

Robert's Calling

Meanwhile Robert Gibson's life had travelled a somewhat different path. As a young man with construction skills and with an interest in horses, he moved to Charles Town, West Virginia, again working at race tracks. Returning to Maryland, he married Dorothy Taylor, and purchased land outside Bel Air. He and Dorothy built a home and had two children, Robert and Denise, but the marriage did not last. On January 28, 1967, Robert married Estelle Jones. The couple has lived happily on Corns Drive in Churchville for the past 50 years. In the early 1960s Robert was baptized as a Jehovah's Witness, and is very devout in his faith.

Civic Duties

Later in 1967 William married Frances Mary Watters (1925-2003), a licensed practical nurse and beautician. The couple lived in Bel Air until her death.

William's life of service extended to the community. He was an active participant at Ames United Methodist Church in Bel Air, working with various ministries and singing in the choir. He also engaged with civic organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the American Legion, Bel Air Post 55. His election as Commander testified to the esteem of his fellow veterans (see Pamphlet 44).

Last Years

In their later years William and Robert

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grew ever more devoted and closer to one another. After Frances' death William and Robert occasionally got together to recall days of old -- often with a chuckle. One favorite story involved Pap, the only grandfather they remembered, a harsh disciplinarian, quick to administer a spanking to a mischievous little boy. One day, while rocking on the porch and giving the boys the "stink eye," Pap rocked himself right off the porch onto the gravel. Two old guys who had courageously and quietly met the challenges of day-to-day life for eighty-some years enjoyed a little laugh at this piece of karmic justice.

As William's health began to fail, he was less able to care for himself. Robert and Estelle tended to the needs of their elder brother. When he was no longer able to live alone, they ensured his hospital, nursing home, and assisted living care. William S. Gibson died on November 5, 2014, and now rests near Frances Mary at Highview Memorial Gardens in Fallston.

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*Sgt. Alfred B. Hilton Memorial Luncheon
Nov. 4, 2017 11:00-2:00 at Ames United
Methodist Church donation is \$25 p/p call
American Legion Post 55 at 410-652-1448*

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**William Samuel, Jr. and
Robert Thomas Gibson:
Veterans Emeriti
Pamphlet 0080
November 2, 2017**



**Sharing Our History
Through Research and
Discussion**

Cover: Robert (R) and William (L) about 8 to 10 years old near their home off Route 1 in Bel Air.

Introduction

Brothers William S. Gibson and Robert T. Gibson reflect in microcosm the concept of “the people”—strong men of inner peace, hardworking, ambitious, law-abiding, and self-reliant – serving God, Family, Country, and Community-- in time of war and peace.

Family Life

William S. Gibson, Jr. (1926-2014) was the first son of William Samuel Gibson, Sr. (1885-1961) and his wife Theresa Lucy Thomas Gibson (1896-1979).



A portrait of Lucy and William Gibson (circa 1930)

The Gibsons' second son, Robert, was born on July 7, 1929. The brothers, with older step sisters Celia (b.1916) and Anna Christy (b.1921), grew up in their family home on the Durham Dairy Farm, on Route 1, across from the old Bel Air Race Track, site of today's Harford Mall.

In the 1930's the boys went to school and helped their father with work around the farm. During racing season, they also helped exercise horses and performed other chores at the track to earn extra money. Their mother worked at the Corner Restaurant on Bel Air's Main Street and at nearby boarding houses. She passed on her expertise as a cook to her daughters, so the family enjoyed many delicious meals together.

Ernest Students and Workers

Both boys attended Bel Air Colored School (BACS) on Hays Street, a feat that made their grade school-educated parents proud. William, an eager, thoughtful, and conscientious student (earning a certificate for punctuality and attendance) graduated in 1943. He worked at wage board jobs at Edgewood Arsenal (EAAPG) until he was drafted in 1944. Robert left BACS at the end of the 10th grade and travelled daily to Baltimore to study welding and carpentry.

Service to Country

William served in the then segregated army for two years. Trained as a rifleman, he was part of the 41st General Service Engineers that performed construction, repair, and maintenance duties of all kinds behind the front lines in Germany and France. At war's end his unit transferred to Fort Benning, where in 1946 William received an honorable discharge. Robert too served in the Army in the years after the war also receiving an honorable discharge.



William S. Gibson, Jr.

After leaving the service, William embarked on a new vocation. Accepted at Baltimore's Apex Barber School, the state's only barber training program for blacks, he earned a much-cherished certificate and a ring commemorating his graduation in 1948. He worked at barbering in Baltimore and Bel Air until 1950 (see Pamphlet 71), when he was recalled to the army during the Korean War. He fulfilled his tour with Battery B, 369th AAA Gun Battalion at Camp Edwards, New York, and received a second honorable discharge. In August 1951, 25-year old Corporal Gibson wed Louise Hayes (their marriage eventually ended). As a civilian employee at EAAPG William worked first as a Munitions Laborer in the base's Property Division. He began as a laboratory worker, was soon promoted to production tester, and eventually became a warehouseman supervisor. In 1974 he moved up to the position of Physical Science Technician. After 46 years of dedicated service, William retired from the Federal Government in 1989.