



## NEVILLE'S MOTHER

MARGARET ALICE PURIFOY

b. 4/15/1908 *Jonesboro, Craighead Co., AR*

d. 8/16/1973 *Jonesboro, Craighead Co., AR*



VI.

## MARGARET ALICE PURIFOY'S LIFE

Neville's mother, **Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)**, was as gentle, loving, and caring as any person I have ever known. She had a pleasant temperament and a kindly disposition. She lived her entire sixty-five-year life in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Neville called her Mama; I called her Mrs. Frierson.

Margaret Alice Purifoy was the only child of Mississippi-born **Ola Frank Gillespie (1881–1934)** and **Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)**. She arrived in the world on Wednesday, April 15, 1908.

Margaret Alice Purifoy's devoted and doting parents gave her much attention in her early years, as evidenced by the plethora of professional photographs that they had made of her as a young child.<sup>1</sup> Some of Margaret's professional photographs were made into postcards. We have three of them, taken at ages two, four, and ten.<sup>2</sup>



*Margaret Alice Purifoy in her christening dress, 1908.*



*A postcard photograph of Margaret Alice Purifoy at about age four, c. 1912.*



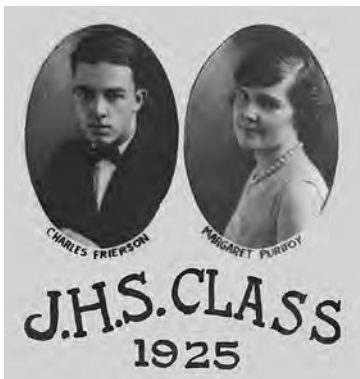
*Margaret Alice Purifoy (age twelve), a student at Annie Camp Junior High School, 1920.*

Margaret Alice Purifoy's early education took place in the Jonesboro Public Schools, beginning at West Elementary School, which was about two blocks from her home at 821 West Washington Avenue. She next attended Annie Camp Junior High School, where she first met **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, who became her boyfriend.



*Margaret Alice Purifoy (age fourteen), a student at Jonesboro High School, 1922.*

Margaret Purifoy went to Jonesboro High School, where she graduated a month or so after her seventeenth birthday, in June 1925. At some point along the way, she must have skipped a grade. Her high-school boyfriend, Charles Davis Frierson Jr., was in her 1925 graduating class, although he was more than a year older than she was.



*Charles Davis Frierson Jr. and Margaret Alice Purifoy pictured in the 1925 Jonesboro High School yearbook.*



*Jonesboro High School, from which Margaret Alice Purifoy and Charles Davis Frierson Jr. graduated in 1925. The building (now razed), which was the local high school from 1917 to 1939, was at the corner of Church Street and East Strawn Avenue, about three blocks from where Charles Davis Frierson Jr. lived on East Cherry Avenue.*

After her high-school graduation in 1925, Margaret Purifoy entered Jonesboro College. In May 1927, she earned an associate's degree in music from the Department of Piano in the Department of Fine Arts.



*Margaret Alice Purifoy's degree from Jonesboro College, which she received at age nineteen, on May 23, 1927.*



Jonesboro College was a Baptist college founded in 1924. The college closed in 1934, and some years later, in 1939, the Baptist Church sold the building to the city of Jonesboro for \$50,000. It then became the Jonesboro High School that Neville attended from 1950 to 1954. The building was completely destroyed on May 27, 1973, by a tornado, and a new high school was built on the site.

*Margaret Alice Purifoy (age nineteen) at her graduation from Jonesboro College.*



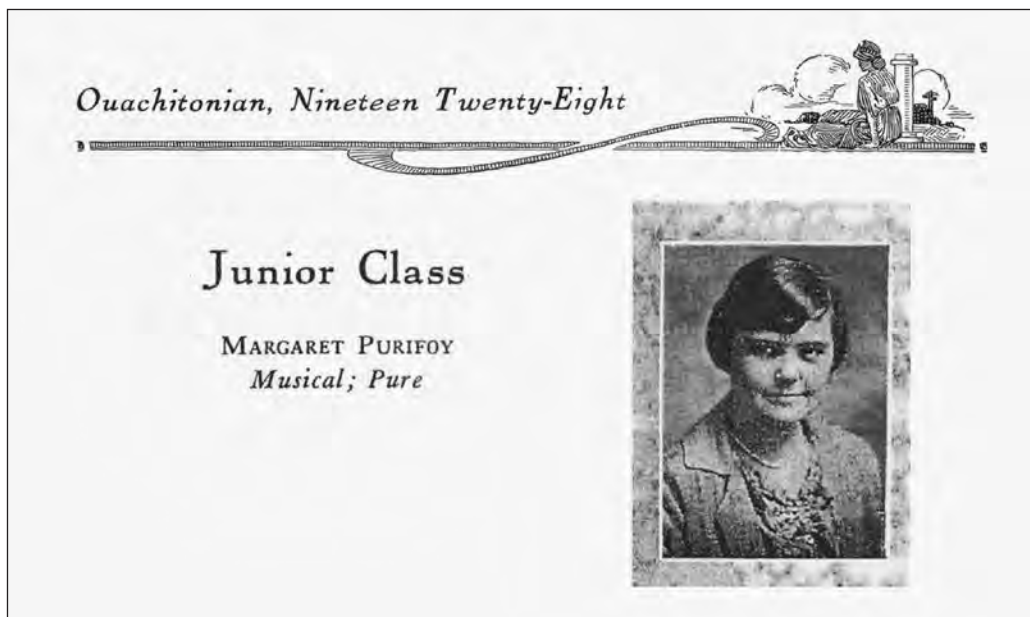
*A 1965 photograph of the Jonesboro High School, which Neville attended from 1950 to 1954. The building was a part of Jonesboro College when Margaret Alice Purifoy attended there in 1925–27.*



*Jonesboro High School after the 1973 tornado, which hit less than three months before Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson died.*



In the fall of 1927, Margaret Purifoy enrolled at Ouachita Baptist College, located sixty-five miles southwest of Little Rock, in Arkadelphia, Arkansas. Since 1965 the college has been known as Ouachita Baptist University. Today the school has about 1,600 students and is affiliated with the Arkansas State Baptist Convention. Margaret attended Ouachita Baptist College for one year. Her mother, Ola Frank Gillespie Purifoy, lived with her in Arkadelphia during that time. At Ouachita, Margaret studied piano, and she became an accomplished pianist. An April 1928 piano recital by Margaret Purifoy at Ouachita was reviewed by a local newspaper. At the graduating exercises of Ouachita Baptist College on June 4, 1928, Margaret Purifoy was listed as a Conservatory Senior.<sup>3</sup> While at Ouachita, Margaret met and dated John Homer Summers (1906–1998), a piano student from Hot Springs, Arkansas.<sup>4</sup>



*In the 1928 annual yearbook, called the Ouachitonian, Margaret Purifoy is depicted with the junior class. She is also listed as a graduate with the senior class. Thus, Margaret Purifoy earned her degree after only one year at Ouachita.*

For the next three years, Margaret Purifoy lived with her parents in Jonesboro. She may have taught music during that time. We know that she continued her relationship with Charles Davis Frierson Jr.



