

CHILTONIAN

Volume 32, Number 1

January 2012

QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, January 8th, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library. Chilton County Probate Judge Bobby Martin will be the guest speaker. All members of the Society and other Chilton citizens who are interested in our county's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

CREDITS:

Chiltonian is a quarterly publication of the Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.
P. O. Box 644, Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644
(A Non-Profit Organization)

OFFICERS:

President	-	David Dennis
Vice President	-	Wayne Sewell
Secretary	-	Marie Smith
Treasurer	-	Colyn Moatts
Reporter	-	Marie Smith

MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Annual: Individual \$9, Couple \$12, Student \$5
(Dues payable in January)

Lifetime: \$100

NOTE: ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL, THE TWO-DIGIT NUMBER AFTER YOUR NAME INDICATES THE YEAR THROUGH WHICH YOUR DUES ARE PAID. AN "L" INDICATES LIFE MEMBER.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article originally was written for the 2000 book, *The Heritage of Chilton County*. It has been revised and updated.

City of Clanton

By Colyn C. Moatts

It is difficult to separate the development of the City of Clanton (formerly Goose pond) from the creation and development of Chilton County (originally established as Baker County). Both came about during the troubled era of Union Reconstruction after the Civil War, and both exist largely through the efforts of Alfred Baker, Sr., the second son of area pioneers Stephen and Charlotte Popwell Baker.

Alfred Baker was elected as the Radical Republican State Legislator from Autauga County in the infamous "Freedmen's Bureau election" of February 1868. It appears from the records of the Secretary of State that his chief purpose in running for office was to use the political process to create an independent county in north Autauga, which would be run by local people for the benefit of local people. He succeeded, and Baker County was established by an Act of the State Legislature on December 30, 1868.

The new county was formed from a large portion of northern Autauga County and smaller portions of Shelby, Bibb, and Perry Counties. Five "Election Commissioners" were appointed—all relatives or allies of Alfred Baker—to oversee a county-wide vote to select a "county capital" or county seat. It is interesting that the land area "carved out" of the other counties for the purpose of establishing Baker County overwhelmingly was populated by white yeoman farmers who typically had owned no slaves. It is even more interesting that

(Continued, next page)

(Continued from Page 1)

the Radical Republican State Legislature could be convinced to vote approval of such an arrangement, given the prevailing social conditions mandated at the time by the Radical Republican United States Congress.

Much of the acreage that comprised the old Autauga County piece of the new county was owned by Alfred Baker or his relatives, and he took steps to expand his holdings around Goose Pond, where he owned a store. Coincidentally, the place known as Goose Pond happened to be adjacent to the proposed line of the South & North Alabama Railroad that had been planned before the Civil War started. Given the surge in railroad building after the War, this line was a likely candidate for completion, and Alfred Baker used his Legislative influence to help "make it happen."

While the new railroad was being completed, the Baker County Election Commissioners established a county capital at "Grantville," which was nothing more than a spot in an open field less than two miles northeast of Goose Pond. Its only advantage seemed to be its name, which implied honor for the leading Union general of the recent war. One of Baker's allies was awarded a \$5,000 contract to build a new courthouse, and he used the money to build a very nice log cabin—probably at a total cost of less than fifty dollars. In any case, this first county courthouse mysteriously burned in 1870, and the county capital was moved temporarily to Dake's Old Mill on nearby Walnut Creek.

Sometime between late 1870 and early 1871, as political power began shifting in Montgomery, local leaders apparently felt secure enough to rename their town site Clanton, in honor of Confederate General James Holt "Old Red" Clanton. Alfred Baker had been Goose Pond's first Postmaster since January 31, 1871—the Goose Pond Post Office was officially redesignated the *Clanton* Post Office on May 4, 1871.

Alfred Baker hired surveyor George W. Floyd of Montgomery to lay out the streets and alleys of the town, as well as business and residential lots. Baker donated land for the courthouse building, the town cemetery—as well as land for the Baptist and Methodist churches that still today face each other, one east and the other west of the railroad line. Most of the land that today comprises Clanton was conveyed to Baker County (for a nominal price of \$5) by Alfred

Baker and wife Rebecca Mims Baker in a deed dated June 26, 1870.

According to *The Chilton View* issue of May 4, 1893, "Clanton is indebted to Mr. Alfred Baker for the preservation of her forest growth of oaks. When the town was first laid out and built, it was he who impressed upon the early inhabitants the importance of leaving these trees standing for the shade and embellishment [*sic*] they would afford the future city."

