

Women of Grundy County

Lou Hill Foster
1898 – 1974

On March 4, 1898, George Lawson Hill and Icie Foster Ashburn Hill of the Collins River Community, were presented with their first child, a daughter, whom they named Ida Louise in honor of Ice's twin sister Ida. By the end of 1903 Lou had been joined by Mary Rankin (Stone), Virgil Anderson, and Martha Emma (Nunley).

Lawson was a farmer whose principal acreage lay parallel to Collins River. For many years he represented the 8th district on Grundy County Board of Education. He had taught school briefly after his graduation from Burritt College. Icie Hill had been orphaned at an early age, but she too had been a teacher before her marriage.

Probably as a result of both parents having taught, all four children became teachers. Virgil abandoned the classroom, but the three daughters (and two grand daughters) gave over one hundred fifty years of service to the students of Tennessee, primarily in Grundy County.

Lou was educated in the school systems of the area, and by age eighteen found herself in the classroom. She was assigned to Sweeton Hill school where she had a one-teacher school with ninety students. Her most memorable moment that year was when one of the larger boys pulled a knife on her.

While she taught at Sweeton Hill, she boarded at a home in Coalmont. It was here that she met Robert Foster, grandson of Charles Foster for whom Foster Falls is named. Robert was second of fourteen children of Robert and Margaret Albany Foster. and Lou became engaged, but he was called to serve in World War I along with three of his brothers and many other close kin. While Robert was gone to Europe where he participated in several hard-fought battles, Lou continued to teach in Tennessee and briefly in Alabama.

After Robert returned from service, they were married on May 25, 1919, at her parent's home in a ceremony performed by Haskell Dubose. Lou's mother had made her wedding dress and a small trousseau. Robert had delegated his older brother Charlie to bring the bride's bouquet as he brought the preacher to the ceremony. When the flowers arrived, they clashed with the color of the wedding dress, so the bride had to choose an alternate dress in which to be married.

The young couple resided in Collins River area for some time, and they were joined by a daughter, Dorothy Louise, on July 31, 1921. They later moved to Coalmont and became parents of a son Robert Hill Foster on Nov. 9, 1923.

Work was hard to find in the South, so in 1925 Robert and some of his brothers decided to seek employment in Chicago. After Robert found work, he sent for his family. Several relatives also made the trek to Chicago to find work, so Lou prepared meals for them and also took in a boarder to increase family income. About two years later, Robert took pneumonia and died April 9, 1928. Doctors felt that his death at such an early age was due to having been gassed in World War I.

Lou returned to her parents' home in Tennessee, and Robert was laid to rest in Philadelphia Baptist Church Cemetery in Grundy County.

The first year after Robert's death, Lou lived in Pelham with her sisters who were employed in Pelham school. Dorothy attended school there, but Robert Hill was a reluctant scholar who did not want to leave his mother yet.

During the 1931 school year, Lou left her children on the farm with her parents and went to Murfreesboro as a full-time student. The next year she was elected to Palmer school faculty, and remained there several years.

Palmer School was an outstanding school with the support of the entire community. The miners did not hesitate to give of their resources, and the PTA had many capable parents and teachers, among whom was Mrs. Perry Leah Roberts, who later became Tennessee State PTA President. In addition to the local PTA, Lou was also active in the Grundy County Council of PTA's.

The next few years followed a pattern of moving to the farm in the summer, attending the summer session at MTSU (usually driving back and forth three days a week), canning about a thousand cans of food for winter consumption, moving back to Palmer for the school year, (the load for moving always contained a heavy upright piano and a cow.) The pattern of obtaining college credits during the summer and teaching during the school year continued until Lou received a B. S. degree. She later received an M. A. from George Peabody College in Nashville.

After living in company rental house in Palmer for several years, an idea of home-ownership emerged. At that time, land could not be purchased in Palmer, so when an affordable house became available in Tracy City, it was purchased, and Lou, Emma, Dorothy and Robert Hill moved to Tracy City in 1943. Robert Hill was called to service in World War II that spring, and the women taught in various schools in the county.

In the fall of 1943, Lou was offered a teaching job in Frostproof, Florida, where she remained three years. She then moved to Stuart, Florida to become supervisor of the school system of that county.

Lawson and Icie Hill sold the farm on Collins River and moved to the home in Tracy City. Lawson died in his sleep May 7, 1947, a few days before he and his wife were planning to celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Since Lou was the oldest child, she felt it was her duty to return to Tennessee to care for her mother. She came back to teach at Grundy County High School at exactly one-half the salary she was scheduled to receive in Florida.

