

SOME PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON CHILDHOOD IN TENNESSEE

Writer's Corner: By **Bill Flatt**

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I really enjoyed reading "I give away my memories" by Truman Fox. I have known Truman since childhood, and I grew up in similar circumstances some three miles from him. I sometimes drive down by where he grew up going to our son, Steve's, and his families' house which sets looking at the fork of Rush Fork and Flynn's Creeks in the Antioch Community of Jackson County. I came with my Dad for him to vote at the Willis Pippin place one time. The molasses ("lassee") mill Truman mentioned was there also.

I remember that we got electricity in about 1948, as did they. One man in our community was afraid of electricity and held out on signing for them to have a right of way through his farm. I remember that Dad spent quite a bit of time with him, talking to him about how much it would help the community. He finally signed. Just after that, a boy named Charlie C. Medlin, a close friend of mine, was accidentally killed when he touched an electric wire on his job in Ohio.

I remember how everyone was anticipating what all we would get when we got electricity. We as children were trying to out brag each other about how many appliances we would get. Of course, money was scarce for all of us. I remember what one woman said about electric clocks; I think of it every time our electricity goes off and on. She said she did not want an electric clock because "when the electric stops, the clock stops." It did, of course, and still does. After we got electricity, one boy tried to blow out an electric light, and we all laughed at him, of course.

Truman's brother, Aaron, used to ride his mule up the Charlie Hill to the Hiwassee Road, to meet his cousin, Leonard Fox, on his mule, and they would ride out to court on their mules to Shephardsville Road. Aaron would stop off at my grandfather's house and court my aunt, Helen Way, and Leonard would ride on up to our house and court my sister, Rosa Lee. As he rode near our house, Leonard would often have his mule in a long gallop and would be singing, "In the pines, in the pines, where the sun never shines, and shivers when the cold wind blows." His approach must have worked because they got married and just celebrated their 61st anniversary. Aaron and Helen lived good lives married to someone else.

I remember when Litton and James Edward Pippin were walking by our house going off to war. I guess they were going to Cookeville to be shipped out somewhere. I also remember when Litton's body was shipped home from Europe and our school at Union Hill dismissed so that we could attend his funeral, a military funeral that was really moving to me. Litton was engaged to my wife, Louise's, aunt, Lucille Pippin. I also remember the day that James Edward Pippin came home walking in full army uniform down the Andy Hill near our school. His brother, Ridley Mitchell Pippin, was in our Big Room as was I. Glancing out the window, he saw his brother coming home, got up and rushed out the door, went through the school yard out onto Hiwassee Road toward his brother and then leaped with a long bear hug into James Edward's arms. By that time the whole Big Room, along with the teacher, was standing, watching what was happening. I'll never forget that scene!

One amusing memory that intersects with Truman's story involves basketball. Our first basketball game, when I was in the seventh grade, was against Shady Grove, where Truman and his brother Houston played. The outside court was on top of a hill and the ball would roll quite a ways into the hollow ("holler") if you missed the backboard, which we were capable of doing at times. They beat us 2-1 (I always say that we were concentrating on defense. Either that, or we couldn't shoot very well).

Lindberg Jackson scored our one point, and I think one of the Fox boys scored their two points. At any rate, Lindberg's mother, Ora, said to several neighbors the next week, "If it had not been for Lindy, that Union Hill would have got slick tailored." I have not heard that expression for a while.

Truman, thanks a lot for your descriptive article. It portrays a way of life that I and many others are very familiar with. Like you, I treasure these memories but do not wish to go back to living like that. I do still enjoy going back to our farm at Union Hill, walking around and looking at the beauty of God's creation. It brings back a lot of good memories as well and a few that I am still trying to repress.

God bless.

Bill Flatt, Ed.D., is a minister, dean emeritus and retired professor of Harding University, retired psychologist and LMFT and author.

“Writers Corner” welcomes any family-friendly poems, essays or narratives for possible publication. Send submittals with 700 words or fewer to arts@heald-citizen.com. The editor reserves the right to edit or refuse submittals.

SAM FLATT CEMETERY, Shephardsville Road, Jackson Co., TN

***Willis B. Pippin**, b. 17 March 1880 – d. 5 March 1952, s/o Andy Pippin & Lucinda Hutchinson.

***Sallie B. (Billingsley) Pippin**, b. 16 September 1891 – d. 20 December 1975, d/o John L. Billingsley & Martha Petty.

Litton Pippin, b. 26 December 1918 – d. 20 June 1944, s/o Willis Bryan Pippin & Sallie Billingsley (PFC US Army WWII died in France).

William Odell Pippin, b. 1 July 1914 – d. 9 September 1926, s/o Willis Bryan Pippin & Sallie Billingsley.

Ridley Mitchell Pippin, b. 4 November 1931 – d. 3 January 1968, s/o Willis Bryan Pippin & Sallie Billingsley. (Tenn. PFC US Army, h/o Doris M. Rogers).

<http://www.ajlambert.com>

***See Memories of Truman Fox**