

See Armstrong file



Judith Cummins French
P. O. Box 1513
Bryson City, North Carolina
28713-1513
828-488-0319
Email: jfrench@dnet.net



June 9, 1998

Wilma Hiatt
Surry County Genealogical Association
P. O. Box 997
Dobson, NC 27017

Dear Wilma:

Thank you so very much for the response to my query regarding Martin Armstrong and his family. I am enclosing several items relating to this family for your society to place in the files at Surry Community College. In addition, I am sending a copy of my memories of Mt. Airy during World War II with pictures of some of my friends during my time there.

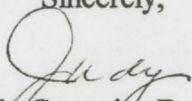
I will write to Carol Cassady in Lilburn, GA, and hopefully bring her into the small group of Armstrong searchers. One of these searchers is Judy Cardwell of your area. She is a descendant of Thomas Temple Armstrong, son of Martin. I will contact the others and encourage them to share their information with your society also. I would like to see a large file in Surry Co. for this family.

As editor of the "Bone Rattler," the quarterly published by the Swain County Genealogical Society, I would like to suggest a trade of quarterly and perhaps even heritage books. Our society has agreed to this, and if yours does also, we could have a great exchange of information. We are presently working to inventory all the cemeteries in Swain County and put them on line in the Tombstone Project on USGENWEB. There is also talk of putting them in book form.

I hope that the materials enclosed will spark some interest in others. The best part of genealogy is the sharing and meeting lost relatives.

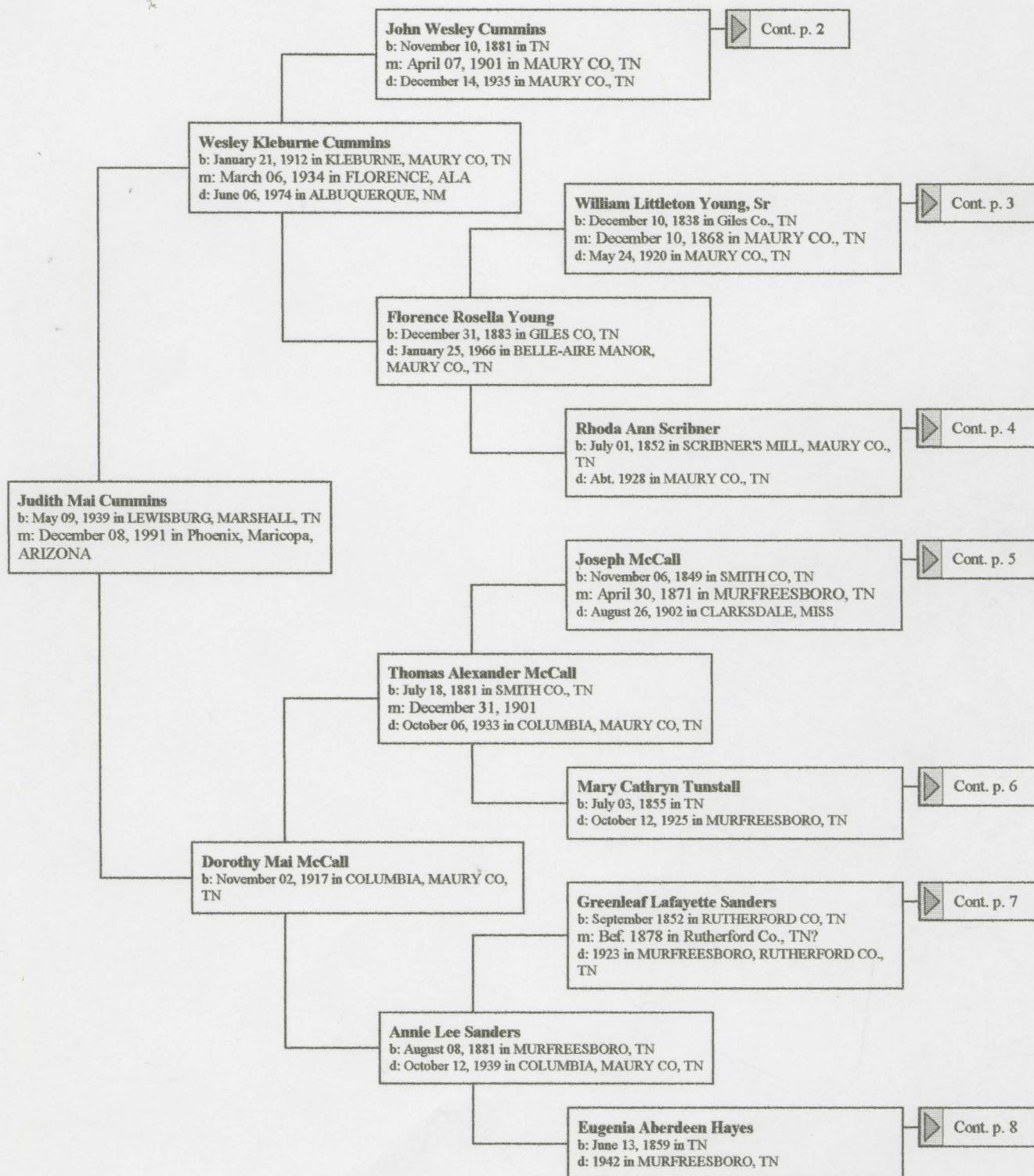
Thanks again for your response. Please ask your society to consider the exchange of materials with our society.

