
Slipper's Soliloquies

By Fred Slipper

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I mentioned "Tarheel" at the end of last week's column. I gradually begin to realize this meant people who had come out to the Skagit Valley from North Carolina, and they didn't actually have "tar heels." Also I learned I had some cousins who lived in North Carolina. In those days this seemed like the other side of the world. So how come I had cousins that far away?

My mother's parents, Simon and Emma Sprinkle, settled in Hamilton when Mom was young, and Grandpa was a school teacher. As I was born quite some time after my folks were married I don't remember Grandpa, but do have fond memories of Grandma Sprinkle. There were three girls in Mom's family, and two boys. Two of the girls, Mom and Aunt Lola, married two brothers from England, Dad and Uncle John. The youngest girl was Aunt Mabel, and she married a young fellow who had come out from North Carolina, Uncle Jim Plott. However, unlike most of the young men who came out from Tarheel, Uncle Jim wasn't happy away from his birth place, so he and Aunt Mabel moved back to N. C. This was unusual in those days, as the other men who came to the Hamilton area found work in the woods and stayed to marry local girls and raise their families here.

Although the work in the woods was hard, these men were used to putting in a honest days work for a honest dollar. Many of them that came out here "without a pan to put water in, or a window to toss it out of," have prospered.

But to get back to my kin folks in North Carolina. Aunt Mabel and Uncle Jim had five children, one boy and four girls. The boy was James Robert, and although I haven't ever met him, he was always someone I thought was something special. Out here boys were only called by one name, Bill, Bob, Jack, etc. So "James Robert" sounded so important! He is five years older than I am, so when I was in grade school he was in high school, and I remember a picture Aunt Mabel sent to us of James Robert in his high school football uniform. I was really proud of that picture, and of cour-

se showed it to all of my envious friends, letting them know this was my cousin from Tarheel.

The only one of my five cousins that I have met is Lucille. This was just before World War II (you remember that, it was in all the papers!!). Lucille was a nurse, and had joined the armed service before I was inducted. Lucille was stationed in the Seattle area for a while, as I recall.

The other three girls are Betty, Marjorie and Gertrude. I remember Gertrude especially, as my Mom's name was Gertrude, and she was so proud Aunt Mabel had named one of her girls after her.

Last week's column and this one are all leading up to one thing, the "Plott Hounds". More on this next week.