

Ransdall Roots

by LeAnne Ransdall Kristek

Bill Ransdall, who soon will be leaving the Missouri General Assembly as Representative of the 148th District, has accomplished much as a citizen and politician. His roots reach back into 19th century Pulaski County.

On the Roach side (dad's mother), James and Ella came from Indiana in 1883 and homesteaded the Gospel Ridge area which is now the St. Robert area.



Ed Roach, Bill Ransdall's grandfather

On the Gray side, dad's great grandfather was a farmer and owned most of the farms from the Fort Leonard Wood boundary to the Devil's Elbow. Descendants still live on some of that land.

Bill's dad, William Ransdall, attended his freshman year of high school in Waynesville in 1932-33. Then, due to lack of financial support, did not attend school in '33-'34. Finally, moving to Kansas in 1934, he completed school while living with an aunt and uncle.

William's family moved to Pulaski County in 1935 and made it their permanent home. William's mother Lucille, affectionately known as Granny, worked in cafes in this area until she bought the Al Cafe and Truck Stop on Route 66 in 1943. The Al Cafe was in what is the former Mallow's Market.

William married Marjorie Roach in 1946. They had one son, Billy Lee Ransdall, on March 16, 1947 at DeWitt Clinic, delivered by Dr. R. O. DeWitt. Bill graduated from the Waynesville High School in 1965 and then attended the University of Missouri-Rolla.

Bill married Patricia Ann Fulbright of Stoutland. They had two children. LeAnne Kristek teaches in Waynesville and Amy Ransdall-Breeden is employed at the Waynesville Technical Academy. They have five grandchildren: Brennan, Eriq, Catherine, and Grace Kristek, and Parker Breeden.

In 1967 Bill bought half-interest in a



Gospel Ridge School, 1915. Identified in the picture are John Harlan, teacher; to his right, wife Silvie Roach Harlan (Ed's sister); far right, back row is Ed Roach; little girl in front is Lottie Harlan.

barber shop across from the Pulaski County Court House and was a barber for five years with the late Dale Breedlove. The barber shop was a daily stop for the officials in the court house. At the time, there was Judge Tom Shockley, County Collector G. W. Lane, Circuit Clerk Bill Jones, and County Clerk Henry Baily. These individuals first introduced politics to Bill and the way things really were in politics.

In 1970 Bill acquired, by contract bid, all the barber shops on Fort Leonard Wood. Bill owned and operated all the barber shops on post for five years. This was his first introduction to the military community. In 1975 Bill also acquired all the barber shops and beauty shops in Ft. Riley, Kansas.



William Ransdall with son, Billy Lee, outside the Al Cafe and Truck Stop, 1947. Those gas prices are a part of history, too.

During his time as a barber, Bill was elected to the Waynesville City Council. He served ten years as a council member and was then elected Mayor of Waynesville and served in that capacity for eight years.

On May 22, 1978 Bill was chosen to be the first Coors Distributor in South Central Missouri. Bill owned and operated this business for seven years. Then he opened a recycling business which grew to be the largest nonferrous recycling center between Springfield and St. Louis.

In January of 1994, Bill bought the old Loyd Thornsberry place on Moccasin Bend of the Gasconade River where he and his family now run a cow/calf operation.

In 1996 Bill was elected to the Missouri General Assembly, 148th District. Due to his knowledge in recycling, hazardous waste, and environmental issues, he was appointed to Vice Chairmanship of the Standing Committee of Energy and Environment. He later became Chairman of this committee. While Chairman, he drafted and passed the most comprehensive and complex bills dealing with hazardous waste, fees for producers, haulers, and disposers of hazardous waste. These measures generate approximately six million dollars a year in revenue.

Later, Bill became Chairman of the powerful Appropriations Committee dealing with economic and natural resources dispensing over 800 million dollars a year.

In his final session in the House, Bill served as Assistant Minority Floor Leader and was ex officio member of all standing committees.

Bill was best known and respected for his vast knowledge and ability to work with the state's 18 billion dollar budget.

Bill stated, "I have enjoyed serving the people of Pulaski county and, even though I have had many bills passed assisting veterans, protecting children and senior citizens, and cracking down on drugs, the most important thing I have done is take care of the people of Pulaski County."

