

# Well-Known Local Merchant Dies

The funeral for John Henry Midkiff, 75, of 235 Orchard St., Mount Airy, will be conducted at 11 o'clock today at Moody Funeral Chapel. A well-known Mount Airy merchant, he died Saturday evening at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem following an emergency operation. He had



**JOHN H. MIDKIFF**

been a patient in the hospital since November 8. A native of Virginia, he was born to Burton M. and Dora Hardy Midkiff. He came to Mount Airy in 1912 and went to

work for a hardware store, which he later purchased and operated as John Midkiff Hardware Co. One of the oldest Mount Airy merchants, he had been a Good year tire dealer for 56 years, a fact of which he was proud and which had earned him national recognition through company publications only a few months ago.

A charter member of the Mount Airy Country Club and a former member of the Lions Club, he attended First Baptist Church here.

Surviving are four daughters, Mrs. Vance Hallman, Mrs. E. J. France and Mrs. Rex Tilley, all of Mount Airy, and Mrs. Walter Anderson of Halifax, Va., 12 grandchildren; 8 great-grand children; two brothers, Floyd Midkiff of Hillsville, Va., and Jim Midkiff of Lowgap; and five sisters, Mrs. Conrad Thompson and Mrs. Delmar Horton of Hillsville, Va., Mrs. Jim Fisher of Wytheville, Va., Mrs. Grant Cassdorpher of Dunbar, W. Va., and Mrs. Paul Semones of Mount Airy.

Grandsons who will serve as pallbearers are Johnny and Joe France, Van and Lynn Hallman, Reggie and Leslie Tilley and Walter Anderson.

Honorary pallbearers include G. Thomas Fawcett, Donald Rector, Blake Carson, Don Fulk, Joe Martin, Willie Carpenter, Bill Corder and Wilson Brim.

The family requests that those wishing to make memorials send them to the research department of Bowman Gray School of Medicine in Winston-Salem.

The body will remain at Moody Funeral Home for the services. Burial will be in Oakdale Cemetery.

*John Midkiff:*

## 'I've always been a trader'

By Roscoe R. Creed

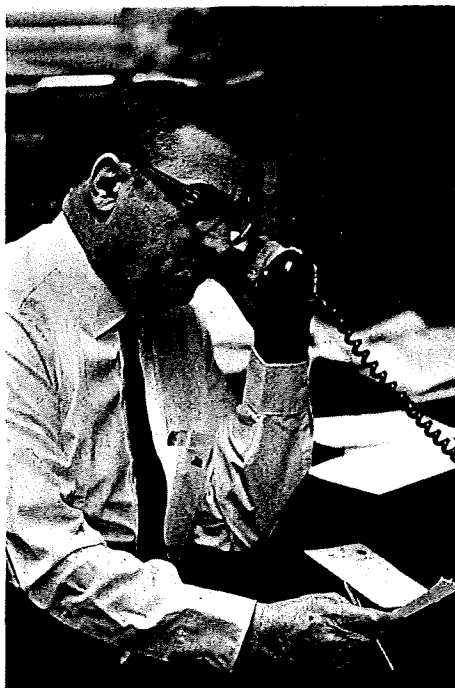
**T**HE PHONE RANG in the office of John Midkiff Hardware Company, Mount Airy, N.C. and John Midkiff himself quickly picked it up.

"All right?"—"Yes, got the best tire deals in town."—"You'll have to come in; can't give prices on the phone. Other dealers shop me, you know."—"Check the other dealers and then come in and see Big John; see if I can't beat them."—"Yes, these are top-quality Goodyear tires; I wouldn't put tires on your car I wouldn't put on my wife's or daughter's."—"All right?"

Midkiff hung up the phone and pushed it against the paneled wall on its scissors extender. Turning in his desk chair and tilting his head to one side, he said, "I do about 30 per cent of my tire selling on the phone. I do nearly all of my tractor tire selling on it. At least I start the sale. If the man's interested I go see him to close it."

After a few more moments of conversation he said, "You'll have to excuse me for a while. I have a customer appointment that I just have to keep." Gathering up his price books and some literature, he hustled out of the office.

A half-hour later he stepped briskly through the office doorway, wearing an ear-to-ear smile. "I just sold 44 tractor tires to (a local implement dealer)!" he said proudly.



John Midkiff: "All right?"

Between interruptions by frequent phone calls and requests to appear on the sales floor, Midkiff said: "I've always been a trader. When I was 10 years old I went around to neighboring farms and bought eggs at four or five cents a dozen. Then I'd take them to town and sell them and make—maybe—two cents on each dozen. On 30 dozen eggs that would be 60 cents. But 60 cents meant something then."

