

Clyburn Family News

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Clyburn Family News - Online..... <http://www.cliburne.com>

Aug 5, 2003

Does anyone know why the date August 5 is important to us? See the answer at the end of this newsletter.

Below is an excerpt from the book "*Cliburne, the story of an American Pioneer Family*" by Angela Claire Clyburn.

Woodrow Wilson Clyburn was born in a log cabin in a field just up the Klamath River from Beaver Creek in the town site of Gottville, California on 25 Aug 1916. He passed away on 12 September 1995 in Rogue Valley Medical Center in Medford, Oregon. Oregon Death Certificate Number 140834. He had suffered with cancer for seven years. Now he was at rest. He lived a full and interesting life.

During world War II he volunteered for the Navy SeaBees. In most branches of the military a man enlisted and was taught a skill that the military needed. In the case of the SeaBees, they were enlisted because they already had a skill and experience!

While he was in the Navy Seabees he was at Guadalcanal and several other Pacific Islands in the war. He developed malaria while on Guadalcanal and was hospitalized in New Zealand for quite a few months. He came home on leave still sick with the malaria and Dr. Newton, a Yreka doctor, told him to get back to the Navy

Hospital as quick as possible! He was skin and bones. He always was tough and he survived!!

Postcard written to Fae McBain from brother Woodrow Clyburn on December 7, 1980

"Hi Fae:

Thirty nine years ago I was sitting in a beer parlor in Portland, Oregon with some friends when Pearl Harbor was bombed. One year later I was in New Caledonia waiting for a ship to go on into Guadalcanal. One month later I was on Guadalcanal and today, 39 years later, I'm sitting on the bank of Lake Meade, fishing.

A mudhen just dove down and stole my bait. I'm going after my 22 rifle and have mud duck for supper!

Hope this finds you in the best of health.

Your brother,

Woodrow Clyburn"

The first SeaBees recruits were the men who had helped to build Boulder Dam, the national highways, and New York's skyscrapers; who had worked in the mines and quarries and dug the subway tunnels; who had worked in shipyards and built docks and wharfs and even ocean liners and aircraft carriers. By the end of the war, 325,000 such men had enlisted in the Seabees. They knew more than 60 skilled trades, not to mention the unofficial ones of souvenir making and "moonlight procurement."

Although technically support

troops, Seabees at work, particularly during the early days of base development in the Pacific, frequently found themselves in conflict with the enemy. The Seabees received about six weeks of advanced military and technical training, underwent considerable unit training, and then were shipped to an overseas assignment. About 175,000 Seabees were staged directly through Port Hueneme, California during the war.

A few submarine alerts broke the monotony of the short trip to New Caledonia where, at Noumea, full realization of the extent of the war was apparent. Every nook and corner of the large harbor was filled with vessels flying Stars and Stripes.

SeaBees hearts began to swell with pride.

In convoy with five troop ships, and protected by an aircraft carrier and a screen of destroyers, LaSalle and the 63rd departed New Caledonia as tension and an awareness of danger increased as the ships penetrated deeper into waters well known to be menacing. Although Seabees were only supposed to fight to defend what they built, acts of heroism were numerous.

Made in 1943 and released in early 1944, the motion picture *The Fighting Seabees*, starring John Wayne and Susan Hayward, made "SeaBees" a household word during the latter part of the war. This picture also began a relationship between John Wayne and the Seabees which was to last more

than three decades. In fact, John Wayne's last motion picture was Home for the Seabees, a Navy documentary filmed in 1977 at the Naval Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, California. This was most appropriate, since the exteriors of The Fighting Seabees, had been filmed in and around the same base during World War II.

The Seabees official motto: Construimus, Batuimus – "We Build, We Fight."

When the Marines finally invaded nearby Guadalcanal, the men of the 6th Naval Construction Battalion followed them ashore and thus became the first Seabees to build under combat conditions. They immediately began the arduous task of repairing the airfield, now named Henderson Field that they had earlier helped to destroy. This became a never-ending job, because as fast as the builders leveled the strip and put down Marston matting, the Japanese would send bombers overhead to drop high explosives on their work. Nevertheless, in the midst of battle, the Seabees were able to repair shell and bomb holes faster than the Japanese could make them. The Allied pilots desperately needed the use of Henderson Field, so the Seabees kept this precious airstrip in almost continuous operation.