*A recent photograph of Margaret Alice Purifoy's childhood home at 821 West Washington Avenue in Jonesboro. It is located about ten blocks from the Frierson House at 1112 South Main Street.*

Margaret Purifoy's childhood home was at 821 West Washington Avenue, and she was only a few blocks away from her closest cousins, who were the six children of her mother's sister, **Emma Edith Gillespie (1888–1976)**. During the late 1920s, Margaret Purifoy often saw three of her first cousins who lived in Memphis, Tennessee:

Robert Snowden Gillespie (1907–2000), Francis Bearden Gillespie (1908–1964), and John Stanley Gillespie (1912–1996).

*Margaret Alice Purifoy with three of her first cousins from Memphis, Francis Bearden Gillespie, John Stanley Gillespie, and Robert Snowden Gillespie, c. 1929.*

Margaret Alice Purifoy also had two sets of Purifoy cousins who lived in Crystal Springs, Mississippi, about three hundred miles away: the four McPherson sisters, born between 1901 and 1908, the daughters of Margaret's aunt **Martha Elizabeth "Mattie" Purifoy (1876–1962)** and the thirteen children of her uncle **Linfield "Linn" Purifoy (1878–1949)**, all born between 1908 and 1931. Finally, Margaret Purifoy had fourteen recorded first cousins who were the children of her father's two much-older half sisters, **Mary Lucinda Purifoy (1859–1927)** and **Julia Purifoy (1861–1949)**. Mary Lucinda's family, the Newmans, lived in Jefferson County, Mississippi, and Julia's family, the McDonalds, lived in Jonesboro. These cousins, all born between 1879 and 1901, were much older than Margaret Purifoy.

Margaret Purifoy had no siblings, but she had at least forty-two first cousins.



Margaret Alice Purifoy at her  
wedding, October 2, 1931.



In August 1931, the Jonesboro newspaper announced the engagement of Margaret Alice Purifoy, age twenty-three, to twenty-four-year-old Charles Davis Frierson Jr. Acknowledging their long courtship and using perhaps a bit of society page overstatement, the article said, *“This marriage will unite two of the most prominent families of the South, and will be the culmination of an unusual romance, one which has existed from their childhood.”* After the wedding announcement, the bride-to-be was feted with parties, several of which were also recorded in the newspaper.<sup>5</sup> The wedding was a formal event, held at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, October 2, 1931. The First Baptist Church was filled to capacity, and the event was hailed as *“Beautiful and Impressive.”* It is well documented by the local newspaper.<sup>6</sup>

At the wedding, the matron of honor was Hope Harrington Cowdery (1905–1996), Margaret Purifoy’s dear friend and the daughter of the couple who had shared the double wedding of her parents in 1904. The maid of honor was Charles Davis Frierson Jr.’s younger sister, **Margaret Frierson (1912–1990)**, and the best man was his first cousin Thomas Whitsett Hughes (1902–1989), who lived in Memphis.

After their wedding, the newlyweds went by car to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and New York. It was during their honeymoon that Margaret Purifoy Frierson became pregnant, and on July 5, 1932, exactly nine months and three days after their wedding, Charles Davis Frierson III arrived.

Neville, Margaret Purifoy and Charles Frierson Jr.’s second child, was born four years after her brother Charles Davis Frierson III. She arrived quite early on the morning of June 1, 1936. She was a Monday’s child who fulfilled the nursery rhyme prediction that she would be “fair of face.”<sup>7</sup>

Four years later, on April 9, 1940, Neville’s younger brother, James Gordon Frierson, named for his paternal great-grandfather, was born.



*Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (age twenty-eight) with Neville Frierson, shortly after her birth on June 1, 1936.*

*Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (age thirty-two) with her one-month-old son, James Gordon Frierson, and her almost four-year-old daughter, Neville Frierson, May 1940.*





*The Frierson family in front of the Frierson House on March 15, 1942, the day that Charles Davis Frierson Jr. went to war: (left to right) Charles Davis Frierson III (age nine), Charlotte Martin Gallaway Frierson (age sixty-three), Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age thirty-five), Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (age thirty-three), and Neville Frierson (age five).*

*Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (age thirty-four) with her children, in late 1942: Charles Davis Frierson III (age ten), Neville Frierson (age six), and James Gordon Frierson (age two).*

Then came World War II (1939–45). In March 1942, just four months after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Charles Davis Frierson Jr. entered military service at age thirty-five. For most of his forty-five months of service in the United States Army, he was stationed in Omaha, Nebraska, about 570 miles northwest of Jonesboro.

For more than three years during the war, Margaret Purifoy Frierson and her three young children lived without their husband and father in Jonesboro. Many years later, Margaret told her daughter Cherry Purifoy Frierson (b. 1947) that this period was the hardest time of her life.

In the autumn of 1942, Margaret Purifoy Frierson wrote many letters to her husband; Charles Frierson Jr. kept these letters.<sup>8</sup> The major subjects of Margaret's letters were their three children, her management of the family's farmlands, and caring for the property she had inherited from her father, Stanley Neville Purifoy, who had died that summer. She also described wartime scarcities in the letters. On a more personal level, she always closed her letters with expressions of love.

About two years after the end of World War II, Margaret Purifoy and Charles Frierson Jr. had their fourth child, Cherry Purifoy Frierson, who was born on May 26, 1947. Neville recalls that her mother, who was thirty-nine years old when Cherry was born, developed a serious postpartum infection and was hospitalized in Memphis for about a month. During her recovery, Neville and her two brothers stayed with their grandmother **Charlotte Gallaway Frierson (1878–1968)** at the Frierson House. A few months later, Margaret was diagnosed with adult-onset type 1 diabetes. For the rest of her life, she took insulin injections and closely monitored her diet and blood sugar levels. The disease eventually took her life.

As the second half of the twentieth century began, the Frierson family—with four children, ages twenty to five—sat for an informal family portrait using color photography.



