

James Norman Bell, 1911-1974

Madison County, Tennessee

By Kathy Haney Williams

Madison County deed books show that **Walter Scott Bell** (1881-1958) bought 100 acres in 1905, 67 acres in 1906, and 100 acres in 1911 – all in District 8 in southeast Madison County in the area of Harts Bridge Road. On 6 September 1906, *The Jackson Daily Sun* in Jackson, Tennessee, reported that Walter S. Bell's "four fine 'Walker' fox hounds" were "missing from Belldale Farm Kennel." The hounds "strayed away from the Belldale Kennel, a few miles southeast of this city."

Walter married **Mary Elizabeth "Bessie" Pacaud** (1890-1962) on 3 December 1908 in Madison County. Walter was the son of **James Cooper Bell** and **Martha Perlina Smith**. Bessie was the daughter of **James William Pacaud** and **Ellen Britton Swink**.

In the 1910 US census, Walter S. and Mary E. Bell resided in Civil District 8 of Madison County with their six-month-old son, **Walter H. Bell**. Walter S. Bell was listed as a farmer, and he owned his farm. A tombstone in Riverside Cemetery in Jackson, Tennessee, memorializes "Walter Henry, son of Walter S. & Bessie Bell, 1909-1912." James and Martha Bell were also buried in Riverside Cemetery, and James and Ellen Pacaud were buried in Old Pisgah Cemetery in Chester County, Tennessee.

Walter and Bessie were parents to **James Norman Bell**, born 13 September 1911, and **Cyril Pacaud Bell**, born 11 January 1917 – both in Madison County. Norman is pictured to the right.



In the 1920 US census, Walter and Bessie Bell lived in District 1 (formerly District 8) on Harts Bridge Road in Madison County with their sons, James N (age 8) and Pacaud (age 3). Census education questions for James N Bell were answered: (1) Attended school any time since Sept. 1, 1919 – Yes, (2) Whether able to read – Yes. In the 1930 US census, this family of four resided at 424 Arlington Avenue in Jackson. In the 1940 US census, the family resided at 416 Arlington Avenue.

All men ages 18-65 in the United States were required to register for the World War II draft. Norman registered on 16 October 1940 with serial number 2473. His mother was listed on the draft card as the person who would always know his address. He was 29 years old with date of birth 13 September 1911, and he was unemployed. He lived at 416 Arlington Avenue. His phone number was 858. He signed in cursive writing. His description was race, white; height, 5'9"; weight, 150; eyes, blue; hair, brown; complexion, ruddy; and "Other obvious characteristics that will aid in identification: Struck by lightning in childhood."

SERIAL NUMBER 2473	1. NAME (Print) JAMES NORMAN BELL	ORDER NUMBER 2067
2. ADDRESS (Print) 416 ARLINGTON JACKSON MADISON TENN		
3. TELEPHONE 858	4. AGE IN YEARS 29	5. PLACE OF BIRTH MADISON TENN
6. COUNTRY OF CITIZENSHIP USA		
7. NAME OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS MRS. MARY ELIZABETH BELL MOTHER		
8. ADDRESS OF THAT PERSON 416 ARLINGTON JACKSON MADISON TENN		
9. EMPLOYER'S NAME UNEMPLOYED		
10. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS		
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
REGISTRATION CARD D. S. S. Form 1 16-17105 norman Bell		

REGISTRAR'S REPORT			
DESCRIPTION OF REGISTRANT			
RACE	HEIGHT (Approx.)	WEIGHT (Approx.)	COMPLEXION
White <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	5-9	150	Ruddy
Negro <input type="checkbox"/>	Blue <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Blonde <input type="checkbox"/>	Light <input type="checkbox"/>
Oriental <input type="checkbox"/>	Gray <input type="checkbox"/>	Red <input type="checkbox"/>	Dark <input type="checkbox"/>
Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Hazel <input type="checkbox"/>	Brown <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Freckled <input type="checkbox"/>
Philippine <input type="checkbox"/>	Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Gray <input type="checkbox"/>	Light brown <input type="checkbox"/>
		Bald <input type="checkbox"/>	Dark brown <input type="checkbox"/>
			Black <input type="checkbox"/>
Other obvious physical characteristics that will aid in identification: Struck By lightning in childhood			
I certify that my answers are true; that the person registered has read and has had read to him his own answers; that I have witnessed his signature or mark and that all of his answers of which I have knowledge are true, except as follows:			
W. Williams			
Registrar for	2	4	JACKSON TENN
Date of registration	OCTOBER - 16 - 1940		
LOCAL BOARD No. 1 JACKSON, MADISON COUNTY TENNESSEE STAMP OF LOCAL BOARD			
(The stamp of the Local Board having jurisdiction of the registrant should be placed in the above space.)			
U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-17105			

In 1954, Norman was the bat boy for the Home Appliance-Pan Am Jays baseball team in Jackson. The Jackson Jays designated 21 August 1954 as Norman Bell Night at their game against Dyersburg Independent. The following notice was published in *The Jackson Sun* on 18-20 August 1954:

The Jackson Jays have designated that night (August 21) as Norman Bell Night. Throughout a season of unusually torrid temperatures, Norman has always been on hand with his buckets of ice-cold water and dipper to try to help his Jays along the victory road.

