• TREE TALK •

Volume 38 Issue 1 **Fall1 2012**

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Editor's Letter

This issue of TREE TALK continues the childhood recollections of Dovie Stowers Nicholson in Potpourri of Memories, who was born in Little Will's Valley near the town of Keener, Etawah County, Alabama, married Charles Chester Nicholson on April 14, 1894 in Attalla, Alabama. She lived in Jacksonville, Cherokee County, Texas from 1910 until her death in 1960. Her addresses according to the Jacksonville City Directories for 1933 was 301 Austin, 1937was 311 Austin, 1956-1958 was 917 Myrtle Drive, 1949 was Myrtle Drive.

Her story continues on page 4.

A note for modern readers. Some of the statements and opinions stated by Mrs. Nicholson would be considered today by some as "Politically Incorrect" or perhaps, even offensive. I suggest that she not be judged harshly as she was a product of a different time, culture and place. She wrote her story in 1938. Who can say what will be said of your and my thoughts and actions in 7 decades?

I hope you enjoy the visit to a time over one hundred years ago.

This issue also contains Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray for five veterans of the Civil War from Cherokee County on pages 31 and 32.

Gordon Bennett
Editor

Protect Your Living Relatives
Don't Mess With The Living, TEXAS

Dovie Stowers Nicholson

Potpourri of Memories

By Dovie Stowers Nicholson

Will Crump and the Haunted Hill

Will Crump was my cousin and a very special friend of my brother, Ben, and his sister, Lula, was my dear friend. We played together often and visited back and forth. Their mother was my mother's sister, Aunt Missouri. She died shortly before my mother's death.

About halfway between our home and Uncle Billy's home was a very steep hill which was known as "The Haunted Hill." Many years before our time, a man, a woman, and a tiny baby, camped on the hill in their covered wagon. The baby became ill, died, and was buried there. So that was why the hill was said to be haunted.

When my cousins would visit Ben and me or we would visit them, we would always walk with each other to the top of the hill and there we would part. We would wave and shout "Good-bye" many times, walking slowly backwards until we were cut off from each other's view. Then Ben and I would catch hands and run as fast as we could go down the hill, expecting to see a "haunt" any minute. We never did have that exquisite pleasure.

After he was a man, Will bought a few acres of land from my father and built a house on "The Haunted Hill." He married a special friend of mine and lived and died on the Hill. The last time we visited in Alabama (about 1906), we had dinner with Will and Georgia. I asked her if she had ever seen a "haunt." She said, "No, but I've wished many times to see a covered wagon go sailing through the air so I could get goose-bumps."

Will built on the Hill because of the vIew. It overlooked the valley for a long distance. Lookout Mountain was beautiful, with the sun slowly climbing to the top, to drop out of sight suddenly. At the foot of the mountain Little Will's Creek meandered in and out among green willows. The A.G.S. railroad ran in sight. When the long passenger trains, especIally, the Pan-American, would flash by in the dark, all brilliantly lighted, it was a sight worth seeing.

Almost at the very top of the mountain was Echo Rock. We called it that because one could stand under it, shout in a loud voice, and the echo would sound up and down the valley in a thrilling way. One side of the rock was covered with soft, green moss. The other side was covered with gray moss, with the dearest little flowers growing at its foot. These flowers were of many different pastel colors-pink, lavender, yellow, violet, and blue.

The mountain boys used this rock as a WIg-Wag station to send messages to the valley boys. To attract their attention, they would blow a lusty blast on a cow's horn in the day time. At night they used pine torches to tell them what they wanted them to know.

Will could see his childhood home from his own home on The Haunted Hill.

Potpourri of Memories

Cousin Line McLendon

My father's mother died when my father was just ten days old, with what was known as "child-bed fever." We know it today as Septic Fever, and science, sanitation, and good care have made it a rare thing, although it still takes its toll, leaving little babies motherless.

A sister of his mother, a Mrs. Leath, took him to rear as her own child. She had a baby about his age, and she nursed both babies. One of her daughters, named Carolina, cared for him, fed him, bathed him, and loved him devotedly. She would never allow anyone to call him "Johnnie," because John was a more manly name; and she wanted him to grow up to be a brave man. His cousins were sorry for him and wanted to pet and spoil him, but "Line" would not allow it.

When he was a good sized boy, she married a Mr. McLendon. Father said he was so sad and broken up when she married. She said, "John, you are a big boy now and you will soon be a man. Mother and I have taught you to be truthful, brave, and honest and you must always live a good life."

In a very few years Mr. McLendon died and left Cousin Line with a small son and daughter to rear. When the son was about grown, he disappeared completely and was never heard of again. Emilie, the daughter, married a Mr. Morton.

They had five small children, including a babe in arms, when Emilie died. Cousin Line took the children to rear.

They had a few acres of poor mountain land to live on. The home was a one-room log cabin, with three beds, warm feather mattresses, a few chairs, chests, and a wardrobe-all plain as could be. Line cooked on a fireplace in a few crude pots and pans. She took cotton of her own growing and wool from the sheep's back, carded it, spun thread, and wove cloth, converting it into warm clothing for her family.

This is my memory of how she looked when I can first remember her. She was tall, raw-boned and angular, very dark, with black hair and eyes. She had an iron constitution. Her hands were large and work-worn, WIth broken fingernails; yet her touch was soft and gentle and soothing. She was a born nurse with wisdom: tact, and comfort as a Florence Nightengale. She was a firm believer in the hard-shell religion, and was true to her convictions.

I remember the time when I had the measles. I was so sick and burning up with fever, and my head was aching. She came into the darkened room and said in her sweet and musical voice, "Little girl, let Cousin Line see what she can do for you." She sat down by my bed and began stroking my forehead and repeating the Twenty -Third Psalm. In a few moments it seemed to me that I was in a cool, green pasture, with a soft, gentle breeze blowing on my face. Soon I was sleeping.

Then she went into Ben's room and did the same for him.

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Again, she came to my bedside when I was very ill with typhoid fever. I was delirious from the high fever and had many delusions. I thought an Indian woman had put gravel in my ears; and if they could get her to take it out, I could hear again. I would beg everyone to search for her. Cousin Line, in her calm, soothing way, made me believe that she was the Indian and was re- moving the stones which was a relief to me. Bless her dear memory.

Her five grandchildren were three boys named Bill, John, and Sam; the girls were Adelia and Emmie. We called Adelia, Dee-dee. Emmie, the baby, was as pretty as a doll. We loved her very much and kept her a great deal of the time. Dee-dee reached the age of eleven and was pretty, sweet, and unselfish.

One cold spring day, word came that Dee-dee was very ill with pneumonia. Father had gone to Gadsden for the day, and Ma was spending the day with Grandma Walker.

I rode a horse and went as fast as I could go, over the Ridge, across Big Will's Valley, across Sand Ridge and Sand Valley, up Sand Mountain and about three miles along the rim of Sand Mountain to get there-a distance of about twelve miles.

When I entered Dee-dee's room, she knew me but could not speak. Oh, the heartbreak of that day and night. The doctor stayed by her side but could not help her and about 3:00 the next morning, she died.

