

**CECIL MARVIN BERKLEY, SR.**  
**The Tale of an American Country Boy**

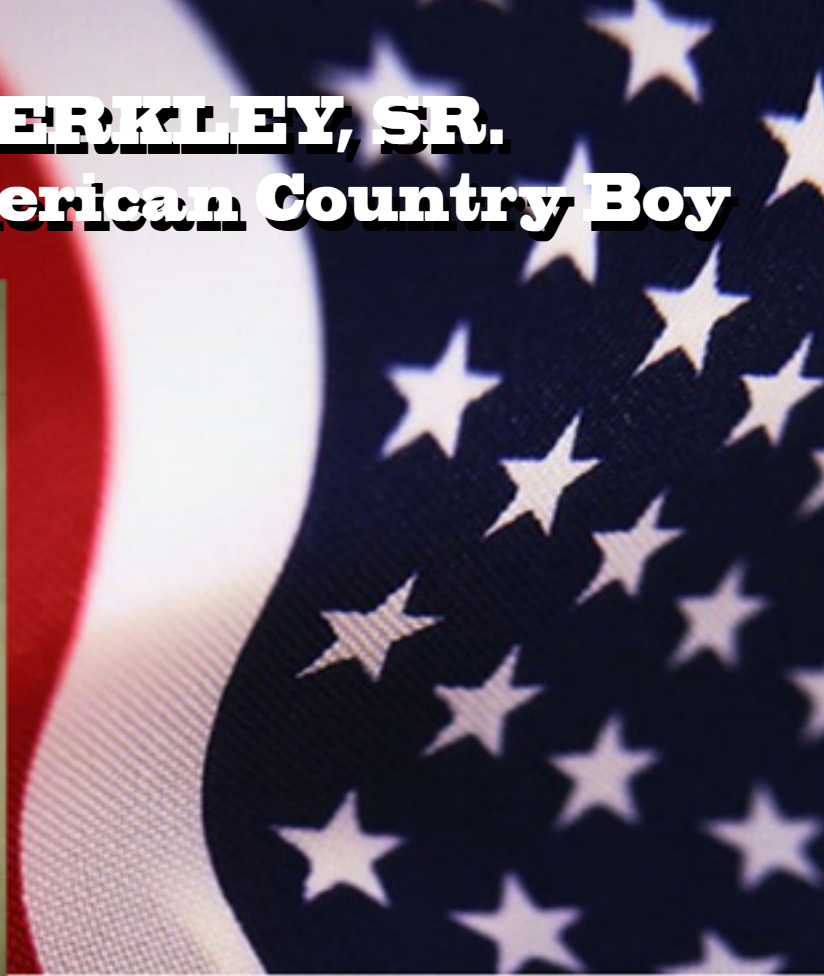


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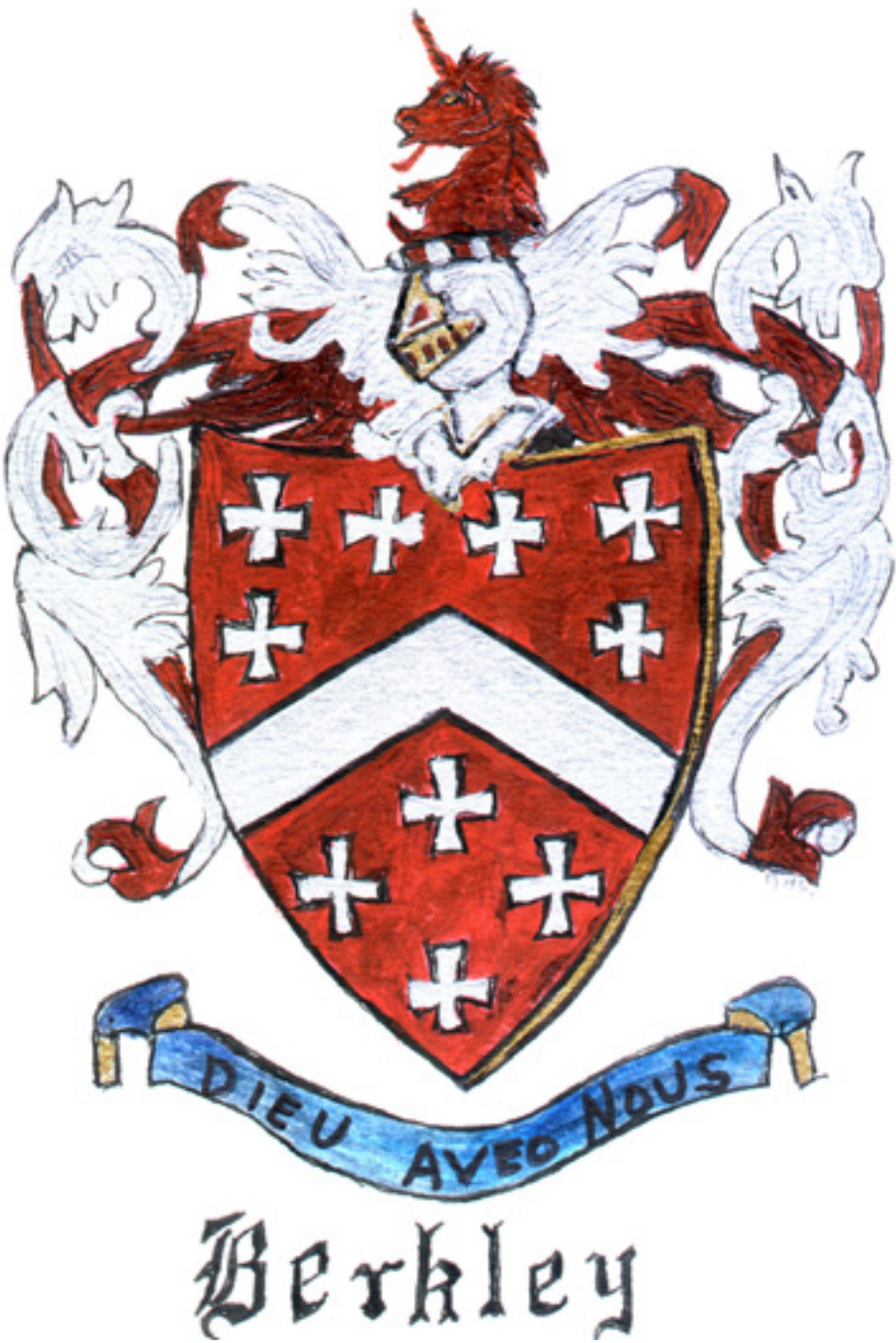
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*This book is dedicated to my loving and devoted wife  
Marion Berkley of 67 years of marriage.  
Also to my granddaughter Gyvel Dalma Berkley  
for compiling this book for me.*



Berkley Coat of Arms - Painted by Bernice Hamlett Sprinkle born 23 Oct 1925 in Charlotte Co., Virginia. She is daughter of Jessie and Ala Mozelle Mason Hamlett. Married Francis Baird Sprinkle born 8 May 1923 in Appomattox Co., Virginia and died 6 October 1990 in Charlotte Court House, Virginia. Francis is son of Jerrence and Mary S Prinkle. Bernice is the cousin of Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr.



AN AMERICAN COUNTRY BOY

According to my Mother, it was one of the hottest days in June that she had ever felt on the day I was born. Lillie Via Mason gave birth to me in Charlotte County on June 19th, 1927. She is the proud daughter of Lafayette Hale Mason, Sr. and Mary Elizabeth Ward. My father is the outgoing son of Charles Radford and Anna Tonia Wood Lucado. My older sister June Emily and my younger brother Clarence Edwin, called me Marvin as did everyone else in my family.

When I was about 2 or 3 years old perhaps about 1929, my sister June and I were getting very sick and could hardly move. The doctor came and my mother told me that the doctor started sticking us with pens and we didn't feel the sticking and he knew then that both of us had polio. At this time the house was quarantined and my mother was told not to let a fly out of the house. Some one told me they went by and my mother was chasing a fly outside the house as one had slipped by! I was told that polio was in my arms but I have never felt or seen where it made a lasting effect on me. June had it in her legs and it did affect her some. You didn't notice anything different about her until she would start up steps. She would go up sideways some times.

My little brother Clarence Edwin was born 25 Mar 1930 and passed away on January 6th, 2006 of cancer. We always called him John Henry. This is because when he was born, our mother said she would never have a child named John Henry and her sister Elsie took notice. From then on we all started calling him John Henry and it simply stuck for the rest of his life.



Clarence Radford Berkley born 3 Nov 1899 Charlotte Co., Va. and died 17 Jun 1977. Married Lillie Via Mason born 14 Mar 1901 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Dec 1984 in Lynchburg General Hospital Lynchburg Virginia. Clarence is son of Charles Radford & Anna Tonia Wood Lucado Berkley. Lillie is daughter of Lafayette Hale & Mary Elizabeth Mason. Clarence is the father of Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr.

MY FATHER, CLARENCE RADFORD BERKLEY

Clarence was the son of Charles Radford Berkley (1844 – 1922) and Anna Tonia Wood Lucado (1858 – 1940). Clarence was born 3 Nov 1899 in Charlotte County, Virginia and died 20 Jun 1977 in Veterans Hospital. He was buried in Veteran Cemetery Johnson City, Tennessee. He was a WWI Veteran and married Lillie Via Mason on 5 Mar. 1923 at Red House, Virginia. Lillie died 17 Dec 1984 in Lynchburg General Hospital and buried in Trinity Methodist Church Cemetery Red House, Virginia. She was the daughter of Lafayette Hale Mason, Jr. (1855-1937) and Mary Elizabeth Ward (1873 – 1968). They had three children. June Emily, Cecil Marvin and my little brother Clarence Edwin.

These are my fathers discharge papers from the Army and the Navy. Notice the change of name. He ran away from the Army and changed his name to John Radford Brown. Yet he still received a good discharge from both the Army and the Navy.

ENLISTMENT RECORD.

Name Clarence R. Berkley 678631 Grade Captain

Enlisted November 8, 1918 at Fort Leavenworth, Mo. for Seven years.

Serving in First enlistment period at date of discharge.

Previous service: None

Noncommissioned officer: Corporal March 14, 1919.

Marksmanship: Not classified

Horsemanship: Not mounted

Battles, engagements, skirmishes, expeditions: None

Knowledge of any vocation: Farmer

Wounds received in service: None

Physical condition when discharged: Good

Typhoid prophylaxis completed Nov. 27, 1918

Married or single: Single

Character: Excellent

Remarks: Discharged for good service. No unauthorized absence under 30 days. No dishonorable discharge. Enrolled to travel pay from Fort Leavenworth, Mo. to Tampa, Fla.

Signature of Soldier: Clarence R. Berkley

Signature of Officer: Captain C. R. Berkley

Form No. 535, A. G. O. Enlisted Nov. 1919 in Ord. Dept. for one year. E. H. Burg, Jr. Maj. M. R. O. H. Blum, Jr.

Commanding 3rd Pers. Co. 1st Div.

Filed in No. 190835  
F. B. SMITH, Captain Q. M. C.  
Nov 19/19



# Honorable Discharge from the United States Army



TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to Certify, That Clarence R. Larkley #678631  
Corporal of 3rd Provisional Ordnance Det. Regiment  
Ord. Dept. U.S.A., as a TESTIMONIAL OF HONEST AND FAITHFUL SERVICE.

is hereby HONORABLY DISCHARGED from the UNITED STATES ARMY by reason  
of his 57th Vol. Inf. Co. Reenlist

Said Clarence R. Larkley was born  
in Charlotte Co., in the State of Virginia, and when  
 enlisted was 18 years of age, by occupation a Farmer,  
 had Blue eyes, Light hair, Ruddy complexion, and was  
5 feet 7 1/2 inches in height.

Given under my hand at Fort Bliss, Texas this  
18th day of September, one thousand nine hundred and fifteen

Henry E. McIntire  
Captain, Ord. Dept. U.S.A.  
Commanding Ordnance Schools

Enlisted as Apprentice Seaman for Elec. (G) August 11, 1920

At El Paso, Tex. (Rate) for two years

Born November 3, 1898. at Phenix, Va.

Has -- produced satisfactory evidence of United States citizenship qualifications (state dates appointments and certificates issued).

Ratings held A.S. Ele (G). Sea. 2/c. F. 3/c.

Certificates -----

Trade schools completed -----

Special duties for which qualified -----

Service (vessels and stations served on, including dates and campaigns and engagements)

NTS, Hampton Roads, Va. from August 12, 1920 to November 16, 1920.

Naval Hospital, Hampton Roads, Va. from November 16, 1920 to December

10, 1920. NTS, Hampton Roads, Va. from December 11, 1920 to March 14, 1921.

Naval Hospital, Hampton Roads, Va. from March 15, 1921 to June 25, 1921.

Naval Hospital, Norfolk, Va. from June 26, 1921 to July, 26, 1921. NTS,

Hampton Roads, Va. from July 27, 1921 to Dec. 13-21. Nav. Hosp. Norf. Va

Recommended for reenlistment as from December 14, 1921 to January 6, 1922.

Character of service yes and adverse no marks assigned.

C. R. Larkley, U. S. N.  
 Commander Medical Corps. and Executive Officer.

Height 5 ft. 10 1/4 in. Weight 155 lbs. Eyes Blue (7)

Hair Light Brown. Complexion Ruddy

Personal marks, etc. st. 1 1/2" f head; s. 3/4" l cheek; s. 5 x 1 1/2" r abdomen;  
s. 4" r. f. a. Post. 2. U.S. 1. a. B Mk. 1 x 1 1/2" l scapula.

Is not physically qualified for reenlistment. Discharged from Naval service by reason  
 of physical disability upon approved recommendation of Board of Medical  
 Survey. Origin of disability in the Neurotic, U. S. N.  
line of duty-813(27)525(23)716(32) 80(14)550(94) Lieut. Medical Corps and Medical Officer.

Monthly rate of pay when discharged Forty eight dollars (\$48.00)

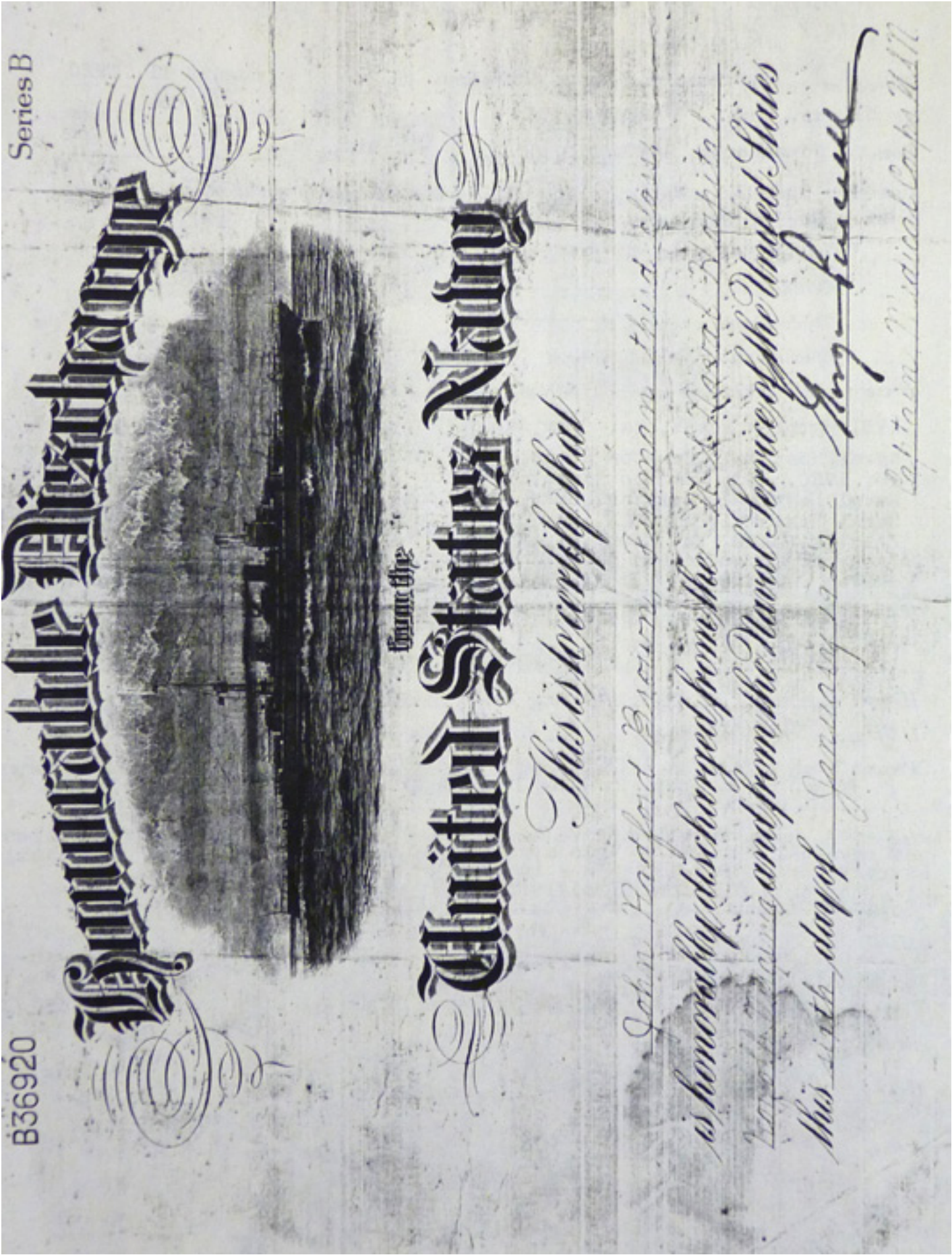
Furnished transportation at the rate of cents per mile from El Paso, Va

to El Paso, Texas and paid \$ 122.95 in full  
 to date of discharge. 2200 miles (Amount)

John R. Brown  
 (Signature of agent)

Admiral, U. S. N.  
 Agent for the United States Navy  
Admiral





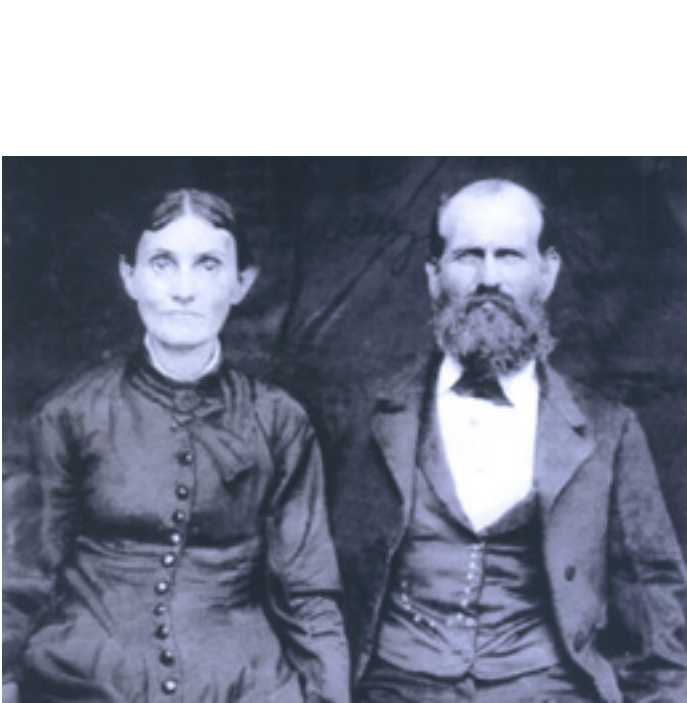
Charles Radford Berkley (Grandfather to Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr.) born 1844 Charlotte Co., Va., & died 19 May 1922 on train from heart disease. Charles first married Temperance Adeline Bailey (pictured to the right) born 24 December 1842 in Hat Creek, Va. and died 11 Feb 1897 Charlotte Co., Va. Charles second marriage was to Anna Tonia Wood Lucado (pictured below with my father Clarence) born 1858 Lynchburg Va. & died 1 Mar 1940 at the home of her son Walter Wood Berkley. Temperance is daughter of John & Mary Bailey. Anna is daughter of William & Martha Wood. Charles is son of Garland & Katherine Berkley. Charles Fought in 3rd Va. Calvary with his oldest brother Publius Jones Berkley.







Confederate Reunion at Charlotte Court House in Virginia - Charles Radford Berkley born 1844 Charlotte Co., Va., died 19 May 1922 on train from heart disease. Charles Fought in 3rd Va. Calvary with oldest brother Publius Jones Berkley. Charles is Grandfather to Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. Man holding flag is Alfred Henry Payne born 28 Oct 1843 Halifax Co. Va., died Sept 1932 in N.C. Alfred married Matilda Susan Berkley born 19 Jun 1847, died 30 Jan 1923 in Pamplin Va. Alfred is son of John & Sarah Payne. Matilda is daughter of Garland & Katherine Berkley. Publius Jones Berkley born 12 Aug 1834 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 2 Jan 1915 Charlotte Co., Va. Married Sarah Smith born 1837 Shennadoh Co., Va. & died 12 Aug 1885. Publius is son of Garland & Katherine Berkley. Sarah is daughter of John & Frances Smith. Woodson Berkley born 1 July 1838 Charlotte Co., Va. died 27 Aug 1924 at home. Woodson married Samantha Carolyn Holt born 13 Oct 1837 Charlotte Co., Va. died 27 Aug 1898 at home. Woodson is son of Garland & Katherine Berkley. Samantha is daughter of James & Sarah Holt. W. S. Hubble is Chaplin. George Cabaness with long beard next to Payne. White is in front of Payne.



Garland and Katherine Berkley. Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., Great Great Grand Parents and the Parents of his Grand Father Charles Radford Berkley



William and Martha Welch Wood. Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., Great Great Grand Parents and the Parents of his Grand Mother, Anna Tonia Berkley



Sons of William Woodson Berkley - from left to right, William Lee Berkley born 31 July 1867 in Charlotte Co., Virginia and died 5 June 1940. Married Lennie Reams born 22 November 1869 in Charlotte Co., Virginia and died 20 July 1969 and is the daughter of John and Julia Reams. Next to William is Cleon Baxter Berkley born 9 July 1873 in Charlotte Co., Virginia and died 15 March 1943. Married Daisy Rudd born 3 January 1881 and died 1 December 1951 and is the daughter of Herbert and Marie Rudd. Next to Cleon is Elijah Jones Berkley born 4 February 1875 Red Hill, Charlotte Co., Virginia and died 23 March 1953 in Danville, Virginia. Married Pearl Elizabeth Pierce born 10 October 1888 in Danville, Virginia and died 22 July 1945 in Spencer, North Carolina. Next to Elijah is James Arthur Berkley born 24 August 1879 in Charlotte Co., Virginia and died 9 May 1960. First married Grace Chamberlayne then Josephine Hite born 7 July 1896 and died 20 December 1989 in Lynchburg, Virginia and is the daughter of Robert and Willie Hite.





William Publius and Mary Jane Clark. William is the brother of Katherine Frances Clark.



Mary Henry Berkley daughter of Publius and Sallie Berkey and wife of Martin Watkin Mason. About 12 years old in this picture.



Edward Rives and Jennie Frances Lemmon. Daughter and Son-In-Law of Publius and Sarah Berkley



James Garland Berkley and 4 of his sons. Top right is Thomas Garland. Bottom right is George Belk. Left top is Wheeler and left bottom is Robert Lee. Another son, William is not shown.





Robert Peter Lucado, Jr. and wife Zora Poff. Robert is the son of my Grandmother Berkleys (Anna Tonia Wood Lucado) first husband Robert Peter Lucado. They married 4 June 1916 in Roanoke, Virginia.



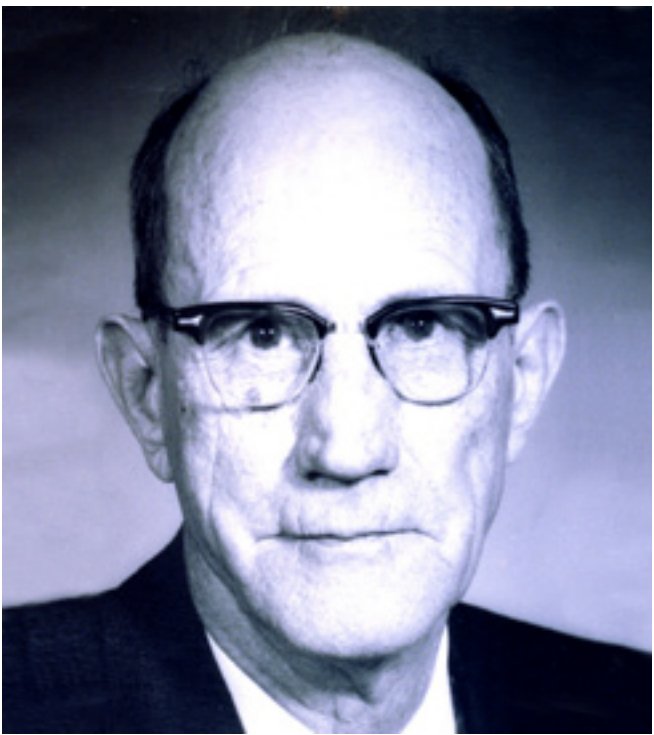
John Lee Lucado son of my Grandmother Berkleys (Anna Tonia Wood Lucado) first husband Robert Peter Lucado.



Hughie Webster and Margaret Lucado. Hugh was born 6 March 1882. Parents are Robert and Zora Lucado. Margaret married Astor Fowler.



Hughie Webster Lucado. Born 6 March 1882



Walter Wood Berkley born 10 Feb 1901 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 2 Nov 1969. Married Alpha Mae Smith born 1 Jan 1909 & died 7 Jan 1998 Kingsport TN. Walter is son of Charles Radford & Anna Tonia Wood Lucado.



Walter Wood Berkley, his wife Alfa and their child.



From left to right, Walter Wood Berkley and his wife Alfa.



Photo was taken at their home in July of 1957. Lois the daughter of Walter Wood Berkley and Alfa with her family. Husband Ed, their son Butch in front of him and son Rickie in front of Lois.



**CLARENCE AND LILLIE DIVORCE**

My dad, Clarence, had a very violent temper and my mother would have to leave him and go to her father home for safety. Clarence would, in a few days, go and beg her to come home and he would promise not to abuse her again. Seems that this had happen many times and she told him she had enough and would never live with him again. A memorandum Of Agreement was made 27 Oct 1930 between Lillie and Clarence that Lillie would have custody of the three children and he would not molest her in regard of the children in any way. She would relinquish him from any support for her or the children and he could visit the children when it was agreeable with Lillie. John Henry was 8 months old at this time. The next time I saw him was when my mother and grandmother were the only ones home. I was standing by my father and he grabbed me up in his arms. He told them he was taking Marvin with him and up the road he carried me. Was there nothing they could do to stop him? Just right after he left God sent my uncle Toy Mason by for a visit. Toy was a powerful man. Toy ran and caught up with us and told my father to put me down and he did. Clarence took his pocketknife out and put it up to his throat and told Uncle Toy he was going to cut his own throat. Uncle Toy told him to cut it from ear to ear. Uncle Toy picked me up and took me home to my mother. Now June had started going to school and was at school at this time and my mother was afraid dad would go to Oakdale School and get her. Tom Thornton, a black man living on the farm, and my mother told him to get on Bonnie, one of the horses, and go to school as fast as Bonnie could run and bring June home. Tom did just that. Tom said later when he got June on that horse no one could take her. My mother lived for a lot of years in fear that dad would come back and try to take us. My mother said Clarence was making moon shine whiskey at this time but he never went back to the still. I never saw my father Clarence after this time until I had married and had two sons.