Sincerely,


Judy Cummins French

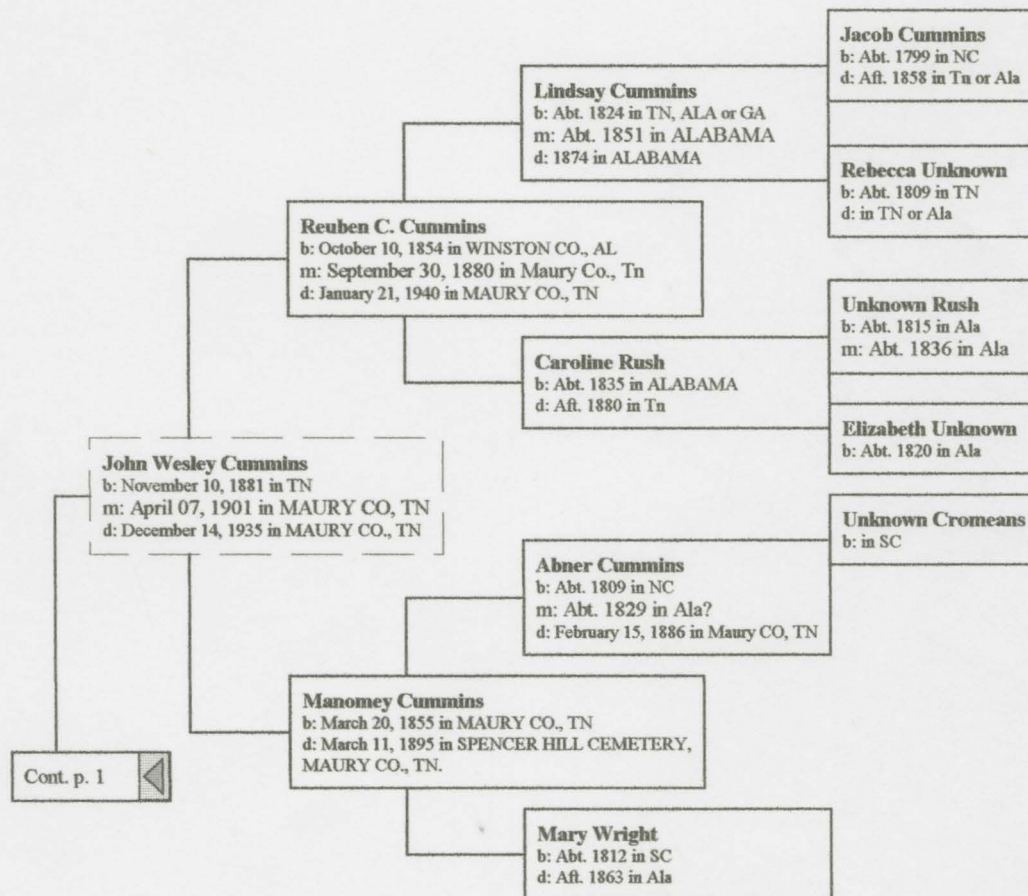
P.S. More Photos will follow.

Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (1 of 15)

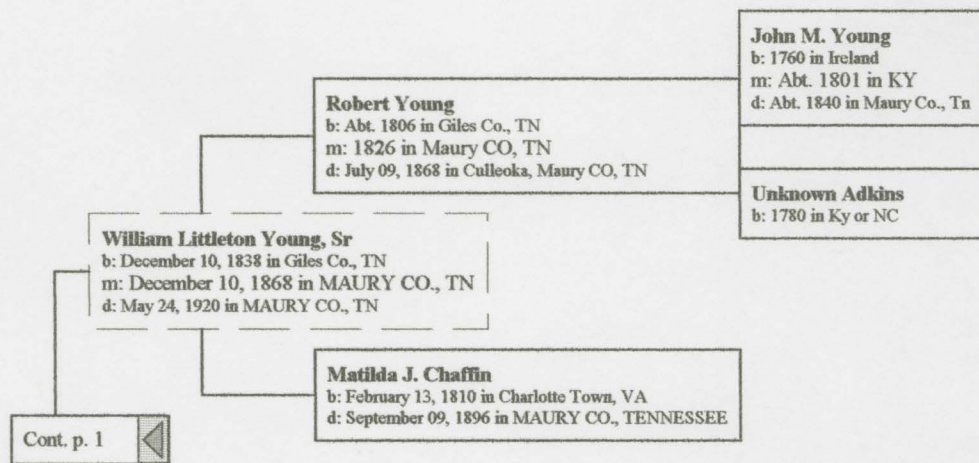


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P. O. Box 1513
Bryson City, N. C. 28713-1513
828-488-0319

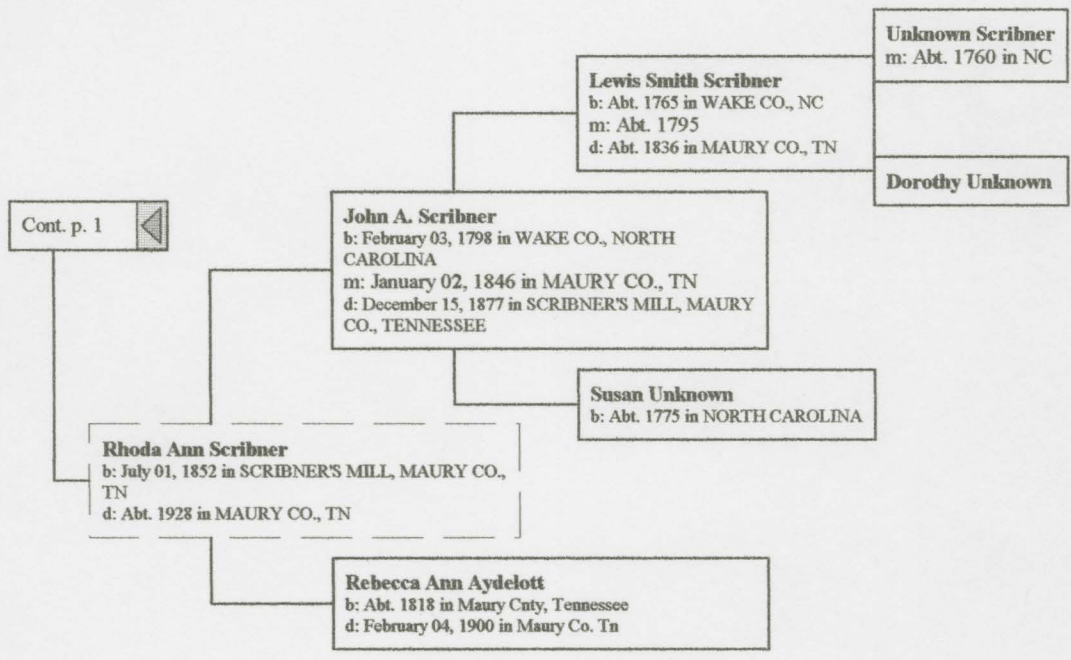
Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (2 of 15)



