

IN HONORABLE TRIBUTE

TO SHANNON'S FALLEN SOLDIERS
AND A MAN NAMED JULIAN K. MORRISON

By: Jack Dickey (January 2018)

IN THAT THE HERITAGE OF THE PAST

furnishes us a solid foundation upon which to build our future, it is very important to recognize, record and preserve our history, its events and those who lived those events, contributed to life's accomplishments and at times sacrificing their own lives. This defines heritage. And, our community certainly has its own heritage of which we can be proud and thankful.

Nonetheless, when these past events and individual contributions are not properly recorded and preserved, it will only be a generation or two until there's "no one left to tell the tale". Such slackness can leave little, or no, foundation of which to build upon for future generations. With this in mind, I am, herein, providing a historical account of the establishment and commemoration of the World War II memorials located in our community and of the man who made it all possible. There are two of these monuments, and both were erected during my lifetime. Over the last quarter century, I have been privileged to be actively involved in the preservation of these monuments and the memory of those great American heroes of whose names are engraved thereon.

IT IS WELL CLAIMED that the first two memorial monuments to have been established in the United States to commemorate the memory of WWII fatalities are located in the small, North Georgia, mill-town community of Shannon. This claim was first made in the late Nineties by the Shannon Optimist Club with the understanding that if any, earlier, WWII commemoratives could be documented elsewhere, Shannon would give

up its claim. Since then, some twenty years have now passed, and no one has yet come forth with an earlier date. The Brighton Mill Monument was dedicated in November of 1946, and the Model School Monument some six months later in May of 1947. I can vividly remember the establishment of the Model School Monument. It started out as a small, clay, scale model on a table in the school library. Once the construction of the real monument was finished, its dedication was held on Memorial Day of 1947. I also remember my mother, who was a teacher at Model School and an accomplished soloist, singing "Crossing The Bar" at the memorial's dedication that year.

I WAS A 7-YEAR-OLD, SECOND GRADER at the time of that dedication in 1947. Now, 70 years later at the age of 77, I have become somewhat of an historian... not so much by endeavor of study, but more by reason of age. I guess one could just say that I AM history! Anyway, I will herein attempt to record an account of just how these two memorials became the first ones in our Nation, and who the patriotic individual was who was responsible for their being. This, I do on behalf of the Watters District Council For Historical Preservation... and in honor and memory of all those brave soldiers who have given the "supreme sacrifice" throughout all the wars and conflicts of our Nation's existence. It is only from a complete understanding of the history and purpose behind these memorials, and the American Flag that flies over them, that one can stand before these monuments, and properly honor, respect and remember the lives laid upon the altar of freedom of which these memorials represent. Remembering our patriotic benefactors, we must... lest we lose the very substance of our great American heritage.

IT IS WITHOUT QUESTION that the establishment of the Nation's first and oldest monuments to WWII casualties should be credited to Mr. Julian K. Morrison. Mr. Morrison

had been an officer in WW I, and that could have been why he took such an interest in the soldiers of the WWII conflict. While this may not be the reason, I do know for a fact that Morrison was one of this community's greatest benefactors and truest American Patriots to have ever set foot on Northwest Georgia's red soil and rolling hills.

JULIAN K. MORRISON CAME TO SHANNON in 1927 to become the CEO and manager of the newly constructed Brighton Mills facility. He remained in that position until his untimely death in June of 1949. Never in the history of this community was there an individual more beloved and respected than was "Mr. Morrison". Very early on, he referred to the mill's employees, their children and the teachers and students of Model School as: "The Brighton Family". And, if there is to be a great family, that family must have a great patriarch. And, none other fit the bill, or deserved the title, more so than did Mr. Julian K. Morrison.

