



A Publication of the Carter-Parramore High Alumni Scholarship Fund, Inc.  
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## *From Happy Town (Chattahoochee) to Tally Town (Tallahassee) and Beyond: A Servant's Report*

by the Reverend Dr. Richard Mashburn, IV, PhD, LTC USA (Ret)

*"After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them."*

- Matthew 25:19 KJV

As a historian, I beg your indulgence for a brief sketch of my story which predicted my path. My ancestral home is in Chattahoochee, Gadsden County, Florida, off Dolan Road (River Hill area), a few miles from the banks of the Apalachicola River. The area was populated by freedmen soon after the Emancipation Proclamation was enacted and my paternal great grandparents were among them. Their offspring would eventually purchase forty acres of the farm land which we still own.

Richard Mashburn, Sr., my great grandfather, was ten years old when the slaves were freed. He died in 1920 and his headstone bears the inscription: "33rd Degree Mason, House of Pythias, UBA." His older son, my great uncle, U. S. Army Sergeant Clinton Mashburn was killed in combat in France in World War I. Richard Mashburn, III, my father, was born from the union of Richard (Buster) Mashburn, Jr. and Elnora Cruse in 1918. I was born of the union of Richard Mashburn, III and Lue Lee Lyons in 1938, the eldest of three children. My maternal grandparents relocated from Pickens County, Alabama to Chattahoochee with the sawmill where he was employed. One of their sons, my uncle, U.S. Army Sergeant Gus Lyons fought in World War II. My father joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was trained in carpentry and laundry/dry-cleaning. With those skills, he was employed in the construction of U.S. Army barracks at Camp Blanding and thereby provided for his growing family.

From the farm, some of my ancestors moved closer to the developing railroad switching yard at River Junction/downtown Chattahoochee for employment. The largest area reserved for Negroes was dubbed 'Happy Town;' others were named 'Crawfish Island,' 'Goose Hollow,' and 'Eastern Front.' Chattahoochee was a 'sun-down town' which did not allow Negroes to be in White areas after sun down. Racial segregation, intimidation, discrimination, and abuse by the Police against Negroes was the mandated norm.

The informal moniker, 'happy town' was based on the ridiculous and equally false notion that Negroes were just as

'happy and content' with their 'place' in segregation as their fore-parents had been in slavery. Negroes were dehumanized in both conditions, but they looked for ways to elevate themselves. My parents were no exception, they understood that a strong faith in God must be coupled with a solid education to attain a livable life, and not merely exist, waiting to die. Consequently, the inhabitants of 'happy town' prepared themselves and their children for a brighter day in the future.

I attended elementary school in Lake City, Florida, Chattahoochee, and Pensacola, Florida; seventh grade in Pensacola, Booker T. Washington H.S.; and eighth through twelfth grade in Quincy, Florida at Stevens H.S. and Carter-Parramore H.S. We were transported by Gadsden County School Bus from Chattahoochee to Quincy, a forty-two-mile roundtrip, since there was only one high school for Negroes in the county, but several for White students. Faced with these conditions I was driven to succeed academically and thereby prepare myself to escape from the limitations of 'happy town,' and by my example encourage others to do the same.

My home training was reinforced by the church, the community and the school. All of my high school teachers, coaches and principals were accomplished in their fields of study and exemplary in all aspects of their lives. As a theologian, I perceived God's providential care in selecting them to prepare my generation for a better day rather than for them to seek more lucrative pursuits 'up north.' From day one they set the highest of standards for themselves and all students in their charge.

Upon graduation in the first class at Carter-Parramore High School in 1956, I enrolled at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), worked my way through college, and graduated in 1960 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Secondary Education/History, Summa Cum Laude, I received a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship in History at the University of Florida, was listed in Who's Who in Colleges and Universities of the USA, and was designated a Distinguished Military Graduate (DMG) and commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Regular Army of the United States of America.

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Immediately called up to active duty, I reported to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky and was assigned to Division Artillery, promoted to First Lieutenant, and earned my Senior Parachutist Wings with thirty-one jumps. During that time, I would call upon my principal, Mr. Verdell D. Hamilton; my English teacher, Mrs. Hazel Scott King; and my history teacher, the Reverend Nathaniel F. Sumpter to agree to be interviewed by agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) on my behalf.

Their responses facilitated my being awarded a Top Secret and Cryptographic Security Clearances which cleared me for training in nuclear weapons employment, followed by assignment to a sensitive command in Turkey on the Black Sea near the Russian border. Later I was assigned to the command of an air defense artillery battalion control center on the East/West German border during the Cold War. I was then transferred to the first of two tours of duty in the Republic of South Vietnam where I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster (Second Award) and the Cross of Gallantry from the Army of the Republic of South Vietnam for Action during the enemy's Tet offensive in 1968. In 1970, I would build a home for my wife and three sons in Tallahassee, one mile from FAMU's campus as I was alerted for redeployment to Vietnam in 1971.

Various stateside assignments followed, during which I earned a Master's Degree in Education, Guidance and Counseling/Summa Cum Laude, at Western Kentucky University and completed one year of Seminary (evening program) at Simmons Bible College and Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Upon retirement from the U.S. Army after twenty-one years, I enrolled at Florida State University and earned the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Education Leadership (summa Cum Laude), was hired by FSU and retired as Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs after nineteen years.

During my fulltime employment at FSU I was blessed with the opportunity to do the work of an evangelist in the North Florida/South Georgia area, and was honored as Assistant Pastor Emeritus of the Bethel Missionary Baptist Church and Pastor of Trinity United Presbyterian Church, both in Tallahassee.

To the students who are graduating from Gadsden County High School this year, let me say that although some of you may be from a poor economic background as I was, do not let that deter you from reaching for the stars and beyond. The foundation that I received at Gadsden County schools prepared me to excel at FAMU. My Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) training at FAMU stood me in good stead as I competed with graduates of the U. S. Military Academy at West Point throughout my twenty-one-year career and I always graduated in the 90th percentile of the U.S. Army's Branch Officer schools and the Armed Forces Staff College. You can likewise be confident that you have received an excellent foundation in Gadsden County Schools as witnessed by the remarkable success of the numerous graduates who continue to excel in various careers. Truly, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." (1 Corinthians 2:9 KJV). The World awaits you!!!



Dr. Richard Mashburn IV, was born and reared in Gadsden County, FL. He is a graduate of Carter Parramore H.S. (1956); Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, B. S. in Education, (1960); Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, M. A. in Education, (1981); The Florida State University (FSU), Tallassee, Ph.D. in Higher Education (1984). He was Commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Regular Army and retired in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel with 21 years of service. After nineteen years at FSU he retired as Vice President for Student Affairs. He is most proud of securing a federal grant to support college bound students at Shanks High School (Quincy, Florida). Dr. Mashburn is an ordained minister of the Gospel; he and his wife, Dorothy Marie Boyer Mashburn, reside in Tallahassee, Florida. He may be contacted by e-mail at [rmashburn@comcast.net](mailto:rmashburn@comcast.net).

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