

## Past Perspectives December 2016

### The Funk Cemetery

There is a small cemetery near the intersection of Sherlock Drive and Forest Hills Blvd, just across from the Forest Hills Baptist Church, which contains the graves of May Funk (1887 – 1922) and Freddie McCombs (1901-1923). There is rumored to also be an unmarked grave of a baby there who belonged to a neighboring family, not related to the Funks.

Novella Funk Carlton, the daughter of Raymond “Glee” Funk and granddaughter of May Funk, still lives in Bella Vista and provided information for this article. Freddie McCombs was related to Novella on her mother’s side of the family; he was her mother’s uncle. He died of pneumonia at the young age of 22.

May Funk attended grade school at the Rocky Comfort School. The Rocky Comfort School District #12 was formed in 1884 and became part of the Hiwasse School District in 1947. The school property was later purchased by Cooper Communities, who donated the land to St. Bernard’s Catholic Church in 1981. St. Bernard’s moved in 1991, and its former church became the home of what is now the Forest Hills Baptist Church.

May Funk was born near Hiwasse less than two weeks before Christmas on December 14, 1887, to Ben and Mary Buxton Cooper. She married Melvin Theodore “Ted” Funk on March 7, 1908, and they had three children born in Hiwasse...Lydia, Clifton and Russell (Rud). They moved to Three Fork, Montana, and had two more children there, Raymond Glee in 1918, and Theodore in 1920.

May became ill while in Montana and wanted to return to Arkansas. The family returned to her parents’ home in Gordon Hollow near Hiwasse, but Ted went back to Montana to work.

May was diagnosed with tuberculosis and knew she wouldn’t live much longer, so she asked to be buried in the school yard where she had so enjoyed her school days as a young girl. What is now a small cemetery was formerly part of the school yard. May died in April, 1922, at age 35. Ted stayed in Montana, where he died in 1970, at age 86. He never remarried, and over the years he made several trips back to Arkansas. On one visit, he erected the small headstone for May’s grave.

May Funk's son Raymond "Glee" was raised by his uncle Ollie. Glee married Norma Holloway in 1940, and had three children, Novella, Vernon and Neva. The family lived on a farm which Glee and Norma Funk sold to Cooper Communities in 1972. That farm is now covered by the waters of Loch Lomond. Norma, Glee, and Neva have since passed away.

Novella, who was born in 1942, married Lytle Carlton in 1961, and she still lives on a farm near Loch Lomond that she and Lytle shared until his death in January, 2010. Her brother Vernon lives nearby in the Hiwasse area. She enjoys spending time with her two daughters and their families, including her two grandchildren, now the sixth generation of the family to live in Northwest Arkansas.

*Information for this column also came from an article written by David Cox, and published in the February 28, 1990, Weekly Vista. Lucas is a docent at the Bella Vista Historical Museum, located at the corner of Highway 71 and Kingsland, next door to the American Legion.*



May and Ted Funk were married on March 7, 1908. Picture provided by Novella Funk Carlton.



Freddie McCombs as a young boy with his pony. He died at age 22 of pneumonia. Picture provided by Novella Funk Carlton.



Rocky Comfort School was located where the Forest Hills Baptist Church now stands on Forest Hills Blvd. This picture was taken in the 1932-33 school year with Mr. Roller as the teacher. Picture provided by Novella Funk Carlton.