There in that humble home, I saw laid bare the soul of the bravest woman I have ever known. Cousin Line praised God for his love and care, and told Him how good He had always been to her. She quoted the Bible, she told Him that from the depths of her being, she thanked Him for the strength to work, for eyes to see the beauty of his handiwork, for sunrises and sunsets, and for the Holy Bible.

Emmie went to her grandmother, knelt and said, "If this is religion, I want it." Her grandmother placed her hand on her head and such a prayer as she said I never heard come from any heart and lips. The little girl was converted and grew up to become a useful Christian woman.

Early that morning, Father and Mother came, bringing food in abundance. They also brought material to make a robe for Dee-dee.

We buried her the next afternoon midst tears and heartbreak. We tried to get Cousin Line and the children to go home with us but she said, "No, we have our duties and must learn to bear her going away."

We left them standing in a group In the yard . I turned and looked back, then wept all the way home ".

All of us loved Cousin Line, but my father espec Ially loved her and she loved him. There w as a caress In her voice when she said his name, John. He always shared and taught us children to

share whatever came our way with her and the grandchildren.

> "As life goes on, the road grows strange
> With faces new, and near the end,
> The milestones into headstones change-
> Neath everyone, a friend."

"No matter how many loving hands may outstretched to help us, some paths we tread alone."

A Golden Wedding

An invitation came a few days before Thanksgiving while I was still a little girl, inviting our family to Uncle Jack and Aunt Winnie Berry's golden wedding anniversary. They had a beautiful home about seven miles up the "big road" from our house.

Of course, we went. Pa and Ma had new suits and looked so nice. I had a new white woolen dress with shoes and hat to match. For color I wore a "rainbow" sash that was very pretty. We had a fine high-stepping bay horse to pull the buggy.

When we arrived, there was the Berry home, sitting a short distance from the road in a grove of old, old trees and shrubbery. An old gray -haired darkie took charge of the horse. The entire house was decorated with all kinds of vines and bronze and white chrysanthemums. They received many gifts, all gold, and our gift to them was a gold bookmark.

Uncle Jack and Aunt Winnie had ten children, all married and most of them with children of their own. One son was a preacher and one daughter had married a preacher. Some of the others were teachers and all were well educated.

The same preacher who had married them was present. When they stood before him, Aunt Winnie was wearing the same white satin dress she had been married in. The son, son-in-law, and little granddaughters all had a part and the preacher repeated the marriage ceremony of fifty years before.

Then the dinner was served and what a dinner! They had turkey and everything else that could be raised or bought.

Another little girl and I were sent on an errand to the kitchen. There were darkies whipping cream-gallons of it-in churns. Some were making beaten biscuits. There seemed to be enough pies and cakes to feed an army, but I am sure that after the guests had eaten, not much was left.

After dinner the music started. In the back hall there was a group of darkies playing musical instruments and singing. The son-in-law had a beautiful voice and sang many old songs like "When you and I Were Young, Maggie." Then the preacher son preached a short sermon.

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I sat on the stairs with the other children to listen. As we left to go home, one of the daughters gave each guest a piece of the wedding cake to "dream" on.

I did dream that night but it was not a pleasant dream. I guess because I had eaten so much rich food and had "made a pig" of myself, I dreamed an awful dream about a big hog trying to catch me. But even if my dream was bad, the day had been a wonderful occasion that I still remember with happiness.

I have often wondered if one of the children present that day could have been the little Martha Berry who grew up to found the school for mountain boys and girls near Rome, Georgia. I don't know that she was even related; but with the same name and so near the same vicinity, it seems entirely probable.

My Father's Council

It is no wonder I grew up loving and respecting my father and thinking his advice was wise and worth following. Other people felt the same way, and often they confided their problems and asked for his counsel. The following little story is only one of many I can recall when his advice was requested and acted upon.

Late one cold, stormy afternoon, Father was reading the "Blesseds" as we sat before the fire-place, at peace with everything. Ben and I were busy with our school books, and Mother was mending. Father had just read, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy."

There was a knock at the door, and there stood a poor, ignorant woman with her little eleven year old son. He was small for his age and undernourished. She gave him a lick with her hand and pushed him into the room, saying, "You good-for-nothing! You'll go to jail for this and you deserve it, too!"

Father rose, with a look of pity and tenderness on his face and said, "Mrs. B---- don't strike the little fellow again." Then to the boy he said in a kind tone, "Come here, son." The boy gave Father a long look-first in fear, then in doubt, then edged closer to him. "Now tell me all about it. Mr. Stowers is your friend and will help you." Amidst sobs, the boy told his story.

A short while before, he had been standing by the railroad track to watch the accommodation train pass. He had a rock in his hand and somehow an urge came over him to throw it at the train. Almost without knowing how or why he did it, he threw the rock. It struck a window, the glass shattered, and a woman passenger was struck in the face. When he heard her cry and saw the blood, he realized what he had done and was terrified.

Father said, "Son, you did wrong, and when we do a wrong, we must try to right it. I know the conductor. he is a friend of mine. We will go down to the train tomorrow when it comes through, pay for the broken glass, and you will tell Buck McAlister that you are sorry for what you did."

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The boy did not want to go, but was convinced that it was the thing to do. Next morning he was in a different mood and seemed anxious for the time to come to straighten out his misdoing.

When Mr. McAlister heard his explanation, he said, "Boy, you are doing the right thing." He took the money to replace the broken pane. Then he told the boy that the woman who had been injured was on the train, returning to her home, and that he should tell her how sorry he was. The woman's face had been dressed,. But the scars would be with her a long time. Yet she said, " It is all right, Son, if only you will try to be a good boy and become a fine man."

From that day on, this boy was a changed person. I once heard him say that with the first kind word my father spoke, he was all broken up inside; and a great desire to be a good boy came over him. He grew up to be a fine man, and he said Father's advice to right any wrong stayed with him.

My First Circus

One of my father's comrades during the Civil War was Mr. Bill Robinson, owner of a circus. After the surrender, he reorganized his circus. When I was about eleven years old, my father received word from Mr. Robinson that his Circus would be In Chattanooga, Tennessee, for a one-day's show, then come on to Gadsden for a performance. My father wired him to come on the accommodation train to Gadsden but stop off and spend the night at our house before the show. He wired his acceptance.

Father then sent word to the Confederate soldiers who had known Mr. Robinson, to spend the night in our home also for a visit with their old comrade. One who came was Colonel Edwards, the father of Olie Edwards who married my brother Fred in later years. There was Captain Hammett, who had lost an arm in a battle; Mr. Bill Patrick, who had lost a leg at the knee; Mr. Mose Newman, who had only one hand left; and Uncle Bill Crump, who had had a bullet go clear through his chest and who could never afterwards straighten his body. A Dr. Calhoun of Rome, Ga., also a fellow comrade, was invited to be our guest, but because of his practice he could not come. However, his son and daughter came to the show.

When the day arrived, the train stopped in our field, and Mr. Robinson stepped off. He was greeted by these friends and others, who were lined up and giving the Rebel yell. As they marched up to our house, it was to the stirring tune of "Dixie," sung by all.