Baker helped ensure a concentration of commercial activity by opening another store, a stable, a storehouse, and a hotel of his own. After the South & North Alabama Railroad was completed in October of 1871 and Clanton had been selected by the voters as the new Baker County seat of government, Alfred Baker engaged in a lobbying effort to ensure the S&NA made Clanton a designated stop on their north-south line.

This latter task was made more difficult by the fact that Baker essentially had renounced the Radical Republican Party and abandoned his seat in the Legislature, spending most of his time helping secure the new county seat. In a letter to the editors that appeared in the July 2, 1872, edition of the *Montgomery Advertiser and Daily Mail*, Alfred Baker expressed great frustration with railroad's failure to establish a stop at Clanton, calling that failure an "evil" and accusing the railroad owners of "gross mismanagement." According to Baker's letter, some of the S&NA management (or their relatives) owned land around Lomax and therefore preferred that site over Clanton as a county capital. "Failing to coerce the selection of Lomax as the county seat of Baker, [the railroad management is trying] to demonstrate to the citizens of Baker [County] the disadvantage of Clanton as the county capital..."

It is likely Alfred Baker also was upset by the S&NA's refusal to accept his earlier offer of a train depot for their use. The railroad refused his generosity on the grounds that they feared Baker might end up with too much influence over the road's operations, that he might seek concessions for freight rates, etc. Ultimately, however, the S&NA purchased the depot and opened it in 1874.

Chilton County might yet be known as Baker County had Alfred Baker been able to control his fatal attraction for members of the opposite sex. But his

frequent and sometimes scandalous indiscretions caused what has been called "a moderation of public opinion" toward him, and by State Legislative Act of December 17, 1874, the name of the county was changed to Chilton. (Some speculate that the S&NA Railroad also might have used its powerful political connections to make establishment of the Clanton Depot contingent on Alfred Baker's public demise, but this has not been substantiated by available records.)

The new county name honored Judge William Parrish Chilton, a former Confederate Congressman and Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. Although Judge Chilton was "a pure and noble man" whose daughter Jenny once taught school in Clanton, he apparently never set foot in the county. In March of 1888, Chilton's widow moved to Clanton and lived here until December of 1890, returning to Montgomery only two months before her death.

When Clanton first became the county seat, the town had a population of only about 200, and it was the centerpiece of Alfred Baker's vision for political independence. Today it has a population of almost 9,000 in a county with a population over 43,000—and the city is still growing, with its corporate limits currently surrounding over 20 square miles. Clanton is geographically blessed, located almost equal distance from the commercial and government centers of Birmingham and Montgomery.

The City of Clanton is governed by a mayor and five council members. Current office holders are Mayor Billy Joe Driver and Council Members Bobby Easterling, Mary Mell Smith, Bobby Cook, Greg DeJarnett, and Jeffrey Price. And these leaders in our community probably would be the first to tell you: nobody in the State of Alabama is more independent than the people of Clanton and Chilton County.

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The *Chiltonian* editorial staff (that would be me) is in need of fresh submissions from our readers.

The submissions may be on any subject either directly or indirectly related to the history of Chilton County, e.g., family histories, personal school stories, church histories, old homes/businesses, military experiences of Chilton County soldiers, sailors, airmen, or Marines, etc.

Your stories may be submitted in any format, as long as it's readable—we'll do the rest.

In addition, we'd love for you to submit genealogical queries. Who knows? One of our readers might have the one missing piece of your family-tree puzzle.

Value Plus

Old Schools of Chilton County Alabama

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The Heritage of Chilton County

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Chilton County Historical Society
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



CHILTONIAN

Volume 32, Number 2

April 2012

QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, April 15th, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library. Mr. John Van Valkenburg will present a program on "Music of the 1940s & 1950s". All members of the Society and other Chilton citizens who are interested in our county's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