GUADALCANAL: "If they had been visitors from Mars, the men of the 63rd NCB could scarcely have been more out of their element. That was the case when they arrived on Guadalcanal in June 1943."

Towering trees, dense vegetation, a fantasy land of "lizards as large as small crocodiles, snakes that fly, toads that eat flesh and fish that climb trees." And, the scattered remnants of a Japanese military force, although defeated, refusing to

surrender. Guadalcanal, its name equated with a hard-fought campaign that began on Aug. 7, 1942, was now the main route on the highway across the Pacific's island-hopping campaign to victory.

A route marked by the skills, labor, sweat and determination of the Seabees who scratch-built airfields, harbor facilities and piers, and constructed roads, barracks, hospitals, fuel depots and massive supply dumps. Seabees were the workforce of the Pacific. Unglamorous and backbreaking, the 63rd's initial major project on "the Canal" was an 80-square-mile program to destroy the breeding grounds of malaria-carrying insects "by swamp and lagoon draining, stream clearance and depression filling."

Work started on June 24. When completed, more than 20 miles of roads, "16.5 miles, as a last resort, by hand labor," had been constructed by the 664 officers and men assigned. Some 100 miles of stream ran free to the sea. The Seabees moved 400,000 cubic yards of earth to level and fill water-filled depressions.

He saw duty on Tulagi, in the Solomon Islands, which was a Japanese base before the Marines captured it. The base played a strategic role during the savage sea battles in the "slot," the narrow channel between the islands of Tulagi, Savo, and Guadalcanal. Patrol boats darted from the Seabee-built advanced base to scout Japanese offensive moves, and crippled American ships limped in to receive temporary SeaBees repairs. On the same day Guadalcanal was invaded, Marines had landed on Tulagi Island.

After the war, Woodrow Clyburn continued to use his skills throughout his life. He was retired

from the US Forest Service, where he had worked with heavy equipment, and was a miner of gold all his life. He worked on a gold dredge in the interior of Alaska in the mid-Fifties, and he was a logger.

At the end of his life the handsome face and form of his youth was replaced with a head full of grey hair, and a body that was brittle from the disease that took finally his life away. He had Multiple Myeloma, but even in his sufferings, his love for the country where he was born and raised remained in him to the end. He had good days and bad days, after undergoing Chemotherapy. On the really good days he went into the mountains along the Klamath River and mined while he was able. He lived until the end, and now is remembered by those who knew and loved him. He is his families American Hero. He is missed.

WOODROW CLYBURN

Siskiyou Daily News Obituary Yreka. Woodrow Wilson Clyburn, a 77 year old Siskiyou County native and long time Yreka resident, died Sep 12, 1995, at the Rogue Valley Medical Center in Medford, Oregon.

He was born in Gottville August 25, 1916, to Stephen and Nancy Clyburn. He was employed as a heavy equipment operator for the U S Forest Service for 17 years.

Mr Clyburn was an avid gold miner for many years and a US Navy veteran of WWII.

Survivors include a son, Franklin Clyburn of Klamath River, a daughter, Linda Hansen of Alaska, a sister Faye McBain of Yreka, a brother, Joe Clyburn of Yreka, and three grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Funeral services are set for 2 PM Friday at Girdner Funeral Chapel in Yreka. Rev David

Samuelson of the Yreka United Methodist Church will officiate. Interment will follow in the Evergreen Cemetery with military honors.

Memorial contributions may be made to the charity of one's choice.

Arrangements are under the direction of Girdner Funeral Chapel in Yreka.

Woodrow W Clyburn's name is inscribed on the wall at the Living Memorial Sculpture Garden in Siskiyou County, California in tribute to his service to his country during World War II.

** (Editor's Note: Both Ernest McBain and Thomas Miles Clyburn were also in the SeaBees. I remember Tom talking about how much he liked New Caledonia and how much he wanted to go back there some day. He never got the chance.*

I also remember my dad, Woodrow telling me about how sick he got with the Malaria. He said he was sitting on the beach, so sick that he didn't care if he died, and watching our ships being bombed or torpedoed by the Japanese and seeing the bodies washing up on the beach. I believe he said that one of the ships that sunk was the one he would have been on if he hadn't of been so sick.)