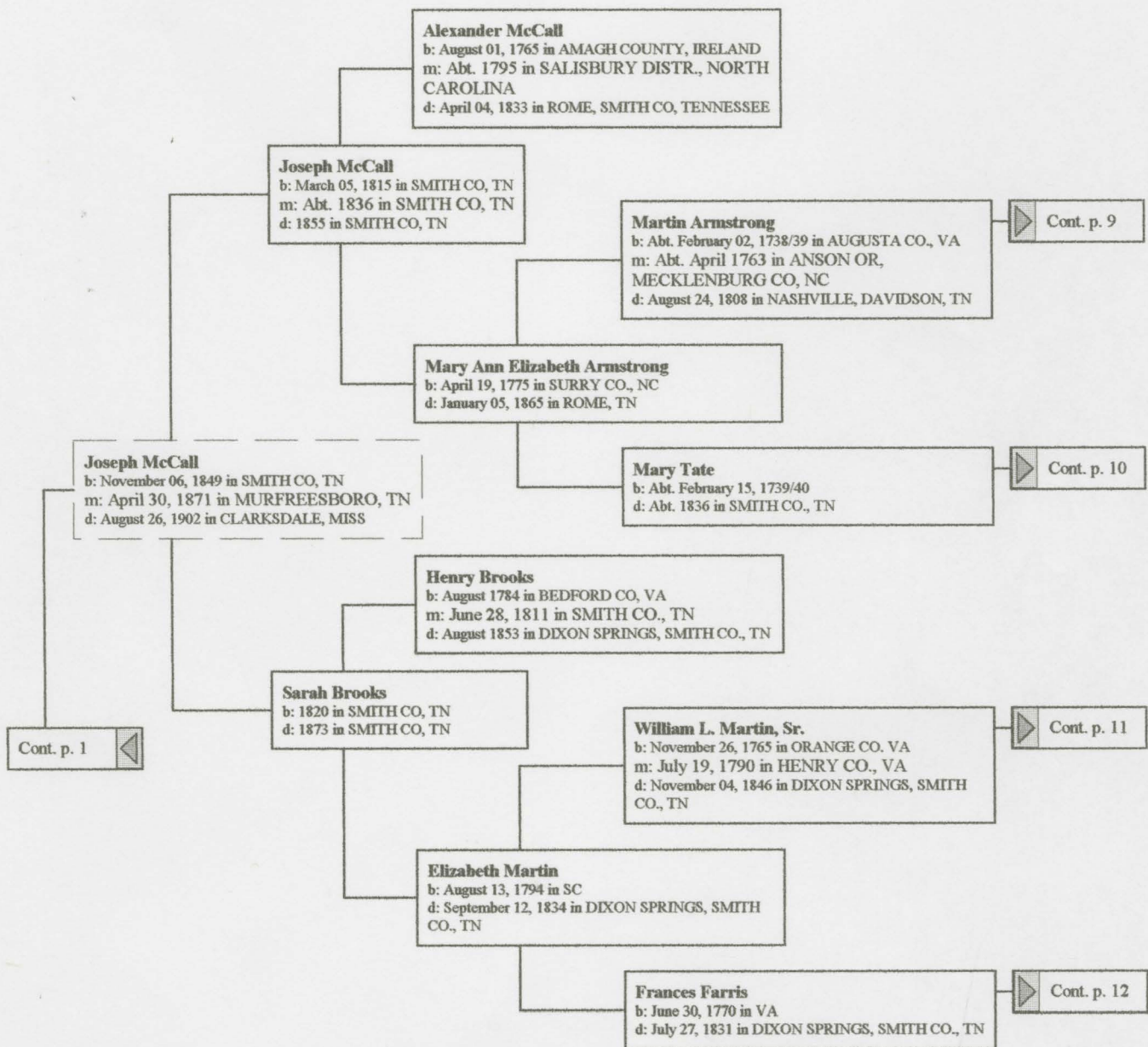
Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (3 of 15)