IN MEMORIUM

Dwight David Dennis, President of the Chilton County Historical Society, passed away at his residence on January 10, 2012. He was born on May 22, 1956, the son of the late Herbert Hoover Dennis and the late Annelle Roe Dennis. He was a plant maintenance person. He is survived by his sister, Diane Dennis; his brother, Joe Dennis; his niece, Adalyne Dennis; and his nephew, Austin Dennis.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Repeated appeals for inputs to the quarterly *Chiltonian* have been unproductive. As a consequence, we've been reduced to rehashing articles that have appeared elsewhere—see last quarter's issue. It has been suggested that I should "continue what [I'm] doing in regard to article selection," but I prefer to include *new* articles—something the readers haven't seen before—or at least, old articles that have been updated with new information. With my natural bent toward that end, I've decided to serialize a first-draft of a small book I've written for my sons. The title of the book is, *A Year for My Profit: Letters to Vietnam, 1969*. In this case, the word "profit" has nothing to do with money; after all, the base pay of a second-lieutenant in 1969 was \$303.90 per month. Rather, my use of "profit" is more in the Biblical sense of learning, refinement, or wisdom—even today, some of my friends and relatives would argue that I didn't receive a lot of "profit" in 1969, or in any of the years that followed. Be that as it may—and at the risk of boring the readers to tears—it is my current plan to publish in the *Chiltonian* the aforementioned compilation of letters that I received during my first year as an Air Force officer in Vietnam. Here's your out: I'll cease and desist publication—and try something else—if I receive any negative input from you, the readers. Fair enough? So, here we go...

A Year For My Profit

Letters to Vietnam
1969

By
Colyn Clay Moatts
© 2012

Introduction

There—on the floor between several still-taped storage boxes, and almost obscured by the accumulated dust of decades—was the small corner of a familiar baby-blue object. Could it be? Surely not...

Although all the basement lights were on, the energy-saver bulbs still were ramping up to their full brightness, and it was hard to see into the secluded area beneath the stairs. I aimed my flashlight, moved a couple of cardboard boxes, and there it was... the old ammo box, painted blue for its second life, with handwritten green lettering on either side of the metal handle: "460 TRW" on one side, and "45 TRS" on the other. The homemade hasp on the end was secured by an old, rather substantial Master lock.

The dusty metal can had served as my secure container for the monthly payroll of the men in my unit in Vietnam (Detachment 1, 45th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron of the 460th Tactical Reconnaissance Wing). You see, as the lowest ranking officer (2Lt) in the unit, I had the additional duty of Payroll Officer; and, because we were paid in Military Payment Certificates (MPC, commonly called "Monopoly money"), the "legal tender" had to be secured when it was transported (walked) from the Phu Cat airbase administration building to our mobile shelters adjacent to the flight line. It was only about a quarter-mile walk, but I was required to wear my sidearm and have at least one armed escort with me—we never knew when some other unit might ambush us and try to enrich themselves by accumulating MPC (which could only be spent on US installations in-country). Oh, well... Catch-22 concepts were alive and well in Vietnam, too, I suppose.

Balancing with my left hand planted on a stud (our basement is unfinished), I reached over and down to grab the handle of the war relic and lift it back into the 21st Century. Now fully exposed to the light, a tiny spider scurried along a fragment of web that dangled from the bottom of the ammo can. Quickly I brushed the web away and wiped off the top layer of dust with my bare hand.

While ancient memories rushed to reassert themselves, I examined the old can. As I turned it over, I could feel more than hear the contents shift inside. Whatever the secret treasure might be, it was something lightweight—no internal rattle, clink, or thud to be heard.

The imposing Master lock was now problematic for my curiosity, and it came to mind that a large bolt cutter might be necessary to solve my problem. As quickly as I thought of the bolt-cutter solution, another idea occurred to me: upstairs, in one of my old briefcases, there was a crusty collection of keys that I had been dragging around for years. Could one of those old keys fit and open the Master lock? Worth a try...

Running upstairs—actually, at my age it was more like hobbling—I went to the bedroom closet, pulled out the old briefcase, and looked through the contents. In the lower compartment of the case, I found a mass of disparate keys, all bound together with an interconnected collection of old key rings.

Hoping I might still have the original, I began the search by looking for a key or keys that had the word "Master" imprinted. Amazingly, there was one such key, which I quickly removed from its crowded key ring.

Excitedly, I made my way back down to the basement—hadn't thought to carry the locked can upstairs—to see whether I had been fortunate enough to find the needle in the haystack.

After placing the can on top of the Kenmore washer in the utility room, I nervously inserted the key into the lock and turned. Voila! The lock released easily after being secured for more than four decades. Wow! Now I could examine the contents and perhaps recall why they had been considered valuable enough to store in a locked ammo can.

I removed the lock from the hasp and slowly opened the lid. Inside, the old box was still its original, shiny Army green, and there in the bottom of the can was a loose stack of old letters, most of which had a single, six-cent US postage stamp—apparently, the Franklin Roosevelt first-class stamp was popular in 1969.

As I looked at the return addresses and the handwriting, I realized that these were most of the letters I received from family and friends while I was in Vietnam. But here's the kicker: even as I sorted the mail by postmark date for later re-reading, I had no recollection of ever putting the letters in the old ammo can, much less securing them with a lock.

