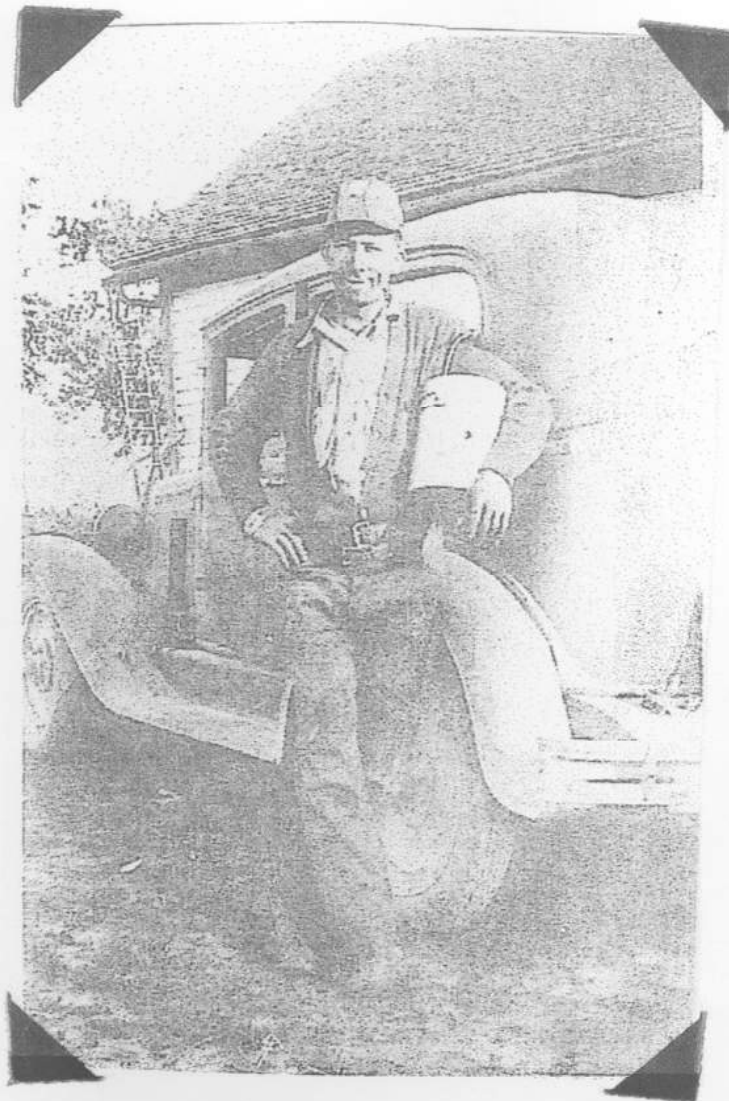


I am the granddaughter of the late Peter Joseph Rinkes, Jr. This is my attempt to put a family man with the name on the plaque.

He grew up in a family of coal miners (so coal mining was in his blood). His Dad, Peter Joseph Rinkes, Sr. owned his own mine in Jug Run, located in Belmont County, his uncles and 2 brothers also worked in the coal mines. While his dad worked in the family mine, Grandpa would often go into the mine where he would do his school work wearing a carbide lamp on his head. Grandpa worked in other coal mines before Willow Grove Mine.