The next year she made the race for Superintendent of Schools, running against Glenn Bonner and Frank Rollings. She was defeated in the race, but she worked hard and thoroughly enjoyed meeting all the people in the county. She visited one place so remote that a bear was seen near the home.

After the election, Mr. Bonner asked Lou to take the job of school supervisor, which she did and remained until her retirement in 1968.

Lou was an excellent seamstress, making practically all the dresses, suits, and coats worn by the women in the family. Once she purchased cotton print material, buttons and rick-rack trim for making a dress whose total cost she tabulated at eighty three cents.

She was a hard worker, a very capable person in many areas. She was very hospitable, had a good sense of humor, a strong sense of family, was a strict disciplinarian at home as well as at school, possessed a strong will, compassion, common

sense, and an optimistic attitude toward life. Whatever hard situation was encountered, she would counsel, "It will get better."

A college course in Home Nursing added to her skill at taking care of the sick. Her mother became bedfast, her sisters Mary and Emma at the same time became patients in her home. She turned her living room and dining room into bedrooms and for about two years took care of three bed-ridden patients. This was made possible by the faithful and loving help of Mrs. Georgie Thompson who stayed with the family until the doctor ordered her own retirement. During these years Lou's mother, sister Mary and brother Vergil all died.

Lou was a member and past worthy matron of the Eastern Star, was a charter member of Alpha Beta Chapter of a Kappa Gamma, xi State. She was a charter member of Grundy County Retired Teachers, and served as it's first president. She was a charter member and first president of the Wesleyan Service Guild, an organization for working women in the United Methodist Church, in which she was an active and faithful member. She was a partner with her daughter in the ownership of Foster's Flowers in Tracy City. She held membership and offices in various educational associations and was a Life Member of N. E.

Her death occurred February 17, 1974, as a result of heart trouble. She was laid to rest beside her husband in Philadelphia Cemetery on Collins River.

She gave herself to help maintain a good family relationship, to further the cause of education, to forward the work of the Kingdom of God. The world is richer and better because she pass this way.

Family History Report

1 George Lawson HILL

Birth: 8 Sep 1873
Death: 7 May 1947

Spouse: Icie Foster ASHBURN
Birth: 7 Dec 1876
Death: 11 Aug 1968
Marr: 25 May 1897

Children: Ida Louise (1898-1974)
Mary Rankin (1899-)
Virgil Anderson (1901-1969)
Martha Emma (1903-1989)

1.1 Ida Louise HILL

Birth: 4 Mar 1898
Death: 17 Feb 1974

Spouse: Robert FOSTER
Birth: 28 Dec 1893(?)
Death: 9 Apr 1928
Marr: 25 May 1919

Children: Dorothy Louise (1921-1958)
Robert Hill (1923-)

1.1.1 Dorothy Louise FOSTER

Birth: 31 Jul 1921
Death: 6 Nov 1958

Spouse: Charles Bernard SCHAERER
Birth: 23 Jun 1912
Death: 20 Jun 1996
Marr: 6 Nov 1958

Children: Laura Foster (1961-)

1.1.1.1 Laura Foster SCHAERER

Birth: 2 May 1961 (?)

Spouse: Joseph Shelby LAY Jr.
Birth: 9 Feb 1957
Marr: 19 Dec 1980

Children: Laura Elizabeth (1992-)

1.1.1.1.1 Laura Elizabeth LAY

Birth: 1 Jul 1992

Family History Report

1.1.2 Robert Hill FOSTER Sr.

Birth: 9 Nov 1923

Spouse: Bettye Jean CHARLES
Birth: 19 Mar 1926
Marr: 21 Dec 1946

Children: Robert Hill (1951-)

1.1.2.1 Robert Hill FOSTER Jr.

Birth: 11 Jul 1951

Spouse: Leda Denice STARK
Birth: 4 Aug 1951
Marr: 21 Dec 1971

Children: Robert Hill (1976-)
Hollie Nicole (1979-)

1.1.2.1.1 Robert Hill FOSTER III

Birth: 25 Feb 1976

1.1.2.1.2 Hollie Nicole FOSTER

Birth: 18 Jun 1979

1.2 Mary Rankin HILL

Birth: 23 Oct 1899

Spouse: Chester Lee STONE
Birth: 6 Mar 1890

Children: Mary Hill (1944-)

1.2.1 Mary Hill STONE

Birth: 29 Apr 1944

Spouse: Nicolas Glennon BEEHAN Jr.
Birth: 24 Nov 1938
Marr: 24 Feb 1974

Children: Shannon Stone (1975-)
Nicholas Glennon (1976-)
Brendon Hill (1976-)

