

- **Claiborne County (TN) Progress**

## **Nell Quesenbery Report**

**August 13, 1981**

### **TO CHERISH UNTIL DEATH**

By Nell Quesenbery

*“All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28*

Sometimes, certain men are called to express great devotion and service to their almost completely disabled mates. These men whom by the time of their labors, are themselves quite grey and have paid heavily the tolls of old age.

Necessarily, they find themselves searching, deeply within for wells of courage and a will to effort. This is at a time when they believed being in the grip of their old age, hopefully they were destined for a sheltered ending.

Now they must become as tender as a woman, the care of the mate's disabled bodies falling completely within their gentle old hands.

Just here in Lone Mountain, my father, Dennis Marchio, like a knight of old, bears this burden. Ed Shumate, now almost ninety years old, had cared for his wife, Cecil, until her death. Fred Wells has cared for Alice well over a decade now.

In New Tazewell, A.J.'s Department Store clerks were busy selling out their stock at 75 percent discount. Coming out of the store onto the sidewalk, I saw a plump grey haired lady, standing, waiting, holding to her walker. Her intelligently alert brown eyes found mine.

Recognizing that she bore all the signs of a major stroke victim, as does my mother, I smilingly walked over to her. I could feel the intense heat rising from the sidewalk and striking from all around us.

Cheerily, I said, "Hi. You've had a bad stroke, haven't you? I know because my mother has had one. She is even more disabled than you." Grinning, I told her, "I'm very fond of stroked folks."

The gentle woman, her large brown eyes fastened upon my own told me, "Yes, I've had a stroke a few years ago. I was unable to walk for two years. My husband had to do everything for me. Then he had to have open heart surgery. I had to go stay with my son's family. They were good to me, but I became so disturbed, I began to walk."

Just then, a tall greying man, still handsome, with brightly aware brown eyes stepped from a long, older model blue Oldsmobile, parked on the street. He came to where the lady stood.

Not knowing me, he protectively sized up the situation. Then feeling eased, he too gently and courteously joined into our discussion, which due to the extreme heat must end soon.

He told me his name was Cluster Simmons. He spoke about his heart attack. I spoke of my father's care of my mother. I also recalled to Mr. Simmons that I'd called him a few years ago seeking information about the "Yoakums." One of his ancestors was Helen Yoakum from Powell's Valley, Tennessee.

I asked the Simmons to come to Lone Mountain to visit with me. Standing on the sidewalk, I watched the large blue car pull away, remembering what I knew of the Simmons.

Oddly, I saw their land before I ever knew their name. Years before, riding along the Pole Cat Hollow Road towards the Meyer's Grove community, I began to spot one beautiful, lavishly cared for field after another. Impressed, I searched for a name on their mail box. "Simmons," I told Jack. "Yes," he replied. "These folks are large dairy farmers." "How very rich looking everything is," I said.

I knew from the Maude Kinkaid "Yoakum Information" that in her search she had visited Cluster's father, Zee Simmons. Also, Zee had gone to Ray County, Missouri, to visit his cousin Maude before his death. I'd read copies of several letters Maude and Zee had exchanged.

In the late 70s, upon the direction of my cousin Dick Yoakum, I called Cluster Simmons to see if he had more information on the Yoakums. He was quite ill and asked me to call his brother, Frank Simmons, who responded to my call most kindly.

The Sunday near the fourth of July of '81, I saw a long blue Oldsmobile coming up my hill. It was my new friends, Cluster and Lillie Simmons. The Simmons left just before a small thunderstorm arrived, penetrating our heavy curtain of heat. I promised I'd write a little story about them for our local paper, The Claiborne County Progress.

Cluster, in the midst of shellie beans, green beans, tomatoes, beets, berries and corn, carefully sent me several handwritten pages containing his family history.

Cluster's information:

*In regards to the Simmons' farm, it has been in the family since it was first settled upon. My great grandparents, grandparents and parents are buried in the family cemetery here on the place.*

*I have been here all of my life. My wife and I have been "sweethearts" from our early school days at Meyer's Grove school.*

*Lillie is the daughter of the late James and Molly Ford. We were married on her dad's front porch January 4, 1931. I was also born on January 4 in 1912. Lillie was born February 26, 1914.*

*We have four wonderful children. First, Irene, she married John H. Ford. They have two boys. Wanda married Earl T. Holton from Murfreesboro, Tennessee. They have one son.*

*Then our oldest son, Hollis C. Simmons, married Norma Wyatt. Hollis is the pastor of the Red Hill Church in Powell's Valley, Tennessee. They have two children, Marvin and Sheila. Marvin is also a Baptist minister.*

*Our youngest son, Lee Roy Simmons, married Brenda Howard. She is the daughter of Rev. Yadon Howard. He is in the Navy. They have one son and one daughter. They live at Virginia Beach.*

*Hollis lives next to us. He is in the dairy business. We started milking in the early fifties. I had to retire in 1977 due to ill health. Irene lives in Wayne, Michigan. Wanda lives in White Bluff, Tennessee. We are proud of all our children, our grandchildren and two great grandchildren.*

*My wife Lillie suffered from a stroke January 3, 1977.*

*She lay in a bed for two years until she started to come around in 1979. Then I had open heart surgery at UT Hospital.*

*There were eight children in our family. These boys, Frank Simmons preceded in death December 24, 1980. Otis Simmons lives near New Tazewell, Route 2, New Tazewell.*

*The five girls are Nellie Kelly, a widow who lives in Monroe, Michigan; Mrs. George (Eller) Good, widow, lives in Bell County, Kentucky; Cleo Davis, widow, New Tazewell; Hallie, the baby, married Walter Wilcox. They live at Route 2, New Tazewell.*

There is a love, a special kind of love, shining from the faces of these elderly lovers as they fulfill their pledge, given in their passionate youth.

*“To have and to hold; for better or worse; to cherish until death.”*

**July 4, 1981**

**CARL MULLINS**

Carl Mullins was born on the fourth of July, twenty-six years ago.

Carl's favorite hobby is taking photos of our local people and places. He signs his photos P.J., the letters P.J. standing for his nickname, which is "Poo-Jack."

Vacie Mullins, Carl's mother, has two other children, a son, Glen Mullins, and a daughter, Elsie Jane Seals.

Happy birthday, Carl Mullins. May you have many, many more.