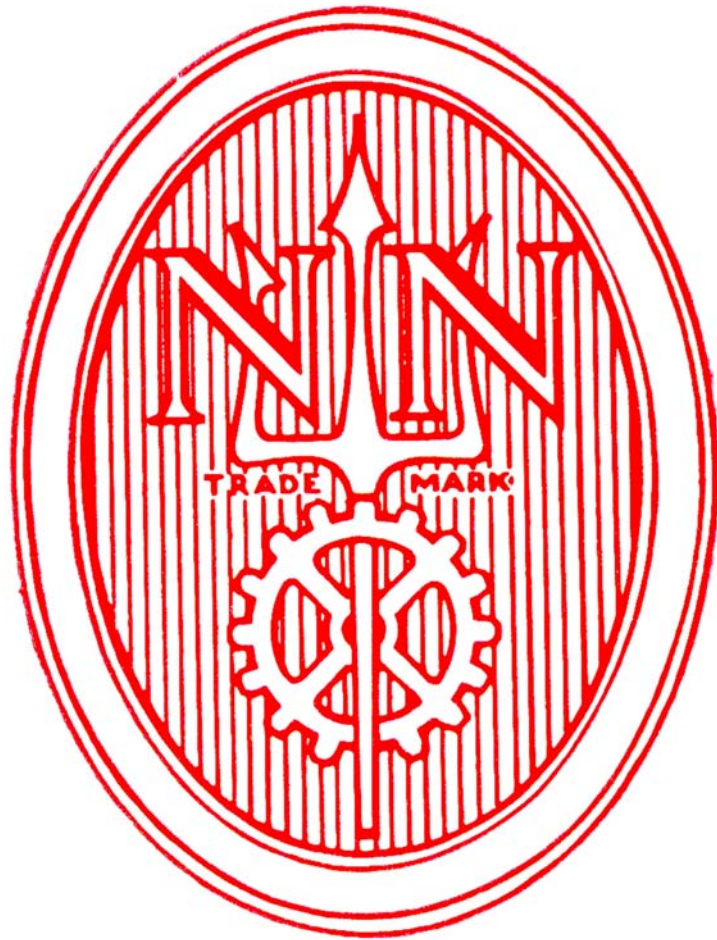


***A FAMILY  
OF  
SHIPBUILDERS***



***In Tribute to Captain Bob***

*by Bill Lee*

# A FAMILY OF SHIPBUILDERS

*Introduction: In its twelve decades of existence, Newport News Shipbuilding has greatly profited from the creativity and productivity of numerous ‘shipbuilder families’. An integral and important part of the very backbone of the company, these truly invaluable assets frequently span several generations and can count amongst their numbers one or often several graduates of the yard’s famed Apprentice School. This is the story of one such family, which not only can trace its association with NNS from the very beginnings of shipbuilding there to the present, but also quite possibly far into the future.*

## **ESTABLISHING A GREAT SHIPBUILDING PLANT AT THE GATEWAY TO THE SEA**



Created in 1886, the Chesapeake Dry Dock and Construction Company was originally envisioned as a repair facility for ships serving the eastern terminus of the C&O Railway. For this purpose, a dry dock was built and placed in service in April, 1889. A year later, the firm’s name was changed to Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. The yard, at that time, was completely contained between Washington Avenue and the James River, and between 37<sup>th</sup> Street and 41<sup>st</sup> Street.

Justifying the expansion, the yard’s founder, Collis Potter Huntington referred to Hampton Roads as “The best location in the world to start a shipyard plant” and added: “There it is never so cold but you can hammer metal out of doors”.

Shipyards of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, by necessity, were largely self-sufficient and manufactured most of the items required in the creation of ocean-going vessels, including ships’ propulsion machinery and other equipment. For this reason, work was begun in 1890 on the construction of permanent buildings at NNS for blacksmith, boiler, machine, joiner and pattern shops; vital for the conduct of steel shipbuilding work. The boiler and blacksmith shops were constructed of brick, and shared a common wall.



These facilities, located directly behind the main office building, at the head of Dry Dock #1, played a vital role in the construction of the first hulls built at Newport News. As did the men that toiled in them. The Virginia Peninsula was not an industrial hot bed of activity then. Skilled craftsmen had to be recruited or attracted to the new shipyard by promises of steady employment and better wages than were attainable elsewhere.