ME AND MY GRANDMA

--by Frank Clyburn

In the summer of 1962 I moved from my parents place in Montague to my grandmothers. Now this was not a new thing because for most of the prior year I had been staying with my grandmother almost every weekend and holiday. As soon as I would get done with my Friday paper route my mother would take me to my grandmothers. Sometimes she would already be at Joe's and would be thrilled to go home to her own bed.

You see, my grandfather had passed away in June of 1961. His death had left my grandmother all

alone at the Lime Gulch Ranch. I was asked if I'd stay with her some and it escalated into me staying with her all four years of high school until I was drafted into the service.

I remember people saying that she wouldn't last six months after my grandfather Stephen Franklin Clyburn passed away. Those people didn't know the effect of a fourteen year old boy on a eighty three year old grandma!

I'm named after grandpa by the way. My dad told me that when I was born that my mother was sleeping when they came to fill out the birth certificate and he named me after his dad and his older brother who drowned in the Klamath River. He said that my mother was furious! She never did



*Franklin L. Clyburn &
grandmother Nancy H. (Parks)
Clyburn*

tell me what she would have named me. Ha.

Anyway my grandma was alone at Lime Gulch. She went to stay with her son Joe Clyburn and his wife Loucille at night if there was no one to stay with her.

I loved my grandma and so I started staying with her. While there, I had chores that I did. She had a wood burning cookstove and a wood heater. I started out just having to fill her wood boxes. But when I moved down To Lime Gulch at the end of my eighth grade in school this wood chopping became my job. Gosh, did I ever get tired of chopping wood for that cookstove! Before long I ended up chopping all of the

wood and even helping cut and load some of it.

As I recall, Joe Clyburn cut most of the wood, but sometimes Jim Clyburn and occasionally my dad Woodrow would cut wood for her. I believe maybe Ernest McBain may have cut some also. The woodshed got filled with wood somehow, but I ended up splitting much of it for the stoves. The older I got, the more wood splitting I did!

Grandma came to love me. Sometimes I felt like she was the only one who did. We got along really well together. She had a very great sense of humor. I'll tell you that with a teenager in the house she didn't have a minute to think about her loss. Sometimes we'd get up in the morning and if I didn't say "good morning" to her she wouldn't say anything. Sometimes this would go on half the day until either her or I would forget and say something to the other. Then she'd laugh!

I run all over those hills around Lime Gulch. She would always worry about me and be happy when I got home. I planted black walnuts and small black walnut trees all up and down the west fork and east fork of Lime Gulch. I've no idea if any of them grew.

We really had a time in the winter. Grandma was fearful of being at home alone after dark. So I'd catch the school bus to Yreka about daylight and get home just before dark. All week long that's all I'd do. Go to school and be with her at home. When the weekend came tho... I had free time and I took advantage of it.

She was afraid of fire and that brought problems. A glass of water that I kept by the bed at night used to freeze. That's how cold it would get. We'd leave the water running at night so that it wouldn't freeze up. I'd heat up a rock or one of her solid metal irons and wrap it in a towel to put at the foot of my bed at night. It was sure nice with that hot

iron at my feet at night. I did scorch a couple of those towels. Ha.

I'd bank the fire with some oak or green wood so that it would burn all night before I'd go to bed. Pretty soon grandma would wander around and if she seen the fire she'd always pour water on it until it was out! Oh how I used to try to get her to leave it go. I'd show her that the dampers were all turned off and it would only be smoldering but if she seen it she'd put it out. When I'd get up in the morning I'd have to rebuild the fire. The house would be so cold.

I often run around with Oliver Clyburn, Joe's son. Oliver was five years older than me but we became friends during that time and we still are. I

remember when he'd play "Smoke em out" in his car. Gosh, he'd puff that cigarette as hard as he could with all the windows up trying to see if he could make me open the window! Ha.. He may have, I don't recall.

