)
Caroline	Dear or Miss Carrie
Scottie	Big
Herschel	Buddy
Elton	Buddy Elton
Leonie	See Sing, Calomine, Little
Seth (died at age 7)	
Wayne	Waynie or Winnie
Katherine	Tatty

My great grandfather was a doctor, which conjures up images of a highly educated, well-to-do, respected professional in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, things were a little different. Medical education only took a couple of years (University of Louisville), and although country doctors were highly respected members of the community, they were not necessarily wealthy. I imagine that their social status was similar to that of the modern preacher or teacher—widely admired, educated, but not extremely well paid. Dr. Hardison supplemented his income by running a farm, which provided lots of work for his children. My grandfather followed in his footsteps by running his small farm to supplement his income as a [rural mail carrier](#). So, in a way, my grandfather learned his vocation as a child from his father.

Work on the farm was therefore a virtue as well as a necessity when Granddaddy was a boy. At least one of his feet (the left?) bore a life-long infirmity from two farm accidents—being hit by an axe, and being run over by a wagon. This foot often caused Granddaddy to limp and wince. He only wore one type of high-top lace up shoes as long as I remember.

My grandfather told several stories of his childhood, and only a few remain in my memory. One involved his father's use of refined language and casual labor. Once, when visiting the local store, Dr. Hardison spoke to a local laborer, "Uncle Joe, if you will come by my place on Monday morning, I will pay you to haul a load of dung." When Monday arrived, Granddaddy was detailed to the barn with a fork and wagon to assist Uncle Dave. After they commenced digging, Uncle Joe quietly inquired, "Is this what Dr. Hardison wanted us to do?"

Dr. Hardison was evidently blessed with a generous spirit. Once, he heard a sound in his barn and tiptoed into the main hallway to find two black men robbing his corncrib. One was inside the crib throwing cobs into a gunnysack held by the second in the hallway. When the sack holder looked up to see the fierce visage of Dr. Hardison, he simply dropped the sack and fled noiselessly into the night. The crib robber came forth shaking, and Dr. Hardison gruffly ordered him to tie up his sack and place it over his shoulder. Then he said, "Get out of here, and don't come back!" Thus he gave the robber a merciful gift rather than justice.

On another occasion, a call came late at night for Dr. Hardison to make a house call on a large, impoverished family. Since it was cold and rainy, Dear was opposed to his responding and insisted he wait until daylight. "Besides," she said, "they can't pay you anything!" Nevertheless, Dr. Hardison hitched his mare, Old Grace (another chapter in this narrative will be dedicated to Old Grace), and set out, only to return much later. Dear awoke to find her husband warming his back in front of the fireplace in his bedroom.

"Well," she said, "did they pay you anything?"

"Yes!"

"They did! What??"

And pulling a twist of (nearly worthless) homespun chewing tobacco out of coat pocket, Dr. Hardison replied, "This!" He then placed the twist on the mantle for all to see. According to Granddaddy, Dear refused to touch the payment tobacco for weeks thereafter, taking a wide detour around it whenever she dusted.

Granddaddy did not follow his father into the medical profession. However, he did get some kind of education in the public schools for lower grades, I suppose, and attended the Branham and Hughes military academy in Spring Hill for at least a year or so that corresponded to what we call "high school." I do not know, but my impression was that he was not an enthusiastic student. One of my prized possessions is an Algebra textbook that belonged from him, and must date from his Branham and Hughes days. It looks as if it has never been used.

Granddaddy grew up in a time when travel and communication were much more limited than today. Children were mainly occupied with work, and spent much less time in play and school than children do today. And much, much less time in organized sports!

Granddaddy developed close bonds with his siblings, as most of them except for his oldest brother, Buddy Elton, lived their entire lives within a few miles of each other. Buddy Elton, reputedly the "black sheep" of the family ended up moving away and living in St. Louis.

In those days, boys' pants often had buttons instead of zippers for the fly. The family ate all of their meals together, and the children helped to serve. Once, when notified that it was his turn to fetch a pan of hot biscuits from the kitchen, Buddy Elton stomped out of the dining room and returned with the pan of bread, frustrated with his subservient role. "When I am grown up," he announced, "I will be wealthy enough to

have a button on the table. I will press that button and a bell will ring in the kitchen and a butler will come out with a pan of hot bread!”

Dear calmly replied without missing a beat, “You will be lucky to have buttons on your pants.”

## Granddaddy's travels

Granddaddy [carried the mail](#) on the same mail route six days a week, rain or shine. He milked his cows twice a day, seven days a week, rain or shine. Pretty steady work, with very little time off for vacations. However, Granddaddy was an adventurous sort, and did a bit of traveling.

When he was only 18 or 19 (September 1904 to June 1905), Granddaddy traveled to San Antonio, Texas, probably by train for money and adventure. He went to see his cousin Louise, the daughter of his uncle, Richard David Hardison. While there, he saw Theodore Roosevelt campaigning for president at the Alamo. He got a job picking strawberries, and rose to the rank of foreman. Granddaddy and strawberry picking did not last very long. He soon caught the train home, after having visited the Alamo (he signed the guest register) and perhaps sowing some wild oats. Huntley recalls, "It was the summer of 1964, and I worked at our Grandparent's farm for a few weeks. One afternoon Granddaddy told me about working in Texas and traveling to San Antonio. He visited the Alamo but was not being able to find a hotel room because people who had come to hear President Theodore Roosevelt took all the rooms. He talked about staying out all night, "painting the town red," and a young female friend. At this point in the conversation Grandma interrupted us saying 'Herschel, drink this and stop talking.' Then she gave him a small glass of brown liquid, which he swallowed in one gulp. After that he took a nap."

As an adult, he especially enjoyed attending the National Rural Mail Carriers Conventions. I know he went to the ones held in San Antonio, Texas and Chicago, Illinois. When he went to the one in San Antonio, he visited the Alamo and had the people there bring out the old guest register. He was able to find his name from those many years ago. When he went to the convention in Chicago he came to visit Millie and Bubba in Elmhurst unannounced. Alice Anne clearly remembers her mother asking him upon his arrival "What's happened, what's wrong?" His visit was a pleasant surprise and very welcome.

As they got older, Grandma and Granddaddy never liked to be gone from home very long, but in 1976 they came to Oxford for the 4th of July. Ben recalls that the family had an old iron reclining yard chair (actually, this chair had once belonged to Dear!) and they cleaned and painted it and put it in the living room for Granddaddy. He always enjoyed his back-bedroom recliner at home.

## **Grandma and Granddaddy's Wedding**

Grandma and Granddaddy were married on February 22, 1912—George Washington's birthday, the reason for the date being that Granddaddy had a holiday that day! Grandma wore new high-topped shoes. They were most uncomfortable! The only thing Olivyn could recall Grandma saying about her wedding was her talking about the train ride to New Orleans for the honeymoon. She simply implied that Mr. Herschel spent too much money on it!

Grandma, when asked how old she was when she got married, replied in a rather miffed tone of voice, "Well, I wasn't any spring chicken!" Actually, since they were married in 1912, Grandma was 25 and Granddaddy was 27 when they were married. Surprisingly, those ages were about average for marriages in the United States at that time!

Evidently the wedding was quite an affair. Grandma told me that she wore some lovely kid gloves when leaving the reception in a surrey to ride to Carter's Creek Station where they caught the train to New Orleans.

## Beech Grove church of Christ

Sunday morning after milking was time to go to church. I remember waiting on the porch with Grandma on a summer Sunday morning. We were ready to go, but we were waiting for one of the Mills boys to go with us. Grandma was not worried at all; she said, "He'll be here directly." I didn't know what that meant exactly (was he going to walk in a straight line up the hill?) but hopefully I kept my mouth shut. He came as predicted, and I learned that "directly" mean "soon."

Even if there had been no calendar, one could know that Sunday morning had arrived because of the strong aroma of Griffin's Shoe Polish that Granddaddy used every Sunday morning on his only pair of good shoes.

Hayden recalls, "Grandma, and Anne, since she was home most weekends, would always make us throw our gum away just before we entered the church door. Darn -- I could never fool them! One of my favorite activities during the sermon was to rummage through Grandma's purse. This had to be in my 7-10 year old years. After all, at that age the sermon always seemed pretty boring to me. I can still see, feel and smell (faintly of face powder from her compact) that white beaded summer purse--same one every year. I loved the feel of those white beads. I always thought it was really nice of her to be so generous with it. I'm sure I was hoping to find gum in it -- never did, and I'm sure she was hoping it would keep me quiet and make me stop fidgeting!"

Ben, about 20 years later, reports Grandma always had gum for him in church.) Alice Anne notes that purse that Hayden rummaged through contained Grandma's "memorandum pad" her words (that's where she kept her grocery list). "I loved to sit and draw in that pad, no larger than a 3 x 5 card."



Most important in my mind is Grandma and Granddaddy's reverence to God. When it came time to pray at the Beech Grove Church of Christ, Granddaddy would kneel. I do not remember seeing anyone else do that at the time, but he would kneel for each prayer. Granddaddy's younger brother, Waynie, was a very loud worshiper, and could frighten very young children. We all remember Waynie singing at church in Beech Grove – God was probably the only One that thought it was pretty!! McKay and her Nashville cousin Rachel once got tickled listening to him, and nearly brought down lots of wrath from those adults down the pew from them. Grandma would keep her eyes open during prayer time. (Don't ask me how I knew that). I also remember Grandma teaching Sunday school lessons and would have her grandchildren in the classroom with her. What a proud moment for her, I am sure.

Grandma and Granddaddy were unfailing in their devotion to this little country church all of their life. Until hindered by failing health in their 90's they attended church literally every time the doors were open. The song leader pawed the air when he was keeping time. Sunday school material was invariably the Gospel Advocate quarterly.

