

## John Edward Curtis & Fana Payne

On December 6, 1941, John Edward Curtis of Coalmont and Fana Payne of Pelham were married in Otey Parish in Sewanee. The beautiful little chapel seemed the perfect setting for the beginning of their new life together.

The next day changed everything. Their brief honeymoon trip to Chattanooga was saddened the following day, December 7, 1941, by news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The newlyweds knew that this would mean war. Johnny was inducted into the U. S. Army on December 19, 1942. He was in training for a short time before being shipped across the Atlantic aboard the Queen Elizabeth to fight in WWII. He served as a Private First Class in Hq. Co. 3rd Bn 116<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. He was a truck driver, maneuvering an ammunition truck over all types of terrain, and even sleeping under the truck at times. Johnny drove onto Omaha Beach on D-Day during the invasion of Normandy. He was in Europe for the Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, and Central Europe campaigns, during some of the fiercest battles of the war.

Fana had studied at MTSU to become a teacher. Her first job was in a one-room schoolhouse, where she had to carry the water and build a fire for warmth in the winter. During the war, Fana lived with Johnny's parents, A. R and Minnie Lovelace Curtis, in the Curtis home place near Coalmont Cemetery. She visited her parents, James and Nora Payne, in Pelham whenever she could.

Johnny returned in October 1945, after nearly three years. He received an EAME Ribbon with 4 Bronze Stars, Good Conduct Medal, Bronze Star, Distinguished Unit Badge, and Bronze Arrowhead. Johnny said that he always believed he would come home. He kept the New Testament that saved his life by catching a bullet.

Fana continued teaching, moving to the Coalmont Elementary School, where she shared her love of reading with her students until her retirement at the age of 62. In all, Fana taught for 35 years in Coalmont. Wherever she went, former students asked whether she remembered them, and she always did.

Johnny went to work for his Father, A. R. Curtis, at the Coalmont Savings Bank, where he learned banking. Johnny later became President of the Coalmont Savings Bank, a position he held until retirement. He was a member of the American Legion for 50 years, served on the Board of the Sequatchie Valley Electric Cooperative for 30 years, and a lifelong member of the Masons.

Fana and Johnny were members of Christ Episcopal Church in Tracy City. They raised three daughters, Linda, Sandra and Jan. They would have celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2001, had it not been for Fana's death on June 16, 2001. Johnny died on November 3, 2002.

Linda (married to Bostwick Wyman, children Tracy and John) lives in Columbus, Ohio. Sandra (married to Mike Pincelli, daughter Jennifer) lives in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Jan (married to Terry Russell, daughters Julie and Holly Langford) lives in Fairview, Tennessee.

Submitted by their daughters, Linda, Sandra, & Jan.

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Curtis, John Edward  
Payne, Fana  
World War II  
Wyman, Linda Curtis  
Pincelli, Sandra Curtis  
Pincelli, Jennifer  
Pincelli, Mike  
Wyman, Tracy  
Wyman, John  
Wyman, Bostwick  
Russell, Jan Curtis  
Russell, Terry  
Langford, Holly  
Langford, Julie  
Christ Episcopal Church  
Curtis, A.R.  
Coalmont, TN  
Pelham, TN