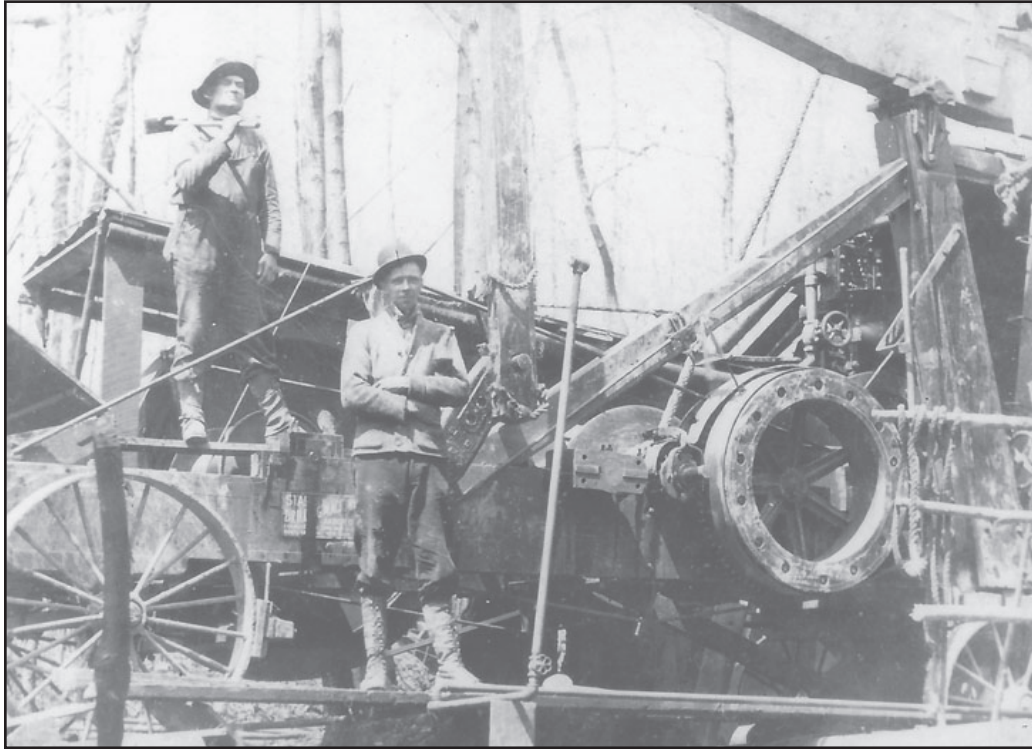


AT LEFT: Four workmen on an oil rig that was probably drilling in the Millers Creek area of Estill County (from the Nelson McIntosh collection). **BELOW:** Elbridge McIntosh and Sam Philipo with an oil rig that was likely in the Pitts or Cow Creek areas. Elbridge was sometimes known as L.B. or "Bridge." He is the great uncle of Nora Helton of Irvine Health and Rehab as well as the grandfather of one of the first female Marines, Josephine Roberts of Sandhill. **LEFT INSET:** Elbridge looks comfortable at the top of an oil rig. (Nora Helton photos)



Nothing more beautiful than a teacher working on verb tenses



America's Heartland
Roger Alford
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A teacher who was working with her students on verb tenses learned that kids really do say whatever comes to mind. "If I say I am beautiful, which tense is that?" she asked her class. "That would have to be past tense," a little boy blurted out. We've all known folks

who tend to say whatever is on their minds. Thankfully, those words aren't always insulting. Sometimes we've moved to offer words of praise, especially toward God when He has shown great kindness to us.

You may have read about the time when such words of praise gushed forth from the mouth of Hannah, the sweet woman of God in the Old Testament. She found herself in awe of His goodness. As she prayed one day, these words rolled off her tongue:

"He raises the poor up from the dust. He lifts up the needy from the trash heap. He guards the steps of his faithful ones. He grants the request of the one who prays" (1 Samuel 2:8-9).