My dad filed for a divorce in 1934 and a letter to my mother Lillie, from J. Kent Early Commonwealth Attorney Charlotte County Va. dated 1 Feb 1935 stating he had a cousin, Fred Johnson living in Kingsport TN. He asked him to take this matter up with some good lawyer reference to the divorce suit since my mother asked J. Kent Early about alimony and for Clarence to give some support to the children. The lawyers in Kingsport, Tennessee were Kelly and Penn letter dated 24, Jan 1935 wrote back and stated they had checked on Clarence and he was employed at one of the local plants as an ordinary laborer, and that his sole estate consist of his weekly pay check which is very meager. Kent Early told my mother that it would probably be impossible to collect anything from going through a suit and she would have to go to court. My mother just dropped the suit at this time as subjected by Kent Early.



Clarence Radford Berkley at horse with one of his sons behind the horse. In the door way is his 2nd wife Leona Mae Akins.

Photo was taken circa 1954/55. My half brothers and sister by my fathers second marriage to Leona Mae Akins. The two ladies in the front are Blanch Lucille Berkley born 19 Jun 1939 Lucille Berkley and Betty Jean Berkley born 14 Jan 1937.





LIFE AT HOME WITH HALE MASON’S CHILDREN



Lafayette Hale Mason Jr. born 10 Oct 1854 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 14 Apr 1937 at home, son of Lafayette Hale “Fayett” & Judith Mason Sr. First married Lucy Ann Mason born 1857 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 5 Aug 1886 at home, daughter of Abner & Martha Mason. Lafayette is shown here with second wife Mary Elizabeth Ward born 14 Mar 1873 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 13 Mar 1968 at the home of her daughter Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Mary is daughter of Joseph & Catherine Ward. Also shown are their children (from left to right) Elsie born 13 Aug 1910 Charlotte Co., Va., married Emory Owen Rushin, son of John & Bertha Rushin. Gladys born 6 Dec 1912 Charlotte Co., Va., married Wallace Howard, son of Wallace & Gertrude Howard. George Russel born 8 May 1907 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 24 May 1979 at Va. Baptist Hosp., Lynchburg Va., married Pearl Carwile, daughter of Charles & Jane Carwile. Grace born 7 Mar 1903 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 10 Feb 1976 Lynchburg Va., married Roy Thurman. Lorena born 14 Jul 1898 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 14 Jul 1992 at Heritage Hall Nursing Home Brookneal Va., married Warner Washington Pollard, son of William & Nannie Pollard. Lillie born 14 Mar 1901 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Dec 1984 Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg Va., married Clarence Radford Berkley, son of Charles Radford & Anna Tonia Lucado Berkley.

and shut them up in the coupling at milking time, picked dried peas, and brought water from the spring. My grandmother, during berry picking time would take me with her to the woods and pick huckleberries also dewberries. She would rub kerosene around our arms and some around our ankles to help keep those chiggers off but we still had plenty of chigger bites. There was always a lot of yellow jackets and watching out for snakes. Can you imagine picking a bucket of these huckleberries? Most of these berries were canned for special meals in the winter.

One day John Henry borrowed a 22 rifle from Mr. Will Lacks. It had one bullet and I had never shot a rifle before. We went hunting with Speed and he jumped a rabbit. When it ran across an old road, I shot and killed it. The first time I had ever shot a rifle. We had a nickel and we went to Joy’s store and bought ten bullets at two for a penny. We went back hunting and shot the ten bullets at rabbits and never killed another one. We were suppose to be at home helping stripping tobacco and when we did go home both of us got a good whipping from my mother for not returning to help with the tobacco.

After her divorce, my mother Lillie and her three children moved in with my grand parents, there were nine people in his home. A full house with my mother, two sisters and brother. Elsie, Gladys and Russell made for nine people.

At this time in 1932 I was 5 years old and during the depression years, everyone had to work. In the Mason home if you were big enough to walk you could work. I was large enough to turn the corn sheller handle to shell the corn and feed the chickens, turn the grindstone to sharpen the axes, bring in wood, pull weeds for the hogs, thin corn, drop tobacco plants, catch the worms on the tobacco, catch bugs off the potatoes and pick them up at harvest time. I could also walk behind the men plowing to uncover the corn or tobacco that was accidentally covered up with the plow, go to the pasture and drive the cows home



Herman and Irene Trent. Grand children of Lafayette Hale and Lucy Ann Mason and children of Luke and Sally Trent.

but I remember when all of her children were born as grandmother stayed with the birth of each one. Russell wed Pearl Carwile 23 Dec 1939 and they move to his new home about the time we left my grand parents home. Grace wed Roy Thurman and lived in Roanoke Va. Thomas Toy Mason was a half brother to my mother and wed Mary Bessie Collins 8 Apr 1915 in Oxford NC. Hal Watkin Mason was also a half brother that wed Flaura Adkins 10 Dec 1921 and lived in Alum Creek, West Virginia. Sarah Elizabeth Mason “Sally” was a half sister and wed Luke M. Trent 17 Nov 1908. They lived near Mount Carmel Church where Sally, Luke and their four children all died with TB. Uncle Toy told me it was all from filth and said if he could have caught all of them away from home he would have set the house on fire. My mother told me that Luke had TB before he wed Sally as he was wearing elastic stocking.

About 1932 Tom Thornton, the black man living in the tenant house, move away. After that another man of color, Alex Gilbert and wife Martha moved in. They came to make a crop and he worked on halves as all the tenant farmers did. Alex had an old hound dog named Beulah. When she had puppies, mama let me



Grace born 7 Mar 1903 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 10 Feb 1976 Lynchburg, Virginia. Married Roy E. Thurman. Grace is daughter of Lafayette Hale & Mary Elizabeth Mason Jr.

I remember the Williamson brothers coming to spark Gladys and Elsie, bringing brown sugar to make sea foam candy. Along about this time we were attending church at White Chapel Methodist Church which was discontinued many years back about 1932. The minister there was named Daniel Boone and he lived in the Methodist Parsonage in Phenix VA. I think he was sparking Gladys at this time as after church, sometimes, I would ride in the rumble seat of his car as he would take them to our home and perhaps eat Sunday dinner.

About 1933 Elsie left home and received a job in Petersburg Va., 25 Apr 1935. She wed Owen Emory Rushin and passed away on July 1st, 2006 at the age of 96. Gladys married Wallace Howard 2 March 1935. I remember the shower that was given to Wallace and Gladys at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ben Cabaniss and most of the people that attended that shower. Lorena wed Warner Washington Pollard 20 Oct 1926. Of course I didn’t remember this wedding



have one and I named him Speed. Speed was the love of my life as a dog. He was one of the best rabbit dogs that I have ever had. I was six years old when Alex gave me that dog and Speed died after I returned home from serving in the Army in 1946. Times were really hard as these were the depression years. I have a book that my grandfather kept records. In it he noted that he was

From left to right, my Grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Ward, my Aunts Lorena, Gladys and Grace, my Mother, Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton and my Uncle George Russel Mason.



Little baby to the left is June Emily Berkley and next to her is Gladys Mason who is also pictured above.

paying Alex seven and a half cents an hour to do ditching. This ditching had to be done about every year on the low grounds to drain some of the water from the land so the corn crops would not drown. I expect grandfather paid Alex in flour, meal, and meat for the work he did. I used to go fishing with Alex after a few years from working for Hale Mason. Alex moved to some other place but I kept up with him until we moved to Northern Virginia. One night he went with me gigging for fish on Cub Creek. Alex gigged into something and we got it on a sand bar. It was a lamper eel, it had eyes down each side. Its mouth could stick to something like the bottom of a boat and you could not pull it loose. Alex would never go gigging again. He was an alcoholic and it seemed he didn't try to do any thing about it. Alex died as he was crossing a branch, he fell and that is where he was found.

This is just the beginning of my memories, lessons and experiences that we all shared among ourselves, which I want to share with you.

### FAVORITE STORIES OF MY GRANDFATHER HALE MASON



Lafayette Hale Mason Jr. born 10 Oct 1854 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 14 Apr 1937 at home. First married Lucy Ann Mason born 1857 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 5 Aug 1886 at home. Second married Mary Elizabeth Ward (to left of Lafayette) born 14 Mar 1873 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 13 Mar 1968 at the home of her daughter Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Lafayette is son of Lafayette Hale "Fayett" & Judith Mason Sr. Lucy Ann is daughter of Abner & Martha Mason. Mary Elizabeth is daughter of Joseph & Catherine Ward.

My most memorable stories are of my grandfather Hale nicknamed "Chunk". At school the kids called me "Little Chunk", that was if they were bigger than me! He was a dedicated Christian converted under the great Evangelist Billy Sunday. In 1916 he became the Superintendent of Sunday School at Midway Baptist Church for one year and then as a Sunday School Teacher for Providence Baptist Church. He held bush arbor meetings and Mrs. Polly Marshall, who remembered these meetings, told me no microphone was needed because you could perhaps hear him a mile away. My grandfather loved his horses, Dan and Bonnie. He had raised Dan as his mother was a mare named Gracie that belonged to grandfather. When I was a small boy, Dan perhaps, was close to 20 years old. Most of the time grandfather would allow me to hold the horses as I sat on the wagon, waiting for him in the store. If I was lucky, I would get a bag of candy. We would travel to Phenix, to the flour mill, Peaks Store at Rough Creek, Petty's Mill at Wren Virginia and the black smith shop for Mr. Clyde Pillow to shoe the horses. Once we were on the way to the black smith





Hal Watkins Mason born 22 Nov 1882 Charlotte Co., Virginia and died 16 Mar 1964 Huntington Co. Hospital West Virginia. Married Flaure Adkins born 28 Oct 1903 Winifrede, West Virginia and died 12 November 1963. Hal Watkins is son of Lafayette Hales first wife Lucy Ann Mason Jr. Flaure is daughter of Manuel and Loucenna Adkins.

shop and a Coca Cola truck came by and frightened Bonnie as my grandfather was riding. Bonnie tried with all his mite to throw grandfather. I just looked on and wondered how that old man held on. We lived a couple of miles from the main highway and the road was rough from the highway to the house with a lot of mud holes. When it rained and people was coming to visit, a lot of them got stuck. Then all we had to do was get Bonnie to the rescue and I never saw a car that Bonnie failed to pull out of the mud.

When Dan was very old grandfather wanted to get rid of him. Mr. George Berkley, a man of color, would take all of these old horses that farmers would give him. I think he sold these old horses to any one that would give him a few dollars for them. I remember the Sunday afternoon that George Berkley came to get Dan. A lot of the Mason family was visiting. When they saw what was happening to Dan they started crying and grandfather ran and caught up with George Berkley and took Dan away from him and brought him back home.

Grandfather always had a very sharp pocketknife and he would let me use it. One day as I was trying to cut something and I cut my hand very deep. I had that scare for years. Once he went to the tobacco market and bought John Henry and I a bar-low pocketknife. I remember grandfather taking me fishing only one time, where you crossed Turnip Creek going to "Wash" Hamlet place. He helped me set the first rabbit trap over at the rail fence at the Pollard woods. He showed me where the rabbits had been coming through the rail fence and the first morning I had one in the trap and I caught a lot more in that very spot. Now grandmother and mama would dress these rabbits and most of the time hash was made because this way you could feed more people. This hash was really a treat putting it over hot biscuits. In these years any kind of meat was scarce and any kind of meat was delicious. When I was only 6 or 7 years old, grandfather would



Mary Elizabeth Mason is pictured on the steps of the Capital in Washington D.C., November 1960.

let me plow with old Dan on the low grounds. Would break the middles out of the cornrows. Grandfather would stay at the end of the row at Turnip creek and turn the plow around so Dan would not fall in the creek and Dan would pull the plow around in the road end. The plow we were using was called a coop plow and their was two at grandfathers home and I never remember seeing any more at any other farm.

Grandfather and grandmother bought the farm where the home house was from William T. Collins 1 Aug 1905. 100 acres for \$1000.00 was paid with a \$250.00 down payment and then \$150.00 annually until paid. On 4 Feb 1907 he bought 45 acres from Leonidas R. Collins for \$315.00 and it seemed he sold this track to Edward Charles Marshall. Seems grandfather bought 77.3/4 acres from the Collins as well and the timber on the 45 acres was sold to J. E. Dunnivant Brothers for \$400.00 . This included the string of old field pines on the home place. Mr. Clayton B. Tweedy cut and sawed the timber.



Home of Lafayette Hale Mason Jr. & his wife Elizabeth Ward. Lafayette is the Grandfather of Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. Lafayette Hale can be seen here reading his bible under the tree by his 1929 Chevrolet Car. Marvin was given a dog named Speed when he was 6 years old. Speed can be seen in background. Speed died after his returned from the Army in 1945. Marvin was born in this house 19 June 1927. His mother, Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton said it was extremely Hot. Lafayette Hale Mason Jr. born 10 Oct 1854 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 14 Apr 1937 at home, son of Lafayette Hale "Fayett" & Judith Mason Sr. First married Lucy Ann Mason born 1857 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 5 Aug 1886 at home, daughter of Abner & Martha Mason. Second wife Elizabeth Ward born 14 Mar 1873 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 13 Mar 1968 at the home of her daughter Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. She is daughter of Joseph & Catherine Ward. Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Married Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Cecil is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate.



All the barns and fields had names on this farm. Three barns down from the house, first barn with a shed where the wagon was kept as well as a surrey. I'll tell you more about the surrey later. The middle barn, the lower barn and all three were made from chestnut logs. Grandmother Mason told me all three were raised the same day. They are not there any longer as Dan Cheatham had someone split the logs from these barns and make fence rails and also kept some around his home. Another barn across the ranch was the flue barn and up above the house toward the Collin farm was the woods barn and perhaps was the only barn on the farm when grandfather bought it. This barn was also made from chestnut logs. Some of the fields were named the red lot, sawmill lot and the low ground and Apple Tree Flat. Many times after returning home from school, I would see a note telling me to change into my old clothes, come to the field and help with the work. If I was hungry, when I arrived from school, I would go to the garden, fetch an onion and make me an onion biscuit, dipping the onion in vinegar with some pepper and salt. Grandfather spent a lot of time setting under the hickory shade tress in the yard reading his Bible. I remember one day Pete and John Mason's two old dogs, Spot and Trailer, both jumped on my dog Speed. Grandfather laid that Bible down and grabbed his chair up and started beating those dogs with it. I through he had killed them.

My great grandfather Lafayette Hale Mason, Sr. was one of the old men that fought at the Battle of Staunton River Bridge. This was the only battle fought in Charlotte County during the civil war. On his property, in an old smoke house, he stored an old civil war rifle, a pistol, sword, bullet vest and a lot of ammunition. My grandfather Lafayette Hale Mason, Jr., gave all of this to my uncle Owen Rushin who took it home in Hampton, cleaned the rust off and sold it. Just would like to know how much he sold this for?

**JUNE EMILY BERKLEY**  
**(1st child of Clarence**  
**Radford Berkley and Lillie**  
**Via Mason Berkley.)**

June Emily Berkley who was born 26 Dec. 1923 in Charlotte County, Virginia and died 9 Dec 1985 of colon cancer in Moses Cone Hospital Greensboro, North Carolina.

She was buried 11 Dec. 1985 in Pineview Cemetery in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. June was perhaps in the first class to graduate from Randolph Henry High School Charlotte



Lillie Via Mason Berkley born 14 Mar 1901 Charlotte Co., Virginia. & died 17 Dec 1984 at Lynchburg General Hospital Lynchburg, Virginia. Married Clarence Radford Berkley born 3 Nov 1899 Charlotte Co., Virginia. & died 17 Jun 1977. Lillie is shown here with her daughter June Emily Peele Land born 26 Dec 1923 Charlotte Co., Virginia & died 9 Dec 1985 of cancer in Greensboro, N.C. Hospital. June married Edward Ruben Peele, Sr. Also shown with Lillie is her son Clarence Edwin Berkley "John Henry" born 25 Mar 1930 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Clarence first married Virgia Rowland then Nancy Strohl. Lillie is daughter of Lafayette Hale & Mary Elizabeth Mason. Lillie is the mother of Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., Edwin is his brother and June is his sister.



Lillie Via Mason is holding Charles Andrew Peele, Sr. born 6 Mar 1950 in Rocky Mount, N.C. Charles is the son of Edward Ruben Peele, Sr. and June Emily Berkley. Charles married Margaret Underwood on 22 Aug 1970 in Greensboro, N.C. The large boy in the middle is Edward Ruben Peele, Jr. born 17 Jul 1943 in Rocky Mount, N.C. Edward is the son of Edward Ruben Peele, Sr. and June Emily Berkley. Edward first married Diane Ballard in March of 1968. His second marriage was to Hilda (last name unknown) on 12 Feb 1971 in Greensboro, N.C. Small boy standing on the right is Cecil Marvin Berkley, Jr., born 4 Sep 1947 in Lynchburg General Hospital, Virginia. Cecil is the son of Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., and Marion Elizabeth Slate. Cecil first married Gyvel Zenia Young on 31 Jul 1966 in Rockville, Maryland. Gyvel is the daughter of Arthur and Gyvel Young. His second marriage was to Catherine Ellen Slover on 17 Aug 1985 at Falling River Baptist Church in Virginia. Catherine is the daughter of John Henry Slover and Leone W. Slover. Small boy standing on the left is Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Sr. "Kenny" born on 31 Jul 1948 at Guggenheimer Hospital in Lynchburg, Virginia. Kenneth is the son of Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., and Marion Elizabeth Slate. Kenny first married Dayne Marie Howard in 1964 in Woodbridge, Virginia. Danya is the daughter of Douglas Howard and Shirley Bryant. His second marriage was to India Mae Salmons on 19 Feb 1990 in Stafford, Virginia. India was born 18 May in Floyd Co., Virginia. She is the daughter of Howard Salmons and Edith McPeak.

Court House, Virginia. On 29 July 1942 in Fort Monroe, Virginia, June first married Edward Ruben Peele, Sr. who was born 29 July 1921 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Edward was a WWII Navy Veteran and his parents were William H. Peele (1897-1954) and Lillie Culpepper (1894-1971). They had four children.

(1) Edward Ruben Peele, Jr. born 17 July 1943 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. He married Diane Ballard in March of 1968. They had 2 children. Emily Marie born 12 Sep. 1964 and Joyce Ann born 1 Dec. 1968. Edward Ruben Peele, Jr. second married Hilda. They had no children. His third wife was Diane Ballard.

(2) .Michael Andrew Peele born 9 May 1947 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. He died 11 May 1948 and was buried 13 May 1948 in Pineview Cemetery Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

(3) Charles Andrew Peele, Sr. born 6 Mar. 1950 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Married Margaret Underwood 22 Aug. 1970 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Margaret was born 26 Mar. 1951 in Greensboro, North Carolina. They had one child, Charles Andrew Peele, Jr. born 26 Jan. 1973 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

(4) Theresa Emily Peele born 20 Sept. 1952 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. She married Thomas L. Bradhan on 31 Aug. 1974 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Thomas was born 21 Oct. 1953 in New Bern, North Carolina. They had two children. Judith Marie born 10 Mar. 1975 in Charleston, South Carolina. Judith Marie married Jack Collins and they have one child named Thomas Kevin Collins born 3 Oct. 1997. The second child of Theresa and Thomas is Larry Edward Bradhan born 9 Dec. in Memphis, Tennessee.

Edward Peele, Sr. worked in the office for Gary Carolina Company in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. The building was heated with oil in a under ground fuel tank and Edward was checking the fuel level but the stick was to short. Edward picked up a twenty foot pipe near the tank and stuck it in the tank. As Edward and another man were lifting the pipe out it struck a high powered electric line and Edward was electrocuted. Almost instantly and was dead when



arriving at Parkview Hospital. It just knocked the other man down. Edward died 7 Dec 1953 and buried in Parkview Cemetery Rocky Mount, North Carolina.

On 15 Jan 1955, when June Emily was 31, she second married James Earl Land who was born 6 Feb 1920 in Nash County, North Carolina. James died Nov 1992 in Greensboro, North Carolina. At his request he was cremated and his ashes scattered in the Tar River where he fished and swam growing up. They had three children.

(1) Mary Elizabeth Land born 6 Mar 1956 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. She married Charles Noah and they have a child named Kristina M. born 23 Sep. 1980 in Greensboro, North Carolina.

(2) James Christopher Land born 11 Jan 1958 in Rocky Mount, North Carolina. Married Nancy Weinwright on 19 Feb. 1987 in Alexandria, Louisiana. Nancy was born 20 Jul. 1943 in Alexandria, Louisiana.

(3) Gregory Earl Land born 12 Mar 1960 in Greensboro, North Carolina. He married Robbie Ann Robertson on 12 Nov. 1994 in Lake Wylie, South Carolina. They have one child named Christian Earl Land born in June of 1998 in Della Vista, Arkansas.



Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. pictured to the left and his little brother Clarence Edwin Berkley is pictured to the far right.

**CLARENCE EDWIN BERKLEY “JOHN HENRY” (3rd child of Clarence Radford Berkley and Lillie Via Mason Berkley.)**

This story is about my brother Clarence Edwin Berkley. He has always been called “John Henry”, but for the rest of this story I will speak of him as J. H. It seems no one knew that his name was Clarence Edwin. Today when I meet people they will tell me they never knew of me but they had known a John Henry Berkley.

J. H. was born 25 March 1930 in Charlotte County, Virginia. From a very small boy he was full of mischief and he never met a stranger. He would get in trouble as a small boy and it would cause me, Marvin, to get a lot of whippings for something he did but I got blamed for. If my mother wasn’t sure who did something wrong, we both got a whipping. The stories are plenty so I will try to mention a few of his pranks. To tell them all would be a whole new book and one worth writing, just not at this time. Here’s a good one . . . he got mad and had a bean in his pocket and said he was going to put it up his nose and he did. The lady living on the farm joining ours took a crochet needle and was able to remove it. He really had a temper and he never got over it even as a grown man. I use to watch him when a turkey gobbler would get after him and chase him in the corncrib. He would start screaming for someone to chase the gobbler off so he could get to the house. Another time he tore up a dollar bill and threw it in the dog house. You know what a whipping he received as this was during the depression years. Mama pasted it tighter and was able to spend it.

One hot summer day the honey bees were all swarming outside the beehive. We had seen Russell take a stick and rake them off as he said he didn’t want them to swarm. These were old home made hives and if the hive fell in the late fall he would take the honey and would kill the bees or they would die. Well I gave J. H. a short stick and told him to stir the bees up so they wouldn’t swam which he did. I can still see the picture today, him running and screaming to the house with his head covered in honey bees. Grandmother Mason met him on the porch and she was trying to get the bees off of him and she was stung many times. I had out run John Henry and was inside the house looking out at them fighting the bees. Once Uncle Russell had made us mad about something, so we had a homemade bow and arrow. I told John Henry just to shoot him with the arrow as Russell was sitting in the kitchen. John Henry walked to the door and shot that arrow. It hit Russell right above his mouth and the blood flew. Russell gave John Henry a good whipping for that. John Henry and I would be in the orchard playing and would see some nice looking apples. As we would climb the tree, we would not see what was waiting for us until something would sting us. It was a big hornet nest and the hornets would always sting you as close to your eye as possible. Usually your eye would swell until you could hardly see.

One day J. H. borrowed a 22 rifle from Mr. Will Lacks. With one bullet we went hunting with Old Speed our dog. I had the rifle and had never shot one before. Anyway, Old Speed jumped a rabbit and when it ran across the road, I shot and killed it. That rabbit kill was the first time I



had ever shot a rifle. That day we had a nickel and we went to Joy’s store and bought ten bullets at two for a penny. We went back hunting and shot the ten bullets at rabbits and never killed another one. We were suppose to be at home helping strip tobacco and when we did go home, both of us got a good whipping from mother for not returning to help with the tobacco. J. H. was always a little afraid of horses and one day he was with our step-father, Willie Rush, in a one horse wagon on the highway. The horse started to run away and our step-father told J. H. that they had better jump out of the wagon. So both J. H. and our step-father went to the back of the wagon and when Willie Rush jumped out J. H. saw him hit the road real hard. J. H. then crawled back up to the front of the wagon and got the lines and was able to keep the horse in the road. He had gone a few miles and as he was getting close to Roger White’s home, J. H. was screaming. Roger ran out of the house and was able to stop the horse and brought both the horse and J. H. home. Someone had come by in a truck and saw Willie laying in the highway and brought him home. He was then taken to the doctor and of course when the doctor realized his condition he was sent to the Memorial Hospital in Lynchburg, Virginia where he was unconscious for 3 weeks and 2 days. During this time we hired a man of color named Noble Hamlet. We paid him \$50 and helped with the tobacco. Noble was born Feb 13 1922 and died 30 Jan 2008 and buried at The Nazareth Baptist Church in Phenix, Virginia. He was special to us. Eventually Willie was released from the hospital and came home but he was in very bad shape the rest of his life.

One more last little story about J. H. He was visiting in Tennessee and wanted to go to a store close by. He saw everyone going around a fence to get to the store and thought he would just take a short cut and go under the fence and go through the pasture. Half way through, a huge bull made a dash for him. He didn’t have time to crawl under the fence so he just went through the fence. It almost ripped all his clothes off and it scratched him all up. In later years when we would go hunting together, he would never want to go through a cow pasture.

As J. H. started getting older he just didn’t have time to work. He just liked to travel around and have a few odd jobs and live with our Aunt Lorena Pollard. J. H. would hitch hike a ride to Tennessee to visit our uncle Walter Berkley. When the weather started to get cold, J. H. would come home to Charlotte County. Our Uncle Warner and Aunt Lorena Pollard would say, “J. H. is looking for winter quarters”. While living at the Pollard’s, J. H. would drive our uncle Warner 1934 Chevrolet pickup truck. One day J. H. was driving alone and was behind the school bus coming down Wren Hill which was very steep. As the bus slowed down, J. H. ran into the bus since that old truck didn’t have very good brakes. It didn’t hurt anything and he knew the driver, so everything was all right. Of course he didn’t tell Uncle Warner but he found out about it anyway. Uncle Warner lost a lot of money in the bank during the great depression. J. H. was sure he had his money buried and he tried to watch to see where it was but he never found any.

J. H. joined the U.S. Air Force, spent four years in Spokane, Washington and no money was ever found. Before he joined he had married Virgie Rowland in 1951 in Vienna, Virginia. She was



Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Married Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Cecil is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate.

Kong; Singapore; Bali; Sydney, Australia; Aulkland, New Zealand and Fiji, Hawaii. They traveled to Mexico six times. Cruised in the Caribbean and attended the Rose Bowl Parade in Pasadena, California twice.

J.H. always liked to drive and when working for other places and at vacation time, he would drive a bus somewhere, once to California. He never wanted to ride with anyone who wanted to do the driving. He drove buses and trucks many miles across America and I asked him had he ever wrecked one. He said no but he had some close calls. After leaving Franklin Charter Bus Company, J. H. and Nancy bought a home at Myrtle Beach. Since they liked to travel so much, they bought a travel trailer and made many trips all over the United States. In 2005 he began to have breathing problems and had to wear an oxygen tank. J. H. was a smoker but he had stopped many years back. Every time he would see these young kids smoking he would go to them and tell them to look at him. J .H. died 14 Jan 2006 in a Myrtle Beach Hospital with Lung Cancer.

born 1932 and they had 4 children: Judy Ann born 21 July 1953 in Spokane, Washington; Cheryl Ann born 22 April 1955 in Spokane, Washington; Ricky Wayne born 9 Feb 1960 in Arlington, Virginia; and Lisa Ann born 18 November 1965 in Manassas, Virginia. After J. H. returned from the service he bought a service station which was located where Berkley Square is located today. Later he became an airline mechanic for United Airlines. At this time he and Virgie had divorce and he married a second time to Nancy Strohl. Virgie died 1 May 1997. J. H. then became a manager for Colgan Air Lines at Dulles Airport in Washington, D. C. After he retired he went to work for Franklin Charter Bus Service.