MORRISON'S BRIGHTON FAMILY was truly a blessing to its members. Mr. Morrison had actually set up a Georgia corporation for the Family. It was the Associated Brighton Employees Incorporated, referred to as "the ABEI". Many employee benefits and community activities were provided and/or sponsored by this member-owned corporation. Such as: ABES's own insurance company, the sale of war bonds and savings bonds, Brighton's textile baseball team, sponsorship of both the Boy and Girl Scout troops, sponsorship of the Brighton Choral Club, the Shannon Youth Club, the big Fourth of July celebration each year, a huge Christmas party for all the Brighton Family children, and the publication of the monthly Warp and Weft magazine. In addition, Morrison and/or "The Mill" funded: the building of many community facilities, including: a stadium for the Brighton Baseball Team, a football field for the Model School Blue Devils, a log cabin for the Boy

Scouts, the Girl Scouts and the Youth Club, a fully equipped commercial movie theater at the Model School Auditorium that could, and did, show full feature films to students and to the public (Saturday Night tickets were only a dime), a modern cafeteria at Model School, the erection of war monuments at both the Mill and Model School and a large community garden space for the Brighton Family. Morrison also established Shandra Farms in this Community. Shandra was one of the most up-to-date farms in Georgia at the time. It boasted Georgia's number-one Aberdeen Angus herd, English jumping horses, Floyd County's first irrigation system and many other modern endeavors such as, the growing and dehydrating of sweet potatoes for cattle feed. There was hardly any beneficial activity within the Community but what Mr. Morrison didn't have a hand.

THIS NATION'S FIRST WWII MONUMENT

Having already mentioned Morrison's creation and establishment of the war monuments and the publishing of the Warp and Weft magazine, I'll now elaborate in more detail about the connection between the two, and the resulting "Nation's First" WWII monument. The Warp and Weft, published by the ABEL, and edited by Morrison, was without a doubt one of the finest company and community periodicals of its day. It was printed by a major publishing company in Atlanta. The magazine was of the highest quality, having the same large page size as that of Life magazine. Actually, the Warp and Weft outdid Life to some extent, in that it had many pages in color, whereas Life was all black-and-white, front to back. Model School's principal, Mr. Randall H. Minor was the magazine's official photographer. I remember well Mr. Minor coming around at the school with that big news camera. It was the kind with the light bulb sized flash bulbs and the slide-out film plate. It was the best and most up-to-date news camera at the time. Both Morrison and Minor would have had it no other way. Everything these men did was always first class!

THE WARP AND WEFT not only featured company news, but news and happenings throughout the entire community... especially those of Model School. It was abounded with photographs of the “Brighton Family” members on their jobs, in their school and at the various activities round about. Then of course, the magazine also had your standard company and industry news, including the latest styles and designs of clothing being made from Brighton Mills fabrics. All-and-all, the Warp and Wept was like a well-edited, high quality, local newspaper... but, without the advertisements. So, when World War II broke out, and some 408 members of the “Brighton Family” went off to war, Mr. Morrison saw to it that the Warp and Weft was sent to each of these soldiers, wherever they were. General Doug Carver, when speaking at one of our Memorial Day events, told about how a young lady (whom later was to become his mother) got a job at Brighton, and Mr. Morrison assigned her to the task of getting all the Warp and Wept Magazines mailed out each month to the Brighton troops, stationed throughout the world.

CAN YOU IMAGINE what a prize this magazine must have been to those battle-weary soldiers “across the Waters” when they would receive all this news and pictures from back home each month? In each Issue of the Warp and Wept, Morrison would have what is called, in newspaper speak, the editorial page. During the War years he concentrated his messages on this page... encouraging the Brighton employees to be patriotic, productive and quality minded with their work, as most of the fabric they were manufacturing was going into the war effort. If Morrison wasn’t pushing the laborers on the home front, he was encouraging his Brighton soldiers on the battle front. Morrison came on as a sort of fatherly image in his messages to the troops. He would tell them how important their fighting was, and how the War had to be won in

order to preserve their homes and our Nation. Incidentally, sometimes Morrison's "editorial page" would be as long as three pages! Mr. Morrison's messages were not a "one-way street", either. Many of the soldiers would write letters back to Morrison, and he would then publish their letters in the next issue of Warp And Weft.

