



A Family Album

Compiled & Edited
by
Richard Patterson

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*Dedicated to
Kevin Paul Halloran
1960 - 1997*

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Preface

The impetus for this album came from the discovery of photos in the attic of the house at 2432 Henrietta Road in Birmingham in 1994 when Mother was moving to Cincinnati. In addition to all the snapshots in various drawers and albums, there were photos in trunks in the attic which I had never seen. I was amazed in particular to find several photos of John C. Wilson, a man whose ghost had haunted my consciousness for 50 years but whose actual likeness I had never seen. I volunteered to become the family archivist thinking that it would be nice if subsequent generations had access to the photos. I decided to make a desktop publishing project out of the photos, and it slowly evolved over the next seven years as the technology on my desktop caught up with my ambitions.

I discovered in the course of designing the layouts that I responded more strongly to a lot of the photos than I had originally realized. I began thinking that the project could become a kind of personal odyssey of self-discovery, and at various times I contemplated writing a much more personal narrative to accompany them. In the end I decided that it was best to save my own commentary for another time and tried to write more factual biographies of each person. I was embarrassed to discover that I had more information about my grandparents than I did my own siblings, so I enlisted the help of my brothers and sisters in composing their biographies. Each of them has contributed to his or her own biographical sketch, generally with reservations about writing a premature obituary. I thought about using the material provided by each sibling as a first person account, but decided against it using an argument about stylistic intergrity to justify my own desire to be editor-in-charge.

I tried to be fair in terms of the amount of space allocated to each sibling, and I drew the line with siblings rather than try to do chapters about each of our spouses and our children. The point was to collect the photos our parents had so they could be shared, not to write a definitive history of the family. What they had was not a definitive photographic record of their children. In a few instances I have added photos not found in the house, and needless to say I have not included all the photos we found. In soliciting input from each sibling I limited it to biographical information and additional photos. I did not accept bribes to suppress certain images, although it did occur to me that a large portion of the cost of this venture could have been defrayed in this manner.

I was fortunate to have a copy of the document distributed at the 1978 Patterson family reunion. I also drew on Gaga's book about her travels, Ruth Noble Golden's History of Tallassee and a pamphlet devoted to the genealogy of the Thrall family from whom Gaga was descended. Emory O'Shee Apple provided additional information about Myrtice Wilson's family, and I snooped through all kinds of documents from Mother's desk drawers on the pretense that it was legitimate research. I even used the resources of the Mormon Temple Genealogy Research library in Los Angeles and the U.S. Army archives as well as a variety of websites in an attempt to fill in some blanks. It has been more work than I ever imagined when I started, but I hope that others in the family will find it as satisfying and fun as I have.

*Richard Patterson
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