

# THE MAZE

Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc.

274 Wilder Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029

---

---

MAZE 2012 May Edition

Submitted by Karen Herbert

---

## **The Oral History of William Ellis Middlebrooks and Mary Elizabeth Mead told to me by my mother, Carolyn Middlebrook Lapeyrouse:**

William Ellis Middlebrooks was born in 1859 in Alabama to H. A. Middlebrooks and Eliza E. Mitchell. His siblings were Sarah, Martha, Johnnie, James, Ben and Henry Snow.

William was a country doctor who traveled around with a horse and buggy to visit his patients. He was paid in goods rather than with money; eggs, chickens, vegetables, wood for the stove, and jam were a few things my mother remembered. On October 5, 1884, in Montgomery County, Alabama, William married Mary Elizabeth Mead who was born abt. 1863. She was the daughter of Isaac Mead and Eliza Ann Walters. There was talk that Mary was somehow related to General George Mead and that she was a lady of leisure. Herbert was their only son. My grandpa Herbert told my mother that he had sisters but that they had passed on.

My grandfather, Herbert, was about 8 months old, his mother, Mary, passed away from scarlet fever. On Sept. 26, 1894, William married his second wife, Caroline (Callie) Lawrence in Montgomery County, Alabama. William and Callie had 2 sons, Henry Peterson Middlebrooks who was born July 11, 1895, and Jim Butler Middlebrooks, who was born in August of 1896. Jim Butler died in 1926 at the age of 30. He was working for the railroad, and a railroad tire fell and hit him in the head. It was stated that he died instantly. I have recently found information that Jim Butler was married to Massie Chesser in Troy, Alabama, June 15, 1918.

William and Callie lived on a cotton plantation in Snowdown, Ala. William and Callie were killed and their son Henry was very badly hurt, when on March 27, 1917, a storm swept through 4 counties in central Alabama just after 1:00 a.m. in the morning. Fourteen people were killed and many injured. In Ansley, just north of Troy, Alabama, where my great grandparents lived, the Methodist and Baptist churches were blown down as well as many farms. Uncle Henry, who was about 16 years old at the time, used to say that he was the only man that he knew of that rode a tornado and lived to tell about it. He was found high up in a tree, very badly hurt. No one expected him to survive, but he fooled them all and did. It took him almost a full year to recuperate from his injuries. My grandfather Herbert was working that night at the railroad and raced home to find the devastation and death of his parents, and his badly injured brother. Uncle Henry was a bear of a man. He stood 6 ft. 4 or better and weighed over 300 lbs. Whenever he would go for a visit to my grandpa Herbert's house, my momma remembers the house shaking as he walked up the steps and her mother, Mamie Lee calling out "Here comes "Man Mountain"! My momma always said it was because of his size that he survived that tornado.

## **Herbert Ellis Middlebrook and Mamie Lee (Cora Bell) Parr Middlebrook:**

Herbert was born Dec. 24, 1888, in Ramer, Al. He died March 25, 1972, in Austin, TX. He is buried next to my father, Emile Lapeyrouse, in an unmarked grave in Galveston, Texas, at Calvary Cemetery. Herbert and Mamie both had been married before. She was divorced and he was married for about 17 yrs. He was either divorced? or widowed? Children? I don't know the answers to those questions, yet.... Herbert went to college to become a doctor like his father before him. He hated the sight of blood and changed his major to pharmacy and then probably dropped out. He worked on the

railroad as a stoker and worked his way up to train engineer. He loved the railroad. He became color-blind and had to quit being a railroad engineer because he could not tell if the lantern was red to stop or green to keep going. He then sold Colliers Encyclopedias and played on a minor farm baseball league (RED SOX). Fishing was a favorite pastime of his. Whenever the Galveston White Caps baseball team played a game in Galveston, he would go. He had a fiery temper and was very jovial and a teaser, also very tender-hearted. Herbert was in his early twenties when his hair became snow white...needless to say I inherited the same gene and started going white in my early twenties, too!

Mamie Lee Parr was born Feb. 20, 1904, in Athens, Al. She died June 9, 1955, in Galveston, TX. She is buried in McKinney, TX, in an unmarked grave next to her father, William Freeman Parr. Mamie's parents were dirt-poor farmers. They moved to McKinney, TX, when she was very young. She married Hebert Middlebrook March 31, 1930, in Durant. Ok. They eloped because Mamie's brother Marvin (her only living sibling) was against the marriage because Herbert was 16 years older than Mamie. They had 4 children, 2 that died at birth, Eugene Ellis and Shirley Jean, and two who lived, my mother, Carolyn Ophelia, and her brother, Kenneth Wayne.