WHEN ONE OF THE BRIGHTON SOLDIERS would fall, his picture and eulogy would be put on a special page in the Warp and Weft. This page would appear every month. By the end of the War, there were 12 Brighton Heroes listed on this page. Those twelve individuals were to become the names of which would be engraved onto our Nation's first monument of remembrance for WW II fatalities.

WHEN NEWS OF THE ENDING OF WWII reached Shannon, the Mill's whistle atop the plant went into a continuous blast, as people came out of their houses and work places to celebrate the glorious victory. The Brighton soldiers would soon be coming home... all but twelve, that is. These twelve had been kept in perpetual memory throughout the War within the pages of the Warp and Weft. Morrison had seen to it that these heroes were not forgotten during the War. And now, he would certainly see to it that they were to never be forgotten after the War... and into the future. Out front of the Brighton Plant was the company's 76-foot flagpole where the Stars and Stripes were raised and lowered each day by Shannon Troop 30 Boy Scouts. Atop that flagpole was the letter 'V' (V for victory). This V was made up of electric light bulbs, so that it could shine at night. It was an inspiring reminder during the War that the achieving of victory over our enemies was what it was all about. This flagpole was, and still is, located in a very prominent location on a quarter-acre island, dead center of the Shannon Community. At the base of this flagpole would

become the spot where Morrison would place his memorial monument, commemorating those twelve “Brighton Family” heroes who would “never be coming home”.

SO, ON NOVEMBER 10TH OF 1946, the very next year after the ending of World War II, there was a huge crowd, perhaps thousands, that gathered at the flagpole in front of the Brighton Mill in Shannon, Georgia for the official dedication of the “Brighton Family” war memorial. After all, the War had only been ended for just a bit over a year. The pain and sacrifice of war was fresh on the minds of everyone. If only the 396 returning, Brighton Family veterans and their families had attended, there would likely have been over a thousand people just from that one category, alone. Then, there were some 1,500 Brighton Mills employees and their families, not to mention all the other people throughout the Shannon Area. There was no family that had not been affected in some way or other by the four-year conflict known as World War II. Many had sons or fathers in the War. One Shannon family, the Orsbion’s, had four sons in combat at the same time. One of those sons, Otis Orsbion, was killed in action, and is one of those names inscribed on the Brighton war memorial. Otis’ sister, Hazel, told me that she remembered the exact day that the two army officers came to the Orsbion home with the dreadful news... because that day happened to be Mother’s Day. So sad... poor Mother Orsbion. Otis’s sister, Hazel, not ever having missed a Memorial Day ceremony at the Brighton Monument, will be absent this coming Memorial Day (2018). She recently passed from this life at the age of 92. I was honored to have had the opportunity to deliver the eulogy at Hazel’s funeral. It, also, gave me the occasion to express thanks and remembrance for this great patriotic American family.

HEARTBREAK AND SADNESS were not the only miseries of the War. Life on the “home front”

was quite different from peacetime routine. There was rationing of items, such as sugar, coffee, lard, tires and gasoline. Due to restricted gasoline and tires, travel was cut to a minimum. The automobile industry quit, altogether, manufacturing cars, and started building war equipment like tanks, jeeps and trucks. Even two or three years after the War ended, car buyers would have to get on a waiting list to purchase a new car. Non-farm folks were encouraged to plant “victory gardens” to help with their food supplies. Textile plants, like Brighton, were running round the clock, producing fabric for uniforms, tents, blankets and other wartime requirements. During the period between 1941 and 1945, there was hardly a family in America who hadn’t sacrificed in some significant way toward the fighting and winning of WWII. Times had been tough during those perilous years with folks not even knowing whether America was going to win or not. It was with this kind of background that only a year after victory, the people of the Shannon community gathered in mass at the Brighton Mills flagpole. They assembled in humble reverence and thankful appreciation to dedicate an everlasting monument in memory of the twelve members of the Brighton Family who had been lost in WWII.