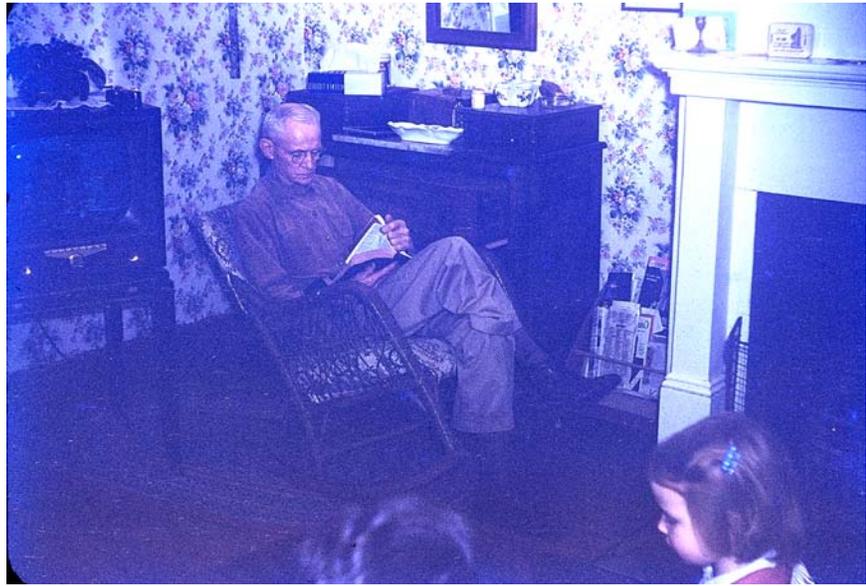
Classroom space was in the basement, and inadequate by modern standards. Several family weddings occurred in this church building. In the fashion of that time, the Lord's Table stood in the front of the church auditorium between the pulpit and the audience. It was always covered with a damask tablecloth, which was ceremoniously removed and folded for the communion service and replaced afterward. Ron heard a sermon by one Leo Snow at a Nashville congregation about tradition that contained a reference to a woman in the area who insisted on the idea of a communion cloth, even though it was no longer needed to protect from flies now that we had screens and air conditioning. It didn't take us long to see that he was referring to Miss Jane. Grandma made the communion bread from scratch and took it to church in a candy box. It was something like extremely white piecrust, baked in sheets that were scored so that they broke into little squares.

I think Granddaddy served as an elder for a while. He taught a class for young folks once when Douglas visited as a teenager, and took as his text Psalm 37.25, which says, "I have been young, and now I am old, but I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or his seed begging for bread." He taught it like he had written it himself. Ron recalls a visit when Mr. Herschel was



studying his Bible in preparation for teaching a class at Beech Grove the next morning. "After supper, he was sitting in study when he asked that I teach the class for him in the morning. I spent several hours in preparation that evening, and things went well in the class. At the time he was in his eighties and still teaching!" During Sunday School at Beech Grove Church, I remember as a child watching Grandma teach Bible stories with flannel figures stuck on a board. I remember one "adult" Sunday School taught by Granddaddy. The passage being studied had something to do about seeking righteousness, and he asked, "What is righteousness?" Hearing no answer, he said "It means doing right. You know what that means." Simple but true.

Once, when Granddaddy was quite old, the congregation held a special day and gave him a nice plaque recognizing his years of service (who has it now?). He made a very brief acceptance speech, the gist of which was that he hoped the congregation could show the same love and support to each member that it had shown to him



Lastly, who can forget Granddaddy reading his Bible each night. He would be sitting in the recliner, visor on, glasses on, and using that magnifying glass to read the word of God. He also had a knack for getting ready for Sunday School much earlier than the rest of us and spending that time studying his Bible.

## Carrying the mail

Harold recalls, "There were two things that were very important to people during the time Granddaddy carried the mail. One was the mailman and the other was the peddler wagon or the rolling store. Daddy first used the horse and buggy, and then later he got a mail carriage. This was specially built for the rural mail carriers. The mail carriage had four wheels, two doors with windows, and a glass windshield. The leather lines came through the dashboard. This carriage was really nice when compared to an open buggy. After his first car the carriage remained stored in the barn. We played in the mail carriage many times. The mail carriage was still there when I left in 1941."

"On a routine winter day, Daddy would leave the post office and be at our house at about 9:00 am, leave our mail, and Mama or one of us would give him his lunch. He usually had a few chores he wanted done that day. From here he went to Sparkman Store, delivering mail. Along the way, he would buy gasoline and pick up the groceries that mama had earlier called for them to have ready for Daddy. At the end of the month the store would send the bill, Mama wrote a check and sent the check to the store by Daddy. I doubt if he ever knew how much the monthly bill was. From here he went up to Carter's Creek Pike. Then he drove to Theta and covered all the roads leading to and from Theta. Next to Gravel Hill on to Hardison Lane (where Tarber and Dear lived) then back to the Post Office. It would be around 3:00 p.m. This was a long day especially in bad weather. Once in a while if the weather was bad he took me with him to help. This was a real learning experience because he had his own system for serving a mailbox, and it was awkward for him and me. He could remember where every piece of mail went. I had to look through too much and this slowed him down. So we exchanged places. He had his own system for approaching the mailbox. He used his left hand to steer the car sometimes not even looking at the road. He would shift gears with the right hand while holding the next person's mail, and head down the road and at the same time picking up the mail for the next box. In one motion he could stop at the right spot, put the mail in the box and head down the road to the next box holding the mail for that box.

I did very well the first time. The second time it had snowed and the thaw made the roads worse than they already were. While approaching a mailbox I let the car slide into the ditch, Daddy took over. He turned the wheels sharply to the right and "Gunned it". This bounced the rear onto the road. There was some damage to the right side of the car. He made no complaint; he just said, "Experience is a great teacher." Did you ever notice the right side of his car? Paint was usually scratched off, and there were numerous dents. On the farm all of the fence posts were afraid of him. Most had car paint on them. To him a car was something you used, not something you washed and shined! Once on a very cold day the roads were ice, and the creeks were frozen over. He was driving and when he tried to cross a creek the four wheels went through the ice. We were in a pickle. Up ahead was the Charley Mahon Farm, and Mr. Mahon had already brought his team of mules with harness out of the barn coming to help. He pulled us out. Daddy said thank you and Mr. Mahon said in a slow drawl, "I was ready for you." You know there were very few bridges then to Daddy carrying the mail was a profession. People depended on him, and he depended on them, too.

As the only link to the outside world, Granddaddy was sometimes called upon to do more than deliver mail. Sometimes a child would meet him with a note and a little money—"Mr. Hardison, please buy me some xxx at the store and drop it off tomorrow." Other times he might practice a little medicine on postal patrons who were sick and all alone.

## **Eddie Mills**

*Harold Hardison*

Eddie McDonald Mills came to us in 1929 at the age of 16. He was about two months older than Bubba. Douglas recalls Grandma saying that his family was so destitute that they were living in an abandoned railroad car and once when some spoiled meat was available due to some sort of train wreck, they got some to eat. So Grandma and Granddaddy took him in as a "hired hand." He worked the farm and milked with help from Bubba and me. I was only eight years old. Eddie and Bubba were the best of friends. For some time they slept together on the screened-in back porch.

After a few years Eddie married Edna and they reared 4 children. Eventually Daddy and Eddie decided to produce the milk within Grade A specifications. At this time they entered into a 50-50 partnership in all farming and dairy operations. This proved to be satisfactory for both families. These 2 men had outstanding personalities and common sense. I have talked to Jim, Eddie's son, and he said he never heard them get mad or "fall out" about anything. Jim said, "Probably the reason was they never both got mad at the same time." They kept their cool.

I must say that Mama is due a lot of credit for the Hardison-Mills success story. There are stories after stories about her relationship with Eddie and Edna and their children Myrtle, Jim, Howard and William. Eddie was a rough-hewn man, but could be very gentle with Grandma when she got old. He and Edna lived on the farm until their house burned down a year or two before Grandma died.

## Miscellaneous

Harold recalls,

“Once Mama saw a snake crawling up and into the big Linn or Linden tree, which was between the house and the lane. She wanted to get rid of the snake so she tried to smoke it out. The tree was hollow and old, and in her attempt to smoke the snake out she set the tree on fire. It became a huge fire, being hollow. The fire was put out the tree was saved, but Mama was upset wondering what Daddy would say because that was one of his favorite trees. He looked at the damage and said nothing.”

“Every Christmas time Cam had a bottle of Jack Daniels for Mama to flavor the boiled custard and the fruitcake. One year when ‘Aunt Jane’ came into Pigg and Parsons Cam had a policeman hidden in the back. As Cam handed Miss Jane the sacked bottle he pulled the sack off exposing the bottle the policeman took Miss Jane by the arm saying, ‘you will have to go with me, liquor is illegal in Columbia.’”

Aunt Jane said, “That is not mine! It belongs to Cam.”

Cam said she fussed at him the rest of his life.

Ron Huffman recalls.....

“I first met these two remarkable people just two days prior to our wedding in Elmhurst, Illinois. They drove to the James Hardison residence in Mr. Herschel’s Dodge sedan. Included in the entourage were Jane McKay Anderson, her son Alfred, and Miss Anne Hardison. I had met Anne previously at Thanksgiving, when she came to Elmhurst for that holiday, but it was my first meeting with the others.”

“It was a most enjoyable time for the wedding, and their being there made it extra special. I recall thinking at the time how amazing it was that that Alice’s grandparents were able to attend her wedding, as my own grandparents had passed away long ago. Mr. Herschel and Miss Jane had celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in February that same year. I was not able to attend that august event, but there may be others who can tell of it.”

