

A lifetime overflowing with blessings

One of William Shakespeare's most memorable quotes is rather simple: "I looked into the abyss of time backwards." What William meant is that he stood in his old age and looked at the canyon of his life and appreciated everything that brought it all together. Oh, there were some hard times, but they were only a few drops when compared to the flood that flowed constantly from the bucket, for that flow was composed of blessings.

Now, let us consider just how this article came about. A few weeks ago, someone suggested that we write about the late Mr. Ira Turner, and added that we could get information from his only surviving daughter, Mrs. Allie Mazingo. We went to visit Mrs. Allie and Earl, her husband. Within two minutes after meeting them, we realized that they constituted another article. This is a rather common occurrence in writing.

We kept quiet until the article about Mr. Turner was published. We went to the couple's house to return the picture of Mr. Turner. We approached them then about telling their story, even while remembering the words of our greatest mentor, Mrs. Myra Wilcox of Choctaw County High: "If you want to write, son, just tell a story, and tell it well." We start at the pinnacle of success, because on Sept. 8, the Mazingo's will observe the sixty-seventh year of their marriage.

Earl was born in the Riley house which was on the Seaborn Gibson place in Red Springs. The family moved to the Wallace camp where a logging company that sent logs to the river by trains was located. He went to school at Red Springs for one year and his teacher was Mr. Ed Gavin. That name leads to the first departure from our story. Mr. Gavin taught us in the fifth grade years later at Needham. His daughter, Louise, lives in Mobile. She married an Army Lieutenant from Theadville, north of Melvin, during World War



II.

Mr. Gavin brought his son-in-law to Needham one Sunday to catch the afternoon train. The officer was going overseas, and we helped him unload his luggage from Mr. Gavin's wagon. He left his wife with child, but he never returned because he was killed in action. The child, a male, is now a practicing physician in Demopolis and is also a musician with the Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

In his second year, Mr. Earl's school was moved from Cedar Springs to the Wallace Camp because most of the students lived there, and his teacher was Minnie Lee Lofton. Earl's teacher in the third grade was Mr. Owen Bush, and in the fourth grade Mr. Leon Tyson who also taught Earl in the fifth grade. His sixth grade teacher was Mrs. Marguerite Tyson, and that leads to another departure, Mrs. Tyson taught some of our sisters and brothers at land while she was still a Douglas and lived in Cyril. We mention these teachers because they are still remembered by many of their former students.

Earl had to drop out of school after the sixth grade and go to work because of severe economic conditions.

The Great Depression was still going on, and times were very hard. He went to work at a little sawmill for Mr. Sim Tyson. His pay was fifty cents a day, and he earned it by rolling sawdust from the mill in a wheel barrow, and by carrying water to the mill crew. He then worked for Mr. George Tyson, and for Mr. Mason Tyson.

In his vacant moments, Earl still remember a pretty little girl in Red Springs, and that memory was added to another in 1937 when he received a Social Security card and covered by Social Security, the greatest and most progressive social program in this country's history. The canyon is slowly beginning to fill.

Allie finished her schooling at Red Springs and began attending Choctaw County High School. Earl began calling on her. If they went anywhere, it was usually to church, or maybe they took long walks along the unpaved but beautiful country roads. Allie stressed that most of their dating was inside her home. Her parents were very delighted that Allie chose such a nice young man.

The Mazingo's are noted for their strong work habits, and for their reliability. Allie never thought about losing Earl, and he never gave a thought to losing her. It seemed that they accepted one another from the beginning. Allie would always feed Earl some good country food when he came calling.

Earl worked at several other sawmills before finally going to work for Mr. Newman Owen in Ararat. He was working there when Allie agreed to his wedding proposal, but we found the Saturday before the Sunday wedding most interesting. Earl had the day off, so he got dressed and caught a ride to Butler because he still had no automobile. He went to Idrain Doggett's clothing store and purchased clothing for both himself and Allie.

He still needed a ride to his home, and to Allie's.



Mr. and Mrs. Mazingo

He met J.W. Morgan in Butler, and J.W. listened as Earl explained his problem. He agreed to take Earl wherever he wanted to go. However, he first had to take his family home, for they were inside the theater watching a show. The family lived on the Sunshine road, slightly beyond where the Lenoir-Lawley VFW club is now located. Earl agree to ride along with the family.

It was quite a bit after dark when the family left the theater, but they pulled into J.W.'s yard, then the lights went out on the truck, and the engine died. There was no way that it would budge.

J.W. told Earl to go to Red Springs, and he would see that he got to Butler the next morning, for he would somehow get the truck rolling and be at Red Springs at daybreak. Earl left the clothing in the pickup, but made certain to take the marriage license that he got that day. He walked from the Sunshine road to Red Springs and barely beat J.W.

The couple married on Sept. 8, 1940, in the front room of the house in Butler that is now Beard's Florist. Joe Edgar, a Justice of the Peace, presided over the ceremony which lasted for ten minutes. They never went on a honeymoon, but Earl did take two days off from work, probably to regain his strength after that long walk from the Sunshine road to Red Springs.

