

May 28, 2005

By Joe Willis

April 28, 2005 Alfred and Edna Gaskill

Photo By: Joe (Boy) Willis



Upon arriving at Alfred and Edna Gaskill's home in Stacy, I knew that Becky Paul and I were in for a treat. Our visit would take us down memory lane, and would give us a sense of how much baseball helped shape our lives growing up.

Alfred had just celebrated his 90th birthday. He was born on April 7, 1915 in Stacy. He had a brother, Alton; a sister Lucy and one brother that died. He married Edna in 1938 and they have three children, Ed, Annette and Sue. They have eight grand children and six great-grand children.

Alfred is known for most of his life, affectionately as "Cotton Eye". He was given that name by a friend, Milton Fulcher, who was mad one day with him, and because of his white hair, called him "Cotton Eye".

The day of our visit, the Gaskills were still recovering from Isabelle, the storm of September 2003, which impacted so many people living downeast. A tornado had hit Loop road just near their home. They are very thankful to have escaped the brunt of the tornado.

Alfred played ball as far back as a young boy. He couldn't remember everything, but you could tell baseball, as it has been for many a young boy growing up, had a major influence on him. It helped him stay in school and he graduated from Atlantic in the 11th grade. It had a major influence on developing special bonds with his friends. Also, it was something for him to look forward to at the end of a week of hard work.

In those days, he could remember playing on Polly's Hill in Marshallberg. He could remember playing Cedar Island, Straits and Atlantic. He remembered that Straits always had the best team. He said, "Boy, those were the days when someone would come for me, and I would run out of the house and pile into the pickup or car, and travel to the games with my buddies. I loved playing shortstop." Some of his friend that played with Alfred was Leland Fulcher (catcher), Floyd Brown, Doyle Fulcher, Alton Fulcher, Telford Gaskill and Earl Fulcher.

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Alfred could remember his brother passing his glove and bat down to him, both were bought at the local store in Stacy. He said, "We had three fields in Stacy that we played on in those days. One field was where Lloyd Fulcher's home is at now; one by Cleve's house and the other was at the school where the fire station is now. He could remember the fans were great. Just about everybody from the community would support the local team.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting Alfred and Edna. Through the entire interview, even though we were talking baseball, Edna could talk about Alfred's life as if it was hers, and in some instances, she could remember it better. She beam with pride that Alfred could still wear his baseball uniform from the 1930s. You could tell she was still in love with a baseball player that she has been married to for more than 67 years.

May 21, 2005

Core Sound Waterfowl Museum and Heritage Center-

"Reliving the Dream -- Baseball: More Than a Game!"

May 21, 2005 was a special day in the history of Carteret County baseball; a day filled with stories that will be told for generations to come, and will be remembered by the people, some two hundred plus, that attended.

Alfred and Edna were at the meeting listening and telling stories about baseball. In attendance were players, fans, family and friends dating back as far as 1915, in addition to other younger players from the 1930s, 1940, 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Alfred Gaskill was the oldest person in attendance. He played on Stacy and Atlantic teams in the 1920 and 1930s. (His uniform that's on display at the CSWM & HC still fits him).

Seeing the smiles on their faces was most rewarding!