*The Frierson family in their house at 823 Park Avenue, Christmas 1952: Charles Davis Frierson III (age twenty), James Gordon Frierson (age twelve), Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (age forty-five), Neville Frierson (age sixteen), Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (age forty-four), and Cherry Purifoy Frierson (age five).*



*The Frierson family, 1968: (standing, left to right) Cherry Purifoy Frierson Hester, William Allen Hester, Charles Davis Frierson III, Carolyn Rhea Frierson; (seated on the sofa, left to right) James Gordon Frierson, Kay Lynn Coleman Frierson, Sandra Rhea Frierson, Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson, Charles Davis Frierson Jr., Margaret Purifoy Bryan, Neville Frierson Bryan, Elizabeth Montgomery Bryan, John Henry Bryan Jr.; (seated on the floor, left to right) Terry Lynn Frierson and John Henry Bryan III.*

In the year 1968, Margaret Purifoy Frierson turned sixty years old. A photograph of her family that year includes her four children, their spouses, and her five grandchildren.

The first of Margaret Purifoy Frierson's eleven grandchildren, Sandra Rhea Frierson (1957–2005), was born in 1957. She had an abbreviated life on account of a congenital heart defect.<sup>9</sup> Her brother, Terry Lynn Frierson, was born in 1962. By the mid-1960s, Neville and I had contributed three grandchildren: John Henry Bryan III, born in 1960; Margaret Purifoy Bryan, born in 1963; and Elizabeth Montgomery Bryan, born in 1965.

In June 1970, Neville's parents came to our home in West Point, Mississippi, for the birth of their sixth grandchild, Charles Frierson Bryan (b. 1970). Two more grandchildren, John Graham Frierson and Mary-Margaret Hester, arrived in 1971 and 1972. The last three grandchildren, Catherine Neville Hester, Sarah Frierson, and William Allen Hester Jr., were born in 1974, 1976, and 1978, after Margaret Purifoy Frierson died in 1973.

Today, Margaret Purifoy Frierson, Neville's mother, has twenty-one great-grandchildren, born between 1986 and 2002.



In the latter part of 1970, Margaret Purifoy Frierson had a heart attack. Margaret Purifoy Bryan, our daughter, who was seven years old, was visiting with her in Jonesboro at the time.

After her mother's heart attack, Cherry Frierson Hester recalled her father crying and being very distressed; it is quite likely that he was aware at that time of his own vulnerability to a heart attack.

Margaret Purifoy Frierson recovered from her heart attack and seemed reasonably well at the Frierson family gathering at Thanksgiving in 1970. She was, however, having trouble with her eyes, likely caused by her diabetes. She had an eye operation between Thanksgiving and Christmas that year. Thus, she was recovering and bedridden when her husband died suddenly on the day after Christmas in 1970.

After Charles Frierson Jr. died, his twenty-three-year-old daughter, Cherry Frierson Hester, and her husband moved in to live with Margaret Purifoy Frierson. According to Cherry, her father had asked her to do that. Almost one year later, just before Christmas 1971, Margaret Purifoy Frierson had a severe stroke and essentially lost her eyesight. She died about twenty months later, on August 16, 1973, at age sixty-five. In a remembrance entitled "Recollections of My Mother," Cherry wrote, "*She was my very best friend.*"<sup>10</sup>

*Margaret Alice Purifoy and Charles Davis Frierson Jr. at Neville Frierson and John H. Bryan Jr.'s home in West Point, Mississippi, in the mid-1960s. Margaret Purifoy Bryan is seated on the lap of her grandmother, and John H. Bryan III is seated next to his grandfather.*



## MARGARET ALICE PURIFOY'S LIFE

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#### 1. A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE CHILD: MARGARET ALICE PURIFOY

As a young child, **Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)** was often photographed by professional photographers. Between ages one and seven, she was captured in five very pretty, doll-like images by studio photographers.



*Margaret Alice Purifoy at age one.*



*Margaret Alice Purifoy at age two.*



*Margaret Alice Purifoy at age three.*



*Margaret Alice Purifoy at age five.*



*Margaret Alice Purifoy at age seven.*

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### 2. POSTCARDS TO DEEDIE AND MATTIE, 1910 AND 1918

Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973) was depicted on a postcard when she was less than two years old.



*Young Margaret Alice Purifoy's (less than two years old) photograph on a postcard, early 1910.*



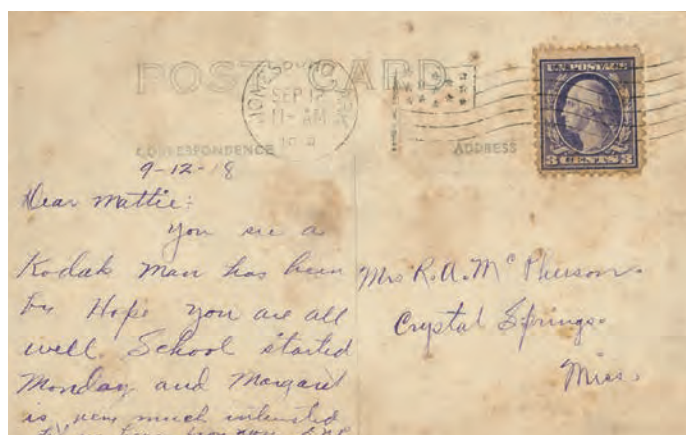
*The postcard is postmarked March 8, 1910, about five weeks before Margaret Alice Purifoy's second birthday. The text reads: "Hello Deedie and Jack! How are you? Here I am! How do I look? Come home and see me. Margaret."*

The postcard is addressed to Margaret Alice Purifoy's aunt **Emma Edith "Deedie" Gillespie (1888–1976)** and her husband, Claude V. "Jack" Jackson (1883–1953), who had married about five months earlier. Young Margaret Purifoy gave her aunt the nickname Deedie because she could not pronounce Edith correctly. The postcard, with its clever message, was obviously written by Margaret Purifoy's mother, **Ola Frank Gillespie (1881–1934)**, Deedie's older sister.

Eight years later, **Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)** sent a postcard depicting his daughter.



*A photographic postcard of ten-year-old Margaret Alice Purifoy.*



*The postcard is postmarked September 12, 1918, when young Margaret Alice Purifoy was ten years old. The text reads: "Dear Mattie: You see a Kodak man has been by. Hope you are all well. School started Monday and Margaret is very much interested. Let us hear from you. SNP."*

The postcard is addressed to Mrs. R. A. McPherson, nee **Martha Elizabeth "Mattie" Purifoy [1876–1962]**, Stanley's older sister. The "Kodak man" was a door-to-door salesman with a handheld camera, invented by George Eastman (1854–1932) in about 1888. In 1902 Eastman also bought the rights to Velox photographic paper with a preprinted postcard back. After that the Kodak company began to seriously market custom-printed photographic postcards.

Stanley Neville Purifoy used a three-cent stamp on this postcard. During World War I (1914–18), the postcard rate was temporarily raised from one cent to two cents. Stanley Purifoy probably used the three-cent stamp because he did not have a two-cent stamp at home.

