

Dedication
to
Art Massengill



IN MEMORY OF MY FRIEND, ART

I met Art Massengill as a student at Live Oaks ABLE Class in September, 2000. Being the oldest two students, with other younger ones, we more or less developed a bond together for study habits. We read each other's stories and complained about how the computers wouldn't work the way we wanted them to. We both became published authors in 2001.

Art received his GED Diploma in February, 2006, and was very proud of his achievement. In his first story, "A Tennessee Childhood", featured in *Beginnings IV*, he wrote about working to achieve his goals. He wrote,

"I was determined to do the best I could in life even if I didn't have a good education. At the age of sixty-four, I decided to start going to school to get a G.E.D. Diploma. I am presently working hard to achieve this goal."

In 2005, Art's health began to fail and he often missed classes; however, we kept in touch by e-mail. During his last days, I joined with our teachers Marty, Donna, and Alyssa to visit with him. It was a fun visit, full of laughter, taking pictures, eating his favorite ice cream, and reminiscing about old times. That evening, Art returned to Marty a stack of books that he had used in class and for homework study. Inside a math book, she found the following story of Art's.

"It was a journey I wasn't sure I should make by myself because of my health – back to the hills where I grew up in Tennessee."

"For many years, I had gone back to the small country cemetery on a hillside where my parents are"

buried. My grandparents and many other family members are buried there also. It's a little place where only community people are at rest. I placed some flowers on the gravesite of eight family members.

"I like to go there late in the evening when the sun is beginning to set and just spend a little time gazing at the beauty of the beautiful Powell Valley. It is an awesome site to view the beautiful Powell Valley. The people who live there take it for granted, but to me, it is awesome just to spend some time overlooking this beautiful valley."

Our friend and classmate died November 1, 2006. As a tribute to my friend, I wrote this story as if Art was speaking to me:

The evening sun, with its magnificent light and beauty, has now gone down for me. No more lonely trips back to my childhood home in Tennessee. No more trips to the old cemetery on the hillside where I used to stand and gaze at the beauty of the Powell Valley below.

I have now made my final trip, which has carried me to my final destination. Not to the hillside where I can look down on the beautiful Powell Valley, nor stand at the gravesites of my grandparents and my parents. I have gone to that great celestial home far beyond the sky. No more aches, pain, hospitals, and struggles for life; just peace, rest and contentment for me.

Oh! What an awesome trip!

~ Rose Buckner

SUCCESS

No one is a failure unless they want to be.
Some people say, "I won't even try."
Some people say, "What's the point?"
Some people say, "It won't make any difference."
Some people say, "So what?"
No one is a failure unless they want to be.

Some people say, "I'll think about it."
Some people say, "Maybe tomorrow."
Some people say, "Oh well, I tried."
Some people say, "Maybe and maybe not."
No one is a failure unless they want to be.

Some people say, "I'll do it."
Some people say, "I failed, so I'll try again."
Some people say, "It won't be long now."
Some people can finally say, "I did it."
No one is a failure unless they want to be.

In memory of Art Massengill

~ *Ethan Thomas*

A TENNESSEE CHILDHOOD

I was born and raised in the mountains in Tennessee. The Tennessee mountains are very beautiful, and Tennessee is a beautiful state. I love to go back to my home state and visit often.

I began my formal education at the age of six. During my first year I successfully completed three grade levels: primer, first, and second grades. The following year I completed two additional grade levels: third and fourth grades. Unfortunately, the small school that I attended was forced to close and the children were bussed to the valley. But my father decided that he would not allow his children to be bussed to the valley, and so my education was put on hold while I was forced to help with the chores around the farm.

At the age of sixteen I began to attend school once again. I started in the fifth grade and was promoted to the sixth grade. After completing one month of sixth grade classes, I was forced once again to leave school and work on the family farm.

There was a lot to do on our farm because we produced all of our own food. We grew all of our own vegetables. We grew wheat and corn and processed them to make our own bread. We raised chickens for eggs and poultry, hogs for meat, and cows for milk.

My mother, father, two younger sisters, and I lived with my grandparents. My mother was epileptic and, because of her frequent seizures, needed help raising the children.

My mother and grandmother both passed away when I was around eight years of age. My two sisters and I were left for my father and grandfather to care for. Because I

was the oldest, I was forced to take on the responsibility of caring for my two younger sisters. I cooked, cleaned, laundered the clothes, and completed any other household chores that were needed.

As a young teen while doing my chores, feeding the animals, and milking the cows, I would dream of living in a room in the barn with a clean floor, wallpapered walls, and a bed with a bedspread. I wanted to be on my own with no one to care for but myself.

At nineteen, I had no goals in life but to somehow find a way to get on my own. Then a friend of mine asked me to come to Ohio with him for a visit with family. I decided to stay in Ohio and find a job. This job was the thrill of my life. I was finally on my own.

I was laid off work on January 19, 1959, and went to work at Totes, Inc. in May of that year; I worked at this job until October 1966. I then found a better job with the Borden Chemical Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. I worked many different jobs at Borden.

I could have been a supervisor, but due to the lack of education and confidence, I didn't accept that job offer. Upon leaving for retirement at age sixty-two, I was a lead person and ran my department on second shift. I was able to handle people well, and the company was happy with my performance. I did my job well while at Borden Inc. I had one new home built, later sold that home and bought another new brick home on one acre of ground. I still live in this home today.

I was determined to do the best I could in life even if I didn't have a good education. At the age of sixty-four, I decided to start going to school and get a G.E.D. diploma. I am presently working hard to achieve this goal. Also, I am

hoping to buy a computer soon and learn how to operate the computer.

Sometimes I still think about my childhood days, and, at times, returning to the beautiful mountains in the state of Tennessee where I was born and raised, but I'm not sure that will ever happen. The state of Ohio has been good to me in many wonderful ways. I will continue to work to achieve all of my goals.

~ *Art Massengill*
(reprinted from *Beginnings IV*)