We had lots of fun. Oliver purchased a Honda 305 Super Hawk and was he crazy on that thing. It's a wonder that he is still alive. It was the biggest bike that Honda made at the time and he drove it like a madman! He cured me from riding as a passenger behind anyone ever again. He went around a turn so fast that the side of the bike was dragging on the pavement. It's a wonder that my hair didn't turn white that day. I've never ridden as a passenger on a motorcycle since! He was a good guy and still is. There's a lot of fire under that inscrutable face of his. He used to take me squirrel hunting and even duck hunting. We used to go down to Humbug Point on the Klamath (now Trees of Heaven Campground) and shoot ground squirrels. He was a very good shot. I never was that good a shot with a rifle but I did kill my first dove during dove season there

onetime. I was with you step-father Ronald Douglas on the hunt. Oliver took me duck hunting on Shasta River once or twice when he had a 1961 Chevy Corvette (believe it was a 1961 or 1962). We could just barely get the shotguns into the car. I believe that is why he sold it. I'll be he wishes he had that car now!

Oliver Clyburn, Steve McMaster and I made our own cannon and shot it one winter at Lime Gulch. Later Dave Clyburn, Paul Clyburn and I did the same. One time after jamming a spark plug, into one we made, as the projectile, the whole thing blew up and became a twisted mess. It was a chrome pipe and it good thing that we had not trusted it and got way away from it.

Dave and Paul and I used to have cow pie fights in the fields at Lime Gulch. Once in awhile, one of us would grab one that was a little too ripe...we'd all laugh at whoever the unintended victim was, ha.

Some of my fondest memories was of the family get-togethers we all had there. Fae, Ernie and Narcie McBain, Frances, Alvin, Steve, Gary and Larry McMaster, Joe, Loucille and Oliver Clyburn, Jim and Lottie Clyburn, Tom, Gladys, Dave, Paul, Jeannie and Dorothey Clyburn. Sometimes Nancy, Roger Smith with Renee their daughter, my dad Woodrow Clyburn and maybe my mother Violet Douglas and my sister Lynda Clyburn would be there. Arlie and Keeva with Ardyce and Lori might be there and Bud Clyburn with his wife and children were sometimes there. Patsy and Thoma Clyburn, although married, were sometimes there also. We had big fine dinners and at Easter would have egg hunts.

I used to try to disappear after the dinner because inevitably the women would try to get me and

Narcie to wash dishes. I didn't mind washing dishes but I washed them every day anyway and I didn't want to have to do big piles of them. Besides that was woman's work! Haha.

I remember that often on the Fourth of July Fae and Ernie would come by and pick me up to go with the rest of the family up on the Siskiyou to the snow banks to picnic. Grandma always went also maybe with Joe, Fae or Jim. Then we all had fun on the mountains.

Fae and Ernie especially always made me feel part of the Clyburn Family. That's not easy with a boy from a broken home but it seems I was never left out!

I had lots of fun with Loucille also when I stayed at grandma's. I'd often ride to town (Yreka) with her when she did her shopping. At these times she also shopped for grandma. She always got plenty of ice cream for us. <Frank smiles> I also remember when Joe and her got a new 1965 Ford Fairlane. I thought it was a nice car. This was a automatic and Loucille was not used to it. We started to leave one store and she put it in drive when she wanted reverse and run over the parking cement in the parking lot. Then finally getting it out of the lot into the street, when she stopped at the stop sign she put it into reverse by mistake. The car ran backward for several feet before she finally got it stopped! I've never let her live it down. Haha.<Hi Loucille ☺>.

Loucille is the kind hearted person who took care of grandma and I, year round, down at Lime Gulch. She used to take grandma to church on Sundays. She never could talk me into going tho she often tried, (well I may have gone once) but she gave me my first Bible which I had until my house burned down in Wrangell, Alaska in 1974. She had a very spiritual influence in me which finally blossomed. Thank you Loucille.

Grandma would sit out on the

front porch in the mornings and in the day time she'd sit on the couch in the living room. She would sit and crochet for hours and hours. Sometimes in the evenings, by the light of the kerosene lamps, we'd turn grandpa's old Zenith trans-oceanic radio on and listen to it. Once in awhile she'd let me wind the old record player up and we'd listen.. I didn't like most of the old songs although "*The Roving Gambler*" was a favorite of mine. She'd chew her tobacco and tell me stories also. She said that she and her sister started chewing tobacco as young girls in Texas. They stole it from their dad.

I also read a lot of books by that gentle soft light from the lamps. I'd even sometimes take the lamps into the kitchen and do my homework at the table there. (Believe it or not!)