Clarence Edwin Berkley (“John Henry”, “Ed”, “J. H.) and Nancy traveled a lot. They flew around the world stopping in London, England; Bombay, India; Hong



**RUSSELL BOUGHT FARM**

In the late 1930's Russell (center of photo below) bought the farm where Dan Cheathman now lives. The whole farm was in the woods with no open fields. These woods had hard wood such as large hickory, oaks and trees that have a lot of large long roots. I was only about twelve years old and I helped clear the first new ground that was started at that time. I used a coulter plow which was pulled by one of the horses. I also used a drag to help get the roots up. We would pick these roots up, put them in piles and after they dried a little, we burned them. The first year Russell planted a crop of tobacco on that land. He cut oak logs to build a barn. I helped after the logs were cut with one of the horses to drag the logs up to where the barn was built. It was really a hard time trying to have tobacco on that farm and at the same time having tobacco on the home place. Since there was no where to get water on the farm, we had to go down to Hubert Skates and draw water from his well to drink.



Above are George Russell Mason (on left) born 8 May 1907 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 24 May 1979 Va., Baptist Hosp., Lynchburg, Virginia. George is son of Lafayette Hale and his second wife Mary Elizabeth Ward. George married Pearl Carwile born 20 Oct 1905 Campbell Co., Va. & died 8 Aug 1990, murdered at home by Adams. Pearl is daughter of Charles & Jane Carwile. Hal Watkins Mason (on right) born 22 Nov 1882 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 16 Mar 1964 Hunington C & O Hosp., West Va. Hal Watkins is son of Lafayette Hale and his first wife Lucy Ann Mason. Hal married Flora Adkins born 28 Oct 1903 Winifrede West Va. & died 12 Nov 1963. Flora is daughter of Manuel & Loucenna Adkins.



From left to right, Bill Collins, George Russell Mason, Raymond Roach

**LEONARD MASON "LEN"**

Uncle Toy and Aunt Bessie raised tobacco but they also used their truck to sell produce in Lynchburg at the farmers market. Their son Leonard "Len" would drive their 1934 Chevrolet pickup to the market every Saturday. I spent many happy hours at their home. Len would make a lot of different things with corn stalks. One time he had something like a mill wheel, where the water from the pond would turn the wheel. Len was a good mechanic and could repair most anything. He also had bees and he would give me a big block of honey to take home with me. I will never forget that sad day while I was stationed in Germany. I received a letter from Marion telling me that Len was killed 27 Jan 1946 in a automobile accident near Red House. Even worse, in that same wreck his brother Maynard had broken his neck. Maynard never recovered from that wreck and had problems the rest of his life.



Thomas Toy Mason born 1 Sep 1884 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 7 Jan 1969 at Liberty Nursing Home Lynchburg Virginia. Married Mary Bessie Collins born 4 Feb 1896 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 25 Aug 1961. Thomas Toy is son of Lafayette Hales first marriage to Lucy Ann Mason Jr. Mary is daughter of James Edward & Kate Collins.

One day when I was visiting at uncle Toy's, a man knocked on the door. When I answered the door he told me to tell Mr. Mason he was there to survey his tobacco allotment. This was the beginning of the stabilization plan where you were told how many acres you could plant. This was started in the late thirties and I felt it was a good plan since people were planting a lot of tobacco and not getting any money for it. Regardless, uncle Toy went to the door and told that man if he could see the road to get on it. Uncle Toy didn't want any one telling him how much tobacco he could plant. The man went on down to our home and told Russell that uncle Toy had run him away. Russell went and talked with uncle Toy and told him the tobacco land had to be surveyed. He told uncle Toy to send one of the sons over to help this fellow and that is what was done.



**MORE STORIES ABOUT MY FAITHFUL FRIENDS, MY DOGS**



Josie and Holly keeping each other company.

As I mentioned previously, my first dog was Speed. Alex Gilbret lived on my grandfather Mason’s farm and had an old dog named Beulah. Beulah had puppies and my mother let me have one. I named him Speed and he was the love of my life. He

was a wonderful rabbit dog. The first rabbit I ever shot was being chased by Speed. This was also the first time I had ever used a rifle. We were only allowed to have one dog and none could have more perfect for me than Speed. He would not run a rabbit at night so that made him good for possum hunting.

Once, a lady named Florence threw hot water on Speed when I was visiting her house. This water took the hair right off of his back, and the mark stayed there for his whole life. I was a young boy but I got after Florence for burning my dog. One day, I walked many miles to Frank Williamson’s with Speed to go hunting. Speed knew I walked in the house and would spend the night there, so he went home. Frank had a little black dog which we hunted with the following day. The next time I went to Frank’s, I made sure I tied Speed up for the night. We got up the next morning and Frank’s mother told him that he had to help his brother Howard get up a tobacco planting bid. Frank, Howard, and I worked as fast as we could and finished by 11 a.m. We hunted the rest of the afternoon until I had to walk home. Speed was always ready to hunt because he was the best.

Later I bought 2 hound mixed puppies for 50 cent each from Wayne Whitlow. I named one Rattler, but the other one killed chickens and had to be destroyed. Rattler was a good hunting dog and always ran loose at our home. When I left to go to work in Hampton, Virginia he went missing. Rattler had run a rabbit into a hold under a fence post and when he tried to come out his collar got hung in the post. He died and was found weeks later.

When I returned from serving in the Army I heard that George and Mildred Foster had some mixed puppies which looked like Collies. I bought one for \$5 to give to Marion as a surprise. This dog was a great dog and we named it Tippy. Tippy would chase rabbits, tree squirrels, flush quails, flush turkeys, and would retrieve most anything. He killed snakes of any kind or size. I never saw him get bit but once and that was my fault. We were loading logs and we ran up on

a large copper head snake. I called Tippy and pushed him over towards the snake. The snake bit him but he killed the snake right afterwards. At this time I had a Diamond T truck with running boards and Tippy would hop right on the running board. You could go any where you would like without having to worry about Tippy falling off. When we moved to Northern Virginia, we left Tippy at my mother’s home. He would go back and forth to Marion mother’s, perhaps looking for us. When we came home for a visit, we took Tippy back with us to Northern Virginia. The next time we came for a visit to Brookneal, Tippy ran out in the highway and a car hit and killed him.

A few years later while working at the Post Office, a Postmaster carrier named Mauchancy, had some beagle puppies. I bought one for \$15.00 and I named him Rip. He’s one of the best rabbit beagles I have ever owned. He started to run at about 5 months old with Limbo. I would take him down next to Featherstone, which was between the railroad tracks and the Potomac River. When he was very young he ran up the banks of the railroad and jumped a rabbit. From that time on every time he went to that bank, he always seemed to jump a rabbit. This place was loaded with rabbits. We killed about 50 in one year. We hunted there until homes and parks came to this area, forcing us out.

Right before we were forced to stop hunting, Kenny bought me a beagle puppy. She was trained in the same area as the others and fit in with them perfectly. She was a good hunting dog and could make music. I use to hunt with one of my friends Ryland Allen, who worked at the post office. He was a retired Marine helicopter pilot and was always a lot of fun to be around. He could tell some tall stories every time I was with him. Once, Allen told me he landed a helicopter to shoot a deer. They had them in the helicopter and hadn’t gone far before the deer started to come lively. While in the middle of the air, the Marines had to push the deer out the helicopter. Ryland borrowed my dogs to go hunting near a large highway. My dog Kenny gave me for Christmas ran out in the busy road and was killed. Ryland went with me hunting a few times in



the valley near the West Virginia line in a large orchard. We killed a lot of rabbits there. He came with me to Brookneal a few times and spent the night. He went with John Mason a few times deer hunting too. Ryland was born and raised at Dillwyn, Virginia, but spent 29 years in the Marine Corps. One thing Ryland will never let me live down was when my truck battery was not charging. He had what I needed to make it work in the back of his old truck, so he drove from Woodbridge to Dillwyn one Sunday in order to give me what I needed. My truck started charging right away, once he fixed



what I forgot to do. We went hunting a few days later in the orchard. When we left coming home one night the alternator stopped working. We finally made it to Manassas, Virginia and decided we just couldn't go any further. We were about 20 miles from home. My brother lived about 10 miles from there and I called him. His daughter Sheryl came to the rescue. To this day I can't remember what she did, but it was good enough to get us home safely.

After we moved to Brookneal we didn't see much of Ryland or his family. We just drifted apart. They had bought a home in Alexandria, Virginia. One day I received a phone call from his daughter and she told me about her mother Nel having dementia. Ryland would not leave her for anything and refused to put her in a nursing home. Not long after then, I received a phone call from his sister and she told me Ryland had died and was buried at the Veteran Cemetery in Quantico, Virginia. Ryland's sister said they were taking turns looking after Nel. Nel was a fun person to be around also when she was well.

I gave Garland Henderson \$20 for Blackie. The first dog we had in Northern Virginia. Blackie was a good rabbit dog but was too fast for the other dogs. She would make a short cut and try to catch the rabbit or would lose the track. In a few years I took her back to Brookneal and left her at my mother's home. She lived there for the rest of her life. When we would go rabbit hunting in Brookneal we would let Blackie go, but she was always too fast to chase the rabbit. This would cause the other dogs to loose the track.

Shep was Cecil Jr's dog. He taught him many tricks. Shep would jump hurdles and play ball. If you hooked him to a wagon, he was just like a horse. Once, a dog food company invited everyone's dogs to a trick on their show. Shep won everything in the show, but he was second for the biggest dog.

My uncle gave me a beagle named Lembo, when he went to Tennessee. He told us if we would come and visit, he would buy Cecil, Kenny, and me a hunting license for Tennessee. He gave us a registered beagle puppy, and we named him Lemon since he had the color of one. Instead of calling him his real name, we always called him Limbo. A few years after that, we went back to Brookneal to visit and hunt. I took Rip and Limbo with us. Marvin Mason told me just to turn them loose at his home for the night and not to worry because nothing would bother them. At that time, John was a small boy. The next morning when I was turning off the highway going to Marvin and Carloyn's home, John came running out to meet us. He told us Rip and Limbo were dead. The bird dog that belonged to Marvin had killed them both.

While hunting with Marvin Mason, Carroll Jennings and others on Marvin's farm in Brookneal, Virginia I ran across the field to cut a rabbit off. Then I stepped in a old stump hole, causing my leg to hurt really bad. Carroll Jennings helped me get to my mother's home and she tied the four dogs in the woods there. She finally got me in the house and I laid down on the bed. My mother was at work at the time and my grandmother was the only one there. I was driving a Volkswagen



Holly in the back yard.

changing gears on my way home until I got to Fredericksburg, Virginia. Once I got on Route 1, I really had a time moving a few feet at the time in the slow moving traffic. Using the clutch and changing gears at the same time with my right foot became very painful. When I got home, the boys helped me get out of the car and into the house. The next morning, Marion took me to the doctor and they sent me on to Anderson Clinic in Alexandria. My leg and foot were x-rayed and I was told it was worse than a break. They put me in a cast that went all the way above my knee. All the walking I could do was with crutches because I could not put my foot down. After a few weeks, the cast began to itch so bad that I told Buck to get the hack saw and remove this cast. When I went back to the room in the Clinic they put another on, and told me if I took it off not to come back.

I have always been a die hard hunter, so I came to Brookneal to hunt with Billy Slate while on crutches. (I had to use these crutches for many months.) We were on the Shorter Farm and I had hobbled out just a short distance from the truck. My dog Speedy was in the honeysuckles and jumped a rabbit. When the rabbit ran out of the honeysuckles, I shot, missed, and accidentally shot Speedy. Thankfully, it didn't kill her. This happened on a Saturday, then on Sunday we decided to take Speedy to a dog hospital in Lynchburg. Before we got there, Speedy had died so we just turned around and came back to Billy's home. I had never cried over any dog as much as I did Speedy. Speedy was our pet and a good hunting dog. She would retrieve any game except a dove. She would never touch a dove, even after it was cooked. A friend of mine had cooked some and brought then to me, and after I ate all I wanted to give Speedy what was left over. As good as it smelled, she wouldn't eat any. So after that, I decided I would never eat another dove. Speedy would sleep in the house and if she needed to go out, she would come to the bed and wake me up. After a little while, she would scratch on the door and I would get up and let her in.

at that time and I told Grandma I was going home to Marion and the boys. With the help of a cane, I finally made it to the car. Grandmother untied the dogs and put them in the car one at a time. I had no trouble



When we moved back to Brookneal, we went to North Carolina and bought 3 beagle puppies. We named one Box Car Willie Rock, Mebs Sweet Dixie Honey Bee, and Hawk Eye. These were all good hunting dogs. Dixie had many puppies and I sold a lot of them.

Cecil had Dolly who was bought from Tom Dornin in Scottsville, Virginia. She was a registered beagle. A man in Hurt, Virginia had traced her through the register papers and came for a visit.

He wanted Dolly and told me he would breed her. Once he bred her, he would give me two puppies in the place of Dolly. I did this and the puppies made good hunting dogs. My next dog was Josie the collie. Josie was just a sweet heart who loved everyone. Josie liked to jump hurdles. We used to go Woodbridge, Virginia and visit our sons and their wives, Kenny, Mae, Cecil, and Cathie. We would get Arlene Mason to take care of her while we were gone. We would leave the truck at home and Arlene would take her for a ride every day. We have pictures of Leah Britton loving her up when she was a very small girl. Once we went to a large sale and Josie was with us. The weather was very hot, so I found a shady place for Josie and told her to lay down and stay. I could hear several people come by and call her but she paid no attention to them. Josie just laid there until I called her to come with me. She died at 13 years old and we buried her in the back yard. We even bought her a tombstone for her death and it says faithful friend.

After Josie, Holly the border collie became part of our family. Marion knew I was very sad over the death of losing Josie, so she told me she would buy me another dog with her own money. I found the border collies advertised in the news paper by Holly Willoughby in Monetea, Virginia. We decided to go look at them and of course I wanted that puppy who was born October 1, 1999. We brought her home and she was like a little teddy bear. I told Marion the first night I was putting her in the dog lot, she would keep us awake all night by barking. We never heard a sound out of her and we didn't think she would ever bark. She finally started barking when she became older. I trained her to jump hurdles and she has always liked to play football, basketball, and catch the baseball and frisbee in the air. She still likes to catch the Frisbee, but she is now deaf and not able to hear it coming through the air. Holly has to catch based only on sight. When my truck moves, she is in it. This last hunting season Holly went every day and waited in the truck. She is my dog and only wants to be with me.

I have two beagles from Coleen Drviet, Pretty India Belle and Marvin's Hat Creek Speed. Both are registered beagle names, (Speed and Belle). I was looking for some beagle puppies here around Brookneal or near by and wasn't able to find any. I called Kenny to look around in



Leah and Josie on front porch

newspapers in Stafford County. Later that night, he called and told me he had found some rabbit beagles for two hundred dollars each. Kenny was going to look at them and I told him to buy me one. Later the next day, he called and told me he had my two beagles. Kenny and his wife Mae brought them to me next morning. They were pretty beagles and he had to pay four hundred dollars for the two. He would not take a penny from me and said they were just a present. I still have them along with Hobo, Charlie Brown, and Tinker Bell, which is Leah's dog.

## HUNTING TALES

### **Polecat**

When I was a young boy, the neighbor's dog was running a rabbit close to our home and treed it under a stump. I thought perhaps I could reach under the stump and get the rabbit, but when I pulled my arm back a polecat was following it. He never let out his scent, but it was in just one second that I was away from the stump. This incident taught me a lesson to never stick your hand in a hole.

When I worked at the post office in Woodbridge, Virginia, hunted with other people a lot. Lee Doss lived across the street from me and he also had beagles. Their names were Horse and Little Joe. He had one more but I forgot her name. We hunted west of the Blue Ridge, because at that time hunting season opened there a couple weeks before it did in the east. During one season, someone told Lee that he could hunt on their farm. We found this man's home, but no one was there. Lee and I drove on down the road searching for a good looking place. We found one, asked the man if we could hunt, and began our trip. Since we were close to the mountains we turned the dogs a loose. The fellow told us there were rabbits in the cut over and we ended up shooting two. All at once the dogs jumped a deer and all left except Rip. We hunted a couple hours and old Rip jumped a deer. The deer headed for the mountain. Some one told us how to get on the other side of the mountain, so we did, eventually catching Rip in the highway. Lee and I drove up a mountain road and stopped at a house. We asked if they had seen the dogs and they said they hadn't. While Lee was talking to the man, I heard a bark. I only heard this dog bark one time, but I told Lee I was sure it was Little Joe, as he had a peculiar bark. There was nothing we could do, as we sure couldn't go looking in his building. The next morning, Lee went back to where we had turned the dogs loose and one of my young puppies was there. He had dropped out of the chase. This was first hunting season, perhaps first day. Lee put a lost dogs ad in the news paper and on the radio. It was obvious someone hunted them through the hunting season and then turned them loose in town.

The day after hunting season ended, he received a call. They said two dogs had come to their home. Lee got Marion and Dot, Lee's wife, to go after the two dogs. While they were gone, somebody called and said they had the other dog. Back then we had no cell phones. Marion and Dot had to go back the next day. On the way there, someone hit Marion's Volkswagen and bent the fender. The driver never stopped.



**Thunder**

One evening, we were hunting in the valley. All at once, everything started to get cloudy and black. It lighting like I have never seen before, and the snow started to fall like it was being dumped out of a bucket. By the time we got the dogs in the car, it was dark and the road was covered with snow. People were sliding into the ditches. Lee sled out of the road into someone’s yard, but he went on through the yard and never stopped. I have never seen a storm come up so fast in my life.

**A Fuss**

There was a preacher who ran a store not far from Tom Brooks, Virginia. He had a large farm and would let us hunt there any time we liked. One day, we were on the back side of his farm late in the day. The dogs ran down in this place because there were rabbits everywhere. Once it was about dark, we had to leave. This day was on a Friday and Lee had to work Saturday. Kenny and I went there Saturday and started hunting. The dogs jumped a rabbit, and I heard someone tell a little boy to go out there and see what was running. When the little boy saw me, he called his dad and told him there was a man walking in the cut over, to me he looked like he was 7 feet tall.

His daddy wanted to know what the hell I was doing there. I tried to apologize for being there and told him the land wasn’t posted. This apology didn’t work. He said he was going to call the game warden. After he talked with me and used every cuss word he could, I told him just to call the game warden. About that time Kenny shot bambi with his gun, as he didn’t know about the man after me. After a while the man told us to move along. When we told the preacher what this guy had said, he told us to go pass a certain tree. The preacher said the man wanted us to go far. Kenny and I still had a wonderful day hunting.

**STORIES OF FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS OF COLOR**



Albert Hamlet

Albert & Lillian Hamlet lived near us and they had 14 children. Pauline, Florine, Ada, Sarah, Laura, Mary, James, Nobel, Charlie, Robert, Gertrude, Fannie, Edna and Joe. I played with Robert, Charlie, Noble and James. James was older and I have one story I must mention that left an impression on me. While James was working for Mr. Monroe Jordan, my grandfather Mason died. James had to come close to see my



Mackie Bolden

long hill. Then all would hop on it and down the hill we flew. After I got older I never wondered why my family let us tear that buggy all to pieces. We couldn’t play with that buggy without those boys helping to push it up the hill. They were larger than me and John Henry.

In 1929 all the chestnut trees died and they were still standing when I was old enough to hunt. Those trees were really very tall and squirrels would hide in the hollow in these trees. With the help of those boys we would get a large saw and go on the bluffs where most of the chestnut grew. When that tree fell, most of the time, many squirrels would jump out and we would start shooting. At that time every one liked squirrels and most of the time people made stew out of them. The Lack neighbors, when firing tobacco, would make a large pot of stew where everyone came and brought a few squirrels or something for the stew. Now getting back to the Hamlet boys, it was unfortunate to learn that once I left home a tree fell on Robert and he was killed.

Now Noble, I didn’t know what happen to him but just a couple years back his obituary was in the paper. I was told by a friend that a few people had broken into his home. As they were running away, Noble shot both and I think he killed them both. Noble had to serve two years in jail for shooting them in the back. I never knew what happened to Charlie or James. Albert and Lillian were both older than my mother. Albert use to tell people that boy Marvin

grandfather feeding the horses just before light each morning. James said he could still see grandfather feeding those horses and said he really had to put some speed on running by!!!.

Grandpa had an old larger buggy he kept in the shed at his home. It had two seats with a nice top and tongue that could be pulled by two horses. I believe you could even use shafts allowing one horse each on the pair of poles between which a horse is harnessed to a buggy. I took that buggy and cut a part of the tongue off and turned it over. Then you could lay it back and use it like a toy wagon. Those boys would help us push that buggy up a



could eat more watermelon than any body that he had ever seen. Albert use to come by when we were sitting in the yard. He was quite the talker and kept his money in his shirt pocket sticking out so people could see he had it. He and his sons use to break a lot of shoe make. After they curred them in the sun, then they would put them on the two horse wagon and take it 20 miles to Pamplin, Virginia. Remember, this was in the depression years and people did anything for a little money. Lillian had a brother, Henry, we always called "Bum". He started to farm with my uncle Russell one year but he quit not long after he started. He could laugh as funny as anybody you have ever heard. He would not eat yellow corn as he said he knew someone that died from eating it. After we moved to Northern Virginia, going back home by Red House, I would see Bum Hamlet sitting in front of the store and stop to talk with him.

Dave and Mackie Bolden were brother and sister. Their mother was named Gladys Boulden and we called her daughter Little Mackie. We called Gladys sister Big Mackie. She had one leg shorter than the other so she walked with a limp. Another sister was named Mildred and she married West Wheeler.

Little Mackie was born Feb. 23, 1925 in Charlotte County, Virginia and started school at 7 years old. Once, their dog followed her to school over a mile from home. She turned back and brought the dog home then her mother Gladys walked her back to school and pushed her in the door. On the way to school the next day she came across a large snake in the road. She was afraid to pass it but didn't know which was the worse, her mother or the snake. So she went on pass the snake. Times was very tight during the depression years and her mother use to wash clothes for people, perhaps for a quarter. Since there was no electricity, Little Mackie said her mother would take her to help. She didn't have much time for school until she had moved to Washington. From there she worked in the day and went to night school and graduated from High School.

Little Mackie married Jessie Spinner Dec. 22, 1947 and had 6 Children. They were Robert, Jessie, Tyrone, Bunnie, Ronda, Al. Big Mackie and Gladys father was Anthony Bolden but we called him "Andy". Andy was born 1853 and was first married to Miriah Hurt. He had two sons by that marriage. John and Luke and three daughters Mary, Nannie and Emma. Andy married second Martha Ford. His father was a slave and it was my understanding that he had a farm deeded to him after the Civil War. It was said he lost a lot of it because some white people kept moving the line rock and taking his land. There wasn't anything he could do about it without the possibility of being killed or hung. Black people didn't have a chance at that time. Andy sold the best part of his farm during the big depression. Hudson Joy purchased that land. All Andy had left was enough to raise a garden on so he worked for other farmers by the day. I have an old ledger where my grandfather paid Andy 65¢ a day and let me tell you, it wasn't an 8 hour days sun up to sun down. I remember Andy but he was to old to work at that time. He would just set under the old walnut tree. My mother use to tell me stories about Andy living in a very old cabin. He may have lived there with his daughter Big Mackie. There was another cabin built in

front of that one where daughter Gladys Bouldin and her family lived. Gladys Boulden married George Davis who had four boys and 2 girls. Mackie knew she had to leave as it was not room in that cabin for her so she moved to New York to live with her Aunt Emma Hamlet in 1949. Then Mackie moved back to Lynchburg, Virginia and moved to Washington and worked at the Old Washington Hospital in 1949. During this time she went to night school and graduated while working at the Hospital. In 1962 Mackie went to work for Government Services in Washington, D.C. where she retired and moved back to Lynchburg, Virginia. She bought a fine nice Brick Home after all that. I hadn't seen Mackie for perhaps for over 65 years. She called us one day and invited us to come for a visit and we had a great time talking about all our memories together as she served us a meal. Mackie and I are all that is left to know anything about the old times as we are the last of our generation.

I grew up near this lady named Mackie Boulden Spinner. She had a brother, Dave born 22 Feb 1929, died at 65 years old in Ohio. He married Gladys Weens and they had two children, Rena and a son. I use to possum hunt with her son who had a hound named Rock. Rock was a good possum dog but his father sold him to Mitchel Green who lived miles a way. Regardless, Old Rock would come back for a visit and Dave would tie him up. This way we could go possum hunting at night which was the only time you could do it. My dog Speed wasn't good at treeing up the tree and when old Rock was treeing, I would climb it and shake the possum down. Dave was afraid of Speed and sometimes Speed would kill the possum before I could get down from the tree. Dave's grandfather, Andy, had an old hound dog named Bob that went with us at time even though he was very old. We would carry the possums home in a burlap bag and put them in an old barrel. Then we would feed them sweet potatoes for a while which was said to clean them out as possums eat anything. When they got rather fat we would kill and skin them for cooking. At that time in my life I ate some possum then but no way would I eat one now. Any kind of meat was good then. I was about 12 years old and Dave was a couple years younger. I never saw him again after we moved to Northern Virginia.

## **LODSON MASON FAMILY**

Lodson True Mason and family lived on joining farms with us. Lodson was a nephew of grandfather and a WWI Veteran who received a pension from a shoulder wound. He was a bit fortunate as a pension during these depression years left them a little better off with their finances. At Christmas time we would receive 1 wagon or bicycle between us three children. Edward "Pete" received a large one, John was middle sized, and Ruby a very small one. We spent some fun times with those children, skated on the frog pond, climbed trees, road horses together. We would go looking for chinquapins, hazelnuts, hells and any other thing we could eat. Lodson had a 1936 pickup truck and about every Saturday we would meet that family over at the forks of the road and we all went to Brookneal, Virginia. Lodson always had to park that truck up near





Seated is Martha Cordelia Hardiman Mason (wife). Seated John Thomas Mason (husband). In lap is Bertha Meredith Mason Elder (daughter). Standing between parents is Henry Drew Mason (son). In front of their father with white shirt on is Lodson True Mason. Standing behind right shoulder of Martha Cordelia Mason is Arimenta Sue Mason (daughter). The adult lady standing in center back is sister Nannie of Martha Cordelia Mason.

the shanty since the road where they lived was too rough to drive all the way down the hill to the house. I remember one Saturday we went to Altivista Va., to see two buffaloes that someone had in a stable. Since we were on the way to the stable the man told us it would be five cents admission each to see them. We spent a lot of time swimming in Turnip creek, and we never had a bathing suit just went in with our birthday suit. In the summer time this was about all the bath you took. All the same you still had to wash your feet before you went to bed. Sometimes a black leach would get on us and they would suck the blood and they were very slick. The only way to get them off was to use two stones to pull them off. One day Pete sat on what

was about a half dead cat fish. It stuck in at least an inch and the blood flew when we pulled the fish out of Pete's rear. I road horses and mules with John, as his father had two mules named Jim and Joe. John and I watched movies of Gene Audrey with Trigger. He could hardly wait to get a horse and when he did he named him Trigger. A beautiful horse and John taught him a lot of tricks. At Christmas we all received a lot of fire works and at about 3:00 am you could hear them going off at their home. My mother would not let us get out of bed before 5:00 am. It was God looking after us with those fireworks. At that time some of the thunder bolts and cherry bombs were like setting off dynamite. After we grew up and went our separate ways, we didn't see much of each other. Both boys were married and had families and died young with heart attacks. Pete was

engineer on the railroad and died at 53, John at 48. Ruby lost her husband, Frank Moon, 30 Jun 2006 with a stroke.