“Alice was pregnant with Jane Anne, Jane and Herschel’s first great-grandchild, so she was treated with special deference. We left Carter’s Creek with a family cradle, which we used for Jane and Kathryn’s early months, and I believe that Chris Cabell also made use of it. However, when we moved to Brentwood, TN in 1972, it wasn’t too long before Mr. Robert McKay, Miss Jane’s brother came to claim the cradle for his great-grandchild, and that was the last that the Hardison line made use of it, to my knowledge.”



“Also on that visit Alice and I left with an old treadle sewing machine which Miss Jane had used until she got a motor-driven model. We still have that relic, and I have almost begun its restoration.”

“We visited Carter’s Creek a couple of more times while I was still in grad school at Purdue. For Thanksgiving 1967, Alice drove with her mother a few days ahead, and her dad and I followed Thanksgiving Eve. I recall that Alice and perhaps some others were given the treat of visiting the tobacco auction with Mr. Herschel. Apparently, that was a very interesting experience.”

“Living in Brentwood gave us opportunity to visit Carter’s Creek more often. It was great that Jane and Kathryn could become acquainted with their great-grandparents. They got to see firsthand the hospitality and work ethic exhibited by both Miss Jane and Mr. Herschel. And of course they were able to observe their sincere spirituality.”

“For their 65th wedding anniversary, we decided that it would be neat to write to Paul Harvey, and get him to recognize them on his radio show. He did this each week for couples that had been married for long periods. We all gathered in the living room at Carter’s Creek for to listen to the show with great anticipation. However, the couples mentioned that day had anniversaries 69 years and greater.”

“We moved from Brentwood in 1977, and Mr. Herschel died in 1978. There was a large gathering of family for the funeral, and the house was full. I recall that Alice and I slept in our van in the yard. Of course, we all had to coordinate usage of the one bathroom in the house.”

## Things to do at Carter's Creek

One of my sweetest memories of Granddaddy is the way when we finally drove up by the front gate after the long ride from Mississippi (sometimes in an un-air conditioned car in the summer) Granddaddy would always be the first one down the sidewalk to welcome us home. He always acted like he had been waiting all day for us to get there, and would scoop each one of us up with a big hug and a kiss. It always made me feel so special!!!

There were no video games at Grandma's house. No Internet access, no air conditioning, no neighborhood kids. No place to ride a bike. Television was nonexistent or primitive. No swimming pool or basketball goal. But it was the most wonderful place for a grandchild to visit, and the Shields family visited there instead of



vacations for most of the 1960s and 1970s. From an even earlier era, Alice Anne says she doesn't recall playing with any toys, but to her that was the magic of the farm!!!! She doesn't think we were ever "bored" for there was always something going on, either in the kitchen, down at the barn, getting ready for someone to come, or just exploring in the house and outside. Instead of toys, children were blessed with a variety of objects and activities. Alan (and others!!) recall:

1. Uncle Jims mouse eaten pipe.
2. Dad's army hat
3. Thomas James Hardison's tooth puller
4. The old (Model A?) John Deere tractor
5. How many wars and battles were won using the dried out tobacco stalks
6. Fishing in Carters creek
7. The hayloft above the milking pallor
8. Do you remember driving Granddaddy's car to the milk barn, or to Seth Sparkman's store?
9. Poke Salat berries
10. Walking down the railroad track looking for lost treasure. (Safely of course)

Remember the red Radio Flier wagon? I remember a photo of Douglas, preparing to ride that contraption down the hill in the front lot and me. Quite a feat to get to the

bottom w/o turning over on a limestone! I don't remember even the most successful landing resulting in anything but a jubilant crash!

And egg fights! Edna had chickens...free-range chickens...that laid their eggs anywhere they pleased. Being "free", many laid them in the hay shed on the south side of the tobacco barn just up from her house. She gathered those she could reach (for sale?) but many remained un-gathered in the upper reaches of the haystacks. We were free (or told ourselves we were) to gather these for our own purposes. With these (mostly rotten) eggs, we educated ourselves on Confederate battle tactics using them as projectiles against the enemy. I don't remember much reprimand for this, aside from: "Well you know Edna does gather these...."

There were little bottles of Coke always had in the pantry. Catherine recalls walking and balancing on top of the white fence that went around their yard, usually with her friend Sally Beasley. Ben remembers when the fence around the front yard went from vertical pickets to horizontal boards.

There were many places to play/ explore, such as the upstairs closets, root cellar, hen house, smoke house, barn loft, milk room, calf barn, well house down by the road, ruins of house next door. The closets upstairs in Grandmas house were like small rooms under the eaves in every room. Each one had a separate personality. The one in Big Anne's room was like a department store--fashions of every sort. And, LOTS of hat boxes with several hats in each. The one in the back bedroom was sort of scary--you didn't know what family secrets you might uncover....The one across the hall from Big Anne's room had a lot of old school books and stuff in it...Back then, I guess people knew the advantages of saving things.

Meanwhile, back downstairs in the [back bedroom](#), McKay remembers watching TV so long, glued to the TV, that her eyes dried out!!! She could barely blink. We did not have a TV at home and watching it at Grandma's was quite a treat. She also remembers that Granddaddy never missed watching "Huntley and Brinkley" in the evening.



Ben reports that he was allowed to drive Granddaddy's green Dodge Polaris around the neighborhood before he got his license. He also was allowed to drive Granddaddy's snapper riding mower. If that were not enough he further confesses that he

recalls riding from Nashville to CC in Big Anne's White New Yorker (a big time luxury car) and getting to sit on the arm rest - and being a little frustrated that he could not sit in her lap and help drive.

One more thing...that someone needs to cover is the cellar. I always thought it so spooky and strange that there was a place in the house where you could go "outside"--it smelt like dirt down there--and yet be "inside." I never remember actually going down there--way too spooky. But, I do know that she kept potatoes and onions and canned stuff down there, and that the walls were dirt.

Also, there was something else way spooky and that was the picture at the foot of Big Anne's bed of the old lady sitting in a chair in the yard with her PILLOW. Why in the world would someone get his or her picture taken with a PILLOW I always wanted to know. Big Anne said that it was just what they did back then. That was spooky.

Also, what about the hen house and the baby chicks--and, the kittens in the barn?????

You could walk to the creek - it was 1 mile. Also there was a fair sized tree at the 1/2 mile point that could be seen from either end. Once there, there was wading, fishing, swimming, skipping rocks, and studies of fluvial geomorphology. You could go fishing at the quarry (once operated by Grandma's brother-in-law, Collie Beal). Fish were small but would bite almost anything, but especially Catawba worms in the spring. McKay remembers going with Grandma to Sparkman's store and wondering how she got all her groceries in a grocery store that was so small!!!

Furnishings were a bit exotic. The couch in Grandma's living room - it was covered with a grey fabric with an interesting texture. And upstairs, at night you used a night pot. Douglas and Alfred liked to lie in the hallway arm wrestling while pretending to drink whiskey from the old bottles that usually were displayed in the upstairs hallway.

There were certain morning rituals: [Eddie](#) coming in with whatever from the barn / garden. Grandma calling Robert McKay she always seemed to hang up in the middle of a sentence she always made the call from the chair that sat at the desk that sat beside her bed.

Jane Anne says,

I remember a bright, white, cheerful dining room. I remember pearl handled knives and cabinets with glass doors built right into the wall.

I remember a violet colored glass doorknob on a backdoor. I remember that I liked syrup better than sorghum molasses. I remember having to duck going up or down the stairs because the floor above extended into the stairwell. I remember walking up the stairs on the wrong side of the railing.

I remember sleeping on the couch in the living room with the moonlight coming in the window so brightly that you could read a book. I remember that Big Anne's room had a sort of sitting room in the front with a day bed.

I remember walking on the top of the picket fence with buttercups thick at the bottom. I remember finding eggs in the hayloft. I remember walking along the railroad track across the road.

I remember that the Christmas tree was a cedar tree from the farm. I remember that I never knew which ring was Grandma's on the telephone party line.

I remember that Granddaddy liked to have a white cat around and that the cat didn't care much for the rest of us when we visited.

I remember a dishwasher on wheels that loaded from the top and attached to the faucet in the sink.

## The Road to Carter's Creek

*Ross Hardison*

As most of you know, my family has lived in Columbia, Tennessee for a long time. In fact my great-great-great-grandfather (see note), James Hardison, moved close to Columbia (actually in eastern Maury County) from North Carolina in 1807. He and his brothers and their families were the founding Hardisons in Tennessee. However, as far as I was concerned, it was all new to me when we moved there when I was about 7 years old. One of the many happy things about this move was that it was very easy for us to travel the 10 miles north to our paternal grandparents' home and farm in Carter's Creek.

The main road to Carter's Creek for us was the "Nashville highway." This four-lane highway is still flanked by historical markers traveling north, mostly about "Hood's advance." After losing Atlanta in late 1864, the Confederate general Hood<sup>1</sup> decided to attack Nashville, which had been in the hands of the Yankees for most of the Civil War. This was actually a pretty smart move if he got there before the Union reinforcements did. Unfortunately (for the Confederacy), in a plantation a little south of Spring Hill, Hood and his generals danced the night away with some beautiful southern belles while the Union reinforcements marched by, with flour sacks around their boots to stifle the noise.



For a long, long time, there was a lane to turn left (west) from the Nashville highway, very close the plantation of the fateful dance. They took out the lane when they built the Saturn factory. I loved turning left there, because it meant we would bounce along a gravel (chert) road over to the railroad, then on to Grandma and Granddaddy's, anticipating the fun and happiness to come.

