



Florence (Pansy) Hartsless Cooper and Morris Bryant (Skinny) Cooper

MORRIS BRYANT COOPER

Apr. 10, 1909 - Mar. 30, 1971

Morris was born on April 10, 1909 in Holt, FL to George and Edna Cooper. Pansy was born on June 3rd in Aurora, IL to Ernest and Cora Hartless. As a child, Morris contracted Typhoid Fever and almost died. It caused him to become very thin and spindly. This resulted in him being given the nickname of 'Skinny', which he carried all his life.

The Hartlesses came to Florida in about 1919 and settled in a new development by the name of Valpariso. That endeavor folded and in Dec 1921 the family moved to Holt to another development started by the Kansas businessman, Ebenezer Porter.

Morris and Pansy met in School at Holt. In her last year in High School, 1927, the school had a play at the end of the term and the teacher had persuaded Morris and Pansy to take the leading parts and by the end of school, they had fallen in love. Pansy was one of the few people to ever graduate from Holt High School.

After she graduated, Pansy needed to work but there was nothing to do except baby-sit, which she did for Mrs. E.V. Terry who had a 3 year old daughter, Elise. Morris kept up with his dad's farm in Holt although he and Edna had moved down to Hilolo, near Lake Okeechobee, due to the poor economy.

Morris and Pansy got married on March 26, 1928. There weren't any jobs around Holt. His dad was working for a lumber company in South Florida. He arranged for him to get a job as a truck driver. The lumber company furnished their employees a place to live so they had a camp car; not quite as big as a mobile home, with no comforts. They got a little furniture and started keeping house. After a few months Morris started working in the company's commissary.

Later in 1928, Morris came back to Pensacola and went to Business College and trained for a bookkeeper. Pansy stayed down there with his mother and dad. When he finished he got a job in Pensacola, which didn't last long. The

1929 market crashed and everything went down. After that, they moved back to Holt and he got a job in a combination grocery and drug store there for a dollar a day. Eventually, George and Edna moved back to the farm in Holt and that provided both families with milk, eggs, and vegetables and they lived on that dollar a day for quite awhile.

In the 1930's, Morris scraped up enough money to buy a truck so he could haul produce. He started out by hauling cabbage from South Florida; also, oranges and satsumas to the north.

In the early 30's Pansy and Morris decided to take in some borders. They rented 2 rooms to a couple (The Withers) that taught school. This brought an additional small amount of rent. Pansy took the State Teachers exam and got a job teaching 1st grade in the same building where she went to school.

In the late 1930's, Morris got hold of some "juke" boxes and fixed them up and the economy was getting better so they began to live a little better. Morris was a natural for that kind of thing. He could stay up all night and keep them going. He had permission from the county sheriff to put on some slot machines. Altogether he began to make some money. Pansy's teaching began to pay better so they were better off in the early 1940's than they'd ever been. In 1941 they started building the house that she still lives in. It wasn't completed, at that time, because the war came on and all private buildings were put on hold.

Early in the war, Morris was drafted and served a couple of years in the US Army. He was stationed in Salt Lake, Utah and Pansy moved out there with him. After he was discharged, they returned to Holt and had an addition to the family. Their son Max was born in 1944.

Morris went to work as a Fireman with Civil Service at Eglin AFB and Pansy returned to teaching.

Morris briefly owned a garage in Crestview, The Cooper Car Care Center in the early 1960's. In 1966, he suffered a stroke and eventually passed away on March 30, 1971.

Pansy retired from teaching in 1972 and spent several years traveling with her brothers' and sisters' families. She currently spends much time with her son, Max, and his family in Charlotte, NC.

*Compiled by: Max Morris Cooper, son of Morris Bryant Cooper.
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