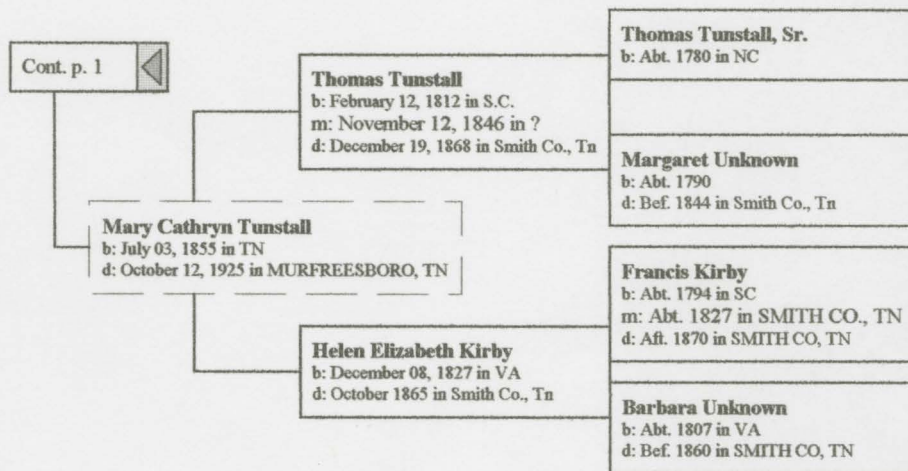
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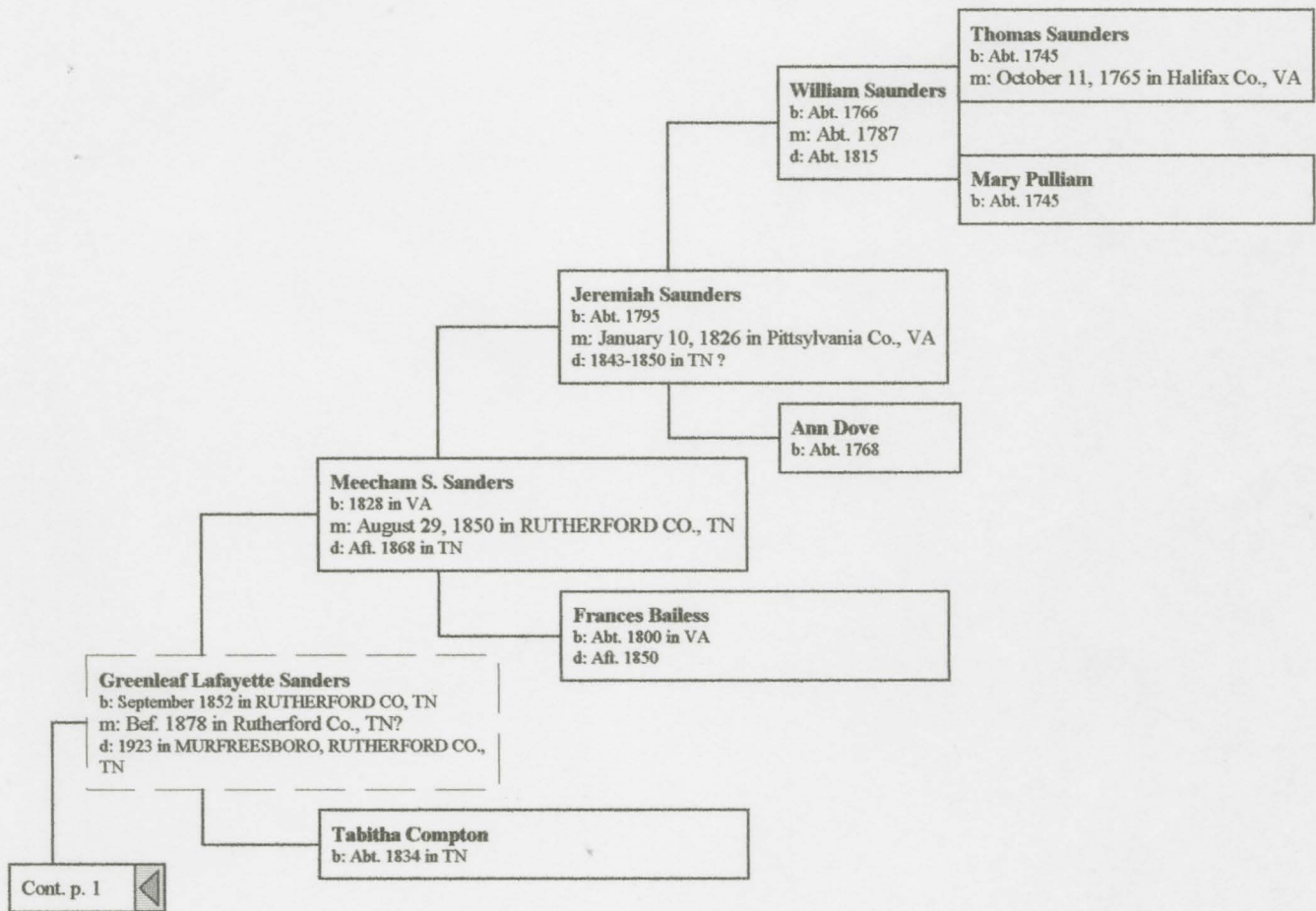
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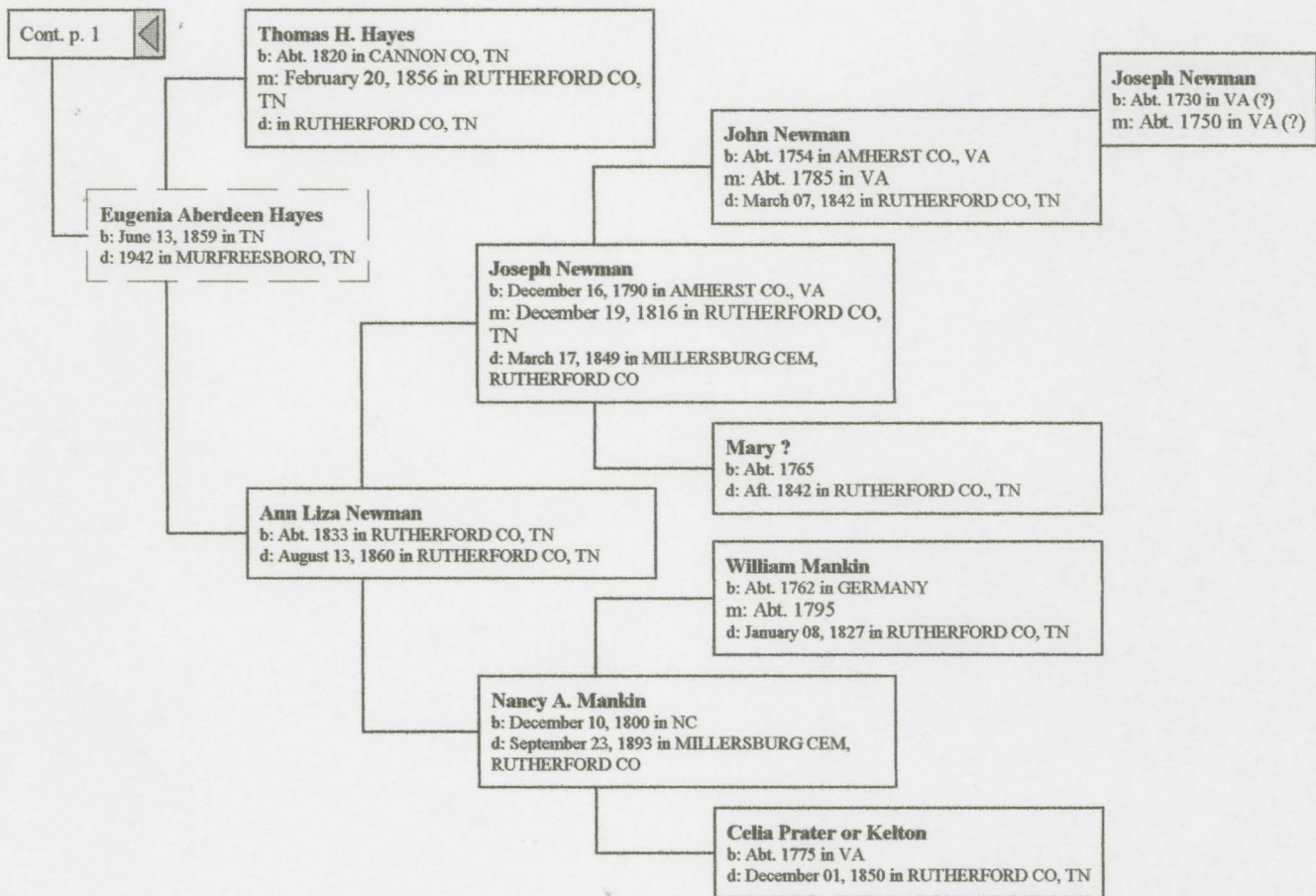
Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (6 of 15)



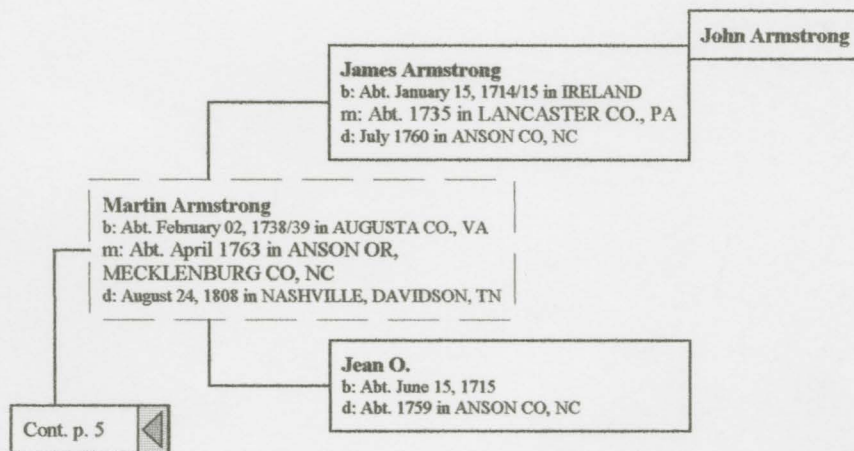
Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (7 of 15)



Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (8 of 15)



Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (9 of 15)



Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (10 of 15)

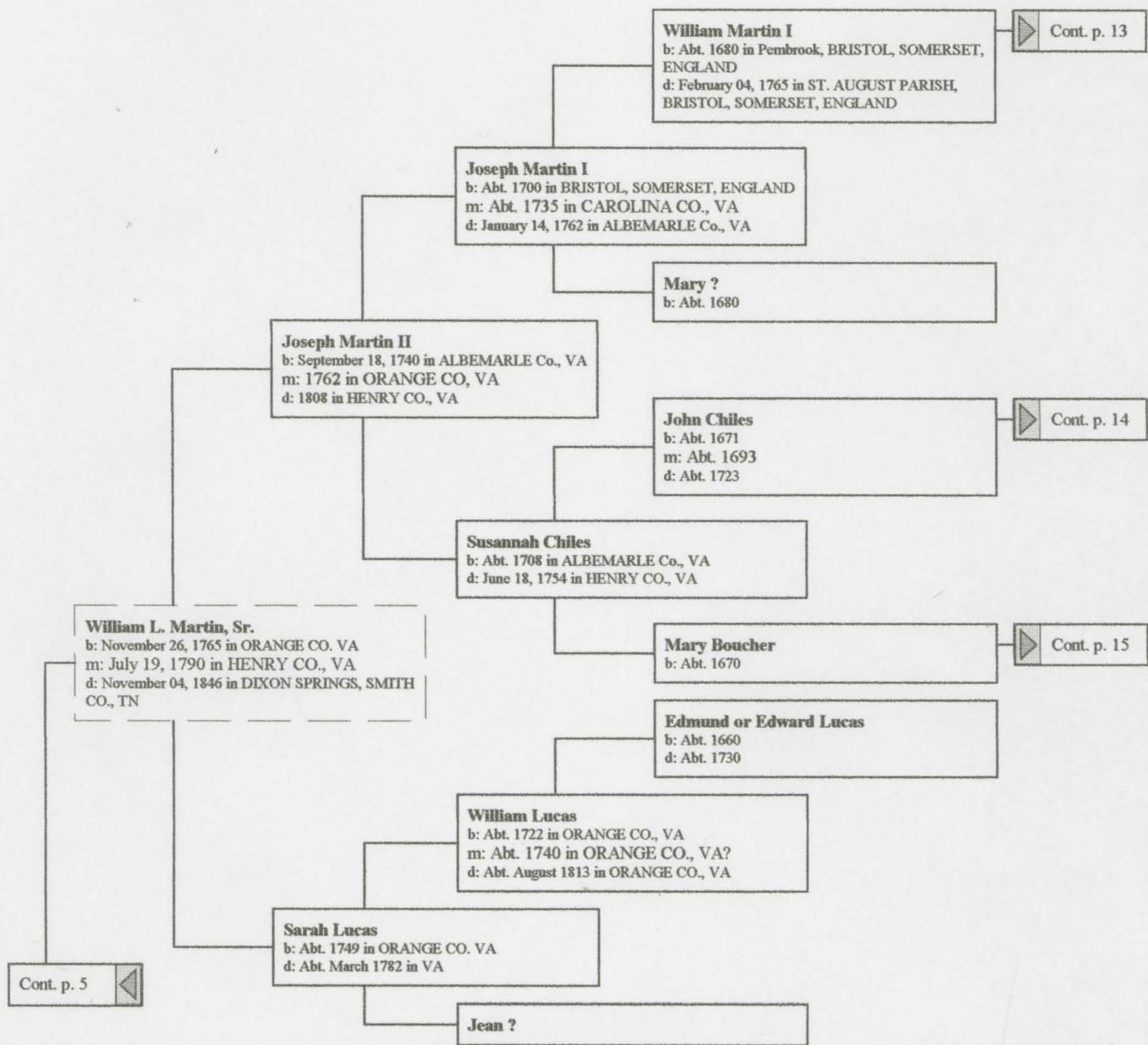
Cont. p. 5



? Tate
b: Abt. 1710

Mary Tate
b: Abt. February 15, 1739/40
d: Abt. 1836 in SMITH CO., TN

Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (11 of 15)



Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (12 of 15)

Cont. p. 5



Frances Farris
b: June 30, 1770 in VA
d: July 27, 1831 in DIXON SPRINGS, SMITH CO., TN

Jacob Farris
b: Abt. 1740 in VA
m: Abt. 1763 in VA
d: Abt. January 11, 1812 in HENRY CO., VA

Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (13 of 15)

William Martin I

b: Abt. 1680 in Pembroke, BRISTOL, SOMERSET,
ENGLAND
d: February 04, 1765 in ST. AUGUST PARISH,
BRISTOL, SOMERSET, ENGLAND