In retrospect, the following is what I believe might have happened. But first, a little background.

My tour in Vietnam began in September of 1968 and would have been completed in September of 1969; however, being young, unattached, located at a relatively safe airbase, and full of anti-Commie vigor, I voluntarily extended my tour for six months, which pushed my return date to March of 1970.

This was the deal: for giving Uncle Sam an additional six months in country, he would give me an additional seven-day R&R trip, an additional seven-day leave to an R&R location, and a non-chargeable thirty-day leave (with airfare provided) to any place in the free world. What he didn't make clear was that the thirty-day leave was not part of the six months—it was added on to the end of the tour; therefore, my actual revised return date became April of 1970.

In November 1969, as I departed for my thirty-day leave back in the "Land of the Big BX" (the US), there were rumors floating around that our unit might be redeployed to some new location. But I was so excited about going back to "The World" for thirty days that I paid little attention to the possibility of a move.

The unit redeployment from Phu Cat (in the central highlands) to Tan Son Nhut (in Saigon) took place while I was back in the States. Near the end of my leave, I was notified to take a troop-transport flight back to the Tan Son Nhut port of entry rather than the Cam Ranh Bay port of entry. Oh, well... my "relatively safe airbase" at Phu Cat was now only a memory.

Briefly I wondered about the limited number of personal possessions I left behind at Phu Cat, but I need not have been concerned. The guys in my unit went through my stuff—uniforms, boots, duffle bag, assorted toiletries, writing materials, etc.—and packed it all in a footlocker for shipment on one of the cargo planes that carried all our unit's mobile shelters down to Tan Son Nhut.

And now I'm convinced that's the way the letters ended up in the ammo-can payroll box: the guys found the letters in a desk drawer, put them in the payroll box, and secured it with the Master lock before packing it into the footlocker for shipment.

After reading the letters—again—I'm very grateful those guys retrieved and protected these long-forgotten treasures of mine, rather than just throwing them into the trash.

Because I no longer served as the Payroll Officer once we were up and running at Tan Son Nhut, I had no need for the ammo can and probably didn't open it again until its recent rediscovery—in any case, no memory of it. It was just a small, unobtrusive object that I automatically packed up each time I moved from apartment to apartment and assignment to assignment over the decades.

And now, primarily for our sons—Kirby and Bryan—I've decided to transcribe the letters for their benefit and for the benefit of their children, God willing.

Boys, please know that this compilation often has been a very emotional exercise on my part. These hand-written "voices" from the past include my parents and my grandmother Sula—your grandparents and your great-grandparent—all of whom died before either of you was born. And although some of the letters are only simple reflections of life on the home front during a time of war, some are very poignant and all are filled with love, the same kind of love I have for both of you.

My prayer is that you'll see some life lessons in these letters to Vietnam, and that your perception of the sovereign God will be positively reinforced.

May our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bless you throughout your lives in all that you attempt in His name.

Continued, next page

The Letters

NOTE: The following letters are transcribed in chronological order with original spellings and grammar, and although some letters are missing—my mother wrote to me at least once each week—one can easily get a sense of the times and home-front events from the letters here included. Sensitive or pejorative words and phrases have been redacted, as appropriate.

From my mother, Eurell Louise Thomaston Moatts, who was born March 22, 1917, and died June 19, 1975:

Clanton, Ala.
Nov. 28 – 1968

Dear Colyn

We got your letter yesterday, and was glad to hear from you.

As for us we are doing well, it's a pretty day here, the sun is shining and it's a little cool we had a good rain last night.

The pictures you sent are all real good, they got here in good condition. The little children are real sweet...

To be continued...

//////////

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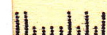
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Volume 32, Number 3

July 2012

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IN MEMORIAM

Marie Monteith Smith, Secretary and Reporter for the Chilton County Historical Society, passed away May 31, 2012, at the age of 85 years. Preceded in death by her husband, Charles T. Smith, and infant son, Dale Edward Smith, she is survived by her son, Dudley Smith, daughter, Donna S. Greenwood, and sister, Nell Monteith Hayes. Rest in peace, Dear Marie.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Thus far, there has been no negative feedback on the first installment of *A Year for My Profit: Letters to Vietnam, 1969*. In addition, no one has submitted any kind of alternative article for publication in this quarter's *Chiltonian*. Therefore, we continue—at least for one additional quarter—the compilation of letters that I received during my first year as an Air Force officer in Vietnam. So, here we go... again.