My Uncle Earl Knight, Jr. told me that he knew grandpa and grandma when he was young. He'd get a ride to town with him sometimes. He said he knew how the tobacco juice got on the drivers side of the car but how it got on the passenger side was a mystery to him until he one day saw her chewing tobacco.

Another favorite story of mine was when she'd tell me about how as a young girl, along with her family, she moved to Texas from Tennessee in a covered wagon. She also told about going to Austin, Texas for business her father had to do. They would camp on the outskirts of town. Nobody went to hotels in them days with a family, they camped.

Anyway one day a group of cowboy looking people rode by on horses and her dad pointed at them. He told her and her mom to beware of those people that they were Texas Rangers and to stay away from them, that they were bad men.

I wish I could remember all the stories. One story she told was

about a nice "colored" lady neighbor who anytime she seen that grandma had company would come over and help her cook. This was probably when grandma and grandpa were in Oklahoma.

Grandma was a very good cook but before I got out of school, she had pretty much forgot most of it and I'd have to cook for both of us. She also got so that the dishes she washed would have to be washed again, but she was always busy trying to take care of the house. She washed, swept, mopped and cleaned up.

She had high blood pressure and the doctor had told her not to drink coffee so she'd take about a table spoon of coffee with hot water for breakfast. The coffee didn't have any color to it at all. Me, being a smart teenager told her that I'd make her different colored coffee for every day of the week with the food coloring in the cupboard! She didn't want any of that. Ha..

She would walk every day with her walking stick. I fixed her a couple that I put screws into the bottom of. I then cut the heads off and sharpened it for her. She liked them. They caught good on the ground. I told her she could pick up papers with them too if she wanted! Ha.. She'd just smile and say something.

One day when I was still in my freshman year I got home from school to find my dad's pickup in the yard. I always liked it when my dad came by and when I went into the house in the middle of the living room was a Honda 55 trail bike. Oh was I excited! Grandma was smiling and laughing at my excitement too. My dad had gotten it for me. When I saw the mileage though, which had about 400 miles on it, he told me that he'd been riding it for about a week himself! I wasn't happy about that and he laughed at me... Haha.. What a nice gift for someone out in the country. I

almost rode that bike to death. A year and a half or two years later I purchased a Honda 150 myself.

I really had lots of fun with that Honda 150. Dave Clyburn and I used to run all over the country on it. We knew every dirt road and back road within probably 50 miles! He was a good mechanic and I had the bike and some gas money so away we went. One time Dave, Paul and I pushed that bike over the hill from Ash Creek to the Bean Mine and went down Rocky Gulch to Henley. We rode three on the seat. When we got to the highway 99 I had to ferry them one by one down to Ash Creek. We sure had fun.

Grandma and I were stranded when the flood of Christmas 1964 washed the road out. I believe we could drive as far as Skehan Bar and Ash Creek. Ash Creek had washed right thru Robert L. (Bud) Clyburn's house and cut through the highway. It had washed out a cabin just up the creek from Bud's too. I later helped Dave and Paul and Bud shovel dirt out of the house but he didn't live there long after the flood. The government made him move as the house was too close to the creek and had no sewage space.

It had washed out the Ash Creek Road in many places also. Tom said that they had to break the dam out that he had in the creek by his house for fear that it would wash the small bedroom cabins away that Dave and Paul slept in. Later when the State of California rebuilt the road they did a very poor job of it. In one spot up by where Tom had at one time had a saw mill they built a big hump in the middle of the road. It took a 4 wheel drive to get over it. Tom eventually fixed that spot and the other ones where they left big rocks in the road. It took him quite awhile.

One time Dave, Paul and I decided that we were going to taste different kinds of booze. We knew

a guy who was over 21 and we pooled our money and had him buy the booze. We bought several pints of different kinds. I took them home on the school bus. It's sure a good thing the school or the bus driver (Mr. Houser) didn't know that we had that stuff! Worst of all would have been for the seniors on the bus to find it...I'm quite certain that they would have taken it. Well, we didn't talk and nobody found out. The next weekend Dave and Paul came to visit and we tried that stuff. Ugh! None of us liked it but we pretended that we did. The only one that I really remember was the Gin...Oh that awful taste! We never got drunk or rowdy we were just teenagers experimenting with life. I don't think grandma knew what was going on but you never knew, she wasn't dumb. Sorry Dave and Paul but I just *had* to tell this story. Haha <Frank grins>.

