

CAROLE SMITH SANDERS

Carole Sanders' roots in Union Springs are almost as deep as those of the village itself. She was born, raised, locally employed, and retired within it. Carole's ancestry is English, Scots-Irish and Dutch. She is the daughter of Clayton and Janice McCulley Smith. All her grandparents were gone before she knew them, but their names are prominently noted in local history books. Their homes were among the oldest and most stately in the village. Her maternal grandfather was Dr. Rob Roy McCulley, the town physician for many years. He served in France in WWI and his father, Robert, fought in the Civil War. Carole's father, Clayton Smith was a celebrated mayor of the village. Her mother Janice trained as a nurse but did not practice until her children were grown. Carole, herself, appears in the *Bi-Centennial History of Springport and Union Springs* leading a parade dressed in Native American regalia. She and members of her family also figure prominently in the history of the Presbyterian Church and Carole was played an active role in the United Ministry Church after the three Protestant churches in the village formed a unique union, part of the ecumenical trend of the 1960's. She and her sisters have been active in the Frontenac Historical Society which is housed in the church of their childhood. One of the windows in that building is memorialized to a grandfather they never knew, Albert Smith.

Carole's childhood in Union Springs represents an image of the post WWII society seen in early television shows. She is pictured with her older sister, Jean, at right. School, church, family and community were fully integrated in a manner that allowed children to play and roam freely throughout the village. The family were members of the Presbyterian Church which had a series of young popular pastors. Young people were active and involved. Everyone knew everyone else. Chorus, band, and church choir were community as well as school organizations. Memorial Day parades were huge events. Carole was part of it all. She graduated from Union Springs High School before the women's movement when most girls did not go to college. When they did, their career options were traditional: teaching, nursing, secretarial, or retail. To a certain degree, Carole chose all the above. She chose nursing, which involved only two years of training allowing her to marry at 20. She trained at the Auburn Memorial Hospital. The nurses training program at that time was a thirty-three month program in which trainees worked fulltime in the hospital with no holidays off, no summer vacations, and only a week off at Thanksgiving or Christmas. She received her



RN degree. She married at 20 and had three children in as many years. Then, the storybook tale took a tragic turn. Her young husband of four years was stricken by a stroke and died. Carole was a widow at the age of 24. To raise her children, Carole took a job as a teacher's aide rather than her chosen career in nursing because it allowed her working schedule to coincide with theirs. She never remarried. Despite the tragedy, Carole and her family gave her children the kind of childhood she had known. Carol worked as a school nurse for 23 years. She raised a son and two daughters in the village. All three graduated from college and went on to professional careers. Her son became a pharmacist and, for a time, operated a drug store in the village of his ancestors. Her daughter served as pastor of the United Church of Christ for several years.



Carole herself was able to continue in the educational field, but not without challenges. At the time, school nurse positions required certification in both nursing and teaching. They were presumably expected to carry some teaching load, but as health education became a course of study for teacher training and a requirement for physical education teachers, the instructional role for school nurses diminished. When an opening occurred at the high school for a school nurse/teacher, Carole applied. She was rejected because she did not have the teaching certification. She pointed out to the superintendent that hiring her as school nurse was cheaper than hiring a nurse/teacher. Shortly thereafter, she received the call in which she was hired as a school nurse.

The primary challenge in Carole's life was obviously the death of her husband. Within that challenge, she found her primary role models: her parents, especially her father Clayton Smith, her hero. His own mother had died when he was three years old. His father remarried but also died when Clayton was only 12. He was raised by a stepmother who was not known to be warm and affectionate. Clayton's older siblings exited as soon as they were able. Clayton had only a short period of education in a "normal school." He was employed by and retired from NYSEG. In addition, he was a leading figure in the history of the village, serving as a justice of the peace, town board member and mayor. He was associated with the Boy Scouts, the Park Commission, the Masonic Lodge, church administration and was a founder of Meals on Wheels. At the same time, perhaps knowing what it was like to grow up without a father, he stepped into a parenting role with Carole's children. He was always there to help whether it was little league or household repairs. He played that role and through the years until his death in 1975. He is remembered, as Carole hopes to be known, as a caring person. The hundreds of children who passed through AJ can attest to her success in that endeavor.