1.2.1.1 Shannon Stone BEEHAN

Birth: 4 Feb 1975

Family History Report

1.2.1.2 Nicholas Glennon BEEHAN III

Birth: 29 Mar 1976

1.2.1.3 Brendon Hill BEEHAN

Birth: 29 Mar 1976

1.3 Virgil Anderson HILL

Birth: 28 May 1901

Death: 26 Jun 1969

Spouse: Sarah Grace CLACK

Birth: 3 Mar 1901

Marr: 11 Jul 1924

Children: Harry Lawson (1925-)
Margaret (1929-)
Mary Elinor (1934-)

1.3.1 Harry Lawson HILL

Birth: 13 Jul 1925

Spouse: Nancy MASON

Children: Nancy Lawson (1953-)
Thomas Anderson (1956-)

1.3.1.1 Nancy Lawson HILL

Birth: 8 Feb 1953

1.3.1.2 Thomas Anderson HILL

Birth: 28 Jan 1956

1.3.2 Margaret HILL

Birth: 31 Mar 1929

Spouse: Paul LINDSAY

Children: John Wyatt (1953-)
Mark Peay (1954-)
Rebecca Jane (1955-)

1.3.2.1 John Wyatt LINDSAY

Birth: 2 Feb 1953

1.3.2.2 Mark Peay LINDSAY

Family History Report

Birth: 4 Jul 1954

1.3.2.3 Rebecca Jane LINDSAY

Birth: 15 Jul 1955

1.3.3 Mary Elinor HILL

Birth: 9 Mar 1934

Spouse: William James WEAVER Sr.

Birth: 29 Aug 1931

Death: 2 Jul 1996

Marr: 18 Dec 1954

Children: William James (1955-)

Angela Grace (1957-)

Amanda Sue (1961-)

1.3.3.1 William James WEAVER Jr.

Birth: 28 Sep 1955

Spouse: Grace WOOD

Birth: 13 Sep 1946

Marr: 1 May 1982

1.3.3.2 Angela Grace WEAVER

Birth: 21 Jul 1957

Spouse: David John PETERSON

Birth: 26 Jul 1953

Marr: 16 Jul 1994

1.3.3.3 Amanda Sue WEAVER

Birth: 7 Sep 1961

Spouse: Ralph Glenmore KINDER Jr.

Birth: 24 Oct 1958

Marr: 24 Feb 1990

1.4 Martha Emma HILL

Birth: 30 Dec 1903

Death: 18 Sep 1989

Spouse: Hollis Honsley NUNLEY

Birth: 21 Dec 1900

Death: 5 May 1956

Family History Report

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ASHBURN

Icie Foster spouse of 1

BEEHAN

Brendon Hill 1.2.1.3
Nicholas Glennon III 1.2.1.2
Nicolas Glennon Jr. spouse of 1.2.1
Shannon Stone 1.2.1.1

CHARLES

Bettye Jean spouse of 1.1.2

CLACK

Sarah Grace spouse of 1.3

FOSTER

Dorothy Louise 1.1.1
Hollie Nicole 1.1.2.1.2
Robert spouse of 1.1
Robert Hill Sr. 1.1.2
Robert Hill Jr. 1.1.2.1
Robert Hill III 1.1.2.1.1

HILL

George Lawson 1
Harry Lawson 1.3.1
Ida Louise 1.1
Margaret 1.3.2
Martha Emma 1.4
Mary Elinor 1.3.3
Mary Rankin 1.2
Nancy Lawson 1.3.1.1
Thomas Anderson 1.3.1.2
Virgil Anderson 1.3

KINDER

Ralph Glenmore Jr. spouse of 1.3.3.3

LAY

Joseph Shelby Jr. spouse of 1.1.1.1
Laura Elizabeth 1.1.1.1.1

LINDSAY

John Wyatt 1.3.2.1
Mark Peay 1.3.2.2
Paul spouse of 1.3.2
Rebecca Jane 1.3.2.3

MASON

Nancy spouse of 1.3.1

NUNLEY

Hollis Honsley spouse of 1.4

PETERSON

David John spouse of 1.3.3.2

SCHAERER

Charles Bernard spouse of 1.1.1
Laura Foster 1.1.1.1

Family History Report

STARK

Leda Denice spouse of 1.1.2.1

STONE

Chester Lee spouse of 1.2

Mary Hill 1.2.1

WEAVER

Amanda Sue 1.3.3.3

Angela Grace 1.3.3.2

William James Sr. spouse of 1.3.3

William James Jr. 1.3.3.1

WOOD

Grace spouse of 1.3.3.1