"I am very proud of the fiscal contributions I have made, such as providing the funding to straighten out the curve in Richland, helping procure the funding for the community building in Richland, and the new bridge on 133. In the Waynesville-St. Robert area, I have assisted with the infrastructure and supporting the Missouri Avenue project, the West Gate, and I am most proud of the impending 16 acre Veterans Cemetery. I am also proud of the grants, such as water and sewer in both rural and city. I am also proud of the 22 million dollars in Missouri Housing Development Corporation Tax credits to construct low to moderate housing. I am also proud of the new bridge on Highway 28, which I helped name the Veterans Bridge and the new Senior Center that received \$307,000 in tax credits to help with the building. These are just a few of the visible accomplishments during my tenure [of eight years] in the Missouri General Assembly.



Local high school boys have a good day. Billy Lee (left) and Curt Cox.

In a recent interview, he was asked if there was any one experience that particularly stood out during his time in the legislature.

"I can remember working all day one Christmas day a few years ago because of a fellow who had a heart problem at Fort Leonard Wood. He was trying to get out and spend Christmas night with his family. But they wouldn't release him unless he could obtain some oxygen."

"Of course, on Christmas day there wasn't anybody at the Fort hospital with any rank. I ended up with a captain who was scared to death because I was a State Representative. Finally, we got ahold of the Veterans Administration in Columbia. They sent a bottle of oxygen to Dixon, Missouri. That older gentleman was able to spend Christmas with his family that evening. I worked all day on it Christmas day because

there wasn't anyone else around, even though it was a federal issue."

Veteran Hunter Gives Tip On How To Bring Home That Turkey Gobbler

Ed (Pappy) Roach [Bill Ransdall's maternal grandfather] is the boss turkey caller of Pulaski County. He makes his own calls and supplies his friends and neighbors with calls. While I was there, several friends dropped by to let Ed listen to their technique or to tune their calls. In this day and time, all reputed experts must have a pedigree, here's Ed's. He killed his first bird at the age of ten (56 years ago) with a rock. The old yellow shepherd jumped into a flock (there were more turkeys in those days) and one four[teen] pounder lit in a tree close by. Ed says that he always could throw pretty good, so he picked up a chunk and let fly. That morning at Grandma's, they had roast turkey.

As soon as Ed was big enough he began to make war on the birds with more modern weaponry, using a single barrel shot gun that rattled when you shook it. His call at this time was a sassafras stick with the pith burned out of it and in order to save his crop (that is, get Ed out of the woods) his father told Ed how to go about getting a particularly elusive gobbler. Ed says that his Pappy told him that he was calling too much so Ed took his stand and only called once, and sure enough, here came the gobbler. Well, Ed's foot got to tapping and he tried to hold it still but it was a mild case of the "bucks" so he forgot about it and shot at the turkey.

I asked him where he aimed then and he said "At the whole bird." Tom Turkey was only wounded in the blast so Ed had to chase him a hundred yards or so to run him down.

"Pappy Roach" has refined his techniques through the years and here is his advice to beginners::

1. The less you call, the fewer mistakes you'll make.
2. Motion gives you away, have your gun on your knee before you begin calling.
3. Don't try to call a turkey across a hollow, get in the woods early enough to move toward the gobbler, at least get on the same ridge with him.
4. If you can't find a convenient tree top to sit in, pick a big tree to sit under.
5. Go alone, this isn't a group activity.
6. Shoot for the head and neck, using 7 1/2 shot.

Annabell Roach's recipe for turkey starts out as most wild game recipes do - first, shoot one turkey. Assuming that your husband is successful and dumps a strange fowl on your table, Annabell recommends that you split the skin over the breast, lengthwise, and peel back the

skin, feathers and all and remove the lean breast meat. Using a cross-grain cut, slice the breast thinly (thicker than country style bacon but not as thick as pork chops), salt and pepper the slices, roll them in flour and fry. Fresh eggs, biscuits and gravy will make your meal.

Ed and Annabell have a beautiful new home on Highway A, just east of the Richland - 66, 44 junction, having sold the farm near Richland and now look forward to having their friends drop in and chat. Ed's had to slow down a little but Annabell can't keep him out of the woods. I suggested that she hide his shoes but she says that he has too many pairs and the weather is warming up anyway and it wouldn't do any good.

- from the *Fort Gateway Guide*, April 1966



Margie (Bill's mother, left) and Ruby Roach, 1929.



William Ransdall, Billy Lee (in wagon), and sister JoAnn outside William's Sport and Hobby Shop, across from Jim's Market where today a telephone booth is located.



Billy serenading friend Richie Smith.



Parading as Mayor of Waynesville



Representative Ransdall (far left) hosting one of the many groups over the years at the state capital. All pictures courtesy of the Ransdall family.