Then he noticed two women standing patiently outside his office door. "Can someone else help you?" he asked.

"No," one of them replied. "We want to see you." Again he excused himself.

In five minutes he was back in his desk chair. "Just made a \$40 sale—sold a pair of winter tires," he said with a satisfied nod.

He picked up his story. "I left home when I was 12 and went to work." He gained experience in such jobs as pouring bearings in a railroad car foundry and selling the products of a local brewery.

In 1912 he signed a contract for three years' work at \$38 a month as a clerk in the hardware store he now owns. Ten months later he was manager and buyer as well as salesman, and his pay had risen to \$62.50 a month.

"We sold Goodyear tires even then," Midkiff said. "We owed for all of them and couldn't pay for a one. I asked (the owner) to let me handle the tires and he did."

Midkiff then went to Charlotte to the Goodyear district office. Despite the financial difficulties of the firm he represented, the district manager extended him \$300 in credit for additional buying, plus the right to discount each bill if paid by the 10th of the month. Midkiff promised to pay what he could each month on

## John Midkiff

the old account.

"From that day until this I have never bought anything but a Goodyear tire," he said, punctuating each phrase with a rap of his knuckles on the desktop.

"In 1912 there weren't many tire sizes," he said, staring past the corner of the room at a memory of tire racks the way they were 55 years ago. "Thirty by 3½; 32 by 4; 35 by 5; 37 by 7—you had 'a tire' and that was about it. I bought two sizes and took care of all the trucks in the county.

"The hardware store looked about the same then as it does now," he mused, "except then the top two floors were lodge halls. Now I've got these floors stacked full of tires. And I've added some buildings at the back."

One of these buildings is used for tire storage, as is the basement of the original building. Another building is a furniture store. A third was built as a farm implement salesroom, but is being turned into an auto service center.

Midkiff leaned forward, his forearms

on his knees. "When I'm here I do most of the tire selling. But when I'm gone the boys (his hardware store clerks) help out. I've got the best set of employees I ever had."

Judging from the firm's annual purchases from Goodyear and the prize trips Midkiff has taken, he and "the boys" have done quite well in the trade area.

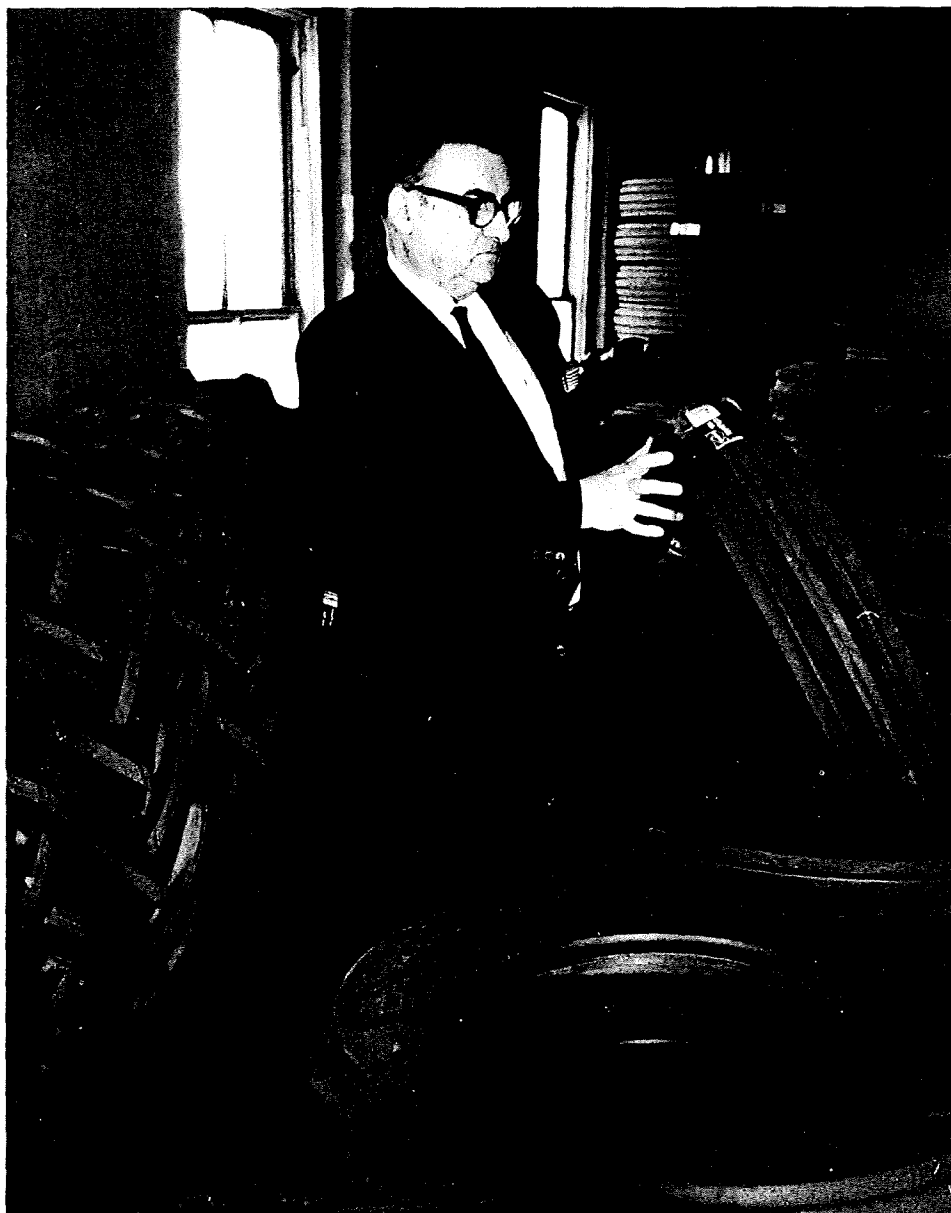
He looked through the office doorway at tall racks of harness and rope, drawers of nuts and bolts, bins of nails, rows of coal stoves, shelves of toys and tools—a few of the thousands of items carried in the store.

