

Letters to Ethel

(Supplemental Pictures)

B.D Mills & Annie Ethel Fly Mills

Bevley David Mills



Undated image of B.D. Mills with five other young men. These fellows were posturing for the camera with even the fellow behind B.D. and the one to his upper right holding their hands as if they were throwing gang signs. Probably innocent and most unlikely that Gibson County had a gang problem with farmer boys in the early 1900's. B.D is holding a tobacco pipe in his left hand. Unsure why the photograph was cropped into a trapezoid shape.

Annie Ethel Fly



An undated image of a young Ethel Fly holding onto a wooden post in a glamour-shot like pose for the camera.

Annie Ethel Fly



An undated image of a young Ethel Fly in a more formal pose.

B.D. Mills & Ethel Fly



An undated image of B.D. Mills with Ethel Fly probably taken while they were dating. Note that B.D. was of slender stature as a young man.

"Chapel Hill School 1912"



One of the first teaching jobs Ethel Fly would hold after gaining her teaching certification from the State of Tennessee. Chapel Hill School was large enough to have more than one teacher with Ethel's class all appearing to be students of approximately the same age. Ethel marked this photograph taken in the snow with the blue "x" and labeled it with the school and year, but did not record any of her student's names.

B.D. Mills & Ethel Fly



An undated and slightly out of focus image of B.D. Mills in his U.S. Army uniform standing with Ethel. The photograph was taken shortly after his return home to Gibson County upon being discharged from military service on February 8, 1919.

B.D. & Ethel Fly Mills



This undated image of Ethel and B.D. Mills was their first photograph after being married on July 2, 1919. It is possible that this was their official wedding photograph.

B.D. Mills



An undated image of B.D. Mills in a suit and tie wearing a fedora hat.

B.D. Mills



An undated image of B.D. sitting on a horse drawn plow-like piece of farming equipment. Taken in front of the home place of his in-laws, Thomas H. and Sarah Elizabeth West Fly.

"Hope Hill School 1922"



Another school class image taken during the winter time, which Ethel Fly Mills labeled by site and year, but not with any student names. This picture was taken during the period that Ethel was the primary wage earner for the couple as B.D. Mills was too ill from tuberculosis to farm. During her teaching career, Ethel would teach in several different rural schools in the south-east section of Gibson County, having to get to work by riding a horse or mule, even for several years after owning a car, because of how muddy the rural roads were during the winter and spring times. Hope Hill was a small community located in southern Gibson county east of Medina and just north of the county line with Madison County. The Hope Hill School was adjacent to a small community church, neither of which are now there. Located across from the school and church was Hope Hill Cemetery seen in the photograph's background. The community was devastated in 1941 when the U.S. Government by purchase and eminent domain took 22,357 acres (34.9 square miles) of prime Gibson County farm land to build the Milan Ordnance Depot (later Milan Arsenal). While necessary for the war effort, it displaced many families whom had resided in the local area for several generations. The arsenal's southern property line begins at the northern edge of Hope Hill Cemetery.

Fly Family 1923



Ethel labeled this photograph "1923- standing at back from left: Lela Fly and husband Aubrey, Mattie Fly Holt, Sarah Fly and husband Thos. H. Fly, Ethel Fly Mills and husband B.D. Mills. Kneeling in front: Irene Cash, Ethelene Holt. The last B.D. was ever able to go out again." Notice how gaunt B.D. appears when compared to earlier photographs. Tuberculosis manifests itself not only with the pulmonary symptoms of shortness of breath and painful coughs with often bloody sputum, but also with fatigue, anorexia, fevers, chills and night sweats, which all contribute to extreme weight loss.

B.D. Mills's Funeral Memorial Card



B.D. Mills's Grave Site



This colorized image of the funeral wreaths lying on B.D. Mills' grave was taken at his funeral on August 24, 1924.

B.D. Mills's Tombstone, Hope Hill Cemetery



"West School 1926"



Another school class image which Ethel marked herself with a blue "x". The West School was located in the community of West Station located where Chapel Hill Road intersects U.S 45-E. West Station was established as a railroad station on the Illinois Central Railroad in 1873 when it took over the line previously operated by the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, which had been completed in 1861. I believe West Station got it's name from George Harrison West, Ethel's maternal grandfather who resided near where the station was established.

"Mt. Zion School 1932"



Another school class image with Ethel on the far right, second row from the front. Mt. Zion School was located near the Mt. Zion Methodist Episcopal Church, one of the earliest churches in Gibson County established in the 1830's and founded in part by Thomas Edwin Hale, one of Ethel's maternal great-grandfathers.

Ethel Fly Mills & Sarah Elizabeth West Fly



After the death of B.D. in 1924, Ethel moved back into her parent's home. She continued to reside there through the deaths of her father in 1933 and her mother later in 1946. Ethel eventually moved into Milan to live after she retired from teaching.

Ethel Fly Mills & Thad Stone (Christmas 1973)



Ethel Mills was an aunt and surrogate mother to Mattie's children and a great-aunt and great-great-aunt to all their progeny.

Ethel Fly Mills's Obituary, The Jackson Sun (November 21, 1988)

Ethel Fly Mills

MILAN — Services for Ethel Fly Mills, 95, were today at Bodkin Funeral Home. Burial was in Hope Hill Cemetery near Medina.