That old house was a wonderful home, and thinking about it brings back a flood of happy memories. I'll recount a few of them here.



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<sup>1</sup> General John Bell Hood of Texas was one of Robert E. Lee

But before that - back to the road. After the visit, we'd frequently take a slightly different route home, down Cleburne Lane<sup>2</sup> along the railroad, past Wayne's, past the old quarry next to Cocky and Cora Beal's old home, past the train station/grocery store/post office at Carter's Creek, to Neapolis. There we'd rejoin the Nashville highway, now heading south to home.

After slaughtering many of his troops in 13 charges against the Yankees at Franklin, Hood made a futile effort to take Nashville. It didn't work and he led his troops back south, effectively ending the western campaign for the Confederacy. Heading south, most of the historical markers along the highway talk about "Hood's Retreat". After a great time at Grandma and Granddaddy's, I guess I felt like we retreating to our ordinary lives. But the great thing was, we would get to go back out soon - maybe even the next weekend!

Note: My impression is that the paternal order of descent is  
James Hardison  
Richard Hardison  
Thomas James Hardison  
Herschel Huntley Hardison  
Harold H. Hardison

Ron Huffman recalls one of his visits to Carter's Creek included a tour of Maury County provided by three of Alice's cousins who lived in the area. They showed us around many of the historic sites, Polk's home, various venues in the county, and several fascinating vestiges of the "war between the states". One particular idea sticks in my mind, that the "South would rise again". And they were right! I remember getting acquainted with one of Alice's aunts, who was trying to tell me about her husband's research at Ole Miss. Her southern accent made me think at first that his work was with "sand", and I pictured modeling piles of the stuff and how it flowed. Finally, she described enough that I understood he worked in sound (acoustics), and it all made more sense. So much for understanding southern accents.

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<sup>2</sup> It's "Cleburne Lane", pronounced like it looks by us ("Cleeburn"), but "Clay' burnne" in his native Ireland. Named for Gen. Patrick R. Cleburne one of the Confederate Generals killed in the battle of Franklin the next day after their stay at "Rippa Villa" the mansion across the Nash. Hwy from where we used to turn to go to G'pa/ma's). He was known as "the Stonewall Jackson of the west" and advocated the freeing of slaves in return for their Confederate Military service...unfortunately this idea lacked enough support to succeed. Rippa Villa's twin (built by its builder's brother) is one of the main buildings on the campus of The Tennessee Children's Home a few miles north in Spring Hill where Momma taught and Bob McKay was a board member for many years.

## Hog Killin'

I suppose you know the importance of hog killin' to people living in the country. The operation provided lots of good meat that would furnish the table for a long time. The weather had to be cold, the hogs had to be ready (200 pounds up to 400 pounds), not too fat and not too lean. The facility had to be just right and plenty help willing and ready. It was routine on farms all across our community if not the whole U.S.A. Most of the help came from neighbors intending to swap work. Thanksgiving was a convenient time because "help" was available and usually cold enough. After a few years of the "swap-work" method most farmers took their hogs to the slaughterhouse in town. Even then Daddy and [Eddie](#) killed their own.

The hogs were ready in a pen on the west side of the garage/smokehouse. One hog was caught and using a .22 rifle shot between the eyes. The throat was cut being sure to sever at least one jugular vein to insure proper bleeding. This carcass was then lowered into the scalding tank until the hair seemed ready to scrape off. The carcass was rolled out of the tank onto a special platform and all hair was scraped off. It was very important to work fast while the skin and hair were hot. After this the hog carcass was hung by the rear feet on a strong horizontal pole. Using a very strong knife the body was opened up from top to bottom. Every thing was removed and the inside cleaned thoroughly. The kidneys, liver and lights (lungs) were saved. The intestines were given to any folks that wanted to make chitterlings (chittlins). It was no problem to get rid of them. Mama could not stand them. While one crew was busy with this carcass another was busy repeating the process on another and on and on until all were properly slaughtered. The carcass is now ready to be blocked-out. The hog is placed on a plate form and using their own butcher knife that was hand made out of an old hand saw blade, the knife was kept very sharp. The blocking-out was tedious and they tried to cut so that the piece would have a good appearance later after finally cured. From this we got hams, shoulders, side meat (bacon and fat back) jowl, face and feet. All edible parts were saved. All the meat was placed on the tin roof overnight to chill. We used the roof of the back porch and the smokehouse.

The second day was the day Mama really got involved in this operation. The first day she was busy making sausage sacks, sewing on an old treadle operated machine. Daddy usually went back to work. WE needed a boss and Mama could handle it very efficiently. The cold meat was trimmed to suit Mama. The trimmings were a mix if fat and lean pieces, some was used for the lard rendering and some use in sausage. For the lard it was cup into small pieces and put into the large black kettle for rendering. There was a very hot fire under the kettle. She kept a large, long handle cedar paddle for stirring the lard only. We were trimming for the sausage at the same time we were trimming for lard. I f there was not enough to make the amount of sausage she wanted we would cut a whole shoulder and go back and trim more on some other pieces. This was cut up into small pieces also to make seasoning easier. When seasoned it was ground-up using Cocky Beal's electric sausage grinder. Mama could look at a batch and tell if it had the right balance of fat and lean meat. She would take some of the first ground meat, make patties and fry them in a black skillet on the fire and ashes under the lard kettle. Now that is the time to eat sausage! After this sampling she knew if she had

it seasoned just right. She seasoned all the sausage. She went into the house frequently to warm if it was very cold.

After the lard process was finished the cracklins were taken off and saved to make bread or fed to the chickens. The crystal clear lard was dipped into a new lard stand. When it cooled it was lily white and then it was stored in the cellar. The ground sausage was stuffed into the sacks and tied. There was a hand-cranked press used to stuff the sausage into the sack. It was then hung in the smokehouse. The big pieces of meat were salted-down in a large box for 30 days. Before placing it in the box it was rubbed heavily by hand with lots of salt the placed in layers of meat and salt. After 30 days the meat was taken up brushed off and hung-up. Then it was smoked for several days until thoroughly cured and flavored. The number of days depended on the weather and the consistency of the smoking. After the smoking was finished the HAMS were placed in a special paper bag and sprinkled with a little powdered lime on the hock and then hung back up. Mama insisted on keeping the hog head and the feet. She would put both into the hot ashes under the lard kettle then at the right time scrape the feet and remove the toes and scrape the face and jowl until clean. The jowl was cut off the rest of the head. Pickled pigs feet are pretty good. Mama canned them sometimes. The organs that were removed were destroyed but not until Mama had made a concoction called PLUCK. I thought it tasted horrible. The brains were saved and cleaned. She would cook them with scrambled eggs for a tasty treat.

It is understood that [Eddie](#), Edna and their children were very much involved with this whole process. They owned a share of the meat. Eddie knew how to carry this off with as few hitches as possible. Usually it was very cold and your hands would be almost numb while trimming the cold meat. All in all it was a very busy and exciting time.

## Animals

After Mr. Herschel retired from carrying the [mail](#), he increased his interest in raising purebred Jersey calves. The milk cows were bred each year, primarily to renew their milk production with the birth of a calf. But by breeding them to a pure bred bull, the calves were not only valuable in producing replacements for the old cows, but also for sale to other dairymen when not needed for his own herd. For years he had housed the calves in stalls in the big barn, but after retiring, he built a special barn with small stalls especially designed for the calves. At each [milking](#) he would carefully feed each calf. A pail with a rubber teat hung on the gate to each stall. He would pour a measured amount of milk in each pail; give each calf a section of hay and a little ground feed. If a calf were sick it would receive special attention. He would let the calves out of their stalls one at a time to come to the water faucet to get a drink of water from a pail under the faucet. He loved his Jersey cows and took such special interest in these calves. They seemed to know and appreciate his touch. Granddaddy was proud of his Jersey calves, and I thought they were as cute as could be. We got to feed the calves occasionally, and they really liked that bucket of milk! Granddaddy named at least some of his registered Jersey cattle after family members. One cow was named, "You'll do, Signora." Mr. Herschel loved his Jersey cows, and would have preferred that store milk be labeled by the type of cow that it came from. Jersey was preferred!! He once asked Alice Anne what kind of butter she preferred to serve and she had to admit that we used margarine. This was viewed as a disgrace!!

One day, Mr. Herschel wanted someone to accompany him to the Jersey cattle auction in Lewisburg, and I volunteered. Mr. Herschel drove over to Lewisburg, which was quite an experience for me, and we enjoyed seeing some fine livestock traded. For the trip home Mr. Herschel asked if I would like to drive, perhaps he was tired, and I was only too happy to comply, as I felt a whole lot safer.

He also had a great fondness for Tennessee walking horses, and always seemed to have the latest program from the Shelbyville show.

Miss Jane loved to feed her "boids", at least that's way I heard her pronunciation. I also enjoyed birds so that was a topic of mutual interest.

## Child rearing

Harold relates....How did I learn to drive a car? In 1936 the milk truck could not come to our place to pick up the milk because the road was closed during a change in its location. We were hauling the cans of milk to a place near the Allen Campbell farm gate and the milk truck would pick it up there. We put the milk in the trunk of our 1937 Chevrolet. One night daddy said "Hal why don't you haul this milk tonight? We are tired". I hesitated about 1 second, got in the car and drove off, left the milk, picked up



the empties and drove back to the house. Mama didn't know what had taken place and neither daddy nor I told her. She would not have approved. I never had a lesson, just watched daddy drive. He really was a trusting person.