A Year For My Profit

**Letters to Vietnam
1969**

By
Colyn Clay Moatts
© 2012

The Letters

(continued)

[Reminder] NOTE: The following letters are transcribed in chronological order with original spellings and grammar, and although some letters are missing—my mother wrote to me at least once each week—one can easily get a sense of the times and home-front events from the letters here included. Sensitive or pejorative words and phrases [and occasionally an entire letter] have been redacted, as appropriate.

From my mother, Eurell Louise Thomaston Moatts, who was born March 22, 1917, and died June 19, 1975:

Clanton, Ala.

Nov. 28 – 1968

Dear Colyn

We got your letter yesterday, and was glad to hear from you.

As for us we are doing well, it's a pretty day here, the sun is shining and it's a little cool we had a good rain last night.

The pictures you sent are all real good, they got here in good condition. The little children are real sweet.

We went to Sylacauga last Sunday evening and visited Marvin¹ & Beadie². She is back at home now, but sure looks bad. Marvin said he was about give out, trying to work an keep house to. She stayed in the hospital 4 weeks.

Matthew³ came by to see us Tuesday night, he had been to Ozark. He spent the night with Mother⁴.

He said they was all alrite.

Wish you could have been here to eat Thanksgiving dinner with us today, hope you will next year.

Daddy just worked 3 days in the mill⁵ this week he's off until Monday.

You got another statement from Shell Oil Co. for \$4.60 this week it was for gas you got in Denver the 7-30-68.

I mailed them a money order for it yesterday. I didn't want to send it on to you, so I paid it for you, and you can pay me back. I am keeping up with everything, ha ha.

I will stop for now, take care of yourself and write when you can.

Our love to you from: mother and daddy.

1. Marvin Thomaston, Mother's brother.
2. Beadie Thomaston, Uncle Marvin's wife.
3. Matthew Thomaston, Mother's youngest brother.
4. Sula Thomaston, my grandmother.
5. Dan River Mills textile plant, Clanton AL.

From my grandmother, Arsula Belle Mitchell Thomaston, who was born October 29, 1890, and died January 13, 1982:

Jan. 7, P.M. -- 69.

Dear Colyn Moatts¹ i hope this will find you feelin fine i am a bout like usal up an able to eat. all rest are very well far as i no. some have colds, but none of us has had the flue. i am all ways glad to hear from you. Eurell tells me when she gets a letter from you. her and Clay² looks forward to hear from you, i no you are good to write them. so write to them often as you can an all the rest will no how you are i had a nice Christmas. our weather has been very cold since then, but its just winter time here. do you ever get to go to meeting³. i hope you do. but as you know

[page] 2/ how to pray, when you have time you can talk to the ones a round you an tell them a bout our Dear Lord Jesus. may be you can be a lot of help to some of them in that way. i pray every day for you an all the others over there, i know that there is no distance in prayer. Dear God is every where he knows all things, for that Good Spirit is every where. please forgive me for not writen no sooner. i havent forgot you at all Love all ways from Grand Mother Sula Thomaston.

1. Grandmother always included given name and surname in her greetings.
2. My dad, Thomas Clay Moatts.
3. Worship services.

From my sister, Shirley Anne Moatts Livingston, now living in Columbiana, AL:

Monday March 3 [1969]

Dear Brother,

I hope things are o.k. with you. I've had a ruff week, but my problems are just that—my problems—I'm sorry I'm late writing you, but I have been thinking about you.

Mother and Daddy went to Georgia to get Aunt Kate¹ this past weekend. Colyn, you wouldn't believe it, she's pitiful. When I saw her Saturday, I wanted to cry. She's changed so much. She weighs 107 lbs. and looks terrible and she's so humble. It's just like she wants you to tell her what to do. I know they must have been mean to her in that [hospital]. I

doubt if she would have lived another month if she had to stay there.

I'm glad your going to get to go to Taipei. It should be a pleasant change for you. Be careful and take care of yourself.

Love,
Shirley

1. *My dad's sister, Kate Louise Moatts Ellison Griffin, who waged a lifelong battle with bipolar disorder, a battle that was compounded by two difficult marriages. She died in 1978.*

From my mother:

Clanton Ala.

April 6 - 69

Dear Colyn

How is my boy this Easter Sunday? Fine I hope, as for us we are doing very well.

It has been a long hard day. We buried Uncle Burns Goodgame¹ this afternoon, but he went quick & easy he never did say a word after he was struck. he went out to the nurseing home to see his sister and was standing by her bed talking to her when he went down.