What's amazing is that those words came from Hannah at a time in her life that must have been

filled with emotional turmoil. She had just arranged for her young son, Samuel, to move out of her home to serve the Lord. Even in such bittersweet circumstances, Hannah found reason to praise God.

Even when we face heartbreak and our world seems to be shaken to its very foundations, God is always there for us. As Hannah pointed out, "there is no Rock like our God." Hannah had clearly learned to trust in and to cling to that Rock.

Unlike the critical little boy who didn't see the beauty in his teacher, God looks upon His children with eyes of adoration. He always sees beauty in the present tense.

Roger Alford offers words of encouragement to residents of America's heartland. Reach him at rogeralford1@gmail.com.

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213 TALES

by the late
Michael Dale Profitt

My name is Michael Dale Profitt, and I was born and raised in Estill County. I was the ninth child born to Charlie Elmer Profitt and Elsie Patrick Profitt and was the first born in a hospital. Mom was born at Cob Hill, the ninth child of twelve children.

My dad, Charlie Elmer Profitt, got to see a lot of change during his lifetime. He was funny about things. He had a bad temper and would get mad at people real easy. You couldn't joke much with him. If you did something wrong, you knew you were in trouble when he found out. He would take a belt or switch to you. His belt was forty-some inches long and would wrap around you. He was a big, strong man. He was 5'9" and weighed around 250 pounds. He was left handed but shot a shotgun right-handed. He told me he wished he could shoot left handed like I do. Being left handed has its bad things. It's hard to use some tools because of this.



Elmer Profitt was in the CCC and served in the military during World War II

He was raised on Tipton Ridge and got to see a lot of changes there. The oil boom was going on when he was a boy. He talked a lot about seeing drilling rigs and wagons going by with their equipment for the oil wells.

He talked about a drilling rig he had seen on a wagon. It had eight yoke of oxen pulling it. Eight yoke is 16 steers

pulling one wagon. They couldn't pull the hill beside Mount Carmel Church. They had to unhook and double up the blocks and hook a block to a tree and pull it that way. It gives you two times the power when doubling the pulleys up. I would have liked to have seen it. It would look funny to us.

There wasn't very many cars or trucks then. You had to use horses or mules. You didn't go down to Irvine very much then. Grandpaw James Profitt would doctor them or the medical doctor would come to your house.

Dad went to school at Mount Carmel School. He went all eight years there. Then, you had to go to town to high school. Some went on, but most didn't.

May Tipton Puckett lived across from and was raised across the road from the school and church. Her parents must have had a lot of money. They sent her to Richmond to become a school teacher. She taught at Mt. Carmel School for a few years. She quit when she married Arnold Puckett. Arnold's first wife had passed away and he had a little girl. Jessie Willie Puckett was their son and trained to be a barber. He cut hair until he got too sick, some forty-some years. They say May's dad wanted her to keep teaching.

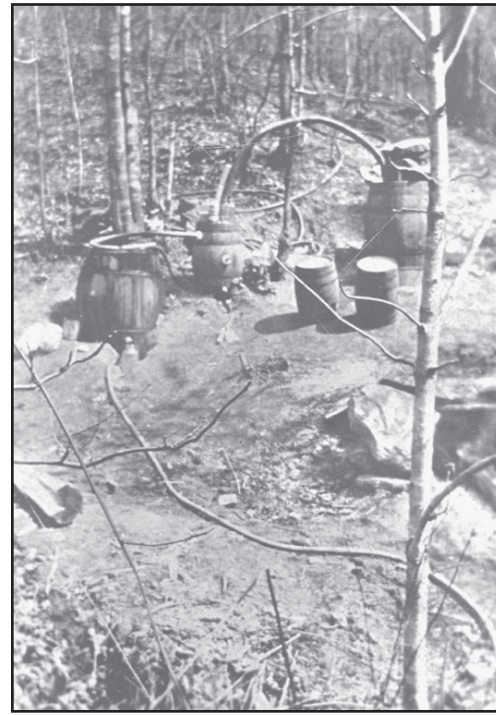
Dad went to school and other things. He said he rode a wagon past the school then with his legs hanging over the side. When I went there you barely could walk between the school and the fence. The man who lived there liked to move his fences every year or two. They did it on all of his property.

