

THE DRIVE-IN

Story by John F. Hall

In my first story (**See The Dipsy Doodle story*), I detailed the events leading to my coming to Cookeville, Tennessee with my wife Paula for a doctor's appointment. The Dipsy Doodle restaurant was recommended for its home style cooking. I wondered where that name came from and I wondered about the person who established that business. This story could not have been written without the help, directly or indirectly of Ayla Whittaker; her grandparents and Audrey June Lambert. This story tells about the woman who established the Dipsy Doodle Drive-In. I personalized my stories, a posterity for my grandchildren. Some raw emotions surfaced during the writing of this story.

World War II had a great impact on this country. On September 16, 1940, the United States instituted the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940, which required all men between the ages of 21 and 45 to register for the draft. The clouds of war would impact the lives of a significant number of Putnam County men. One young man, Clarence Lee Phillips, was born May 8, 1920. He is the son of Joe Phillips and Lillie Huffines. He met and fell in love with Helen Burris. She was born August 29, 1921. She is the daughter of J. W. Burris and Martha Lee Francis Hall. She was 19 and he was 20 when they married on April 13, 1941. Some time after April 18, 1945, four months before the end of World War II, a Western Union Special Delivery telegram was delivered to Mrs. Helen Phillips. That telegram changed Helen's life. It read, "The Secretary of War directs me to express his deepest regret that your husband Private Clarence L. Phillips was killed in action in defense of his nation on April 18 in European area. Letter follows."



World War II had an impact on my family. My mother, Marion G. Hall was pregnant with me when she received word that her brother, Francis Race was killed during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. He was a hero. All the rest of her life, my mother carried the newspaper clipping, in her purse, which contained his picture and

news of his death. She gave me the middle name of Francis to honor his memory.

(Pictured: American soldiers of the 117th Infantry Regiment, Tennessee National Guard, part of the 30th Infantry Division, move past a destroyed American M5A1 "Stuart" tank

on their march to recapture the town of St. Vith during the Battle of the Bulge, January 1945. US National Archives).

I enlisted in the Army on my 17th birthday and became a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division. My wife, Paula, was 18 and I was 19 when we were married by an Army Chaplain on Fort Campbell, Kentucky. I had a break in service to go to college on the GI Bill. I enlisted again, in the Army Reserve at the age of 32, the same age when my Uncle Francis was killed. I continued to serve until I turned 60.

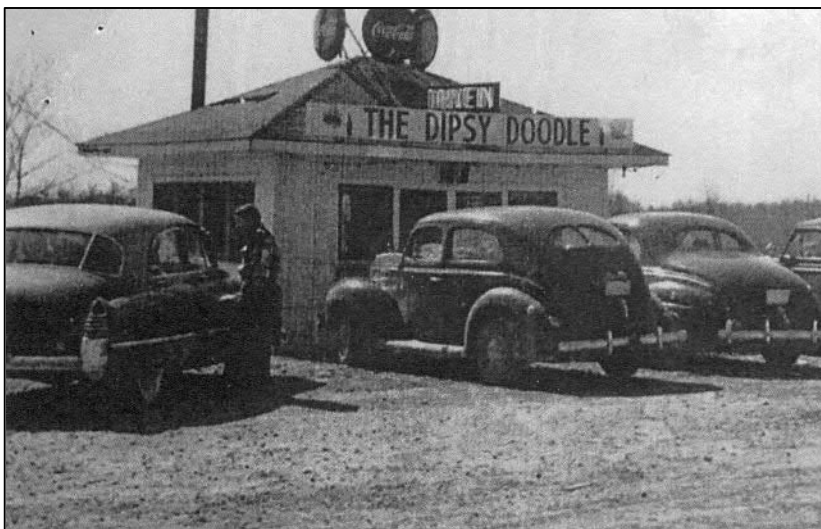


Sixty Eight soldiers from Putnam County were killed in World War II. In a very small way, this part of the story honors them, their families and their friends who mourned their sacrifice. I included a picture of my son, John standing by Claude Mergenthal. He is a World War II veteran. Recently, Claude celebrated his 100th birthday. He is a living link to that distant time and distant war.

(Pictured: John A. Hall standing by Claude Mergenthal, WWII Veteran, age 100).

We may never know why Helen Phillips decided to open the Dipsy Doodle Drive-In. Nostalgic stories bring back the past. The Putnam Drive-In movie theater in Cookeville closed in 1997. Today, it is a parking lot for semi-trailers. The Dipsy Doodle Drive-In, according to Audrey June Lambert's research, was established in 1948 by Helen Burris Phillips.

