

SECOND GENERATION (PARENTS)

GEORGE WILLIAM GRIFFIN
REBECCA INEZ LANNING

George William GRIFFIN, Sr., son of **William Henry GRIFFIN** and **Doshie STRATTON**, was born on 8 Jan 1926, and died on 25 Nov 1985 in Douglasville, GA at age 59. He was buried on 28 Nov 1985, Thanksgiving Day, in the Turniptown Baptist Church Cemetery. The cause of his death was a third stroke in 1985.



George married **Rebecca Inez LANNING**, the daughter of **Andrew Thomas Lanning** and **Minnie Ann Cochran**, on 10 Oct 1942 in Gilmer County, GA. Their license was recorded in Nov. 1942 by Willard C. Holden, Ordinary.

Rebecca Inez LANNING, was born on 4 Jul 1920 in Ralston, Gilmer County, GA, and died on 19 Jan 1981 in Dalton, Whitfield County, GA, at age 60. Inez was buried on 21 Jan 1981 in Turniptown Cemetery. The cause of her death was Coronary heart failure.

According to Mary Lanning Goble, the sister of Inez, Inez was born dead and the midwife that was helping filled a dishpan with cold water and placed Inez in the pan. With the shock of the cold water, Inez revived.

For more on the Lanning Family, visit website <http://griffin-lanning.com> and click on Lanning and then The Book.

GEORGE'S STORY

George was born in the Atlanta area to William Henry Griffin and Doshie Stratton. Evidently Henry and Doshie never married and somehow Henry ended up with George. When the family migrated to Gilmer County about 1941, George came along. He was raised by his grandmother, Maude, who was a housewife, since Henry lived there also and traveled back and forth to different places to work. His grandfather Albert was alive and present at this time and I am sure had an influence on his early life also.



1942 in Gilmer County was mostly a very rural environment and I know from all the stories that George was a 'rounder'. At an early age, he was already very gifted with mechanical things. One of the few jobs I know of George having was working for the Ford dealership in Ellijay for Mr. William Sailors.

George moved around after the divorce from Inez in 1953. He first went to Louisville, KY for a while and then on to St. Louis, MO. Later he migrated across to West Virginia for a short stay and then down to Spartanburg, SC. George was living in Spartanburg when his son Fred was killed in Georgia in 1964. About a year later, George had moved to Dalton, Georgia. He was living here when his daughter



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Barbara died in Ellijay. After her death, George packed his family and moved on to Atlanta. He owned a service station just out of Little Five Points on DeKalb Ave for a while before Uncle Buck sold him about six acres in Douglas County. George was living in Douglas County at the time of his strokes and ultimate death.

George hated school and only attended through the third grade. Later in life, he could just barely read and write enough to sign his name. He could take an auto mechanic book though and tell you everything that was happening, both in the writing and the diagrams. He was one of those guys that was gifted in his calling and was very smart, even if it wasn't book smarts. He could work on any part of an automobile – motor, automatic transmission, body work – you name it, he could do it. It used to amaze me when I would hang around the junk yard some after I was grown and married. If someone wanted a part, he would tell one of the boys to “go out yonder under that blue 57 Ford and you will find a generator for a 1963 Oldsmobile, bring it to me”. He had it all cataloged in his head – never on paper.

When I had been with the phone company about four years in Atlanta and dad moved back there and started his junk yard/garage, he tried his best to get me to come to work for him and help to keep records and keep up with things. As much as I would have loved to work with daddy, I knew it would never work out. He could not offer me the security the phone company offered so I had to pass it up.

INEZ'S STORY

I never remember daddy and mama telling us how they met originally. Inez was either 4 or 6 years older than George (depending on who you listened to) and I am sure she was looking for a way out of Turniptown where she was both mother and sister to her five siblings since her mother died when she was young. I am not sure if Inez ever really wanted to change her mountain woman ways. Some things were ingrained and she was as hardheaded as anyone could be. I think it was some of this unbending that caused Francis, Barbara, and Fred to leave at the very first opportunity. Poor George was stuck with being the baby and mama never wanted to let him go.