That evening we served them a fine turkey for supper, with everything good to eat that goes with it. I remember that the dessert was pound cake and boiled custard flavored with brandy. After supper the men lit their pipes and began to reminisce. One story brought on another, each man eager to recount some episode of his war service. About ten o'clock, Uncle Andy served eggnog. They let me listen to their stories until their voices faded away, and I was so sleepy I had to go to bed. I never knew what time they managed to separate.

One other thing I remember about that night was seeing the glow of numerous campfires on the

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mountain sides both in front of and behind our house. The circus was such a rarity that whole families had left their homes, had journeyed part of the way to Gadsden and were camping out overnight in order to reach town in plenty of time for the parade.

We were all up early the next morning, busy as could be. For breakfast we had a large platter of quail breasts, fried in deep fat and lifted out all brown and tender, with beaten biscuit, gravy, several kinds of preserves and jellies, milk and coffee. At the breakfast table Mr. Robinson said, "John, I want you to round up all the widows and orphans of soldiers that you know, and they will be my guests at the show. And I want every darkie on the place to come, too." So the word was spread by Negroes on horseback, and about fifteen women and children were waiting at the big tent when we reached the circus ground.

On the way to Gadsden we passed a stream of people-in wagons, buggies, on horseback, or walking-all eager and excited.

Mr. Robinson took our family to his private railway car to meet his family. He had a lovely wife and two precious children. One portion of the car had been set up as a schoolroom, and the children were at work on lessons with their governess. We had dinner with them at their table in the big dining tent, and how our eyes feasted on all the unusual sights and sounds.

Then it was time to go to town for the parade, and a big fine one it was! Anyone who has not seen a circus parade as they had them in those days has missed a real spectacle. At the head of the parade Mr. and Mrs. Robinson rode on beautiful horses. She was on a snow-white Arabian charger and was dressed in a dark red riding habit. He was on a coal black horse and was dressed all in black. Next came the two children in a little basket-phaeton drawn by ponies, with a big black Negro leading them. There were many beautiful horses, cages of wild animals, clowns, show people dressed in their colorful costumes, a steam caliope thrilling our ears with its strange music, and so much else to see that we could scarcely take it all in.

After the parade, many of the spectators started back home immediately, for money was scarce and not all could afford the price of the show. But the parade had been worth all their time and the discomfort of the trip, and they went home with much to talk about and think on.

At the show itself, we had reserved seats and the actors and actresses bowed to us as the honored guests. Afterwards we stayed to see the animals fed, and we especially enjoyed seeing the lions and tigers eating. Then we told the Robinsons goodbye and parted, never to see them again. Truly it was the end of a perfect day, whose memory I will always cherish.

A Happy Walk

A happy walk and conversation I had with my father one lovely day in late July, still lingers in my memory. The crops were unusually fine, the rains had been sufficient, the sunshine gentle and stimulating, cultivation had been at the proper time and growth was rapid. We walked to the gin-house, hand-in-hand, talking about crops, rain, sunshine, flowers, and many other

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things. The gin was on a hIgh point and from it we could look down the valley.

A refreshing shower had just fallen, making the day cool, fresh, and fragrant. A lovely rainbow came out and arched the sky. Father told me that it was a sign that the earth would never again be destroyed by a flood. He reminded me that God had made all lovely things for His children and that the green crops we were looking at were part of the beauty He had made. In view of where we were standing were green fields of corn, and fields of cotton covered with pink and white blooms. The gin-house field was in clover that year, making a pretty sight as it waved and rippled in the breeze. Watermelons were ripe, the apple orchard was fragrant and beautiful, with the trees loaded with red and green apples. In the peach orchard the trees were covered with ripe, pink-cheeked peaches, both cling and freestone, with a few apricot trees among them.

The vegetable garden was full of all kinds of vegetables ready to be cooked. How crisp, tender, and good they were when gathered early in the morning while the dew was still on them. The garden fence was covered with black and yellow raspberries. Quails, doves, mocking birds, and redbirds and many others were all around, singing their happy songs. We saw a mother quail with her young ones, feeding on seed. Overhead a chicken hawk was flying, giving that peculiar whistle which always struck terror in the hearts of mother hens and birds. The mother quail warned her biddies to hide from the enemy, and so they scattered and hid under plants until the mother told them the danger was past.

Sleek, fat, satisfied cattle were grazing on sweet clover. Milk cows, with full udders, were waiting at the pasture gates, ready to be milked.

We saw some baby squirrels with their mother on a fence near a hollow post, where they had their home. They had been eating the tender green corn on the. stalks, tearing the shucks with their teeth and paws, and nIbblmg the corn until their little mouths were covered wIth the milk of the young ears.

As we walked, Father said, "It is so sweet and peaceful here, I love it. During the war when I would be cold and hungry and oh so homesick, I often thought of how happy I would be to get home again." He repeated the 23rd Psalm and the 19th Psalm, both of which he loved. He told me about his mother, who died when he was only ten days old. He had been told that as she lay dying, she sang the hymn, "Amazing Grace" and now I understood why it was his favorite hymn and remembered the many times I had heard him sing it as he left the house, going to the barn or the fields.

He told me of my own mother and little sister who were with God, and how happy they were. He said, "When I see growing plants I can feel the presence of Jesus, for He liked to walk in the fields and used plants for illustrating many of His stories, teaching people how to live."

The picture my father gave me of God and heaven was the way he believed it was-a loving heavenly Father in a cool, quiet, pastoral setting, and of Jesus walking in nature, and my little heart was glad and relieved. So many sermons I had heard were about a jealous and vengeful

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God lying in wait to punish wrong doers, about Hell-fIre. and brimstone and other terrifying things.

This walk and talk left me contented with my lot in life, happy in my companionship with my beloved earthly father, and confident of the love and compassion of my heavenly Father.

Lula Crump's Story

Aunt Missouri died shortly before my mother did and left three small children, Will, Lula, and Martha. Uncle Billy married a Miss Milliron soon after his wife died. This step-mother was very unkind, even cruel, to the three little motherless children. To this day, I could never call her "aunt." She had her good points, I am sure. She was an immaculate housekeeper, a good cook, and could sew beautifully. She had to work very hard before Lula was large enough to help. She had five babies about one and a half years apart, which made her overworked, over-tired, cross, and impatient.

Lula was truly the burden bearer. Two of the little half-sisters were afflicted. Perhaps they had had what we today call polio, but at any rate they were sadly misshapen. Some said that this was "sent on" the mother because of her unkind treatment of the step-children, but I could never go along with this explanation.

Lula had to work so hard, wait on these children hand and foot, bear their ill-temper, and be denied many of the good times I took for granted.

Well, the years went by until Lula and I were about sixteen. Lula, both in appearance and manner, was very much like Aunt Sarah Roden. About this time a Baptist preacher, Brother Ramsey, bought the farm adjoining the Crump farm. A young man by the name of Jim Hines came to board with Brother Ramsey. He had a contract to get out tanbark on the ridge back of our house.

Jim met Lula and fell deeply in love with her. He began calling on her and was so devoted to her, that she soon cared for him. We were all so happy over the romance and did all we could to help it along.

