

LOUIS HUSTON GILL AUTOBIOGRAPHY (#1005)

I was born at home in a two room cabin located at Wolf Creek, DeKalb Co., TN on the 20th of May 1922. My parents are Preston Stewart Gill (1901-1967) and Addie Anderson (1902-1976). My father was a native of DeKalb Co., TN the son of Houston Stewart Gill (1858-1910) & Frances Rosentrant Smith (1862-1942). My mother was a native of Putnam Co., TN the daughter of Lewis Monroe Anderson and Matilda Isabelle Wallace of Boma, Putnam Co.

The doctor and my aunts arrive at the house for the delivery. Audra Camilla Denny, Ollie Lamby Julian & Eldra Shanks were there. When my mother started her delivery everyone waited in anticipation. I was told that my mother passed out during the delivery. The doctor thought that the baby was dead. I showed no apparent signs of life. The aunts took charge and cleared out my throat and I started to move. 'He is gonna be alright now', they said to the doctor. They all decided that I needed a name right away, so they named me after my grandfather, Lewis Monroe Anderson and my grandfather Huston Stewart Gill. The name stuck! Mom must have agreed because that is my name.

My parents brought me to Detroit, MI when I was a year old, where my two sisters, Gloria & Reba and brother Jerry were born. I grew up during the depression, but I was always able to find some kind of work, while I went to school.

When World War II came, I volunteered for the Army Air Force. After training as a Bombardier and Navigator, I was given an officers commission. I flew in a Flying Fortress, (B-17) with the 8th Air Force from England out over Northern Europe. The Boeing B-17 is an American legend. In WWII, it carried the air war to Germany, bombing heavily defended targets while dodging flak and enemy fighters. Able to withstand severe damage, the "Fort" commanded great respect. I nicknamed the plane "Patches" because of all the bullet holes in it. This plane is now featured on a U.S. postal stamp on the Classic American Aircraft Series.

Six months before the invasion of France by the Allied Army, on my 24th mission my plane was shot down over Germany. I was wounded, captured and held prisoner for sixteen months. After the camp was liberated I was in several hospitals till I was able to go back home. Once back in the U.S. I made my way back to Detroit.

I married Mary Chilottee Gallagher (1923-2003). I called her "Lottie". We have two children, Susan & John Michael and several grandchildren.

I was a carpenter in 1952, when I designed and built the house where I now live, located in Livonia, MI. In 1967, I doubled the size of my home by an addition and found out that I was getting a bit older. During this period the area changed from rural to urban.

I owned and drove my own trucks from 1959 to 1979 and hauled cars and trucks all over the USA. This took me to many places that I would have never gone to otherwise.

Close friends and relatives call me L.H. and AL.

My parents moved back and retired in Cookeville, Rt. 4, Putnam County. They are interred in the Smellage Cemetery located in Boma.

Story submitter: Louis Huston Gill
28984 Sunnysdale
Livonia MI 48154-3332



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