

where they were married on December 18, 1924. They sent a telegram to the Dickenson's which read, "Married today. Very happy." Mary Lona, still angry, was said to have replied "Any fool can be happy for two hours."

Shaky beginnings in marriages don't necessarily lead to poor results. After five children and more than sixty happy years of living together, they concluded their vows when "death did them part." Homer passed away on May 21, 1986.

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#### Bobby Gibson

Ma told me that once, about the time Uncle Homer was a small boy, she decided to knit all of her children a pair of stockings for their Christmas present from her. She started knitting early in the fall and knitted and knitted and finished all but one stocking before Christmas Eve. She knitted all night and finished the last stocking just before dawn on Christmas day in time to put them out for the Christmas presents with the oranges and candy and one toy or other present for each child which Pa would have bought.

Tolbert Newton Lester was born January 30, 1839, in his father and mother's home on the Cleveland Road in Clarke County, Georgia, about two years after the family had moved from Oglethorpe County to Clarke County. He died in Athens on July 15, 1928. He was the youngest of the nine brothers out of eleven sons of Lewis Lester, Sr., who fought in the Civil War. He enlisted early in the war and fought till the end of the war. The official roster which he had states that he served in Company C of Johnson's Guards of the 44th Regular Georgia Volunteers, Dole's Brigade, Rhodes' Division, Third Army Corp, Army of Northern Virginia. It further recites that he was wounded at Chancelorsville on May 3, 1863, was captured at Spotsylvania Courthouse on May 10, 1864, and was later exchanged. When I was a small boy I used to hear a lot of talk about the Civil War and about Grandpa Lester's service in the war. My recollection has always been that Pa and Ma said that he was wounded three times, captured three times and exchanged three times. Once I think I



remembered the names of the battles in which he was wounded and captured, but unless I have made a notation which I did not find upon a recent search I have forgotten. Attached to these remembrances is a copy of the service records of his eight brothers who also served in the war.

Great grandfather Francis Marion McLeroy also enlisted in the Confederate Army early in the war, and after about a year he was discharged in late 1862 because he was a miller and a minister. I have his discharge papers and will report more on him at another time.

One of Pa's favorite sports was hunting crows. He would dress in an old dark suit with a dark shirt and dark hat, pack a cane bottom chair, his shotgun and a handful of his various crow callers in the car, and go out to what he thought was a likely spot on one of his farms. He would set up the chair and start calling crows either through his cupped hands or with one of the various crow callers. If a crow came within the range of his gun he almost invariably brought it down. I am sure he had more trouble keeping little boys like Julius and me quiet than in winging the crows.

He delighted in telling the story of having winged a pair of crows which he retrieved and took back to town with him. He drove straight to Dr. E. H. Hill's backyard (pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Athens who lived on Hill Street. The house was destroyed in the extensive additions to Athens Regional Medical Center). He pulled up to the back porch; the cook came out and spoke to him and he asked her if Dr. Hill was in. When told that Dr. Hill was not in he produced the pair of crows and asked the cook to put them in a box for Dr. Hill. She said, "Lordy Mr. Jim. What's Dr. Hill gonna do with them crows?" Pa said, "He's gonna split their tongues and teach 'em to sing so they can sing in the choir at the Presbyterian Church." She nearly fell out laughing at the idea of crows singing in the Presbyterian choir.



It wasn't on a crow hunt, but once I was riding with Pa out to his farm off the Tallassee Road past the McLeroy family cemetery (the part of great-grandfather McLeroy's farm which Uncle Frank McLeroy received in the distribution of his father's estate and which Pa bought from him). It was in the early afternoon after dinner in the summertime and before reaching the farm Pa passed under a tree growing on the side of the road and shading part of the road. He stopped the car in the shade, opened all the doors, pulled his panama hat down over his eyes and told me to play in the sand while he took a little nap. I picked up a twig or two and doodled in the sand and the dusty clay of the road but it didn't take long for me to get bored with sitting on the running board doodling. I soon started asking questions. "Pa, what's that over there in that tree?" He would push his hat up and try to answer, then pull it down and try to nod a bit more until my next question. Finally after this went on a few minutes he pushed his hat up and said "Son, why do you talk so much?" I answered "Well Pa, I don't know but I guess maybe I'll be a preacher like Dr. Cartledge." He couldn't wait to crank up the car, drive back to town, go to see Dr. Sam Cartledge and tell him what I said.)

Mother's memory of Pa's first car being the second one in town is a little exaggerated but it was an early car in town. Neither of us remember what kind of car it was but he used to tell about ordering the car and it arriving by rail strapped to a flatcar. Because he did not know how to drive and none of the family did, he asked Carl Fowler, a relative descended from E. S. Lester, Tolbert Newton Lester's brother, who had a reputation of knowing how to drive a car to go with him to the station to get the car. He loaded up the surrey with several of the children and Carl Fowler and headed to the depot. They put some planks to the flatcar and Carl drove the car off the car onto the ground. Someone was sent home with the surrey and everyone else piled into the touring car and Carl drove them around eventually ending up at home. They could only go forward because Carl had not learned how to back. Pa did drive cars from that time, about 1907, until the middle of World War II when the engine of his 1935 Buick froze and split. This solved the family's problem of finally putting a stop to Papa driving. Pa told me that he had once an open touring car with improved brakes and he was coming



along Oglethorpe near the Holman place (beyond Sunset Drive) when he saw a black man working in the field who owed him some money and wasn't making much effort to repay it. He slammed on the brakes to stop and call at the black man but unfortunately the improved brakes were so improved that they stopped instantly and threw him out of the car over the windshield and hood into the road. He said the black man came running out of the field up to the road, hovered over him "Lawsy Mr. Jim, is you hurt? Is you hurt?" Pa said "I propped up on my elbows and looked at him and said 'No, I'm not hurt, but you are gonna' be hurt if you don't pay me that money you owe me'."

When I was about three years old and Elizabeth was about eight Pa and Ma took us with them to Macon to visit Aunt Ruth and Uncle Holman. The road was not paved and the driving was hard so Pa asked Uncle Grady to go along and help drive. The car was a seven passenger Dodge sedan. South of Eatonton the road had had a lot of grading, widening, etc., possibly for paving, and rain had made the soft red dirt into slippery mud. Uncle Grady hit a spot which grabbed the car and turned it upside down on the roof. They laughed about me and said that I ended up standing on my head on the ceiling of the car. We all were sort of dumped into a heap on the inside ceiling. The doors would not open but we finally were able to raise windows enough to crawl out. In a few minutes another big car came along the road driven by a black doctor from Macon who had as passengers two other men. He stopped and had Ma, Elizabeth and I get in his car out of the light rain coming down while he, his two passengers, Uncle Grady and Pa uprighted Pa's car. We then all got back in and finished our trip to Macon.

On another similar trip to Macon the car skid off the road and knocked a mailbox down. Fortunately the ditch was not deep and no assistance was necessary to continue the trip; only pay damages for the knocked down mailbox.