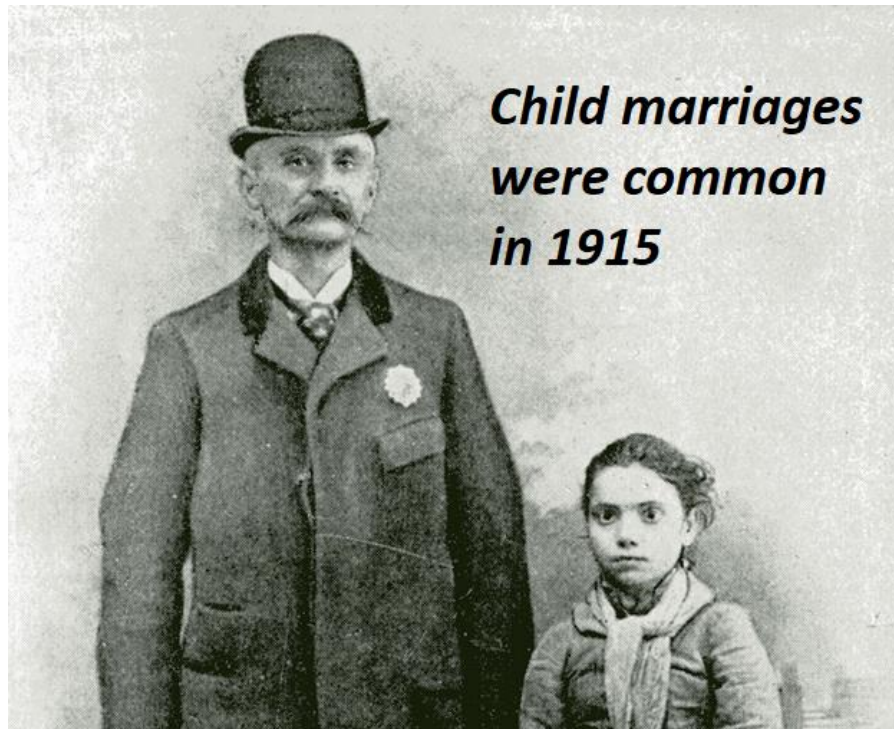


MAXINE IRWIN SMITH

By Gerald Smith-Leverock (Maj. U.S. Army Retired)

Maxine I. Smith was born in Sandersville Georgia in 1910 as Maxine Irwin. At the age of 15 she was married off to John Smith who was 39 years old at the time. In those days, women did not have much say in how to live their lives and were pretty much expected to do as they were told by their parents. The marriage was an arranged marriage set up by her mother, Lucille Irwin, but Maxine's heart wasn't in it. She began to run off.



In those days, many young girls were married off to older and more financially established men, who were chosen for them. Because Maxine would run off, John Smith resorted to locking her in the house in order to keep her from running away. His house became her prison.



Finally, at the age of 16 she managed to escape and hitched a ride to New York City with people who were passing through Sandersville. She arrived in New York city a few days after that with nothing but a small bag that had a few of her personal belongings in it. The year was 1926.



Because, Maxine was an attractive young girl, she didn't have much of a problem finding a young man to take her in. She said that the young man was a musician who played with the Duke Ellington Band that was quite popular in New York city in the mid 1920's.



After being associated with music and musicians from the years 1926 to 1930, Maxine fell on hard times as the depression began to take hold in America.

I remember her telling me when I was a child that she was so hungry for meat that she used to cook onions in a frying pan because they reminded her of what a good steak smelled like cooking in a pan.



In 1936 Maxine and a girlfriend were walking on the boardwalk in Coney Island and decided to stop and see a psychic fortune teller just as a joke. My mother was always told by a number of doctors that she would never have children.



The fortune teller told her that she would have not one, but two children. She knew then that the fortune teller was a fake because she was 36 and women just didn't have children when they were that old. Remember, this was 1946.



*“You will have
two children.
A boy and a
girl.”*

In 1948 Maxine, at the age of 38, was blessed with a beautiful baby girl that she named Maxcille Maddox, after the father Mac Maddox.



And, in 1950, at the age of 40, she was blessed again with a baby boy who she named Gerald after his father.



Little Gerald's father, Gerald Smith-Leverock. He served in the Navy during World War II.



Gerald Smith-Leverock Sr. A Navy Man



“Little Gerald” went on to become an Army Officer and retired from military service. Here he is on a deployment in Northern Germany.

So, now Maxine had a complete family. However, Gerald Sr. soon left and Maxine was left to fend for herself and her two children. She was a single mom and had two children to raise.



After Gerald Sr. left, Maxine found herself destitute. So, to support her family, Maxine learned how to become a hairdresser. Below, Maxine is in her first beauty parlor in Cutchogue, New York.



Maxine attended many beautician seminars and, in some cases, brought her daughter Maxcille along with her to some of the functions.





Maxine was a strong and independent woman long before strong independent women were appreciated and respected.



Maxcille, below sitting on a bench, blessed Maxine with a beautiful baby granddaughter who was named after her. Her granddaughter was named Maxine. We called her “Little Maxine.”





Little Maxine:



Little Gerald, blessed Maxine with another beautiful baby granddaughter. Her new granddaughter was named Elisha. Below is Gerald and his daughter Elisha.



After 40 years in New York, Maxine retired to Atlanta, Georgia.



She always believed in God and was a very religious person. She was a very kind and gentle person, and even though at times she had to take a switch to me for acting up, I usually deserved it.

She had a nice little one-bedroom apartment in a high-rise off Capitol Avenue in Atlanta, Ga. She could almost see Falcon Stadium from her window in 1975.



There Maxine met “Dad” her true soulmate. She was in her late 60’s to early 70’s at the time.



Around 1982 Maxine moved back to her place of birth, Sandersville, Georgia. She retired living in a house passed down to her from her father, Mac Irwin, at 305 W Floyd St.

She spent her remaining days enjoying the small-town life that Sandersville had to offer. Below she is in the back of her house washing her red car. She loved the color red.



This was the beautiful life of a bright-eyed young girl from Sandersville, Georgia. Maxine I. Smith (1910 – 1988).

