

## THIRD GENERATION (GRANDPARENTS)

George William GRIFFIN Parents  
William Henry GRIFFIN  
Doshie STRATTON

Rebecca Inez LANNING PARENTS  
See my Lanning Book of Ancestors for the  
Lanning Lineage

**This Griffin Book will now trace the Griffins and Strattons back as far as I can go.**

**William Henry GRIFFIN**, son of **Albert Thomas GRIFFIN, Sr.** and **Mary Maude BELCHER**, was born on 8 May 1902, probably in Clayton County, GA. He died on 16 Dec 1975 in Cobb County, Georgia at Kennesaw Hospital at age 73. Henry was buried in the Ellijay Cemetery beside his parents and brother, Fred.

He was 'granddaddy' to us and 'Uncle Henry' to others.

It appears Henry's early life was spent in Clayton and Henry Counties, GA where he grew up with three brothers, Clay, Fred, and Buck (Fred and Buck shown below) and three sisters. He was listed on the Federal census in 1910 in Clayton County, GA with his parents as seven years old. Ten years later on the next census, he was listed as William H., sixteen years old in Henry County.

When his parents moved to Gilmer County about 1941 when his brother Fred was killed, it appears Henry came along. I can never remember Henry living anywhere other than the old house where his mother was living. Henry continued to live with her and look after her after his father died in 1947.



I do not remember Henry ever working a structured job. He was always self employed and was one of those people that could do a little of everything – 'a jack of all trades and master of none'. I know of the following



occupations he carried on at one time or the other – cutting timber, cutting pulpwood, digging wells (hand digging before the drills ever came on the scene), farming, and last but not least, he was in the tree business (cutting, topping, trimming, and anything else that went along with tree work). Oh, by the way, he was a junk collector also.

When I was twelve years old, I started working with granddaddy in the tree business. I would work with him on the week ends and in the summer months when the farm would spare me. He

never paid me much but anything was better than 'naught'. Talk about learning the value of hard work! I am not sure how Jim Queen and I ever survived. Jim was the son of Henry's newest lady friend and we were basically Henry's work crew on Saturday and during the summers. Some of our ventures led us up into trees sixty to a hundred feet high, cutting, lowering, and moving from limb to limb, with only a rope to tie us off or to hang on to. Lord help if the wind was blowing. They do not make amusement park rides to compare with riding a tall tree top from side to side and hanging on for dear life.

Henry never had a bucket truck so every tree had to be climbed the old fashioned way. We either had to hook it or try to get a rope over a limb somewhere and be pulled up by the rope. One of our ways to get the rope over a limb was to hook a coil of rope on to a long cane pole and lift it up and over a limb. Now these cane poles did not grow at every location so we had to find one on the river somewhere and cut it down. This we did and trimmed it up and tied it across the old truck from front to back. You talk about a

site – here comes this truck with a cane pole about two or three inches in diameter sticking out in front about ten feet and out behind about ten feet. I mean we had to make WIDE turns. We also had to be careful not to follow too close and have that pole shoved up ---- you get the picture. The Gilmer Hillbillies were on the road again.

Henry never had AAA Auto Service. It was not invented yet I guess. If something went wrong with the old truck, we got the tools out from behind the seat and began to work right where it died. With spit and bailing wire, most of the time we were able to get it to hobble on in to home. I can remember many times having to fix a flat tire on the side of the road. This chore entailed removing the tire from the vehicle, moving over into the grass, taking crowbars and removing the tire from one side of the rim, removing the inner tube, patching the tube, replacing the inner tube in the tire, hammering the tire back onto the rim, using a hand pump to pump the tube and restoring the tire to the vehicle. After all that, we were proud to be on the road again. Oh yes, the weather never cooperated – from freezing cold and rain to instant sweat, it had to be done.

We had been to Copper Hill, TN one day working and on our way back through Fannin County, Jim and I noticed a big tire come by us going in the same direction. By the time our mind caught up with the situation, we had slammed into the pavement on the inside. It was our wheel and tire leaving without us. I don't know what happened to the lug nuts but off it had come. Jim and I had to chase the tire down and roll it back for reinstalling. Luck was with us and we had not broken anything when the axle fell. We scrounged up enough lug nuts to keep the old tire on until we got back to Ellijay.

Working or just riding with granddaddy was an adventure. I mentioned he was a junk collector. Everywhere we went, he would collect anything people were throwing away. I am not sure some of the stuff was being thrown away but we got it anyway.



