George Carl Loven and Cordie Lucretia Phillips Loven

Brief Biography

Letters of Correspondence 1917 - 1919

George Carl Loven, the eldest of 10 children, was born on April 29, 1891 in the small village of Joy in Burke County, North Carolina. At the age of 15, he began to work with his father to build a road from Morganton to Linville Falls. A few years later his family moved to Spruce Pine, North Carolina and it was there that he met Cordie Phillips.

On November 15, 1893, Cordie Lucretia Phillips was born in Mitchell County, North Carolina, the eldest of nine children. After completing high school in Bakersville, N.C., she taught in a one room school house in Ledger, N.C. Later she moved to Spruce Pine where she worked at the Spruce Pine General Store for several years.

One night Carl went to the Spruce Pine Fair and saw Cordie singing with a church quartet. He asked a friend who this “pretty little woman” was and managed to meet her in the weeks following the fair. They “courted” for a couple of years before he was drafted on October 2, 1917 into the Army infantry soon after the United States entered World War I. He was sent to Camp Sevier in Greenville County, South Carolina for training, before his departure to Belgium and France in May of 1918. During his time at Camp Sevier, Carl endured surgery for appendicitis and experienced a case of the grippe (or influenza) during the 1918-1919 pandemic. During the latter part of 1917 and continuing into 1918, Cordie and Carl maintained a regular series of letters. These letters portray the culture and colloquialisms of North Carolina culture, homesickness, combat training, thoughts about the dangers of war, patriotism, “courting” through correspondence, and the current new technology of the time – a Kodak camera.

Carl was a corporal when he was deployed to France and Belgium in May of 1918. His unit was sent to the battles on the Hindenburg Line near Cambria, France. On September 29 of 1918, he was severely wounded in the leg and knee by trench mortar shell. Afterwards, he was sent to England for treatment and further recovery.

At the Hindenburg Line, he spent much of this time in the trenches. When he and his unit advanced towards the German soldiers on the day he was injured, he fell next to an injured German soldier. While they waited for the Red Cross to pick them up, the German soldier shared his water canteen with Carl, since his had disappeared in battle. They also showed each other photos of their families.

After Carl returned to the United States, he went back to Mitchell County to reconnect with Cordie and his family. In 1920, he and Cordie were married in the Phillips’ home in Ledger. They settled in Spruce Pine.
After moving to Spruce Pine, they rented a house for a couple of years and then made the
decision to build a large home that could also serve as a boarding house and provide a source of
income. There were frequent visitors in Spruce Pine due to the mica industry. Carl had
knowledge and experience in construction and Cordie was an excellent cook, having helped her
mother in the kitchen at Ledger. They worked together to have a prosperous life. In the early
1920s, Carl also sold some of the first cars in the region. In the 1940s, the boarding house
business concluded and Carl and Cordie went into the furniture business with their siblings,
Vera Loven Phillips (Carl’s sister) and Arnold Phillips (Cordie’s brother). Both couples had two
daughters. Marjorie Loven was born to Carl and Cordie in 1921 and Evelyn came along in 1932.
Vera and Arnold’s daughters were Elizabeth and Mary Louise. The couples’ goal was to build a
successful furniture business in order to educate all four girls. They all graduated from college
and became teachers. Elizabeth Phillips went on to earn her Ph.D. in English and taught at
Wake Forest University for over 30 years.

Carl was a leader in the Spruce Pine community. He chaired the Rationing Board during World
War II, served as mayor of the town from 1946 – 1949 and served on the school board.

For the rest of Carl’s life, he had serious arthritis in the leg and knee where he was wounded.
When he needed medical treatment, he always went to the Oteen Veterans Hospital in
Asheville, N.C. After returning from the war, he never wanted to be around fireworks or any
type of explosives and he never hunted again. In 1968, he was admitted to the Oteen Hospital

Compiled by:

Evelyn Loven McCulley Ochs (Carl and Cordie’s youngest daughter)
and
Lucretia McCulley (Carl and Cordie’s eldest granddaughter)

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