But there were other forces, working against the romance-forces so strong that in the end they won. The step-mother did not want to lose her slave and won Uncle Billy to her side. So one day Lula's father ordered Jim from the house and said that he would shoot him if he ever tried to see Lula again. Jim and Lula were the most heartbroken people I have ever known. Jim came to our home and asked us to help him. My father went to see Uncle Billy, but he would not talk about it except to say,. "I want all of you to stay out of this. It is my affair and no one else must meddle in it."

Lula was too much under her parent's control to disobey them. We noticed that her health was failing. Their family doctor said it was slow fever and chills but she did not get well. One day, I

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went after her in the buggy to bring her to our house for awhile, thinking the change would do her good. She had to be almost carried into the house.

We put her in front of two big windows where she could see the flowers on the porch and in the yard. All the family, the neighbors, and the darkies made special efforts to do things for her. Grandpa Roden and Uncle Jerry came to see her, bringing her gifts of gowns, hose, handkerchiefs, perfume, and houseshoes. One day our family doctor came for a visit. I noticed how closely he watched her while in the room. When he started to leave Father walked to the gate with him and he said, "Mr. Stowers, I am not Mr. Crump's family doctor, but I beheve Lula has consumption." Father said in grief, "That woman has destroyed the poor girl's body as well as her happiness. "

At the end of ten days, we took Lula home. She stayed in bed, growing weaker and weaker as the days went by. One night as I was watching at her bedside, she whispered, "Come closer." This is what she whispered, "I have tried to be a good daughter. I know I am going to die. Will you ask Pa to let Jim come so I can see him once more?"

I hated to ask Uncle Billy, but for her sake I could do it. He consented to allow Jim to come. Early the next morning I went home, wrote Jim a letter telling him she was dying and wanted to see him. As I started home on Saturday just before dark, she said, "Come early tomorrow. I know Jim will be here." I got there very early the next day.

Her stepmother had the room so clean and the bed as fresh and white as the driven snow. I thought Lula looked so pretty, with her braided hair lying on the pillow, her pink cheeks and bright eyes. She looked happy and expectant.

In a little while I saw Jim ride up the lane to the fence. I told Uncle Billy to go meet him. He walked down to the gate and held out his hand. Jim took it and they walked into the house together. When he entered Lula's room, he fell on his knees beside her bed and gathered her in his arms. I had to get out for a good cry.

The stepmother came rushing in and held out her hand. Jim refused to take it. She invited him to have breakfast. He told her he had had breakfast before he left Attalla. When I started home, he went with me to get some coffee. He said, "It would choke me to try to swallow a bite in that house."

He asked for Uncle Billy's permission to bring a doctor from Attalla and Uncle Billy said, "Whatever you want to do for her is all right with me." Jim brought the new doctor, who, after examining her, said, "I give her three days to live."

There is little more to tell. Lula wanted Jim to sit by her bed and hold her hand until she became unconscious. On a cold, bleak December day, we laid her to rest. I could almost forget my heartbreak trying to help Jim, Will, Martha and my grandfather.

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I know she is in heaven-her precious body all rested and healed from the hard work and heart-aches that were her lot on earth.

"Sometimes the fondest memories are awakened by Some little thing, like a word, a song, or a face.'

The Rink Girls

About three miles down the highway from our home, on a poor, rocky, hillside farm, there lived two old-maid Dutch girls named Anna and Rhoda Rink. I have no idea how old they were. Their parents had come over from Holland many years before. Evidently they had known better times, for among their keepsakes were many lovely and unusual things. But when I knew them, they were very poor and worked hard for a meager living. The parents were dead and the two boys were married. We always laughed to ourselves about one brother's name-Alimos Amzi Simon Monroe Rink, but they called him "Bud" for short.

We called Anna, "the woman with the hoe," as she was nearly always working in the yard or garden with her hoe; digging, planting, and cultivating. We said that we believed that every seed she put into the ground germinated. She had many beautiful plants and flowers. Among the plants brought from the "old country" were many beautiful tulips which they called "two lips."

Anna and Rhoda wove their clothing on a hand loom, from cotton they raised and from wool which they sheared from their sheep. Their clothes were odd and old-fashioned, for they used the same patterns all their lives. They wore split bonnets and the splits were very old. Their clothes were patched over and over and worn as long as they would hold together.

The Rink farm was a sanctuary for birds and animals for they allowed no hunting on it. If a hunter did get on their land, Rhoda would approach him with her shotgun and call out in no uncertain terms, "Scat! Get out! Begone!", and the hunter always "got". They grew clumps of berry bearing bushes, to attract the birds; and the birds flocked there, seeming to know that they were safe. If a hawk threatened her little chickens, Rhoda would sit on a stump with her shotgun, patiently watching her chance, then fire; and the hawk would tumble down.

Rhoda was the one who transacted the business. She would mount her little red mule and go to Gadsden on business or for the few supplies they needed. They raised almost everything they used, but sugar, coffee, and a few other things had to be purchased. In the fall, she would take her one bale of cotton to sell in Gadsden and get a few things for winter. The little mule was so slow that it was a day's journey to go and return.

When I was about sixteen years of age, I was invited to a big tacky party given in Gadsden by one of my friends. My stepmother told me that years before, Miss Anna had been all ready to be married but for some untold reason, she had broken her engagement, laid away all of her wedding outfit in a chest and never again looked at them. She said she would ask Miss Anna to let me wear these clothes to the tacky party.

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Miss Anna said, "I will let her wear them this one time, but no more." She left the room while her sister got the things out of the chest. They smelled so sweetly of lavender. The wedding dress was made of stiff flowered brocade, with a pointed bodice. The underclothes were hand-made, with little pinhead tucks and yards and yards of Valenciennes lace. There were mitts, reticule, handkerchief, and beaded shoes, all in gray.

On the afternoon of the party, Miss Anna came to our house and handed me a small box, saying, "Don't open this before you are dressed." I did not dress at home, but took the clothes to the home of the girl giving the party, and dressed there. Then I opened the box, and there in it lay an old-fashioned nosegay Miss Anna had made for me to carry.

When I entered the parlor, you could have heard a pin drop. Then the noise began, everyone talking at once and asking, "Where did you get those clothes?" Everything was fingered and admired. Later in the evening the judges left the room to decide who should have the prize for the tackiest clothes.

By and by, my escort of the evening, Henry Smith, came to me and said that the judges could not agree, for some said I was not "tacky", just out of date. Henry advised me to withdraw from the contest, to save hard feelings. I followed his advice, and the prize, a book of poems, went to another girl.

About this time, a niece of the Rink girls came to live with them. Her name was Dora. They were glad to have her and wanted all the young people to know and like her. They invited four girls of the neighborhood to spend the day. They were Charlsie Malone, Lula Crump, Ida Fain, and me.

The Rink home deserves a description. It consisted of two large rooms, or, more accurately, of two separate log houses. One was the living room and bedroom combined. There were tester beds, with canopies and with ruffles reaching to the floor, covered with home woven coverlids or counterpanes, which today would be valuable. The floor was covered with clean, white sand. They had a lovely grandfather's clock and some beautiful hand carved chests. Miss Anna had an adorable little rosewood desk with a gold key. She had requested the desk be buried, unopened, with her when she died. No one knew what was in it. It was so lovely I wanted to hug it, and I imagined that it was full of love letters.