Cora

Beal notes that.....Perhaps the one thing that impressed me the most when growing up with my father was his cheerfulness when he was very tired. Even yet when I am tired, cheerfulness is not a good word to describe my attitude. I don't even remember his being cross or aggravated without obvious and just reason. For instance, when he would explain a math principle to me for the 5th time, he'd spit in the fire and say "Good Night, Mary, why don't you understand!? Take this book and go to bed"!

His comments or advice was always clear and usually in a very few words. An excellent listener, but not too much response from him. Just enough to encourage more from the other person.

His honesty, for me, was highlighted during WWII when gas was rationed. Each family I guess, was allowed 3 gallons of gas a week. The government issued rationing stamps for gas, sugar etc. My high school basketball team needed gas stamps to purchase gas to go to our games. Daddy, who got extra stamps because he [carried the mail](#), should give some of our stamps for our team to use, in my opinion! The reply was always, "I'm sorry, I just can't do that. We need the gas to go [church](#) and for me to take the car to be repaired." Car repair was frequent since parts were very difficult to get and poor quality because good materials went to the war effort. To even suggest he let me have gas stamps to be used to carry the mail was out of the question. The fact that "other people did it" was not a point he would even discuss, except replying to my argumentative plea with a "humph". We happened to have a winning team during those years, which made it

even more frustrating to me, but basically, I understood and admired him his sense of right and wrong.

## **Community**

Miss Jane also enjoyed talking on the phone, which was a party line at that time. She seemed to know everything that was happening in the community, and she talked loud enough on the phone in the hall that we all knew as well. When she was done talking, she simply hung up with no “goodbye”, a bit unusual but that was the way she did it.

## Breakfast and other Meals

Grandma and Granddaddy's house was heated by fireplaces and heaters, which left some cold spots in the winter. But it was always warm and welcoming in the kitchen. I can remember when the kitchen was heated by a slender coal-burning stove. I think it was called a Warm Morning stove. Even then, she had an electric range and oven, but Grandma would still cook some on that old stove.

They weren't fancy, but we had some great meals in that kitchen. I remember oatmeal with cream for breakfast, cooked by Granddaddy before he went down for [milking](#). Grandma would cook eggs and sausage after that. Grandma always cooked a big noon meal, but except on holidays or Sundays, we ate that in the kitchen.



Eating was / is the unofficial family religion. For breakfast, Granddaddy always had hot water cornbread as well as a bunch of other things (but never too much). Now several cousins are wasting inordinate amounts of time on "celery candy." We all remember how delicious Grandma's cooking was. From time to time when I would ask her for a recipe, I found her way of measuring ingredients a bit hard to follow. The dry ingredients were measured by ice tea glasses or hands full, e.g., the flour required in a dish could be a half an ice tea glass and the sugar a hand full. Remember homemade strawberry preserves on hot biscuits, strawberry shortcake, fresh peach cobbler, country ham, and hot water cornbread, milk with the cream floating on the top? I remember how Grandma would always eat an apple or orange before she went to bed and would let me have a bite. Ron recalls that on his first visit to Carters Creek (and several subsequent visits) there were breakfasts in the kitchen, when Miss Jane would put out another sumptuous feast of eggs, bacon and/or sausage, biscuits, and hot-water cornbread. Also on the table were at least two homemade preserves, molasses, and real butter.

During the time he [carried the mail](#) (50 years), Grandma fixed a special lunch for Granddaddy. After breakfast she made fresh biscuits for him and then sliced them and added ham or sausage. She would also make piecrust for a small aluminum pan, fill it with peaches or apples, sugar and butter and folded the crust over it. The lunch was always ready when he stopped at the house after he finished sorting the mail at the post office.

Grandma raised chickens in the coop behind the garden, both for eggs and poultry. Looking for eggs was always an adventure - there was even a nest in the garage. Grandma had the most efficient means of dispatching a chicken I've ever seen. If she wanted chicken for dinner, in the morning she'd go out to the coop, select the unfortunate (but tasty) victim, and bring it back to the house. In the back yard, she'd take the chicken

by the legs in one hand and a cleaver in the other, swing the chicken so its head was on a stump, and with one swing of the cleaver, decapitate the chicken. After some plucking and cooking, we had fresh chicken for dinner.

I really liked the suppers, a more modest but pretty good evening meal. I remember sitting around the table, lots of talking and laughing, eating some ribs and leftover vegetables. If we dropped by in the afternoon, there were always leftover biscuits and maybe sausage for a snack. Even when Grandma had lost most of her appetite as she got older, she'd eat her crackers in the kitchen while the rest of us ate a meal. Maybe it was the good company as much as the food, but that kitchen was a great place.

Meals other than breakfast involving company typically were served in the dining room. The dining room it was separated from the living room by glass-paneled doors. These stayed closed at dinnertime until the meal was on the table, and only when everyone was called to eat were they opened. There was always a crowd for dinner, mostly relatives, but also including itinerant preachers, friends, and anyone else who was around. Their hospitality was legend. Granddaddy once remarked to me, "Boy you have reached the land of milk and honey!" nodding toward the pitcher of rich Jersey cream and the stand of Middle Tennessee honey on the table.

Speaking of pie, I remember exquisite pecan pie, chocolate meringue pie (from Aunt Evelyn on the Higgenbotham side), and many others. But my favorites were the fruit cobblers that Grandma would make from scratch, seemingly in a matter of minutes. She'd take some fresh peaches or blackberries, mix in sugar and pastry, and cook it while we ate dinner (the noon meal). For dessert, we'd have warm cobbler with fresh cream. Couldn't be finer!

## Christmas

As a child, Christmas season was a time of almost unbearable anticipation. I know we got up VERY early every Christmas, anxious to find what Santa had brought. I recall cowboy paraphernalia and toy pistols being quite popular. But one of the biggest treats is that we'd go out to Grandma and Granddaddy's around mid-morning, for a second round of gifts and a LOT of fun.

Grandma and Granddaddy decorated about the same for Christmas every year. Granddaddy would cut down one of the scrub cedars in the area and put it up in the front parlor, where they'd put on lights and a few decorations. All the grandchildren would get a present from Grandma and Granddaddy, and we all got one from our Aunt Anne. Little did I realize that she'd continue that generosity even after her death, including us all in her will.



Getting more gifts was great, but what I enjoyed the most was playing with my cousins. Alan had a great list of some of our activities. The house was on a hill, flanked by some outcroppings of rock on the way down a fairly steep slope to the barn. Those rocks served many purposes. I remember setting off firecrackers on them and driving a Radio Flyer wagon over them - going airborne was fun but it hurt when you landed! They served as the rugged terrain for our battles, armed with old tobacco stalks. Meanwhile, adults sat around shoulder-to-shoulder, cheek to jowl inside and just talked. McKay recalls, "On one of those Christmas days when a large crowd of family and friends were gathered in Grandma's living room, I remember Daddy taking me aside, and telling me to take a good look at that scene. Then asking me if that was not the kind of home I wanted to have? This was when I was trying to figure out what to major in college. WOW - I 'll never fill those shoes!!!"



One of my fondest memories was a rare white Christmas. It must have snowed about a foot on Christmas Eve in Tennessee. I know Daddy had a hard time getting us from Columbia out to Carter's Creek that Christmas, but somehow we made it. The Shields (and possibly others) were at Grandma and Granddaddy's, and someone had a sled. Doug Shields (senior) supervised a rowdy group of young cousins playing in the snow. That hill down to the barn was long and pretty steep, and we had a wonderful time sledding and playing. I still remember Doug telling to walk outside the path for the sled - in fact I tell it to Alex every time we're sledding now!



## Christmas Dinner

One of the highlights of any holiday was the dinner, and Christmas was a special one. Grandma ruled the kitchen and the dining room, but all the families brought something to add to the feast. I may be mixing up the menu from Thanksgiving and Christmas, but I remember turkey, dressing and gravy, ham, and a bunch of other dishes from various family members.

The cooks in our family have a wide variety of culinary taste and expertise. The great thing for kids was that we had a lot of things to choose from. "Tutter" (Jane McKay Anderson), Alfred's mother, was an excellent but adventuresome cook. One Christmas, she brought some congealed blue cheese salad. It may have been a delight to some palates, but to us kids, it tasted awful. Alfred, with the flair for tact that he has now perfected, asked, "Mama - did you bring this salad?" Hearing the affirmative, he replied, "It's not very good, is it?" I don't think Tutter wanted to hear that, but the rest of us erupted in laughter.



My mother was more consistent in her contributions. She considered desserts to be her forte, and she always brought a delicious coconut cake, light and creamy. She also brought a jam cake, which I think she makes to her family's recipe. I loved the coconut cake but never understood the enthusiasm for the jam cake. Of course, I don't like chess pie either - was it invented by an underemployed cardiologist?

## Hospitality

How do you write the memories of someone you have cared about and loved in just one simple story? I was trying to determine one but several kept coming to mind. The first thing normally that comes to my mind when thinking of our grandparents was how they always welcomed visitors. Visiting preachers would frequently come back to Grandma and Granddaddy's for Sunday dinner. Uncle [Bob Neil](#) was one of those...he often led the singing at Beech Grove...once Grandma's biscuits were not ready with the rest of the meal and she said: "take this loaf of light bread out for now.... when it was passed to Bob he said "no thanks...I know there's some biscuits in this house somewhere..."

I think I met several of the founding members David Lipscomb College, such as S.P. Pittman. I later discovered that Grandma had been a student of theirs, and they signed her diploma from the "Nashville Bible College." That diploma is hanging on a wall at Harold and Olyvin's house in Columbia. Some of these preachers were celebrities, appearing on the ever-popular TV show "Know your Bible." It was a quiz show where you had to answer questions (rather arcane ones as I recall) from the Bible.