Except during World War I, the rate for a postcard stamp was one cent from 1872 until 1952, a period of eighty years. The postcard postage rate then rose to thirty-five cents until 2016, when it was reduced, for the first time ever, to thirty-four cents.



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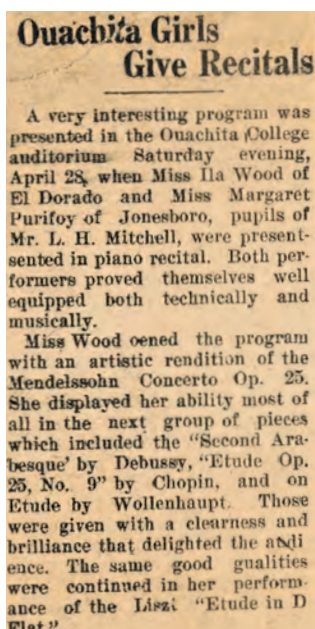
### 3. STUDYING MUSIC AT OUACHITA BAPTIST COLLEGE, 1927–28

In the fall of 1927, nineteen-year-old **Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)** entered Ouachita\* Baptist College, located in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, 196 miles southwest of Jonesboro, Arkansas. Her mother, **Ola Frank Gillespie Purifoy (1881–1934)**, accompanied Margaret and lived with her during the year at Ouachita Baptist College.

When Margaret Purifoy entered Ouachita, she held an associate's degree in music from Jonesboro College, from which she graduated in 1927. At Ouachita, she was a student in the Conservatory Department. During the 1927–28 school year, Margaret Purifoy's grades were quite good:

Fall term, 1927:	Music Theory—90
Winter term, 1927–28:	Organ Class—98
	Music Theory—90
	History of Music—94
Spring term, 1928:	English—90
	Counterpoint—88
	Music Appreciation—84
	Piano—96

On April 28, 1928, Margaret Purifoy gave a recital in the Ouachita auditorium.



Miss Purifoy's first number was the difficult "Sonata Op. 7" by Grieg, which she rendered with great power. In her next group she played "May Night" by Palmgren with artistic tone coloring. "Nocturne for Left Hand" by Scriabine, which displayed unusual left hand facility and of "Brer Rabbit" by McDowell. In her last number, the "Concerto Op. 22" by Saint-Saens, she displayed all her good qualities as a pianist. Miss Purifoy gave this beautiful composition the artistic interpretation that it requires. The orchestral parts for both Concertos were played by Mr. Mitchell.

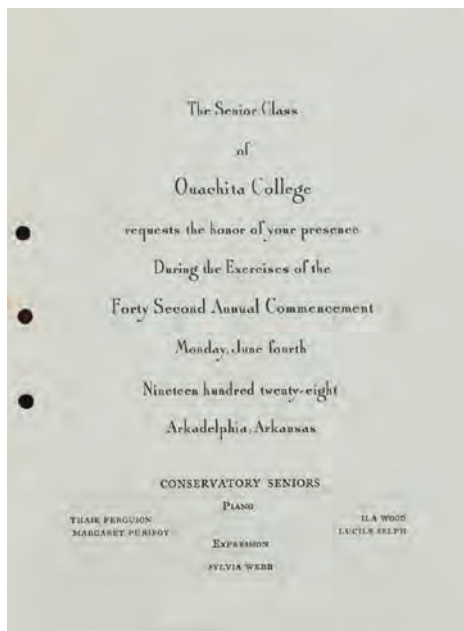
he two performers were dressed in elaborate gowns of tulle and tulle, Miss Wood wearing white, and Miss Purifoy delicate pink.

The ushers for the recital were Misses Elizabeth Seale, Margaret McCarroll, Ruby Wood, Lucille Selph, and Helen Walker.

*A newspaper account of a piano recital given by Margaret Alice Purifoy at Ouachita Baptist College in 1928.*

\*Ouachita is pronounced "Wosh-i-taw," with equal stress on each syllable.

Margaret Purifoy is listed as a Conservatory Senior in the formal invitation to the graduation exercises held on June 4, 1928. Thus, we presume that Margaret Purifoy had enough credits to graduate from Ouachita Baptist College after just one year there.



*An invitation to Margaret Alice Purifoy's graduation from Ouachita Baptist College in 1928.*

After graduating from Ouachita Baptist College, Margaret Purifoy lived with her parents in Jonesboro for the next three years. Her 1931 engagement announcement called Margaret “*one of the most finished of the younger musicians of the city, and a member of the Nocturnal Club.*” Margaret Purifoy Frierson continued to play the piano throughout her life.

Neville was undoubtedly inspired by her mother to study piano, and she did so for all sixteen years of her education. At Southwestern at Memphis, Neville earned a bachelor of music degree in piano pedagogy\* in 1958. Today she plays the piano quite well, though not often.

Interestingly, our older daughter, Margaret Purifoy Bryan (b. 1963), though musically talented and named for her grandmother, did not study piano. Rather, after finishing high school at age seventeen, she majored in French. Coincidentally, in 1985 our daughter Margaret married her college boyfriend whose English surname is French. Margaret occasionally plays the piano.

\*Pedagogy is pronounced “ped-uh-GAH-gee.” It is a term for the art, science, or profession of teaching.

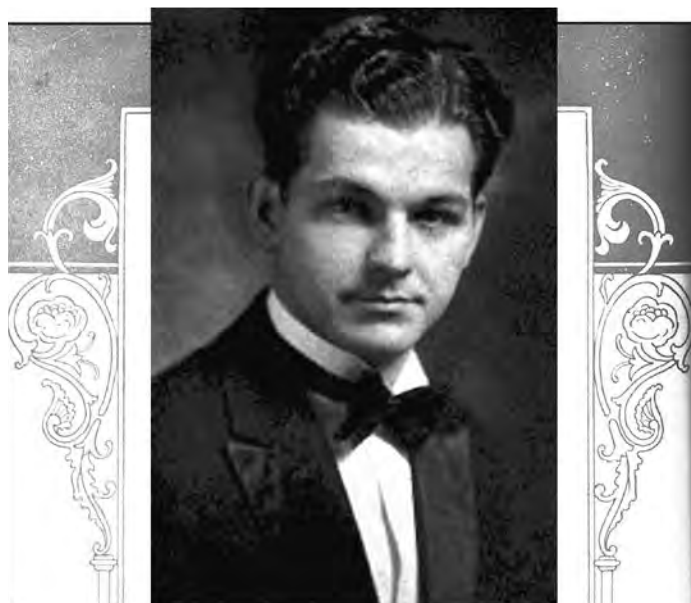
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### 4. JOHN HOMER SUMMERS AND MARGARET ALICE PURIFOY

**Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)** was a popular young lady during and after her college years in the late 1920s. She had many friends.