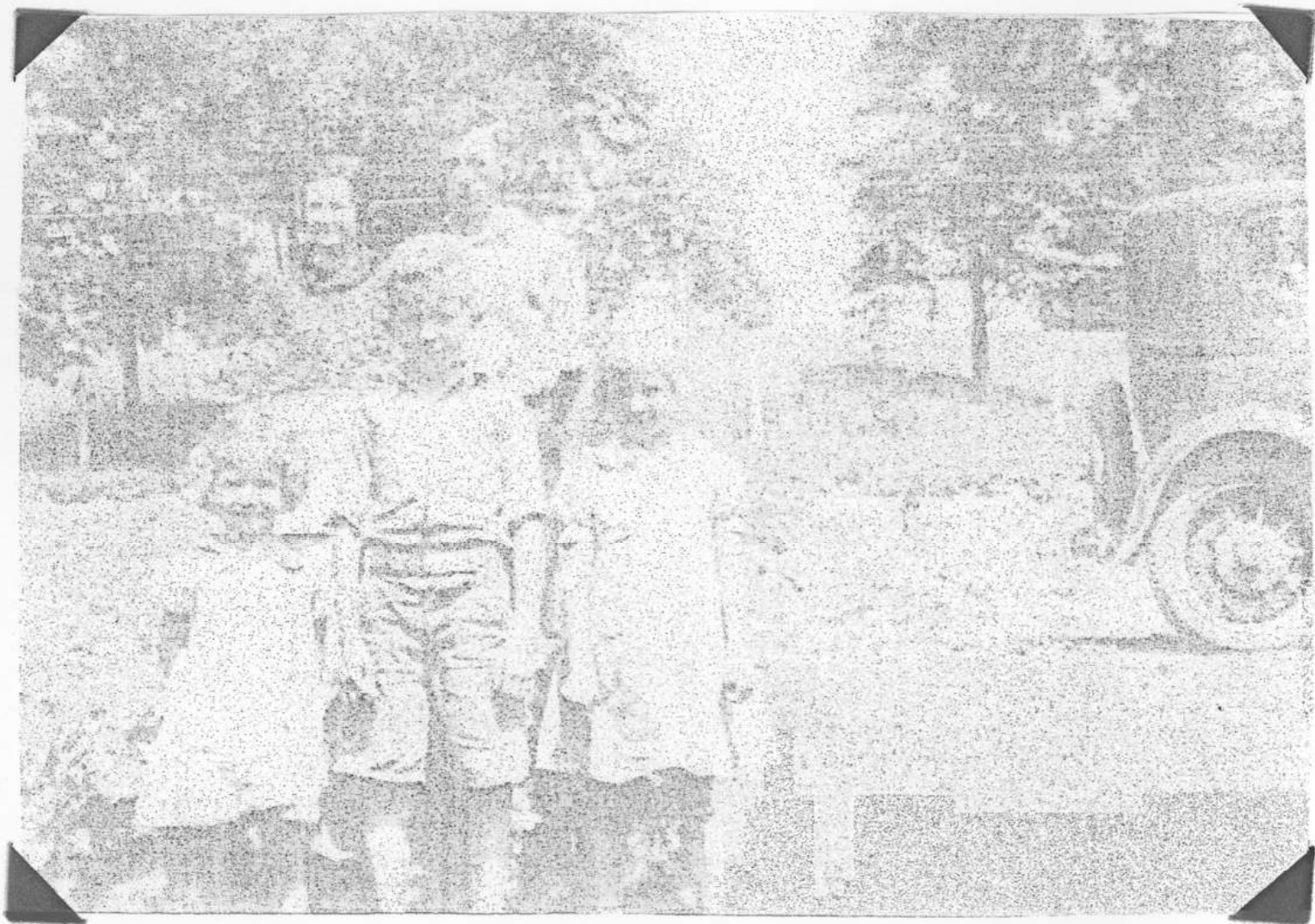
My Grandpa was introduced to the love of his life, Margaret Isabelle Ridgeway by his friend and her brother, James Alfred Ridgeway. During their courtship they played dominos, popped popcorn and pulled taffy. They married in August 1925.



They had 4 children, Betty Lou (still born), a son Richard Lee and 2 daughters, Nancy Marie and Margaret (Peg) Deloris.

On Sundays, Grandpa would load his young family in their 1934 Model A or Model T and go to Jug Run to visit his mom, Lulu (Hummel) Rinkes. In order to save on gasoline, Grandpa would put the car in neutral and coast down the hills and his children loved every minute of it. In the winter, Grandpa and his children would go skating on the frozen creeks in Jug Run. They didn't have money for skates so they skated in their shoes. They would slip, fall, laugh and have a good time as a family.

Grandpa allowed his family to have pets. They had dogs, cats and even a cow. He did not like for his children to say "I can't", "where are we going?" and "are we there yet?" Grandpa also liked Gene Autry movies.



Grandpa loved his wife and their children so much that he was leaving the coal mining business. He had been hired on as a custodian for the St. Clairsville Public Schools. He was working his last week at Willow Grove Mine.