It may well be that some men with the requisite skills for shipbuilding, initially employed in the C&O's major maintenance facility for steam locomotives in Clifton Forge, Virginia, were encouraged to move to Newport News. Or some of them may have done so on their own initiative. In either case, in the first year of NNS&DDCo's existence, a skilled boilermaker, **Robert Carter**, moved to the Virginia Peninsula and became a shipbuilder.

## **ROBERT ABBITT (*Captain Bob*) CARTER**

*~ First Generation Shipbuilder ~*



Robert Carter had already achieved much in his young life, and under the most difficult of conditions. The eldest of eight children, he was born in Buckingham County, Virginia in 1863. The Carter siblings were orphaned when he was only 14. Somehow, he not only managed to keep the remaining members of his family together; he learned the boilermaker trade as well.

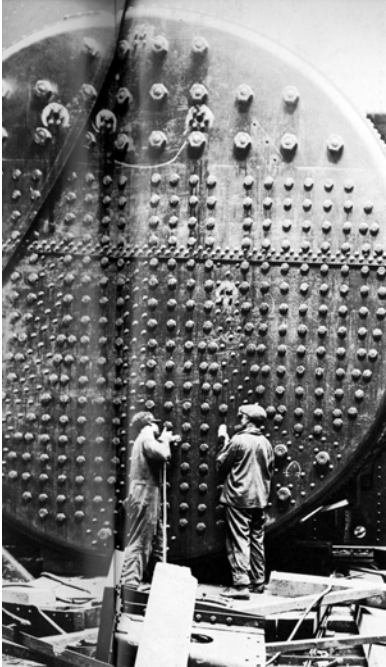
By the time he was 30, he had married **Frances Marion Small** at some earlier date. Frances Marion was born in 1867 and lived nine and a half decades; long enough to enjoy seeing her family of shipbuilders grow large and to prosper, and to participate in some shipbuilding traditions herself.

On some unrecorded date in

1893, Robert Carter accepted employment at NNS, and they moved from Covington, Virginia to a home on 25<sup>th</sup> street in the residential east end of Newport News; just a short trolley ride to his workplace in the yard's boiler shop.

Robert Carter's early days of employment in Newport News must have involved the manufacture and shop assembly of fire tube boilers, also known as "Scotch" boilers.





This huge boiler, of that type, was manufactured and assembled in the yard's shops. Installed in an early battleship built at NNS, this technology was state-of-the-art in the early 1900s. Undoubtedly he was involved with and quite likely had a leadership role in the transition of the art of boiler manufacturing techniques to create more modern and powerful water tube boilers a few years later.

Obviously, his people skills were much appreciated by company management, along with his technical capabilities. As shipyard records reveal, R. A. Carter became foreman of the boiler shop on July 24, 1917.

Mr. Carter held this important post until retiring on December 30, 1936 at age 73, following 43 continuous years of shipyard service.

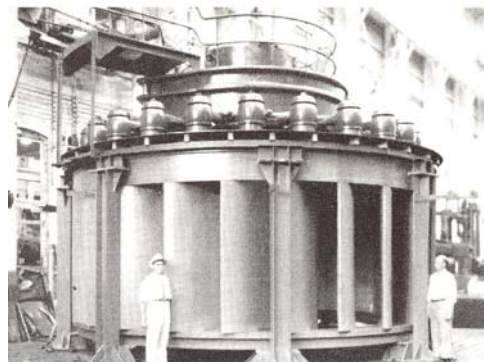
His shipyard retirement amounted to \$75 per month.

During this long tenure, while almost everyone else in the shipyard was called by just their last name; Robert Carter was so respected by his peers and his superiors that at some point an ever-lasting nickname of admiration and affection was bestowed upon him:

***“Captain Bob”***.

But his career was not yet over; far from it.

In 1939, the ever-youthful Robert Carter, by then 76 years old, went ‘into the field’ to do ‘one last job’ for the shipyard. At the Claytor Hydro-Electric Power Plant in Pulaski, County, Virginia, he supervised the installation of four NNS-manufactured hydraulic turbines similar to the one shown here fully assembled in the shipyard’s main machine shop.



Then, in 1941, his company – and his country – called on *Captain Bob* again. Newport News Shipbuilding was constructing a satellite shipyard in Wilmington, North Carolina for the Maritime Administration in order to mass produce Liberty ships. That yard had to have a boiler shop, as well as someone to supervise its construction, then train farmers, fishermen and females as budding boilermakers, and finally to run it on a wartime basis.