Robert Littrell, owner of the Home Appliance Store, said a place will be set aside for any gift any person would care to bring. Presents such as shirts, ties and socks, anything but money, would be considered appropriate.

It's a wonderful gesture. Probably nowhere in the city of Jackson is there another fan more loyal, less selfish than Norman Bell. Try to make it to College Park Saturday and make Norman Bell Night a big success.

The Jackson Sun reported on 22 August 1954 that "Norman Bell Night was a big success, with Norman receiving several nice gifts."

Norman was the mascot for the Jackson Jays baseball team. He is pictured on the front row on the left in *The Jackson Sun* photo published 5 June 1955.

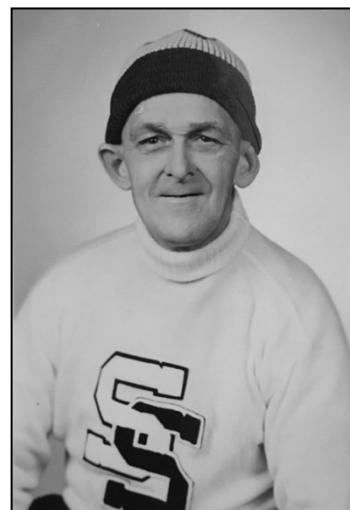


James Norman Bell wearing a baseball uniform



James Norman Bell in downtown Jackson, TN

Norman was known in the South Jackson area as a kind man with special needs. When the high schools in South Madison County consolidated into the new South Side High School in the fall of 1956, Norman became a fan of the Hawks and often attended their football and basketball games where he would ring a cowbell to celebrate a good play or a score. He was often seen walking to and from the school and his home (3.2 miles one way), both on Harts Bridge Road. He carried a tote bag with a variety of items. He attended worship services at local churches. He often rode with neighbors when a game or church was too far to walk or if there was inclement weather. He is proudly wearing a South Side letter on his sweater in the photo on the right.



South Side High School alumni shared fond memories of Norman.

Wanda Walker Lee: “My daddy told me that if you ever gave Norman a ride, you had to take him all the way to where he was going. If you tried to stop and let him out before you got to his destination, he would refuse to get out of the car.”

Jenny Butler: “His mother made homemade sausage or got it somewhere. He would bring sausage and biscuits to a game and share.”

Barbara Haney Shepard: “During one of his visits to First Baptist Church, Bemis, he had his usual cotton bag with him. After the service, he opened his bag and pulled out a cat. The cat was certainly well behaved during the service.”

Linda Goff Farmer: “When I took drivers education, Lt. **Bill Way** of the THP was one of the instructors. He told stories of Norman Bell trying to hitch a ride to out-of-town football games. Norman would try to ride with the TN State Troopers; of course, they were not allowed to take civilians in their cars unless they were under arrest. Lt. Way said he often would drive by Norman hitching a ride; then when he (Lt. Way) arrived at the game, Norman would already be there. He said that happened often and he did not know how Norman would beat him to the games.”

Tony Rice: “Being a resident of Harts Bridge and Justiss Road area in my childhood, Mr. Norman Bell was fairly well known by all. He lived approximately one mile farther down Harts Bridge Road from my family. He lived approximately three miles from South Side. It was told that many days he would walk every step of the way from his home to who knows where in the City of Jackson and many times, every step back to his home if a ride wasn't available. It would not be unusual to see him returning home late at night with his bag of goods. I once observed him with the bag over his shoulder as he was pushing a lawnmower.”

Randy Flanagan: “Norman got upset when South Side wouldn't give him a school jacket to wear at the ballgames. Then, he gave his support to Tury Oman and the Jackson Golden Bears, thus following them to all their games even if he had to walk.”

On 2 June 1970, Norman suffered multiple injuries when he was struck by an automobile at the intersection of South Highland Avenue and Harts Bridge Road. The accident was reported in *The Jackson Sun* on Wednesday, 3 June 1970, page 32.

Admitted to General Hospital's Intensive Care Unit at 10:30 p.m. Tuesday was James Norman Bell, 57, of Route 3, Jackson. Bell suffered multiple injuries and is listed in fair condition today. He was struck by an auto at the intersection of the Harts Bridge Road and South Highland.

Chief Marcom said Bell was walking against the traffic, toward a car driven by James A. Doege which had stopped on the other side of the road to pick up Bell. Bell was struck by a car driven by Mrs. Judith Smith of 124 Vance Street.