Inez Lanning Childs - Ellijay, Ga - About 1945

George Jr. tells these tales on Inez:

Mama was a 'fraidy cat'. Almost anything could spook her. Now here is a woman that grew up about as far back in the hills as you could get, among the panthers (painters), bobcats, bears, and snakes. Somehow, she developed an awful fear of almost everything – even to the phobia stage – and when she left Turniptown, she carried them with her to the other side of the county.

Most snakes mama could deal with – by leaving them alone or killing them with a hoe or shovel. There was one snake though that she swore was always after her. I think she called it a 'black racer', more likely an old rat snake that hung around barns and corn cribs or just a black snake trying to get out of her way. If mama ever saw one, she started to run first and look later but she always swore it was chasing her. From the field behind our house, the trail ran along a bank about twenty feet high. We had cleared some land on the upper side but had not made a garden of it yet so it was pretty open along the trail. On the lower side of this trail at the edge of the bank was our clothes line for drying clothes on wash day. Down the bank was one tremendous briar patch. Now that you have the lay of the land, let me tell you the rest of the story. Mama was returning on this trail one day when she swears a 'black racer' began to chase her. Now mama was a big woman and to imagine her at a dead run is hilarious. Somehow she got it in her mind that the snake was about to catch her and she decided to grab the clothes line and swing up so it could go on by. Bad choice – there is not a clothes line in the world that could hold mama – so there she goes, hanging on to the wire and plowing head over heels into the briars on the bank. By the time she crawled out and found George, before he could even ask her what happened, she declared, “Come on, we've got to go to Allene's”. When they got to Allene's, mama began to tell her story and was there to get Allene to pick the briars out of her. Amid the laughter of George and Allene, they finally got them all out and took pleasure in dabbing alcohol and iodine on the wounds just to hear mama yell some more.

The old house finally burned to the ground and Inez and George barely escaped with only the clothes they had on. From the construction materials and all the paper lined walls, when fire started, it quickly consumed everything. There was no time to throw water or gather belongings – just run. Mama and George moved into the remains of my great grandmother's old house. What had once been a four room log home consisting of three separate structures with a breezeway was now just one good sized room. Aunt Nanny told mama she could stay there. It was while living in this house that mama came busting through the door one night and told George to get his gun, there was a bear after her and he needed to kill it. After being convinced, George got his rifle and exited the house to where mama had heard this bear. Along the dirt road from the spring to this house, there was a pasture fence and my grandfather Henry had put a small pony there. I guess mama forgot and as she was walking along the road, the pony was walking along the fence beside her. As he stepped, she began to run, and by the time she got to the house, the pony was almost running to keep up with her. When George finally figured it out, he had to return to the house and try to explain it to mama who continued to insist it was a bear after her.

Mama was deathly afraid of storms. When we were all young, we had to dig a storm cave into the side of the bank where the old house sat. When it started storming, mama would gather all of us up and herd us toward the cave/cellar. Getting down the little trail to the opening was a feat within itself. If you slipped on the muddy trail, your next stop was at the bottom of the bank, after you had been shredded by the briars. Anyway, if we shined a light into the little cave and there were no other dwellers in it at present, we all gathered up inside to ride out the storm on the little dirt benches dug into it.

When I left home, my grandfather, mama's daddy, had moved a little one room trailer onto our land in a little flat spot in the garden at the foot of the hill from us. Papa and his son George lived in this thing – I mean you had to go outside to change your mind – but here they were living in it. Papa finally moved out and left the trailer behind. George says that mama used to take him and head there if a storm came up. He never understood why – it had less foundation and was much less stable than the old house. I guess mama just wanted a change in venue just to be safe.

On one of those storm situations, mama and George even got into the old car parked beside the house. It was between the house and the bank on the upper side and mama must have felt like the bank would protect her. Above our old house was the city dump and there was almost a perpetual fire there burning trash. On this night, a tornado did touch down, picked up the fire from the dump and carried it across in the air above George and mama in the car. Mama was in the front seat on her knees praying and George was perked up in the back seat so he could see what was going on when the sky turned red above them. Mama thought the end of time had come and started praying harder (out loud) , and George just sat there with his mouth hanging open as the fire slammed into the hillside across the creek from the old house. Thankfully, there was enough rain in the storm to quickly put the fire out but not before Inez and George had the scare of their life.

Even through all the years though and as shabby as the old house was, it never once blew over or off its wooden pillars.