So, at age 78, Robert Carter and his wife moved for the first time from the state of their birth and entire existence to temporary quarters in Wilmington. Once there, *Captain Bob* quickly became known as ‘the grand old man’ of the shipyard; the most senior, in age and experience, of the 400 people that NNS sent there to work a wartime miracle.

And work a miracle, they did. Starting in February of 1941, they carved a shipyard out of a pine tree wilderness that abutted swampy tidal waters, just south of town. This ambitious project included sliding shipways, outfitting piers, and shops and subassembly areas; all serviced by dozens of modern cranes. Plus offices, an apprentice school and other support facilities. Employee housing, a nursery school, and an entertainment complex were also constructed within walking distance for the use of the thousands of men and women that flocked to Wilmington to learn and practice the art of shipbuilding.

Their bold motto, *To Build Good Ships Quickly*, proved true, time and time again.

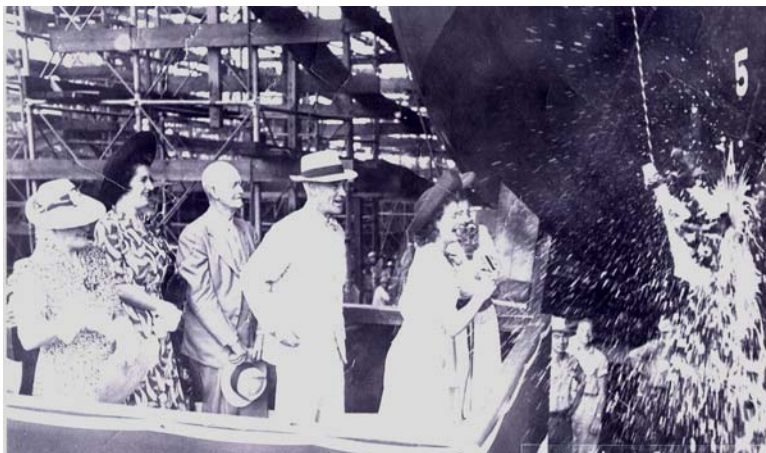


Construction of North Carolina Shipbuilding's facilities was still underway when the keels for the first two ships built there were laid on May 22, 1941. Hull #1, a Liberty ship, was launched on December 6, 1941. In a little over five years, the Wilmington yard delivered an astounding 243 ocean-going vessels (requiring, on average, a ship launching ceremony every 6-1/2 days!).

In those hectic days, even launching sponsors were in short supply. But the people from Newport News helped meet that challenge too. Names that are an integral part of the history of NNS appear frequently on the list of the Wilmington yard's sponsors. Young ladies' names like Miss Ferguson, Miss Woodward and Miss Blewett.

In obvious recognition of his many contributions, Robert Carter was honored not once – but twice – as he witnessed a family member christen a ship at North Carolina Shipbuilding. Not many men in the shipyard's middle management ranks have ever been accorded such an honor, and none, perhaps – except *Captain Bob* – two times.

His only daughter, **Audrey Willard Carter** Walker was the sponsor of the SS William A. Graham, a Liberty ship that was the North Carolina yard's Hull #16. In this vintage photo, taken at the climax of a short ceremony on July 26, 1942, her excited success was witnessed and enjoyed by, left to right, her mother, Frances Marion Carter; a niece, Shirley Mae Carter, her proud Pop, *Captain Bob*; and Roger Williams, only President of the North Carolina Shipbuilding Corporation in its five years of operation. Hidden behind her is the event's matron of honor, her sister-in-law, Katherine Walker.



Other family members present on the launching stand that day included her husband, Wilber Walker, a Foreman in the NNS Pipe Shop during the war, and her oldest brother, Elmo Abbitt Carter along with his wife, Eulalia Villenes Carter.

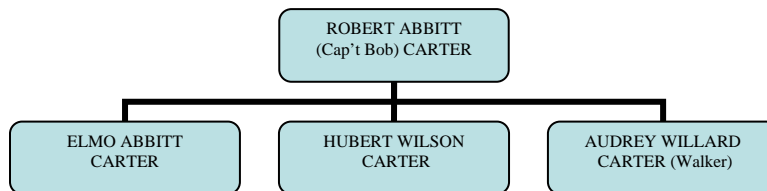
The next ‘Carter launching’ was an even more memorable event. On November 1, 1943, Mrs. Robert A. Carter christened North Carolina Shipbuilding Corporation’s Hull #98, the SS MORNING STAR, a C-2 cargo vessel. It was a Sunday, an unusual day for a launching, even in wartime. But for good purpose, because her husband, *Captain Bob*, proudly watched that ceremony on what was the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth!

