

The hand-written letter that follows was written in June 1980 by Dane Alderson McNeill (1932-2023) to his sister, Mary Alice McNeill Tolle (1919-2013), and her husband, Donald James Tolle (1918-1993).

The letter describes a trip that Dane and his daughter Patti took to Marble Falls, Arkansas, on Memorial Day weekend in 1980 to discover whatever he could about his uncle Dane Alderson McNeill (1878-1941), who had lived for some years in Marble Falls.

Dane Alderson MCNEILL

Born: Nov 4, 1878 in New Paris, OH
 Died: Nov 27, 1941 in Marble Falls,
 AR
 Age: 63
 Cause: Heart failure. Coronary
 occlusion.

**James Leslie MCNEILL**

Born: Jan 27, 1881 in Laurel, OH
 Died: Jan 14, 1964 in Bellefontaine,
 Logan County, OH
 Age: 82

**Jessie May MCNEILL**

Born: Jan 13, 1883 in Dublin, IN
 Died: Feb, 1970 in Tallahassee, FL
 Age: 87

**Mable Elsie MCNEILL**

Born: Dec 24, 1884 in Dublin, IN
 Died: Apr 25, 1891
 Age: 6

Jerome Fee MCNEILL

Born: Sep 25, 1857 in Laurel, Ohio
 Died: Aug 30, 1928 in Thonotosassa,
 FL
 Age: 70

**Marjorie Fleming MCNEILL**

Born: Nov 8, 1886 in Moline, IL
 Died: Aug, 1956 in Tallahassee, FL
 Age: 69

**Donald Fee MCNEILL**

Born: Jul 30, 1889 in Moline, IL
 Died: May 26, 1896
 Age: 6

**Malcolm Collins MCNEILL**

Born: Nov 11, 1891 in Fayetteville,
 Ark
 Died: Oct 11, 1980 in Tallahassee,
 FL
 Age: 88

**Richard Warren MCNEILL**

Born: May 21, 1900 in Richmond, IN
 Died: Mar, 1975 in Mobile, AL
 Age: 74
 Died: Mar 28, 1975 in Mobile, AL
 Age: 74

**Alice MCNEILL**

Born: Apr 28, 1902 in Richmond, IN
 Died: Jun 7, 1902 in Richmond, IN
 Age: 0

Mary Alice MCNEILL

Born: Jun 12, 1919 in Calhoun and
 Virginia Street, Tallahassee, FL
 Died: Nov 25, 2013 in Cape Coral, FL
 Age: 94

**Theresa Louise MCNEILL**

Born: Jan 18, 1922 in Calhoun
 Street, Tallahassee, FL
 Died: Feb 26, 1990 in Tallahassee,
 FL
 Age: 68

**Dorothy Madeline (Dot)
MCNEILL**

Born: Sep 28, 1924 in Tallahassee,
 FL
 Died: Jul 25, 2020 in Florida
 Age: 95

**Malcolm Collins MCNEILL , Jr**

Born: May 17, 1928 in Tallahassee,
 FL
 Died: Jan 17, 2003 in Tallahassee,
 FL
 Age: 74

**Dane Alderson MCNEILL**

Born: Aug 8, 1932 in Tallahassee,
 Fla
 Died: Jan 29, 2023 in Forney, TX
 Age: 90



2 Jun 1980

Dear Mary Alice + Donald,

I have just completed the long desired pilgrimage to Marble Falls, Ark. It was unusually successful.

I have a close friend, Wallace Martin, whose father has a ranch in Bass, Ark. near Jasper. He, Patti + I went there for Memorial Day weekend. Wallace had called ahead to let his father + stepmother know we were coming. He told them about Uncle Dan and my interest in coming.

When we arrived late Sat. Wallace's father had made several calls and found out Uncle Dan had had a partner in Marble Falls named Albert Roney, now dead. He had talked with two of Roney's sons. The older son told him Uncle Dan

was buried in Maplewood Cemetery in Harrison. He also said Uncle Dan + his father had built a store - Post Office on Highway 7. Roney was the Postmaster but Uncle Dan was the one that ran the store + post office most of the time.

We went to Harrison Sat. after supper but could not find the grave stone in Maplewood. I called the older Roney son, Gene, and asked if I could come by and talk with him the next day. He said he would be home after church.