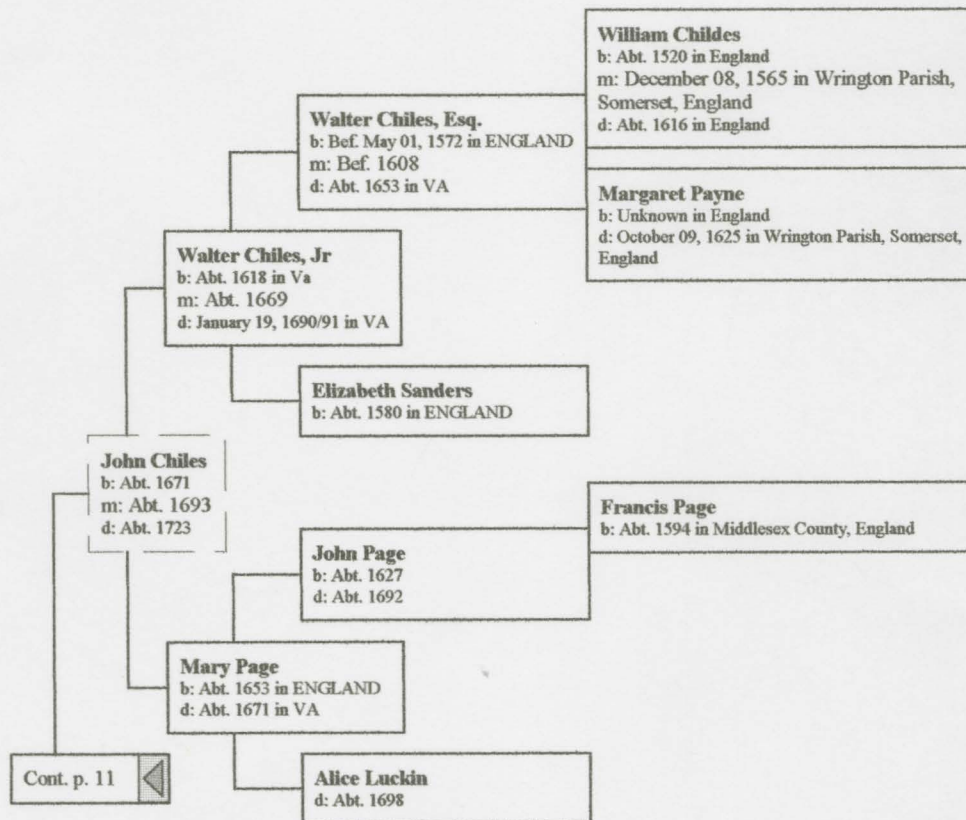
Martin De Tours Barron Of Emmeas

b: WFT Est. 1639-1668 in The Hauge, Neatherlands
m: WFT Est. 1663-1710
d: WFT Est. 1693-1753

Cont. p. 11



Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (14 of 15)



Ancestors of Judith Mai Cummins (15 of 15)

Cont. p. 11



Mary Boucher
b: Abt. 1670

William Boucher
b: Abt. 1645

My North Carolina

Childhood Memories



My Parents, my sister, and myself

Judith Mai Cummins French
P. O. Box 1513
Bryson City, NC 28713-1513
828-488-0319

Mount Airy, North Carolina



Barbara and I in our plaid taffeta dresses,
about 1945 in Mt. Airy, NC.

From Paris, we moved to Mount Airy, N.C., and we lived there until after the end of the war. This lovely little town in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains, just 10 miles south of the Virginia state line, holds a special place in my heart mostly because of the people I knew there.

When we first moved to Mt. Airy, we lived in a second floor apartment with a screened-in back porch. It must have been spring or fall when we moved there because I was wearing satin pj's that Mother had made for me. They had "frogs" for fasteners and, I think, they were gold satin with blue trim. The reason that I remember them so clearly is because one night after I had put them on I felt something crawling on my leg. I started screaming and trying to get them off. It was a bug and no harm was done, but the neighbor downstairs thought that someone had fallen off the screened on porch because of all the racket that I caused. I remember that I would walk to the Rockford Street School with Barbara so it must have been fairly close.

I believe it was while we were living here that Mother left me in the car at a service station while she went in for something. The car started to roll down to the street and I pushed on the brakes and stopped the car. When Daddy came home, I told him that I had saved a little girl's life that day by putting the brakes on and stopping the car. He asked "Who was that little girl?" and I said "ME! "



We moved to the house on Granite Street and became fond of the Hatcher sisters, "old maids" who lived across the street. Miss Lena and Miss Alice were their names and Miss Alice was a first grade schoolteacher at the near by Rockford Street School. They would come to visit with Mother and Allene and sit perched on their chairs as if ready to take flight at any moment. In 1994, I learned that Miss Alice retired and moved to Dobson, NC, and lived to be 97 years old.

I was so anxious to go to school that Miss Alice would spend time with me on Sat. teaching me the things I would be learning in the first grade. When I finally entered school, I only spent six weeks on the first

grade and was sent to the second grade to Miss Valentine. I was too disruptive in the first grade class because I already had learned all they were learning.

The school on Rockford Street had a wide sidewalk leading up to the front steps. This was used to separate the boys' playground from the girls' playground. If the boys and girls wanted to talk during recess, they would go to the center of the sidewalk. I often was in the area to talk to Jimmy Lee Ashburn or another friend (I cannot remember his name) from the orphanage outside of town.

Because so many of the children came from the outlying areas of Surry Co. with dirt roads, rainy days were often "teach-through" days. This meant that lunch period was shortened or skipped, and everyone went home at about 1 p.m.

About this time, the first of the plastic raincoats came on the market. They smelled terrible and always made me sick at my stomach. I remember that one day I just left school and walked home in the rain because I didn't feel well. Mother was not real happy with me since I had just left without asking anyone.

The Partridges lived on the corner of Rockford and Granite on the same side of the street as our house. Our side yard abutted their back yard. They had a daughter in the military - I think she was a nurse.

Mrs. Foy lived two doors down Granite from the Hatchers (who lived directly across the street). Her son was in the Army Air Corps and her daughter-in-law and

granddaughter, Julienne, lived with her. Julienne was about my age, and we played dolls often on their large front porch. The doctor advised Mother that I should take a nap every day, even after I started to school. The reason given was that "Judy's fragile." My little friend, Julienne, told her mother that she did not want to play with me any more. When asked why, she said, "Because she is fragile. She must have heard the adults discussing the reason for my naps, and in her mind, "fragile" was not a good thing. Julienne's father was lost in the Pacific during the war, and I never knew the outcome. There is a "Foy Lumber Co." in Mt. Airy, N.C., and, perhaps, they can give me some information.



Barbara, Molly Shannon and me
Please notice the matching dresses.

Rachel and Robert Smith lived on the other side of us. They had a son, Robert, and a daughter, Molly Shannon. Robert was quite a bit older and Molly Shannon was a little younger than I was, but we all played together at times. Rachel played the organ and chimes at the Methodist Church. Molly Shannon carried her grandmother's family name, and Mrs. Bray, her maternal grandmother, would not allow her to be called "Molly." Mrs. Bray lived in a large white house in Mt. Airy with a double glider

in the side yard. We would sometimes go to her house for parties for Molly Shannon.

During the war with sugar rationed, refreshments for showers, church circle meetings, etc. were often things like Ritz Crackers with peanut butter. Once when the church circle was at Rachel's home, she had Molly Shannon making the Ritz Crackers and peanut butter in the kitchen while she was entertaining in the living room. The crackers were coming out with really smooth edges and Rachel had been complimented on them. She went into the kitchen to pass the compliment along and Molly Shannon running her tongue around the edges to remove the excess peanut butter that squeezed out when the two crackers were put together. Needless to say, Rachel was horrified, but all survived with no ill effects.