WHEN THE EVENT TOOK PLACE in November of 1946. The monument, supposedly, included a bronze plaque of which was mounted on a granite stone which rested on the flagstone-paved circle at the flagpole. Inscribed on the plaque were the names of the twelve fallen heroes, followed by these words: “They Gave Their Last Full Measure of Devotion...” There is an interesting side note, worthy of mention, in regard to the bronze plaque. Some fifty years after the 1946 dedication, the Shannon Optimist Club declared the Brighton WWII Monument to be the oldest in the Nation. This claim was to stand unless another one was found which could predate the Brighton Monument. This claim continued to stand for only a few years, however.

Another older, and near identical, plaque was discovered in the attic of the old Brighton Mills office building. The only difference was that this older plaque was made from wood instead of bronze. Ironically, this older plaque that actually predated what had been thought to be the original Brighton plaque, WAS the original Brighton plaque... the one dedicated in 1946!

WHAT HAD HAPPENED WAS that in 1946 the Country had not gotten back into full peacetime production. Bronze had been a strategic metal during the War, and was restricted for shell casings, machine components, etc. So, only a year after the War, bronze would have still been in short supply. Not to let the unavailability of bronze delay the upcoming memorial dedication, Morrison had apparently ordered the making of a wooden plaque... one of which had been painted to look a lot like bronze. This plaque was mounted to the permanent, granite base next to the Brighton Flag Pole. The dedication ceremony went on as scheduled. Later, once bronze became available, a new metal plaque was cast. The old wooden plaque was then lifted from the base, and the new bronze plaque bolted down in its place. The sheer urgency of getting a job done on time, as displayed in this account, gives substantial credence to why the Brighton's WWII monument may have become the earliest and first in the Nation.

NOW, WE FIND that the Shannon Community not only has the oldest WWII memorial monument, but it also may have the second oldest one, to boot. This second monument has already been mentioned in the first part of this article. So now, here's the full story. There was this leading and colorful character in the Shannon Community, affectionally known as "Uncle Bill", J. L. McKellar. He had one son by the name of J. L. "Stuffy" McKellar, Jr. Stuffy was a bright young man, who

had just been accepted into medical school at the time of World War II. Stuffy's sister, Mardelle, recently gave this following account: *"My brother had just finished school at North Georgia Military College. Planning to become a doctor, he had just been accepted at the Medical College of Georgia. But, with so many of his friends going off to war, he just didn't feel good about his going to college right then. He felt it was his duty to serve his country more than anything else"*. In that he had taken ROTC at North Georgia, he was not required to take basic training. So, he was sent straight to the Pacific Theater and into the Battle of Okinawa. Stuffy was in a forward patrol, taking out enemy snipers when an American artillery round fell short of its target, landing amongst the members of his patrol. J. L. "Stuffy" McKellar was therein killed by "friendly fire" in service to his country at the Battle of Okinawa only 20 days after having enlisted. He is, forever, nineteen.

I WAS VERY YOUNG when Stuffy was killed, but I remember listening to the older folks talk about how terrible it was. They said Uncle Bill was going up and down the road crying and hollering over the loss of his only son. I was told that my grandad, J. M. Hogan, got with Uncle Bill, talked to him, and consoled him as best he could. From that day forward, Uncle Bill always called my grandad "Papa"... Papa Hogan. Grandad was no more Bill's papa than Bill was our uncle, but such titles in those days were bestowed as symbols of endearment and respect. Uncle Bill and Papa Hogan have now been gone for over fifty years, but the relationship they created between our two families is still there... strong as ever.