Sunday morning Patti + I went back to the cemetery and finally found the grave stone. It was very clean + looked good after 39 years. I have enclosed a Xerox copy of the picture I took since I want to take the original to Tallahassee with me this week. One stone the stone up

close + the other is of the site itself.

We then drove down to Marble Falls, now Dogpatch USA. Apparently some years after Uncle Dave's death Roney sold most of the land to Al Capp's organization + they built a lit' Abner type amusement park on it. We went into the park to see the cabin, spring + falls. The cabin was being used as a home for an employee of the park and was behind a fence from paying customers. Patti + I slipped around the fence to take some pictures. We saw a young man in his late 20's in the yard so I went over to explain why we were photographing his home. I started by saying: "My name is Dave McHill and we are ..." At that point he interrupted + asked if we were related to the Dave McHill that built the cabin.

I was really surprised that anyone in Dogpatch would know anything about Uncle Dan. It turned out that he was Ernie Raney, son of Gene Raney. He now ran the trout farm in Dogpatch under contract with Al Cappi organization. He told me that his father Gene moved into the cabin after Uncle Dan's death in 1941 & lived there for almost 36 years. When his grandfather Albert (Dan's partner) died in 1976 Gene moved north of Harrison to Bear Creek Trout Farm to take it over from his father & gave up the running of the trout farm in Dogpatch to his son Ernie. He was very nice to Patti and me and invited us in to see the inside of the cabin. He showed us all through it and explained what was original and what had been added. We met his wife and son. I guess Ernie had lived there all his life.

While we were in Dogpatch we saw the spring and water fall. There are pictures of the cabin, spring, + falls on one page. The trout farm was built in the big springs after Uncle Dane's death by Albert Raney in the early 50's and was made a part of Dogpatch when Al Capp bought the land.

When we left the park we went around and found the store that Uncle Dane + Raney built + operated. It was also built with cobble stones and looked very similar to the original cabin. There is a picture of the store as it now looks on highway 7. We found out later that they built another cabin for Raney on the bluff on the other side of the spring from Uncle Dane's cabin. Albert Raney lived there until he sold the land to Dogpatch + they took his cabin down when building the park.

From the store we drove down the highway.

a short distance to find a historical Marker that told about the Ark Marble in the Washington Monument taken from that hill in 1836.

Then we went to Bear Creek Trout Farm to see Gene Rany. Our visit with Gene was very interesting. He was about 12 or 13 in 1932 and grew up in the Rany cabin only a few 100 feet from Uncle Dane. He did chores for Uncle Dane like bringing in wood for 10¢/hour. When Uncle Dane died he and his father Albert were staying with him 24 hours a day — 12 hours on + 12 hours off each. He died in the cabin — they think from a ~~small~~ stroke. He had a bad case of emphysema in his last days and therefore had difficulty going up + down the hills + the stairs in his cabin. Gene's wife also remembered Uncle

Dane, She and Gene had been married shortly before Uncle Dane's death. She + Gene's sister had cooked for Uncle Dane in those last months. All the people there called him "Mac" and thought he was a sweet old man.

They told me about Uncle Dane running his little black '37 Ford Coupe (remember it?) up + down those mountain roads. Apparently he liked to go down to a "Hootin Hollow" to drink beer a couple of nights a week.

They said there was a lady that came by the store flirting with him but he never would have anything to do with her.

They couldn't find any pictures of him but they found some other very interesting things in Albert's papers. I am sending you copies ^{to keep} of two letters from Aunt Jessie in 1941. One of them had your card in it. I'm sending it along also. It was a strangely

satisfying feeling discovering ~~the~~ relatives' ^{old} letters about your immediate family and yourself in a stranger's home in the middle of Ark.

Gene had been very sick since immediately after his father's death in 1976 and had just stored his father's papers. The things they gave me they had run across but since I didn't give them but a half-day notice of my visit, they did not have time to look for other material. Gene's wife said she would look for other things and send me what she finds.

We are leaving for our vacation this week - will be in Tallahassee Friday + Sat. (6-7 June) then on to Mexico Bch for one week. It will be fun to tell my story to Mother + Daddy and see what Daddy remembers about Uncle Dave funeral, his pardner, what they saw, how they got out there in Ark, etc.

Hope y'all had a good trip. Mother told me about your trip. Sorry we weren't there the same weekend.

I'm glad I'm getting to send you some copies of family letters for a change - hope you enjoy them as much as I did.

Love,

Dana