

Lloyd's Lasting Language

My daddy was a dirt farmer...who farmed the old way
- Lloyd

Every once in while, a person comes along who has a noteworthy gift; and this particular person, Lloyd, has many stories to tell and the best way to tell them. His heritage and the assorted characters and circumstances are combined into a rich offering of folklore, personal stories, and tells passed down from his family and such. At the root of his language, Lloyd describes himself as just a little, fat man; but with a somewhat wicked laugh, he sobers his temper and commences with one story...and than another.

Aside this gift, he is a hardworking feller who grew-up on a farm, went to school, and then went to work. And work he did where for eight years he nearly drove himself hard from early morning to late at night; as his doctor warned, Lloyd was driving his self to an early grave. Still, he would rise early in the morning, load his van, pick-up the boys, and press-on to Georgia for a full-days' work. On darkness, the shift was over and back to Alabama he drove, took a shower, and went to bed.

Beyond eight years of this rigor, Lloyd was roofer, a press operator, and a continuing farmer like his father before him. Seven years in manufacturing brought much reward and opportunity as he had greatly reduced his daily road time; yet, even after seven years in progressive roles of press operations, he was laid-off from this manufacturer.

As I sat and listened to this story - among others - I could easily identify with a sense of discouragement; but could also recognize a steady stream of humor



and lightheartedness intermixed with the dramas and sometimes disappointments of life. I could not avoid the sense that Lloyd was blue or discouraged in his present job situation; but I could also sense that he was not about to lose heart given a hard upbringing and the untimely death of his dad when Lloyd was only ten. Enough about my impression and sense, let's let Lloyd talk for a spell.

My daddy was just an old dirt farmer; he worked the land hard to make a living. He farmed the old way - with a mule and plow. Once he bought a tractor but my sister wrecked it; after that, he sold the tractor and went back to the old way a-doing things. When he was 53, he died; he died out in the field where he was working.

My daddy was a dirt farmer...He died out in the field where he was working.

When I was about 20, my momma told me that I had a twin; a girl that died at birth. She also told me that I had only one and a half lungs - but that hasn't stop from smoking - I been smoking since I was a boy.

My older sister has written some about our family. I think she had something published - she's always been a good writer. When I had to write a paper in school, she would do it for me. One time, the teacher told me that she was going to give me a "B" for my paper and she was going to give my sister an "A" - she knew my sister's writing.

One of my first jobs was working as a cold-roofer. I would travel about Georgia and other places. One time we was working in Houston and some of the boys would go out at night to those bars with all the women; women all over the place - even swinging from the ceiling. At least once, my boss had to go find them boys. - They had gotten into trouble I think.

Lloyd would continue sharing such stories from day to day; and I listened, I learned that the gift that he had for storytelling was fostered well before his days - and are the kind passed from generation to generation...as well as the gift it seems.

My folks came from North Carolina - its' been tracked back to Ireland, I think. They moved to Alabama because they was involved

My folks come from North Carolina...they was in moonshine...

in moonshine and had to leave that state on account of the law. Two of the brothers - my great uncles - was named "Robert E." and "Stonewall". They was named after the great generals of course, and they brought their moonshine to Ballplay where I grew up. Moonshine's got to be done right; can't have those radiators or any of that; it's gotta be copper.

One of my folks was a charcoal maker. He had some big pits and would burn wood in them to make charcoal. He would sell the charcoal - and even got some advertising on a local radio station to help. People would come from miles around to buy his charcoal. He died of black-lung when he was fairly old - but he never worked in coal mine.

My grand daddy worked in a saw mill - now that's dangerous work. He said that one day his teeth were really bothering him and a young foreman popped-off and said something to make him mad. My grand daddy hit the young foreman and busted his jaw. The owner of the saw mill took both of them to the doctor - my grand daddy to get teeth pulled and the young foreman to get his jaw wired. The young foremen was not able to pop-off after that and, as far as my grand daddy, everyone at the mill thanked him.

When we was kids, we didn't have much time for sports. You know that Ballplay - where I live - got its name from the Creek Indians. They use to play a game or sport - and that's how the place got the name. No, when I

was a kid, we might go out in the field and horse around - tackle each other and such. Now, some of my grand kids is playing sports; and some of them like to tackle me sometimes. I'll just play along and let them pile on; then I'll come bust-in in out-a there and get-em back. They love to tackle grand daddy.

Lloyd had not had much time to spend with his own kids - as he explained that the long hours of work took priority in those days. As for these days, his grandkids are able to spend time with him and for that he finds purpose and contentment amid the disappointment in his job situation.