## LESSONS IN HOG KILLINGS

Now a little bit about hog killing time. My grandfather would buy about four small pigs around October and would keep them until perhaps November the following year. He always wanted large hogs and the fatter the better. About 6 weeks before time to butcher them he would put them in a small pen so all they could do is eat and get fat. He would feed them slop, chop and a lot of corn. The first hog killing time I can remember was with the help of Washington "Wash" and Jimmy Hamlet. The day before grandfather would install the scalding tub he would dig a trench to put the tub over, then fill it with water. The next morning grandfather would get up about three or four in the morning and start a fire to heat the water and about light the help would arrive and kill the hogs and put one hog at a time in the scalding water then take the hog out on some boards. Then they would take old used jar tops to scrub the hair off. Then they were hung on a high pole usually with one of the poles on a tree branch close to the trunk of the tree and the other with two post with a fork to hold the other end of the long pole. Then they would use a gambling stick which was about two feet long and cut in to the leaders near the back legs and stick each end in each leg so this way it would hold the hog up so they could open them up and all the inside could be removed. My grandfather would always try to get the liver ready so some could be cooked for dinner. At this time it was three meals a day breakfast, dinner and supper. You never heard the word lunch at dinner time. After the hogs cooled, most of the time the next day, the hogs were cut up into hams, shoulders, and middling meat. Then it was tender loin, spareribs, backbone, sausage, joel, sauce, chime, pig feet and scraps from the stomach which was cooked later in a black kettle until all the grease was cooked out and this was called lard. After the grease cooled it would turn to a solid substance and would be white. The meat then was called crackling and a lot of people put this in the corn meal when making batter bread. Then the intestines were used to make chitterlings. The way this was cleaned would take them to a swift part of a branch and hold them in the swift water until the stuff was washed out. I never ate them as at that time no electricity, no running water and I wondered if they were completely cleaned. Some part of this, I am not sure where, they used to make gut lard. When grandmother would boil the chitterlings, it would stink the whole house up. The chitterlings that people buy at the Super Market today smells the same way when boiling. Back at that time I really liked the brains mixed with scrambled eggs. Now I would not eat them for anything. Every part of the hogs was used, as some people would say you eat every part but the squeal.

As long as Marion and I farmed we had hogs. One time after we had removed the lard from the black pot, still hot and in a lard tin, I picked it up by the two handles. Just as I started in the door a handle broke off and it dumped all over the kitchen floor. Lucky no one got burned. After the



meat was cut up it was salted down in a meat box and covered with salt. Most every one had a smoke house with a meat box. This meat would stay in this box for a few months, taken up and washed then covered with borax and hung up in the smoke house. Then it was smoked with an open fire using hickory or apple wood until it was smoked as you would like. A lot of times a little insect called a skipper would get in some of the meat, but if you caught this in time you could get them off and still eat the meat by washing with borox. My mother and grandmother would take some of the sausage, fry it and put it in jars to use later. After putting this in the jars they would take the hot grease, pour it over the sausage in the jars, seal the jars, turn them up side down and the grease would turn to a white substance. This sausage had to be used before hot weather or it would spoil. Some people would put sausage in a bag like a stocking and put wax someway on the bag and then smoke it with the meat. We never use this method at our home.

### CHICKENS AND TURKEYS

Grandmother always had chickens and turkeys, and all were just turned loose just to go where they wanted to roam. The turkey hens would always go to the woods on the old Pollard place to make a nest and lay eggs. I have watch grandmother and Gladys many times standing around watching to see where the turkey was making her nest. When found, she would take a spoon and retrieve the eggs from the nest. The turkey hens could set on the eggs and look after the little ones, but they would take them to far from home. There were so many predators, especially large hawks waiting to prey on these small chickens and turkeys. Hawks would dive down and catch large hens. She would leave at least one egg in the nest or put something there so the turkey would keep laying eggs in the nest. She would save these eggs and when she had enough she would put them under a setting chicken hen our use an incubator so they would hatch. Sometimes when the little turkeys were first hatched, she would hand feed each one, I think with little pieces of boiled eggs. All the laying hens, after a time, would stop laying and start setting. The ones you didn't need to set on eggs would be put in a chicken coop until they got over the spell of setting and they would go back to laying. During the summer months, a lot of setting hens were set with about 15 eggs and when they hatched with the baby chicks. Each brood of chicks, with their mother hen, had what we called "a chicken hoover", which was a very small little house for the hen and chickens to live in. There were perhaps about ten chickens in hoovers always under good shade trees. After a few weeks, the mother would wean the chicks and each hovel had a water jar set up so the water would flow down as needed. In about six weeks it was time to eat some of them or sell some. We would put about four or five in a burlap bag and cut a hole in the bag so each chicken would have a hole to stick his head out so they would not smother. I have been to Joy's store with chickens over my back and would trade them for things need like sugar and other thing we couldn't raise. If there was any money left over after paying for the things you bought, the clerk would give you a due bill for the extra money which you could use later as they never gave you cash back. The stores traded the same way with eggs. Mr. Hudson

Joy would buy trapped rabbits, no shot rabbits, after they were opened. He gave a quarter for them but still no cash just a due bill. The chickens had a hen house to lay their eggs and it was a small door just large enough for the chickens to get through up about five feet, with a ladder type pole to reach so they could get in the hen house. It was this way so the dogs and other animals could not get in so easy. Some time animals such as weasels and owls would get in and kill the chickens especially at night. There were always dogs trying to get in to suck the eggs. Some dogs would climb up the pole and get in. These dogs were called egg sucking dogs. We would try to break the dogs from eating the eggs by punching a small hole in a few and putting them back in the nest with a lot of red pepper and other hot stuff so it would burn the dog mouth. Sometimes that would break them from sucking eggs. If you had a dog that would kill chickens, you would have to destroy them as every one had chickens running loose back in those years. I never had but one that killed chickens and I destroyed him. A lot of the chickens would roost in trees or on the roost poles and would not go in the hen house at night. All the turkeys would roost in trees at night. Gladys told me at one time, the turkeys would go over to the Roach farm and try to roost on a iron gate. Grandmother would send Gladys after them and she would chase them home. The turkeys would roam all back in the Pollard woods and grandmother told me sometimes they would stroll with wild turkeys. When the tame turkeys came home in the evening the wild turkeys would roost near by but they would not come all the way to the house. Now you can imagine with all the chickens, turkeys, guineas and ducks running around everywhere, including the porch, leaving little piles to be stepped in. Especially when you were going barefooted and it goes between your toes or step in it and track it in the house to be cleaned up. When people stopped raising chickens, it really cut down on the flies. The chickens would have a lot of lice and most everyone had a hand spray with Black Flag spraying the roost poles and places to kill the lice.

#### A Chicken Tale - The Pullet

When Kenny was born we lived at the Wade May farm where we raised chickens. We named one Rhode Island Red chicken the Pullet. One bunch of little chickens all died but this one. We took that little chicken and raised her as a pet. We kept her in a box when she was very small and she really got spoiled. So as she got a little larger, each night she would like for us to put her in that box which we did. We could pick her up any where. If the door was open she would walk right in. When Buck was a baby she would fly right up on the tray of the high chair. If we went out and didn't return until after dark, the Pullet would be waiting for us. Walking around in the yard next to the step for us to put her in her box in the screened in porch. She didn't think about going to roost like the other chickens did and she stayed in that box until we took her out the next morning. She could have hopped out any time.

Before I leave this turkey part I have to mention something about the fighting turkey gobbler. John Henry was still small and that gobbler would chase John Henry in the corn house, then stand guard waiting for him to come out. John Henry would scream and cry until some one would come and run the gobbler off so he could get back to the house.



## **HARVESTING WHEAT**

Wheat harvesting time, the first thing that had to be done was for someone to use a cradle scythe and cut what was called “a wind roe” around the field. This was done so no wheat would be run over with the binder and wasted. As the man cutting with the cradle scythe and dropping the wheat in small bunches someone would tie this in bundles with a few blades of wheat. Then would come the binder pulled with four horses. At our home it would always be uncle Toy Mason riding in the saddle on Bonnie and driving two horses in front. His son, Leonard, would be riding on the binder and operating and controlling what was needed to cut the wheat. The binder would automatic bundle and tie the bundles and drop them on the field. Other men would be picking the bundles up and put them in small stacks. I remember one time uncle Toy made me ride one of the front horses, for some reason not sure for what, but I was always ready to ride a horse. I remember when the weather was really hot and the horses would be unhitched and would take them to the branch so they could drink water and cool off in the middle of the afternoon. Another thing I liked about cutting wheat as the binder would be almost finishing a field the young rabbits would start running out and us children would run and catch all we could and clean and dress them. Grandmother and mama would cook the rabbits but grandmother would always put a little soda in the salt water she soaked them in, as she said this would take the green out. This was really good eating with young rabbits and gravy over biscuits.

Next would come the threshing machine to thrash the wheat, Floyd Pillow and Tom Ramsey were the main people who had threshing machine, some other few people also had them but most of our wheat was thrashed by Mr. Pillow or Mr. Ramsey. It took a little time for the thresh machine to be set up. Was pulled to each farm with a tractor and then the tractor was used with a long belt to operate the threshing machine. At this time all the neighbors around would come with their teams and wagon to help hall the wheat to the machine to be threshed. The horses or mules would have to pull the wagons up close to the machine so the farmer could throw the bundles of wheat in the threshing machine. A lot of these mules or horses would be frightened and would try to run away. Some teams were so frightened they were unhitched and the wagon pulled up to the threshing machine by men. This was really a fun time for me as always like to see the teams cutting up and trying to run. The threshing machine would go from farm to farm and where it was at dinner time the women had to prepare the dinner for all the farmers that were helping. The way the owner of the threshing machine was paid was a toll from the wheat. The threshing machine owner always had a truck to haul his toll wheat and supplies for the machine. One day Pete Mason was holding on to the back of the truck so it could pull his bicycle along and the truck backed up and back over the bicycle but Pete didn't get hurt. It was always a large pile of straw left after threshing the wheat. Back in those years most every one would sleep on straw ticks. Most ever one would like to get fresh straw for their beds, but some times the chiggers were still on the straw and you would get many chigger bites in the bed. One time the threshing machine was at Uncle Toy Mason home and Maynard, Uncle Toy's son told me to look at that black man limping. The man had told Maynard that a mule threw him and hurt his leg. Maynard said that Pa got up in the middle of the night to get a glass of cider and saw this guy trying to steal some

turkeys. Uncle Toy went back in the house and got his gun and shot him in the leg as he went over the fence.

## **THE COLLINS FAMILY, OUR CLOSE NEIGHBORS**

Our nearest neighbor to the Masons were the James “Jim” and Mary Kate Carthorne Collins family. They had 3 sons, Colly, Nowlin and Johnny as well as one daughter, Bessie. Their Son, Ira Nowlin Collins and wife Flora Bentley Collins lived close by and they had three children. Calvin Lee Collins who was born 19 Jan 1928 and died 2 May 1996 buried in Concord Cemetery, Emory Melvin and Mary Sue Perkins. Their son Johnny and wife Della Trammel Collins had two sons, Elmon and Randolph.

Calvin Lee Collins was a Navy Veteran in WWII and served on many positions in Concord Rescue Squad. His wife Mary Archer Caldwell had one son, Larry Wayne Collins.

Now Jim and Nowlin had two horses named Frank and Bob. Frank was a bay color and Bob was a iron gray. Now Bob would balk and wouldn't pull the wagon and I was told the only way they could make him pull was to start a fire under him. Both horses were very large so you can only imagine how entertaining that could have been. The pasture the horses were in was made out of split rail fence, so the horses would take their nose and butt them down and get out. The Collins solution to this problem was to put a halter on the horses and run a chain through there front feet. This way they couldn't raise their head up but could eat the grass.

Now Nowlin bought a farm near by and he took Bob with him. Jim rented his tobacco land to a man named Frank Crabtree who moved in the house that Nowlin moved out of. I use to mention to Frank Crabtree that was 2 Franks. He was a really nice fellow but he died young after marrying Eva Jurdan, a near by neighbor. Eva married second Joe Quick.

Jim wed a second time to a lady named Florence Powers that he met at Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey Circus. Calvin Lee and family had to move out of the main house to a sawmill shack on the farm. Calvin Lee still had to milk the cows and bring some by for his grandfather Jim. One morning I met Calvin Lee standing in the chimney corner of his grand Pa Jim's home. He said he didn't want to go in for he knew Florence would kiss him. Takes grandma to tell you about her and my mother going for a visit to Florence. She had gotten mad with her husband Jim and just tore the house up because she wanted a new appliance.

Calvin Lee Collins was one of my nearest best friends. When he would come to play and the dark caught up with him, we would have to walk with him by the Collins cemetery. Perhaps I had mention before you could sell trap rabbits at Joys Store for a quarter due bill. So one day Calvin Lee had caught a rabbit in his trap. He told me he wanted me to go with him home and help him



dress the rabbit. We took the rabbit from the trap and tied his hind feet together and we had tried to cut his trough but he jumped up and got away from us. We put Speed the dogression on the track and Speed chased him the rest of the evening but never caught him. Calvin Lee was really upset because he had lost his quarter which was a lot of money for us in those depression years.

Another time, Calvin Lee and his father Nowlin came to visit us one night and one of Johnny's dogs had follow them. That old dog had a fit and when they looked for a dark place, he ran in the Kitchen under the side table. Nowlin was trying to get him out and Calvin Lee kept telling him his name was Blue. Nowlin, with a very loud voice, then told Calvin Lee to call him Blue, Blue, Blue. They worked until they dragged him from under the table after got over his fit. The reason these dogs would have them was because of worms. Nobody had any dog food in those days so we just fed them corn bread and biscuits and scrapes from the table. What we use to do was give the dogs coppas which was rat poison. We would give then just a tinny bit on the end of a pocket knife blade. It would take care of the worms. Perhaps there is another name for this type of fit but this is all I ever heard. When a dog would have a fit they would run. When you caught them, they were very nervous, trembling, barking and surly hurting.

Calvin bought a 1935 ford automobile. One night Zane Elder, Geraldine Holt, Marion, myself and Calvin Lees girlfriend, Hazel Clark went for a ride. This was a Sunday night and Marion and Geraldine had to go to a pray meeting at Falling River Church. Calvin Lee and Hazel didn't have to go to church so Calvin Lee told us he would be back to pick us up when church was over. It was pouring down rain and Marion and Geraldine could not let their parents know that Calvin Lee had not got back. We decided to slip around back of church where there was a place under we could get out of the rain. Everybody had left the church with no lights. One of us had to wait for Calvin hoping he would stop for us which he did. All the same we never went with him again. Calvin Lee got a fishing hook stuck in his hand and his grandfather cut it out with a razor blade.

Jim and Kates son Johnny wed Della Tramell and they had two sons Elmon and Randolph. I hadn't seen those boys for years. After we moved back, I ran into Randolph and after that I saw a lot more of him. One morning I was reading the obituaries in the paper and his name was there. He had died of a heart attack. Elmon is still living and I ran into him at Wilbun Super Market in Appomattox. Every time Johnny use to see me after I married Marion, he wanted me to let him hear my wifes name and it would make me hot. Johnny would like to visit the neighbors at night and he would set until 12pm. If some people would see him coming they would blow the lamp out like they had gone to bed. When I was very young Johnny made a squirrel stew for us young boys. At that time there were no screens in the windows so I didn't know weather I was eating flies or stew!!

One more tale my good friend Hubert Scates told me is that there was a through way by Johnny house and the old house was spooky looking. He said he was going by and saw Della and the boys running to the grave yard and hiding behind a tombstone. He call to let them know who

he was. Hubert was a man of color but was one of my best friends. He really helped me with so many things. We did a lot of hunting together and at one time he had a little fine dog name Jabber. Hubert was not to good of a shooter but would still shoot and you could hear him laugh for a mile away. One time the dogs were chasing a rabbit and the old rabbit ran, set down near his feet and he just reached down and caught him.

Now Bill Collins, he was the Treasurer of the City of Roanoke for many years. Collier Collins was perhaps the oldest son but I don't remember him. I was told he lived in Ohio and was married with two children. He went to the River and left his shoes and other things on the bank. It looked like he jumped in the river but no body was found. My aunt told me he use to come back and visit his parents and I don't know when he died but his belongings were sent back to the Collins.

## THE LACK FAMILY, OUR CLOSE NEIGHBORS

Will Watt and wife Lula Stanley Lacks had moved from Crystal Hill Halifax County. Their children, Lillie, Louise, Raymond, Howard, Eddie, and Carolyn raised Mrs. Lacks niece Frances Brown. Mr. Lack was a very prosperous farmer and when I was growing up people also said he knew more about curing bright tobacco than any person around. They would come to him for advice on changing the heat level when they were not sure what to do. Sometimes the tobacco was sweating and they were afraid the tobacco would start drying up to green. When selling tobacco on the market, green tobacco would sell very cheap.

At this time Eddie and Howard were still at home farming and the Lacks bought a new car about every year. Of course Eddie did all the driving and they always bought a Ford. Howard had a bad car wreck and broke his jaw bones and he had his teeth wired together. One tooth was pulled where he could eat through a straw. During that time he helped Russell strip tobacco. We were stripping tobacco in the first barn and we had to have some heat as this was in December. Someone had given Russell a medal tar barrel and he cut a hole in it to make a draft. This was used as a heather. We didn't think about the old tar that was left in the barrel and started a fire. I don't know how Russell got that barrel out of the barn door and threw it before it caught it all on fire. Unfortunately he burned his hands pretty bad.

I remember the Lacks having Brunswick stew at the tobacco barn, which was always made with squirrels. The neighbors would bring squirrels or vegetables to put in the stew. Mr. Lack would plant a large field of sorghum cane to make molasses. This cane, at maturity, had to be cut and all the fodder had to be stripped off by hand. This took a lot of time but with help from the neighbors it was done quickly. Now it was time to grind the juice from the sorghum cane. The cane was fed into a grinder that was operated by a horse or mule that was hitched to a long pole. The horse or mule pulled by going around and around this pole. The juice would start collecting in a large flat vat which had fire under it. This cane juice had to be cooked very slowly



and someone had to be stirring this at all time. The person cooking the molasses had to know what they were doing or the molasses would be too thick or if not cooked enough, would be to thin. The whole time this was cooking, it would have a shim that had to be removed from the form. The horse or mule was rotated every once and a while. We ate a lot of sorghum molasses as I was growing up. Most of the time on hot buttered biscuits but some times on pan cakes.

At one time Mrs. Lacks’ nephew, Allen Stanley, came to live with them and made a crop of tobacco. He was about my age and I got to know him. We hunted a lot and I discovered he was a expert hunter, quick to aim and shoot. At this time all of the Lacks children had moved away from home and started their own families. The niece, Frances, left home and went to work in Lynchburg, Virginia. Mr. Lack had a 1939 ford pickup but he never drove so Allen had to drive him every where he went. Mr. Lack had two mules, Beck and Joe. One day the truck would not start so Allen got the mule Joe to pull the truck up on a hill so we could roll it down the hill to get it started. He had the harness and the rope lines laying on the ground and Mr. Lack had his foot over in the lines. Suddenly, all at once, the mule was frightened by something and jerked away.

Mr. Lacks’ shoe was caught in the lines and that mule dragged him every which way. Just as we would get close to catch the mule, he would take off running again. By the time it all stopped, the mule and Mr. Lack had about passed out. His leg wasn’t broken but it was many months before he could walk again. That same year we were helping the Lack’s to kill hogs. The truck wouldn’t start and somehow I spilled gas on my overall legs. I got too close to a fire we had to warm by and the flames caught my legs. As I was jumping up and down, I unfastened my overalls then dropped them to smothered the fire out. Lee Hudson, who was helping, always said I was trying to run and he grabbed me to keep me from running. Eddie took me to the doctor but I wasn’t burned very much and no scars to worry about. Allen moved back to Halifax and I lost track of him. After I returned to Hat Creek in about 1982 I started working on genealogy. I was going through Halifax Cemetery and ran up on Allen’s grave along with his wife’s. Both had died very young and later I ran into someone who knew Allen. They told me he was a very bad alcoholic. I had been with Allen when he lived with the Lack’s. When at the tobacco warehouse in South Boston, we would go up to a café that stayed open all night. Allen would buy bottles of cheap White Polk Wine and I would drink a little of that and that was all the drinking I ever did. Allen was always a fun person to be around. At that time, at the store you could buy a cup of peanuts very cheap and he was always eating them.

**THE ROACH FAMILY, OUR CLOSE NEIGHBORS**

Andrew and wife Mattie Foster Roach had 3 children. Oder Edwin married Erna Mae Smith and they had 3 children Geraldine, Edwin and Alden. Andrew and Mattie’s other son, Raymond and wife Ethel had two children, Shirley and Roland. Daughter Easter no children.

Lodson True and wife Estelle Johnson Mason had three children Edward, John and Ruby Valley. Claude and wife Ada Reynolds Jordan and they had one son Merle.

**SWEET BRIAR SCHOOL**

My mother Lillie and Aunt Lorena attended Sweet Briar School before Oakdale and I have one of Lorenas report cards (seen on following page).

Only a few people seem to know anything about this School. My mother told me about where the school was located and I looked ever where in that area for signs of where the school was located. And it was a old building I had been very small and I had been in that building many time and I had no idea that was Sweet Briar School It was just a seemed to me it was a old shack. I had no idea that was the school until I saw pictures of old schools but when I found out Mother had deceased. Lorena Report card said Fannie Lou Baker was the teacher. Seems school at that time lasted about 4 months Oct thru Feb. Year 1910/1911.

My grand daughter, Dalma, commented how amazing it was to handle such an object from our family that is just barly over 100 years old.

**OAKDALE SCHOOL**

My mother attended Oakdale School with all her siblings and after that, I attended with my siblings. It was located 1 1/8 miles north of the Old Well Store on route 672. The original building still stands and was occupied by Mrs. Hazel Noblin and family.

In 1913 a group of concerned citizens in the Old Well community decided to have a school built. They then contracted Buck Sublett and his helpers, Hudson Cawthorne and Clyde Jackson to build