During her time at Ouachita Baptist College in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, Margaret Alice Purifoy dated a piano student named John Homer Summers (1906–1998),\* who was from Hot Springs, Arkansas, about forty miles north of Arkadelphia, Arkansas.



JOHN HOMER SUMMERS, A.B. . . . . Hot Springs, Ark.

*Diploma in Piano*

HERMESIAN

*"His music hath power to charm."*

Signal Staff, '28, '29; Solo Pianist for Glee Club; University Club, '28; Supervisor of Practice; Honor Society, '29.

*John Homer Summers, who dated Margaret Alice Purifoy while she was attending Ouachita Baptist College. He is pictured above in the 1929 Ouachita yearbook as a graduating senior.*

Margaret Purifoy is pictured with John Homer Summers in photographs taken in Hot Springs, his hometown, in 1928. The photographs were taken at the Display Spring, next to the Fordyce Bathhouse, which operated from 1915 to 1962. Today the Fordyce Bathhouse is the visitor center for Hot Springs National Park.

*\*For some of the research about John Homer Summers and Margaret Alice Purifoy at Ouachita Baptist College, Dr. Wendy Richter, an associate professor and archivist at Ouachita Baptist University, was especially helpful.*



*The Display Spring at Hot Springs in 1928. The bandstand above has now been razed.*



*Margaret Purifoy and John Homer Summers near the Display Spring in Hot Springs in 1928.*



*John Homer Summers at age twenty-two, in 1928.*



*Margaret Purifoy at age twenty, in 1928.*

John Homer Summers is enumerated in the 1940 census as a musician and teacher living in Hot Springs with his wife, Evelyn Joyce Summers (1909–1998), and a three-year-old daughter named Carole. John Homer Summers died at age ninety-one, in January 1998, and his wife, Evelyn Summers, died in October of that year. They both passed away in Hot Springs and are buried in a cemetery in nearby Saline County, between Hot Springs and Little Rock, Arkansas.

Neville and her sister, Cherry Purifoy Frierson (b. 1947), recall finding a cache of love letters from a suitor, probably John Homer Summers, addressed to their mother in the late 1920s. We have not been able to locate the letters.



## MARGARET ALICE PURIFOY'S LIFE

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### 5. "AN ENGAGEMENT OF WIDE INTEREST"

On Monday, August 17, 1931, a month and a half before their wedding, the local Jonesboro, Arkansas, newspaper announced the engagement of **Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)** and **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**. As was the custom, numerous parties took place during their engagement, several of which were reported in the newspaper. The wedding took place on Friday, October 2, 1931.

*A newspaper announcement of the date of Margaret Alice Purifoy's wedding. We presume the headline read "Chooses October for Wedding." Interestingly, the date in the caption is inaccurate. They married on October 2, 1932, not October 3.*



The wedding of Miss Margaret Purifoy, lovely daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley N. Purifoy, and Charles D. Frierson, Jr., son of Judge and Mrs. Chas. D. Frierson, will be the outstanding social event of October when solemnized Friday evening, October 2, at eight o'clock at the First Baptist Church. The bride-to-be has been the inspiration of many beautiful parties during the past month and several delightful parties are planned for next week. On Monday afternoon Mrs. E. C. Barton and daughter, Mrs. Lloyd Rebsamen will entertain with a bridge party at their home on Nettleton Road honoring this popular bride-elect and on Tuesday evening Mesdames Robert Harrington and Clarence Cowdery of St. Louis, Mo., and Mrs. J. M. Birdsong will compliment Miss Purifoy with a "Pajama Party" at the home of Mrs. Birdsong on West Washington Avenue. Following the wedding rehearsal Thursday evening Mrs. Gush Nash and daughter, Miss Florence Nash, will entertain the bridal party with a buffet supper at their home on Union Street. *SUN-9-26-31*

*Parties planned for the bride-elect, Margaret Alice Purifoy, as reported in The Jonesboro Evening Sun on Saturday, September 26, 1931.*

*SUN-10-28-31*  
Mrs. A. B. Jones Jr. of Los Angeles, Calif., who is the guest of her parents, Judge and Mrs. Allen Hughes at Memphis, arrived this morning to be the guest of Judge and Mrs. Charles Frierson on Main street, until after the Frierson-Purifoy wedding.  
—:—  
Miss Margaret Frierson who is a student in the University of Arkansas, will arrive Thursday to be present for the wedding of her brother, Charles D. Frierson and Miss Purifoy. She will be accompanied by her aunt, Miss Irene Galloway of Fayetteville. Miss Frierson will be Miss Purifoy's maid of honor. *SUN-10-28-31*

*Family arriving for the wedding as reported in The Jonesboro Evening Sun on Monday, September 28, 1931.*

## SOCIAL EVENTS

*\* \* \* SUN - SEP. 29, 1931 \* \* \**  
One of the most beautiful of the pre-nuptial parties, which have been given in honor of Miss Margaret Purifoy, lovely bride-elect, was the bridge party given yesterday afternoon by Mrs. Eugene C. Barton and her attractive daughter, Mrs. Lloyd Rebsamen, at their home on Nettleton Road. The handsome Barton home was artistically decorated for the occasion with a variety of beautiful roses, zinnias, dahlias, and mountain daisies. A miniature illuminated church from which a miniature bridal party was departing, adorned the side entrance hall where the guests were graciously welcomed by Mrs. Rebsamen, wearing a stunning frock of grey chiffon and Miss Purifoy, dressed in a smart fall model of black chiffon velvet with lace trimmings. She wore a becoming hat of black felt. The guests were received in the living room by Mrs. Barton, wearing a striking model of black chiffon. The tallies were effectively designed with brides and grooms. Eight tables had been arranged for bridge and when the games were concluded the prizes were awarded as follows: high score prize, a white handbag, elaborately beaded, to Miss Martha Little; second high score, a beautiful crystal pitcher, to Mrs. J. Hardy Little; consolation, a handsome flower bowl of green and white crystal, to Mrs. Chas. C. Witherspoon; tea guest consolation, exquisite handkerchiefs, to Mrs. Joe W. Little. The hostesses presented the honoree with a dozen lovely crystal goblets of the Hobnail pattern. Mesdames Barton and Rebsamen were assisted by Mesdames E. Whitfield, J. Hardy Little, E. L. Farley, Herbert Sanderson, Fred D. Troutt, Clarence Cowdery of St. Louis, Rufus Shanleaver of Memphis, and Miss Lenora Little in serving delicious refreshments consisting of: chicken salad, pickles, hot buttered clover leaf rolls, jelly, hot coffee, ices, and salted almonds. The ices were frozen in the forms of love birds and wedding rings. There were three tables of tea guests. The following out of town guests were present: Mesdames Robert Harrington and Clarence Cowdery, St. Louis, Mo.; Mrs. Rufus Shanleaver, Memphis, Tenn.; Mesdames A. B. Jones Sr. and A. B. Jones, Jr., Los Angeles, Cal.; Miss Marian Howser, Marion, Ind.