Unfortunately, that unique shipbuilder’s birthday gift was eclipsed a few weeks later when he was struck by an automobile in downtown Wilmington. Seriously injured, he had to return to his permanent residence on Maple Avenue in Newport News to recuperate. Subsequently, he retired, for a second time, on June 30, 1944, over fifty years after he first went to work in the NNS boiler shop.

Never fully recovering from his injuries, Captain Bob passed away on November 10, 1945, shortly after attaining age 82. But he lived to see his efforts and those of millions more rewarded by the victorious end of World War II. His wife survived him for a considerable period of time, passing away in 1962 at age 91.

But that’s not the end of the story, far from it, when it comes to the Carter family’s participation in shipbuilding. Nor of the family’s remarkable tendency toward longevity.

## A SECOND GENERATION OF SHIPBUILDING CARTERS



*~ Apprentices Elmo & Hubert Carter; and Ship Sponsor Audrey ~*

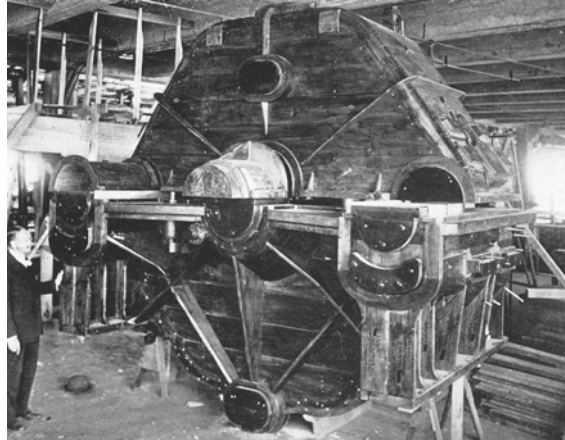
Robert Carter and his wife had three sons and a daughter. The second oldest son, Roy, never worked at NNS, and his promising career as a lawyer ended prematurely in 1941, when he passed away at age 47. The remaining two boys, **Elmo Abbitt Carter** and **Hubert Wilson Carter** both entered the Apprentice School at Newport News Shipbuilding, graduated and had long and productive careers there.

The eldest boy, Elmo, was born in 1896 and completed his time as a Patternmaker in April of 1917, when this picture was taken. Although none of his immediate family worked at the shipyard, his brother-in-law was a timekeeper there for many years. It is his daughter, Shirley Mae, who is included in the launching photo on the preceding page.



Elmo became a graduate apprentice shortly before his Father was named Foreman of the yard's boiler shop and two years before the shipyard's Apprentice Program was formalized. At that time, the Pattern Shop was on the third floor of the Joiner Department Building, adjacent to the Main Machine Shop and the boiler shop's original location. In 1918, the Pattern Shop was relocated across Huntington Avenue and next to the Foundry.

In this new location, Elmo Carter practiced his trade for almost 50 years, helping build complicated patterns for such complicated pieces of machinery as reduction gear housings for high speed naval vessels. It was here that Elmo's long and productive NNS career ended in 1966, after 53 years of continuous service. At the time of his retirement, he was a General Foreman in the Patternmaker Department. His retirement amounted to \$150 a month, which he received for over twenty-five years, until he passed away in 1991 at age 95.



Captain Bob's only daughter was **Audrey Willard Carter**. Born in 1912, she was the previously mentioned sponsor of North Carolina Shipbuilding's Hull #16, at age 30. She married Wilber William Walker, a career shipyard employee who completed his lengthy service in the Non-Destructive Testing Department. Audrey Walker passed away in 1993.

The youngest of the four Carter children, Hubert, was born at his parents' 27<sup>th</sup> street home in the East End of Newport News on March 23, 1915. His playmates, during his school years, would read like a who's-who of shipbuilders. One of his favorite chums was a slightly older boy; Dick Poythress. Dick completed his apprenticeship in 1937 and also had a productive career in the shipyard. He was a close friend of Hubert Carter for decades, and is well remembered as the creator of the Apprentice School's seal.