Robert Smith owned the property behind our back yard, and he planted a garden there. Strawberries were one of the crops that did really well, and he would often share with my family. One day, just after arriving home from church, Mr. Smith called to Barbara and me and asked if we wanted some strawberries. Of course we said yes and went to get them. We were still wearing our Sunday dresses, flowered chintz (kind of like polished cotton), and since Mr. Smith didn't have any containers for the berries, Barbara and I made baskets of our dress skirts for a place to put the berries. As we ran back to the house with our treasures, we clutched them to our bodies so they would not drop out. This caused the berries to squash and got juice on our dresses. Needless to say, Mother was not as thrilled with our gift of fresh strawberries as she would have been if our dresses were not permanently stained with strawberry red spots.

The summers in North Carolina were the times for polio epidemics. I suppose that every summer, the children were quarantined. That meant that we were not allowed to attend Vacation Bible School, movies, libraries, church, or be on the streets downtown. Rachel would play a toy piano for our Sunday school classes in the driveway between the two houses. V-J day came in August, 1945, during one of these quarantine periods. I remember watching the celebration from the car with all the windows rolled up. Even that could not dampen our joy that the war was over. Once we had been to Florida for a vacation and after our return, Florida was forced to close their borders because of the severity of their polio epidemic. Someone reported to the health department that we had just returned from there and our house was quarantined. The groceries were delivered to the door, but we had to wait for the delivery person to get back in the vehicle before we could open the door.

While living in the house on Granite, my parents did some remodeling, mentioned in the story about the duckling. They added a room at the back, redid the kitchen (the cabinets had been red and black). To change the furnace to oil from coal, the basement had to be enlarged. Since the area is mostly granite, this entailed some blasting. When the day came for the blasting, Barbara and I had the measles and could not be taken out of the house. The blasters proceeded with their work and with the exception of one beam that bumped the floor of the house, we hardly knew that they were working.

My father was a person who listened to the news every evening and expected us to be quite and listen also. I suppose that is one

reason why I remember so much of the war. I particularly remember the most special day, V-J Day. (V-J meant "Victory over Japan" and the end to World War II.) We heard it on the radio and Rachel came running over to leave Molly Shannon with us so she could go to the church to play the chimes. She wanted hers to be the first to herald the end of the war. Thinking of this time brings tears to my eyes. America's part in the war was almost as old as I was. I did not remember peace.

During the war, many things were rationed - sugar, flour, meat, shoes, gasoline, nylon (ladies's hosiery) - and each of these effected something else. Sugar limited the pastries, cakes, candies and soft drinks that we could buy or make. Gasoline restricted our travel and seeing relatives. Each person over a certain age had their own ration book. I have my ration book and will include a picture of it.

Candy, as I have mentioned, was a very scarce product during the war. One Halloween, the family across from the Partridges gave us each half of a Hershey bar as our treat. That was a very special treat at that time.

Another neighbor of ours was Mrs. Haynes. She was a daughter of the original Siamese Twins brought from Siam by P.T. Barnum. She married a gentleman who was Sheriff of Surry Co. for a number of years. We were invited to parties for her grandchildren at her house. I remember the house as dark and scary, but I suppose that was because it was filled with the dark Victorian furniture and the heavy velvet drapes. Mrs. Haynes would not allow anything to be published about her father and his brother. When we saw an

article in LIFE magazine in about 1948, we were pretty sure that she had died. There have been several books written about the twins since the death of Mrs. Haynes, the best is "The Two" and there is also a file in the Surry Co. Library in Mt. Airy with more up to date information.

The Haynes' lot dropped sharply from the sidewalk. It had a garage that was supported with stiles. The story was told to us that one day, Sheriff Haynes was pulling into the garage and either the brakes failed or he did and the car went through the rear of the garage. It was just hanging there in the air. Of course, we never heard the end of the story, but since Sheriff Haynes did not die that day, he and the car must have been rescued.

Once on a visit with my mother to an antique shop north of Mt. Airy, I recall seeing a photograph of these men in an oval frame with a convex glass. It was a strange thing for a child to want, but I really did. Needless to say, I didn't get it.

One Easter, Barbara and I received a little, fluffy, yellow duckling. I cannot recall his/her name now, but the duckling had a very sad, short life. We filled the washtub with water in the back yard and put in the duckling to watch it swim around. Imagine how distressed we were when the little bit of yellow fluff began to sink. No matter how hard or fast it paddled its feet, the poor thing just kept sinking. The duckling was so saturated with water that rubbing it with a towel did not dry it. In the less than warm spring weather of Mt. Airy, the duckling still shivered. Mother turned the oven on very low and leaving the door open, placed the duckling inside to, dry its feathers quickly.

No! We did not have roast duckling! The process worked fine, but we learned from our vet, Dr. Jackson, that due to a "birth defect" our little duckling had little or no natural oils in/on its feathers. The deficiency meant that he could not float. That was not all the duckling's bad luck. This Easter season came when my parents were in the process of making an addition to the house and building a retaining wall. This wall was where our yard adjoined the Smith's driveway and was constructed about 6 feet high of concrete blocks, the ones that are hollow in two places. (Of course, at the time, it seemed about 12 feet high.) During the construction, our little duckling waddled over to the wall, and with its usual grace and agility (and fate), promptly fell to the bottom of the nearly completed wall. I realize that there was really no way to recover the peeping victim without tearing down the wall, but it was terribly difficult as a child to see the workmen pour concrete into the blocks which held our little non-swimming, hard luck Easter duckling. It must have been almost as difficult for my parents and Aunt Allene, since I am quite certain that Barbara and I (particularly me) didn't want to understand why the duck could not be saved.

Mixing flour with water was our way of making paste to be used for glue. This procedure fascinated me, and I decided to try it with Mother's face powder. Since this face powder was a little expensive and available only in larger towns like Winston-Salem, N.C., it was valued by Mother. Well, if you have ever tried to mixed powder and water, you know that it does not work. The powder just floats on the water. When my little experiment failed, I left the bowl containing it in the closet in the bedroom which Barbara and I shared. When Mother

found it, she was quite mad. She asked us which of us had done it. We both denied it. She then stated that she would spank both of us until one of us told the truth. Well, I know that I had done it and would be spanked for it so I reasoned that silence was my best option. Barbara on the other hand had no part in the experiment and therefore, was receiving a spanking that she did not deserve. As the spankings continued, Barbara decided that the only way to end them was to confess to something that she had not done. When she did, Mother decided that the discipline was enough. Many years later, we laughed about it -- at least I did!

