



# Living Today Her Christmas Wish Came True

Thursday, July 26, 1979

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When Tricola Mae Rippy Gibson was a small child growing up in Upper Cleveland County, her mother made her rag dolls and her biggest wish at Christmas was for a room full of beautiful baby dolls.

"Granny Gibson", a spry 83, has been enjoying Christmas year-long at her house for many years. Her large family and friends have given her hundreds of dolls of all descriptions and a collection of salt and pepper shakers which number 800 and come from far-away places all over the globe.

Mrs. Gibson's youthful appearance and keen sense of humor belie her age, a visitor to her home in the Lily Mill Community of Shelby will enjoy chatting with her about the "good ole days" and her busy life as a senior citizen.

"Granny", as she is affectionately called by her friends, contributed some of the items to her growing hobby, because she likes to travel and visits a son in Florida quite frequently. She has also traveled with Shelby Senior Citizens Club on outings to Georgia, Charlotte and Wild Acres Retreat at

Little Switzerland, attended the club's Valentine dances and tapped her feet to the dance music. She also busies herself with canning and freezing vegetables from her garden and growing flowers. She never misses a Sunday at Landmark Baptist Church where she is active in the Sunday School.

Born and raised on a farm, Granny Gibson recalled that her father, the late Alexander Rippy, owned and operated a sawmill and cornmill. As a youngster, she recalled how she used to operate a shingle machine and learned to sew on her mother's knee. She attended the old McBryer one-room schoolhouse on Highway 18 in Shelby and married Olen Devonia Gibson, a neighbor, at the age of 16 at a magistrate's office in Grover. The Gibson celebrated 60 years of happy married life before he died, retiring in the Lily Mill Community a dozen years ago after living in various sections of the county all their lives.

Mrs. Gibson, the identical twin sister of the late Mrs. Paola Owensby of Kings Mountain, recalls how her father never could tell his daughters apart. Their attending physician, Dr. Idolit, gets the credit

for their unusual names and also helped name some of their brothers and sisters. Other members of her family are her brother, Jesse Rippy, of Kings Mountain, and her sisters, Mrs. Matrona Bell Patterson of Union, S.C. and Mrs. Hattie Idella Smith. Deceased members of her family, including her twin, were Mrs. Valtishie McCurry, Miss Beatrix Rippy, and Ollis Rippy.

"Granny" is mother of nine children. Her family also included 37 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren and three great-great-grandchildren. Her children include Mrs. Iva Jeanette Smith of Shelby, Mrs. Nellie Cleon Lefevers of Kings Mountain, Roy Hartness of Indiantown, Fla., Hershel Odell Gibson of West Palm Beach, Fla., Charles Rion Gibson of Indiantown, Fla., Billy Lowery Gibson of Blacksburg, S.C., Bobby Burns Gibson of Laurens, S.C., Mrs. Faye Jean Williams of Rock Hill, S.C. and James D. Gibson of Blacksburg, S.C. Billy Gibson is father of twin daughters and Nellie Lefevers is mother of twins, a boy and girl.

Dressing her large assortment of dolls with clothes she has fashioned herself from scraps left over from

clothes and quilts is another hobby of the versatile senior citizen. Since some of the dolls are 30 and 40 years old, they also tell the story of changes in dolls and clothing over the years. The two bedrooms, in which the dolls are displayed, are a fairyland for youngsters who visit and see walking dolls, talking dolls, petite dolls, fancy dolls, rag dolls, and hand-me-down dolls from grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Lisa Lovelace, a great-granddaughter, contributed several dolls in the doll collection and said "Granny" loves to sew and fashion beautiful clothes, not only for the dolls but for the whole family. Two favorite quilts were also displayed, a dutch girl and Chinese plate quilt, and also her collection of hand-painted plates.

Granny's twin sister, also a collector, willed her salt and pepper shaker collection. Clothespin shakers from the mountains, pigs, donkeys, chickens, cows, stoves, cats, corn, squirrels, cup and saucers, donkeys, bullfighters, among the traditional and unusual items on the shelves of Granny's living room, spilling into two bedrooms and the kitchen.



Granny Gibson with photo of herself and twin sister...



...Granny's home is really a doll's house

Photos by Katrena McCall