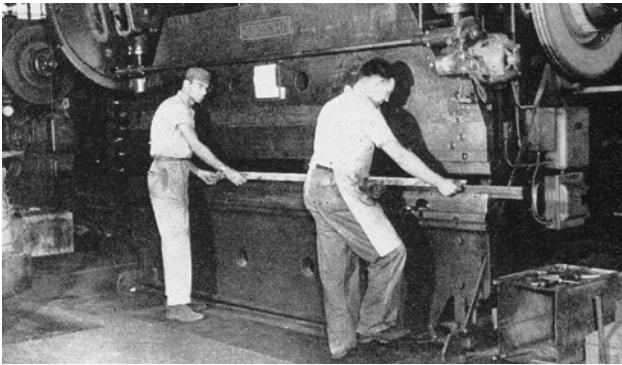


Another of his neighborhood acquaintances, **Frances Marie Coffman**, was a pretty girl six months his junior. At one point, when they were only ten years old, she fell down while playing and Hubert helped her up. In a recent reminiscence, he fondly recalled: "She looked into my eyes, and I could tell right then that she loved me." A few years later, he told her he loved her as well and...but that's getting a bit ahead of their part of this story.

After attending Walter Reed Grammar School, Hubert went to Newport News High School, where he played football and posed, in his senior year, for this picture. He graduated in February 1934, in the middle of the nation's painful recovery from The Great Depression.

Nevertheless, his Father managed to get him a low-paying job as an inexperienced helper in the shipyard's boiler shop. However, it wasn't too long after that when *Captain Bob* was forced to make some personnel cutbacks in his department. He told Hubert to go home. When his son protested, saying that his Dad could lay off someone making more money (and everyone, just about, made more money than an unskilled helper), his Father replied: "Boy, go home. I can take care of you. I won't lay off a man that has a family."

Fortunately for Hubert, that situation didn't last very long, for the Federal Government was pumping money into public works, including new ships for a navy badly neglected after World War I ended. Consequently, while much of the nation was still economically incapacitated, recovery was well underway in Newport News by late 1934.



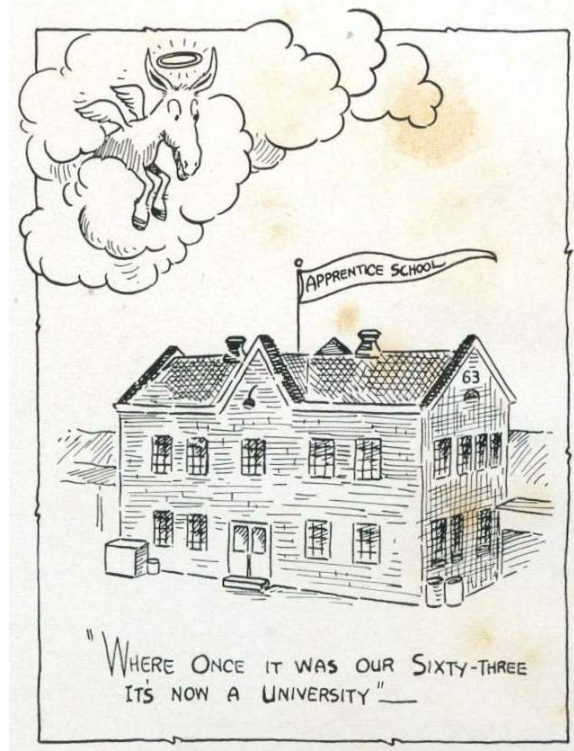
Hubert was soon offered an apprenticeship in the Sheet Metal Department, which included the magnificent starting wage of 28 cents an hour.

He readily accepted, and once he was permanently working behind the wrought iron fence that parallels Washington Avenue, Hubert Carter

rapidly became accustomed to being called by his last name, as thousands of apprentices have experienced. His practical training included stints in the Sheet Metal Shop, plus on ship under construction. Much of his early experience came from working onboard some of the first aircraft carriers built by NNS.

Unlike his older brother, Hubert and his classmates even got paid to go to school, albeit only for a few hours, each week. By the mid-1930s the Apprentice Program had advanced from being an informal over-the-shoulder training technique, to one unique in industry. A formal educational program had been established in 1919, and a building had been converted for the exclusive use of teaching junior-college-level courses that were germane to shipbuilding.

The fact that the school – NNS Building #63 - had once been the yard's mule stable certainly wasn't lost on the wags of that era, as this cartoon, published in an issue of the *Shipyard Bulletin*, amply demonstrates.





By November 11, 1938, Hubert had completed his apprenticeship and was making 64 cents per hour. And then, things got even better. Sometime between then and when he was age ten, Hubert responded to that adoring gaze he first saw in Frances' eyes, and told her that he loved her as well. And no wonder, based on this 1935 Newport News High School graduation photo of her. They made plans to become wed...as soon as permissible.