Over the years, the couple were blessed with three children. Marie was born in 1941, Shirley four years later, and Jessie Earl two years after Shirley. Marie is deceased, and an automobile wreck claimed Jessie's life. How did the couple handle the grief of losing two of their children? They counted their blessings by realizing what was left. They still had something to live for, and the evidence is found in the numerous hand-painted pictures that their children and grandchildren plastered on the walls of their living room.

Finally, they are both believers in the benevo-

lence of a Divine Creator. Earl's mother, Mrs. Ella Mae Mazingo, gave an acre of land on the Ararat road for the building of a church and among its earlier pastors was our own Rev. Marie Pardue of Rock Springs, whose friendship we cherished through the years. Time, faith, family, and friends helped the couple partly recover from the loss of their children.

While evaluating their married life, Mrs. Allie explained that a successful marriage should be heavy in love and cooperation. Her advice to young married couples is to solve problems as they arise, and to talk things over in a soft, gentle voice. Again, we will not argue with 67 years of success.

Earl's other employers included Ray Davidson, L.C. Harmon, Owen Kelley, the Bonner Construction Company, and Buster Kelley. After their children were gone, Earl worked for a seismic company in the oil fields. Allie went with him, and Earl's work took them through most of the southeastern states, and throughout all of Texas, so they got to see a little of the country.

The couple are now at home on the Ararat road, in the same house where they have lived since 1942. It is next to a garage where numerous deer antlers adorn the outside walls, for Earl was an avid hunter and fisherman in his younger years. However, everything that he killed or caught was used for food. He hunted and fished with concern for the environment.

Allie stressed that Earl kept his part of the wedding vows. Listen to her: "I have never been hungry, even once. He has taken good care of me, and he loved our children." Just writing about this couple is a pleasure, and appreciate the manner in which they welcome us into their home.

In looking backwards across the years, Allie and Earl do not see an empty abyss. Instead, they see a canyon that is overflowing

With blessings.

Heritage Fest will again feature big-name country stars

By Bobby Graham
Mayor, Town of Gilbertown

GILBERTOWN — Welcome to summer! This is a time when many of us take the opportunity to gather up the family and go on a family vacation.

Well, I am going to tell you that we have another option for this year and hopefully every summer hereafter. We are having some of the finest entertainment you will find anywhere right here in Gilbertown. Starting on Wednesday, May 30, there will be a gospel singing at Heritage Church of God. Most of the singers for this event are local artists and we should come out and support them. This will be the night that the Choctaw Co. Heritage Festival will be kicked off with prayer. The entertainment on this night will be an attempt to showcase the heritage of Christian music in our area. There is and always has been a lot of local talent here.

On Thursday, May 31st, there will be a performance of the production, "Smoke on the Mountain" by the Gilbertown Ballet and Theater Arts Performing

Companies. This will be a good night of family entertainment watching some of these local, talented people perform. Tickets for this event will be \$10, so let's come out and support them. For more information anyone can contact Town Hall or BTAPC Director Fred Kimbrough.

On Friday, June 1st we will have a big Gospel/Bluegrass concert on the big stage at the Southern Choctaw High School Football Stadium. These performers will be brought in from all over for a great night of entertainment. There will be a \$10 admission for this show.

On Saturday, June 2nd at 10 a.m. there will be a Colgate Country Showdown held in downtown Gilbertown. The winner of this contest will go on to compete in the state competition.

All day on Saturday — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. — there will be booths set up in Gilbertown where you can buy food and see the Heritage exhibits, enjoy Choctaw Indian Dancers, ring-a-ding kids games, a petting zoo, reptiles of the world display, pony rides and many other exciting things for the whole family.

There will be an Author's Symposium

and book signing, live music and an antique and late-model car show by the Choctaw County "Cruisers".

On Saturday evening there will be a concert at the SCHO Stadium featuring two of today's biggest-name entertainers whose names will be announced later. Opening the show will be the winner of the Colgate Country Showdown from that morning. Also on the show will be Scotty Ray Boyd with MISS 101.3 Radio in Meridian, who will serve as the emcee for

the night.

Well, I'm out of breath just talking about it so you can imagine what it's going to be like that weekend. This is an opportunity to show the world that we are here and we have something to offer. A lot of time has been spent by the volunteers of the Choctaw County Heritage Group and many others to put this event together, so I am asking you to come out and support this event to celebrate our heritage right here at home.



Choctaw Sun photo by Mickey Bryant

Happy 80th birthday, Russ!

BUTLER -- Russell Kacmarynski (seated, center) was honored by family members with a dinner Saturday, March 24, 2007 on the occasion of his 80th birthday. His wife, children, grandchildren and their spouses were in attendance for the festive event which was held at St. John's Catholic Church family center in Butler. (ED. NOTE: Happy birthday to our friend Russ! May you enjoy many more! -- Tommy.)

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