The woods behind granny's old house were filled with his collection. Only he knew what most of it was and I don't remember him ever selling much of it. I guess he did though or there would not have been enough land in Ellijay to hold all his pickings.

If we were riding and saw something shining in the ditch or on the road, Jim and I just cringed because we knew Henry would bow up in the middle of the road and stop to investigate. Old hub caps, beer cans, or anything that reflected sunlight was a find for him. I can't remember how many times we almost got run over trying to retrieve these items. We have been called everything but a white man by folks that were sideways behind us or right up under the back lip of the old stake body truck.

Most people looked at Henry's stuff as junk but my wife Sarah took an interest in him and his junk. I can still picture Henry and Sarah walking through his treasures and him pointing and telling her about each one. She loved those times with him and I could tell it thrilled him to have someone show an interest in him and his collection. If there was anything Sarah wanted, all she had to do was point and Henry would drag it out and back to the house to the trunk of the car. We still have an old cast iron wash pot he gave her. I think it is the only thing we still have from him and it is priceless to us. One day our children may look and wonder what in the world we were doing clinging to that old pot but for now, there are memories tied to it.

Henry always had an old mule or horse to work the farm. We could never afford either so Henry always let us use his. I think he was really taking care of us in his own way. He did farm when he was home but for the most part, he was always on the road working somewhere. I look back and I am thankful for Henry and all he did do for us

that I was unaware of at the time. I guess when you are twelve to seventeen and all you see is the tail end of a mule, you never get a good view of the big picture. If Henry hadn't kept a work animal, we would have starved to death on that little six acre rock farm.



When granny, Henry's mother, moved in with her daughter in Douglasville, Henry continued to live in the old house alone. It was never the same when all the activity around the house ceased. No more visits by the children and grandchildren – no more hills ringing with laughter. Shown in the picture above are probably the last pictures of Henry (in the rear in the hat) and granny at their old home in August of 1965. It appears a reunion was held there at that time for granny and all those that could gather.

In 1975, Henry became ill and could not care for himself. He moved in with his sister Nanny in Douglasville, GA, and was there in December of 1975 when he was rushed to Kennesaw Hospital in Marietta for the last time.



As far as anyone can determine, Henry never married but somehow he managed to sire two and possibly three children. I can remember daddy saying that he knew his parents had never married.

In a partnership with **Doshie STRATTON**, they produced one child.

The child from this partnership was: **George William GRIFFIN, Sr.** George married **Rebecca Inez LANNING** on 10 Oct 1942 in Gilmer County, GA. The marriage ended in divorce and George next married **Sarah Virginia HOGSED**.

In a partnership with **Lucille NEWBERRY**, they produced one child. The child from this partnership was: **William Henry GRIFFIN, Jr.**

Sometime shortly after 1949, Henry met a young widow with four children. **Lillian Daves Queen**, whose husband James Queen had died in 1949. Lillian's children were:

**James Davis Queen**, born 1940

**Mamie Jean Queen**, born 1943

**John Wesley Queen**, born 1944

**Joan Elise Queen**, born 1946

**Henry and Lillian** became partners for about 25 years and Henry accepted the children like his own and cared for them into their adult lives. These four became like brothers and sisters to me and we spent quite a bit of time together growing up. Somehow in 1964 we all ended up in Charlotte where J.D. had an automobile repair shop.

For whatever reasons, we seemed to all find ourselves riding different winds and we scattered. Jim married and moved to Chattanooga, TN. Jake closed his shop in Charlotte and moved on eventually ending in Florida. I lost track of Mamie and Joan completely at that time.

For 43 years, we had no contact until recently when I finally found Jake and began the process of finding the others. It has been like a wonderful homecoming to re-establish what I feel is a family relationship.

It is easy for me to write about my grandfather but now I turn to another who knew him for a different view.

The following is an excerpt from an e-mail I received from Jake Queen and I am using it here as a testimony to my grandfather and my father and their character.

Bill

It's hard to believe but your Grandfather Henry and my mother lived together for thirty years.

Henry was like a father to me. He came in to our life after my father died in 1949. He was the only one who cared about us. My dad's family was all living up north and most were wealthy but they never checked on us at all. Henry was always there for us. I asked Mom why they didn't get married and she said that if they did she would lose her pension from the government. So our family became part of the Griffin family. We were not blood related but we never thought anything different.

We moved to Atlanta with Henry and lived a short time with Aunt Nanny and Uncle Slim. He was always my favorite. I recall he was so strong he could pick me up and toss me up on the roof of the house. We were close to Aunt Lois and family. Little Henry was my favorite. I see he passed too. When he got out of the Navy he came to live with us.