*A Monday afternoon bridge party for the bride, Margaret Alice Purifoy, as reported in The Jonesboro Evening Sun on Tuesday, September 29, 1931.*

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### 6. A “BEAUTIFUL AND IMPRESSIVE EVENT”

**Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)** and **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)** were married in a formal wedding ceremony at 8:30 p.m. on Friday, October 2, 1931, at the First Baptist Church in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Though it occurred during a time of deepening economic distress in the United States, their wedding was heralded as “*one of the most impressive . . . ever solemnized in this city.*”

It should be noted that Margaret Alice Purifoy’s parents, **Ola Frank Gillespie (1881–1934)** and **Stanley Neville Purifoy (1879–1942)**, had married in the very same church more than twenty-seven years earlier in an equally grand ceremony. Margaret Alice Purifoy was their only child.



*A tinted wedding photograph of Margaret Alice Purifoy, who married on October 2, 1931.*



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 1931

Miss Anna Childress Clark

TELEPHONE—Office 1283

**Frierson-Purifoy Wedding Was Beautiful and Impressive Event**

One of the most beautiful and impressive weddings ever solemnized in this city was that of Friday evening, when Miss Margaret Purifoy became the bride of Mr. Charles Davis Frierson, Jr., at 8:30 in the First Baptist Church.

The decorative scheme was one of exquisite simplicity, conceived by one with a natural eye for artistic effect. No flowers were used, but the handsomest palms, most stately ferns, and most graceful vines were used with marvelous effect, making a perfect background for the beautiful bridal party. Tall floor baskets filled with clematis vines with huge bows of white tulle on the handles were on each side of place of ceremony and the altar rail was completely hidden, swathed in glistening smilax. The entire chancel was filled with greenery, relieved by two tall white standards, with a third one in the center holding forty white cathedral candles. The dias was draped in white.

Preceding the ceremony a beautiful program of nuptial music was given with Mrs. Hal Holt Peel at the pipe organ. Her first number was "Andante in D Flat" by Le Maire. This was followed by "Meditation from Thias" by Massenet.

Mrs. Paul Elder sang beautifully "I love You Truly" by Carrie Jacobs Bond, and then Cadman's beautiful "At Dawning".

For the processional, Mrs. Peel played the "Bridal Chorus" from Wagner's "Lohengrin", and for the recessional, Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" and during the ceremony she played "Traumerie". Mrs. Peel wore a lovely gown of poudre blue silk with pink corsage. Mrs. Elder was in a stunning evening gown of pink chiffon with pink corsage.

The large auditorium was filled to capacity with friends and relatives of the popular young couple. Robert Patrick lighted the candles just before the ceremony, when the ushers, Messrs. William Hughes of Memphis, James Harrington, St. Louis, Mo., and James Patrick of this city marched to the altar followed by Miss Florence Nast and Miss Irene Sanderson bridesmaids in opposite aisles.

Miss Nash was wearing a similar gown of poudre blue silk lace. Each wore matching lace mitts and slippers. Then came the maid of honor, Mrs. Clarence Cowdery of St. Louis, Mo., formerly Hope Harrington of this city, wearing a gorgeous model of jade silk lace. The maid of honor, Miss Margaret Frierson, sister of the groom, was lovely in an exquisite model of deep pink silk lace. They carried bouquets of Radiance roses and ferns, and wore crystal pendants, gifts from the bride.

The bride was exquisitely lovely in her bridal gown of handsome white Chantilly lace combined with wedding ring velvet, and long tulle veil edged with silk lace—the cap effect with clusters of orange blossoms at each side of her was most becoming. Her flowers were Bride's roses, tube roses and ferns in shower effect. Her only ornament was a strand of exquisite pearls, gift of the groom. She approached the altar leaning upon the arm of her father, who gave her in marriage.

They were met at the altar by the groom, his best man, Mr. Thomas Hughes of Memphis, cousin of the groom, and the officiating minister, the Rev. Low H.

Heard, pastor of the First Baptist Church, who united their lives in marriage, using the ring service, which was beautiful and very impressive.

After the wedding the bridal party and close relatives went to the home of the bride's parents, where an informal reception was held. The guests were privileged to see the many beautiful wedding gifts.

The home was prettily decorated in a pink and white color motif. The table in the dining room was a perfect picture, with handsome lace, pink roses, ferns, pink candies, and a beautiful wedding cake, which the bride cut. This was served with ice cream in the shape of wedding rings. Miss Margaret Frierson caught the bride's bouquet.

Mr. and Mrs. Frierson left on a motor trip to Washington City, Philadelphia and New York City.

For traveling the bride wore a smart ensemble of black pebble crepe with black lynx fur, with matching accessories.

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The bride is the only child of Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Neville Purifoy of this city. She is most talented and attractive. She is a graduate of Jonesboro College and received her degree in music from Ouachita College. She is an accomplished musician and is a member of the Nocturne Music Club.

The groom received his A. B. degree from the University of Arkansas. Later he attended George Washington University in Washington, D. C., and last June received his LL.B. degree from the Law School of the University of Arkansas. He is now a member of the law firm of Frierson and Frierson. He is a member of the Kappa Sigma Fraternity.

Out of town guests who attended the wedding were: Mrs. Charles Snowden, Francis and Snowden Gillespie, Miss Marguerite Zenner, Mrs. Hal Holt Peel, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Hughes, Sr., Mr. and Mrs. Allen Hughes, Jr., Miss Corinne Hughes, William Hughes, Memphis; Misses Margaret and Irene Galloway, Fayetteville; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Harrington, James Harrington, Mrs. Clarence Cowdery, St. Louis; Mrs. Addison B. Jones, Sr., and Mrs. Addison B. Jones, Jr., Los Angeles, Calif.; Mrs. Rex Wheeler and Mrs. Berry of Marion; Miss Marian Houser, Marion, Indiana; Thomas Hughes, Paragould.



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### 7. “MONDAY’S CHILD”

According to Neville’s mother, **Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson (1908–1973)**, Neville was born at 3:06 a.m. on Monday, June 1, 1936. For that reason, Neville has always celebrated and recorded her birthday as June 1. Unfortunately, Neville’s birth certificate originally stated that her birthdate was May 31, 1936; this error caused many problems over the years. In March 2013, at age seventy-six, Neville began the somewhat laborious process of officially changing her birth certificate date. Her application was made to the Arkansas Department of Health. A fee of \$27 was paid. Her request was granted.