Mrs. Mills, a retired teacher in the Gibson County School System, died Saturday night at City of Milan Hospital.

She was married to the late B.D. Mills.

Although Ethel's mind in her last years was a just whisper of what it had been, she retained her sweet nature until her death on November 19, 1988

Ethel Fly Mills's Tombstone, Hope Hill Cemetery



Lonnie Dan Holt & Martha Elizabeth Fly

Chapel Hill School (circa 1910)



Seen in this school class image are both Lonnie Dan Holt (#1) and Martha Elizabeth Fly (#2), his later wife. Although most of the individuals were later marked and named by Martha Elizabeth Fly Holt, she did not date the photograph.

"Miss Mattie Fly" (Martha Elizabeth Fly)



Undated image of Mattie Fly sitting in the Fly home place front yard. A few photos survived the Holt Homestead fire, but not the marriage photo of Lonnie and Mattie Holt.

Holt Family "Sep. 30, 1930"



Family photograph of Ella Hays McMinn Holt (in center) and her four children (from left): Ina Bessie Holt Atchison, Emma Alene (Allie) Holt Fuqua, Otha J. Holt and Lonnie Dan Holt.

Lonnie Dan Holt (June 3, 1947)



My most favorite photograph of Lonnie Dan Holt. This photograph was one a group of images taken by Campbell Soup Company in 1947 for publishment in a company house magazine. Lonnie would start tomato plants from seed for Campbell Soup and when they reached the level of growth seen in the photograph, they would be pulled up, bundled together and shipped north by railroad to be replanted where the growing season was much shorter. Danda on the farm in his quintessential khaki colored hat, shirt and pants is how I most fondly remember my grandfather.

Lonnie D. Holt 1968



In the summer of 1968, my family moved from Memphis to Greeneville where my father began practicing as a radiologist. Danda came up to visit and went tent camping along with me, my brother Bob, my Dad and our cousin Lee. Danda made a point to visit one of the soldiers he had served with in the 57th Pioneer Infantry who resided out in the country in between Elizabethton and Roan Mountain. Unfortunately, we did not record his name.

Lonnie D. Holt, The Jackson Sun (June 11, 1970)

Gibson Farm Leader Announces Candidacy

Lonnie D. Holt, prominent Milan farmer and leader, announced today his candidacy as a Gibson County delegate to the 1971 Constitutional Convention.

Holt, a lifelong resident of Gibson County served with the United States Army during World War I in France. He taught school in Gibson County for five years after his army service and later worked 18 years with the U.S. Postal Service before resigning to devote all his time to farming. He is still actively engaged in farming.

Holt is a member of the Milan Exchange Club, Gibson County Farm Bureau, and a deacon in the First Baptist Church at Milan.

He is married to the former Miss Mattie Fly and they are the parents of seven children.

Holt said, "I believe strongly in the conservative approach to the problems of life. I believe that the future progress of our nation, our state, and our community is best served by such an approach."

"The dominant issue to be considered at the constitutional convention pertains to taxation. Gibson County is basically a rural county. We propose to work to the end that the small business and farming interests of our state have a strong voice in the tax structure of the Constitution of our state."



LONNIE D. HOLT

Lonnie D. Holt, The Jackson Sun (August 7, 1974)

Civic Leader Lonnie D. Holt Dies

MILAN — Services for prominent Milan farmer and civic leader Lonnie Dan Holt, 77, will be held at 3 p.m. Thursday at the First Baptist Church of Milan with the Rev. Denzil Dukes officiating.

Mr. Holt died early this morning at Baptist Hospital in Memphis following a brief illness.

He was born in the Chapel Hill community near Milan and attended public schools there. Later, he taught at country schools in the area. He also worked for several years at the U.S. Post Office in Milan.

Mr. Holt was best known for his extensive farming interests, which included crops of strawberries, sweet potatoes, cotton, corn and other vegetables. He was one of the founders of the Irvin Fly Co., and was a major stockholder in Tri-County Equipment Co.

He also was involved in Republican Party politics, and once ran as a delegate to the state constitutional convention.

Mr. Holt was a deacon of the First Baptist Church of Milan. He also was a veteran of World War I and was active in the American Legion. He

was a member of the Milan Exchange club.

Survivors include his widow, Mrs. Mattie Fly Holt; three daughters, Mrs. Winfield Rich of Memphis, Mrs. Edmond Miles of Gibson, Mrs. Elliot McMullan of Newton, Miss.; four sons, Dr. Dan Holt of Springfield, Robert Holt of Knoxville, Dr. David Holt of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and Dr. Huey Holt of Memphis; a sister, Mrs. Ina Atchison of Milan; 18 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Following services, burial will be in the Chapel Church Cemetery. Fields Funeral Home has charge.

Lonnie Holt was admitted to the hospital to evaluate some abdominal symptoms he had been suffering from. Shortly after receiving a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer, he passed.

Mattie Holt (June 16, 1984)



My most favorite photograph of my grandmother. She loved gardening, fishing and flowers. She was making a floral arrangement presentation at the local garden club when she suffered her 1st stroke later in 1986. She passed quietly at home on April 2, 1988.

Tombstone of Lonnie Dan & Mattie Fly Holt, Chapel Hill Church Cemetery

