

Lonnie Maness. *Lonnie and Brooksie Maness: Aspects of their lives and times*. Martin: Forrest Publishing, 2006. ISBN 978-1-4243-0830-5.

For four decades Dr. Lonnie E. Maness has been a member of the Jackson Purchase Historical Society (JPHS), attended meetings regularly, and contributed often as a speaker and prolific writer. Yet, what do you know about him personally? In 2006 he created an opportunity for others to learn in this book broadly covering his life. At every stage Maness, born in 1929, details the challenges and friendships the family encountered. In many respects his life exemplifies the American dream of rising from humble surroundings to success. Perhaps fittingly for a 19th-century United States historian he grew up a short distance from Parker's Crossroads, Tennessee, the site of a Civil War battle he later studied in detail. Older readers especially may identify with his early world.

His long association with higher education began in 1948. He enrolled at the University of Tennessee Junior College (UTJC), a forerunner of the present University of Tennessee at Martin (UTM). He was honored to be the commencement speaker at his 1950 graduation.

Maness then left college life for a while, however. Audaciously he introduced himself to Brooksie Nell Altom, a Carroll County, Tennessee resident, and married her. The Lonnie Maness family moved to Peoria, Illinois, where he did accounting for the Caterpillar Tractor Company. Their numbers increased with the arrival of Barbara Nell during September, 1951. Within months in Milwaukee he took a similar job with Standard Oil of Indiana. The Manesses welcomed their son David in late November 1953. Father Maness also began a dedicated association with the Church of Christ.

Yet, Maness aspired to even better the family. With Brooksie's continuing encouragement, he enrolled in economics and history night classes at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. In 1961 the hardworking bookkeeper again graduated with honors. Due to no evening law classes, Maness opted for a Master's in history to possibly teach and got his second degree in 1964. Next, the Manesses headed for a University of Iowa history Ph.D. program. Eager to teach, in 1965 he contacted his UTJC history instructor Dean Horace Smith who hired him at Martin. The Maness brood was going home!

In many ways the years 1965 to 2002 were golden ones for the family. Teaching history, especially demanding at first, was his dream job at his preferred institution. Unfortunately in those early years his railroading father perished in a caboose accident. For several years he focused on his family and teaching and local professional goals. At the time Barbara and David did well academically at UTM and afterwards with her excelling in high school teaching and with his achieving in medical school. Inspired by them, he took summer, night, and Saturday classes at then Memphis State University. Family perseverance prevailed in 1980 when father Maness and son David received their doctorates.

Maness flourished more during the 1981-2002 span. He especially published articles about local history and mid-19th century topics in Tennessee, West Tennessee, and Jackson Purchase journals and spoke frequently to civic and Civil War-Reconstruction groups. He produced an amazing number of book reviews about those events. In 1984 the effective professor received the University of Tennessee National Alumni Teacher Award. His paramount work is *An Untutored Genius: The Military Career of General Nathan Bedford Forrest*. At home the Manesses

enjoying their dogs, rejoiced about becoming grandparents, and reveling in seeing Europe while Dr. David Maness was with the Army in Germany.

While doing well professionally, Maness received possibly the cruelest blow of his life. His beloved Brooksie succumbed to a long bout with lung cancer in 1996. Nevertheless, with usual resolve, the heartbroken husband stayed as active and productive as ever. Oh, perhaps he was slowed a bit by controlled diabetes and heart bypass surgery. In mid-2002 he became Professor Emeritus and still exhibited in retirement the same enthusiastic zest for family, life, and history. For example, after publication of this family history he saw Colonel David Maness retire from the Army to become Professor of Family Practice and Department Chair at the University of Tennessee School of Medicine in Memphis.

Review by Dr. Marvin Downing, University of Tennessee at Martin