Mamie loved to crochet and tat (make lace). She was a fairly good seamstress and an excellent cook. She loved to bake. Carolyn and Kenneth were around 9 or 10 when she went to work. She sold magazines and collected money with Herbert and also worked at the Carlton Hotel and the old Queens Court as a desk clerk in Galveston, Texas. She was a very loving, caring, Christian lady with a deep faith in God. She stood barely 5 feet tall and had a huge heart for anyone in time of need. She hated her real name (Cora Bell), so she changed it, though not legally, to Mamie Lee. My grandparents were in Texas City, Texas, the day of the Texas City Disaster. They saw many horrific sights that day. My grandmother had nightmares for many weeks after. Grandpa Herbert said that it was because of Mamie's love of talking and visiting with people that it literally saved their lives. They were late for their next appointment because she was just gabbing away....they would have been killed if they had made their appointment on time...the area they were heading to was totally destroyed and there were no survivors.

Grandma Mamie had an old steamer trunk full of Middlebrook and Parr family mementos that Mattie (Grandpa Herbert's 3rd wife) burned.....What a loss to all of us. It just makes my heart sick. I would love to have seen what was in that trunk....all the history and stories it contained. My mother said that her step-mother Mattie found my Grandpa Herbert going through the trunk and got insanely jealous. When he went to work the next day, she hauled the trunk outside and set it afire. When Grandpa Herbert came home from work, he found what was left of it smoldering outside and fell to the ground weeping while she yelled at him that no ghost was gonna be in their marriage.

As in all oral family history, there is some truth, but over time the stories grow... it is our job as our families' story tellers and genealogists to find out the truth and fill in the blanks whenever possible.

You will notice that for William and Henry I used the -s at the end of Middlebrooks but not for my grandfather Herbert...He swore that there was no -s at the end of his name, and my mother remembered the arguments that her dad and Uncle Henry had about that.

Sources:

Oral History: Carolyn Middlebrook Lapeyrouse

Newspaper: *Birmingham Age-Herald*, March 28, 1917, page 9

Karen Herbert: Her Mother, Carolyn Middlebrooks Lapeyrouse, father was Herbert Ellis Middlebrook(s) and Great-grandfather is William Ellis Middlebrooks



Herbert Ellis Middlebrook; Born Dec. 24, 1888 Died March 25, 1972

**The lineage For Grandpa Herbert:** Herbert Ellis Middlebrook -- William Ellis MIDDLEBROOKS, Henry Alford MIDDLEBROOKS, Alford MIDDLEBROOKS, Micajah MIDDLEBROOKS



Henry Peterson Middlebrooks; Born July 11, 1895 Died April 3, 1948

**The lineage for Uncle Henry:** Henry Peterson Middlebrooks -- William Ellis MIDDLEBROOKS, Henry Alford MIDDLEBROOKS, Alford MIDDLEBROOKS, Micajah MIDDLEBROOKS

**Herbert and Henry were half-brothers - same father, William Ellis Middlebrooks, different mothers**

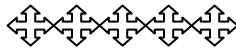
Uncle Henry's mother was Caroline (Callie) Lawrence - she was killed in the tornado

Grandpa Herbert's mother was Mary Elizabeth Mead - she died of scarlet fever, William was her second marriage. Her first husband was ? Turnipseed



Carolyn Ophelia Middlebrook Lapeyrouse; Born January 13, 1934 Died November 21, 2010

**For my mother's picture the lineage is :** Carolyn Ophelia Middlebrook Lapeyrouse -- Herbert Ellis MIDDLEBROOK, William Ellis MIDDLEBROOKS, Henry Alford MIDDLEBROOKS, Alford MIDDLEBROOKS, Micajah MIDDLEBROOKS



**2012 Annual Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc. Meeting/Reunion  
October 3-6, Mineral Wells, Texas**

Plan on attending our 2012 meeting by making reservations at:

Holiday Inn Express Hotel (Mineral Wells, Texas)  
6801 Hwy 180 E, Mineral Wells, TX 76067  
Reservations: 1-940-325-7829

Mention you will be attending the Middlebrooks Reunion:

Name of the Block: Middlebrooks (group name), block code: MFA

The group room rate is \$89.99 + tax until Aug 24, 2012. (King is \$92.99)

Rate includes Express Start hot breakfast bar!

After August 24th, room rate is higher.

Reserving through our group rate, will entitle us to a no-charge Meeting Room during our event, if we get at least 10 rooms.

Consider RV accommodations at [Fort Richardson State Park](#)

**4 Oct**, Thursday: AM- Registration; Opening and Reports, PM- visit to local sites in Jacksboro to include Fort Richardson, the Jack County Museum, records at the Jack County courthouse, and the genealogical section at the Jacksboro library.

**5 Oct**, Friday: Day long field trip to family home sites and cemeteries in and around Jacksboro.

**6 Oct**, Saturday: AM- speakers, 10:30 – Family Reunion – 3:30 PM /PM- business meeting closeout.

**Mark your calendars.**

**See you there**