

## Porter – Donald Vincent and Lois Loween Barber

Married 1938 in Ohio; moved to Mount Airy 1970

The family of Don and Lois Porter became a part of Mount Airy in 1970 when they sold their Dayton Ohio business to the L. S. Starrett Company headquartered in Athol, Massachusetts. Don had established a business connection to Mount Airy in the early 1950s when he opened a branch of his Ohio business, The Herman Stone Company, in Mount Airy on the grounds of the North Carolina Granite Quarry. The Herman Stone Company of Dayton was initially established in the early 1940s prior to World War II by Wallace Herman. Don was initially employed as his draftsman, but he soon grew to be Herman's right-hand man. He had a natural engineering mind and developed a deep knowledge of the properties of stone, which allowed the transition into precision stone work. As the war developed and restricted the use of cast iron, Don and Wallace developed the first granite surface plates as a means to replace the cast iron plates that could no longer be manufactured for industrial use. The great demand for these stone surface plates throughout a broad range of industries meant that a reliable stone source was needed. Hence the connection to North Carolina Granite. When the L. S. Starrett Company purchased Herman Stone, they decided to move it all to Mount Airy. Since Don Porter and his sons were vital to the production process, the whole Porter family moved from Dayton to Mount Airy. This included Don and Lois and their sons Don Charles (Chuck b 06/25/1940) and Douglas Robert (Doug b 03/30/1947). Both sons followed in their father's footsteps, each serving a period of time as general manager at L. S. Starrett before moving on to other endeavors.

Don served as general manager at Starrett Mount Airy until his retirement in 1978. He was also a civil servant and was instrumental in working with the Army Corp of Engineers to design a dyking system to protect Mount Airy industries along the Ararat River after the flood of 1978 destroyed Starrett and other industries along its banks. Don was an active Rotarian. He enjoyed regular golf games with his friends, to the point of becoming one of the original investors that established Cross Creek Country Club. He had a beautiful tenor voice that he

shared regularly with the choir of First Presbyterian Church in Mount Airy. Earlier he had sung for years in a Barber Shop Quartet The Foremen of Dayton . They were professional quality and traveled far and wide, performing alongside the likes of Bob Hope and Jerry Colonna.

Lois was his biggest supporter and was instrumental in the growth and success of Herman Stone, serving as bookkeeper until the move to Mount Airy. She also was a talented and industrious business person in her own right and had her own ceramics shop in Mount Airy, making beautiful products and offering classes to people throughout the community. She readily shared her knowledge of fine china painting and pouring molds and baking in a hot kiln with anyone wanting to learn. Her shop became a social hub with ladies enjoying learning the process from Lois and making beautiful item from their homes and gifts for friends and family. Lois was also very musical and shared her soprano voice in the choir at First Presbyterian. She also shared her cooking skills there each Wednesday when they served a full lunch under her direction for businessmen in town who came to eat and hear a short meditation. There was always a full house when Lois cooked.

Both of Don's and Lois' sons married Mount Airy natives. Doug married Arlette Lambert, daughter of Fred and Ruby Lambert; Chuck married Carolyn Miller, daughter of Junior and Juanita Miller. Don and Lois had 6 grandchildren Andrea Puckett Porter (Kittrell), Douglas Robert Porter Jr, Jennifer Davis Porter (Schornstadt), Don Charles Porter II., Mark Douglas Porter and Paige Noel Porter (Sandford). They also had eight great-grandchildren: Allie Kittrell, Anna Claire Kittrell, Elizabeth Kittrell, William Kittrell, Cooper Rowan Porter, Coralee June Porter, Sarah Porter and Riley Porter. Both Don and Lois enjoyed entertaining family, especially at their mountain house at Chalet High just off the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Don and Lois eventually retired to Delray Beach, Florida but they did not forget their love on Mount Airy. Don was born June 1, 1910 in Dayton to Leslie Coleman Porter and Eloise Chipman Porter. He had one brother Robert. He passed away February 24, 1995 in Delray Beach. Lois was born February 18, 1913 in Montgomery County, Ohio to Peter Mente Barber and Nellie Grace Ridgeway Barber. She had 3 siblings: Donald Ridgeway Barber, George Russel Barber and

Betty Jean Barber. She passed away September 13, 2004 in Florida. Don and Lois were married in Dayton, Ohio in 1938. They started their family and business in Dayton, Ohio but nourished and grew both in Mount Airy, North Carolina. They are buried side by side in the Oakdale Cemetery in Mount Airy.



**Donald and Lois Porter on their wedding day. 1938 in Dayton Ohio.**



**Lois holding Baby Douglas on his Christening Day,  
with Donald and little Chuck looking on. 1947**





**Donald Vincent Porter**



**Lois Loween Barber Porter**



**The Porter family l to r: Chuck and Carolyn, Don and Lois,  
Arlette and Doug in Mount Air**



Starrett pink granite plates have today's most wear resistant surface known in natural granite. Their smooth, jewel-like quartz bearing points protect accuracy and finish of surfaces and tools used on them.



Donald V. Porter

The cast iron surface plate. Great in its day, but with far less accuracy than granite and four times the price.

**Ten times the accuracy, one-quarter the cost.**

The Herman Stone Company of Dayton, Ohio, — a manufacturer of building granite — originated the granite surface plate in 1941. Development of the manufacturing process was handled personally by Donald V. Porter.

Due to the demand for cast iron during World War II, cast iron surface plates were in extremely short supply. As "necessity is the mother of invention" Mr. Porter went to work with a substitute surface plate material: granite. He took three small slabs of granite and lapped them by the Whitworth method whereby two plates will agree but the third will not unless all three are flat. He lapped the three slabs until they all read the same, eventually getting them to within a remarkable flatness tolerance.

And so a substitute material began taking the market away from a traditional material in short supply. Donald V. Porter expanded the technology of manufacture to the point where today's granite surface plate is typically ten times as accurate as the cast iron plate and costs about one-quarter as much to buy.

Mr. Porter's business was acquired in 1970 by The L. S. Starrett Company and has grown into the large modern plant shown here. It is located near the quarry in Mount Airy, North Carolina.



**Lois wearing one of her hand-painted sweaters.**





**Original employees of Herman Stone Company with Don and Lois on left end of back row (1969). ( The Porter business family)**



**Original employees of L. S. Starrett in Mt. Airy with Don on left end of front row. Chuck is looking over Don's shoulder and Doug is 3<sup>rd</sup> from left, front row. (1970)**