

First Trip to Auburn

I had made a decision early in life that I was not going to follow a red tailed mule the rest of my life. My parents were very poor so I volunteered to join the Navy to qualify to go to college under the GI bill. After being discharged from the Navy in 1945, I was on my way to Auburn. (I chose Auburn over Alabama because all the rich folks in Crossville went to Alabama and I would be more at home with the country folks). I packed a change of clothes in a paper bag and hitchhiked to Auburn (190 miles) with less than two dollars that was left out of the \$100 discharge pay from the Navy. I arrived in Auburn late in the afternoon on Sunday and discovered that the VA office was closed. I thought they would receive me the same way the Navy did and was looking forward for a nice cot and a warm meal. I did not know anyone in Auburn and did not know what to do. I was hungry, so I walked a few blocks downtown to the "Doll House" (a restaurant that I worked for during my entire time at Auburn) and spent the rest of my money on a delicious half fry of oysters and French fries. The situation I was in must have shown, because Archie McKee (owner of the Doll House) asked me what was wrong. After telling him my story, he told me it would be two months before I would get any money from the VA, and I would have to find a place to stay and eat. He gave me a job to earn for my food, led me to a place to stay, and got me a job at the Wards men store in the afternoon to earn money for clothes I needed. Archie had to be an angel that God sent to Auburn. He also gave jobs to three other Crossville boys (Cecil Frasier, Alvin Campbell and Dick Christopher). Auburn is not just the loveliest village of the plains, it is the friendliest village of the plains.