It wasn't much larger than a concession stand and provided curb service. Audrey mentioned in an article that read, "A grease fire in the concession building put the Dipsy



Doodle Drive-In on the Sparta Road out of business. The web page for the Dipsy Doodle Inn restaurant shows that it was established in 1953.

(Pictured: The Dipsy Doodle Drive-In).

Ayla Whittaker proved the pictures of the Dipsy Doodle Drive-In. It is not a building that

makes a place special. People make a place special. The Dipsy Doodle Drive-In was a

place where the teenagers would hang out for a cold drink and a foot long hot dog. The two old pictures show how the Dipsy Doodle looked when it was first opened. In my



first story, I write about a time decades ago, when Ray Stevens flipped his car over, I did not mention too much about his passenger Don Williams. Don was Ray's agent and manager. Prior to that he sang with his brothers, Bob, Dick, and Andy Williams. This story may not have been written had that event not occurred.

(Pictured: Paula Hall in the Dipsy Doodle)

Every school day, I rise and shine and take my grandson, John-John to school. He is not an early morning person. Most of the time he cat naps on the way to school. My grandfathers

died before I was born. So I have no memories of them. I was driving home after taking John-John to school I was wondering how I was going to end this story? This is the first time that I wrote a story about a drive-in and people that I never met in person. My Pastor likes to repeat that Christ is in charge of our lives. Even country music singer Alan Jackson in a song that he wrote sang the words, "but I know Jesus and I talk to God. And I remember this from when I was young. Faith, hope and love are some good things he gave us. And the greatest is love."

I mainly write these stories for a distant church; for my Brothers in another city; for my grandchildren both blood kin and adopted, and for my friends who light up my life. If this sinner is a humble instrument of Christ's peace, then it should surprise no one that I

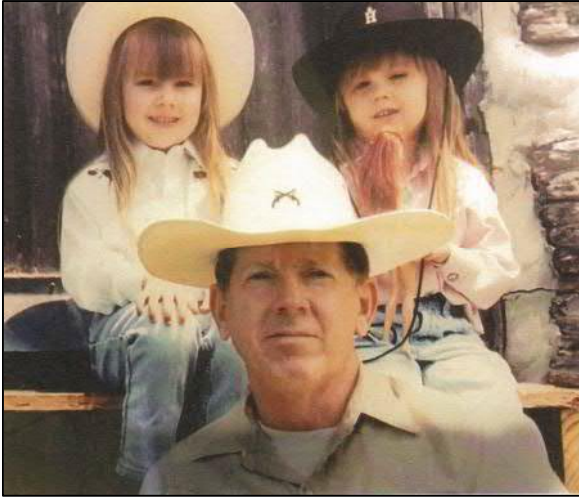


should ask the Good Lord to help me find a good ending to this story. I was perplexed about another story that I could not finish. The lady in the story, due to health reasons, was not able to meet with me. The story is about an old log cabin near my son's house. It turns out that this log cabin had to be moved due to the creation of Lake Barkley State Resort Park.

(Pictured: Old log cabin on the Canton Blue Springs Road, Cadiz, Kentucky)

So each log was numbered; disassembled, and then reassembled on a corner lot. This lady is 81 years old and the log cabin belonged to her great grandfather. One day, when my granddaughters, Andrea and Heather were young, we sat on the steps of this old log cabin for a picture. This old cowboy, at heart, and his two young cowgirls provided the perfect picture to help put the finishing touches on that story.

I decided to end this story about a drive-in, veterans from World War II and an old log cabin by using the lyrics in Don Williams's song "Lord I Hope This Day is Good." In the way of clarification, this is not the same Don Williams mentioned above. This is the American country music artist Don Williams. Dave Hanner is the song writer for this 1981 hit.



(Pictured: John F. Hall and his grandchildren, Andrea L. & Heather C. Hall).

Here are some of the lyrics, "Lord, I hope this day is good. "I'm feeling empty and misunderstood. I should be happy, Lord, I know I should, but Lord I hope this day is good. Lord, have you forgotten me? I've been praying to you faithfully. I'm not sayin' I'm a righteous man, but Lord I hope you understand. I don't need fortune and I don't need fame. Send down the thunder, Lord, send down the rain. But when you're plannin' just how it will be, plan a good day for me."

Charity begins at home. Love begins at home. It might be your parents or your grandparents. Give them a hug and tell them that you love them, but plan a good day for them. And when you go out their door, tell the Good Lord you love Him and ask Him to plan a good day for you!!

John F. Hall

*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>

*Read about the Dipsy Doodle Restaurant in the History section of Putnam Co., TN in the Baxter section at:
<http://www.ajlambert.com>