

A BRIGHT, SHINING STAR

By John F. Hall

My brother and sister-in-laws, Marsha and Roger Garner gave me an early Christmas present. It is a history book that was compiled by Kim Fortner, the Trigg County librarian, and Paul Fourshee, a Cadiz businessman. Paul told me that it took them three years to research the book. It is called: "ON THIS DATE (Historical Facts of Trigg County 1820-2020)." They wrote the book in celebration of the bicentennial of Cadiz and Trigg County, Kentucky. They researched and wrote a brief historical fact for each day. . On page 420 of the book, for December 15, 1993, they wrote in part: "Seven teenage boys died in the worst traffic accident in Trigg County's history...". In this story, I mainly write about one of those boys, Dale Garner, my nephew.



Previously, I wrote a story called: "Faces In Stone." The faces of the seven students that died that day are embedded in a stone monument located in front of the former building that once housed Knight & Hale Game Calls. That building is now the home to a church called Word of Hope. Only the backside of the monument is visible from highway 68/80, and those faces in stone are in the front side of the stone monument. There is also a long bronze plaque mounted below the faces. On that plaque are the words written by Jan Wilkins Herzog, as follows:

"Seven Friends & Comrades. And the seven rode into our hearts, into our souls. And the pain of their leaving only God Himself knows. Seven young men out for a brief ride. Seven gone forever a whole town cries. Seven friends and comrades seven friends in all, Seven times the grief we feel when Heaven made the call. All the boys were workers all strong and able men. A call came down from Heaven and took all seven friends. Must be these days in Heaven must be a shortage of boys to work. Ones to bear the burdens when others try to Shirk. But what of us left here on earth, what of the tears we've shed over seven friends a leaving, seven young men dead? Cry no more, the call came in seven angels ride. Together they're in Heaven now working side by side. Look to Heaven carefully and you might see seven friends a riding into eternity. In memory of Dale Garner, Jeremy Gordon, David Lawrence, Jesse Lawrence, Patric Perry, Joey Rogers, and Steven Wallace who died in a traffic accident December 15, 1993 on US 68 in Cadiz, Kentucky. All seven worked together here at Knight & Hale Game Calls."

Dale Garner, my nephew, lived less than 50 feet from my old Kentucky home. He was more like a son than a nephew. He was over at my house on a daily basis. He loved to help my wife, Paula, decorate our Christmas tree. At that time the Army Reserve was having me serve as many 100 to 150 days a year on active duty. Dale was just 16 when he proudly asked me to ride with him on a sunny day. He wanted to show me that he was a good driver.

On a cold day in December 1993, the Garner family, the Oakley family, and the Hall family drove to the cemetery high above Hurricane Creek Baptist Church for Dale's graveside service.

I wrote a short eulogy for Dale. I quoted from John, Chapter 3, Verse 8: "The wind blows where ever you hear it's sounds, but you cannot tell from where it comes or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Bob Dylan wrote the song, "Forever Young." These are some of his lyrics: "May God Bless and keep you always. May you always do for others and let others do for you. May you build a ladder to the stars and climb on every rung. May your heart always be joyful. May your songs always be sung. May you grow up to be righteous. May you grow up to be true. May you always know the truth and see the lights surrounding you. May your hands always be busy. May your feet always be swift. May you have a strong foundation when the winds of change shift may you stay forever young."

I decided that the history book that Marsha and Roger Garner gave me would make nice Christmas gifts for my son, John, and my grandchildren, Andrea, Heather, and John. So I purchased four additional history books for them. I ordered a book for my brother-in-law, Bruce Oakley that he can share with his wife, Brenda. Their son, Kerry was also killed in a traffic accident. I realize that history is not an interesting subject for most people. My grandchildren were not born when Dale died. Seeing a picture of Dale does not describe the delightful boy that he was. To make the history book interesting to my grandchildren, I felt that I first needed to put them in the book. Secondly, I needed to make history relevant. I gave my good friend, Tom Vinson, my last copy of a movie that I made, 30 years ago, when Dale Garner was six years old. I went to Tom's house to see if he still had that copy. Tom's nephew once removed is Patric Perry. His face is also on the stone monument with Dale. Thankfully, Tom still had the VHS tape.

Tom and I became friends when we worked for two years on the 1985 Trigg County Book. I served as the Historian for that book. We were founding members of the Trigg County Historical Society in 1981. After working on that history book, Tom persuaded me to work with the TVA on a documentary about the Golden Pond Moonshine Era. I got a one-day permit from the ATF to make the moonshine. I had to destroy the mash and moonshine after a public demonstration that was covered by WPSD-TV Channel 6. To CYA, I decided to document the destruction of the "White Lightning." I decided to make a movie and make Dale the leading star. I wrote the script and let Dale do the rest. He was a shinning, bright star that day. Everything in that movie is authentic.

I like to bring history to life. So I added two stories, and several pictures to Paul's and Kim's history book and I attached two DVDs. The movie about Dale is called, "The Boy and the Moonshiners." I also wrote a story by that name that can be read on Google. I included a second DVD about the Golden Pond Moonshine Era. The TVA tried to eliminate that film when it was kicked out of the LBL. In that film, there is a picture of my wife, Paula when we were dating back in 1964. She is standing by the Golden Pond highway sign. Dale's movie was a zero budget film on VHS format that I convert to

DVD. I did the best that I could with my crude electronics. Dale was my bright, shining star.

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*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at:
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