They come home from Auburn Friday afternoon and he called up here soon as he got home. He said he was doing fine & wanted us to come down there to see him yesterday, but he died about 8³⁰ yesterday morning. There sure was a lot of pretty flowers and lots of people at the funeral.

Mama Moatts² stayed up here, but Mary³ & Lewis⁴ have already gone.

It rained some yesterday but it has been a pretty nice day today.

Mother and all the rest here are doing pretty good.

I got me a new suit, hat & bag for Easter but I didn't get to use them today, but I can wear them later.

I will stop for now. You write when you can & take care of your self.

We love you very much.

By for now, from Mother.

1. *My dad's uncle by virtue of Uncle Burns's marriage to Dad's aunt, Tommie Lee Moatts Goodgame.*
2. *My dad's stepmother, Nancy Julissa Wells Moatts; "Mama" died in 1973.*
3. *My dad's half-sister, Mary Will Moatts Golson.*
4. *My dad's brother-in-law, Lewis Golson.*

From my father, Thomas Clay Moatts, who was born June 7, 1913, and died July 17, 1987:

Clanton, Ala.

April 6, 1969

Dear Colyn:

I hope you are doing alrite We are doing pretty good. We didn't get to go to church today Uncle Burns passed away yesterday an they had the funeral today he had a heart attack while he was out at the nursing home to see his sister Mrs Bell Thompson he always said you was a good boy an always said tell you he asked about you but we all have to go sometime an that is a good way to go. My chickens are still laying mighty good we have plenty of eggs to use. I made \$36.00 last week on the side that is pretty good. We are off for Easter Monday so I am going to paint tomorrow I will make \$22.00 if I work 11 hours. I have got me a good boy to work with me he likes to make the green stuff like I do. His name is Thurl Adams & he sure is a good worker an I am lucky to have him he works at the mill to you be good an the time sure is passing so fast you will be home before long.

I will close for this time With Love

Dady

From my mother:

Clanton, Ala.

April 9 - 69

Dear Colyn

Just a few lines to say hello.

We got your letter Monday & was glad to hear from you.

As for us we are doing alrite, only about to burn up today it is about 78 deg bet that sounds cool to you, but it seems real hot to us.

Sure glad your volleyball team won. I know its a honor to be elected Chairman of the Officers Council¹, And we are real proud of you, but I don't want you to take on so much that you cant get enough rest.

You can be over loaded you know, and that's not good for you.

So take it easy.

Have you gotten your drivers License yet? I mailed them to you. I went out to see Aunt Ida² yesterday afternoon, she is lots better her face has cleared up a lot³.

Mama Moatts is still up here, she is doing fine.

We sure have a lot of pretty flowers blooming now & the leaves are coming on the trees. Daddy is painting

Raymond Lawley's house. I better stop for now.
Write when you can & be sweet we love you.
By from Mom & Pop.

1. *Phu Cat Air Base Junior Officers' Council.*
2. *Ida Mae Thomaston Ray, my mom's oldest sister; Aunt Ida died in 2003.*
3. *From injuries received in an automobile crash.*

To be continued... (?)

////////////////

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CHILTONIAN

Volume 32, Number 4

October 2012

QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chilton County Historical Society will hold its quarterly meeting at 2:00 PM on Sunday, October 14th, at the Chilton/Clanton Public Library. The program had not been finalized when the newsletter went to press, but all members of the Society and other Chilton citizens who are interested in our county's history and its preservation are encouraged to attend.

CREDITS:

Chiltonian is a quarterly publication of the Chilton County Historical Society & Archives, Inc.
P. O. Box 644, Clanton, Alabama 35046-0644
(A Non-Profit Organization)

OFFICERS:

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MEMBERSHIP RATES:

Annual: Individual \$9, Couple \$12, Student \$5
(Dues payable in January)

Lifetime: \$100

NOTE: ON YOUR ADDRESS LABEL, THE TWO-DIGIT NUMBER AFTER YOUR NAME INDICATES THE YEAR THROUGH WHICH YOUR DUES ARE PAID. AN "L" INDICATES LIFE MEMBER.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Looks like you're stuck with another installment of *A Year for My Profit: Letters to Vietnam, 1969*. Yet again, no one has submitted any kind of alternative article for publication in this quarter's *Chiltonian*. Therefore, we continue—at least for one additional quarter—the compilation of letters that I received during my first year as an Air Force officer in Vietnam. So, here we go... again.

