

LEFT: Private Earl A. Trimmer, 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, (d. 24 Sep 1944), Purple Heart. RIGHT: Private First Class Stanton L. Trimmer, 202nd Engineer Combat Battalion, (d. 15 Sep 1944).

Trimmer Brothers

Salem, Ohio

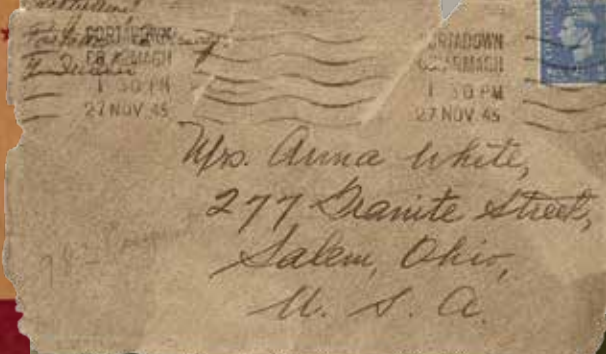
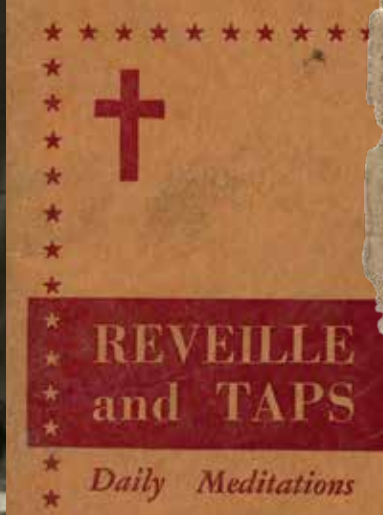
Margaret White Paxson grew up with six older brothers. Technically, only one was a full brother, while the other five had a different father and would therefore be considered half-brothers. But Margaret points out that when you are all raised by the same single mother, “there is no such thing as half anything.”

That single mother was Anna Trimmer White. She was born in 1889 in East Liverpool, Ohio, the daughter of English immigrants who had come to work in the nearby potteries. East Liverpool was once called the “Pottery Capital of the World,” and its Lotus Ware design won top prize at the Columbian World’s Exposition in Chicago in 1893. Anna’s brother, Edward Wardles, fought in World War I and survived a life-threatening, gangrenous arm injury only through an experimental treatment. The arm was first encased in glass, and then maggots were inserted to eat away at the infection. He and his arm survived.

Life was not always easy for Anna. Not yet twenty years old, she married Charles Trimmer, who was fifteen years older and a tough teamster from a coal mining town in Pennsylvania. They had five sons, but Charles was later confined to a sanitarium, and their marriage ended.

Anna then married Carl White, a truck driver from South Carolina. Anna and Carl had three children: one boy and two girls. During the 1930s, they moved all over Ohio. Their house in Kent burned down. After moving to Berlin, Ohio, Carl hit the road—this time for good. In the heart of the Great Depression, Anna Trimmer White was left alone with eight children. She ended up in Salem, Ohio, which was named after Jerusalem, the “City of Peace.”

All five Trimmer boys served in World War II. Charles, the oldest, was a Marine. William served in the Army. Paul served in the Merchant Marines and was part of the fleet supporting the besieged troops on Guadalcanal. Stanton served in the 202nd Engineer Combat Battalion, building pontoon bridges across rivers and breaching fortified lines in the Allies’ march toward Germany. Earl, the youngest Trimmer brother, served in the 157th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, first in Italy and later in Southern France.



Dartymun,
 Portadown Banagh
 N. Ireland
 Nov. 26, 1945.

Dear Mrs. White,
 We know exactly
 how you feel, therefore, you
 are in our thoughts.
 As we have already
 said, Stan was out of
 the list. We miss him.
 All Stan's friends
 here, join with us in wishing
 a peaceful Xmas, and a
 peaceful New Year.
 We would like to hear
 from you just to know how
 you are getting along.
 Most sincerely,
 Jim & Nellie



Earl
 1941



Stanton and Earl died just nine days and fifty miles apart, in September 1944. Later, they would be buried side by side at the Brittany American Cemetery. When asked why her mother chose to have the boys buried overseas, Margaret says that Anna thought the money the government would spend sending her sons back home could be better spent on other needs.

Anna's son with Carl White, Carl White Jr., graduated from high school in 1947 and then enlisted in the U.S. Army. In 1950, he was sent to fight in the Korean War where he was killed in action. Because overseas burial was not an option in the Korean War, Carl Jr. was returned home and buried at Arlington National Cemetery, where he would join his uncle, Edward Wardles.

Anna had lost three sons in two wars. Her other son, Paul Trimmer, the merchant marine at Guadalcanal, was never quite the same after the war. He lived with Anna at 928 Prospect Street in Salem. He had nightmares. He flew into uncontrollable rages, smashing porcelain objects on the floor. He drank too much. Paul died in 1980, age sixty-seven years old.

Anna lived in Salem until she was nearly ninety-eight years old. She adored her African violets and enjoyed crocheting, knitting, and quilting. Many of Anna's children and grandchildren still use these handmade gifts from Anna. Occasionally, she hosted boarders in her home. Several of her children lived nearby, and there were always grandkids around. Her family describes her with one word—"durable." When asked by a local newspaper about losing three sons in two wars, this durable, single mother of eight responded, "Naturally I feel deeply that they are gone, but if the sacrifice they have made will keep liberty alive not only in this country but in the rest of the world as well, their lives were not wasted."