Back then, a long-standing, absolute prohibition against apprentices still in their time becoming married was strictly enforced. So Frances and Hubert had to impatiently wait until after he had completed his apprenticeship to become man and wife. That happy event took place on December 3, 1938. Their first home was located at 115 Maple Avenue; just a block from the home of his parents and within walking distance of hers.

As might now be anticipated, Frances Coffman's family also had strong ties to the Newport News shipyard. Her father, Williamson Bond Coffman, was an electrical supervisor in the yard's powerhouse. Two of her siblings also were employed by NNS, one in the Pipe Department, the other on the staff of the Riggers Department.

Hubert and Frances Carter's family grew, over the next few years, as did the Carter family's continued association with NNS. First to come along was **Robert Upton**, in 1939, then **Wilson Bond** in 1942, followed by **Frances Marion** in 1945. Their mother was a traditional stay-at-home Mom. Long trips, especially during the war years, were infrequent, especially for a mother of three whose husband was working long hours, six and sometimes seven days a week.

So it's understandable that one of Frances Coffman Carter's fondest memories is of going to Wilmington in late 1943 to not just witness, but to actually participate in the ship christening ceremony that so honored her husband's Father, *Captain Bob*. She and Hubert's sister, Audrey Carter Walker, were the attendants when Mrs. Robert A. Carter christened a ship on her husband's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

That was an event worthy of an understanding shipyard management then, and also worthy of being repeated in the future. Hopefully, this example may inspire some future shipyard executive (and, one presumes, someone who may also be an Apprentice Alumni) to continue to honor its most valued employees in such appropriate fashion.

Hubert Carter spent the bulk of his shipyard career working on aircraft carriers. During World War II he moved from carrier to carrier on the yard's north side, until they were christened and moved to the yard's outfitting piers. At times, he worked on ships under construction on even keels in Shipways 10 & 11; at other times he met the challenges of installing sheet metal components in huge vessels being built on inclined ways.

He often toiled deep in the bowels of a carrier under construction, his senses both assailed and almost overwhelmed, at times. Visibility inside unfinished steel compartments was not good, and welding and burning operations quickly caused visibility to further diminish. Predictably, working inside such a steel box was also extremely noisy.

In addition, various metal-forming methods also produced a number of unpleasant smells, plus the creation of airborne contaminants. Strong fumes from application of zinc chromate primer paint, often followed by burning and grinding operations on newly coated surfaces added to the general discomfort.

Hubert's sense of feel was also both affected and offended. Raw shipbuilding steel gets cold, and stays cold in the winter. It gets hot, and stays hot in the summer. Added layers of warm clothing got in the way of his work efficiency, so he could not really bundle up in the winter. He had to remove his gloves to perform many tasks, resulting in the inevitable and multiple cuts and scratches that come from working with sheet metal.

Most of the times, in this harsh environment, Hubert plied his trade in carriers' galley areas, workshops and storerooms from midships aft. Over time, he was promoted to the rank of foreman, and had as many as 32 craftsmen at a time working under his direction.



At day's end, he walked out a gate in the company of thousands of others to catch his ride home; a car pool that included five other men, paying the equivalent of bus fare to the driver. And once a week he lined up with them behind the main office building after the 4 PM quitting whistle blew in order to receive his weekly pay.

In the late 50s and early 60s, the company's workload, coupled with his proven craftsmanship and people skills resulted in his being reassigned, for a time, from working on carriers to submarines, and then back to carriers. In addition, in 1963, he had the pleasure of going on the sea trials of the USS THOMAS JEFFERSON (SSBN-618). That period of his career also included the opportunity to work, shipboard, with his middle child. There's more about that Carter in this story a little later on.

Returning to carrier work for a final time, Hubert Carter became a General Foreman, responsible for all shipboard installation of sheet metal work on NIMITZ-Class carriers. When the second ship of that class, DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69) was completed in October of 1977, he decided that he did not want to work for what would be several more years on the next carrier, CVN-70. Her completion would not come until at least 1982; at which time he would have been two years past normal retirement age.

Acceding to his wishes, he was granted early retirement by the shipyard in March of 1978, after recording 44 years of service. Roughly four decades of his life was devoted to helping create some of the most complex creations of man – modern aircraft carriers.



But, like his Father, Hubert Carter was not done working. He switched from a vocation of shipbuilding to avocations that included volunteerism at Riverside Hospital and with his church, and playing golf. He routinely toured the old Hampton Public Course, without benefit of a cart or a caddy. He last played a round of golf in October of 2004...at age 89.