Mama was very superstitious. Mama dipped snuff all the time and if we were riding somewhere and a black cat ran out in front of us, she would make a quick stab at an X and spit right in the middle of the X – right on the windshield. She would then fuss because she couldn't see where she was going. She had the same habit if a rabbit ran across the road in front of her. She thought they were bad luck too.

Daddy was the same way about a black cat. If you were riding with him in one direction and a cat crossed in front of him, you were about to be going in the opposite direction. He would slam on the brakes and turn the car in the middle of the road and it was up to you to hang on if you even had time to grab something.

As I stated earlier, I do not remember much about the time that George was at home with us. He had basically left us a couple of years before mama finally realized he was not coming back and filed for divorce. Inez never got over it. Even though she lived with a heart full of anger for the woman who took

him from her, and for him, I think she loved him until she drew her final breath. Inez never remarried and as far as I can remember, never had a serious relationship with anyone afterwards.

There was a lot of hatred that was passed on to us children and we learned to cultivate hatred too. It took a death in our family, my brother Fred in 1964, to bring the three of them face to face with reality and the knowledge the anger was consuming them. Eighteen months later, my sister Barbara died, and they were brought closer and could even sit down together and carry on a conversation. I think age and time were beginning to heal old wounds. By the time Inez died, they had actually become amiable to each other and would visit in the different homes. I guess death and age puts a damper on hate if we will just let it. Many times hate will cause us to lose out on life by hanging on to old things that remind us to hate.

Children from this marriage were:

1. Francis William GRIFFIN

Francis William GRIFFIN was born on September 30, 1943. Francis married **Sarah Charlotte CURD** on 4 Sep 1964 in York, SC. [SEE GENERATION ONE]

2. Stillborn Infant Girl

Stillborn Infant Girl – My aunt Mary tells me that mama had a baby at home that was stillborn. She tells the story that Andrew, my grandfather was there at the time and he wrapped the child in a towel or pillowcase, and took it into the woods behind the house and buried it. NO ONE! Knows where this baby's grave is located because Papa took the secret to heaven with him. I know the area where this took place but would not even venture to look after all these years.

3. Barbara Sue GRIFFIN

Barbara Sue GRIFFIN was born on 16 May 1946 in Ellijay, Gilmer County, GA, and died on 25 Jan 1966 in Ellijay, Gilmer County, GA, at age 19. She was buried in the Turniptown Baptist Church Cemetery. Barbara had contracted pneumonia while in the hospital in Ellijay giving birth to her second child, a girl. Barbara had married **William LAWTER** on an unknown date in Spartanburg County, SC, and this marriage was failing. There are those who said that Barbara just didn't want to live any more and she just died. I hate to believe anyone could be this depressed, but it happens. After Barbara's death, her husband took their son and left, leaving the baby girl with George to raise; declaring he did not want anything to do with her.



Daddy always called Barbara 'Cookie'.

Life for Barbara was not easy. She grew up in the same environment I did in Ellijay and had to fight every step of the way. Being the only girl in our family, she, too, had to take on a role never meant for a youngster. She never really had a chance to be a young person with all the adult responsibilities heaped upon her.

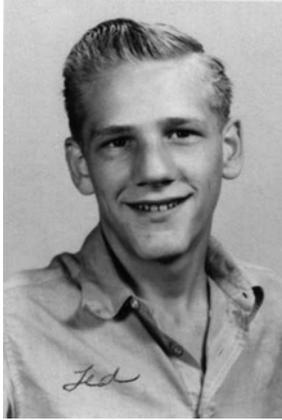
George tells this tale of Bobbie:

When Bobbie was still a teen, mama went to work at the Busy Bee Café in town. Bobbie had the responsibility of looking after Fred and Little George. When she started dating, mama told her she had to take George with her since she could not leave him at home alone. George says this was okay since the guy she was dating had a little sister and he brought her along to accompany George.

Barbara could hold her own though. She was one tough 'Cookie' – a tomboy extraordinaire. She could stand flat footed and knock you into next week. She had to – to be able to put up with the likes of Fred and me.

4. Fred Franklin GRIFFIN

Fred Franklin GRIFFIN was born on 12 Sep 1947 in Ellijay, Gilmer County, GA, and died on 11 Jun 1964 in Rex, GA, at age 16. He was buried in the Turniptown Baptist Church Cemetery. Fred was killed in an auto accident in Rex, Georgia.