Thus, it became official that Neville is a Monday’s child. “Monday’s Child” is an old English nursery rhyme that foretells a child’s character or future based upon the day of the week that he or she was born. The purpose of the rhyme was to help young children learn the days of the week. The most common modern version of the rhyme is:

*Monday’s child is fair of face,  
Tuesday’s child is full of grace,  
Wednesday’s child is full of woe,  
Thursday’s child has far to go,  
Friday’s child is loving and giving,  
Saturday’s child works for a living,  
But the child who is born on a Sabbath Day  
Is bonny and blithe and good and gay.\**

From pictures with her mother captured in the late 1930s, Neville could be a Monday’s child and a Sunday’s child.



*Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson with Neville (almost six months old) on November 22, 1936.*

*\*At the time this verse was written, bonny meant attractive and beautiful; blithe meant cheerful; and gay meant happy, excited, and carefree.*



*Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson with Neville (age two), 1938.*



*Margaret Alice Purifoy Frierson with Neville (age four), 1940.*

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### 8. 1942 WARTIME LETTERS

In September, October, and November 1942, **Margaret Purifoy Frierson (1908–1973)** wrote long, newsy letters to her husband, **Charles Davis Frierson Jr. (1907–1970)**, who was stationed in Omaha, Nebraska. Her letters almost invariably discussed three subjects: their three children, wartime scarcities, and tending to the family's farms. All the letters ended with expressions of love. Excerpts from these 1942 letters follow.



*Margaret Purifoy Frierson at age thirty-four with her three children—Neville (age six), James Gordon Frierson (age two), and Charles Davis Frierson III (age ten)—during World War II, 1942.*

### THE CHILDREN

November 13: *Just a quick note to tell you that Charles [Charles Davis Frierson III (b. 1932)] got his deer today. He just called and said he got a nice spike buck. He saw him first and shot him right in the neck. They were both tickled. Your dad [Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (1877–1947)] said he was a natural born hunter.*

November 14: *I guess you saw the write up of Charles and his deer hunting. I am sending the clipping out of the Tribune. It was on the front page in black type the same size and blackness as the news of finding Eddie Rickenbacker.\**

*\*Captain Eddie Rickenbacker (1890–1973) was the United States' most successful fighter pilot during World War I (1914–18). In October 1942, while touring American air bases in the Pacific region, his B17 was lost at sea. After twenty-four days spent drifting on a raft, Rickenbacker and his crew were found and rescued. This event occurred at about the same time that Charles Davis Frierson III killed his first deer.*



*Charles Davis Frierson Sr. (age sixty-four) and Charles Davis Frierson III (age ten).*

November 14: Honey, here's what I've been planning to do. The children and I would like to come up about the 10th or 15th of Dec. and spend three or four weeks with you. Would you like that? Could you get us an apartment? (Neville says she hopes you can get the same one again). . . . Oh I do hope you really want us to come—we all want to so bad. I don't feel like I could stand Xmas without you. I'd be so alone.

November 14: I got Neville the cutest doll today. I had seen one for \$8 but just couldn't pay that, so I found this cute one for \$1.98—she'll love it, I know. What will we get Charles? Should I get a football? James [(James Gordon Frierson (1940–2015))] says Santy Claus is coming to Omaha. By the way he said Neville today, for the first time.

November 21: Charles ate at school Friday and said he enjoyed the lunch. They had black eyed peas with a small piece of meat, creamed potatoes, apple sauce, a biscuit, and a piece of cake—all for 10 cents.

November 21: Neville went to Mary Lee's [Mary Lee Rebsamen (b. 1936)] this morning to a meeting of Mary Lee's Music Club.\* She [Neville] loved it. She invited nearly all the girls to come to see her this afternoon—three of them came and Charles had one guest—so I had a goodly bunch of children.

\*Neither Neville nor Mary Lee have any recollection of this.



## WARTIME SCARCITIES

September 23: *Honey, after deep thought and investigation I have decided to have our house painted. I have wanted to all year but felt it was unpatriotic to spend the money but several people have advised me to go on and do it or I'll be sorry later.*

October 18: *Another lonesome Sunday. I don't like 'em. I took the children to S. S. [Sunday School], and after that I went by to see Allen Patterson about tires. He gave me no hope for new tires, but said I might be able to get re-caps, if I had anything to re-cap.*

November 11: *I worked at the Red Cross sewing room today—sewed 90 buttons on and brought 100 home to sew on children's rompers. Now don't fuss cause I did it for it eased my conscience and did me good. I really need contact with people, other than my family and tenants.*

November 21: *If you see safety pins anywhere please buy me some. There are none here and Sears doesn't have any. Our grocery store today had a big sign on the door saying "no lard, no sugar, no bacon, no coffee."*

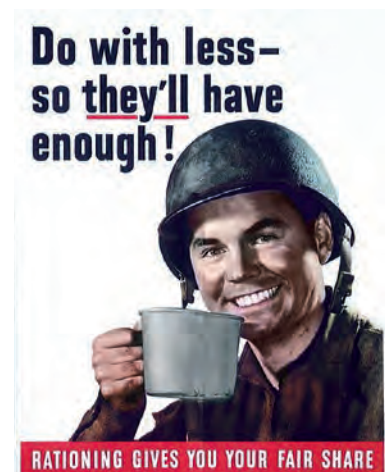
November 25: *I finally got my truck certificate for gas today and it calls for only 23 gallons of gas per month! It seems they cut everybody down below what they asked for.*

No date: Margaret [[Margaret Frierson Cherry \(1912–1990\)](#)] *went down the other day and tried to buy nylon hose. She was quite surprised to learn there hadn't been any since June! The rayon ones I have now will not stay up. I don't like them at all. I still have some nylon for dress-up.*

No date: *I hear the October quota of coffee here is already gone from the warehouses—just a little left in the stores. Looks like people will be coffee-less in a few days. This is one time I'll be glad I don't drink it.*

No date: *I finally got Charles a pair of pants, only one though, and had to get size 14. Everything is so scarce here—we never know when we will get bacon, chewing gum, candy bars, bananas, marshmallows, cokes, etc. and when we won't. We don't mind, tho.*

November: *I'm still sewing on buttons for the Red Cross—over 300 buttons so far.*



A World War II poster supporting rationing.