Today, Hubert and Frances currently reside in a modest home in the Denbigh area, where they have been since 1963. But neither one of them shows any discernible signs of slowing down from their fulfilling lifestyle of togetherness and happiness.

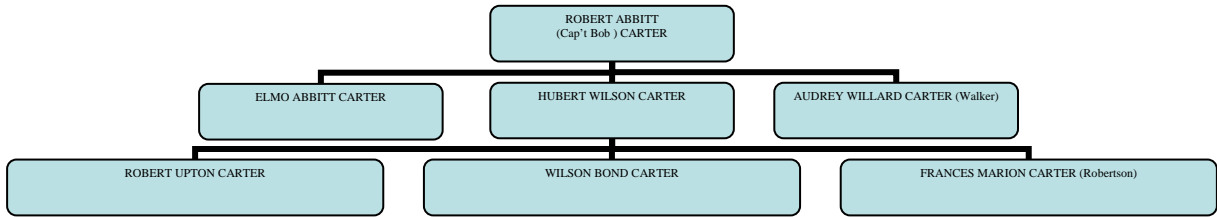
Rapidly approaching age 92, the seemingly ever-youthful Hubert Carter still cuts his grass, cleans out his gutters and changes the oil in his car; things most other people in their tenth decade of life would no longer even try to attempt.

Not to be undone, his wife, the slightly younger Frances Carter, often hangs wash out on an old-fashioned clothesline, to impart that fresh air smell simply unattainable by mechanical means.

Those fortunate enough to spend time in their company marvel at their respective memories and their physical condition. But most of all, their eyes still shine with those loving looks reminiscent of a heartwarming story when puppy love blossomed and ripened into six-plus decades of marriage.



## THE THIRD GENERATION OF CARTER SHIPBUILDERS



~ Plus Numerous Other Shipbuilders, Related by Marriage ~

Francis Marie and Hubert Carter’s eldest son, Robert, has continued his grandfather’s tradition of working at NNS past normal retirement age. Presently, he is 67, and is employed in the yard’s Electrical Design Department. His sister, Frances Marion, once worked close by, in a City of Newport News office. She married apprentice graduate John Donald Robertson, who completed his time in the Mold Loft in 1958. Donny comes from another multi-generational shipbuilding family. His Father, Lem, was both an apprentice graduate and a vice president at NNS. Two of his brothers were also longtime employees there, and his eldest brother, Lem, Jr., was also a graduate apprentice.

The other son of Hubert and Frances Carter, W. Bond Carter, followed more closely in his Father’s footsteps. After completing high school, he was offered an apprenticeship in the Steam Pipefitters, and entered the Apprentice School in 1962.

Like other members of his family, Bond was introduced to the oft-times mysterious jargon of the NNS waterfront; so numerous, they had to be tabulated in a multi-page handbook. Completing his time in 1966, he then was given the opportunity to work for one of the yard’s nuclear subsidiaries, Newport News Reactor Servicing, at naval prototypes in New York and Connecticut.



While in his apprenticeship, Bond happened to be assigned to work on the USS THOMAS JEFFERSON at the same time his Father was also working onboard that sub. It may have been the tight quarters of a submarine, or perhaps Bond’s relative inexperience, but at some point his Father became exasperated with him, and loudly declared: “Boy, you must be as dumb as a stump”.

Thereafter, to many a shipyard colleague, Bond Carter became forever known as ‘Stump’ Carter. Not as flattering a nickname as his Grandfather, *Captain Bob*, was given, to be sure, but a pretty unique one, nevertheless. And hard to get rid of, for, after all, it was bestowed on him by none other than his own Father.

Returning to NNS from work above the Mason-Dixon Line on naval nuclear prototypes, “Stump” became a steamfitter supervisor on submarine construction projects, managing a work crew of 26 men. Seizing an opportunity to go into the yard’s design area, when hundreds of draftsmen were needed, he became an apprentice (of sorts) again.

After a short period of ‘drawing board’ refresher training, Bond Carter became a designer in the NIMITZ propulsion plant project team. Between 1968 and 1970, when he left the shipyard, Bond participated in what was then a state-of-the-art design concept; the utilization of a full-scale mock-up to create a superior design. Three-plus decades and ten completed carriers later, he looks back at this experience as one of his proudest accomplishments.