A passenger in Mrs. Smith's car told investigating officers that an auto was parked on the left side of the road with the headlights on when Bell crossed the road.

Mrs. Smith has been charged with failure to yield the right of way to a pedestrian. The mishap is still under investigation.

After his parents died, Norman lived at Belldale Farm with a caregiver until his passing. His death certificate #01777 states that he died 25 January 1974 at age 62 in Madison County.

Cyril Pacaud Bell attended Branham and Hughes Military Academy in Spring Hill, Tennessee; and he graduated from Jackson High School and Union University in Jackson. While a student at Jackson High, Pacaud was a member of DeMolay Fraternity; and they enjoyed possum hunts, bonfires, refreshments, and dancing at “the Bell Farm about six miles from Jackson on the Harts Bridge Road” according to *The Jackson Sun* on 31 October 1937.

Pacaud also registered for the World War II draft on 16 October 1940, and his serial number was 2320. His contact information was the same as Norman’s card. Pacaud was 23 years old at that time with date of birth 11 January 1917. His employer’s name was A. V. Patton; and the place of employment was Market at College in Jackson, Madison County, Tennessee. Pacaud’s description on the draft card was race, white; height, 6’0”; weight, 160; eyes, blue; hair, brown; complexion, ruddy. His employer was **Algernon Virgil “A.V.” Patton** (1876-1942), spouse of Pacaud and Norman’s aunt **Florence Lena Pacaud Patton** (1887-1988).

Pacaud served as a US Navy pilot in World War II and retired with the rank of commander in 1954. While serving in the military, he met **Phyllis Marie Friess** (1918-2006) of Akron, Ohio; and they married 5 May 1945 in Corpus Christi, Texas. She served in the US Navy as a WAVE and was one of its first group of women officers. After the war, Pacaud and Phyllis moved to Jackson where their five daughters were born and raised – **Jeanne Marie Bell Meyer** (1948-1997), **Barbara Ann Bell Day**, **Mary Elizabeth “Libby” Bell Carmichael**, **Susan Irene Bell Akers**, and **Patricia Pacaud “Tricia” Bell Nelson**.

Pacaud was President of Jackson Lumber Company, Jackson’s Man of the Year 1961, Mid-South Man of the Year 1961, President of the Jackson Area Chamber of Commerce, and Director of Development of Lambuth College. Death certificate #51784 states that Pacaud died 9 December 1994 at age 77 in Madison County. Death certificate #58307 states that Phyllis died 9 December 2006 at age 88 in Madison County.

Walter, Bessie, Norman, Pacaud, and Phyllis Bell are interred in Hollywood Cemetery, Lot 43, Section A.

Norman’s nieces have many fond memories of him and their family farm where he lived. Tricia shared her memories of the Bell family’s farm, Belldale. She remembers the beautiful wrap-around porch, the setting of the house up on the hill, the great storage area for canning jars under the house, the woodwork, tall ceilings, pocket doors, daffodils in the springtime all over the hill, and the lunch bell outside the back porch (which is now in her back yard). Barbara shared portraits of Norman; and she remembers their dad set up a workshop for Norman in the basement of the house where Norman made several things to sell, including stick horses with red heads and black features (eyes and nose). Barbara also remembers that he saved bubble gum aluminum wrappers and had a giant ball made from them. Susan remembers that Norman kept his shirt pocket full of pens and pencils, and he often sang *Amazing Grace*. Belldale Farm at 872 Harts Bridge Road in Madison County was property of the Bell family from 1905 until 2020.

Sources:

- Walter S. Bell from E. C. Bell and wife Cora Lee, District 8, 100 acres, 1905 – Deed Book 69 page 23; Walter S. Bell and others from J. R. Allison, District 8, 67 acres, 1906 – Deed Book 80 page 179; Walter S. Bell from Levy Smith and wife Sallie, District 8, 100 acres, 1911 – Deed Book 81 page 25
- Mary Elizabeth Pacaud’s Delayed Certificate of Birth on Ancestry.com
- Draft registration cards from Ancestry.com for James Norman Bell and Cyril Pacaud Bell
- *The Jackson Sun*: 6 Sep 1906, 31 Oct 1937, 22 Aug 1954, 5 Jun 1955, 3 Jun 1970, 11 Dec 1994, 10 Dec 2006
- Obituary of Phyllis Friess Bell, *Akron Beacon Journal*, 11 Dec 2006 in Newspapers.com
- FindAGrave.com memorials: 27045233, 27045086, 137924257, 85222848, 27045100, 85222866
- <https://register.shelby.tn.us/> - Archives, Tennessee Vital Records, Death Records/Marriage Records
- <https://hollywoodcemeteryjacksontn.org/wp/master-burial-records/>

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