

# History of Dickson Record and Gift Shop

One of the oldest stores in Mt Airy has closed after 75 years – Dickson Record and Gift Shop.

John A Collins	1921-2007
Frances B Collins (Beamer)	1926-2019

John worked with his father at the Greensboro Wholesome Bread plant until he joined the Navy in 1941. He was a member of the 3000 man crew on the aircraft carrier USS Bougainville of the US 5<sup>th</sup> fleet serving as a gunner.

Out of the service in 1945 and back in Mt Airy with his \$400 muster check and a long love of music all lead to the opening of the record store named after his mother. “Walking the Floor Over You” by the late Ernest Tubb was the first 78 rpm record sold in the store. At the time John started the store he was across the street from the current location where Frances’s father’s “Star” Barbershop was located. John said he used to watch Frances walk down the street. They wed in 1948.

It seemed about every 5 years the music formats changed – 78’s, LP’s, 45’s, 8 tracks, cassettes, CD’s, and DVD’s. John and Frances worked with generations of shoppers. John had a knack for musical trends and Frances had the same knack for the gift shop. Frances also conducted candy making classes at the store. They said what kept them in business were their friends, “friends” being the term they used for their customers. According to the distributors, they were the oldest music store in both Carolinas operating under the same proprietors.

Frances and John always Mt Airy. Frances was involved in the Woman’s Business Club. She and John were both members of the Kiwanis. John held many offices including the Lt. Governorship and Frances was President one year. Both were members of the Central Methodist Church.

Opaleene Beamer  
Sister of Frances Collins  
2022