Guests obviously included family, but strangers as well. I remember my family was having dinner (the noon meal) at their house when some young man comes up to the house and instead of coming to the door and knocking, he just sat in his car honking his horn. Granddaddy (against the wishes of those sitting at the table) gets up, goes to the car and greets the young man. A simple story, but one that showed me always be kind no matter how people treat you.

A second story of which has always stayed in my mind is how they treated Joe that lived across the tracks. Joe worked for Granddaddy on occasion, and yes he and his companions would eat their meal on the back porch at dinnertime, but the thing that impressed me was the compassion given to Joe and his family in time of need. Grandma and Granddaddy would find out that someone was sick, Grandma would prepare food for the entire family, and then they would take it to their house. This may be a commonplace experience today, but one must remember that in those days association with people of a different race was not looked upon very kindly.

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, national unemployment was well into double digits. People worked for \$1 a day or less, if they could find work. There was no "social safety net" for the jobless. Throngs of men rode back and forth across the country on freight trains. We might call them homeless people today, or hobos. The trains that ran about 200 yards from their front door brought many of these vagrants to the grandparents' home. Harold recalls...Living beside the railroad provided me with many exciting times. During the 1930's there were a lot of people riding the rails. We saw them frequently at Carters Creek Station. One man made an annual visit. He would get off the freight train at the Station and walk to our barn. Usually we were [milking](#) late in the afternoon. He would ask "Can I sleep in your barn tonight?" "No, sir! Daddy would answer. He was afraid the man would set fire to the barn while smoking. Daddy continued "Just wait and you can go to the house with us. He waited. Daddy would tell Mama, "Jane we have a visitor for supper". Without hesitating Mama would say "Take him into the bathroom and clean him up" supper is ready. When bedtime came Mama

would tell me to take him up stairs to the back bedroom to sleep. That was where I slept. I did not sleep with him. The story goes that Grandma made Granddaddy lock the bedroom door while they slept just to be sure the family was secure. Once, years later, over a nice dinner, Granddaddy thumped the dining room table and said, "Bums and congressmen have all eaten at this table." I guess that covered it.

Maybe one reason I remember the blessing of hospitality in our Grandparents is as I think about my family and yours, I see this trait still alive and well, and if our Grandparents were here they



would be proud. Along with the hospitality came the cold biscuits, Russell Stover Candy, and King Leo peppermint stick candy, which is still available. When I was a young grandchild my family and I would go to the Grandparents house, generally the first place my brothers and I would go would be the kitchen. Generally without failure, there would be some cold biscuits, bacon, and/or sausage on top of the stove. We would consume that, then go to where the Russell Stover Candy was as well as the peppermint candy and have our desert. I do not recall ever being told by either grandparent not to eat those items. What amazes me even more, (living in our present day of being concerned about food spoilage), is that we never got sick after eating the left over meat that was not kept in the refrigerator.

One thing that I love about Grandma is that, although she had some nice things--silver, crystal, china, linens, not everything she had or used was "perfect" by anyone's standards. No matter what the occasion, she always seemed to "make do" with whatever she had--and with such grace and aplomb that no one noticed the difference. For instance, the biggest platter that she used for turkeys and big pieces of meat had a huge crack that had been taped together. She used it that way, and as far as I know, never commented that she wanted another one. She always used old blankets as a table pad under nice tablecloths--sometimes using SEVERAL layers...what a hassle, why didn't she just BUY a table pad??? She was doing with what she had. Although her chocolate cake and a cold glass of milk could not be beat, sometimes the chocolate cake stuck to the bottom of the pan, so she just crammed it into a Tupperware box--it didn't have to be perfect to taste good. And, the thought of starting over and throwing the broken one away was as foreign to her as a microwave would have been. Sometimes, she would mend with whatever thread was handy.... Whatever happened, she could make the best of it. Now, this is not a slam to those of you who like to do things "right", but I find that in life, a lot of effort goes into things that just don't make a lot of difference in the long run.

My daddy told me a story about something that granddaddy said along those lines one time. Momma and daddy (Doug and CB) had just bought their first house, Windswept Manor, and daddy was getting granddaddy's advice about all the home repairs that needed to be made, and was anxious about getting it all done. Granddaddy's comment was "just live in it"!!

One time, when I was in high school, (I think) I decided that grandma should teach me how to make biscuits. We put in the flour, and the shortening and so forth. She always used a coffee cup to measure the flour, which was kept in a tilting bin under the counter. She worked everything in by hand, and so, she then proceeded to show me how to work in the shortening with my fingers. Well, her experienced fingers just knew how to do it without getting the shortening stuck all over her fingers, but I just did not get it. We both quickly realized I was a hopeless case, and left the biscuit making up to her. Eventually, I did learn to make biscuits.... but the dough still sticks to my fingers. (I still have her beaten up old metal 1/3 cup measuring cup.)

Spending the night at Grandma's.... always crisp starched pillowcases. Cold rooms with space heaters.... Lots of blankets piled high.... A china bed pot.... The train whistle in the night....

One time, right after we were married and were living in Pensacola, Florida, waaaaaaay before we had kids. I decided that we should drive to Carters Creek for Thanksgiving and surprise everyone. We drove and drove and drove, and finally came in after everyone was asleep. I can remember how it made Big Anne cry...and, then, we jumped into bed in the very back bedroom with the light just hanging from a cord from the ceiling. They didn't know we were coming, so a heater had not been in the room. The sheets were still clean and fresh and smelled like summer, the pillowcases were starched and crisp...and the bed was piled high with blankets. We shivered under them until we warmed up and slept like rocks.

The sleeping accommodations were fine, but no one warned me about the late night trains that would rumble through. My first night I awoke to a whistle that sounded like it was just outside the window, and I forgot that the bed where I slept was one where the ceiling was quite low. I rose up quickly and the ceiling and I met headfirst.

Now that I have tried it a couple of times, I wonder how Grandma managed to show so much hospitality just to family, let alone hobos, church folks, neighbors, needy, etc. Jane recalls, "Most of all, I remember that the farm was always a great place to visit and that my great grandparents welcomed everyone." "Everyone" could easily become 10 or 20 people!

Cora Beal recalls...since I was the last one to leave home, it seemed to me we were always preparing for someone to come or saying goodbye! There was such a variety! Some folks who lived close by would come in the morning and sit and talk while Mama worked in the kitchen or elsewhere. Those people would include, Edna Mills, Vance and Tom McMeen, May Dell Ellis (who married Jimmy Ellis, they were black people from Carter's Creek Station), "Big" and ad infinitum.... and oh yes, "cousin" Mack Alexander! He was blind, but came to the community from Nashville to visit his relatives, the McMeens. He sold watches for a living. He carried them around with him pinned to his vest and wore several on his arms. He was an excellent communicator

especially on world news and was the first person who accurately told us the war (WWII) was nearly over. He had time to listen to the radio when other people did not. There was also milk tester who came once a month to spend the night and test the milk for its butterfat content. I'd sit mesmerized listening to his stories about his travels all over the world. I think he was German.

Other guests who stayed for several days included Miss Rebecca Sparkman (a very distant relative of "Cousin" Carrie a.k.a. "Dear". She stayed in a darkened room till noon because she was subject to headaches!!! Haaaaa. The two Olivias, a mother and daughter pair that we enjoyed. Daughter was grown and taught school in south Alabama. Miss Olivia, the mother, took charge of the fly swatter during her visit and killed flies almost all the time. The preachers and song leaders holding gospel meetings. I guess about our favorite preacher was Bro. Charlie Brewer, and of course our favorite song leader was [Bob Neil](#). How Dear would purrrr during Bob's long conversations with her. Anne and Tutter's college age friends, they were all so glamorous to me. But the one that topped them all was when Bubber called and said they were coming home for a few days and would bring his boss, Mr. Macklin with him! Mr. Macklin just happened to be the president or CEO or something impressive of Armstrong Tire and Rubber Co. At that time, Armstrong Tire and Rubber Co. was one of the major tire and rubber companies in the nation. He did spend the nights in a hotel in Nashville, I think. But incredibly to me, he seemed fascinated with Mama and Daddy's hospitality! To reciprocate, he invited Mama and Daddy to go with him, Bubber and Millie "out to dinner". **That** was something that was almost never done at that time. Mama tried to decline, but Bubber wouldn't permit her to do so. Daddy just replied "No," he would not be going. That was that! Mr. McMacklin brought Mama a huge purple orchid for the occasion. Orchids were seen only rarely. To hear Mama tell about the huge steak he ordered for her and how much too much it was for her to eat would have made a "dog laugh" (one of Mama's slang expressions). For many years after this event, Mr. Macklin would send Mama and Daddy a very very expensive gift at Christmas time. I recall most of them were sterling silver platters, trays etc. I could go on and on, but don't you think they were "given to hospitality"?

## Back bedroom

The back bedroom was always warm in the winter, since the fire in the fireplace never went out. Lots of times when we came to visit, we'd just head on back to the back bedroom. To get there, you passed a bureau on which you'd frequently find a large tin of peppermint candy. If you were really lucky, you'd find some Russell Stover chocolate candy, given to Granddaddy, but he'd always share it.

In addition to the fireplace, the back bedroom had the television, Granddaddy's easy chair, and Grandma and Granddaddy's bed. That bed was really a platform for our games when the room was crowded with cousins. Next to the easy chair were Granddaddy's Bible and a dairy magazine. He'd read the magazine, work the Scrambler puzzle on the newspaper comic page, and he'd study his Bible to get ready for Sunday School.

One of the reasons life was fun out there was that our parents were so busy visiting with folks that we could do more on our own. Sometimes we watched too much television, and I still remember Doug Shields (senior) telling us to quit watching the "idiot tube."