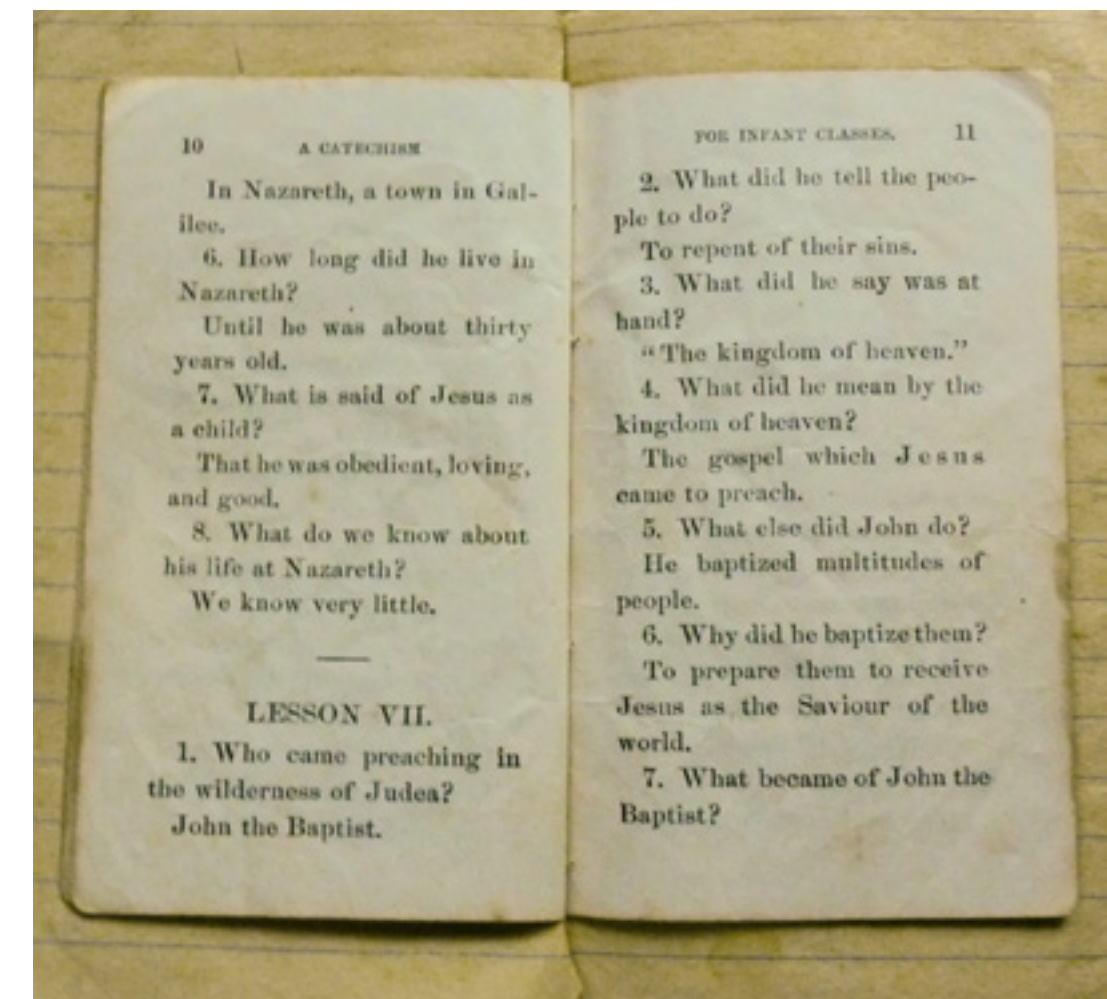
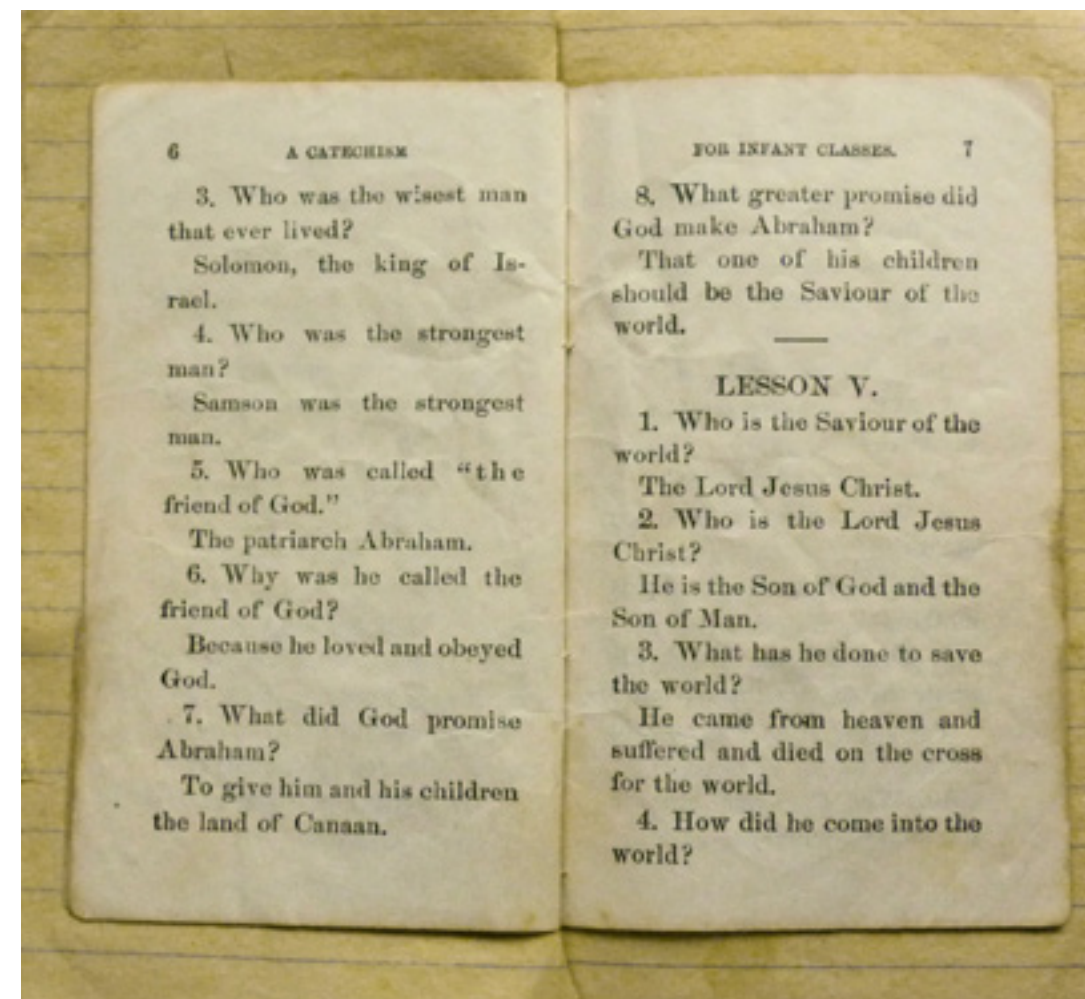
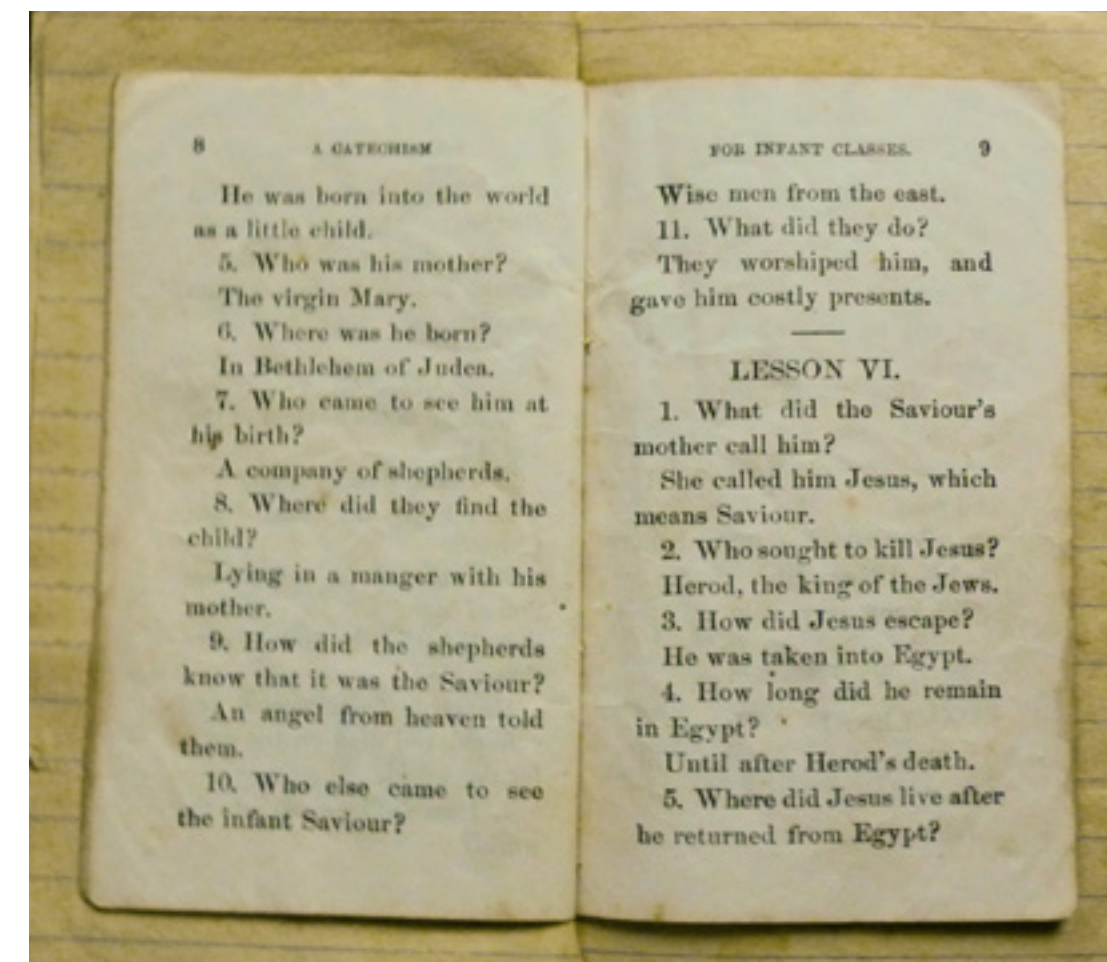
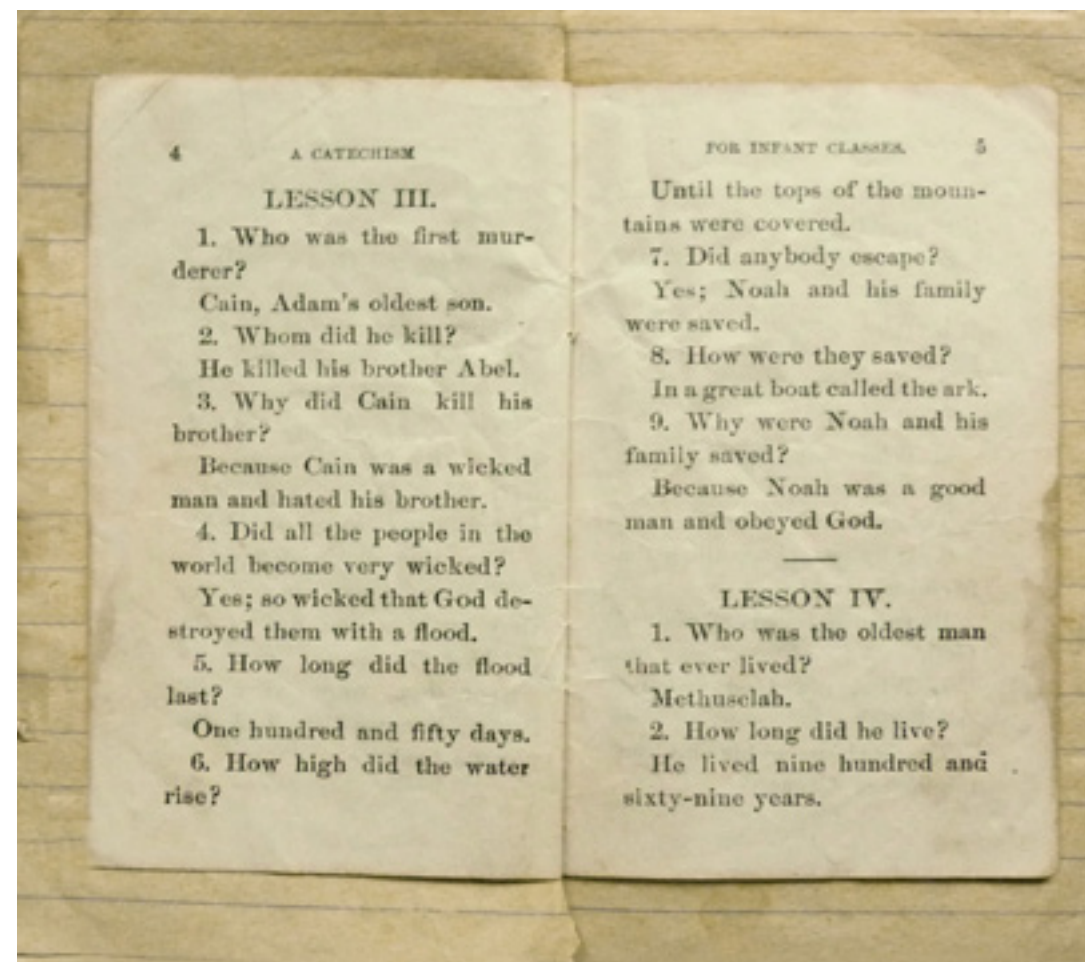


the school for them. When the plan was drawn they found that they needed a large plot of land for the building as well as the access to a spring to their water. They received the plot of land from Davis Jordan who lived nearby. Then my great-grandfather, Tom Hamlet, gave the school the right away to

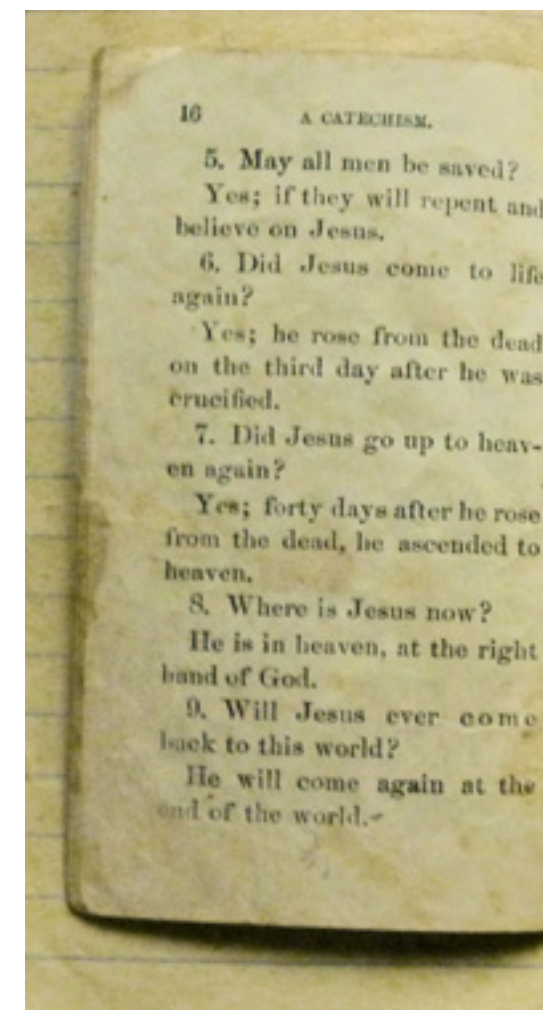
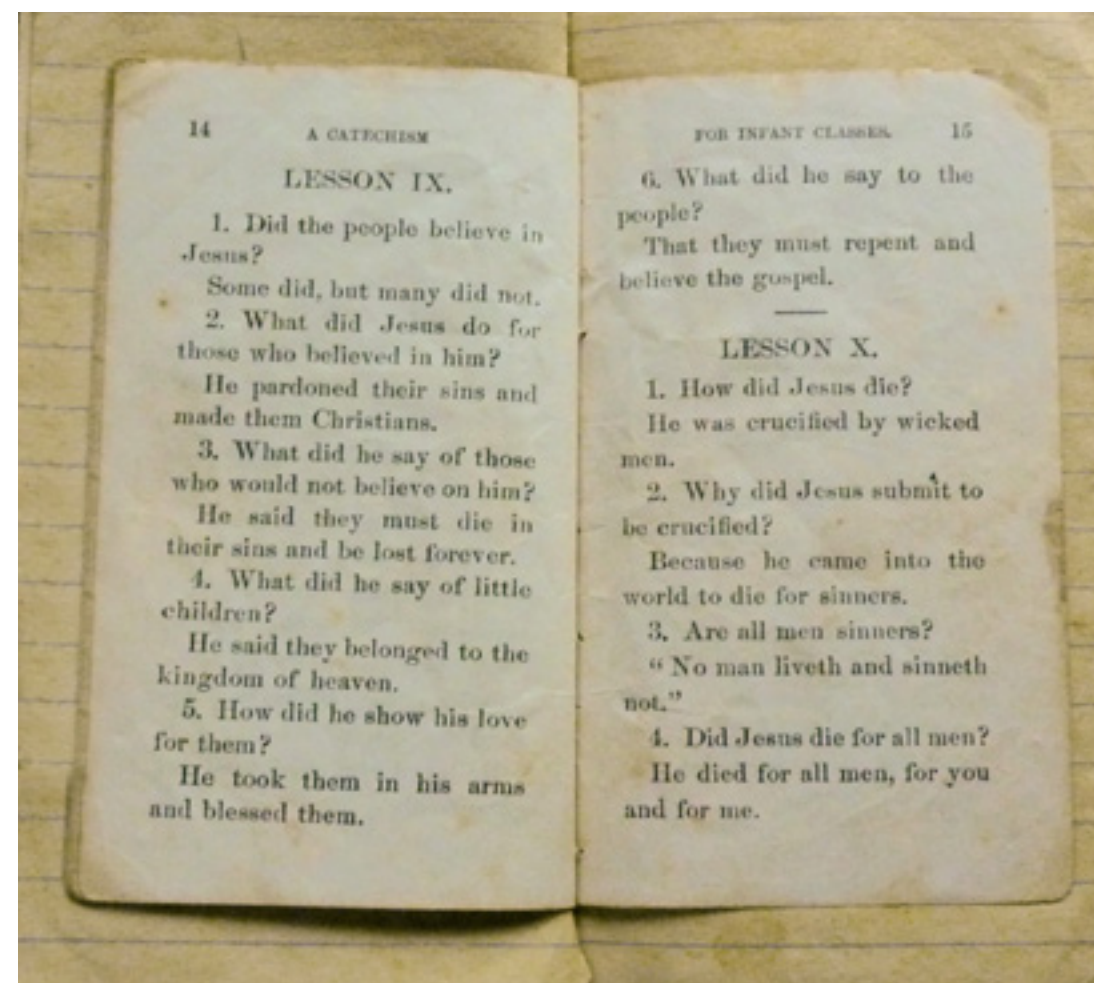
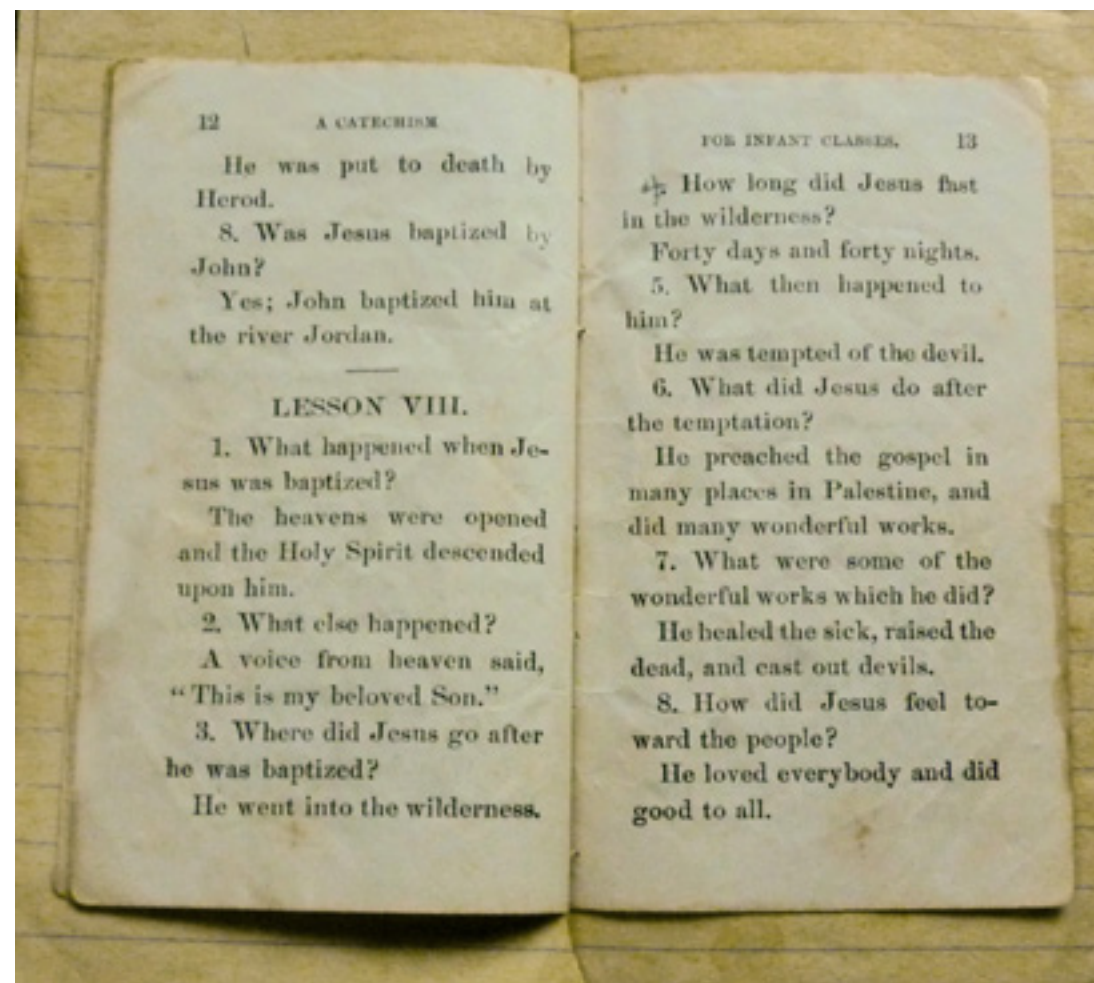












spring for their water needs. It was to become a three-room building with an outdoor toilet.

Some of the children walked to school and some rode in buggies. For me, it was a two mile walk. To tell a bit about the inside of the school, each room had a cloak closet and a lunch shelf. The coats and overshoes were put in the cloak closets in cold weather and the lunches were put on the lunch shelf. Each child brought his own lunch in a "dinner-bucket" and drank from the same dipper. There was a blackboard in each room, each desk had an opening top and were bolted to the floor. The playground was in front of the school and it was just dirt with no equipment. During the time I attended, we had no electricity. The school was heated by a wood stove located in the center of the room. When the children arrived in the winter, they were quite cold. They would warm themselves by the fire and go to their seats. Those sitting next to the stove would always get too hot and those in the back of the room were too cold. Wood for the stove was brought in wagons, cut and stored in the wood shed. The building was cleaned daily by the students and teachers because there was no janitor. This

remained true until the school closed in the 1950's.

The first three teachers were Miss Florrie Mason, Miss Lizzie Wilson, and Miss Eva Baker. Had these women married while they were teaching, they would have lost their jobs. Later Miss Mason and Miss Baker were married and lived in the community. Miss Baker married Mr. Wheeler Ramsey and Miss Mason married Mr. E. L. Petty. Miss Mason and Miss Wilson lived in the farmers' homes and drove a horse and buggy back and forth to school each day. Miss Baker lived at her home and also drove a horse and buggy.

The main emphasis in lower grade subjects at Oakdale was Reading, Writing and Arithmetic. By the time you reached the eighth grade subjects were Reading, Writing (Penmanship), History, Latin, Arithmetic, English and Spelling.

In 1916 the enrollment was approximately 100 students in grades 1 through 8. This was the largest enrollment since the opening of the school. The three teachers at this time were Miss Lucy Alice Gillian, Miss Margaret Chocolate and Miss Sarah Hamlet. Other teachers at Oakdale in the 1920's and early 30's were Ms. Flora Belle Williams, Mary Barnes, Nelly Moorefield, Matty Morris, Ethelyn Gibson, Lorene Branch, Sally Baker, Mary Cocke, Elizabeth Donald, Cassie Dickerson and Leslie Ramsey.



In the early 1930's, eighth grade students were moved to Phenix High School leaving one room vacant. We used it for morning exercise. When Phenix High School was destroyed by fire they were forced to move once more to Aspen High School.

According to Mrs. Hamlet, Oakdale school's Physical Education equipment consisted of one bat and one ball. To entertain the children, they would play other school's ballgames. The other pupils would come in horse-drawn wagons.

She mentioned in an interview that a former teacher, Cassie Dickerson, who taught at Oakdale school in 1931-1932, was forced to have liquid soap. It was dispensed in oil cans due to health rules passed in the country. Those same health laws also required each child to be provided with their own drinking cup. The schools of Charlotte County had a state course of study which they had to follow. A county supervisor would visit the school often to be sure all regulations were carried out.

She had also been interested in Libraries and had this to say about the Oakdale library when she taught there. "There were 25 books in our library at the time. The way we got new books was by ordering them from the Richmond Library. We only had to pay for the postage on them. They were mailed to us at the beginning of each school year and we sent them back to school when school closed. We kept them in good shape in our two fine bookcases and there was never any hesitation about sending them to us." She then mentioned that salaries were very low at an average of \$300.00 a year. Some teachers taught for a few days at the end of the year without pay to make the school year complete. At this time boys and girls south of the school rode the bus and those north of the school walked.

She then told stories of how the children would give plays and charge admission. The parents and other people would come and pay to see the plays. This money was then used for school expenses. When money was scarce, benches were made from planks laid on some rocks. The community league, later the P.T.A., helped to raise money for the school and grounds. Teachers beautified the school by buying shrubs and plants. At one time they got eight shrubs for \$4.00. Some of these boxwoods live today.

Some of the teachers from 1935's to the 1940's were Ms. Ester Pugh, Gertrude Nelson, Virginia Blaxton, Ethel Clowdes, Carolyn Andrews, Beatrice Driskill, Beulah Hamlet and Ethelyn Gibson Jordon.

The school was still heated by a wood stove from the late 1930's and 40's. Water was obtained at the pump in the yard and outdoor toilets were still in use. Grades 1 through 3 were in one room and 4 through 7 in another. Ballgames were still played with other schools, the physical education equipment still consisted of a ball and bat, and the library was still quite small. In the 1940's 4-H Club meetings were held in the school. Miss Kimbrough, was the first teacher of Bible in the public schools of Charlotte County and taught the subject at Oakdale.

The Federal Government made it possible for the hot lunch program. Lunches at this time were 5¢ each. The Federal Government gave schools surplus food and matched the cost of the lunch. Since most children couldn't afford the nickel for lunch, they would barter, corn, beans, tomatoes, eggs, meat and other things to pay for their lunch. By this time the third room had been turned into a lunchroom which was furnished with homemade tables and chairs. The first cook was Mrs. Pollard and the last cook was Mrs. Bernice Collins.

Sometime near 1950 the 7th grade was moved to Bethel which started the beginning of the end for Oakdale School. A chapter of life in our community seemed to change. For so long the school had been a part of the people's social circle and a center of life. As for me, I eventually moved onto Randolph Henry High School. Mrs. Elizabeth Fry and Mrs. Julia Baggart were the last teachers at Oakdale.

The Oakdale School building was sold by the School Board at public auction and purchased by M. C. Pillow. Mr. Pillow. It was later sold it to Dick Moblin and his widow lives there today.

ARMY LIFE



Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Married Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Cecil is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Photo taken in 1945, when stationed in Germany, serving in the Army during WWII. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate.

My uncle Owen Rushin, who lived in Hampton Virginia, found a job for me in Newport News Virginia working for Railway Express. At 17 years old I was not allowed to drive the trucks so I was a helper. One truck there was a 1928 Model Ford that was used to haul fish and other perishable items. The old fellow that was driving that Ford lost his driving permit and the boss allowed me drive it. I deliver the perishable items and after a short while they gave me a route of my own driving a Dodge truck.

I drove that truck until I was 18 years old and then I had to register for the draft in Hampton, Virginia. Mrs. Roundtree was there when I registered and I mentioned to her that I sure would like to go in the Navy instead of the Army. She told me if I would sign up for immediate service she was sure I could get in the Navy so that's what I did. She gave me a ticket for the trip to Richmond for my physical.

When I arrived in Richmond, a big sign was penned on my back that said rush. I went through



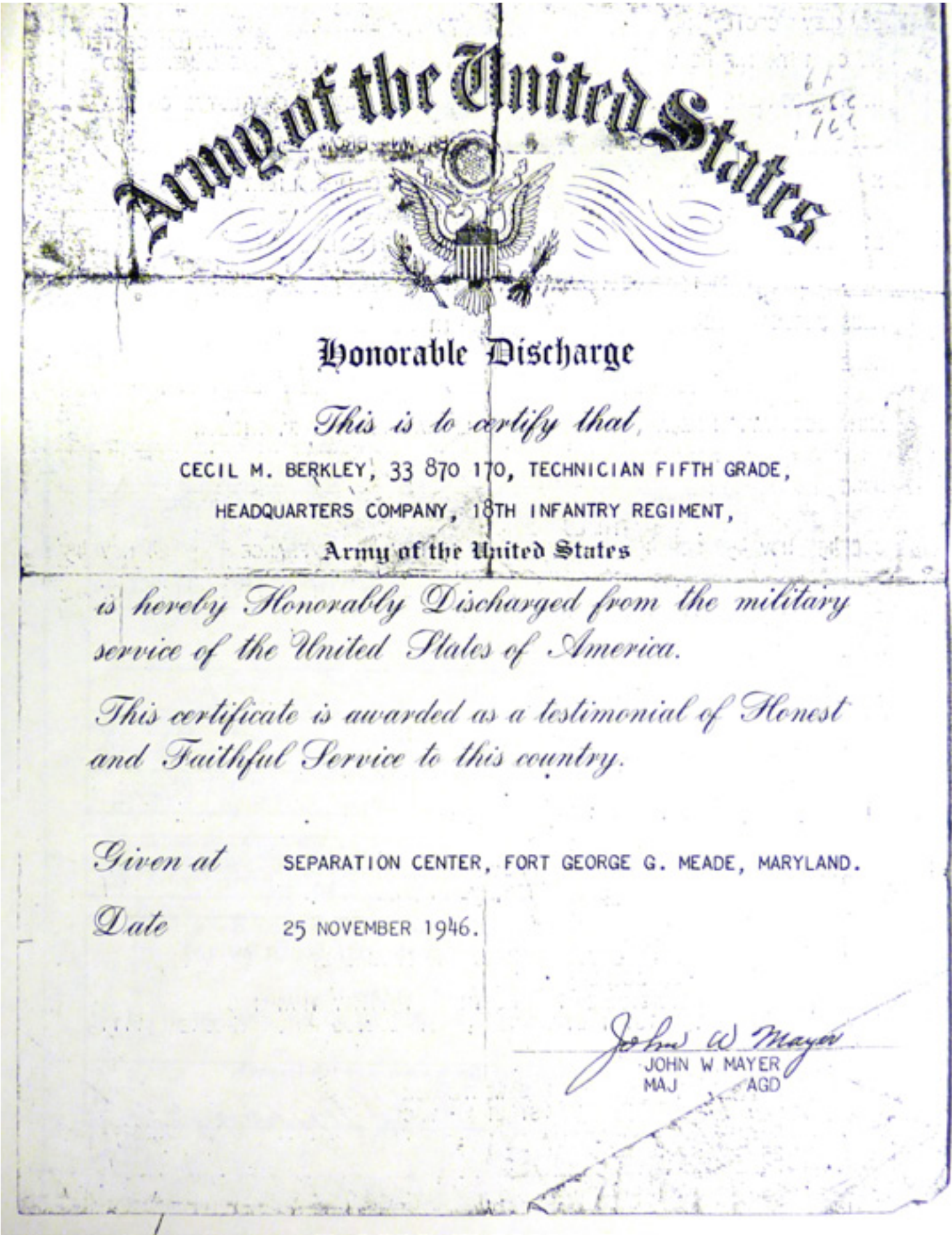
the different lines for that physical and was taken from the back of the line to the front at each place. Late in the evening I arrived at the last place where I was asked if I would like to be in the Navy or Army while at the same time he was stamping Army on the paper. That night I was put on a bus and was sent to Fort Meade Maryland. Next morning at Fort Meade I was in a line for shots and I think I was given two in each arm. Those needles sure didn't feel like they do today, it was like getting stuck with a nail! It was a very hot day and we were sent out in the yard for mail call. I knew I wouldn't receive any mail since no one knew where I was but I still had to stand out in the sun anyway. I felt I was getting sick and sat down like a lot of the other soldiers did. A Lieutenant in charge made every one stand up and I could feel I was going to faint. The soldier behind me told me he would catch me as I went down which he did. When I was coming to I could see soldiers laying every where. I also saw and heard that Captain giving the Lieutenant the H word and told him to do something for the soldiers that had fainted. After I had fainted I had a severe head ache and a Sgt. came up to me and told me to report for K P that evening. I was still very sick and my job that night was to pick the eyes out of potatoes, all night. I was at Fort Meade just a couple of days then put on a train to Camp Wheeler, Georgia to start my basic training which lasted 17 weeks. It was very, very hot through the months of July, August and September. I didn't know at the time but we were training to invade Japan. While I was at Camp Wheeler the atomic bomb was dropped on Japan and they surrendered. One of the soldiers at Camp Wheeler was jumping for joy and said his father was working at where the atomic bomb was made for a few years and didn't know what he was working on.