I went to live with your Dad in St. Louis, MO and stayed with him for many years. We traveled the country working from place to place until we moved to Spartanburg, SC. Then he helped me open my shop in Charlotte, NC.

Bill you are welcome to use our family name in any way you chose if you so wish. We all talked when Henry died about him and Mom being buried together but I guess there was a problem. I owe your dad a lot. I loved him very much. He also was my best friend and mentor.

Note: Your Dad named me Jake.

Your Brother Jake Queen

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**Doshie STRATTON** was born on 15 Dec 1900 in Robbinsville, Graham County, NC, and died on 16 Jun 1974 in Atlanta, Fulton County, GA at age 73 as the result of a heart attack. She was buried in Magnolia Cemetery, Fulton County, GA.

The picture below is the only picture I have of my grandmother. It is the only picture I know of that shows Henry and Doshie together.

When I was young and still in Ellijay, I remember seeing my grandmother, Doshie, about twice a year when she and then husband Kyle would be passing through on their way to Robbinsville to visit her relatives. They never stayed long, just a quick stop and then on their way again. I know we did not have much to offer in the way of amenities and comforts so they were in and out quick time.

I was always glad to see them though; not for anything they gave



or did for us, but because she was my grandmother.

Kyle and Doshie lived in Atlanta and Doshie had somehow accumulated some wealth from her ex-husbands and I guess investments. She was a shrewd business woman who had rental homes in the Little Five Points area and she and Kyle also had a small store they operated. I remember the store was like at sidewalk level and built back into a bank it seems; just a plain little community store.

Doshie had one son by her husband before Kyle, Jim

Aldred. Jim Jr. was usually with them when they came through so we got to know each other briefly. He was a couple of years older than me so when they came, they usually brought a box of used hand-me-downs for us poor children to pick over. I know I should not belly ache, but it seems we got help only when it benefited someone else.

When I moved back to Atlanta about 1966 to begin working with the phone company, I went by to see if Doshie had an apartment that Sarah and I could rent. She took us to one of the houses she owned and showed us a two-room efficiency on the third floor. The apartment by itself would not have been too bad I guess, but the bathroom was out the door and down at the end of the third floor hall. Everyone on the third floor shared this bathroom. Now to Doshie, all this seemed proper and fitting and she could not understand why Sarah and I did not jump on this deal.

We finally found an apartment just down the street and as we began to settle in, we wanted to get to know my grandmother a little more. Sarah was a trooper in this matter. She was not working at this time so she would go by and get Doshie when she went grocery shopping. The friendship blossomed but Sarah finally had to quit taking Doshie with her. It seems that when Sarah would put something in her buggy, Doshie would take it out and look at it and if she didn't think we needed it, she would put it back on the shelf. She would then reach and get something she thought we needed and put it in the buggy. Sarah is one of the most patient people I know but I can imagine there were a few times when she had to turn away somewhere and count to ten – or a hundred! She managed to work it out though and when she went to work in Atlanta, she was able to gracefully bow out of the shopping trips with Doshie.

I had a time trying to find the family tree limb for Doshie because I knew nothing of my great-grandparents. After hunting and pecking on the Internet and with the help of some beautiful Stratton researchers, a few pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place.

Doshie was born in Robbinsville, Graham County, NC, at the turn of the century, 1900. She was one of eleven children born to **James Robert STRATTON** and **Kandis CARRINGER**.

The following is taken from an article in the Graham County NC Heritage Book:  
An article on the Jack Dillard Stratton family states:

Richard (called Old Dick) and Sue had two sons and two daughters, one being Jack (b. 1835) who married Eliza Russell.

They had five children, one being **[James] Robert** (b. 1855) who married **Kandis Carringer**. They had eleven children:  
~ Doshie m. Charlie Deaton

Growing up in Robbinsville was a lot like growing up in Ellijay I am sure; rural mountains and narrow valleys. Robbinsville is located just outside the Great Smokey Mountains National Park but is still located in the backbone range of the Appalachian Mountains. There were no industrial plants there in 1900. In fact, the only reason to be in this area was to farm.

On May 2, 1910, Doshie is listed in the house of her father, James R. Straton on the Federal Census for Cheoah Township, in residence number 114/114. Doshie is shown as 9 years old.

Doshie married **Charles DEATON** about 1917 in NC. I can find no marriage license or certificate without going to Raleigh and searching and paying for copies.

