

From the Cradle to the Grave: Issac Nelson Goodlow

In 1925 Calvin Coolidge was President of the United States, Adolf Hitler published volume one of “Mein Kampf” and people everywhere were doing the Charleston across glossy dance floors both day and night. Buster Keaton’s newest film, *Go West*, was being enjoyed by movie-goers of the roaring 20s, and The American Automobile Association declared that women drivers were as competent as men. In Savannah, Tenn., 1925 saw people farming their land and raising their children, and it was into this rustic setting that Isaiah and Irene Goodlow gave birth to their first son, Issac Nelson, on Monday, Nov. 9.

Affectionately referred to as “Uncle,” Goodlow was raised along with his brother James and three sisters, Lula, Mildred and Bernice. His nephew, the Rev. Roger Hopson, recalled that his mother’s brother was a very intelligent and generous man.

“He was really like a dad to me,” Hopson said. “He loved family time, he *loved* good food and he was full of stories. He taught me to have a strong work ethic and he gave me my sense of right and wrong, and it was more than just hearing it, he lived it.”

In Goodlow’s day, Hopson recalled, military duty was not optional, so when war broke out in the Asian theater, Goodlow served for two years in Korea. Following military aptitude testing, he was assigned as an Army medic. He dealt with wounded soldiers out on the front lines, and was therefore compelled to take part in one of the most difficult aspects of war.

“He used to tell me that he could remember hearing his buddies calling his name

when they'd get hurt," Hopson said. "That experience changed him."

The war left Goodlow technically disabled. He was diagnosed as having "shell shock" when he returned to the States. Hopson said that even though he was still a very entertaining man to talk with, Goodlow's post-military life found him quiet and unable to work.

"He was a heavy smoker, and at times he could be a heavy drinker," Hopson said, "and he drank coffee like it was water. The war really got to him, but he was still quite a character."

Goodlow never married, although Hopson said he spoke of having fathered a son named Wallace Nelson while he had lived in Key West, Fla., before the Korean War.

"It's sad because we've never been able to find him," Hopson said. "We don't know what the mother's name was so we have no way to locate him."

According to Hopson, Goodlow's brother, James, married a Caucasian woman named Lois in Chicago, Ill., and they had a daughter, Judi, whom Goodlow loved as if she was his own child.

On Dec. 22, 1985, after 60 years of making cherished memories, Issac Nelson Goodlow died peacefully in his sleep and was awarded a flag-draped casket with full military honors. His obituary left mourners with a sense of who that quiet, gentle man was by stating that he was fondly remembered as "Uncle" by people "because of his kindness and the personal interest he took in everyone he met." It is a privilege to honor his memory now.

Holly Cole
4/10/05
4124/ Hopson

Willie Mae Graves Holloway was a woman with a lot of love to give and the capacity to show her love in many different ways to the people she cared about. An activist, a Sunday school teacher, a poet and a cook with a famous recipe for egg pies, Holloway was an outgoing and passionate person who was loved by all who knew her.

Holloway was born in Stanton, Tennessee on July 17, 1909 to Samuel and Sarah Graves, and was the second of their five children. She became a Christian at a young age and began a life of devotion to God through her service to St. John Missionary Baptist Church, where she would later become a member of the choir, the mother's board, and the Missionary Society and would also serve as a Sunday school teacher and the church secretary.

Holloway's passion for service extended into her community. As a young woman, she became the secretary of the original Haywood County Civic and Welfare League and she traveled throughout the country promoting the right to vote for African-Americans, eventually becoming one of the first in Haywood County to vote after the fight was won.

Holloway's sister, Callie Sue Brown, can still recall the struggle.

"We couldn't go to the courthouse to vote," said Brown. "We had to go to a store in Dancyville where we had to stand line for hours and hours.

"Even though we had won the right to vote, we still weren't allowed to in Brownsville. Willie Mae took part in a lawsuit with the leaders of the community so that

we would be allowed. She was very active in everything, promoting the rights of our people,” she said.

Holloway also met and fell in love with Ellis Holloway, whom she would be married to for 46 years. Together they adopted a son and a daughter, Melvin Holloway and Sam Ethel Holloway. Holloway became known for welcoming people into her home with a smile and with her “baked goodies,” especially with her egg pies.

“She could really make those egg pies,” said Brown. “I could never make them as good as she could.

“She had the recipe in her head. Everyone in our family loved them and they were always asking her to make them.”

Along with cooking for her friends and family, Holloway loved to write poetry which she would read at family get-togethers. She would write for fun, she would write to express herself and she would write to commemorate events, but no matter what the topic—whether the beginning of the human race or the 1986 *Challenger* explosion—Holloway’s poetry was a testament to her faith in God, whom she served until the time of her death on August 18, 1998.

Willie Mae Holloway will always be fondly remembered by those who knew and loved her as an articulate and gentle person who went out of her way for others. She was a humanitarian who touched so many lives in so many ways. Her poetry was compiled in a book, *Poems of Variety*, by her sister, and her unstoppable spirit lives on in her words and in her wisdom.