On that fateful day of March 16, 1940, my Grandpa was 36 years young and he was having troubles getting his car to start. After 2 failed attempts to start it he went back into the house and told my Grandma "if the car doesn't start on the next try I am not going into work". He kissed my Grandma. Back outside he went, the car started and off to

work he went. Never to see his family again and never to cross the threshold of the home that he and Grandma worked hard to have. My Grandmas fears of Grandpa never coming home became a reality. Like some many families that day, lives were shattered and changed forever.

My Grandpa worked as a car loader in the coal mine which required him to go deep into the mine shaft, load the coal into rail cars and bring the coal out of the mine. And because of his job and because he was so deep in the mine shaft when the explosion happened, Grandpa was the last miner recovered 11 days after the explosion.

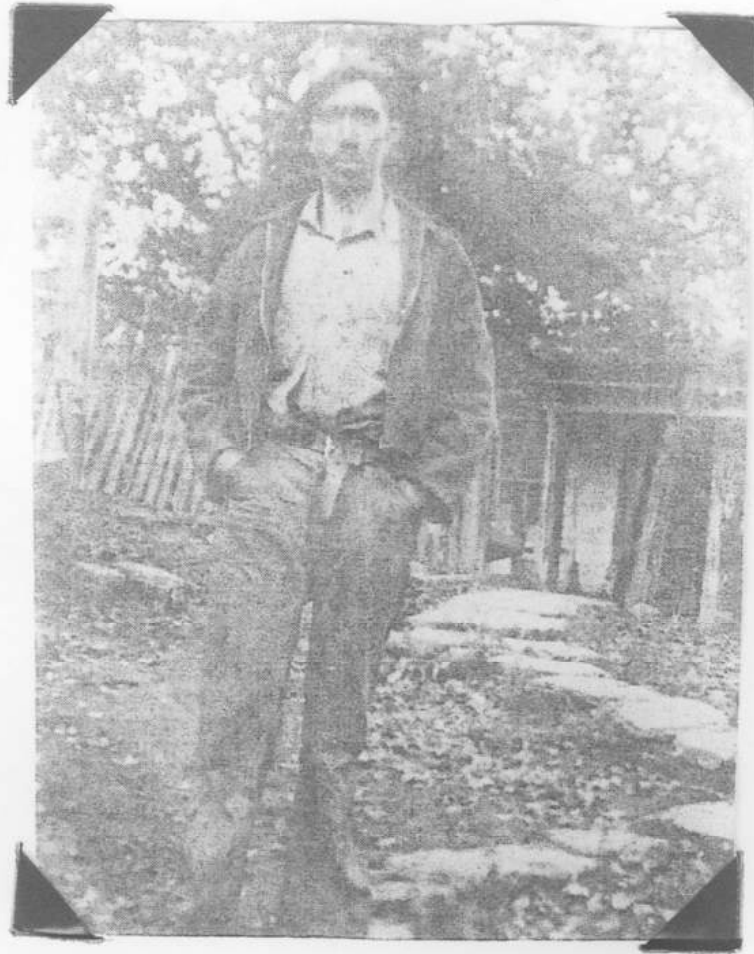
Shortly after the devastating explosion, the article below was in the local newspaper and it wrote about my Great Grandma Lulu (Hummel)Rinkes ' loss of 3 family members.

ST. CLAIRSVILLE MOTHER HAS LOST 3 IN MINES

The Willow Grove disaster has proved that wives of miners must have the same fortitude as "the men who go down to the seas in ships." Mrs. Lula Rinker of St. Clairsville, has had more than her share of deaths of loved ones, resulting from mine tragedies. Her husband, Peter Rinkes Sr., died about 13 years ago, effects of a leg fracture sustained while putting down a mine shaft near St. Clairsville. Her son, Harry, was killed last December in the Goodyear mine near New Athens by a cutting machine and another son Peter Jr., died at Willow Grove. Mrs. Rinkes has another son, Woodroow, who is employed in the same mine near New Athens, in which his brother Harry met death.

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Her son, William Woodrow Rinkes that was mentioned in the article later died of Black Lung.