BILL MCKELLAR AND JULIAN MORRISON were the best of friends. Uncle Bill had worked at Brighton Mills, but Bill's son, Stuffy, never had. Therefore, when the 1946 monument at the Mill was erected, it only included Brighton Mill employees who had lost their lives in WWII. As Stuffy McKellar was not included on the 1946

monument, Mr. Morrison decided to have another monument erected... in memory of Stuffy McKellar and in honor of other Model students who had fought in WWII. This monument would be constructed on the Model School campus, which was only about two thirds of a mile from the Brighton Monument. The Model School Monument, made from local stone, was much larger than the Brighton Monument. In fact, the school's flag pole was attached to its side. This way, the American Flag would always be flying over it, as is proper for all USA memorial structures and monuments. An interesting side note to this monument is that it was built by an Italian, master, stone mason by the name of Ettore Cescutti. Mr. Cescutti was assisted by his sons, Robert, Ronald and Edmond. These boys were also students at Model School. Earlier, Mr. Cescutti had been commissioned by Henry Ford to go to Italy and bring back some 70 stone masons for the building of the famous "Ford Complex" at Berry College. After the completion of the Berry project, Cescutti and several of the other Italian masons and their families decided to remain here in Floyd County, Georgia, and make America their new home. The Cescutti Family is a proud example of the great contributions made to this country by immigrates. There are numerous masonry structures throughout the area that attest to the skills of the Cescutti's. In fact, there is hardly a mason today in the Rome Area that has not learned their trade under the mentorship of one of the Cescutti's.

SO, THE MODEL SCHOOL MONUMENT

was ceremonially dedicated on Memorial Day of 1947. After that, as far as I know, nothing else happen in regard to this WWII shrine, or the one over at the Mill, for quite some time. In fact, it would be exactly fifty years (Memorial Day of 1996) before these two historical markers would, again, be appropriately recognized. By the Fall of 1987 all of Model School's activities had been moved 2.5 miles down the road from its old Burlington Drive campus at Shannon to the

School's new location at Barron Road. The old campus was subsequently sold. Now, there was a day in the Mid Nineties when my wife Becky (MHS 60) and her sister Peggy (MHS 58) along with myself (MHS 58) visited the old Model School Campus to reminisce, and take a few pictures. While there, we noticed that the McKellar WWII Monument was partially torn down with its plaque missing. The flag pole that had been attached to it from which had proudly flown the Stars and Strips when the three of us had attended Model School was no longer there. This scene was much like an act of desecration to a cemetery... or maybe even worse. This monument had originally been built to be an everlasting memorial to the memory of Jesse L. McKellar and to honor "The Boys of Model School Who Served Their Country". It had been erected by one of this community's greatest benefactors, and my own mother had sung at its dedication ceremony. Now, all that was left of those hallowed memories was a pile of loose rocks against a remaining backdrop of a couple of old dilapidated school buildings of which had once been our proud alma mater.

REALIZING THAT JULIAN MORRISON'S

and this Community's original intent of providing a permanent and long-lasting memorial had been dishonored by neglect and abandonment, it seemed only fitting that this same community should attempt the restoration of this memorial. So, I carried it before the Shannon Optimist Club. Most of the Club's members were Model School graduates, and many had been there in 1947 when the memorial was dedicated. My own restoration sentiments were shared by the other members, and it was decided that the Club would take this on as a project. The project would be to rebuild the monument down the road at the "New School". One of the problems we faced was that the plaque had been taken from the old monument. So, we would have to try to find a picture or some other record of what that inscribed wording had been on the original

plaque. This would be required before a new one could be cast. Since the ones of us who remembered the monument all thought that the plaque was made of bronze, we surmised that thieves had removed it, and probably sold it for scrap metal. That's certainly what it looked like as evidenced by the way the monument had been torn up... especially around the part where the plaque had been. Nevertheless, we decided to make what most felt would be a fruitless effort to sound it around that we were looking for the plaque.

LUCKILY, WE “HIT PAY DIRT”! Mr.