The other room, or cabin, was the kitchen. To reach it from the living room, you went down several sleps, walked about ten feet, then up several steps. They cooked in pots, pans, and kettles over a large fireplace. The dining table was covered with a home woven cloth, and the dishes were blue Dutch willowware. I remember very clearly what our dinner that day consisted of: sauerkraut, baked sweet potatoes, pig's knuckles, spoon cornbread, and vinegar pie. When the meal was ready, the aunts left the room so that we girls could eat alone. That afternoon when we started home, they gave each of us a bunch of lavender. As we left, we admired their peafowls, with the cocks strutting and spreading their large, beautiful tails of magnificent plumage. The blue of the neck, the green and black of the back, the brown, green, violet, and gold of

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the tail with the eye-like spot at the tip of each feather made a handsome bird; and each of them seemed to think so, too, as he displayed himself to his audience.

We tried to be good friends to Dora, but she was peculiar and so different from other girls, that we never really got close to her. When she came to live with her aunts, they went through their chests and got out beautiful garments to be made over for her. But she looked a freak in them, for the aunts had their own ideas about how things should be made. One thing I remember was a tan cape trimmed in ostrich feathers. It was really beautiful, but since no one wore such a cape, it only made her look outlandish and different. None of the boys would go out with her because she was so odd. Yet she later married and moved away, and I lost trace of her.

Rosie's Wedding Celebration

Uncle Andy came in one morning bowing and scraping and pulling his forelock. We always knew that when he came in that way, he wanted a special favor. He said, "Marse John, I wonder if we can get the gin-house for Rosie's wedding." Now Rosie was not Aunt Mollie's child but the daughter of Uncle Andy by a former woman. She worked in Gadsden and was very anxious that her dear father see that her wedding was solemnized with fitting ceremony and style. The groom was named Abraham Lincoln Garner. Father gave his consent for them to use the gin-house for the day-long celebration, and Uncle Andy retired with "Many thanks and God Bless you, Marse John."

Then such cleaning, decorating, and preparations began as were not often seen. A raised platform was built for the musicians to sit on to play the wedding music. It was announced that there would be a "cake-walk" after the wedding and all friends were invited by messenger to attend. A corner of the gin-house was curtained off for protecting the bride and her attendants from the gaze of the curious before the ceremony.

A little after sunrise on the appointed day, the darkies began arriving, walking, riding horseback, in buggies or wagons, all with a basket of dinner and all dressed in holiday attire. Many were dressed in clothing given to them by their "white folks" and some looked really comical. Some had on suits much to so large. Some were dressed in clothing so tight it was bursting at the seams And oh! their poor feet. Some had on shoes so large they had to shuffle as they walked. Others had on shoes so tight they hobbled.

Then the groom showed up. He was as black as the dark itself. No "yellow nigger" would have been welcome in Uncle Andy's family.

Now the musicians struck up the music. They were seated on the raised platform, all dressed in white, with a red calico band on one arm with matching red socks-the very last work in style. The band was composed of banjos, mouthharps, Jew's harps (called juice harps), fiddles, drums and horns.

By and by the preacher arrived and went around shaking hands. He peeped behind the curtain

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and told the bride he was ready to begin the ceremony. With the band playing a stirring march, the "waiters" came forth and marched to the flower bedecked altar. Their names were Pearlie and Sillie. Both were as black as nine black cats. One was dressed in yellow, the other in scarlet. Then the groom, dressed all in black, with a big red rose in his lapel, took his place at the altar. Now came the really big moment, when the blushing bride came from behind the curtains on the arm of her father. One glimpse at her told why she was getting married.

Much thought had gone into her bridal array and it deserves a complete description. Her costume was of three shades of pink. The basque was pink with white flowers, the skirt was another shade and the over-skirt, stylishly tucked up in the back, was the third shade, and had a wide ruffle at the bottom. Her hat was a "flop-style," blue with red poppies. With her black buttoned shoes and white gloves, she was indeed a vision, and all the women exclaimed at her beauty and lovely clothes.

I had invited three of my friends Bettie Tabor, Charlsie Malone, and Sallie Keener, to spend the day with me, so we sat in a buggy and watched everything.

Aunt Mollie had spent a long time "carding" out the children's hair. They used wool-cards to comb the hair, then it was rolled in white cotton strings in numerous little pig-tails. Often the hair was rolled so hard and pulled so tight that the poor little pickannies could hardly bat an eye or shut the mouth. Aunt Mollie had also baked a huge wedding cake. In one corner of the gin-house a cookstove had been set up on which coffee was boiled and fish fried. Uncle Andy had gone to Big Will's Creek and "lifted his fish baskets" out of the water, returning with many pounds of fish. Soon the odor of frying catfish filled the air; and if there was anything negroes loved in those days, it was good old greasy catfish.

To make the day more perfect, Booker T. Washington arrived. He had been a plantation slave, the son of a mullato slave and a white man, born in Virginia and rising by his own efforts to a position of respect as a teacher and far-sighted and practical reformer. He deserved and had the respect of both whites and colored. A few years before this event, he had established a colored school at Tuskegee, Alabama. He came our way fairly often, for he never lost an opportunity to speak in behalf of "The New Negro" and urge them to get an education. My father was one of his white friends and contributed to the funds for his school.

Anyhow, he was the idol of these negroes, and the celebration was now assured of being long remembered for his presence.

The wedding ceremony was a lengthy one, opening with a solemn preamble and closing with a long prayer Then the preacher pronounced them man and wife, Uncle Andy and Aunt Molly rushed up, kissed the bride, and shook hands with the groom, welcoming him as their son-in-law. Then the guests kissed the bride and congratulated the bridegroom.

Dinner was announced and all spread together, with an abundance for all. By this time the babies were asleep on old quilts all around the room. Next Professor Washington made a rousing

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speech and took up a collection for his school.

Then the big "cake-walk" took place. Aunt Molly furnished the cake-a "stack" cake baked in pans of different sizes, beginning with a large cake for the base, then a smaller one, and finally, on the top a very small one. It was iced as white as snow, placed on a glass cake dish with a stem, surrounded by flowers, and set on a white doily on a table, to be viewed by all and greatly admired. It was to be the prize for the winner of the "cake-walk. "

The judges, three in number, sat on the platform with a good view of the roped off path the contestants would walk. All those who entered the contest were lined up and given a number, and waited to hear the word "Strut!" The music got louder and louder, the hand-clapping got faster and more impatient. Then one of the judges rose and all became so quiet you could hear a pin drop. In a pompous voIce, he said, "Let No. 1 Strut! "

Off down the walk she went, turning, swaying, side-stepping, bending forward and backward. She walked pigeon-toed, knock-kneed, and swayed from side to side with her hands on her hips. Her friends urged her on, "rooting" for her, or you might say, forming her pep squad.

Number 2 had a jumping rope and she introduced new capers as she jumped. Number 3 had a red parasol and a fan. She would flirt and cast eyes at the judges, but they sat as firm and dignified as the Sphinx. Number 4 was a tall, black negro girl, known as "Blue-gum" Sal. They were all afraid of her, as her bite was said to be poison, and would be fatal, so they believed. After a few didos, her dress split down the back and she was "'liminated," and had to retire behind the curtain.