I remember one story that grandma told me several times. She told how Joe, her son, when a young guy was going to start smoking a pipe. He brought it into the house and filled it with tobacco and lit up. She said that he started gagging and got kind of sick. She said that he walked out of the house on the back porch and threw that pipe and tobacco across the creek! She said that was the end of his smoking. I can still picture this in my mind today the way I pictured it when she told me. Too bad we all didn't learn so fast.

Later Tom Clyburn told me a story about Joe, his brother. It seems that they were at a dance at Camp Lowe up by Hornbrook. They were both young, single and of course they drank some. They came out of the dance hall and it was stormy and rainy. They found that they had a flat tire. Tom told Joe to crawl under there and put the jack down and jack the tire up so that he could change it. He said there was a big puddle of water under the car. He waited and waited for Joe to jack the wheel up. Finally he got down to see what was the matter and there was Joe - passed out in that puddle of water! Tom always laughed when he told that story. Well, I guess Joe learned the drinking lesson

also because I never knew him to drink more than a single beer. Sure wish I could have learned those lesson's so fast.

I used to love to eat the apples off of the big Golden Delicious tree in the front yard at Lime Gulch. Also the English and Black Walnuts there were wonderful. Those black ones were hard to get out of the shell though.. I remember loving the little strawberry peaches they had growing up by the house. And the grapes! Oh every year there was lots of grapes on the vines that formed an arbor that shaded a bench which grandma and I sat down on in the summer. This arbor was over top of a nice cool spring which was ditched to Joe Clyburn's place for the orchard grandpa used to have there. Joe also got his house water from this spring.

In the summer my dad and I would set up a Ram that was used to lift water from this same spring to a tank above the house. This was only done if the water dried up in the creek where we got water. This Ram did not use electricity. It used water power to lift the water. Very interesting thing. I used to have to keep it going. Sometimes it would stop and I'd have to start it. It worked good.

Did I say that there was no electricity? Well, there wasn't any there. I don't think there is any there yet. My dad did bring a light plant (generator) there for out use. We used it sometimes. I was fascinated with the old gas lighting system that was built into the house. It was a system that used carbide for gas. How it worked was like a carbide miners lamp. There was a deep tank sunk into the back yard. Carbide was poured into it and then water. It created carbide gas which went into the house through a gas line. Each of the main rooms in the house had a gas lamp on the wall which was lit for lights. It never worked when I was there but it must have been something!

Occasionally when Dave and Paul would visit, we'd start the generator and watch TV. Yes, we had TV. After I'd been there about 6 months my dad and I put a TV cable about a quarter mile up the

ridge and got a signal. Later Joe Clyburn put one up from the other side of the hill to the same place. Anyway we'd watch a show or two but our favorite was watching a religious show. We'd watch this guy (I won't name him) grab these people who were in wheelchairs or crutches by the head and shake them and loudly pray and then all of a sudden they'd get up and walk. We'd almost roll on the floor watching that. I guess we'll all go to hell...huh? Oh we could always find a way to have fun.

Grandma did have a telephone. She told about eavesdropping on the neighbors. She said when the phone would ring that she would listen to the conversation and try to be real quiet. Ha.. She said that most of the people on the party line did that.

After high school, when I had to leave Lime Gulch and grandma because of being drafted it was very hard. I didn't have any choice in the matter but what was to happen to grandma? The one person whom I felt loved me most and whom I loved and who needed me more than anybody else. I was excited about the adventure but subdued because of the dilemma. Well, she was moved around from family to family as I understand it and in a short time she was put into Beverly Manor where she died. I had a hard time accepting that.

I blamed myself for leaving her even though I had no alternative. I acted out and ended up in some trouble for awhile. It took me years to understand that I wasn't to blame for her taken from her home, being put into Beverly Manor and for her death. Even now, remembering, I miss her.

Now the house is gone, torn down by the Meambers, the people who purchased the property after grandma died. Bill Schmit a school friend of Dave Clyburn and mine now owns the place. I know that things change but change always comes hard for me.

**(Editor's Note: This are my recollections's to the best of my memory. You may have different ones. If so please send them to this newsletter so that we can share them. Only good ones tho...please... Oh and by the way grandpa Stephen Franklin Clyburn was born on August 5, 1871 in South Carolina.)*