



From left: *Snow Folks* is the most recent book by Carthage artist and author Lowell Davis. It is set in his beloved town of Red Oak II along historic Route 66. The town hall is one of several small buildings that make up the yesteryear feel of Red Oak. Lowell Davis paints from a small studio in his home.

PAINTING AND LOVING LIFE

CARTHAGE ARTIST LOWELL DAVIS FINDS PEACE | *By Ann Leach*

AT SEVENTY, Carthage artist Lowell Davis's life has included periods of bold color balanced by serene scenes, much like one of his paintings. And yes, there have been times of dark shadows. From a globetrotting lifestyle to a penniless existence sitting on the porch of his home at Red Oak II just outside Carthage, Lowell is a study of a not-so-still life.

When you sit with Lowell in his home, it's hard to remember that you are with a larger-than-life figure who was once at the top of the art scene. His slight stature and down-to-earth conversation evokes a visit to see a good friend; one who talks easily of suc-

cess, creativity, love, and God. But you can't pay a visit to Lowell without asking about his painting process.

"I never know what is going to come out," he says. "I may start a painting thinking about one subject, and I end up with something else entirely." Lowell's work as an artist has included cartoons, paintings, publications, and illustrations.

"I knew the moment I spilled my first box of Crayolas that I would pursue art," he says. "My mother used to say that I drew my first mural at age two."

A cartoonist for many years, the Davis whimsy spilled over into figurines depicting

farm scenes from his childhood and propelled him to success.

"I have been rich and then lost everything at least three times," Lowell says.

"I was so low. I knew I couldn't go on," Lowell recalls. "I turned it all over to the Lord then. I said to Him, 'They say you don't give out more than a person can handle, and I am getting close to the limit. You have to take over. I can't do this anymore.'" But things began to change.

Precious Moments figurine artist and longtime friend, Sam Butcher, gave Davis a gift of a trip to the Philippines and encouraged him to get away from his troubles. It worked.

SHEA BRYANT; ANN LEACH



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Lowell met and fell in love with Rose, the manager of a Chinese restaurant he and Butcher visited.

“She brought me back to life,” he claims. He brought her back to the United States and his beloved Red Oak II. He married her five years ago.

“I didn’t know what I was missing until I found Rose,” he says.

Now Lowell and his bride continue to tend to the needs of Red Oak II. He continues to paint and illustrate books. His most recent book is *Snow Folks*. Full of whimsical snowmen and women, the book shares the snow folks’ fascination with the town

of Red Oak and the simple, peaceful ways there.

“I always put ‘written, illustrated and lived’ on my books,” he says. “These are sto-

ries about the places I know, have lived at, and loved.”

Lowell’s love of Red Oak and its close proximity to old Route 66 is evident.

“People’s lives are so busy these days that I think they’d like to be reminded of a simpler time,” he says. “We’re the best kept secret around, and Carthage is part of Route 66, so I think more people should come to see what we have around here. There is nowhere in the world I would rather live than right here. I want to sit on my porch, talk to the folks that come by, paint, and live my good life.”

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