When the judges announced Number 2 as the winner, there was great cheering. The musicians played "Susie-gal, Rock and Joy Your Freedom." The lucky one placed the cake on her head, and pranced up and down to show she could 'tote' without touching the cake. This ended the gala occasion and everyone started home.

About ten days later Uncle Andy came in one morning and proudly announced that Rosie and Abe had a fine, black boy weighing ten pounds, and that he had been named Andy Henry.

Springtime on the Farm

Each season on the farm where I was born and reared had its good times, but the springtime was the happiest season of all. Winters were long and cold, and we would have to stay indoors a great deal. Then the days would grow longer and warmer, and the sun would come out bright and cheerful. Little lambs, colts, calves, and pigs would be coming so fast that it was hard to keep up with them. Little chickens, turkeys, and guineas would be hatching, and soon be following their mothers in little flocks. A little downie new fowl is the dearest, warmest, softest thing to hold in your hand. We could hardly wait to get up in the mornings to see what had happened in the night.

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One day I was crawling in the hayloft searching for eggs, when I ran my hand into a deep, dark hole and into a nest of newborn kittens, all warm, soft, and wiggling. It almost frightened me to death. I took the steps down several at a time, screaming and trembling. From that day to this I have never been able to run my hand into a dark hole.

Flowers would begin to bloom and garden seeds would be coming up with their promise of good things to eat. Winter fare was good but monotonous, and how we would welcome the first green vegetables.

One spring they teased me by saying I held the undisputed title of being the loudest screamer and the fastest runner on the place. It came about this way.

Anna and I claimed a bird's nest in a hollow stump. We had watched the mother bird build her nest; and after she laid five little blue eggs in it, we looked at them often and watched the mother sit on the nest. She became rather tame, and we would bring feed for her. Then the little birds hatched out, and we would pick them up and hold them. One day Anna and I raced one another to see who could reach the nest first. She won, and ran her hand into the nest and pulled out a chicken snake which had eaten the five little ones.

She screamed and threw it as far as she could, which happened to be right at me. It struck me under my chin; and when I felt that awful thing, I, too, screamed and started running and passed her without a bit of difficulty.

In the spring, we children would rush home from school, go straight to the pantry for something to eat, then ride horseback or look for wild flowers, and search out bird's nests. We never molested the birds or stole their eggs, which our father would never have tolerated even if we had wanted to. In the woods back of our house, there was a grand play place with vines, rocks, and all kinds of wild flowers covering the hillside. There was a spring of clear water back of the apple orchard with a branch flowing down the hillside. When a big rain would come, Ben and the darkies would make "flutter-mills' and put them in the water. It was fun to watch them turn over and over. The boys would make traps for quail, bait them and often bring in as many as two dozen at one time.

When a turkey gobbler has several mates setting, he has the "big head." He will strut, rake his wings on the ground, and gobble, gobble all day long. And mean! We dared not go near ours, as he would chase us all over the place.

An interesting job in the spring was making the year's supply of soft soap. All winter, all meat scraps, skins, fat, and bones were saved. About April, the ash hopper was started to dripping lye from hickory ashes. Then all the scraps and lye were put in to a big iron pot, and a slow fire was built under it. The contents were slowly boiled for hours until it turned into thick soap. Then it was emptied and put into barrels and stored in the smoke house. The soap was allowed to mellow for several months, for at first it was so strong it would ruin a person's hands. After it got mellow, it would wash the clothes snowy white, soft and sweet.

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May Day fifty years ago was "prank" day. If you had been riding through the countryside in the southern states in the early morning of May Ist, before the sun was up, you would probably have seen girls rnbbing dew on their faces, necks, arms, and hands, for this dew was, by tradition, supposed to make lovely, soft complexions for months to come. After completing the ceremony, which was held preferably in a field of clover, we then searched for four-leaf clovers for good luck. Since a four-leaf clover is very scarce, it took diligent searching to find one.

One year, Matilda Speigle, Willie Hamlin, Ida and Ira Fain, and Lou Nowlin from Gadsden, came to my home to spend the night and day of May 1st. We had a happy time together, probably acted foolish and "giggly," but the older folks were indulgent and enjoyed seeing us go down "fool's lane."

We washed in dew at daybreak, breakfasted on berries and cream, then later we took a mirror to an old well when the sun was at exactly the right angle to enable the bottom of the well to reflect in the mirror. You were supposed to see the face of your future husband in the mirror. If you were going to be an "old maid," you would see nothing. Usually a mirror would get broken, and that meant seven years bad luck.

OF FLOWERS AND FRUIT

I believe that it was Shakespeare who said, "In the spnng a young man's fancy lightly turns to thouthts (sic) of love." But in the spring, my thoughts turn to planting and growing things. Spring has always been to me such a happy season.

When I was about nine or ten years old, in the early spring, a great desire came over me to grow pot plants. I told my father about how much I wished this; and he said, "Write to Mr. Belcher and order as many pots as you want." Mr. Belcher had a pottery factory on Sand Mountain, about thirty miles from our home. He owned a quarry from which clay was dug to be made into churns, pots, jugs, and many other useful household utensils. Not much was required in the way of machinery to turn out the wares, but the man who shaped them was an expert. After the various articles were "turned," they were placed in a kiln and heated for hours, to make them strong enough to withstand heat and cold. I wrote Mr. Belcher a card and told him to bring me one hundred pots of different sizes with some large enough to hold ferns. After the card was mailed, the watchful waiting began. After about three weeks, he drove up to the gate in a covered wagon one evening about dark. I could hardly wait to see my pots; and when they were unloaded, I was so happy I could hardly bear it.

My father told the darkies to fill the pots with the richest dirt on the place, and he would go to Miss Lucy's to get plants. Living in Gadsden was a Miss Lucy Pettingall. She had a big greenhouse and sold plants and cut flowers. She would sell one dollar's worth of rooted plants, then give you all the cuttings you wanted. Father came home with a good quantity of plants. We put

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the rooted ones in rich soil in the pots, and the cuttings we placed in damp sand to root. We sent into the woods for large ferns, and thcy were so pretty in the big pots. The woods yielded many wild flowers, too, and it was not long before I had many blooms in all colors and shades.

Father had a carpenter build two stands with several "step" shelves each, which we placed on the porch to hold my many flowers. Before cold weather carne on, they dug a "pit" and we had blooms all winter. I enjoyed my plants for many years and have to this day a great love of flowers and have never been without at least a few.

A fond memory I have is of a wisteria vine-called by some, "Travelers Delight"-which extended all across our front porch. In the spring it was covered with gorgeous purple fronds, which attracted honey bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies.

Across our back yard there was a hedge of purple altheas. I sometimes wonder just how long this hedge was, for in my memory it seems to stretch for many feet.

About March the iris would be in full bloom. Across two sides of the front yard were beds of iris, at times seeming to be a solid mass of purple blooms. I am sure that I have seen as many as a thousand blooms open at one time. Another beautiful plant was the hollyhock, in many different shades.