A Year For My Profit

Letters to Vietnam
1969

By
Colyn Clay Moatts
© 2012

The Letters (continued)

[Reminder] NOTE: The letters are transcribed in chronological order with original spellings and grammar, and although some letters are missing—my mother wrote to me at least once each week—one can easily get a sense of the times and home-front events from the letters here included. Sensitive or pejorative words and phrases [and occasionally an entire letter] have been redacted, as appropriate.

From my father:

Clanton, Ala.
April 13, 1969

Dear Colyn:

I hope you are doing alrite we are doing fine the weather sure is getting pretty the flowers are beautiful Mother's thrift sure is pretty it is a little early to tell you but we are looking forward to seeing you in

September ha. I have been working this week I have made \$76.00 on the side not to bad. I could have worked 3 more hours yesterday but I quit at 3.30 so I could mow Mothers yards they are so pretty the rye grass is so green it looks black. We went to church there wasent to many at preaching. Dr¹ was gone when the cat is away the mouse will play. Uncle Rudolph² is doing pretty good but feeble he cant walk to good. Mama stayed with us a few days this week she is getting along fine so far. Uncle Billie³ has really been catching the fish he went Thursday evening by his self an caught 20 that is good. You write when you can be good an we still Love you
(Your car⁴ is alrite) dady

1. Dr. J. Gilbert Hutchinson, pastor (at the time) of the First Baptist Church in Clanton.
2. My dad's uncle Rudolph Moatts, died 1971.
3. My dad's half-brother, Billy Dalton Moatts, died 2008.
4. My lime-green, 1968 Mustang.

From my mother:

Clanton, Ala.
April 13 - 69

Dear Colyn

How is my old sweet boy today?
Fine I hope, as for us we are doing alrite. It is a dark rainy day here. It started raining in the night & has rained alday.

We went to church this morning, there was 401 there. I was going to make some pictures this afternoon, the flowers are just beautiful I think they are about the prettyiest I have ever seen.

I have some colored film so the flowers should make real good pictures.

Shirley got her chop sticks from you yesterday, she sure was proud of them.

The chickens have slowed down they are not laying as many as they did,

but we are still getting enough to do us.

Ida & Jesse¹ are doing a lot better since I wrote you about the wreck.

Mother & all the rest are getting along pretty good.

Matt came through Clanton for a little while one day this week,

he said they was doing alrite.

Well as news is short I better stop for now & let daddy go mail this.

be sweet & write when you can, take care.

We love you, by for now from Mom.

1. My mom's brother-in-law, Jesse Ray.

From my father:

Clanton Ala.
April 27 1969

Dear Colyn:

We are doing fine an hope you are. I have been very buisey this week doing some small Jobs. We started on another very large house that will take about 3 weeks to complet don't worry about me working to hard I enjoy my work an have a good boy working with me. he is 21 years old an don't mind working I sure do enjoy working with him he is married an before he married he bought his home an furniture so you see he is a good boy. Colyn the time is passing very fast so it won't be long before you will be home. My chickens are doing alrite I got 31 eggs this week we went on day ligh saving time today I sure am proud of it. Mothers flowers an yards are beautiful the car is doing fine I have just cranked it up an let it run some. I still love you very much an will be glad when you get home

With Love
Daddy

From my mother:

Clanton, Ala.
April 27 - 69

Dear Colyn

Just a note to say hello, I hope this finds you doing alrite.

As for us we are doing pretty good.

it is a pretty day here, it was pretty cool last night.

We have been to church & just got through with dinner¹.

There wasn't to many in church just about 450.

We went on daylight saveing time today, so I guess a lot of people slept late.

I am sending you this beauty that I got out of the paper, thought you might like to old Alabama's first ha ha. [?]

Mother & all the rest are doing very well here,

so I better stop for now & go mail this.

be sweet & take care we love you. Write when you can.

by for now from Mom.

1. Southern for "lunch."

From my father:

Clanton, Ala.
May 4 1969

Dear Colyn:

hope you are doing alrite we are doing fine. the weather is so beautiful at this time of the year. Mothers yards sure are pretty. I don't have time to help her very much with them, but I do mow them for her. I am getting all the work I can do now I am going to slow down some an just do the easy jobs. No use to climb a tree when you can get all the apples you want on the ground, ha. Uncle Lewis an Mary – Mama were up here yesterday they are all rite Your car is out in the back yard taking a sun bath it sure does look good an runs good We start it nearly every day. Billy has been catching lots of fish, I haven't been this year. It won't be to long before you will be home now the time sure dos pass in a hurry so be good an don't forget to write for I look forward to those letters.