"The hardware business doesn't mean a thing to me," he said. "If it weren't for the tire business I'd quit right now. I love the tire business; it's part of my life.

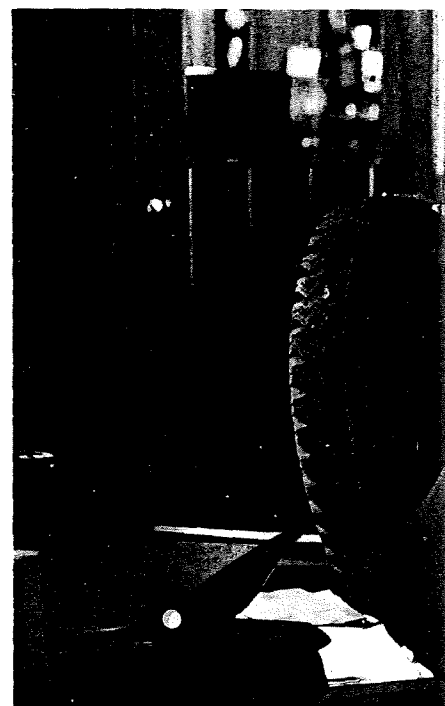
"Sometimes I don't get into the office until 10 o'clock in the morning," he said, sitting suddenly erect. He added with a wave of his hand, "But I work every night until 10 or 12, either selling tires or collecting for them.

"I'll never retire from this business," he said, slowly shaking his head. By present standards, he has already had his chance and passed it by 10 years ago: John Midkiff will be 75 years old his next birthday.

GO



... "I start nearly all my tractor tire sales on the phone" ...



... "I wouldn't put tires on



... "The exterior hasn't changed much" ...



... "If it weren't for the tire business, I'd quit right now" .



your car that I wouldn't put on my wife's or daughter's" . . .

Goodyear **GO**  
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IN MEMORY

OF

Mr John Henry Midkiff

Jun 2, 1893 Nov 16, 1968

75 Years 4 Months 25 Days

SERVICES

Moody Funeral Home and Chapel

Tuesday Nov 19, 1968 11 AM

CLERGYMEN

Rev James Powell

INTERMENT

Oakdale Cemetery

SURVIVORS

Daughters  
Mrs Vance Hallman Mt Airy, NC  
Mrs E J France Mt Airy, NC  
Mrs Rex Tilley Mt Airy, NC  
Mrs Walter Anderson Halifax, Va

12 Grandchildren

8 Great-Grandchildren

Brothers  
Floyd Midkiff Hillsville, Va  
Jim Midkiff Lowgap, NC

Sisters  
Mrs Conrad Thompson Hillsville  
Mrs Jim Fisher Wytheville, Va.  
Mrs Delmer Horton Hillsville  
Mrs Grant Casadorphr Dunbar, W.Va.  
Mrs Paul Semones Mt Airy

Pallbearers  
GRANDSONS

Johnny France  
Joe France  
Van Hallman  
Lynn Hallman

Reggie Tilley  
Leslie Tilley  
Walter Anderson

*In Loving Memory*

*of*

*Dora Midkiff*

June, 12, 1875  
Oct. 19, 1965

*Age 90*

*Services*

Thursday, Oct. 21, 1965 - 10:00 A.M.  
HILLSVILLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
(Will Lie In State.)