**Jobs and Pleasure in Germany**

Shortly after arriving in Germany I went Deer hunting with some soldiers. It was at night, I didn't carry a gun yet those soldiers shot and killed one. It was just right in town and cooked at the mess hall. There I ate a lot of deer meat along with the other soldiers.

My first responsibility in Germany was as a truck driver. After a short time I was asked if I would like to be interviewed for a job looking after the staff Officers Quarters. This involved supervising the cooking and cleaning until work was completed. Most of the work was done by Polish and German women. This home was like a Castle. The food was delivered here by truck. Sometimes there would be a few water melons and you can guess who ate those!!! The truck was guarded at all times as the hungry Germans would occasionally run up to it, steal some food off the truck and run. Just about all the food they had were potatoes and only salt to put on them. No butter!

Then I was in the MP'S for a while. I was sent to Garmisch, Germany to guard some German prisoners so they could make and paint signs. I would have to go get them each morning from the Penitentiary and take them back each evening. This was a fine bunch of German prisoners. Didn't take me long to see that you couldn't run them away as they liked all the food they wanted. Also prisoner at the Penitentiary was Max Schmeling, the German boxer. It was for something that he did for the Germans for food but I never saw him. I had been guarding those prisoners for a while and one day the Company Commander drove up and told me that he thought I had gone AWOL and that I was to be there just a couple days. Garmisch was ski town and the first time I had ever seen any ski jumping. I



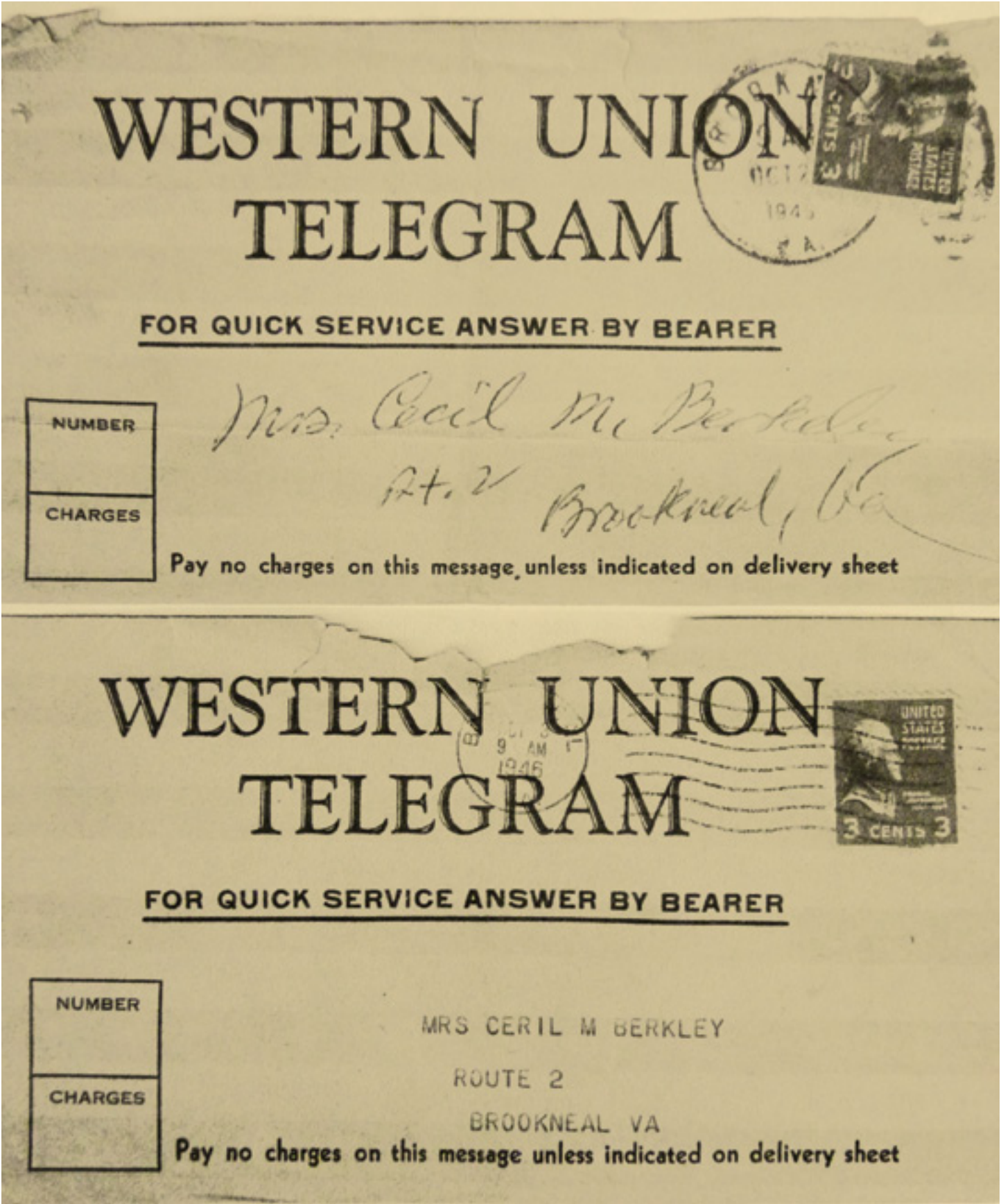




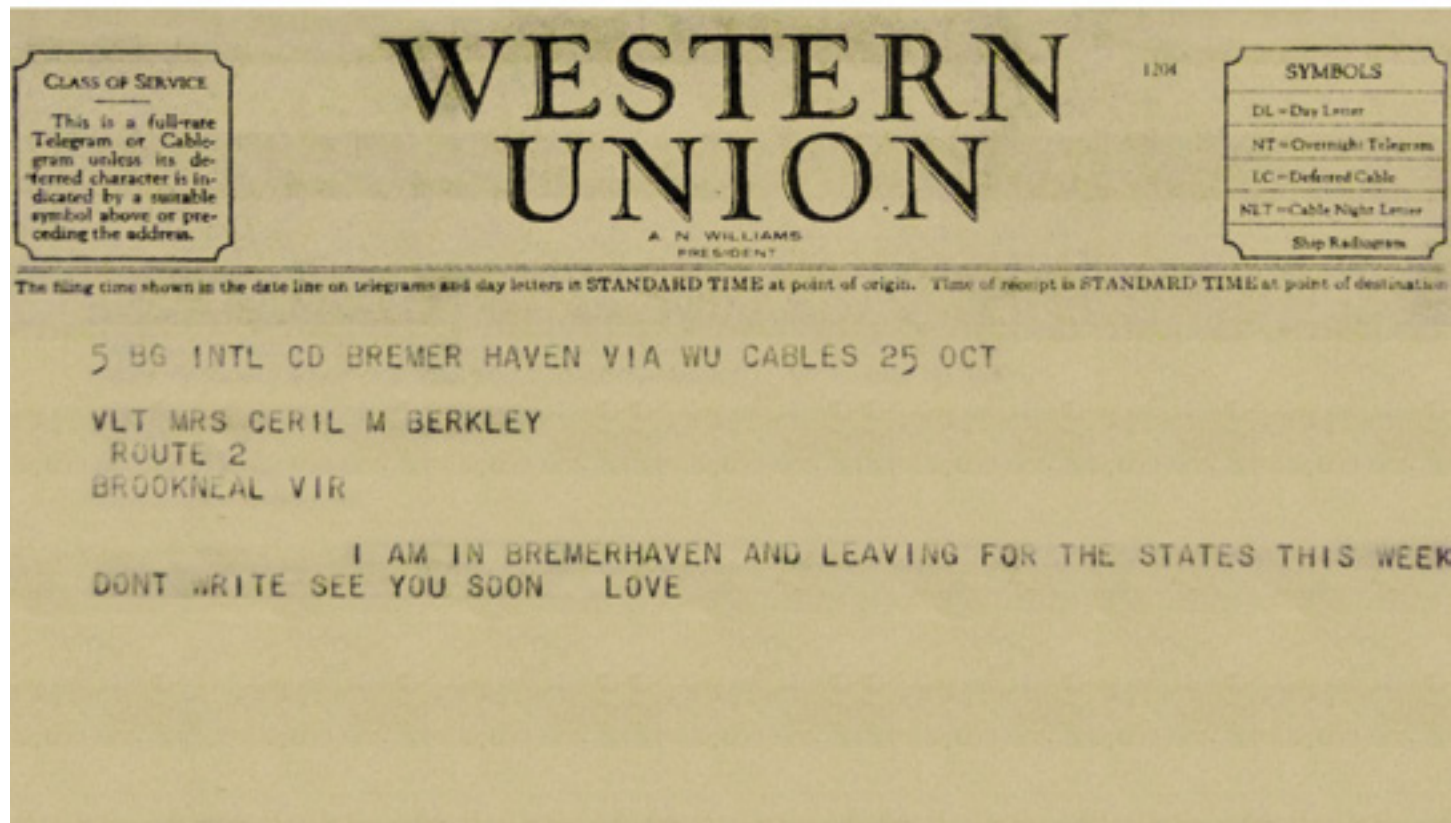
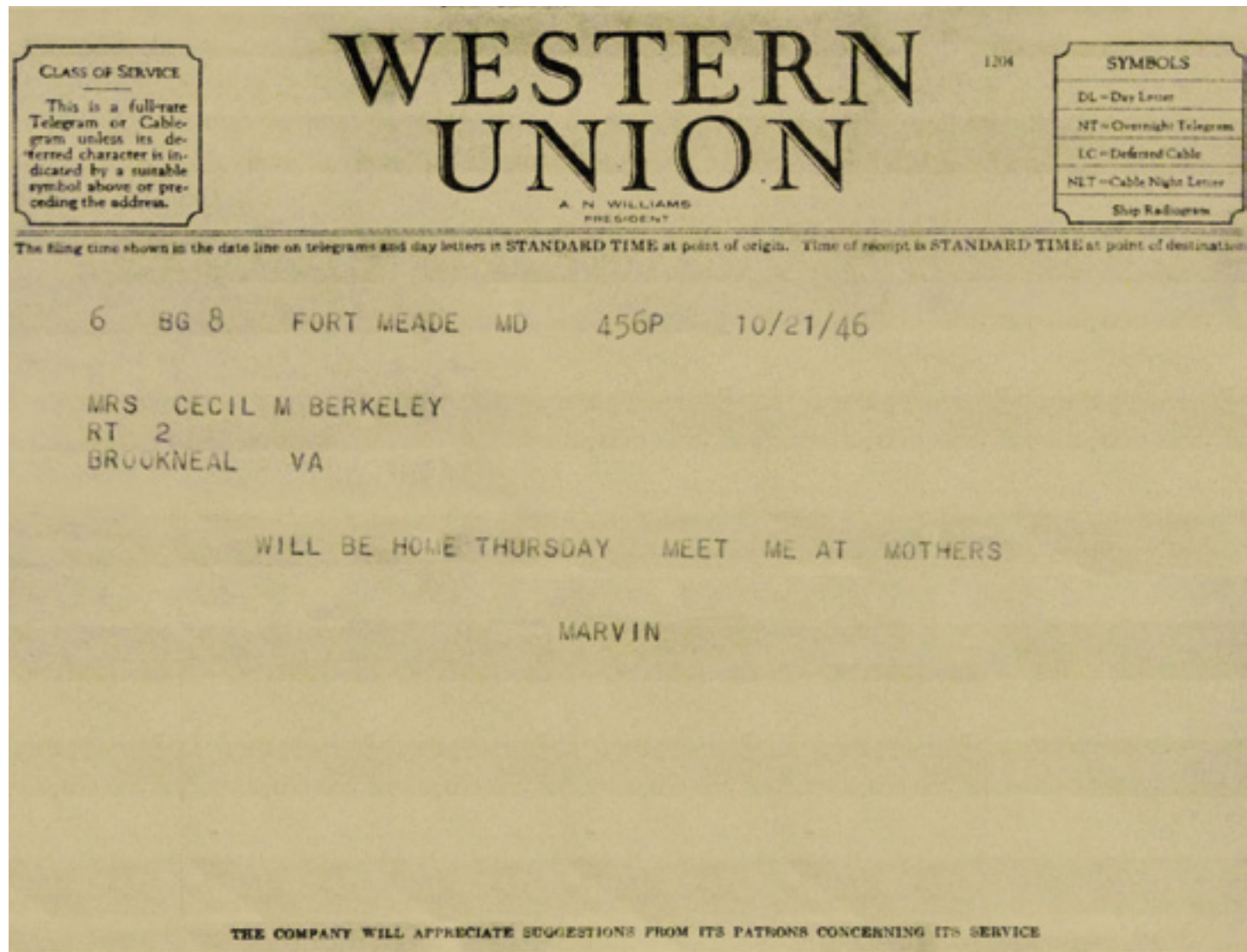




Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. on a local's horse while serving in Germany during WWII







## CECIL MARVIN BERKLEY, SR., MARRIES MARION ELIZABETH SLATE

I met Marion in the early forty's at a prayer meeting at Falling River Baptist Church. Rev. R. S. Booker was the pastor. My very best friend, Zane Elder, took me to church that night to meet Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927. Daughter of Willie Vest Slate (1905-1953) and Mabel Holt (1908-1972). That night at Falling River Church was my first date and from that night I was planning for her to be my wife and I never had another girlfriend. I knew she was the most beautiful girl I had ever seen and after sixty six years of marriage, I think she still is. Before I left for the Army I bought Marion a diamond wedding ring. She knew she could not let her parents know she had them because they were planning on her going to college to become a nurse. We had planned to marry after I was discharged from service but when I came



home on leave we decided to marry before I left for Germany. I married Marion Elizabeth Slate November 3, 1945 in Rustburg Virginia by Rev. J.W. Marsh.

After a short honeymoon, I had to report to Camp Pickett, Virginia and from there sent to Newport News where I was left on a ship (The West Point). In about seven days I landed in LaHarve, France and from there I traveled to Germany on the train, riding in box and coal cars. After I returned home Marion and I decided to farm.

Our first son Cecil Marvin Berkley, Jr. was born 4 Sep 1947 and second son Kenneth Wayne Berkley was born 31 July 1948.

We attended Falling River Baptist Church where I made a profession of faith in June 1947 and was baptized by Rev. R. S. Booker in Brookneal Baptist



Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate. Married Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Cecil is son Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton.





William Vest Slate born 2 Jun 1905 Campbell Co., Va. & died 5 Dec 1953 at Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg, Va. Married Mabel Holt born 18 Jul 1908 Campbell Co., Va. & Died 10 Aug 1972 at Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg, Virginia. William is son of William & Anna Slate. Mabel is daughter of Elbert & Alice Holt.

worked there a while and then applied and was hired to work for the Post Office in Falls Church, Virginia.

Now Marion has always been a stay at home mom but with those two boys, born eleven months apart, it was all the job she needed. Marion held many jobs at First Baptist Church of Woodbridge, Virginia. She took the Dale Carnegie Course “ How To Win Friends And Influence People” and takes pride in her membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution. Marion has always had a talent for writing such things as letters, cards and other correspondence. She was always good at looking after our finances a great home maker and encourager.

Church. Marion had made a profession of faith as a young girl 31 July 1938 and baptized in a farm pond by Rev. R. S. Booker.

We moved to Northern Virginia in 1952 and I worked as a carpenter. A good friend of ours, Kenneth Cabaniss, was a building superintendent in Vienna, Virginia and he gave me a job. I



Marion Elizabeth Slate (first on left) born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Married Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate. Cecil is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Marion is holding her son Kenneth Wayne Berkley Sr. born 31 Jul 1948 Guggenheimer Hospital Lynchburg Virginia. First married Dayna Marie Howard born ca 1949 Woodbridge Virginia. Second married India Mae Salmons born 18 May Floyd Co., Virginia. Dana is daughter of Douglas & Shirley Howard. India is daughter of Howard & Elizabeth Salmons. Standing next to Marion is Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton born 14 Mar 1901 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Dec 1984 at Lynchburg General Hospital Lynchburg Virginia. First married Clarence Radford Berkley born 3 Nov 1899 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Jun 1977. Clarence is son of Charles Radford & Anna Tonia Berkley. Second married John Willie Rush born 16 Jun 1891 Appomattox Co., Va. & died 26 Feb 1951. John is son of Charlie & Rhoads Rush. Third married Jessie James Shelton born 24 Sept 1891 Halifax Co., Va. & died 15 May 1960 Melrose Va. Jessie is son of James & Emma Shelton. Lillie is holding Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr. born 4 Sep 1947 Lynchburg General, Hosp., Lynchburg, Va. First married Gyvel Zenia Young born 18 Mar 1948 Copenhagen Denmark. Second married Catherine Ellen Slover born 12 Feb 1946 Oneida N.Y. Gyvel is daughter of Arthur & Gyvel Young. Catherine is daughter of John & Leone W. Slover.



Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. (first on left) born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Married Marion Elizabeth Slate (on far right) born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Cecil is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate. Marvin his holding his son Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr. born 4 Sep 1947 Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg, Va. First married Gyvel Zenia Young born 18 Mar 1948 in Copenhagen Denmark. Second married Catherine Ellen Slover born 12 Feb 1946 in Oneida N.Y. Gyvel is daughter of Arthur & Gyvel Young. Catherine is daughter of John & Leone W. Slover.

We don’t have an elaborate home here but a Christian home.

While living in Brookneal we had our first son, Cecil Marvin, Jr. who worked as an electrician.

He married his first wife Gyvel Zenia Young 31 July 1966 in Rockville Maryland and they have 3 children.

(1) Gyvel Dagmar (we call her Dalma) Berkley born 1 Jan 1986 who wed Danny John Koester II and they have one son Danny John Koester III. When they divorced, Dalma and son Danny Koester III, ended up in Key West, Florida where he met and married Jessica Williams. Dalma has a business there as a Graphic Designer called Printing, Signs and Designs.

(2) Cecil M. Berkley III born 25 December 1968 has one daughter named Rachel Ann Berkley. She is adopted by John and Mary Kay Snyder and now she is Rachel Ann Snyder. We are lucky that she

We were living in Herndon, Virginia at this time so we moved our church membership from Falling River Baptist to Herndon Baptist, then later we moved our membership to First Baptist Church in Woodbridge, Virginia.

I retired as the Postmaster of Woodbridge, Virginia June 25, 1982 and we move back to Hat Creek, Virginia where we now live. On our first Sunday back we moved our membership to our home church Falling River Baptist.

*While living in Brookneal we had our first son. Soon followed by another!*



Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr. (shown on right) born 4 Sep 1947 Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg, Va. First married Gyvel Zenia Young born 18 Mar 1948 Copenhagen Denmark. Second married Catherine Ellen Slover born 12 Feb 1946 Oneida N.Y. Cecil is son of Cecil Marvin & Marion Elizabeth Berkley. Gyvel is daughter of Arthur & Gyvel Young. Catherine is daughter of John & Leone W. Slover. Kenneth Wayne Berkley Sr. (shown on left) born 31 Jul 1948 Guggenheimer Hospital Lynchburg Virginia. First married Dayna Marie Howard born ca 1949 Woodbridge, Virginia. Second married India Mae Salmons born 18 May Floyd Co., Virginia. Kenny is son of Cecil Marvin & Marion Elizabeth Berkley. Dana is daughter of Douglas & Shirley Howard. India Mae is daughter of Howard & Elizabeth Salmons.





Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr. born 4 Sep 1947 Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg, Va. First married Gyvel Zenia Young born 18 Mar 1948 in Copenhagen Denmark. Second married Catherine Ellen Slover born 12 Feb 1946 in Oneida N.Y. Cecil is son of Cecil Marvin & Marion Elizabeth Berkley. Gyvel is daughter of Arthur & Gyvel Young. Catherine is daughter of John & Leone W. Slover. He is shown here with his dog Shep in 1954.

has always been in the family fold.

(3) Rebecca Ann Berkley born 25 September 1971 wed Dimitrios S Mastoras "Jim", 7 August 1999 in Albany New York. They have since divorced.

She second married Greg Valker on April 7, 2011. Rebecca and Jim have one daughter Alexandra Elizabeth Mastoras "Lexi" and they live in Leesburg, Virginia.

Cecil M. Berkley, Jr. wed second to Catherine Ellen Slover 17 August 1985 in Falling River Baptist Church Brookneal, Virginia. Cathie is greatly loved, appreciated and respected by her step-children. She took them in as teenagers and accepted them as her own, even as grown adults, she still does.

Our second child, Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Sr., was born on 31 July 1948 at Guggenheimer Hospital in Lynchburg, Virginia. He passed away on 31 August 2011 at Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg, Virginia. His burial was held at Stafford Memorial Park, Stafford, Virginia.

Kenneth was an electrician and had been employed by the U.S. Government working at the pentagon. He retired after twenty five years there. When Ken was eleven years old, while hunting, a gun kicked him in the eye and he lost his sight in that eye. Never have I ever heard him say he couldn't do something because he wasn't able to see. Kenny was an avid fisherman and hunter who also loved his garden.

His obituary published 9/2/2011 read as follows -

Kenneth Wayne Berkley Sr. "Kenny"

Kenneth Wayne Berkley Sr. of Stafford County, Va., 63 passed away in Mary Washington Hospital Fredericksburg, Va., August 31 2011. He was born July 31 1948 in Guggenheimer Hospital Lynchburg Virginia. Son of Cecil Marvin Berkley. Sr. and Marion Slate Berkley and one brother Cecil M. Berkley, Jr. and wife (Cathie). He is survived by his loving wife India "Mae"; Salmon Berkley. Children Kenneth Wayne Berkley Jr. of Pennsylvania and wife (Melissa) and Kevin Russell Berkley and wife (Ana); step children Jerry Branscome and Brenda Sullivan; Grand children Alexandria Victoria, Dayna Fantina, Sophia Marion, Kadajah Camila, Taylor Rayne, Jade Lorina and Kenneth Wayne Boulvy. Kenny was Electrician about all his life and the last 25 years worked at the Pentagon where he retired. . Kenny liked a simple life he liked hunting,

fishing, raising chickens, rabbits, and working in his garden. When he was younger he loved his horses and used them to plow with and pulling his wagon. His last horse was a quarter horse named Boxer which he raised from a colt. After retirement Kenny had an accident 21 Oct 2006 which almost took his life and was in and out of the hospital the rest of his life. Kenny made a profession of faith at a very young age in the First Baptist Church in Woodbridge, Virginia. Received family and friends Sept 5, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Mullins and Thompson Funeral Service Stafford Chapel. A grave side service was conducted at 11 a.m. Tuesday Sept. 6, in Stafford Memorial Park

He first married Dayna Marie Howard. Dayna was born in 1949 in Woodbridge, Virginia. Her parents were Douglas Howard and Shirley Bryant married in 1964 in Woodbridge, Virginia. Kenneth and Dayna had 2 sons.

(1) Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Jr., born 15 Jun 1965 in Alexandria, Virginia. He wed Melissa Lynn Lane 5 Aug 1992. Melissa was born 15 September 1972 in New York. Her parents were John Lane and Sheila Hernandes. Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Jr. and Melissa have 2 daughters.

(1) Taylor Rayne Berkley born 13 Mar 1994 in Fredericksburg, Virginia

(2) Jade Lorina Berkley born 22 Dec 2002 in Mary Washington Hospital, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

(3) Kenneth Wayne Boulvy born in 2008 in Tobyhanna, Pennsylvania.

(2) Kevin Russell Berkley born 3 Oct 1972 in Alexandria, Virginia. Wed first Evelyn Sherille Knowles born 16 July 1971 in Virginia. Her parents were Kerry A. Knowles and Consuelo Alvarez. Kevin and Evelyn have one daughter.

(1) Alexandria Victoria Berkley "Alex" born 18 Aug 1991 in Fredericksburg, Virginia  
Kevin Russell Berkley second wed Ana Janet Gonzolaz and they have 3 children.

(1) Dayna Fantina Berkley born 4 Nov 2002 at Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

(2) Sophia Marion Berkley born September 2003

(3) Kadajah Camila Berkley born 16 September 2005 at Mary Washington Hospital in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Sr. second married India Mae Salmons 19 Feb 1990.





Me with some of my Great Grandchildren. From left to right, Jade Lorina Berkley, Kadajah Camila Berkley, Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., Alexandra Elizabeth Mastoras, Sophia Marion Berkley, Taylor Rayne Berkley and Dayna Fatina Berkley.



From left to right, Cecil Marvin Berkley, Rebecca Ann Berkley and Kevin Russell Berkley.



Wife of Kevin Russell Berkley, Ana Janet Gonzolaz.



From left to right, Carolyn Reeves Mason, Jade Lorina Berkley, Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Jr., Rebbecca Ann Berkley, Lurlee Ann (Jordan) Slate and William "Billy" Henry Slate.



Jade Lorina Berkley and her sister Taylor Rayne Berkley.





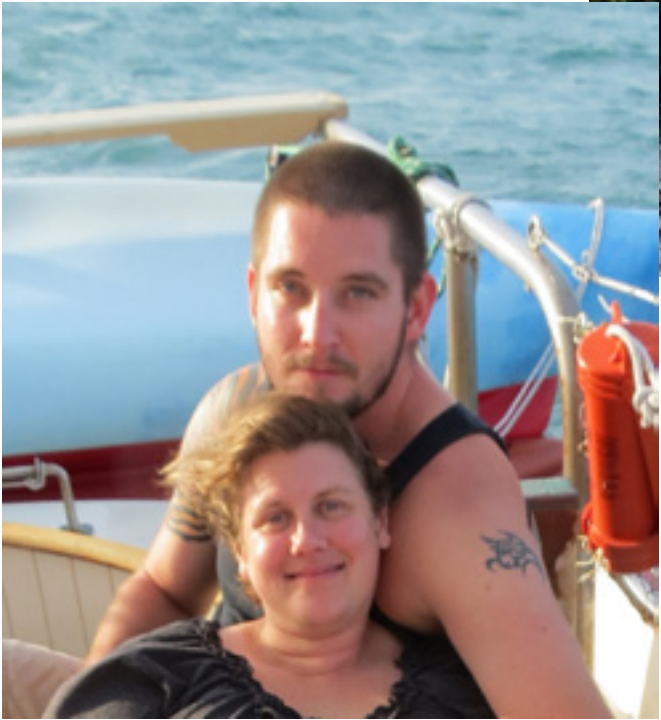
From left to right, Rebbeca Ann Berkley, Rachel Ann Berkley, Alexandra Elizabeth Mastoras, Cecil Marvin Berkley III, Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. and Catherine Ellen (Slover) Berkley.