Henderson, then principal at Model Elementary, advised us that the plaque was down at the Floyd County Schools' maintenance building. The even bigger surprise was that the plaque was not a bronze plaque... not even a plaque. It was a big (approx. 1,800-pound) flat rock of which we later learned had come out of the northern part of Floyd County. This rock had been engraved similar to that of older tombstones, where the background had been carved out, rather than the lettering. The raised lettering and the color of the stone made it look a lot like a cast metal plaque, which was probably the reason we had all mistakenly remembered it as a bronze plaque. I recently talked with Edmond Cescutti, and he remembers going with his dad, and helping load that stone into a truck from the place where Mr. Cescutti had found it. Here at this point, we find a rather interesting correlation. The first plaque on the Brighton monument was wood, made to look like metal. The plaque on the Model School monument was stone, that looked like metal. In both cases determination and innovation won out over shortage of metal, and the jobs got done on time... and, ahead of all others in this Nation, apparently!

WITH THE ORIGINAL INSCRIBED STONE

now having been located and plans now being made for re-erecting the monument at the new

school campus, it was discovered that Stuffy McKellar had not been the only Model School student lost in WWII. There were four others. Consequently, the Optimist Club decided to build two identical monuments with the original McKellar stone in one and a newly engraved stone in the other. The new stone would list the names of Model School students who had died in any of the American Wars. The five WWII students' names were engraved so as to leave room to add more names in the future, although it was hoped such an occasion would never need to occur. The design of the two new monuments would be somewhat different from the old, original, stone-built one. That monument served as a support for the School's flagpole... while on the other hand, the new school already had its flagpole, prominently displayed on a plaza out front of the main school building. So, the function of holding up a flagpole would be left out of the design on the new monuments. Otherwise, all other aspects of the original would be kept in place. Both of these new monuments would be stone masonry structures. Both would have engraved lettering that would be literally "chiseled in stone". And most notably, both would be designed and built by a Cescutti... Ronald Cescutti. Like all the Cescutti's for generations, Ronald was a brick and stone mason, and he had helped his dad build the original Model School monument a half century earlier.

AT THE TIME OF THIS WRITING (January 2018), Ronald has passed on. However, his brothers Edmond and Bob are still around. In recently talking with Edmond, I learned that a local architect, Mr. McLean Marshall, had designed the old flagpole-supporting monument. Marshall had made a clay model of the monument, complete with a flagpole attached to the side... the one I had remembered seeing on the table in the library. The Cescutti's had worked from this model. Anyway, Edmond continued to tell me about the flagpole being attached to the monument. He said that when they were ready to

attach the flagpole, they had gotten the boys from the school's industrial class to help with raising the pole into place. Edmond said that about the time they got the pole standing up were it could be attached to the monument, it got off balance, and started to fall. At that time the industrial boys took off a running, leaving Mr. Cescutti and his sons trying to hold the thing up. Well... it fell. Edmond said: "it messed up the brass ball on top". I can't be sure of this, but Ronald Cescutti may have been a bit more receptive to taking on the job down at the new school in 1997 when he found out that the flagpole there was already up and would not have to be attached to the monument!

ON MEMORIAL DAY OF 1997, a well-attended ceremony took place in front of Model High School for the dedication of the newly erected Model School War Monuments. In addition, on that same day, and immediately following the event at Model School, the attendees moved up the road to the 1946, Brighton Mill Monument where there was a second ceremony held in recognition of the fallen soldiers listed on that monument. Dr. Nevin Jones was the master of ceremonies at both events. As it turned out, the day's events effectively ended what had been the Community's half-century Memorial Day hiatus. Patriotism was now back on tract. The Shannon/Model School community has not missed a single year since that day, but what it has conducted a Memorial Day service centered around these war monuments. This event is held each Memorial Day at the Brighton monument location. Nonetheless, the outlying Model School monument is decorated in the same way as the Brighton site with flags displayed for each of its fallen heroes, the laying of a wreath and the returning of the Flag to full staff at 12:00 Noon.