With Love
Daddy

From my mother:

May 4th – 69

Clanton, Ala.

Dear Colyn

Just a few lines to say hello.

hope this finds you doing alrite, as for us we are doing pretty good. have been to church & just got through with lunch. it is a cloudy cool day, I lit the heater this morning. Nell¹ & Vernon² came by before they went back home. Kate got part of her things moved in to her apartment yesterday, it will be real nice when she gets everything fixed up.

daddy's chickens have slowed down some but they are still doing pretty good.

Wish you could be here next Sunday for Mother's day, but I know you can't. I think Matt & folks Marvin & Beadie, Alvin³ & Nell⁴, Ruth⁵ & folks Leon⁶, Edith⁷ & family are all comeing to Mothers next weekend.

We are keeping Shirley's cat, but we give her little dog away. I couldn't keep him, 3 cats keep me busy feeding them ha ha. I will stop for now, be sweet & take care write when you can. We love you.

by from Mom.

1. Cousin Nell Goodgame Klinner, daughter of Uncle Burns and Aunt Tommie Lee.
2. Cousin Nell's husband, Vernon Klinner.
3. My mother's brother, Alvin Thomaston.
4. Uncle Alvin's second wife, Aunt Nell.
5. My mother's sister, Ruth Thomaston Lindsay.

6. My mother's brother, Leon Thomaston.

7. Uncle Leon's wife, Aunt Edith.

From my cousin, Anita Louise Thomaston, a daughter of my Uncle Matthew (Mother's brother) and Aunt Jane:

10555 Thrasher Road
Jonesboro, Georgia 30236
May 2, 1969

Dear Colyn,

I'm sorry I haven't written in so long. BUSY, BUSY, BUSY!!! I suppose you are too. I finnally found a minute in Study Hall to write.

In English class we are putting out the school paper, the "Devil's Trident." For the past three weeks we've been working on it. Yesterday we started 'laying it out' and today we finished it. There is a story about our Christmas project to Vietnam in it. Cheryl Roberts and I wrote it. I'll send you a copy of it. Hopefully, it is coming out next Friday (May 9). We have to sell at least 500 copies (10c each) to pay for the printing.

Also on May 9 our Drama Club is in a play competition, with two other schools. Our entry is "Sorry, Wrong Number". I'm a prompter and an understudy.

On May 10 we (the family) are going to Alabama to see Grandma Sula for Mother's Day.

I don't know if I told you, but I'm in the National Junior Beta Club. You have to keep a 90 average grade-wise to stay in it. We are going to Six Flags over Georgia either next weekend or the one after that.

On May 16 I am in a play called "The Solid Gold Cadillac." I'm a newscaster. Miss Mears (remember?) is in charge of publicity. Seems like all she's ever doing anymore is making posters.

At school I'm running for Vice-President of next year's Student Council. We'll have elections May 16. Campaigns start May 12.

Tomorrow, May 3 our Clayton Highlands Civic Club is sponsoring a May Carnival. I guess you know that Dad is president of the Civic Club.

On Wednesday April 30 we got report cards. I made straight A's except for ... one A+ in English. Next year I will be taking English, Algebra, French I, Band, Georgia History, & Physical Science.

And NOW for the NEWS of the PAST!

On February 22 we had a science fair. I entered a project but didn't win anything. One boy, Richard Mitterzwei went all the way to the State Fair winning 4th place there.

On March 28, 29, & 30 our Girl Scout troop went on a camping trip. We were supposed to have platform tents but one was torn down and I was burned [sic]. The leader's cabin was also torn down. We stayed in a thing that was like a screened-in porch. We went wading in a mountain stream.

On April 3 I went to see "Caberet" at the Atlanta Civic Center. We got tickets for ½ price - \$3.25. It was weird.

On April 30 I got my hair cut. Its fairly short.
FUTURE NEWS ...

Janet¹ and Nancy¹ are going to be in a dance recital. Jan has a solo. Her costume is red. Nancy's is yellow with a tuttu.

Our band's Spring Concert is May 18. Miss Barber sure picked a dumb title "Hair, the Long and the Short of It." Whoever sells the most tickets gets a \$50 scholarship to go to music camp this summer.

This summer I'm going to be taking oboe lessons. So, sometime in the future I'm hoping to get an oboe, maybe. As you probably know, oboes are quite expensive.

Well I'll write you around Friday.
Take care of yourself!

Love,
Anita

1. Anita's younger sisters.

To be continued... (?)

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