

ARCHIE MAC HICKOX

Born in Waycross, Georgia September 16, 1926

His mother "Nicie" married Dolen Corbett on June 21, 1930

Son of James and Laura Corbitt Dolen had two children by his first wife Lousiana Moye – Otis Leroy and Ruby. Archie step- brother and stepsister

My mother, Gracie Corbitt Gill was a sister of Dolen Corbitt.

Archie was my step cousin and my buddy and friend. The first time I remember Archie was about 1933 in Sarasota, Florida. We lived on Arlington Street west of Tuttle Avenue and on Thanksgiving we had a family get together at our house and lots of aunts, uncles and cousins came to our house for Thanksgiving Dinner on tables in the yard. On the west side of our house was a sweet potato patch with lots of loose dirt between the beds. Someone asked Aunt Nice and Uncle Dolen if they brought their money needles! They said, yes. Someone got gold rings and anything gold and they tied them up in a handkerchief and buried them behind the house in the potato patch and smoothed the dirt so you could not see where the gold was buried. I saw Aunt Nice and Uncle Dolen use their Money needles and they went into the potato patch and found the gold!

I was nine, Archie was eight and Dorlos was seven. That is the first memory I have of Archie.

Not long after that day we had a hurricane come across Florida and I went with Archie and his folks to check on Uncle Elmon about two miles east of Bethany church. The road went north off of Highway Seventy (Myakka City road) and crossed a bridge over Manatee river south east of Bethany church at the southeast corner of Sam Phillips property, but the river was flooded out of its banks and you could not see if the bridge was still there, so Archie and me got out into the water and walked on the bridge, so that Uncle Dolen could follow us across on the bridge. It was about sixty feet across the river . We had to feel with out feet to be sure the dirt was not washed away at the end of the bridge. It was all O.K. so Uncle Dolen drove the Model T Ford car on across the bridge and out of the water. We got into the model T and went on to Uncle Elmon's. – He was Uncle Dolaus' brother - Archie and Me climbed an orange tree and got oranges. We played in uncle Elmons barn and watched the hogs in their pen. Uncle

Elmon had a syrup kettle and cane grinder and a smoke house where he smoked meat. We carried smoked meat and syrup home with us. The storm had not damaged any of his things at his house.

About 1935, Grandma Laura Corbitt was living with Aunt Mollie Thompson about one half mile north of Aunt Nicie and when mama went to visit them, she let me off at Archie's house so I could play with him. We picked guavas off their tree and we played marbles sometimes, and we ate banana fritters that Aunt Nicie cooked. (One day I was at work and I got a phone call from Aunt Nicie. She asked me to come by her house and take her home with me for a visit, and I did. After supper that day I asked her to tell me how she made the banana fritters that I ate at her house when I was a boy. She told me how she made them so good. She said "first I put some flour in a bowl and then I put in some sugar and some vanilla flavor and some bananas and everything was some. She did not measure anything. (She made banana pudding the same way).

Later they had another house moved in, so they had two houses and they started Corbitts Old Folks Home on the southwest corner of Gillespie Avenue and 18th Street on the north side of Sarasota.

I didn't get to be with Archie very much until we moved to Tampa in 1936 then to Sulpher Springs and came back to Sarasota in August 1937 and we lived about 1 ½ miles east of Archie and I could ride my bicycle over to play with him. Sometimes I walked and when mama got sick, I pulled our wagon with all the family laundry in it and washed the clothes for mama in Aunt Nicie's washing machine. She helped me hang them on the clothesline to dry, sometimes. While the clothes dried, me and Archie played or shot our BB guns at tin cans – or played marbles. After a few times me and Archie went with Aunt Nicie to gather Sea grapes to make jelly with. We went south on Highway 41, two miles south of Stickney Point Road and went in the woods, west towards Sarasota Bay, we were north of where we got oysters sometimes, and we spread a sheet under sea grape bushes and shook off the grapes onto the sheet. We got several buckets full; enough to make Sea Grape Jelly. Archie and me went to the city dump sometimes and found many good things there, including the newest comic books with the covers torn off. They were discarded by Russel News Agency. Sometimes I went to the dump alone and if Aunt Sara McCray was there (an old colored woman) I would help her gather rags and load them on her wags and go with her to her home in the colored section of town nearby, called New Town. I would build a fire under her wash pot and

fill it with water for her to boil the rags. She hung them up to dry and sold them for three cents a pound. I liked Aunt Sara.

