

Histories of Various Chilton County Personalities

By Scarlett Teel

Oliver Preston Little

Mr. Oliver Preston Little was born on November 5, 1920 in Chilton County Alabama just off the Charlie B.Cox Highway near the Mt. Zion Community. His parents were Mrs. Flora Bell Littlefield Little and Mr. Oliver Little. Mr. Oliver Little died three months before the birth of his son. The parents of Mrs. Flora Bell Littlefield Little were Mr. Tom Littlefield and his wife—a Smith. The paternal grandfather of Mr. Preston Little was Mr. John Little who moved from Mobile to Chilton County in a two horse wagon. This grandfather, Mr. John Little, died in a little white house that was on today's Lay Dam Road in front of the former Chilton County Hospital.

Mr. Preston Little's maternal grandfather helped his daughter in the rearing of his fatherless grandson. At the time of Mr. Little's birth, his grandfather, Mr. Tom Littlefield was still working at a machine shop. A story goes that in 1925, Mr. Tom Littlefield bought two new Model T cars for he wrecked the first one by running it into the barn so he quickly replaced the ruined car so that he and his daughter, Mrs. Flora Bell Littlefield Little, would have a car to drive. Mr. Preston Little and his mother lived on Third Avenue in Clanton where Mr. Preston Little attended Chilton County High School. When Mr. Little was twenty-one years and one month old, he was drafted in 1942 into the U. S. Army to serve in World War II. He left Clanton on a bus and went first to Anniston, Alabama then to Ft. McPherson in Atlanta, Georgia. He was sent later to Keesler Field, Mississippi for preparation to be sent overseas to serve. He went first to Casablanca, then on May 23, 1943 was moved into Tunisia. One man in the unit kept a journal of the 314th Troop Carrier, 61st Squadron that flew and maintained C-47's and C-G4A Gliders. The gliders were big enough to carry a jeep and four fully equipped men.

In 1946, Mr. Preston Oliver Little met and married Miss Pauline Plott, the daughter of Mr. Ed Plott. The couple had three children, a daughter, Mrs. Peggy Little Mitchell, and two sons, Mr. Terry Little and Mr. Aaron Little. They have six grandchildren, Mark; Jimmy; Terry Jr.; Angie; Baiden O'Neal and Blair and one great-grandson.

Being a lifetime long aviation enthusiast, Mr. Preston and Mrs. Pauline Plott Little



Mr. Little at Oshkosh with Dick Rutan's record setting Voyager airplane.

went from Clanton, Alabama to Oshkosh, Wisconsin for twenty six years to the EAA Convention, which has become known as the world's largest air show. Mr. Little served as a volunteer in the Air Operations Group every afternoon of the show for 4-5 hours. He and Mrs. Little pulled a trailer nine hundred miles for thirteen trips to the show. He flew in the Concord plane, before they were all removed from service, from Oshkosh into Canada and back. He also enjoyed seeing and learning about many other interesting planes and pilots. In 2002, for the first time, an annual "Preston Little Award of Excellence" was presented to volunteers especially chosen "who demonstrates selflessness, cooperation, and professionalism in support of the air operations during the annual EAA Convention, which has become recognized as one of the most significant aviation events in the world." He, also, could be often seen around Gragg-Wade Field in his hometown of Clanton, Alabama.

Ida Mae Popwell Cutright

January 17, 1921---September 27, 2006

An ode to Ida.....

It has been said that "Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for awhile and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never the same." I do not know who said these words but it is true about our friend Ida Mae Popwell Cutright.

There are lots of words one could use to describe Ida but two come readily to mind—"interested" and "interesting." She had lived with Rex all over the United States and the world. She was able to do and see things in her 85 ½ years which others could only dream about. She lived

life to the fullest and never gave up. She kept pushing even when she did not feel like pushing.

After moving back to Clanton, I soon discovered Ida, the hard working business woman, in her beautiful unique shop, The Owl's Nest, and she did much, much framing for me. She became more than just my framer-- she became my best friend of about twenty years. We soon discovered our mutual appreciation of antiques and "junkie." For years we made weekly junkets to Alabaster to the thrift store and to south Clanton to the cow sales barn to the flea market. I learned a lot from Ida and we had quite a few adventures together. We never came to words or blows over any of our treasures that we rescued but there were times we probably coveted what the other had found.

Once she told Charles Rex that we were in such a hurry to get to the thrift store that we out ran an ambulance on the way there!--so you see she had quite a sense of humor too.