## The City Sisters Visit the Farm

After our family moved to the Chicago area, Elmhurst, Illinois, Hayden and I would still get to visit Carters Creek. Our first trip must have been when I was entering 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Hayden entering 2<sup>nd</sup>. Our Dad and Mother, James Hayden and Millie, would put us on a train in Chicago early in the morning and we would ride all day to Nashville. Those trips were always an adventure. Mother would pack our lunches in a shoebox or a shirt box. She would get on the train with us, get us settled in our seats, tip the porter and off we would go.

I (Hayden) recall that I would beg to start eating that delicious lunch before the train left the station. To her credit, Alice Anne would not allow it. If I had had my way, we probably would not have had a lunch to eat when noontime arrived!

I remember we had puzzle books, reading books and coloring books to occupy our time. I think the only time we would get out of our seats would be to get a drink of water and go to the bathroom,



which was always fun because the train would rock to and fro. Big Anne was always there to meet us. I don't know how she did it but as I remember it she was inevitably at the foot of the steps of our train car. She would collect us and our suitcases, get us in the car and drive to Carters Creek.

I (Hayden) recall that when we arrived, after lots of hugs and kisses, we had one immediate chore to do -- that was to go outside and tear a small, green, flexible branch off of a bush, remove all of the leaves and bring it to Grandma for inspection. This was the dreaded switch that was placed on top of the refrigerator, "just in case". I always thought it was a bit unfair that we, ourselves, had to gather the very instrument of our punishment. The threat of that switch being readily available to apply where most needed was enough to keep me in line most of the time. I don't have any strong recollections of its ever being used -- not to say that it wasn't, I've probably just blocked the memory of it -- and the misbehavior that may have caused its use!

We had two weeks of fun, such a change from living in the city with buses and sidewalks. I remember collecting eggs, but always being afraid of snakes in the nests. In addition to a possible snake in a nest, I (Hayden) was also terrified of the chickens sitting on their nests that lined the wall in the garage. They would flap their wings and squawk at us when we came near. BUT, that penny per egg that Grandma promised us was enough incentive to overcome almost any fear! When we came back into the kitchen with our precious eggs and she gave us 5 or 6 or 7 pennies each, we thought we were rich! I'm sure I spent mine on bubble gum.

One of our friends and playmates was Myrtle Mills. We had a great time with her climbing in the hayloft and drinking water from the springhouse. It was especially fun spending time (just about every day) with Myrtle, because she knew everything about the farm -- the best places to explore and the most fun things to do. The three of us had a

game that we liked to play (only occasionally, mind you) when hanging around the barn during [milking](#) time. One would stand in the hayloft and the other two would stand below, some distance away. We would toss eggs (one at a time) to see how long we could throw each one back and forth before it broke. I'm sure we never actually threw them at each other!

Milking time was work for Granddaddy and [Eddie](#), but we had a good time just watching. Once in awhile they would let us try to milk one of the cows. I (Hayden) would try to milk the cow and try to squirt milk into the mouth of a cat or kitten that was hanging around for a treat. Never worked -- and Granddaddy and Eddie were such experts!

Riding old Billy, the horse was the best. Granddaddy wouldn't let us ride with a saddle because his friend's son had a serious accident involving a saddle. So we all rode bareback. We would stand on the fender of whatever car was out in the lot and climb on Billy's back from there. Your turn to ride meant you could ride from the car around the tree in the front lot and back again, usually it was Hayden, Myrtle, and maybe some of her brothers and I taking turns.

Many years later, after I (Hayden) was a mom and had a mom's perspective on things, I asked Grandma if she ever worried about us riding the horse -- after all there was no adult hovering nearby to make sure we didn't get hurt. Her reply was, "Well, no. If you fell off and broke your leg, then you fell off and broke your leg!" I loved her free wheeling attitude!

Some years Grandma and Granddaddy would take us to Shelbyville to the Tennessee walking horse show. I thought they were the most beautiful horses I had ever seen. (Hayden) Yes, going to that horse show was always a thrill. We absolutely loved it!

The best place to sleep was in the hall upstairs on the feather mattress. We would take turns each night sleeping on it. Every so often it would flatten down so I would fluff it up again. We also had a very good time !! rambling¶, Grandma's word, in the closets upstairs. There were old trunks holding mostly old school books of our Dad, Jane McKay, Anne, Harold and Cora Beal. Then there was sliding down the banister - such fun and Grandma never minded our laughing and squealing -- and can you imagine two little city girls watching Grandma prepare a chicken from start to finish for the evening meal -- starting with catching it in the back yard and wringing it's neck? Fascinating stuff. And.... just about every day Grandma would bring a pail of hot water to pour on the front porch. Of course our job was to sweep all of the chicken do-do off of the porch.

Every person should be blessed with such precious childhood memories as we have of our summer vacations on the farm -- after all who wouldn't hold dear the memory of sweeping chicken do-do off the front porch!

## Milking

Granddaddy supplemented his income by milking a herd of Jersey cows. This required milking twice a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year for most of his life. No vacation, no sick leave, and NO allowance for any weather events!!! Additional time and labor were required to keep the herd fed, bred, and healthy. I never heard him complain. He did respond with an emphatic NO when asked, very late in life if he “missed the cows” after he finally sold them. If you were born later than 1975, you may wonder why the icon in our homes that reminds us of our grandparents is a photo of an old barn with the door open, house on the hill in the background. It has always seemed an interesting twist of fate that Granddaddy’s milk barn and calf barn have survived his house by so many years!

Of course, for us visitors, going to the barn was recreation. Breakfast for us visiting was followed by a trip to the barn to catch a glimpse of the milking. Granddaddy and [Eddie](#) had already been there for some time as they met at the barn around 5 AM. Milking time was work for Granddaddy and Eddie, but we had a good time just watching. Once in awhile they would let us try to milk one of the cows. I (Hayden) would try to milk the cow and try to squirt milk into the mouth of a cat or kitten that was hanging around for a treat. Never worked -- and Granddaddy and Eddie were such experts! Even though grandchildren weren’t much help, Granddaddy seemed to like having us come on down to the barn. I liked watching him put his galoshes on. He had injured his foot with an axe as young boy chopping wood at his home on Bear Creek Pike, and his foot had an odd angle that required care in getting shoes and galoshes on. But he always put them on before going to the barn. As Alan pointed out, sometimes he’d drive (or let one of us drive) straight down the hill to the barn, other times we’d just walk. As a very young boy, I remember Granddaddy, Eddie and probably Eddie’s sons milking the herd of maybe 30 or so Jersey cows by hand. Those guys had incredible forearm strength and endurance. They’d let us try to milk, but we’d only last a few strokes.

The fellows were very accurate too. There was a family of cats around the barn, and they came in for milking time as well. When milking by hand, the guys would occasionally shoot a stream of milk over to the cats. The cats would just sit with their mouths open, and the milkers would hit the cats right in the mouth every time!

Granddaddy always brought a small bucket of milk back to the house from milking. Grandma would skim off the cream, and keep the cream in a small pitcher and the milk in a larger pitcher in the refrigerator. It was never pasteurized, just fresh.

Alice Anne, Hayden and Myrtle Ophelia Mills had a game that they liked to play (only occasionally, mind you) when hanging around the barn during milking time. One would stand in the hayloft and the other two would stand below, some distance away. We would toss eggs (one at a time) to see how long we could throw each one back and forth before it broke. I’m sure we never actually threw them at each other!

McKay recalls...I remember wanting so badly to get up in the morning in time to go to the barn with Granddaddy that I kept waking up all night long and going downstairs to see if Grandma and Granddaddy were awake yet. I think I finally woke them up or else they just gave up and got up anyway. I did get to go to the barn that morning!!!

How many of you remember seeing Granddaddy clean his teeth the first time? I just remember being amazed one could take their teeth out and brush them. Even more to my amazement was the first time I saw [Eddie](#) Mills pull his teeth out and spray them down with the hose while cleaning the milk room. It was good clean spring water wasn't it?

## **Driving**

Referring back to Mr. Herschel's driving, in his later years he was known on more than one occasion to have had minor fender benders after which he paid off the victim in cash rather than his family finding out. He obviously did not want to give up his independence to get around. Alfred reports that once he got in the car (the green Dodge) with Grandpa to go to the barn and as they backed out of the garage he kept backing up way too much till he hit the fence around the yard.

Alfred said: Stop Grandpa you're hittin th' fence!

He said: Shhh! I'm wanting a new fence and I'm just helping this old one along a little bit!

## A 50th Wedding Anniversary Celebration

Cora Beal and I courted for four years, three of them by long distance. On May 27, 1948 we had a date that we had made a couple of years earlier. I had just completed my Masters degree at Vanderbilt, and Cora Beal was finishing the last few days of work on her B.A. at Peabody. I had bought an engagement ring that day at Cole Jewelers, an old family friend from Belmont church. When I picked her up in my brother, Ben's, car, I asked her if she would marry me. When she said yes, I gave her the ring. Of course, one of the first things we did was to call her parents. When we told Mr. Herschel that I had given her a ring, he was not nearly as excited as I thought he ought to be. All that I remember him saying was, "Is it insured?"

I am sure it was very difficult for Miss Jane and Mr. Herschel to see me bring our young family to Mississippi. I remember asking Mr. Herschel to make a hurried trip with me to Oxford to accept the position at Ole Miss. I don't remember much about the trip, but Mr. Herschel offered no criticism, even of my driving which I am sure he could have improved upon. He went into see Dr. Alton Bryant with me and made immediate connection with him because his wife was Miss Willie Hume, a native of Spring Hill whose father had operated the Branham Hughes Military Academy.

