

# *Bobbie Sue Shelton of Eagleville*

Written by Yvonne Moon, originally published January 18, 2007 in the Rutherford Reader



*Southern women see no contradiction  
in mixing strength with gentleness.*

*Sharon McKern*

With a name like Bobbie Sue Shelton, you somehow know she's got to be born and raised in the South. Just the name alone conjures up an image --- a genteel woman with a friendly voice and a welcoming air. Upon meeting her, the expectations are met and far exceeded. She's a modern day version of the Southern matriarch --- a picture of mature beauty with graying hair, graceful and strong, so vibrant and passionate in her love for life.

Bobbie Sue Shelton was born Bobbie Sue Redmon in a small house trailer behind what is today the Eagleville, Tennessee Post Office. Later, the family moved to a house on Main Street --- the old house still stands next door to the Mexican restaurant

downtown. When Bobbie Sue was around 12, her Dad built a house on the same lot where she was born. Bobbie Sue would live there with her family until she married in 1961. With her early childhood home located near the town's main thoroughfares, Bobbie Sue spent much of her childhood traipsing through the streets of downtown Eagleville. She remembers vividly some of the colorful inhabitants and frequent visitors to the area. One of the most memorable characters was the Goat Man, a traveling salesman/preacher who stopped by Eagleville occasionally on his frequent trips through the area. It was reputed he traveled over 100,000 miles in 49 states during his over 50 years of traveling. Bobbie Sue can remember as a young girl how "word of his arrival would reach Eagleville long before the sounds of clanking pots, iron wheels and the bleating goats." Another character of interest was longtime Eagleville resident, Sterling Owen "Dump" Edmonds, a noted inventor. It was he who first conceived the idea of the trailer truck (and the dump truck) along with several other inventions. He is also credited as the creator of an item of great importance to women everywhere --- the lipstick tube. Bobbie Sue's father, Junior Redmon worked with "Dump" Edmonds starting at the young age of 16. Bobbie Sue recalls how Mr. Edmonds was such a frequent visitor to the Redmon household when she was a young girl that she often thought of him as a grandfather.

These memories along with the numerous newspaper articles collected and preserved by her late mother, Nina Hudson Redmon, have proven invaluable as Bobbie Sue writes historical articles for the local community newspaper, the Eagleville Times.

Bobbie Sue is certainly not one to be bored. She retired in 1998 from Jostens in Shelbyville, where she worked for 28 years, most recently as head of the accounting department. Her late husband, Don Shelton, a teacher and principal in the Bedford County School System for 32 years, died in 1999. It was during this phase of her life that Bobbie Sue would often walk five miles a day for five days each week --- to stay busy while learning to deal with the grief of her husband's death.

These days, she stays busy researching and writing her newspaper articles, spending time with her family, and caring for her two pets, a cat named Socks and a white poodle named Chaz. She especially enjoys time spent with family --- her three children (now adults, a son and two daughters) and four grandchildren --- one granddaughter and three grandsons and all very, very special! She has high hopes that her oldest grandson has inherited the "packrat" genes that she herself got from her mother. At age 13, the young teen has already started collecting items of nostalgic memorabilia from the 1940's and 50's.

Another very important aspect of her life is her upcoming marriage to Sonny Lonas, a well-known and respected Nashville musician. Sonny has worked with Patsy Cline, Ernest Tubb, and other major artists from across the country through the years. Bobbie Sue and Sonny met about three years ago at a senior citizens dance in Spring Hill where Sonny was performing with the band. Bobbie Sue has loved dancing since she was a young girl dancing to the jukebox at the downtown hangout in Eagleville. Today, the venues (along with the dancers' agility) may have changed, but the fun remains all the same!

One of Bobbie Sue's latest projects has been working in cooperation with local resident Don McCord in organizing a book about the history of the Eagleville community. She had previously helped to compile a book about the nearby community of Rover. When McCord began his project to write about the history of Eagleville and its' people, he began talking with residents by phone and in person. At times, he would drive the back roads of the community with elderly residents to gain their knowledge and recall --- to help document the various places and events he was writing about. Bobbie Sue helped to edit the research material and was able to provide many of the photos that are included in the book. Again, her mother's collection of old newspaper articles and death notices of local residents proved a wonderful source of information. Bobbie Sue said when the 525-page book with 230 photographs was finally published in 2006 (after years of research and editing); she and Don McCord were as thrilled and exhausted as proud parents with a "new baby!"

So, if you (like me and Bobbie Sue Shelton and her mother before her) are a packrat, don't give up on your endeavor. To some, the yellowed newspaper clippings and assorted mementos may seem like "piles of clutter" but to the historians of future generations, the items will be priceless. And remember that the valuable antiques of today were once household items that "someone just decided to hang on to."

By keeping alive the memories, we honor those people and places we hold so dear.

To order the book, EAGLEVILLE, the history of Eagleville from 1790 to present, you may contact Don McCord at 615-274-2859 or Bobbie Sue Shelton at 615-274-6282.