THE 1997 EVENT led to what today is the area's best attended Memorial Day commemoration. The yearly observance, started

by the Shannon Optimist Club, is now sponsored by the Watters District Council for Historical Preservation. The annual ceremonies are kept in the tradition of the original 1946 dedication with the local Boy and Girl Scouts participating in “the laying of the wreath”; twelve flags flying (one for each fallen soldier of the Brighton Family); a representative of each of the USA military branches plus: presentation of the colors, a three-volley gun salute and taps... all by the American Legion Honor Guard. We have had many distinguished speakers to give the keynote address over the years of whom many I’ve had the honorable privilege to introduce. Most recently, and again for the upcoming M-day 2018 event, the Army’s General Billy Brown will be speaking. Brown actually participated in the original 1946 ceremony as a Second-class Boy Scout and a member of Shannon’s Troop 30. Now-a-days, some seventy-three years later, Brown comes back to us as a Three-star General.

THE RE-CONSTRUCTED (second) Model School monument had been in place for only 13 years when the people of Floyd County voted, and passed, a special sales tax measure for building a new Model High School facility. Plans called for the new school to be on the same ground as where our WWII monuments were located. So, once again the old monument had to be torn down and rebuilt at another site. This was in 2010, and the monuments were re-erected along with a new lighted flag pole in a very fitting plaza at the center of the campus. This is, by far, the most appropriate setting of any of the previous locations.

ALTHOUGH THE MODEL SCHOOL MONUMENT is not the first WWII monument (the Brighton Monument holds that distinction) the discovery of its abandonment and missing plaque at the old Model School Campus is what started a chain of events which lead to the recognition of the Brighton WWII Monument and the formation of

the Watters District Council for Historical Preservation, Inc. Here is the sequence of those events:

1. Old Model School Monument found abandoned with the plaque missing
2. Shannon Optimist Club takes on project of restoring the monument at new MHS Campus
3. The missing plaque is discovered at the County School's Celanese bus barn.
4. While the Optimist Club was working on the project, Optimist Member Roy Powell advised that there was another WWII monument (Brighton Monument) at the flagpole in front of what was then Galey and Lord Mills. This monument had not been defaced or abandoned... just forgotten.
5. In that Julian K. Morrison had erected both of these WWII monuments, the Optimist Club decided to include the recognition of the Brighton Monument along with its restoration and also recognition of the Model School one.
6. Memorial Day of 1997 back-to-back ceremonies were held at Model School and Shannon for remembering the lives of our fallen soldiers.
7. In 1998 the Shannon Optimist Club decides to continue the Memorial Day ceremony at Shannon each year, thereby making it an annual event.
8. In 2006, the Dickey Seed Company purchased part of the old Galey and Lord property which included the three-

tenth-acre site of the historical Brighton WWII Monument. Dickey then placed the Monument site property into a separate deed of which included an unbreakable covenant, whereby the property could never be used for any other purpose than memorializing the lives of the 12 names on the monument along with all other USA war dead.

9. By 2010 the Shannon Optimist Club had been dissolved, and the Watters District Council for Historical Preservation incorporated. With the purpose of this new organization fairly-well stated in its title, it was only appropriate that the Council take on the sponsorship of the Community's annual Memorial Day activities... which it presently continues to do.

THE WATTERS DISTRICT COUNCIL not only sponsors Memorial Day events, but also continues an ongoing mission of publishing and preserving the history and heritage of Shannon, Model School and the surrounding community. One can see by the Council's web site that there is a treasure trove of history now being preserved for generations to come. All of which may have never happened had it not been for a man named Julian K. Morrison and his love of his fellow man and his country.

- ADDENDUM -

January 2019

THERE HAS RECENTLY BEEN new information discovered about the great American Patriot Julian K. Morrison. The 'K' in his name stands for Knox... Julian Knox Morrison, Jr. He was from Statesville North Carolina. He was a decorated officer of WWI, and came to Shannon in 1927 to become the first president of Brighton Southern Mills and president of the parent company, Brighton Mills...

simultaneously. Morrison held the position until his untimely death on June 10 of 1949.

MR. MORRISON WAS EVERYONE'S HERO that knew him..., the Mill's workers and their families, the teachers and students of the local school and especially, the WWII Soldiers. But, what most people didn't know was that Mr. Morrison was already a hero... decorated war hero that is, when he came to Shannon. Morrison came out of the US Army with the rank of Captain. He held two, not one, but two Distinguished Service Cross commendations. The Distinguished Service Cross is the second highest military commendation that can be received by a member of the United States Army... only one step below the Congressional Medal of Honor.