## FARMING AND RENTAL PROPERTY

October 6: *I'm real excited over the farming for next year and I'll know a little more about it all. Course you will still have to help me lots. I believe I can cut down on expenses, and also see that more comes in.*

October 29: *I had a letter from my Miss. County [Mississippi County, Arkansas] man today saying his contract made in 1933 said he was to get  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the cotton and all of the other crops, (corn, soybeans, etc.) and I was to get  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the cotton and  $\frac{1}{4}$  the conservation check, and all the parity check. Shall I let him go on like that next year? He said he had about one more bale which would make 13 bales—two less than last year. The 13 bales make me about \$338\* and the conservation was \$100 and the parity will be \$25—a total of some \$463. Taxes are \$85.63—so the 40 acres has made clear \$378 this year.*

No date: *I found out today I have to fill out a huge form on each of the houses and apartments I own—23 in all. I have to answer dozens of questions. Guess I'll spend the day down there at the rent control office.*

November 21: *I spent most of yesterday filling out my 23 O. P. A.\*\* rent forms. I found out I didn't know all I should about my rent property—running water, garage, bathroom, etc, so I had to go to about half of them to find out. Today, I spent most of the day getting licenses—drivers, car, truck and trailer—\$28.58 worth! You don't know what you missed not farming in 1942—I've written my name so many times I can close my eyes and write it as well as with them open.*

## EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE

October 16: *Honey, I'm awfully glad you are my husband! If I had a husband that fussed at me like Ned does Mary I'd just die! He always has though so I guess she's used to it. I couldn't stand it. You probably should have fussed lots of times but you didn't and I love you for not. I'd probably love you even if you did, but don't you try it!*

November 6: *Darling I hate for you to have to wash your socks—when I'd love so to do it. Wouldn't it be awful if we both weren't so busy though. If I stop even five minutes and just sit and think I get so lonesome for you I just can't stand it—so I just don't stop.*

November 21: *I love you so much, Honey. I can hardly wait to see you again. Maybe it won't be long now.*

November 25: *I am so excited over coming I can't write even as well as usual. I have to scratch out nearly as much as I've written. Anyway you know I love you heaps and heaps.*

\*In 1942 the price of cotton reached about twenty cents per pound [\$100 per bale], for there were no price ceilings for agricultural commodities. That was about twice the price of cotton during the Great Depression (1929–39).

\*\*The Office of Price Administration (1941–47) was a wartime government agency that placed ceilings on prices and rationed scarce supplies such as automobiles, tires, shoes, nylon stockings, sugar, gasoline, coffee, meats, and processed foods.

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### 9. THE FIRST GRANDCHILD, SANDRA RHEA FRIERSON

On January 12, 1957, **Margaret Alice Purifoy (1908–1973)** and **Charles Davis Frierson Jr.'s (1907–1970)** first grandchild, Sandra Rhea “Sandi” Frierson (1957–2005), was born. She had an abnormal heart at her birth.

*Margaret Alice Purifoy  
Frierson with her first  
grandchild, Sandra Rhea  
Frierson, 1959.*



At age nine, on January 6, 1967, Sandi Frierson became the first pediatric open-heart surgery survivor at LeBonheur Children's Medical Center in Memphis, Tennessee. She paved the way for numerous successful heart procedures for children.

Sandi Frierson attended public schools in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and graduated from Jonesboro High School in 1973. After attending college at Arkansas State College in Jonesboro, she went to the University of Arkansas, from which she graduated in 1982.

Sandi Frierson lived in Fayetteville, Arkansas, for most of her adult life. During the 1990s, she was for a time editor of the University of Arkansas Press, an academic publishing house associated with the university. She was also a skilled photographer who received numerous awards at local photography exhibitions. Sandi is particularly remembered by me for her extensive family genealogy work, which was especially well organized and quite useful in the preparation of this book.

In 1997, at age forty, Sandi Frierson returned to Jonesboro. She died there on January 3, 2005, just ten days short of her forty-eighth birthday.



*Sandra Rhea Frierson (age thirty-nine) with her dog, a golden retriever named Kira, 1996. Sandi had very long hair and liked it very much.*



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### 10. A REMEMBRANCE OF HER MOTHER BY CHERRY PURIFOY FRIERSON

A few years ago, Neville's sister, Cherry Purifoy Frierson (b. 1947), wrote her recollections of her mother, **Margaret Purifoy Frierson (1908–1973)**. Cherry was twenty-six years old when her mother died; they were very close.

*Neville's younger  
sister, Cherry  
Purifoy Frierson,  
at about age fifty,  
in the late 1990s.*



## RECOLLECTIONS OF MY MOTHER

*My mother was a full time mother. She devoted her life to her children and later her grandchildren. She never seemed stressed. She had a soft, sweet voice and never raised it. She enjoyed playing the baby grand piano her father had given her. That piano is now in my daughter Catherine's home. She belonged to the Treble Clef Music Club for years. She also participated in the Presbyterian Women's Circle and was a Sunday school teacher and Girl Scout leader. When I left the sixth grade at South Elementary School, she was given a lifetime membership in the PTA. She had been in that school's PTA for 21 straight years. But, the most amazing thing I think she did was to visit her widowed, invalid mother-in-law at least once a day, mostly twice a day, for 20 years.*

*Before I started school, she was diagnosed with diabetes. She had to learn to give herself insulin shots twice a day. This was before disposable syringes. I believe she didn't enjoy traveling because of the trouble keeping the insulin cool and the syringes sterile.*

*After raising four children in the house at 823 Park my brother Charles and his wife Carolyn talked my parents into building a house next to theirs on the woods lot in the center of what had been our family farm. That home became 1505 Frierson. About five years later my father died of a heart attack, leaving my mother, who was recovering from a heart attack, alone. She also lost most of her sight due to diabetes. She couldn't live alone. I was the only one of her children who had not bought a home of my own so my husband and I moved into her home to help care for her. She died almost three years later. My siblings were gracious enough to allow me to stay on and raise my three children there. My daughter Catherine is raising her children there now.*

*I owe my education to my mother. I am dyslexic. No one knew about dyslexia in Jonesboro during the 50's and 60's. I was just considered a slow reader. My dear mother read books to me every night so I could keep up with what my friends were reading. She read my textbooks and homework sheets to me every day. She spent untold hours sitting with me at the table in our den getting me through school. After I married, she helped me open a private kindergarten in my home, the home my father grew up in at 115 E Cherry. It is gone now. She came every morning for four years. She was my very best friend.*

*Even today, after all this time, people tell me of how much they admired her or how her sweet spirit had affected their life. She lives on in their lives and in the lives of her children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She has eleven grandchildren. She got to see nine of them, the last being my daughter Mary-Margaret who was just seventeen months old when her grandmother left us. Her life will always affect the lives of those in our family who have come after her. I miss her.*

Cherry Purifoy Frierson