Ida loved her family and often shopped for treasures with one or more of them in mind. She loved to show pictures of and to tell stories of her great-grandchildren and, please tell Lisa how much she enjoyed the card that she sent to her recently with the little old ladies in their art class! She showed it to everyone and insisted that they read it.

Once after Rex died, she told me, as we walked around among the colorful characters—and you would know what I mean if you have ever been there—at the cow sales flea market, that she would love to invite one of these male characters to dinner some night along with both Charles Rex and Sarah Love—just to see her children's faces as she introduced her "new" friend to them! Just another example of her sense of humor!

Another time we participated in a "Mexican Standoff" at the cow sales flea market. We found a vendor there with seven silver plated mint julep cups for sale. The vendor made it plain that she wanted to sell all seven of them rather than individually. Well, we began to gather all seven of them up but also did another buyer standing there. We had four and she had three of the cups. Ida was determined and believed in fair play for she meant that we would not leave without the other shopper giving us the cups since we showed the first interest and, indeed, had gathered up the most cups. We stood there and stood there but finally the girl relented and those mint julep cups reside today in my china cabinet that I bought from The Owl's Nest.

Ida loved her yard and gardening—always having something beautiful growing there. Once we decided on a special project to beautify our yards. We discovered that Dollar General at Jemison had those cheap white plastic swan planters for sale. One afternoon on the way to do our thrift store shopping, we loaded the back end of Alvin's Jimmy with all the swans they had in stock. Swan necks were sticking every which way as we went up the road to Alabaster! We could not settle for just white plastic swans to adorn OUR gardens! We bought cans and cans of black spray paint and had Morris Moatts to special order us a bunch of expensive sphagnum moss packages. We spray painted those swans and then painstakingly hot glued that moss on them. They did look pretty and interesting for a little while—until the neighborhood squirrels found our offerings of sphagnum moss. In no time, we had naked black painted swans setting in our gardens! I do not know what happened to Ida's swans but I still have my naked black swans to remind me of our expensive project that went awry.

Ida was an artist with her paints as well as her gardening, framing, needlework and sewing. Everything that she did she gave her all and did with the best of taste. Many homes all around the area display some project from Ida's hand.

Ida was proud of the fact that she came from the Popwell family, one of Chilton County's pioneer families. Only weeks before her death she was engineering a project to develop her family tree further. She loved her community, her country and her world. She stayed up to date on all the news and politics affecting her world and did not shy away from expressing her dismay over of the

shenanigans of politicians. It is said that "what we are is God's gift to us", but "what we become is our gift to God" and she did lots of good deeds quietly for many people in her community choosing to give her money and efforts where she could see the results. She went quietly around her world displaying the true Christian spirituality! Ida was a true Southern Lady, if there ever was one, and as Johnnie Lane said, "We lost a good one!" on September 27, 2006 when we lost Ida Mae Popwell Cutright. She truly left "footprints on our hearts!"

Ida Mae Popwell was born in Chilton County, Alabama to John Richard (Johnny) Popwell and Rhinie Angeline Collins Popwell on January 17, 1921. Johnny Popwell was the son of Reuben Popwell and Mary Ann Baker Popwell, the daughter of Alfred Baker, the "Duke of Clanton." Johnny Popwell's siblings were Emmett Popwell; Leon Popwell; Georgia Popwell Sharbutt; Annie Popwell Farley; Sinnie Popwell Henley; Evie Popwell (Butler) Lowe; Callie Popwell (Reuben) Miller; Emma Popwell (Joseph Walter) Teel; Lena Popwell (Will) Thomas and Alfie Popwell. Ida Mae Popwell Cutright's siblings were Mary Popwell Robinson; Oran Popwell; William R. (Bill) Popwell; Grady Popwell and Curtis Popwell.

Ida Mae Popwell met and married Rex Cutright from West Virginia. To this couple was born Charles Rex Cutright and Sarah Love Cutright Price. For years Ida Popwell Cutright and her husband traveled the world for her husband to work building pipe lines but her heart remained here in Chilton County. Before retirement time, she bought land on U. S. Highway 31 North and built and set up a unique antique and gift shop called the Owl's Nest that she ran for many

years. There are few homes in Chilton County and nearby areas that did not benefit from Ida Mae Popwell Cutright's gifts and talents.

NEXT MEETING

Derric Scott will present some modern Internet genealogical research methods and useful websites. Please bring examples of your favorite sites to discuss.

Upcoming Dates

Clanton Library, 2:00 PM:

- **Jul 27, 2014 – THIS SUNDAY! CCGS Meeting** – Derric Scott will cover some modern methods of Internet genealogy research.
- **Also:** BRING ANY OLD PICTURES AND RECIPES TO SCAN

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