George tells this tale on Fred:

Evidently someone's dog had gotten into some of mama's chickens and she found out who owned it. The man offered to pay for the chickens and mama sent Fred to collect the money. Off he went and he was gone and gone and gone and just never came back. Mama finally contacted the sheriff's department and someone mentioned they had seen him walking out Cartecay Highway. This puzzled mama so she called daddy in Spartanburg to see if Fred had called him. He advised her he had and that he was on his way up there. Mama had the sheriff to put out an alert for a runaway and a couple of hours later, the sheriff in Gainesville, GA called and said they had him. He had one thing on his mind – running away from Ellijay. Needless to say, mama got Uncle Clay to take her to Gainesville to get him and haul him back.

Shortly after this incident, Fred did leave home, before he finished high school and traveled to Spartanburg to work with daddy as a mechanic. Again, his presence created problems and so he left. How he managed to get to Rex, GA, south of Atlanta, none of us know, but somehow he did. Fred had



worked on an old Ice Cream truck and was test driving it when it flipped over and threw him out. Seat belts were not a big deal in 1964. Maybe if they had been I might possibly still have another brother living. Needless to say, he was killed instantly.

Fred was always just 'Ted' when we were growing up. Even though he was four years younger, he and I had our share of fights. He too, could hold his own. There is something about scrawny, wiry people that makes them

tough as nails. One morning, about 1959, while we had the old 49 Ford, we awoke with a flat tire. Fred got the jack out of the trunk and began to change the tire since I must have been busy with other chores. He had the car jacked up and was reaching up under the fender to pull the tire off when the jack jumped out from under the bumper. With his hands and wrists on top of the tire, the fender came across both and broke both arms. After we got him all patched up, all Bobbie and I could think of was "Now who's gonna do his share of the work?"

I had already left home and was in the Army in the early 60's but I would get to see Fred sometimes when I would be on leave or a week end pass and headed to Spartanburg. I was even there when Barbara was married in Spartanburg. I never dreamed we would lose both of them at such an early age.

While living in Spartanburg for the short while, Fred met **Linda MAUNEY**. These two were too young to get married but they did produce a child. Linda was pregnant when Fred was killed. She carried the baby through and married James Robinson in Spartanburg, SC. The child was named Fred Robinson. He has been told of his father and the circumstances surrounding his death.



5. George William GRIFFIN, Jr.

George William GRIFFIN, Jr. was born on 14 Dec 1953 in Ellijay, Gilmer County, GA. George married **Connie Venetia GRANT** in Ellijay, Gilmer County, GA.



As I stated earlier, George was ten years younger than me so he was still a young un' of seven when I left home. When Barbara and Fred left home shortly after I did, George had to grow up in a hurry. He became the 'man' of the house. Times and conditions changed some for mama and George. Mama moved into town into a rental house and worked in a café across the street, the 'BUSY BEE'. It was a few years before they moved back into the old house – after Fred was killed, about 1965. I know they were living back in the old house when Barbara died.

George tells these stories on himself:

He was afraid to sleep in the room with the dirt floor after killing a hog on the farm. THE MEAT BOX WAS THERE. Bobbie and Fred would kid him about 'here comes that pig'. He knew the pig was dead - he helped scrape the hair off it, helped to cut it up, helped to salt it down – but he just wasn't too sure about sleeping next to it. He tells that when the three of them used to walk the old dirt road between our house and Aunt Allene's, Bobbie and Fred would run away from him and yell, "Here comes that pig; here comes that pig", which would mortify George. As hard and as fast as his little chunky legs would take him, he would be churning up the dust and screaming like a banshee trying to catch up with them.