Children from this marriage were:

**Hardy L. DEATON** was born in 1919 in NC and died on 14 Jan 1977 in Atlanta, Fulton, GA 2 at age 58.

**Flora B. DEATON** was born about 1921 in GA. Flora married **Johnny PRICE**.

**Annie Mae DEATON** was born about 1923 in GA. Annie married **Mr. PIERCE**.

Sometime shortly after Hardy was born, Charles and Doshie moved to Putnam County, GA along with Doshie's parents. The 1920 Federal Census for Putnam County, GA – Glades District lists Charlie, age 22, Doshie, age 18, and Hardy, who was 1 year and 3 months old at the time.

The 1920 Census indicated that Charlie could not read and write but indicated that Doshie could. At this time, Charlie was a farmer and Doshie is shown as a farm laborer. Doshie and Charles are renting and living next door to James and Candice Stratton at the time of this

census.

Things were probably pretty tough on the farm even with her parents living next door to help with baby sitting or raising. While farming is an honest life, it is a hard life; bodies that age and wither in the sun. Hands crack and the body is dead tired after a hard day in the field. Even after the field work was completed for a day or a season, there were many other chores associated with living on a farm. At this time, there would have been no electric conveniences. Firewood had to be gathered and sawn or chopped, cows had to be milked, butter churned, pigs fed and a multitude of other things that had to be completed before the sun disappeared from the sky and all trace of light was gone. After dark would come any household chores that could be done with only the light of oil lamps or the fire from the fireplace, such as sewing or mending their meager clothing wardrobe.

Into this environment in 1921, Doshie had another child, Flora and in 1923, along came Annie Mae. Here now is a young lady of about twenty three who already had a husband and three children and a lifetime of hard work and misery staring her in the face if she stayed there. I guess Doshie looked at the long road ahead and decided she had had enough. Sometime between 1923 and 1928, Doshie and Charlie parted company with Charlie keeping the children. Charlie moved back to Graham County, NC and remarried before 1930 when the next census shows him living there with a new wife Minnie, aged 18. This census also shows all three of the children living in this household.

The next few years are blurred in the life of Doshie. Since the last census was in 1930, I can not find Doshie after that. Somehow she found her way to the Atlanta area because sometime around 1923 – 1926, she met my grandfather **William Henry GRIFFIN**. Evidently they lived together and had one child, my father George, but they were not destined to stay together for very long.

Doshie next married **James ALDRED**. The child from this marriage was: **James ALDRED**. I have no timetable for the marriage but I am almost positive it was in the mid to late thirties.

James Jr., was probably born between 1937 and 1939. I believe Mr. Aldred died and Doshie inherited some money but I would not swear to this. I never remember my grandmother talking about any of her early life – in fact; I don't remember too many conversations with her about anything. I wish I had been more curious about her life.

Doshie next married **Kyle F. BRANTLEY** on an unknown date. Kyle was like a grandfather to us and we always liked him. Doshie and Kyle had no children of their own.

The following obituary appeared in the Atlanta Constitution on page 6C, Tuesday, June 18, 1974:

Mrs. K. F. Brantley

Services for Mrs. Kyle F. (Doshie Straton) Brantley, 73, of 108 Elizabeth St. NE will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at East Side Baptist church, burial in Magnolia Cemetery. Mrs. Brantley died Sunday, apparently from a heart attack. Survivors include her widower; sons, Hardy Deaton of Atlanta, James Aldred of Decatur and George Griffin of Douglasville; daughters, Mrs. Annie Mae Pierce of Atlanta and Mrs. Johnny Price of Goldsboro, N.C., and brother, Dillard Straton of Robbinsville, NC.

Brantley

Friends and relatives of Mr. and Mrs. Kyle F. Brantley, Mrs. Mae Pierce, Mr. and Mrs. Hardy Deaton, all of Atlanta; Mr. and Mrs. Johnny Price, Goldsboro, N.C.; Mr. and Mrs. George Griffin, Douglasville; Mr. and Mrs. James Aldred, Decatur; Mr. and Mrs. Dillard Stratton, Robbinsville, N.C. are invited to attend the funeral of Mrs. Kyle F. (Doshie S.) Brantley, Wednesday, June 19, 1974 at 11 a.m. at Eastside Baptist Church. Rev. Guy C. Rainwater officiating. Interment Magnolia Cemetery. Pallbearers please assemble at the church at 10:45 a.m. Horis A. Ward, Inc.

SSI and Georgia Deaths list: Doshie S. Brantley, her married name at the time of death [Kyle Brantley]

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