By 1965, the rules of the shipyard’s Apprentice School had eased somewhat, and apprentices were allowed to marry in their final year. Bond and **Barbara Ann Curlee** were married in May of that year. Even his introduction to her involved a Carter family member, for his sister Frances Marion worked for a time in the 1960s with Barbara for the City of Newport News. Barbara and Bond have two sons, **Jeffery Bond** and **Gregory Abbitt Carter**, born in 1969 and 1971, respectively. It should be noted that the name ‘Abbitt’ runs through every generation of the Carter clan. And for good reason; it was the maiden name of *Captain Bob Carter*’s beloved mother.

When Bond left shipyard employment, he went to work for Barbara’s uncle, Ben Riggins. Ben, as might be expected, is an Apprentice Graduate, completing his time in the Shipfitters in 1945. Like many a ‘transplanted’ Virginia Peninsula industrialist, with an intimate knowledge of the shipyard, Bond has often performed work within the confines of NNS since he ceased being an employee. As a result, Bond’s business association with his many friends there has continued unabated.

In 1981, Bond Carter formed his own firm, Carter Iron & Steel Company. Naturally, he continued to seek subcontract work with the shipyard, and was rewarded for his efforts on numerous occasions until 2004, when he retired. Today, he and Barbara can happily sit back and proudly observe, as a fourth generation of Carters provides services to Newport News Shipbuilding.



## THE FOURTH GENERATION

~ *Providing Contractor Services to Newport News Shipbuilding* ~

Neither of their sons has ever worked, directly, for Newport News Shipbuilding. But currently, the youngest, Greg, runs Carter Iron & Steel; so the tradition of the Carters providing service to Newport News Shipbuilding continues unabated. For example, in 2006 the firm provided the massive steel subassemblies utilized in rebuilding Pier 3 there.

Greg and his wife, **Kelli Jean Keeter** met while attending Radford College. Not surprisingly, her grandfather was Owen Keeter, another familiar name in shipbuilding at Newport News. Owen completed his electrician apprenticeship in 1935 and was involved in the early days of navy nuclear propulsion work at NNS, including a stint in Idaho. Greg and Kelli have two pre-teen daughters.

Greg's older brother, Jeff (also a Radford graduate) and Jeff's wife, the former **Julia Taylor**, currently have a similar-sized family, also consisting of two daughters. Jeff sells rigging equipment for the Chesterfield Trading Company, which lists Newport News Shipbuilding as one of their biggest and best clients.

## THE FIFTH GENERATION

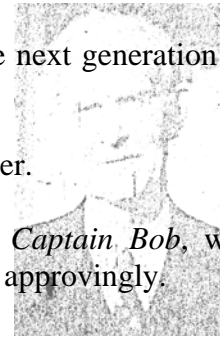
*~ Is There a Shipbuilding Career in the Future for One or More of Them? ~*

The four Carter girls that presently constitute, so far, the fifth generation of Robert Carter's direct descendants, are too young, presumably, to entertain any thoughts of shipbuilding careers. Yet...

Who knows, perhaps someday one or more of them may become the next generation of Carters to help enrich the history of Newport News Shipbuilding.

Perhaps, as apprentices, just like their grandfather and great-grandfather.

If that should ever come to pass, their Great, Great Grandfather, *Captain Bob*, will undoubtedly look down from that big boiler shop in the sky and smile approvingly.



*Postscript: I recently became aware of, and intrigued by the Carter family's history, albeit somewhat by fortuitous accident. In early 2006, while researching the life of fellow apprentice alumni Dick Poythress, I found a distant relative of his who happens to live next door to Hubert and Frances Carter. What that relative knew and was able to tell me about Dick had been largely supplied beforehand to him by Mr. Carter's commentary about their collective childhood capers.*

*Later, while talking directly to Mr. C, I not only learned of his experiences as a second generation shipbuilder, I also happily discovered, the parts of the story related herein that pertain to his Father's leadership roles at the Newport News and Wilmington shipyards. Additionally, in the small world department, I learned that someone I had worked with at NNS over 35 years ago – Bond "Stump" Carter – was a member of that self-same family. But then, it's a small, small world in "Shipyard Virginia". Still later, following some research on my part, a few telephone calls to various Carter family members and a delightful, hours-long visit with Mr. and Mrs. Carter in December of 2006; what you have just read resulted.*

*As indicated in the introduction, this is but one of what are presumed to be many similar stories of service and success by other multi-generational shipbuilding families. I hope to find more, in the near future, and write about them. Meanwhile, perhaps you, the reader, may be inspired to find and write about some of them yourselves!*

*Bill Lee*  
March, 2007