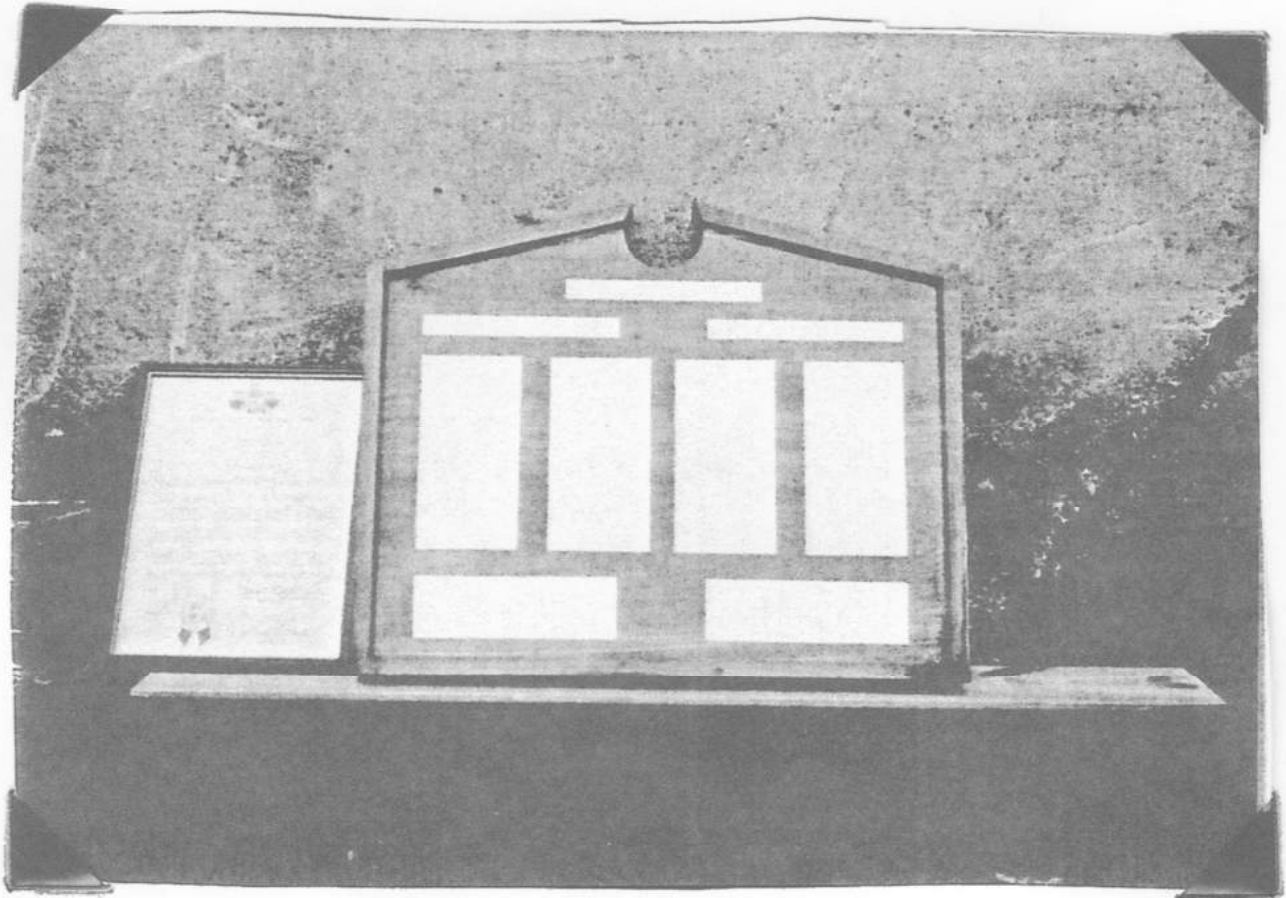
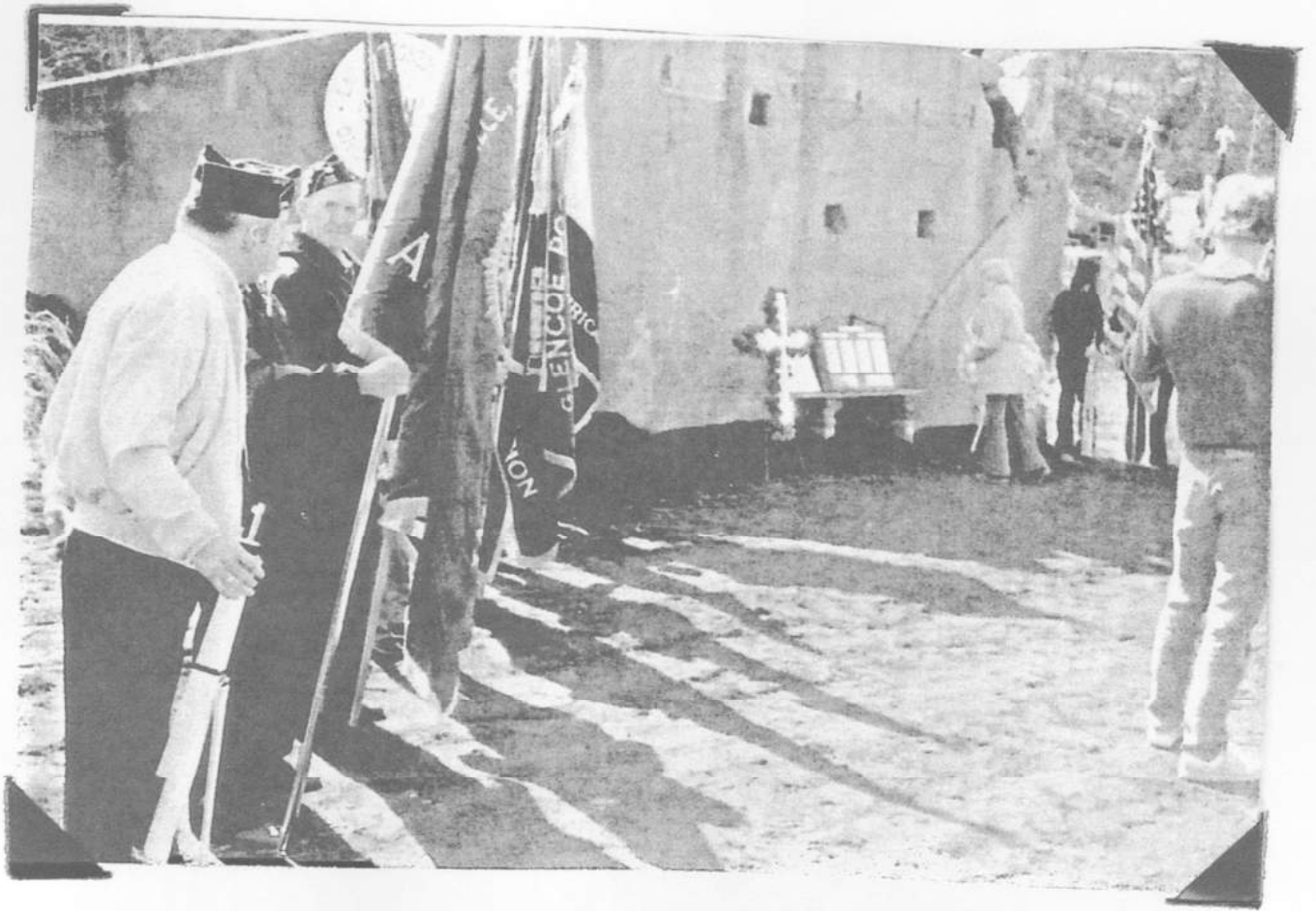
My Grandma did whatever she could to provide for her young children, Richard Lee was 11 years young, Nancy Marie was 9 years young and Margaret Deloris (my mom) was 6 years young. Grandma washed dishes in a local restaurant, did laundry for other families, took care of young mothers and worked as a receptionist at the local funeral home.

After her children were grown up, she put herself through nursing school and became a LPN. She worked at Mount Carmel Hospital in Columbus Ohio.

Grandma believed with all her heart that Grandpa was the only man for her, she never remarried and she loved him and grieved for him until she drew her last breath.

Grandma had many health issues that prohibited her from attending the Willow Grove Mine memorial service held on April 28, 1983 at Neffs Ball Park in Belmont County. However, she was proudly represented by her 2 daughters, Nancy and Margaret.





Written with love by Granddaughter Margaret (Peggy) Ruth Gummere.
November 2014