As we got older I bought a 22 rifle and we shot it a lot, then a man came to stay in the old folks home. I think his name was Mister Coe. He had a 22 special rifle that did not use regular 22 bullets. Archie borrowed it sometimes and bought special bullets for it and we shot a lot with the rifles. Sometimes we went rabbit hunting and shot rabbits or went after frogs in the ponds and shot snakes. We sold the frog legs to the Plaza Restaurant for 75 cents a pound. Sometimes we caught a gopher or a soft shell turtle and we carried them over to New Town and sold them for one dollar. We learned to shoot good. Both of us could hit anything. Sometimes we rode bicycles to any place we had not already seen and we learned to ride looking back over the rear end with our back to the front sitting on the handlebars. We could ride west on 18th St. to Orange Avenue and turn around and ride back to Archie's without stopping for anything. That was one mile down the road and one mile back. Then we got in to fire fishing later on. After I got a car we went fire fishing at night along the eastern shore of North Sarasota Bay. We would put a gas lantern on a board and fasten it out front of a boat and stand over it with a fish gig with a long handle. We never threw the gig, but we learned to put it in the water easy and shove it to the side of the fish and then push it into the fish. We could see everything for about twenty feet out in front of us in the water two or three feet deep. We always got fish. One giggered fish, the other poled the boat at first, until Archie bought a little outboard motor then the one of us in back just ran the motor slow. We had a shade behind the lantern so the one in back could see where we were going. Before we fished my brother and sister were going on the Salvation Army bus to their Sunday school and the captain wanted to start a Boy Scout Troop. He was Capt. Halliday. So they said "we need more boys, we need twelve to charter a scout troop. We had a scout meeting and brought more boys that would like to join the Boy Scouts. We soon got enough boys but the captain learned that he could not use their money to sponsor a scout troop, so he contacted a friend in the Sarasota Rotary Club and the Rotary sponsored Boy Scout Troop Six of Sarasota, Florida, Sunny Land Council and got a charter for the troop which uncle Dan Smith was our scout master and Mr. Russel from the Rotary Club was his assistant. Uncle Dan had been scoutmaster up north for twenty-five years. He was old but he knew scouting and Mister Russel learned. Uncle Dan taught us everything and in all contests at camp we always took first place in knot tying. We did not do well in other

things. The charter members of Troop Six were, the captains son, Junior Halliday, Franklin Banks, Archie Hickox, Bud Cooper, Jewel Bunkley, Jerol Bunkley, Tom Drymon, Doryal Hand, Robert Douglas, Charles Dorlos Gill, Kenneth Gill and Alva Peters.

The Rotary Club built a building in Gillespie Park for us to meet in. After Pearl Harbor was bombed I quit school and went to work full time and had to quit scouts. Archie stayed a while longer. In February 1942 I started driving dump trucks. I went to Ft. Myers to work on the air bases and then went to work at Page Field with Post engineers. I married in April 1943 and stayed in Ft. Myers until November 1943, then moved back to Sarasota. Archie had married Sue Scarborough and went into the army and we did not see each other very much until he came home.

In 1947 or 1948 Archie and Sue started square dancing. They wanted me and Myrtle to go with them and we did. The Moose Lodge had the building over Barths Grocery on Ringling Blvd and on Saturday night Candy Rowel and his band played music for their dance. We learned to square dance, and the callers were Frank Wallace and Clarence Hawkins and Johnny , the only old time callers left around there. A few months later the band played at South Trail Fire Department. I had been learning the calls and our gang wanted to square dance but no caller was there so my friends asked me to call. I called a set and did very well for my first time. Then the bandleader called me over and told me "Kenny, I want you to call whenever I am playing from now on". I told him that was the first time I ever called and he said, "I know but I like the way you call and you will learn". After that I called square dances for the next twenty years on most weekends.

When we were shooting rifles, we helped each other learn to shoot straight, every shot. When I worked at Venice Air Base, they brought one hundred fifty German prisoners to Venice. and build a compound for them inside the base. One day I drove a truck with fifteen of them to the officers club down on Venice Beach. They had a party the night before and we had to clean up the place, inside and outside. After they finished one threw a bottle out into the water, waves were about two feet and they wanted the guard to show them he could shoot. He shot hit the bottle on the third shot. They said "let Kenny shoot". It was a thirty-caliber rifle, and I had never shot one. When the bottle came up I aimed and waited for it to go down and then up and I fired and hit the bottle in one shot. They really yelled at that. Archie had helped me to shoot straight.

I started driving school bus in September 1948. Archie started about the same time driving Trailways Bus. He drove Trailways about thirty years. Archie's boss was a Mr. Calhoon. He came to Sarasota and went fire fishing with Archie and me. He begged me to come drive Trailways busses, but I could not do it. When I was seven, I fell from a tree and injured a vertebra in my neck and I can't stay awake at night to drive. Archie drove twenty-five years and then five more as Instructor teaching new drivers to drive in the mountains.

In 1948, I repaired trucks for Henry Hutchinson and one day he came to my house and Archie was there. He said "Kenny I have a bull dozer in a field, I need to move it. It has not run for several years, will you come out and make it run and move it for me"? Archie and me went out and started it and leveled the ground and moved it over to one side.

One day I saw a flock of Kerloo birds in the pond where Archie and me got frogs. I asked mama if daddy had any shells for the shotgun. She could only find one #8 birdshot. I took the one shotgun shell and the shotgun and slipped up as close as possible. When they flew up I shot into them and picked up seven kerloo, each as big as a broiler chicken. Mama was happy for sure that day.

One night Archie and me were in another pond way out in water knee deep. One eye was too red and I was using a frog gig on a pole. I giggered that red eye and it was an alligator, he rolled and got loose in the water. We ran on water that night to get out of the pond.

Many years later Archie was on the night run from Tampa to Tallahassee about three o'clock in the morning passing through Gulf Hammock in North Florida. Archie saw a deer run into the front of a truck and was killed in front of him. He looked in the mirror; all the people on the bus were asleep. He pulled the bus off the road by the deer, opened an empty baggage compartment and threw the deer inside. He quietly closed the door and got back on the bus and drove on. At the bus station in Tallahassee, he pulled around back, stopped at his car, got out and opened the trunk. He got the deer out of the bus and put it in his car trunk. He pulled the bus on into the station and unloaded and checked out. Another driver took the bus on the next run so Archie went home and dressed out the deer. He saw the deer get killed and he did not like to see good meat go to waste. It really

happened! Archie was my cousin, my buddy, my friend. I remember him well!

Written by Kenneth Gill

age 86

October 3, 2011