He talks about walking the old dirt road at night barefooted. Every rustle in the leaves or breath of wind conjured up thoughts of something that was about to get him. It even caused cricks in the neck when it was behind you. He talks about stepping on sticks (or something) and having them wiggle under his feet. That is when his mind yelled out "feet don't fail me now" and he would put his body in high gear and boogie, arriving at the house completely out of breath and trying to explain what was after him in the dark

Sometime in George's young years, Granddaddy brought an old girl's bicycle in and gave it to him. It was on of those that had the springs on the front for added suspension. George thought he was in hog heaven. He now had the perfect transportation to make the trips to Allene's for mama's medicinal remedy (a half pint of pure moonshine). Smooth riding too. He tells of one trip and as he was returning, something spooked him and he is revved up again, pedaling for all he is worth. Just as you approached our old house, you dipped down a short hill, across a creek, and back up a short hill to the house. Just as he came down the hill to the branch and hit the dip, the springs came down and locked, thus locking the front wheel. Behind over teakettle he goes, over the branch, through the air and landed on the half pint of moonshine in his pocket. It busted and now he is all in a mess – crying, wet, bicycle all messed up, and mama's bottle broken. Now he has to go right back by whatever spooked him to get another bottle, only this time he has to walk (in the dark).

When George was about sixteen, he somehow became the proud possessor of a motorbike. I am not sure how long he kept it because I never saw him with it. He said he was going into town one day and was behind some farmer in an old flat bed truck. The farmer was not in any hurry and really, neither was George but something distracted George and he turned his attention from the road. When he next glanced back, the truck was stopped in front of him and the next happenings were instantaneous. He hit the back of the truck and rolled up into the bed and up against the cab. By the time the farmer stopped and George crawled out of the back of the truck, they determined there was no damage to the truck. The farmer determined George was okay and left on his merry way. Can't say the accident helped the motorbike though. George had to push it home.

Most of my memories with George are those of his teen age years. After I was discharged from the Army and married Sarah, George used to come and stay with us for most of the summer when he was out of school. He became like a child to us and I think Sarah still thinks of him as her oldest son.

George is grown now with a family of his own, two daughters. He is an ordained Baptist Minister of the Gospel.

Shown in this picture is the last photo of our family together. This photo was taken on the evening of my graduation, May 1961, in the field behind our old home. For a country group, I think we all dressed out and cleaned up pretty well – don't you?



Shown in this picture is the last photo of our family together. This photo was taken on the evening of my graduation, May 1961, in the field behind our old home. For a country group, I think we all dressed out and cleaned up pretty well – don't you?

Shortly after George Jr. was born in 1953, George and Inez were divorced. Mama struggled to raise us on this six acre rock farm and I am sure these struggles and all the stress helped to hasten her death at the age of 60.

After the divorce was final, George next married **Sarah Virginia HOGSED**. Virginia was the daughter of Max Guy Hogsed and Rosell Cole Hogsed.



He had met her in the hills of Ellijay and I guess their love flourished. Virginia was married to Junior Jones when they met and she too, had to go through a divorce. George and Virginia were still married to each other when he died first in 1985. Fifteen years later, in 2001, death would knock again and this time, Virginia was taken. Virginia is buried in the Turniptown Baptist Church Cemetery near her husband and children.

From her marriage with Junior, Virginia had two children, Martha Ann and Jerry Lee. They were raised in her house with the other children produced by her marriage to George.

Children of George and Virginia are:

Betty Jean GRIFFIN was born in Aug 1953. Betty is now married to **Jimmy JOHNSON** and has a family of her own. As of 2007, Betty lives in Ellijay, GA.

Robert James (Jim) GRIFFIN was born in 1955, and died in 1983 in Atlanta, GA at age 28. He is buried in the Turniptown Cemetery. Jim married **Jan PIERCE** and had two sons at the time of his death.

Albert William (Willie) GRIFFIN was born on 4 Oct 1957, and died on 4 Aug 1977 in Douglasville, GA at age 19, the result of an automobile accident. Willie was buried in 1977 in Turniptown Cemetery.

Georgia Ann GRIFFIN was born on 12 Jan 1959. Georgia Ann married **Bruce Clifton KEITH** on 7 Jun 1973 in Atlanta, GA, and has a family of her own in Florida.

Thomas Wayne GRIFFIN was born in 1961. Thomas married **Ellen, (Mrs. Thomas Griffin)** and has one daughter.

As much as this is about ancestors, I still want to take this time to remember those whose memories time may diminish but will never erase:



**Fred Franklin Griffin – 1964
Barbara Sue Griffin Lawter – 1966
William Albert Griffin – 1977
Rebecca Inez Griffin – 1981
Robert James Griffin – 1983
George William Griffin, Sr. – 1985
Virginia Hogsed Griffin - 2001**