From left to right, Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., Marion Elizabeth (Slate) Berkley and Cecil Marvin Berkley III.



In the center is the second wife of Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Sr., India Mae Salmons.



Danny John Koester III and his wife Jessica Koester.



Gyvel Dagmar (we call her Dalma) Berkley



**FAMILY MEMBERS OF  
MARION ELIZABETH (SLATE) BERKLEY**

**ELBERT HORTON HOLT**

Elbert Horton Holt was born in Campbell County 23 March 1872 son of Charles Calvin Holt and Sarah “Sallie” Tucker. Elbert died 21 Dec 1933. On 19 December 1894 wed Alice Florence Marshall in Charlotte County VA by Rev. D S Hubble Alice Florence Marshall who was born 5 July 1874 died 4 April 1956 and both are buried in Falling River Baptist Church Cemetery. Elbert and Florence had the following children. (1) Eva Mae b 7 Feb.1896 Died 9 July 1896, (2) Charles Horton Born 11 July 1897 Died 7 Jan. 1979 wed Gladys Cook No children,(3) Dewey Reeves Holt Born 11 Oct. 1900 died 10 Apr. 1932 wed Ruth Terry 5 children Harold, Dorothy, Norris, Johnny, and Charles, After the death of Dewey. Ruth and family moved to the Dodd farm in Charlotte County. (4) Loyd Baxter born 4 Apr 1902 Died 21 June 1902, (5) Innis Martin Born 28 Aug 1903 Died 2 Apr 1978 wed first wed Louise Sandidge second Susie Nash no children, (6) Annie Ruth Born 28 Feb 1906 Died 5 Nov 1973 wed James A Coleman one son James A Jr. , (7) Mabel Born 18 Jul 1908 Died 10 Aug 1972 wed



Elbert Horton Holt (2nd from left) born 23 Mar 1872 Campbell Co., Va. & died 21 Dec 1933 at home in Campbell Co., Va. He is son of Charles Calvin & Sarah Ann Tucker “Sallie” Holt. Elbert married Alice Florence Marshall (5th from left) born 5 Jul 1874 Campbell Co., Va. & died 4 Apr 1956 at home in Campbell Co., Va. Alice is daughter of Charles Richard & Mary H. Hunter. They are shown here with 5 of their 8 children. Innes Martin (1st on left) born 28 Aug 1903 Campbell Co., Va. & died 2 Apr 1978 Lynchburg Gen. Hosp. Innes married Louise Sandidge born 19 Nov 1907 Lynchburg Va.& died 15 Apr 1965 Lynchburg Virginia. Louise is daughter of Edgar & Ella Sandidge. Charles Horton (3rd from left) born 11 Jul 1897 Campbell Co., Va. & died 7 Jan 1979 at home. Charles married Gladys Cook born 8 Oct 1899 Richmond Va. & died 18 Jan 1981 Lynchburg Gen. Hosp.

Gladys is daughter of Thomas & Mary Cook. Annie Ruth (4th from left) born 28 Feb 1906 Campbell Co., Va. & died 5 Nov 1973 Anaheim Ca. Annie married James Abbott Coleman Sr. born 27 May 1906 Appomattox Co., Va. & died 21 Nov 1986 Richmond KY. James is son of James & Mary Coleman. Mable Holt (in the lap of Alice Florence) born 18 Jul 1908 Campbell Co., Va. & died 10 Aug 1972 Va., at Bapt. Hosp., Lynchburg, Va. Mable married William Vest Slate born 2 Jun 1905 Campbell Co., Va. & died 5 Dec 1953 of Pneumonia at Lynchburg Gen., Hosp. Lynchburg, Virginia. William is the son of William Henry & Anna Bell Slate. Mable is the mother of Marion Elizabeth Slate Berkley. Dewey Reeves (7th from left) born 11 Oct 1900 Campbell Co., Va. & died 10 Apr 1932 at Memorial Hosp. Lynchburg, Va. Dewey married Ruth Alice Terry born 27 Jan 1897 Campbell Co., Va. & died 2 Nov 1973 at Va. Bapt. Hosp., Lynchburg, Virginia. Ruth is daughter of Joe & Louise Terry. Other children not shown are Eva May, Loyd Baxter & Pauline.

William Vest Slate. They had 3 children Marion wed Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr., Carolyn wed John Marvin Mason and William Henry wed Lurlee Jordan, and (8) Pauline Born 19 Jul 1913 Died 21 Dec 1997 wed Herbert Puckett no children. All are buried in Falling River Baptist Church Cemetery except Annie Ruth who is buried in a mausoleum in Anaheim Ca.

When Elbert and Florence were married Elbert was working on a farm in Charlotte County and it seemed he moved back and fourth between Charlotte and Campbell County renting farms until he bought a farm in Campbell County. His last child Pauline was born 1913 on the Old Smith Farm in Charlotte County now owned by Red Hill Plantation. This was a very close family and on Sunday especially setting around the dinner table laughing and telling old stories.

My wife, Marion, told me that she was six years old when her grandfather Holt died, but she still remembers the times she rode in the wagon with him as Old Maude pulled it. He would put the brakes on that wagon going down hill. Her cousin James Coleman usually rode with them. When her sister Carolyn was born grandpa came every day and held her and called her “Little She”. She also remembers him setting at the table reading his bible. Remembering when he died at 8:15 pm, some one rang the dinner bell. Her father, Vest, slipped his feet in his shoes and ran as fast as he could because he knew when that bell rang other than meal time it was trouble.

The Paper Wrote;  
Mr. Holt who was a deacon in Falling River Church,was one of our most loyal, devoted, and consecrated Christian men. His hearty support and cooperation were invariably given to any and every movement which would mark the uplift and betterment of his fellow man. His devotion to his home and family, his cheerful disposition, his sympathetic interest in others and above all his sense of love and duty to his God combined in making his life and influence one that will live on and on in the hearts and lives of others. He realized clearly the responsibility enjoined upon him and his greatest pleasure was in the discharge of his known duties to others. His was a life well spent and no words could be more applicable and fitting to him than those of the poet when he said:

“Master, I’ve filled my contract  
Wrought in thy many lands;  
Not by my sins wilt thou judge me  
But by the work of my hands.

“Master, I’ve done thy bidding  
And the lights are low in the west;  
The long, long trail is over,  
Master,I’ve won it-rest.





Charles Calvin and Sarah Ann Tucker Holt. Great Grand Parents of Marion's and Parents of her Grand Father, Elbert Holt.



Charles Richard and Mary H. Marshall. Marion's Great Grand Parents and Parents of her Grand Mother, Alice Florence Marshall. Charles lost his leg in the Battle of Gettysburg 3 July 1863.



Eliza Clark with Grand Daughter. Eliza is the sister of Sarah Ann Tucker, Marion's Great Great Grand Parents. Eliza's Grand Daughter is Ellen Gordon Harvey.



2nd wife of Charles Calvin Holt, Queen Vashti Holt with Family. Queen is seventh from left. Her Daughter, Tommy Daisy is third from left. Tommy's husband, John Cardozer Williams is first from left. On the left of Queen is her Grand Son Oswald and her other Grand Son, Harry is on the right.



Anna Bell Daniel Slate. Marion's Grand Mother.



William Henry Slate. Marion's Grand Father.





Oster Kim Holt. Sister of Marion's Grand Father, Elbert Horton.



From left to right, Marion Elizabeth Slate, Norris Horton Holt and James Abbott Coleman, Jr. Marion is shown here with her cousins. Norris is the son of Dewey Reeves Holt, Dewey is the son of Marion's Grand Parents Elbert Horton Holt and Alice Florence Marshall. Next to Norris is James, the son of Annie Ruth Holt. Annie is the daughter of Elbert Horton Holt and Alice Florence Marshall.



Marions sixth grade class in 1941.





**MORE FAMILY PHOTOS OF THE BERKLEYS**



Back row from left to right, my wife Marion, my Father Clarence and me. Bottom left is my first son Cecil Marvin Berkley, Jr. and to the bottom right is my second son Kenneth Wayne Berkley. This photo was taken at the home of my Father in Tennessee.



My sons Kenneth Wayne Berkley and Cecil Marvin Berkley, Jr. are seated in the back.



Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. in May, 1956 with his sons Cecil and Kenny enjoying some time outdoors.





Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. in May of 1957 looking very smart in his uniform at Jefferson Village in Falls Church, Virginia



This photo was taken in December, 1959. From left to right are Elsie, Lillie Shelton (my mother), Lorena Pollard and Mary Elizabeth Mason.



My son Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., at 7 years old enjoying his new bike at Jefferson Village.

This photo was taken in December, 1959. From left to right are Lillie Shelton (my mother) with her mother Mary Elizabeth Mason and her sister and Elsie.







Me with my beautiful, loving and dedicated wife Marion on a summers day.



From left to right, Edward Ruben Peele, Jr., June Emily Peele (my sister), Charlie Peele and Edward Ruben Peele, Sr.



Back from left to right Edwin Clarence, me, bottom row of children, Charlie Peele, Kenny Berkley, Cecil Berkley and Eddie Peele. Charlie and Eddie are the children of my sister June.





This photo was taken in March, 1959. From left to right, Owen Rushin, Mary Elizabeth Mason (my Grandmother), Lorena, Grace, (my Aunt) and Lillie Shelton (my Mother).



From left to right, Mrs. Stevens, Joan Rushin, Elsie Rushin, Pearl Mason and George Russel Mason (my Uncle)





This photo was taken in 1960 and is the first home bought by Cecil Marvin and Marion Elizabeth (Slate) Berkley. By the time Cecil Marvin Berkley retired as Postmaster of Woodbridge, Virginia, many improvements were made and an extension was constructed on the fireplace side of the house. As a grandchild of Cecil and Marion I recall many wonderful moments in this house as I am sure my brother, sister and cousins would agree. Moments like Christmas, Easter, Anniversaries, Birthdays, tea parties with Grandma, washing the car and Grandpas colorful stories. My favorite is when Grandpa took the training wheels off my bike and some how convinced me that I would be ok and I was!

At home in Woodbridge, Virginia with sons 12 and 13. Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Cecil is shown here with his wife Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Cecil Sr. is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate. Also shown are their sons Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr. (shown on left) born 4 Sep 1947 Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg, Va. First married Gyvel Zenia Young born 18 Mar 1948 Copenhagen Denmark. Second married Catherine Ellen Slover born 12 Feb 1946 Oneida, N.Y. Gyvel is daughter of Arthur & Gyvel Young. Catherine is daughter of John & Leone W. Slover. Kenneth Wayne Berkley, Sr. (shown on right) born 31 Jul 1948 at Guggenheimer Hospital, Lynchburg, Va. First married Dayna Marie Howard born ca 1949 in Woodbridge Va. Second married India Mae Salmons born 18 in May Floyd Co., Va. Dana is daughter of Douglas & Shirley Howard. India is daughter of Howard & Elizabeth Salmons.



Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. in May of 1957 with his sons and family pet Shep at their home in Woodbridge, Virginia

This photo at our home in Woodbridge, Va. From left to right are my son Cecil Marvin Berkley, Jr., my mother Lillie Shelton, my son Kenneth Wayne Berkley .







Cecil Marvin Berkley on his front lawn in Woodbridge, Virginia with his father Clarence and his brother Clarence Edwin (first on left) Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Married Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate. (second on left & father of Cecil & Clarence Edwin) Clarence Radford Berkley born 3 Nov 1899 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Jun 1977. Married Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton born 14 Mar 1901 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Dec 1984 in Lynchburg Gen. Hospital Lynchburg Virginia. Clarence is son of Charles Radford & Anna Tonia Wood Lucado Berkley. Lillie is daughter of Lafayette Hale & Mary Elizabeth Mason. (third on left) Clarence Edwin Berkley born 25 Mar 1930 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Clarence first married Virgie Rowland born ca 1932 & died 1 May 1997 near Fredericksburg Virginia. Virgie is daughter of J.B. & Eva Roland. He second married Nancy Strohl born 9 Sep 1935 North Hampton Pa. Nancy is daughter of Harold & Arlene Strohl. Cecil & Clarence Edwin are the sons of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton.



This picture with Grandma in bed is a very special picture of 5 generations Mary Elizabeth Mason, Lillie Shelton, Marvin Berkley Sr., Cecil Berkley, Jr., Gyvel Berkley. (first on right-in bed) Mary Elizabeth Ward Mason born 14 Mar 1873 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 13 Mar 1968 at the home of her daughter Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Mary is daughter of Joseph & Catherine Ward. Mary is second wife of Lafayette Hale Mason Jr. born 10 Oct 1854 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 14 Apr 1937 at home & son of Lafayette Hale "Fayette" & Judith Mason Sr.

(first on left of Mary & daughter of Mary & Clarence Radford Berkley) Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton born 14 Mar 1901 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Dec 1984 at Lynchburg General Hospital, Lynchburg Va. First married Clarence Radford Berkley born 3 Nov 1899 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Jun 1977. Clarence is son of Charles Radford & Anna Tonia Berkley. Second married John Willie Rush born 16 Jun 1891 Appomattox Co., Va. & died 26 Feb 1951. John is son of Charlie & Rhoada Rush. Third married Jessie James Shelton born 24 Sept 1891 Halifax Co., Va. & died 15 May 1960 Melrose Virginia. Jessie is son of James & Emma Shelton.



(second on left of Mary & son of Lillie & Clarence Radford Berkley) Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Married Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate.

(third on left of Mary & son of Cecil & Marion Berkley Sr.) Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr. born 4 Sep 1947 Lynchburg General Hosp., Lynchburg Va. First married Gyvel Zenia Young born 18 Mar 1948 Copenhagen Denmark. Second married Catherine Ellen Slover born 12 Feb 1946 Oneida N.Y. Cecil is son of Cecil Marvin & Marion Elizabeth Berkley. Gyvel is daughter of Arthur & Gyvel Young. Catherine is daughter of John & Leone W. Slover.

(in the arms of and the daughter of Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr.) Gyvel Dalma Berkley born 1 Jan 1968 Alexandria Virginia.

Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton born 14 Mar 1901 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Dec 1984 at Lynchburg Gen. Hospital Lynchburg Virginia. First married Clarence Radford Berkley born 3 Nov 1899 Charlotte Co., Va. & died 17 Jun 1977. Clarence is son of Charles Radford & Anna Tonia Berkley. Second married John Willie Rush born 16 Jun 1891 Appomattox Co., Va. & died 26 Feb 1951. John is son of Charlie & Rhoada Rush. Third married Jessie James Shelton born 24 Sept 1891 Halifax Co., Va. & died 15 May 1960 Melrose Virginia. Jessie is son of James & Emma Shelton. Lillie is the mother of June Emily, Cecil Marvin and Clarence Edwin Berkley.





In 1982 Cecil Marvin Berkley was presented with this award thanking him for over 30 years of dedicated postal service at the Woodbridge-Dale City Post Office. Shortly after that he and his wife Marion moved back to where it all started . . . Brookneal, Virginia!



Here I am posing with my award. By me on the bookshelf is a hand painted duck given to me as a gift by my long term secretary and friend Mrs. Zimmerman.







Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. gave this lovely locket to his wife Marion before heading back to his service in the Army overseas. As you can image, it meant a great deal to her while he was away. His letters stayed stored away but this locket stayed close to her heart at all times. One year her granddaughter Gyvel Dalma Berkley came by to have dinner with her new husband Danny John Koester II. Marion asked him what he thought would be a good gift for her granddaughter for Christmas. He suggested anything of sentimental value with a link to the family. That's when Marion felt it would be a good time to pass the locket along to her. Dalma was absolutely thrilled to receive it and thoroughly enjoys showing it to others and telling the story behind it. It is a very fragile piece of jewelry now and even though the image has faded, the memories are still very clear. Memories of what it was like to date Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr. and build a life with him. Memories of seeing him leave and return. Memories of starting a home and family under the love and guidance they both have in God and our savior Jesus Christ.



On our 50th wedding anniversary, Marion and I went on a Caribbean cruise and a couple days before we left Marion had a mammogram. We had mention to the nurse that we were leaving on the cruise and they said all was well but wanted to know what day we would be back. About 2 days after we returned home we received a call that said Marion had better come back as she needed a biopsy but every thing was ok. If the doctors would have told us that it would have ruined our trip.



Enjoying our 50th Wedding Anniversary Cruise on Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines.

My Granddaughter, Dalma, has this to say about her Grandmother:

I grew up around strong independent women, none more so than my Grandmother, Marion. Her faith in Jesus Christ and God gave her the power to cope with many of life's unexpected surprises. Such as marrying Cecil Marvin Berkley during a leave of absence from WWII. I still treasure the locket she gave me from their courtship. When he returned for good, she never looked back. 2 sons later she finds herself trying to keep up with 5 grandchildren, 11 great grandchildren and her first great, great grandchild due in about 7 months.

I loved how she would show me off every where she took me, actually, she still does. Especially First Baptist Church of Woodbridge, Virginia and Falling River Baptist Church in Brookneal, Virginia. Her tea parties were the best in town and her patience could rival that of the Pope's. Believe me, I know, I have tested it. Simple road trips were always an adventure and making rice crispies treats was the best. She let me make costumes out of her old curtains and make forts out of her lawn chairs. In doing so she showed me how much it means for one person to care for another. Something that motivates me to do the same in everything I do everyday never forgetting to end it with a prayer.

If there is one simple lesson I continue to learn from my Grandmother, it's simply . . . always do the right thing. *Always appreciating your love for me ~ Dalma Berkley*





(standing from left to right) Nancy Ruth Berkley born 27 Jun 1951 in Suvillan Co., TN. Donald Wade Berkley born 25 Apr 1943 (deceased) in Sullivan Co., TN. Mary Lou Berkley born 26 Mar 1944 in Sullivan Co., TN. Walter Wood Berkley born 11 Aug 1941 in Sullivan Co., TN. Blanch Lucille Berkley born 19 Jun 1939 in Sullivan Co., TN. Billy Wayne Berkley born 23 Sep 1946 in Sullivan Co., TN.  
(sitting from left to right) Betty Jean Berkley born 14 Jan 1937, Leona Mae Akins (2nd wife of Clarence Radford Berkley shown here on her 88th birthday with their children) born 28 Feb 1907. Daughter of Albert and Lorina Akins. Erma Lee Berkley born 10 Aug 1935 in TN.



Cecil Marvin Berkley III born 25 Dec 1968 Alexandria Virginia. Cecil married Diane Darling. Rebecca Ann Berkley "Becky" born 25 Sep 1971 Alexandria Virginia. Rebecca first married Dimitrios S. Mastoras on August 7, 1999. "Jim" was born 14 Jun 1973 NY. Jim is son of Speros & Wendy Mastoras. Rebecca second married Greg Valker on April 15th, 2011. Gyvel Dalma Berkley born 1 Jan 1968 Alexandria, Virginia. Gyvel married Danny John Koester III born ca 1966 Rock Island Illinois (now divorced). Danny is son of Danny & Mary Koester. Cecil, Rebecca & Gyvel are the children of Cecil Marvin Berkley Jr. and the Grand Children of Cecil Marvin & Marion Elizabeth Berkley.



Pauline and Herbert Puckett. Pauline was born in 1913 and was the last child of Erbert and Florence Holt



From left to right. Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell CO., Virginia. Married Cecil Marvin Berkley, Sr., born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Cecil is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Mason Berkley Rush Shelton. Next to Marion is Carolyn Reeves Slate born 22 Feb 1933 in Campbell Co., Virginia. Married John Marvin Mason born 16 Jul 1929 in Campbell Co., Virginia. John is son of John and Kate Mason. Next to Carolyn is William "Billy" Henry Slate born 23 Sep 1936 in Campbell Co., Virginia. Married Lurlee Ann Jordan born 27 Feb 1935 in Campbell Co., Virginia. Lurlee is daughter of James and Callie Jordan Sr. Marion, Carolyn and William are the children of William Vest & Mable Slate



Cecil Marvin Berkley Sr. born 19 Jun 1927 Charlotte Co., Virginia. Married Marion Elizabeth Slate born 12 Oct 1927 Campbell Co., Virginia. Cecil is son of Clarence Radford & Lillie Via Berkley. Marion is daughter of William Vest & Mable Slate.





**GRAVE MARKER DEDICATION**

On October 6th, 2012 a Marker Dedication was held in Brookneal Virginia for Thomas McDearman, a Revolutionary War Patriot from Virginia. Sergt. Thomas McDearman was born in Prince Edward County Va. 1758 and died March 28, 1838. Thomas served four different enlistment times during the war.

In 1775 where he marched to Williamsburg to join the First Virginia under Col. Patrick Henry, after three months they marched to Long (Great) Bridge to the assistance of Stevens and his militia units. He returned home and was given a recruiting commission, after gathering 14 to 15 recruits, he marched them north in December 1776 rendezvousing with the army near Philadelphia on the Schuylkill and was in several slight engagements with the British. Returning once again to Prince Edward County in the spring of 1777 and ended that duty. On or about April 1 1780 he was drafted in the militia while residing in Amelia County. He was transferred and served under lieutenant Dudley McDearman his father. They marched to Hillsborough, North Carolina and joined Gen. Steven’s Brigade. Marching on to Camden South Carolina, they joined MGen. Gates and were in Gate’s Defeat. His discharge was on 8 November 1780. Thomas was drafted again 1 April 1781 in the militia of Amelia County. He was marched to just below Richmond on the James River where the army was under Lafayette. Various services were

performed in the Richmond/Petersburg area. He returned home just eleven days and engaged as a volunteer in reconnoitering parties until July as Tarleton was passing through the county. Drafted again he was marched to Jamestown joining BGen. Lawson’s Brigade. They joined Gen. Washington for the siege of Yorktown where he saw the surrender of Cornwallis. Guard duty followed escorting prisoners to Fredericksburg. His discharge came there and his gun delivered up arriving home in Amelia the 1st week of November 1781.

At the time of his death in 1838 Thomas owned 300 acres located off of Patrick Henry Hwy. (Rt. 40) & Turnip Creek Road at the County Line Cross roads in Charlotte County Virginia. His son-n-law Claiborne Mason purchased land from the estate of Thomas and the cemetery is located on the property.

Thomas’s 5th Great Daughter Joan McDearmon Bennett a member of the Mary Blount DAR Chapter located in Maryville Tennessee applied for the VA Headstone for him and her husband Jerry Bennett and mother Martha McDearmon traveled from their home in Louisville Tennessee to install the headstone and be present for the Marker Dedication.

A special Thank you to Darwin and Dorothy Mason their son Monte and employee Kevin for all the work they did to clear the cornfield and help to install the headstone. And to Marvin Cecil Berkley for his research on Thomas McDearman and the cemetery. He is the 4th Great Grandson of Thomas McDearman and during the research that Joan Bennett did found Marvin Cecil to be a 4th cousin who met for the 1st time during the dedication.

The Dan River S.A.R. Chapter in Danville President Mr. Bernard Baker and the Regent from the James River D.A.R. Chapter Penny Swisher from Lynchburg conducted the Dedication. Joan McDearmon Bennett spoke about Thomas’s service and unveiled the headstone.

- Those in attendance were Marvin Cecil Berkley (4th Great Grandson),  
Joan McDearmon Bennett (5th Great Granddaughter)  
Jerry Bennett  
Martha McDearmon  
Bernard Mason  
Darwin & wife Dorothy  
Carole & Carroll Jones  
Connie Jo & Keith Jones  
Steve Mason
- Bernard Baker-S.A.R  
Penny Swisher-D.A.R.





### REBECCA ANN BERKLEY

Ain't No Mountain High Enough for Rebecca Ann Berkley. I have yet to see one curve ball in life that can knock my little sister from it! I believe her first challenge in life was falling from a tree house. Extending out one arm to break the fall, she broke her wrist. An infection set in after the surgery and she had to endure a stay of approximately 6 months at Potomac Hospital before we could welcome her back home. It took years and another surgery for the break to operate as best as it could under current medical standards. All the same, in my opinion, it's a great improvement. The same could be said for the spirit of my little sister. She was caught in the undertow of our parents divorce and ended up in Texas before coming back home for good. Seeing her again after so long reminded me of memories not so distant at the time. We can honestly say that

as children we never had a bad birthday or holiday. All our Halloween costumes were made by hand by my mother with great detail and creativity. Every Easter Basket was the rival of the neighborhood. Every Christmas you would have thought Jesus was at our house!

Rebecca started her adult life as a waitress and now works at the FBI offices. Very impressive for someone that needed to find her own way. Guiding her was her love for God and Jesus as well as her family. She is forever trying to improve herself and her education. She is not just my little sister, she is my best friend.

I must say her best contribution to this world is simply put . . . her daughter Lexi. I'm not kidding when I say that this child waited for me to arrive before she made her entrance into this world. You see, traveling from Key West, Florida to Virginia can be a bit challenging. Especially on a budget. I was late due to travel issues but this child held on for Aunt Dagmar. Just minutes after my arrival, Cathie had something to tell me. She very graciously let me know that she was taking the last available spot for the delivery. Who am I to argue and minutes later . . . JOY . . . and a lot of photos.

Lexi is an amazing example of how much love one can give to their own mother. It's pleasant to witness her maturity and understanding at such a young age develop. Her sparkle delights me every time I see and talk to her. My fondest memory of her is during a road trip we took to New Jersey. In attendance were my mother, Becky and of course, Lexi. We wanted for nothing while we were there. We certainly made the most of a great local Italian restaurant and bungee jumping off the local boardwalk carnival.

The future continues to look bright for both of them and I look forward to every memory we make.



### THE FAMILY OF DAVID AND VICKIE BRITTON NEXT DOOR NEIGHBORS

David and Vickie moved here in 1988 when their youngest daughter Carrie was about 3 years old. They have been here about 25 years and better neighbors couldn't be found. Every time a health problem arises, we call Vickie. She is a registered nurse who works at Virginia Baptist Hospital in the out patient Department. Vickie informs us of what we must do and when the rescue squad should be called. She does all the little things we need done and also gives me my B12 shots. When David, Vickie's husband, is home, we feel very secure. He has helped me numerous times when Marion fell and even at times I have fallen. David is a carpenter, mechanic and just a jack of all trades. He loves working in the garden and is really a good friend. David and Vickie have 3 daughters.

Carrie Ann Britton was born on October 13, 1986. She graduated from Lynchburg College with a degree as a Graphic Designer. Now, she is in the bakery making cup cakes and perhaps making a lot of money. She owns her own business called Irie Sweets. Carrie married Dane Farrow Harrison on July 4, 2009.

Jennifer Leigh Britton was born on December 14, 1988. She graduated from Liberty University in 2011 and has a job teaching 5th grade at Concord Elementary School in Concord, Virginia. In 2006 Jennifer won a State Championship in the One-Act Theatre Festival and also the Actress of the year award.