THE FOLLOWING IS an interesting article written on June 16, 2017 by Jessica A. Bandel:

Statesville Man Twice Decorated with DSC

Jessica A. Bandel



ID portrait of Julian Knox Morrison from the files of the American Field Service. Courtesy of the archives of the American Field Service and AFS Intercultural Programs.

“I have a feeling for the French people I cannot describe,” wrote then-lieutenant Julian Knox Morrison to his parents on January 10, 1918. “When I stand on a road...and see the regiments going up to the trenches my heart goes out to them. ... One sees these poor fellows go by and the question always comes into one's mind, how do they keep it up? Ragged, dirty, bearded men, laboring along under the

usual infantryman's pack, many of them with sticks to aid them with eyes and jaws firmly set. To them the glamour and newness of war has become old. They have made the trip to and from the trenches too many times."

By the time he penned this letter, the Statesville native had already been in the warzone for six months with the American Ambulance Field Service, an organization of American volunteers that operated under French command. From June 9 to November 13, 1917, Morrison served as a member of a supply unit within the Field Service known as Transport Materiel Etats-Unis [T.M.U.] 397. He transferred to the American Mission, Motor Transport Corps, of the American Expeditionary Force toward the end of 1917 where he put his experience with the Field Service to good use as a training instructor.

In May 1918, Morrison again obtained a transfer, this time to the newly organized Tank Corps. Displays of "extraordinary heroism" and cool leadership under fire at the Battle of St. Mihiel and the Meuse Argonne Offensive twice garnered him the Distinguished Service Cross (DSC), the second highest military commendation that can be received by a member of the United States Army.

The battle-hardened tank corps captain finally returned to the United States in mid-March 1919, having served continuously overseas for twenty-two months. Morrison received an honorable discharge in May and married Sue Gunter, of Greensboro, NC before moving to Georgia to pursue a career in textiles.

From 1927 until his death on June 20, 1949, he served as president of Brighton Mills in Shannon, Georgia. Newspapers throughout the south lamented his loss and heralded him as "one of the South's leading textile industrialists" ... a testament to his level of influence and prominence within the business world.

SHANDRA FARMS

ONE CANNOT DO JUSTICE to the memory of Mr. Morrison without reference to his beloved Shandra Farms. Shandra lies in a valley at the Western toe of Armstrong Mountain about two miles from the Brighton Mill. A large sprawling cattle and horse operation, it was a real showplace in its day. Morrison had built his stone mansion home overlooking a scenic view of the farm.

SHANDRA FARMS WAS not only one of the area's most picturesque farms... it was also one of the most modern, up-to-date farms in all of Georgia. Some of the State's first Aberdeen Angus, purebred cattle were introduced at Shandra. The farm also boasted of English jumping horses. Morrison's Angus cattle would take first prize at Georgia's Southeastern Fair nearly every year. When Shandra didn't take first, Berry Schools did. Same cattle though... because Berry had gotten their breeding stock from Shandra Farms.

SHANDRA FARMS HAD working and catching pins that included walk-through cattle dips. The show barn, where the prize bulls were housed, was air conditioned... in the Forties! This was at a time when no homes had air conditioning, and only a few stores in Rome had installed AC.

SHANDRA HAD ONE OF THE County's first irrigation systems. Innovated ideas produced some unheard-of results, such as: growing and harvesting large fields of sweet potatoes and turnips. Then, dehydrating them for use in cattle feed.

FEW MEN HAVE MADE the accomplishments of Julian K. Morrison... and few ever will. Fewer still, have made as many friends and helped their fellow man as much as did Julian K. Morrison. And, few have done so in such a short lifespan. Morrison was only in his early fifties when he left us... indeed, a remarkable man who lived a remarkable life.

JD