

A HISTORY THAT ALMOST DIDN'T HAPPEN.....

By: Cortney Hupper Lenk

(Many people are not aware of this, but my grandmother, Dorothy Crouse, and mother, Barbara Hupper, narrowly escaped death on December 15th, 1942. The crash made national headlines. See attachments below.)

There are a multitude of reasons why families have moved to Lincoln County, but for the Crouse family it was World War II and lifelong friends.

At approximately 9:45 p.m. on December 15th 1942, a B-24 Liberator Army bomber took off from what was then Lambert-St. Louis Municipal Airport with Germany as its final destination. Tragically, the bomber crashed just north of Lambert and set afire the home of Reginald and Dorothy Crouse. Dorothy was in the kitchen giving her two month old, Barbara, a bottle when she heard the roar of the plane and then a loud crash. Dorothy saw a ball of fire crash through the window of the baby's room next to the kitchen, and she bundled Barbara in a quilt and hurried out the front door. Dorothy and the baby escaped safely to a neighbor's house. Their four-room house was completely destroyed, with only its chimney standing. Reggie, who was at work, was called home and started going through body bags searching for his wife and baby. Imagine his great relief when he was informed they were safe at the neighbors!

Sadly, seven servicemen were killed in the plane crash.

When the Crouses' received their insurance money, they were encouraged by their friends, Alvin and Dell Adams, who had bought a farm in Lincoln County, to head north. In September 1944, Reggie and Dorothy purchased 135 acres adjoining Alvin and Dell in Whiteside, where they took up residence and planted their roots.

Barbara and her brother, Jimmy, grew up with all four Adams children, Junior Adams, LaVerne Wright, Melba Houston, and Nadine Krieg, in Whiteside, and have maintained close ties over the years. Today, Junior farms the Crouse farm. LaVerne and Barbara still attend the same Whiteside Presbyterian Church where they grew up. Melba and her daughters remain close to Barbara, Cecil, and their children. Nadine is busy being a sunshine girl in Florida but is always close to the Crouse offspring hearts.

The Dorothy Crouse Trust still owns the 135 acre farm that was purchased in 1944. Dorothy and Reggie's oldest grandchild, Elizabeth, and her husband own the white two-story home on the farm.