Leah Nicole Britton was born on June 22, 1994. She graduated from high school in 2012 and will



start attending Lynchburg College this fall. She is planning to pursue a bachelor’s degree in nursing then later becoming a flight nurse. Leah played softball all of high school and won many awards. In 2010, Leah won the First Team All-District award for playing outfield. While attending her junior year of high school, her team became Dogwood District Champions. Leah’s senior year was the biggest year for her softball career. She received the Gold Glove Award, Second Team All-District Catcher, and hit her first career walk-off home-run.

All 3 girls are very special to us, but Leah has been sticking with me since she could walk. When she was little, she would look out the window anxiously waiting for me to come outside. Leah would help me do anything I needed to get accomplished during the day. When she was a little bit older, she would take the wrenches out of my hand and fix everything herself. She never minded getting dirty while working. Leah has been cutting our grass since she was about 7 years old. When I bought the Husqvarna Mower, I had to tie the seat down because she didn’t weigh enough to keep the engine from cutting off.



**DOUG AND ANNETTE BRADLEY**

This is a wonderful couple and we are always glad to see their smiling faces at church. I have been hunting with Doug for perhaps twenty five years. He is an outstanding hunter. If it weren’t for Doug I may have stopped hunting except for his helping hand at times when I would fall. I always feel that he looks after the dogs and even gives them their shots. Now Doug, you don’t know how lucky you are to have a wonderful beautiful wife like Annette.



From left to right: Nathan, Caleb, Isaac, Tammy and Keith

**REV. KEITH WILLIAM AND FAMILY**

Pastor Keith came to Falling River Baptist church in June of 2004. He and Tammy have three sons, Isaac, Nathan, and Caleb. Previously, Keith pastored in Buckingham at Chelsea Michigan. He has also ministered in other congregations as a Youth Minister and Children’s Pastor. Keith received his Master of Divinity degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Bachelor of Arts from Bluefield College.

Keith has been at Falling River Baptist Church for the last eight years and has really made a difference in my life. Since we have had Keith as the paster of our church he has helped me walk closer with my Lord. The messages Keith brought, taken from this Ten Commandments, has had a new meaning for Marion and me. Such as the work and power of the Holy Spirit. Keith is all around a great preacher!!! His wife Tammy Williams Children’s Minister and charge of the G A and is involved in a lot of activities in the church. WOAHH. I don’t see how she has time for any thing cooking, cleaning, or washing clothes while waiting on those four men.

Isaac the oldest, has starting driving. I’m sure he will be a great driver, along with everything else he does. Sometimes, he teaches our Sunday School lesson on youth Sunday and really does an



outstanding job. He is a great guy to hunt with, a good shot and also is great at catching the dogs when we are ready to come home. In 2012, he plans to start trapping.

Nathan also teaches on youth Sunday. I hear that he also did as outstanding job. He enjoys hunting just like his oldest brother. Nathan has a wonderful personality.

Caleb is the youngest son. He is coming along and really enjoys music and I am sure Hobo will be glad for him to join the hunt this Fall. Just one thing about Hobo, you have to watch after you get the rabbit and you leave it in the truck. Hobo will slip back and steal it off the truck. I know he has slipped back and got a couple of Dougs. Caleb is full of personality too.

Pastor Keith is a good hunter and also a good hunting buddy. I always enjoy him saying a little prayer before we leave for a hunt.



## WHAT FALLING RIVER BAPTIST CHURCH MEANS TO ME



This church was where I met Marion Slate the love of my life in Oct 1942 at a Prayer meeting conducted by R S Booker. Zane Elder my very best friend was dating Geraldine Holt brought me with him to Falling to meet Marion and we married Nov 3, 1945. I attended a revival conducted by Rev R. S. Booker in June 1947 and come to know the Lord as my Personal Saviour and was Baptised at the age of 20 at Brookneal Baptist Church by R. S. Booker. The rich heritage handed down by the Slates and Holts and many other families in this church enriched my life and made me live a better christian life.  
*In Christian Love,*  
*Marvin Berkley*

Rev. R. Elton McDowell, 96, of Carolina Avenue, Phenix passed away Saturday, Nov. 5, 2011, at Southside Community Hospital. He was the devoted husband of Dorothy Harris McDowell for over 72 years. Rev. McDowell was born in Campbell County July 24, 1915, son of the late Edwin Leon McDowell and Lola Mason McDowell. He was a member of Falling River Baptist Church where he served as Pastor Emeritus.

Rev. McDowell attended Hampden-Sydney College for two years and then graduated from the University of Richmond and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. He was ordained in 1937 and pastored a field of churches in Halifax and Pittsylvania counties; he also was pastor of Upper Essex Baptist, Falling River Baptist and Bethel Baptist churches at various times in his ministry. He served as interim pastor for many other churches. He was well-known across the state for the hundreds of revivals he conducted.

The last sermon he preached was in his home church at Falling River Baptist in Oct. 2011 when he told "his story" about his lifetime journey in God's service.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by four daughters, Nancy Hartnett (Jack) and Ann Perry of Richmond, Patsy Morrison (Tommy) of Brookneal and Jo Ellen Hearn (Ross) of Alma, Ark.; six grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; one brother, L. Welford McDowell of Powells Point, N.C.; two nieces, Jean and Peggy; special friend Brenda L. Jordan (Ronnie).



A funeral service will be conducted at 2 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2011, at Falling River Baptist Church by the Rev. Keith Williams and the Rev. Lynn Marstin with interment to follow in the church cemetery.

The family will receive friends following the funeral in the church sanctuary.

Memorial contributions may be made to Samaritan’s Purse, American Bible Society or the property improvement fund at Falling River Baptist Church.

Henderson Funeral Home and Cremation Service, Brookneal is assisting the family.

**ELTON MCDOWELL HOMECOMING SERMON 2011**  
**at Falling River Baptist Church in Brookneal, Virginia**  
***This was his last sermon.***

To be stumbling around here like an old man because I'm not but 96 years old so you have to put up with me the best you can. You know, Paul, the Apostle Paul, had a wonderful young friend named Timothy and Paul considered Timothy his son in the ministry. He wrote at least two letters to this young man, we have recorded in the New Testament for us, and in these letters he gave all kinds of instruction and advice and council to young Timothy and I want to read from the fourth chapter to the last chapter of the second apistle to Timothy and we're going to read just the first five verses of this chapter. I charge the therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Preach the word be instant in season, out of season. Rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure said doctrine but after their own love shall they heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and shall be turned unto fable. But watch thou and all things endure affliction do the work of an evangelist make fruitful proof of thy minutes. And may the Lord bless and use in a wonderful way this tremendous message from his inspired word. Join us again in a moment of prayer. “Father we are so grateful for this privilege and opportunity to be in your house with these, your people and we are so grateful for your blessed word and the messages we find therein. When you speak to each of our hearts, from your word, this morning, the thoughts and ideas most need so that we would be better children of yours and better witnesses of the marvelous things you have done for us. For it is in Jesus name we pray, Amen”. I still remember with a great deal of delight the revival we had last year. Keith had invited men, a different man, to speak each evening. Mention of that had been made this morning. Each man, each minister, told his story and what wonderful stories and messages they were. A little bit later, Keith told his story and several of you have asked me about telling my story. Well, if I took the time I'd like to tell my story, we'd be a long time getting downstairs to what's down there. But, my story has really just two parts. The first part is God looks after his own. God looks out for his own and if you belong to the Lord he is going to look out for you as well. And the second part of my story is the goodness of Gods people. Nobody knows that better than the one that's standing before you. The goodness of Gods people I have enjoyed practically all of my life. But

you know I got off to a real bad start. I was born on July 24th, 1915 up here where Earl and Owen Waller lived. Back then, the ladies, when they went to have a child, didn't go to the hospital. Children were born at home and I was born right up there in that house. It wasn't but a little ways from there where we lived down to grandpa and grandma Mason's and we had a path that went through a piece of pines, used to be there, that takes just a few minutes to walk down there or walk up there. Grandma, I understand, came up to see mother, who was her daughter, of course, and the new baby for several days to see if they needed any help that she could give. And they tell me that one day, Hazel, who was grandmas youngest child and my mothers sister, Hazel came with grandma up out to see the baby and mother. On the way home she asked my grandmother said, “Momma, do you think Lolo, now Lolo was the name of my mother, do you think Lol is going to keep that baby?” Well grandma said, she said, “Of course she is going to keep that baby. Why in the world do you ask such a question as that?” Well she said, “Momma, that's the pitifullest, ugliest thing I ever saw in my life.” So that didn't help matters very much. Well, I as I got a little bit older, freckles started appearing and my face was really just one big freckle. I remember that from looking in the mirror sometimes and I had two aunts who were my fathers sisters, aunt Mirth and aunt Eva and they called me turkey egg until I was just about grown on account of all of those freckles. And them papa built a smoke house right back of the house, just a little way and I had gotten to be, I don't know, about 4 or 5 years old, a pretty good size little fella and one day I was out there working on something beside this smoke house. I don't have any idea what it was now and while I was working on it, it began to dribble rain a little bit, just a little drop now and then, began to pick up a little bit and after a while it was literally pouring. Mother came out on the back porch, saw me, looked out there, saw me stranded out there by the smoke house working on something and she called me and told me to come on in the house and I went on up in the back porch and I remember I stood there just a few seconds and there was a circle of water that big that had run off of me down on the floor. Mother said to me, “Son, don't you have sense enough to come in out of the rain?” So I got off to a right bad start but my mother and daddy were great Christians. They loved this church as much I guess as anybody and going to church was accepted. They are just as much a part of our life as sitting down and eating or going to bed and going to sleep but with no reason in the world not to go to church unless you are sick and I'm going to tell you, you had to be sick, sure enough, if you didn't go to church. Now we had a preaching service, had Sunday school every Sunday, he had fallen, and we had preaching service every fourth Saturday afternoon. Dr. Fisher, my first man I remember as Pastor, well Mr. Booker would come on the fourth Saturday afternoon each month and preach, that was the worshiping service, then we had a business meeting of the church after the worship service. Then he would preach again on Sunday morning, the fourth Sunday morning. Then we also had what they called a prayer meeting. Early Sunday night. Sunday school and worship service and prayer meeting. Now this was an unusual prayer meeting. Real often we'd have a great many more in prayer meeting than we had for Sunday school on Sunday morning. A man, somebody in church, would be appointed or elected by the church to be in charge of the prayer meeting. Then this man would call on different men in the congregation to lead the prayer meeting on this Sunday night and then another one, maybe, on the next Sunday night. The order of service was usually, Mr. Charlie Midcliff would lead us in two or three songs, we'd have some prayers. The man that was leading the service would read the scripture and that was generally announced at Sunday school, he'd read the scripture. He'd make a little talk on that scripture and then he'd call on



this one and that one, different men to get up and come and make a talk. But we got to church one Sunday morning, long in the late fall, early winter. I remember going, as we were going to church that night to prayer meeting, mother said she hoped that they had a fire in the stove. They had wood stoves in the church then, because, it was real cool. Well, we got there and they didn't have any fire in the stove but that Sunday morning when we got to church, Mr. Con (Conrad) Barlow came to me and handed me a piece of paper. Well I looked at it and I saw a scripture reference on it. I was in the seventh grade then, I don't know how old I was, but I looked at that piece of paper and he had on there written a passage of scripture and he said, "I got charge of prayer meeting tonight and I'm gonna call on you to make a talk on that" and I like to fainted. I said, "Mr. Barlow you know your not going to call on me and please don't." I begged and used every reason I could think of. He just walked off and left me standing there. Totally exhausted trying to get him to change his mind. We came to prayer service that night. I went home, found a bible and I practically memorized that little passage of scripture by the time I got to church that night. You know I learned one that, that night, I learned that you could sweat without working. I didn't know that before. I sweated an awful lot, digging potatoes and cutting wood and all of that. I have done a lot of sweating in my life but I sat in a pew with my hands folded not doing a hand turn or nothing. I could feel the sweat coming up from under my arms, run down my side to the belt and every time I wiped my forehead it was just as wet as if I had stuck it in water. Finally Mr. Barlow read that scripture and he made a little talk and then he said something like, "We got a real treat in store for us. I've asked Elton to make a talk and Elton you come on up here." I don't know how I got up there and I made some kind of a talk, I had no idea what in the world I may have said. You know Dot and I enjoy seeing these boys and girls come up here every Sunday for there message that he has for them and I love to watch them when there going back to their seat, they come right by, all of them with smiles on there face, some hopping, some skipping, some jumping and some are running a little bit but none of them ran as fast as I ran after I got through back to my seat. I spent the rest of the service trying to figure out how I could get out of the church without anybody speaking to me. If there had been a rat hole there I would have shrunk up enough to go into it. The service was over and I was trying to get to the outside door and uncle Elbert Holt, uncle Elbert Holt was one of the greatest Christians I have ever known. He was my grandmother Mason's brother. He was Carol Mason's and Marion Berkleys grandfather and some of you remember Pauline Pucket, it was her father. Well uncle Elbert got a hold, he was my mothers uncle, she called him uncle so we always called him uncle. Before I could get out Uncle Elbert got a hold of my hand and I thought surly he's gonna shake my arm loose from my shoulder telling me what a good job, and all, I had done and squeezing my hand so I didn't know if I would never get my fingers apart again and suddenly he stopped shaking my hand and he said, "Elton?", and I looked up at him and he said, "You know I wouldn't be at all surprised if the Lord don't call you to preach the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ." I never thought of such a thing. He sowed a seed and then on I kept thinking about it and praying about it and finally I went to Mr. Booker and talked with him about it and he said, "Well, if the Lord wants you to preach the gospel he's gonna let you know about it." By the time I got into high school, I knew about, I knew that was what he wanted me to do. Why? I don't have any idea. Anybody that was so pitiful looking and ugly and with all them freckles and didn't have sense enough to come in out of the rain. How in the world could God use somebody like that? I asked Mr. Booker, I said, "What should I do?". Well, he said, "You want to get as much education as you can. Your going to need all you can

get." I didn't do that. I have regretted it my whole ministry that I didn't get more education. Well I said, "What does that mean? Does that mean go to college?" Well, he said, "Yes and the Seminary too." Now I graduated from high school in 1932 and any of you as old as I am you know what 1932 was economically and that kinda of thing in the midst of the great depression. I said, "How in the world am I going to get money enough to go to college?" Well, Mr. Booker said, "I don't know, but if the Lord wants you to go he's going to provide a way." So I graduated from high school in 1932 and I decided that I would stay out of school for a year before I went to collage and work. You know the only job I could get was over at Buroughs land and lumber company, some of you here used to work for. Buroughs land and lumber company and the job I had was out on the lumber yard stacking lumber. The trucks from the saw mill would haul one inch boards and two by fours and four by fours and eight by tens and twelve by twelves and dump them out in the yard and we had to stack them up in piles so that the air could get through them and dry them out. You know what my salary was? 10¢ an hour. 10 hours a day. You know I hear folks talking about getting \$6 and \$8 and \$10 an hour. I didn't make that much in a whole week. We worked five, ten hour days and a half a day on Saturday. They never did write a check. A little envelope, about that big. Most of the time on Saturday, after we finished working on Saturday morning, they give us an envelope that had a \$5 bill in it and two quarters. Once in a while they had five \$1 bills and two quarters. I was always glad when it had all those bills and it looked at least like I was getting more money then I was. We worked for \$5 and ¢50 for a week and you don't get much money to go to college like that. I will remember the superintendent telling us one day, one Saturday, "I want you all to stay a few minutes, I want to tell you something." We all waited around and he said, "Beginning Monday we've got to raise you all's wages to ¢24 an hour instead of ¢10. Roosevelt's NRA, National Recovery Act has gone into effect and were going to have to up you all's wages." Well I thought I had it made. I'd have so much money I wouldn't know what to do with it. Mr. Booker, every time I came home, after I went to school, he would have me preach at one or more of the churches. Most of the time they took a special offering, they took a special one this morning before the property committee but this was a special offering for me. The goodness of Gods people, and you if it hadn't been for the money that you folks or your parents or your relatives gave during those years, I had never in the world been able to have gone to school and to finish school. I got through with college, finally got my degree from the University of Richmond. Then Mr. Booker urged me to go to seminary and I got in touch with him out at the Louisville Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. I got accepted out there and I wish I had an hour now to tell you about that first trip I made out to Louisville all by myself. I had never been any further away from home than to Richmond and my mother and daddy were with me then. They took me to Lynchburg and I got off on the main line of North Weston, went through there and that passenger train had a name, it was named the Pocahontas and I got on the passenger train the man that sold me the ticket had changed trains in Cincinnati. The baggage was checked and he told me, he said, "Now don't you lose none of them things and I practically held them in my hand all the way to Louisville. I got to Cincinnati and got off and went in the biggest building, the station there. I had no idea where the Louisville and Nashville place to board the train way. Everybody I saw that had a cap on, I figured they were associated with the railroad, someway or another and I would ask them and I finally found, I finally got to Louisville. I asked the man at Louisville, "Do you know where the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is?" He said, "I have never heard of it." I said, "Well, don't you all have some



street cars or city bus?" He said, "No indeed, we don't have any." I said, "I have got to get out there, how am I gonna get out there?" Well he said, "I don't have any idea." There's a whole yard full of taxi cabs out there. Well, I had seen a taxi cab, I had never been inside of one. I went out there and I asked a man, told him where I wanted to go and he said, "Well, where is that?" I said, "I don't know." He called the office back there and they gave him directions and of course the next question was how much is it gonna cost me to get out there? It was way under what I thought it was gonna be. That was the only way I had to get there. I couldn't walk, I had some luggage and put it all in there and went on out there and he made a turn into what looked like a college campus and he said I said the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary so much, he said, "We almost at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, now, where do you want to go?" and I said, "I don't know?" Well, he said, "Don't you know where your gonna stay?" I said, "I know the name of the hall I'm suppose to go in." He said, "Well, tell me that." I told him here is where it was at, I said "I don't have the slightest idea. This is the first time I have ever been out here." Well, we saw some boys along the sidewalk, he stopped and asked them. They told him. Anyway, I finally got there. Each student was assigned a post office box with a little dial on it, didn't have a key, like you kids in school, you know, had a little dial. They told us what the number was to dial and I had a whole lot of trouble with my mail. Dot promised me when I left, she gonna write to me every day. Well, I had been there for about a week and I hadn't got the first letter. I went to the mailbox one day and I could see through a little glare there was an envelope, something was in there white. I like tore that lock all to pieces trying to get that thing open. I got it open and pulled it out and there were three or four letters addressed to Dr. John McDowell. Well I said, "I'm a McDowell but my name is not John and I'm certainly not a doctor." Well I was on the way to the dining hall and I sit down at the table with the boys I generally ate with and I said, "Do any of you all happen to know anybody here by the name of Dr. John McDowell?" Why they said, "Yea, he's a professor here at school. That's him sittin right over yonder at the end of that table. So I went over there and said, "Dr. McDowell, I got some mail today that I believe is your mail.", then I handed him the letter. He said, "Is there another McDowell on this campus?" I said, "Yea, that's my last name." He took it and said, "Yea, this is my mail." We tried to strike up some kinship but he was from South Carolina and I never heard of him nor he of me. I turned to go back over to sit down to eat my dinner, lunch and he called me back, he said, "by the way, my secretary told me that we've gotten several letters that weren't addressed to me and they may have been addressed to you." I said, "Dr. McDowell, where is your office?" He told me, well I went right straight to the office, forgot about eating and I went in there and a girl at the desk, I said, "My name is Elton McDowell and Dr. McDowell tell me that you might have some letters addressed to me." She said, "Yea, yea, got three or four of them." She pulled them out and two of them were from Dot and two of them were from mother. I didn't go back to the dining hall to eat, I went back to my room to read those letters. Mail was so important but you know that wasn't the most important thing. I went to the post office one day, I had been there a month or so and I got a letter out. I could see it was addressed to me and it was written in pencil and you could tell that pencil needed sharpening some kinda bad. Up in the left hand corner, I couldn't figure out who's name was up there. Well, you know as far back as I can remember there were ladies here at Falling River Baptist Church that I had considered to be real old women. They were never as old as I am. They always dressed in black. Most of them had large families. They were always here at church. I stopped under a tree, was a bench there and I sat down and opened it and I

made out the name at the end and it was one of these ladies, old women as I thought they were, dressed in black, always here. I read that letter and it broke my heart. She tried to tell me how much they loved me. How much they were interested in me. She said something I never thought about before. She said, "We prayed for you in our house every day and we called your name out loud." I never thought of anybody calling my name out loud in their prayers. I saw there was something else in the envelope and I reached down in there and there was a dollar bill all crumpled up. She said something about, hope this will be of some help to you. Well, I went back to my room and I went in there and I shut the door, locked it and we had a nice desk and a pretty good chair to sit in. I pulled that chair out from the desk and I took that letter and I spread it out the best I could on the seat of that desk. Then I took that dollar bill and tried to smooth that out and put that on that desk. I got down on my knees and I talked with God about that woman. Old woman dressed in black and all those children and she, I told her Lord, she needed that dollar more than I do and I talk with him about that. The goodness of Gods people and did you know while I was out there I got a number of those letters and actually I got one letter, one day that had three one dollar bills in it. I know that I don't know where that woman got the money from. I know she had no business sending it to me. I know she needed it worse than I did. Ah, the goodness of Gods people as he tries to lead us in the right direction and to his work and his will. I finished out there and came back here, I done some preaching in the summer while I was in the school. We had organized a field during that time. Straight Stone, Pull Bottom and Mulbury and I came back to that pasturage of three churches and then we built and organized the Buffalo church. I wish I could tell you about that, we rebuilt that church ourselves. We cut the timber, we hauled it to the saw mill, they sawed it up and they hauled it out there on the grounds and another feller in the service sat down and drew the plans and I'm not an architect and drew the plans a little bit and rebuilt it the building. In a week the school board was allowing us to use a one room school but he found out we could use it no longer and we built that thing in a week and had services in it. So I came back and wound up with five churches. The folks from Upper Essex Baptist Church down in Essex County about 45 miles outside of Richmond, I never heard of before, came and asked me if I would come down and preach a trial sermon towards a call. Dot and I and Nancy was a baby, a pretty good size little child and we went down there and spent the weekend and preached there. I would have been, if I took the call, the first full time pastor at that church. We were coming home and after we got past Taberana I told Dot, I said, "What I the world would I do with one church, I'm pastoring five. I won't have nothing to do down there with one church. Well, anyway we down to Upper Essex and later came back before the fall and all. In 1945 I was invited to the Grimms Island Baptist Church to preach in a ten day revival. One afternoon the pastor and myself were sittin on a porch of the parsonage where they lived, talking, and he said to me, "Have you ever considered leaving the pastoral ministry and going into evangelism?" I said, "No indeed." Now he said this, I didn't, he said, "We have had a lot of evangelists or people come peaching about. You are the best we have ever had and you do an excellent job and the Lord, I want you he said to consider the fact that the Lord maybe calling you to do evangelism, evangelistic work." I promised him that I would and I got to thinking about that thing and I think that year I had already accepted sixteen revivals to preach in. I went back to Essex and I called the board of Deacons together. I told them that I felt like the Lord maybe wanting to use me not only in the Pastoral ministry but to use me also in evangelism but I was not going to accept any revivals if they interfered in any way that I knew of with the work in ministry of



our church. If I am in a radius of hundred miles of home, I'm gonna drive home every night after the service so I'll be there the next morning and about half of the afternoon. I wanted to know if they had objections to that. They didn't, they encouraged me in it. You sent a committee from here down there to see me and Dot and about a possibility of going on a call and I told that committee the same thing. When I came up here to preach a trial sermon, I told you, the congregation, the same thing. It was acceptable apparently and when Bethel Church down here came to see if I would be interested in making a change coming down there, I told their committee and I told them the same thing. During those years, from an evangelistic stand point, I preached in over 700 revivals in more than 600 churches. I saw over 2,500 people make professions of faith in Christ. So in my ministry the Lord has looked out for me as pastor of churches, he as also given me so many wonderful opportunities of service in other areas. You know I have tried to be active in all of the associations that our churches were in. Straight Stone churches were in the Pennsylvania association, Pull Bottom was in the Dan River association, Essex was in the Rapahana association, Falling and Bethel in the Appromatox association. I got to meet and fellowship with a great number of other preacher and you know I think about it real often. Sometimes I say I wish I knew but I don't want to know, how many boys I have talked with in pastories who would almost weep about the problems they were having in their churches. Couldn't do anything with the board of deacons, they were giving them nothing but heart aces and troubles, little clicks within the congregation. I never had that to happen. The Lord looking out and the goodness of Gods people and how many times I have thanked the Lord for the cooperation in the backing and in the help of so many as we try to do the Lords work and the Lords will. As many of you know, later part of August, I got sick for some reason and I don't remember anything that happened at the house. I remember waking up some time or another and I was in a vehicle. I found out later it was a rescue squad vehicle and I thought they were going to bounce me plum up to the roof. I never had such a rough ride and I wasn't conscious but a little while. The next time I woke up I was in a great big room laying on the hardest bed I ever laid on in my life. I looked around and there was a man standing by my bed and he saw me move and he said, "Welcome back buddy, we are so glad you have come back to be with us again." Well, I didn't know what in the world he was talking about. I hadn't been aware so far as I knew of, welcome back buddy. Then he said, "I'm doctor somebody", I don't remember who he said what doctor he was. I said, "Doctor, where in the world am I?" He said, "You in the hospital." I said, "What hospital?" He said, "Lynchburg General Hospital." Well, I said, "What in the world am I doing in the hospital?" Well, he said, "As of now we're not too sure but as of now we think probably it's congestive heart failure." Congestive heart failure. You know I have know about congestive heart failure ever since I have been an adult and I never have really known what it was. I do know and knew then that I buried a whole lot of folks that they told me died with congestive heart failure. You know the next thought that popped in my mind after I was wrestling with that congestive heart failure was this, I wonder if I'll ever stand in a pulpit again. Is this it? Will I ever stand in a pulpit again? The Lord had been with me and Gods people have been with me through and with their prayers. Sunday before last I was up at the Midway church with Lynn Marston at their homecoming day and I stood in that pulpit. Last Sunday down at the Mound Nebow Baptist Church for their homecoming day and I stood in that pulpit and look me, I'm standing in the pulpit again. Because of Gods leadership and guidance. He takes care of his own and the goodness of Gods people. Keith and you, you all give me the privilege and the opportunity to be here today and I'm so grateful for it.

You know something else, when I finally came to, in that great big room and that doctor said he thought I had congestive heart failure. I looked over there and there sat Patsy. Well, Dot couldn't be there because she wasn't able to be there. The other girls couldn't be there at all. They didn't know anything about it, it was a long ways a way and there she sit and I don't know what I said to her, I spoke to her and she spoke to me. Just in a minute or two I looked up and here come somebody walking down foot of the bed and it was Keith. He came over and sat down by Patsy and they, we talked a little while and then they said that I began to talk all kinds of foolishness and I began to do all kinds of foolish things. You know what that Keith did? He stayed there with Pat and looked after me until the doctors and the nurses took over. The goodness of Gods people and I know for a fact the Lord sent him to help Patsy to look after me until there were others there. You see, that's the story of my life. The goodness of God, the goodness of Gods people and how he takes care of his own from one day to the other. Thank you so much this morning for letting me stand up here and let my try to talk again. I hope a little better than it was the first time when I ran all the way back to my seat.

Elton McDowell Homecoming Sermon 2011 at Falling River Baptist Church in Brookneal, Virginia  
This was his last sermon.

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