Another favorite pastime of mine was trying to discover how alarm clocks worked. I was able to get them apart, but I could never get the hang of putting the springs back into them. My parents were less than pleased with this activity.

Around this time, Barbara had a set of "Gone with the Wind" paper dolls. I don't know why I did not have a set, also, but I was evidently jealous of hers. I devised a plan - each day or so, I would get her paper dolls and amputate a part of one. One day, Rhett would lose a hand, another day, Scarlett would lose a foot, and so on. She has never forgiven me especially when she found out that the paper dolls are now collectibles and worth about \$90.00 the last time I checked. I have tried to make amends by buying her the reproduction paper dolls, but I don't think it is the same.

In about 1943, my family decided that we wanted a dog and went to Winston-Salem to buy a Boston Terrier. I don't know why that breed, but we evidently saw an ad in the

paper. We went to the house and to see them. If you never seen a Boston Terrier puppy, you have truly not seen the most adorable, prissy puppy in the world. All the puppies were in the living room with us, and then one left and went to the back room. I followed her, and proclaimed that she was the one I wanted. We named her "Miss Muffitt" and had her companionship until 1953. She was not a well marked Boston, she was the large size, but she was affectionate, lovable, faithful, patience, and mine. As it turned out, almost all the pets we had when Barbara and I were at home ended up being mine. It must say something about me, but I won't go into that. Miss Muffitt died at the vet's in E'town where we had boarded her while attending my Uncle Martin's graduation from Vanderbilt in Nashville. When Mother called to ask if we could put Miss Muffitt up on Sunday afternoon, the vet told her, "Mrs. Cummins, **that** dog died." We were all devastated. Later when Martin and his family came through on their way to their new home in Harrodsburg, Ky., they found all of us, Daddy included, in tears. Their first thought was that Grandmother or another family member has died while they were in route.

Christmas of 1945, my parents were going to surprise Barbara and me with a playhouse for the backyard. The plan was that the people delivering it would be there at a certain time or call to say when they would be there so that Mother could have us away from the house. Well, that did not work out. There was a driveway on the Partridge side of our house, but it was seldom used by my parents for the car. The flatbed truck bringing the playhouse was noisily backing into the yard so Barbara and I ran to the windows to see what was creating the

commotion. Mother was hollering at us not to go to the windows - but that was a time that curiosity prevailed. We did look, and we did see, and Mother did cry because the surprise was spoiled. We did enjoy the playhouse though for the rest of our time in Mt. Airy.

During the war, the leading citizens of Mt. Airy arranged to bring a Dutch family to the move to the area and out of the dangers of the war. This Dutch was the Nieuwenhuis (pronounced Newinghouse by me) Family. Their daughter, Dideka (?), was my age and in my school and Sunday school class. She had beautiful naturally curly red hair.

My mother was a Brownie troop leader so I attended meeting long before I was old enough to belong. One meeting before Halloween, we used mannequin heads (borrowed from Daddy's store) to make masks. Cheesecloth was placed over the face of the mannequin, melted wax was then brushed onto the cheesecloth, pushing the cheesecloth into the crevices created by the eyes, nose and mouth with the brush. Then, another layer of cheesecloth or muslin was then put on the top, and this was allowed to cool in place. When cool, the mask was removed from the mannequin's face, the eyes, nose, and mouth holes cut out, and the mask was painted.

When the rationing of gasoline allowed during the war and later whenever we could, we traveled quite a bit. We went to Florida several times for vacations and to Tennessee to see family or for funerals. Daddy's main concern on the way home was to arrive in our town before the Post Office doors were locked - which was generally 5 - 7 p.m. This often meant that we didn't stop often for

food, restrooms, or anything else. One trip we had bought a bushel of apples and Daddy had placed them in the back seat floor. All the way home, when we said we were hungry, Daddy would say "Eat another Apple." After that, if anything was bought on the way home, we tried to make him put it in trunk so he would at least have to stop and get the items out of the trunk.

Jimmy Lee Ashburn, My First Love!



Jimmy Lee Ashburn,
me and others at a
birthday party -
Barbara is behind
me.

Jimmy Lee Ashburn - ah yes! My first true love. I will try to scan two letters that I have from Jimmy Lee into these pages. He and Howard Pruitt (Barbara's flame) lived down the hill from our house on Granite. They had ponies and sometimes we would get to sit on them. I don't remember that we ever actually rode them, but I do remember sitting on them.

Jimmy Lee wrote me at least two "love letters" which I have scanned into this document. I have recently found that he is living in the Chapel Hill, NC. area, but I do not know what he is doing. John and I have enjoyed these and often wondered what happened to Sunset Carson, the cowboy actor referred to by Jimmy Lee in the first letter shown below. It is strange that, through all the moves and upheavals in my life that these two letters remained and in surprisingly good condition.

I still wonder about this young man who stole my heart. I am including a picture of one of my birthday parties in Mt. Airy which shows several of the boys in knickers.

Dear Judy C.
I love you with all my heart.
Do you love me with all your
heart sweetheart. I will take
you to the show, we will see
Sunset Carson and another
cowboys I will come and play with
you honey and sweetheart. you
are mine sweethearts.

This was written while we lived in Mr. Airy.
"Dear Judy C.
I love you with all my heart. Do you love
me with all your heart sweetheart. I will take
you to the show, we will see sunset Carson
and another cowboys. I will come and play
with you honey and sweetheart. You are
mine sweetheart."

Dear Judy
I miss you very, very
much. We went to the
beach and it was cool
but I want in swimming
two times. We pass your
house. This is all I can
said.
Goodbye
With love,
Jimmy Lee

This was written after we moved to Suffolk,
Va.
"Dear Judy
I miss you very, very much. We went to the
beach and it was cool but I want in
swimming two times. We pass your home.
This is all I can said.
Goodbye
With love,
Jimmy Lee



My birthday party about 1945 in our backyard in Mt. Airy. Molly Shannon Smith is the little girl in the velvet to the right of me (this her hand to her face), Robert Smith is the young man standing to the left by himself, Howard Pruitt is the boy at the end of the first row. Someday maybe I will be able to identify the others.



Pet Day for the Brownie Troop in Mt. Airy. Mother was the Troop Mother. I am holding the bowl (it had a turtle in it), a friend is holding Miss Muffitt, and I don't see Barbara.