*Clergymen*

Elder Monroe McGrady  
M.M. Vass

*Interment*

HENLEY CEMETERY

*Survivors*

FIVE DAUGHTERS:

Mrs. E.C. Thompson - Hillsville

Mrs. Paul Semones - Mt. Airy, N.C.

Mrs. Grant Casdorph - Dunbar, W. Va.

Mrs. D.L. Horton - Hillsville

Mrs. Jim Fisher - Wytheville

THREE SONS:

James Midkiff - Lowgap, N.C.

John Midkiff - Mt. Airy, N.C.

Floyd Midkiff - Hillsville

25 Grandchildren  
45 Great-Grandchildren  
7 Great Great-Grandchildren

## Mrs. Midkiff Honored With Birthday Dinner

Mrs. B. M. Midkiff of route 3, Hillsville, Virginia was honored on her 86th birthday with a family picnic dinner at her home.

There were fifty three of the family present which included six of her children, 14 grandchildren, 16 great grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Shown above are Mrs. B. M. Midkiff and her son, John H. Midkiff, his daughter, Mrs. E. J. France, her son, Johnny France and his son, Tim France making the fifth generation.

Mrs. Midkiff, the wife of the late B. M. Midkiff, has eight living children. They are: John H. Midkiff, Mount Airy; Jim Midkiff, and Floyd Midkiff, Hillsville, Va.; Mrs. Conner Thompson, Hillsville, Va.; Mrs. Paul Semones, Mount Airy; Mrs. Jim Fisher, Wytheville, Va.; Mrs. Delma Horton, Hillsville, Va., Mrs. Grant Casdorff of Dublin, West Virginia.

Mrs. Midkiff received many nice and useful gifts.



... Five generations of the B. M. Midkiff family ...



**CELEBRATING  
50 YEARS  
AS A GOODYEAR DEALER**



**JOHN MIDKIFF**

still growing to give the people of  
Mount Airy The Best in Tire Values  
and Service.

**GO... GO... Goodyear  
with John Midkiff**

4-23-65



IN MEMORY  
OF

Mr. James Burley Midkiff

August 14, 1902 March 16, 1987

84 Years 7 Months 2 Days

SERVICES

Wednesday

March 18, 1987 11:00 A. M.

Moody Funeral Chapel

CLERGYMEN

Rev. Flake Mason

INTERMENT

Oakdale Cemetery

SURVIVORS

Daughter  
Mrs Bruce [Norma] Jones Mt Airy

Son  
Russell Midkiff Mt Airy

Grandaughter  
Mrs Kathy Jones Marshall Mt Airy  
Two Great-Grandchildren

Sisters  
Mrs Della Webb Roanoke, VA  
Mrs Lula Semones Mt Airy  
Mrs Effie Pugh Wytheville, VA  
Mrs Betty Horton Hillsville, VA

Brother  
Floyd Midkiff Hillsville, VA

His Wife Mrs Pearl B. Midkiff  
Died In 1977 & A Son James B.  
Midkiff Died in 1975

Pall Bearers

James Jackson ~~Don Horton~~  
Howard Smith Willie Jenkins  
Claude Haynes Burlen Lawson

IN MEMORY

OF

Mrs Pearl Brannock Midkiff

July 26, 1902      Feb. 13, 1977

74 Years    6 Months 17 Days

SERVICES

Tuesday

February 15, 1977 11-AM

Moody Funeral Home Chapel

CLERGYMEN

Rev. J. L. Bryson Jr.

INTERMENT

Oakdale Cemetery

SURVIVORS

Husband  
James B Midkiff

Daughter  
Mrs Bruce (Norma) Jones, Mt Airy

Son  
Russell Midkiff, Raleigh, NC

One Grand Child

One Great Grand Child

Sister  
Mrs Zoie Edwards, Mt Airy

Pall Bearers

Joe Edwards	Junior Hawks
Perry Wright	James Jackson
Max Wright	Burlen Lawson

IN MEMORY  
OF

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Son  
Russell Midkiff    Mt Airy

Grandaughter  
Mrs Kathy Jones Marshall    Mt Airy

Two Great-Grandchildren

Sisters

Mrs Della Webb    Roanoke, VA

Mrs Lula Semones    Mt Airy

Mrs Effie Pugh    Wytheville, VA

Mrs Betty Horton    Hillsville, VA

Brother

Floyd Midkiff    Hillsville, VA

His Wife Mrs Pearl B. Midkiff

Died In 1977 & A Son James B.

Midkiff Died in 1975

Pall Bearers

James Jackson    Don Horton

Howard Smith    Willie Jenkins

Claude Haynes    Burlen Lawson