Dad's favorite food was soup beans and corn bread. He always wanted them for dinner and supper. Mom said Grandmaw didn't cook much besides soup beans. Dad didn't have much of a childhood. Mom said he had to start working on the farm. His older brothers were grown by then. They lived on the Yeager property about a 1/4 mile from the school. The old log house was partly there when I was a boy. Arnold Puckett owned the land then. Now, his son Willie's family still has it.

Dad got to see the new road come to Tipton Ridge. Highway 52 was built by the W.P.A. in the '30's. To come up the mountain, they had to blast off the cliff at the top part. They took the cliff back far enough for the road. There is a good spring part way down the mountain. It was built up with concrete and a rock wall built around both sides with a three-inch pipe coming out. When it was first built, it had a big trough made

of cement. They had it so people could water their horses and mules. They later tore the trough out.

People used to hang out down there. People would stay down there and some would sell bootlegged whiskey. They say Uncle Walter did that some. He hid his whiskey beside the water pipe. Once a copperhead snake bit him on the hand. He had helped make moonshine and had to go to prison for it. He got out and went to Ohio.



A moonshine still, similar to many found in Estill County during Prohibition.

Dad helped make a lot of whiskey. He may have liked to drink a lot at that time. Everyone around made moonshine or helped make it. One of the McIntoshes had a big still on Walters Ridge and got caught. They put the still in the museum in Frankfort. It's still there. There was not much to work at if you didn't work for the oil company. A lot of people moonshined. When I was a boy, you could still see where stills were all over the woods; long as there was a spring so they could get water to run on. They heated them with wood. There was a lot of old lye cans around every one. I'm glad I didn't drink that moonshine. The lye will eat up your stomach. They used it to make the mash work off faster; also battery acid can be used but it will eat you up, too. That was "dirty moonshine."

There wasn't much to do for recreation. Sometimes, shows would come to the school house at night. People would come up there to play music sometimes. Dad said Hee Haw's David "String Bean" Akeman came up there once to play with a band. Someone threw a whiskey bottle at the band. String Bean told them he would love to

have a drink with them, but he would hate for them to hit and break his banjo.

NOTE: String Bean once played in a band led by former Estill Countian Asa Martin who gave him his name because of his tall, lanky appearance.

Dad had hunted a lot when he was young. Lots of times he would go squirrel and rabbit hunting. He said he had gone coon hunting but didn't like coon hunting. I think he "went" for fox hunting. I never could understand fox hunting. The way they do it here is just sit by a fire and listen for the dogs running a fox. Then argue who's dog is leading the chase.

Dad had started drinking and smoking after he got in his teens. He said they would go to Ravenna and Irvine, messing around. He said one day he was down in Ravenna and helped pull the rods out of an oil well by hand. It was only eight or ten rods deep. That is 200' or 250'. That's not very deep but where the oil sand was there. There used to be wells in about everybody's back yard in Ravenna. They had a little tank in each yard that probably wouldn't hold ten barrels of oil. The power was next to the railroad and there were several wells in the railroad yard. The wells up on Tipton Ridge and out around Furnace have 25 and 30 rods. They are 500 or 600 feet deep. The wells in Lee County and on up keep getting deeper the further east you go.

Dad started dating Mom after he got older. He decided to join the CC and went out there to Washington State to work for them. I guess he rode a train out there.

He quit that and came back home. Then World War II broke out and he joined the Army. They already had Barbara and Mom was pregnant when he left. The Army was what he should have stayed at is what Mom said, because he liked to boss people around.

He didn't talk much about the War. He was an expert marksman and a mortar gunner. He got several medals and ribbons for his service. He talked more about it after he got older. He said he had been a mortar gunner for 31 days. The average life was 30 minutes. They try to zoom in on the mortars to knock them out. It must have been awful over there, watching people being killed on both sides. As the old saying goes, "War is H__."

We couldn't watch no World War II movies on television. The old show about World War II was on the old. It was called "Combat" and we never got to watch it.