At this time, the back yard had a trellis covered with a huge grapevine. It bore sweet, delicious purple grapes that made fine jelly and jam, so good in the winter with hot biscuits or homemade "light bread." Much depended on fruit, and I early realized how important fruit was to our health.

OUR APPLE ORCHARD

When I was a little girl I thought of our apple orchard as a place where fairies, brownies, and elves lived.

It was at the back of our house, gently sloping up a ridge to a higher spot. When the orchard was in bloom, it was a beautiful sight, with its dainty pink and white blossoms. Bees, butterflies, and humming birds flitted from tree to tree, sampling the sweet and fragrant nectar. Many other birds of various kinds made their nests in the orchard.

Sometimes there was a gentle spring shower, then a soft breeze went in a wave over the treetops, petals fluttered down, and a flock of birds flew up for a short distance, then settled down again. Nowhere could one find a lovlier (sic) sight than apple blossoms and bluebirds. The red birds, too, were pretty later on over the green of the trees. Mocking birds were numerous and their song was beautiful. Away in the fields quail said, "Bob White! Peas ripe!". There was one kind of bird which sang all day long to his mate, and the song sounded like, "He biddie, he Joe."

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In the fall, the apple orchard was again beautiful, with big red apples on the trees and dappling the ground. They were gathered and stored in straw in barrels to last all winter. There was a small green apple which ripened in May and made delicious "apple cobblers. ' Then the June apples ripened, and they were so good made into apple dumplings, topped with whipped cream flavored with lemon. We had a large "horse" apple that was white or green in color and it made lovely red jelly.

I remember one spring when the pears and peaches were in bloom, a late cold spell brought a freeze that killed all the fruit except ours. It so happened that the ridge back of the orchards caught on fire; and leaves, old logs, and pine were burning, making a smudge smoke that settled down over the trees so dark and thick that it protected them from the freeze. We were the only people for miles around who had fruit that year. My father sent word to friends and relatives that all were welcome to a basket of fruit. I can remember the fun of visiting with those who came, and of helping them gather fruit to take home with them. There the fruit was made into jelly, apple butter, preserves, pickles, etc., so welcome on the winter day's menus to come.

Summer

After the hard work of spring and early summer, there always came a lull when farm people had time for fun. We had house guests for a day or a week or a month-it didn't matter. We went visiting, too. This was the time for protracted meetings, picnics, outings. There was a great abundance of delicious food from the garden, orchard, woods and fields. Summer school was in session for three months but there was still time on Saturdays and Sundays and after school to enjoy the outdoors.

Somehow writing this makes me think of what my father taught us about land. He said that you cannot abuse land or misuse it without having it show the results of that usage. Land was something to strive for and to guard with pride. To him and to me, land meant peace, security, and beauty.

After the older states, of which Alabama was one, were cleared and settled by planters, they produced abundant crops for many years. But so much timber was cut and burned that the land dried out, and being depleted of strength and moisture, it is not nearly so productive today.

Another thing that caused the land to become less productive was the indifference of the tenant farmer. When I can first remember, the owners lived on their land and took pride m their homes, orchards, fields, and livestock. They were proud of their barns filled to overflowing with feed for their stock and of their cellars and smokehouses.

I have known a few fine tenant families, of ambition and industry, who were willing to do their share of the work and cooperate with the landlord, but only a very few. So much has been written in recent years about the down-trodden, mistreated, and abused tenant farmer that there grew in my heart a desire to say something in defense of the landowner of my girlhood.

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The landlord really did a great deal for the tenant, even though most of those in my experience were shiftless and void of pride. The first favor from the landlord was the use of one of his wagons and teams to move them to their new home, which cost them nothing in rent or repairs. Water, wood, and a garden plot for vegetables were all free. They could gather fruit from the orchards and berries from the field. Pasture for their cow, tools of all kinds, stock with which to cultivate and seeds to plant did not cost one cent. A doctor and medicine were provided in sickness. A team and wagon were to be had at anytime for marketing, visiting, or church. In most cases, a year would be all they would live on a place. Sometimes they would move before the crop was planted, after the owner had furnished them food shelter and clothing for several months.

I have written about the abundance of food on the farm and fine crops, but not every year lived up to this. I've seen hail storms almost ruin gardens, crops, and fruit.

I've seen storms blow beautiful shade trees and fruit trees up by the roots. I've seen droughts destroy crops, making hard times for all. In 1880, the crops were very short. People would have sickness and death, and it was the duty of the neighbors to care for the sick and to bury the dead. One summer an epidemic of typhoid fever swept through the valley causing many deaths.

HUCKLEBERRY TIME

Pleasant outings we had every summer were when we went to the woods to pick huckleberries, which ripened in June. They were small, blue berries which grew on bushes and were delicious in pies or jam. Three or four of the little Negro girls and boys, Ben and I would go along to pick. We would take drinking water and a lunch, which we would usually eat soon after we got to the berry patch.

Ben would pick diligently until he had about a pint in his bucket. Then he would either spill them or eat them, and then lie in the shade and sleep. After the rest of us had gathered a lot, we would sit down to rest, and the darkies would tell us stories about B'rer Rabbit and B'rer Fox very much as we have them today as told by Uncle Remus in Joel Chandler Harris' books. They had riddles and jokes, signs, and many sayings that must have been brought by their forefathers from Africa.

One time on one of these outings, Ben found a hard-shell turtle and carved his initials on it. The next year he found it again in about the same place.

Before we would get home, Ben would buy some of the berries the pickaninnies had picked and walk into the kitchen as big and bold as you please, so the folks thought he had worked hard. Soon after we got in with them, brass kettles of berries and sugar would be bubbling on the stove making jam. A pie would be baking in the oven, and how good it smelled.

Darkies would come with berries to sell and my stepmother would ask how much they wanted for them. "Thirty cents a gallon," they would say. Then she would say, "My, that's high." They

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would answer, "Yas'm, but you see, Missis, they's hard to pick, and they's a rattlesnake under ever bush!"

FOURTH OF JULY PICNIC

By the Fourth of July, crops would be "laid by," fruit and melons were at their best, and chickens were big enough to fry. After the weeks of planting and working the crops, now the farmers would have a rest before time to gather the crops. Revival meetings, picnics, and visiting would be the order of the day. In this day and age, all of this may sound dull and even primitive but, believe it or not, it was then up-to-date and enjoyable.

An occasion we always looked forward to was an annual picnic on July 4th at Moor's Springs. This site was about five miles down the valley from our home and was in a beautiful shady grove of ancient trees. It was a convenient place for the entire county to gather, as a good road came across the ridge from Big Will's Valley to the spring, so it was a popular spot for picnics and political assemblies.

A special train would run from Birmingham and another from Chattanooga, bringing people to spend the day. A little after daylight, stands would be built for the sale of lemonade and ice cream, etc. People would begin coming early in wagons, buggies, on horseback, as well as walking. All would bring baskets of food for lunch. When the trains would arrive and unload, a big crowd would be on hand.

Several miles up Big Will's Valley there was a community known as "Girl-Town" because so many pretty girls lived there. They would come to the gathering, all riding horseback. One time they were dressed alike in black velvet riding habits, wearing tall black English hats. They rode well and all looked so pretty. The young men would be watching for them and rush forward to help them dismount and to hitch their horses for them, then they would take them to the "stands" for ice cream and cold lemonade.