The 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary celebration in 1962 was a very special event. As I remember it, Tutter was "in charge." I think Miss Jane and Mr. Herschel both would like to have missed the event if they could. A cake had been ordered from cousin Ruth Rucker who lived on Old Hickory Blvd. just south of Nashville. We had a station wagon at the time, and I was given the job of driving to Nashville to pick up the cake and bringing it back in the back end of the station wagon. I realized that this was a very responsible assignment and left on the trip with considerable trepidation. Cousin Ruth had the cake ready when I found her house, and it was a beauty, several layers high with lots of icing and decorations.

I loaded it in the back of the station wagon and started for Carter's Creek, realizing the whole celebration depended on me getting there with the cake in tact. Every turn and bump was navigated with the utmost care, with the greatest challenge being the hill and the cattle gap in the gravel drive from the lane up to the house. The cake arrived in tact, but when we got it on the table it was obvious that it was leaning like the tower of Pisa. The celebration was a great occasion with many friends and relatives paying their



respects. When cousin Ruth arrived at the celebration that afternoon, she casually explained the leaning cake with, “Oh, the bottom layer crumbled and I patched it a little with some crushed pineapple.” I can only imagine the consequences if that cake had crumbled in the back end of my station wagon. I think I would have kept on driving and not come back.

## Tornado!

Thursday night January 10, 1963 a tornado hit Spring Hill just before midnight leaving much destruction but only one casualty. Ed Whitwell's prize birddog "Speck" was killed when the "fury of the twister" collapsed the second story of Ed's Gulf Service Sta. Shortly before this it ripped the roof off [Eddie](#) & Edna's house leaving them in the bed (but removing the bed sheets) and greatly damaged Grandma & Granddaddy's house. As I remember it Momma (Jane McKay) and I went down the next day, Daddy (Ewin) followed on Saturday, I was 8 years old. Grandma said the sound was like that of a tremendous freight train and she and Grandpa tried to go down in the cellar but they couldn't get the door open due to the air pressure. After it passed the door opened easily and they did go down there for a while but when all was calm they came back up to find broken glass everywhere including in the bed. When we got there Friday they had a "low fire" burning in the [back bedroom](#), no other being allowed as the chimney was clipped off even with the top of the roof thus creating a fire hazard...and we well know how we feel about fire hazards! The windows were blown out and the north kitchen wall was separated from the dinning room wall far enough to stick your arm through (but Grandma wouldn't let me!). I'm not clear exactly who was there but remember Huntley leading an expedition to find "straw driven into trees", which I don't think we found but did find tobacco sticks driven into many things. At least two were driven into the house, one in the upstairs closet above the back bedroom the other into the panel to the right side of the front door. These were left in place as a reminder as was a piece of tin wrapped around the limbs of the Poplar tree in the front lot. I checked there a couple of years ago (about 2003) the tree still stands but the tin is apparently gone. The brick house on the Walton place (next farm to the north) was destroyed and a large barn flattened. I remember peering down into the ruins of the house and seeing a Social Studies (or Geography) book that I, and I think Alan or Douglas, were then using at our schools. This was a "reality T.V." moment for me before the term existed. Ironically Winnie ("Waynie" to some) and Pauline's house was spared the tornado only to be destroyed a year or so later by fire. They moved into the little white house down the road till their new brick house was completed.

I remember seeing the sheet of aluminum in the tree in the front yard and being told the story of the tornado.

It was not until Alice and I had been married for a couple of years that we had the opportunity to visit Carter's Creek. It was the summer of '64, just a few months after the tornado and when Alice was pregnant with Jane. Several incidents remain in my memory of that visit. Firstly, there were lots of people, mostly relatives, and the logistics of sleeping, eating and using one bathroom was challenging. I recall how there were sumptuous noontime meals, after which the men gathered on the porch for tales, whittling, and some shooting. Mr. Ewin Anderson would shoot groundhogs on the farm across the railroad. And Mr. Wayne Hardison, Herschel's brother, would tell some pretty good stories, as would Mr. Herschel. People would come and go on such an afternoon, and I recall meeting Cameron McKay, Miss Jane's nephew. On that first visit, I became acquainted with Mr. Herschel's sister, "Big" or "Scottie". I recall taking Miss Scotty home after dinner. She was accompanied by a black woman who helped her out at her house, and came to the Hardisons to help prepare the dinner there. The sleeping

accommodations were fine, but no one warned me about the late night trains that would rumble through. My first night I awoke to a whistle that sounded like it was just outside the window, and I forgot that the bed where I slept was one where the ceiling was quite low. I raised up quickly and the ceiling and I met headfirst. As mentioned above, that was the year after the tornado, and I can remember seeing all the metal roofing material still tangled in the limbs of the big poplar in the front lot. Also they showed us where the north wall of the house had been moved out 3-4" from the rest of the house, without disturbing any of Miss Jane's glassware displayed on glass shelves in the two dining room windows. When the storm hit, Miss Jane and Mr. Herschel attempted to go the cellar, but the pressure difference was already such that they could not open the door.

## Bow ties

As we all know Granddaddy wore bow ties. These were not the clip on ties. They were the old fashion, tie them yourself, tie. How many of you have tried to tie a bow tie?

I bring this up because one memory comes to mind of when Big Anne went to Europe (I believe Paris was a part of that trip) and came back and gave Granddaddy a silk straight tie. Granddaddy graciously wore the tie for a few hours, sat in his easy chair as he always did after a meal to read the daily paper. If my memory serves me correctly, Huntley starts talking to Granddaddy about the silk tie he was wearing. At some point in this conversation, Granddaddy takes the straight silk tie off and hands it to Huntley. That is the only time I witnessed Granddaddy wearing a straight tie.



I was reminded of this last year at Valentines. The church had a Valentine banquet, and one of our members who has a similar body build as Granddaddy, wore a bow tie to the banquet. When he and his family were at our house I showed him a picture of Granddaddy in his tie and the resemblance was amazing.

## Age and infirmity



After Mr. Herschel's passing we continued to visit Miss Jane as often as we could. Often on our visits Alice and Miss Jane would go shopping. She particularly liked to go to Burlington Coat Factory, to help the girls choose their winter coats. We would take her out for dinner on Saturday nights when she liked to go to Stan's out on the highway. She liked to have some country ham or fried

chicken or whatever was really good, but not necessarily good for you. As Miss Jane neared the end of her life, she was cared for through the week by a black woman; Billie Anne was her name as I recall. Of course Big Anne took care of things on the weekends. When we would visit, we could no longer take Miss Jane out, but we enjoyed being with her in the house. As was the case with Mr. Herschel, her mind was sharp down to the very end.

On one visit, after Granddaddy died, and Grandma was more infirm, Harry and I were visiting on a Sunday morning. She was sitting in a chair struggling mightily to get dressed from the sitting position....She never did mind starting to get dressed or undressed with a crowd in the room....

She did not want any help from me. She struggled mightily to get the slip on, but in doing so, somehow, she had managed to get her red slip on backwards. (For those of younger vintage, you must remember that to grandma's mind, you just did **NOT** wear clothes without the right undergarments, meaning **always** a slip under a dress. She would have no more gone without a slip than you would go out without panties. Slips were often color coordinated with the dress--red, navy blue, black.... you can probably recall using some of them in the dress up collection in Oxford in later years). When she realized that she had gotten the slip on backwards, she exasperatedly began to change it around the right way--no small task from the sitting position, especially with her bad back. I said, grandma, why don't you just leave it backwards, no one will ever know... She stopped dead in her tracks and pointed one finger up at me and simply said: "Habit is a cable, we weave a thread each day, at last it is strong, you cannot break it."

At ninety plus, she was making a point with me. She intended for it to stick. I will never forget it.

## Old Pat

Granddaddy loved animals, especially Tennessee Walking Horses, Jersey Cows, and Ole Pat. And, Pat loved Granddaddy. Pat was a homely sort of collie mix. His hair seemed to be a collage of cowlicks. But Ole Pat understood whatever Granddaddy said to him. I can remember when he got him, as just a pup. And, I can remember him training Pat. Pat hated storms and would come through the back door to get away if he had to. He would tear the screens off of the windows.

Little Anne recalls, “One thing that I wanted to do right after Granddaddy’s funeral was go back to grandma’s house and put my arms around Ole Pat. But, no one seemed to know where he was. Big Anne said that he often “hid” out when a crowd was around. So, with all of the commotion, though disappointed, I did not make much of it. Later, Big Anne said that he never came back. The last time she saw him was on the front porch when she was taking Granddaddy to the hospital before he died. We all wondered if Pat just knew.”

Harold recalls, “I was with Daddy on the front porch just before noon of the day he died. I had given him a B12 shot because his doctor had told us to any time he began to hurt. He was in the rocker and Pat was lying beside him. Daddy had his hand on Pat’s head. As I told him I was leaving to go home he said I hope the shot helps. I told big Anne that he seemed to be ok but I will be by the phone. She called at 2 pm to tell us to meet at the hospital.



Daddy seemed chipper, and Anne took Mama back home. Olivyn and I stayed at the hospital. Then Olivyn went home for a while, and as Daddy seemed ok, I went out to grab something to eat about 6:30. When I returned, about 7 pm, the doctor said he died of a severe stroke and a massive heart attack. He also said that daddy was talking and joking when with the doctor and some nurses when it all happened. He never left the emergency room. Prior to this over the years he had some heard trouble but Dr. Gardner had given the family instructions and some medicine to use if needed. What a wonderful way to pass on. I called Mama and told Big Anne. Yes, ole Pat knew and left. Not unusual for a pet dog to do that.

Later, when I visited Grandma one day, she remarked, “Ole Pat has grieved himself to death.”