

From the Cradle to the Grave  
Our Legacy of Love and Hope  
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1958 - 2005

Jesse James Bowles

Jesse James Bowles was born to the late Jessie and Lessie Mabon Bowles on Sept. 28, 1930 on a 90-acre farm in the Douglas community of Haywood County, Tenn.

Bowles was raised in the small community in Haywood County between Stanton and Dancyville, 12 miles west of Brownsville, the youngest of four children and the only boy.

“My grandmother used to say it [the community] got so bad, when you wanted to date someone, you’d have to go to another county,” recalled Roger, Bowles oldest son.

Although his son Roger would not “comment on his hobbies”, Bowles enjoyed fishing, hunting and farming soybeans and cotton on his family’s property in his early life and later going to see the harness races a few miles away in Mason, Tenn.

Bowles attended Douglas Junior High School with his sisters, Ida, Pauline and Hazel, until he was expelled in the ninth grade for arguing with the principal.

“He got put out of school. That was my grandmother’s story. She said that if that was the way he wanted to act, that he just shouldn’t go back,” said Roger.

Although Bowles still lived in Haywood County, he, like many others in his community, rode with several friends 47 miles into Memphis to work. He was a production supervisor at American Stove Products in downtown Memphis until his retirement.

Bowles married Thelma Taylor in 1949 in Corinth, Miss. and lived happily with her until her death from pancreatic cancer in 1992. In 1950 the couple was blessed with their first child, Roger, followed by Lawrence in 1952, Carolyn in 1956 and Randy in 1959. Carolyn still lives on the family farm to this day, although half of it was sold to Ida at the time of their parents’ death.

“Back in those days, everything was a challenge. Every day was an adventure,” Roger recalled of his youth in the small southern community.

Bowles passed away in the same community he was born and lived his whole life in when he had a heart attack on July 7, 1996. In his passing, he left his four children, two of his sisters, Pauline Currie and Hazel Johnson, six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

“He was a smart man that probably didn’t live up to his full potential because he had kind of a rebel streak in him. He did things his way right up to the end,” said Roger.