By this time the bands would be playing and everyone would be having a good time. A platform for the speakers, with seats around it, would be ready, decorated with red, white, and blue bunting and with United States flags flying in the wind. Then the candidates would speak, each one telling why he should be elected sheriff, or judge, or governor, and all the other offices Wagonloads of watermelons would be given away by the candidates.

Then it would be time to spread the dinner on the Iong wooden tables, covered with white tablecloths. Darkies in clean, crisp aprons and caps would help spread the good things and make coffee to serve the old people. Women would compete with each other to see who had prepared the most lavish and delicious food-hams, fried chicken, chicken-pie, pickles, preserves, vegetables of all kinds; in fact, everything that could be thought of.

Some sainted old preacher would be called on for the blessing, and then the feast would begin. Young men would seat their sweethearts in a good place, and all would eat and talk. All of this

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time, musicians would be playing joyous or patriotic music and in the open air it sounded so pretty. The stirring strains of 'Dixie" was a frequent favorite, and people would clap their hands and stamp their feet.

A dance floor was nearby so that those who wished to dance could do so. The lemonade men would shout, "Bring your sweetheart for lemonade, boys! Lemonade! Made in the shade, stirred with a spade!" Big, strong Negroes would be featured in boxing matches and wrestling matches, and some would dance jigs. Always a man would be appointed to keep order, and he would in turn delegate others to help if anyone became unruly. This happened occasionally as some men had "bottles" hidden out and would visit them.

After dinner there would be more speeches, visiting, and entertainment. About four o'clock, some man would mount the platform to dismiss the crowd, after which the return home would begin, with promises to meet again next Fourth of July.

Autumn

Autumn on the farm was a time of preparation for the winter. Summer school was let out, and various protracted meetings had been held. It was a busy time, for there was cotton to pick, molasses to be made, potatoes to be dug, as well as all the other chores that went with living on a farm. On the roads many wagons loaded with cotton were being driven to market, while our cotton gin hummed busily all day long ginning the abundance of cotton, the chief cash crop in this section. Wage hands drove the teams, while the owners went along on horseback.

Making up syrup, visiting the syrup mills to chew the sweet cane or drink some of the juice always gave us happy times.

Late in August or early September our winter wood supply was gotten ready. Men came down from the mountain to our house, bringing saws, axes, and mauls to work with. They went to the woods back of our house and cut, sawed, and split wood for days. Then the fireplace wood was hauled to the wood-yard and stacked in neat rows. There would be a pile of fireplace wood as big as a large house when all was stacked, for we sometimes had as many as six fires going at once. The stove wood was stacked under shelter to keep it dry. Pine for kindling was split and stacked, and chips were picked up and placed in baskets. Nothing was wasted. The men who cut the wood were paid in meat, syrup, lard, and coin. They laughed and sang as they worked, for it was a pleasant time.

The wild geese began going over, flying south for the winter. They always flew high because of the mountains and ridges. They flew in large flocks, uttering their "honk, honk" cry and always in V-formation. When the leader of the group tired, he would drop back and another would take his place. Sometimes they lit on lakes or in wheat fields to feed. Then the hunters would kill many for food, but their numbers were so great they were not missed. If the geese flew over at night, I would snuggle down into my feather bed and feel ever so cozy, but always my blood

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stirred in response to their wild, free cry. If I heard a flock in the daytime, I would run outside and watch until they were out of sight. I knew that winter was just around the corner.

One autumn day I saw a drove of hogs being herded to market. There must have been five thousand hogs in this particular drove. They could go only a few miles a day, for they were fat, so they were driven slowly. There were a few men on horseback, but most of the herd drivers were walking with large staves in their hands to control the hogs. The wagons with supplies followed along behind the herd; and if a hog grew exhausted, he was taken into the wagon. Trained dogs assisted the men. At night, the wagons and men made some sort of formation to keep the hogs from straying and to protect them.

Now the days grew shorter. Twilight was beautiful with the sun slowly climbing to the top of Lookout Mountain, then disappearing suddenly behind it. The trees put on their autumn colors of red, yellow, and orange, and the green of the pines looked even greener by contrast.

About this time the winter term of school began, with a small student body at first, because the tenant children were still helping to gather the crops.

At this season, droves of horses and mules were driven south. We often kept the drovers overnight, because we had plenty of room for the men and animals and plenty of feed in the barn. The drovers were charged by the bushel for corn and by the bale for hay. Water was no problem, as water from a spring up in the hollow had been piped to the barnyard; and there was a water trough which had been hollowed out of a large log.

The drovers were interesting to listen to as they talkedand told stories of their trips to Florida, Kentucky, and Tennessee. I remember one joke they told; that you could ask a child in Florida what they lived on. The answer would be, "Fruit and vegetables in the summer and Yankees in the winter."

Always friends of my fathers would come from Gadsden to hunt on our land for a few days. Our table frequently boasted quail, doves, and squirrels, ducks and geese, and occasionally wild turkey. There were still a few flocks of wild turkeys in the woods. Uncle Billy Crump was a great hunter, and from time to time he brought us a turkey, fat on acorns and juicy and tender. With chestnut dressing, it was a treat.

Thanksgiving came and went, celebrated much as it is today, with guests, big turkey dinners, church services, parties and nutting expeditions to the woods to gather walnuts, hickory nuts and chestnuts.

Now it was time to bake the fruit cakes for the Christmas season. We did not have the candied fruits such as you buy in the store today. We used peach, pear, or watermelon rind preserves, dried apples, citron, and all kinds of spices. Nuts by the quart were laboriously picked out by hand-a job even the small children could share. As much as twenty-five pounds of fruit cake

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were baked, put into five gallon lard cans with wine poured over it from time to time and left to mellow. How delicious a piece of this cake with a small glass of homemade grape or berry wine tasted as it was served to the family and visitors during the winter.

Winter

Now the days were short and grew colder and colder. We had to wear plenty of warm clothes. Everyone wore union suits, or "long handles," as they came to be called. Both boys and girls wore woolen stockings which came well up over our knees, mittens, caps, hand-knit woolen sweaters and coats. The boys wore warm pants and shirts. We girls sometimes looked like bags of pudding tied in the middle, for we also wore red flannel petticoats and warm drawers.

Helping with the chores and walking or riding to school meant cold toes and hands, and our parents tried to guard us against colds, "la grippe' (influenza) and pneumonia. The school room was never very comfortable. For those near the stove or fireplace, it was sometimes too hot, while those in the back of the room were freezing. In our homes the heat was never even. In spite of roaring fires, some spots were always cold.

At night we heated bricks at the fireplace; and when we were ready for bed, the bricks were wrapped in newspapers and cloths, and we children would dash to our cold beds, each carrying a brick. There, under our hand-pieced quilts, deep in the feather beds, with a warm brick at our feet, we slept comfortably until the next morning, when we faced the agony of getting up in chilly rooms in the cold, gray dawn.

Oh, those good winter breakfasts of oatmeal, hot biscuits or cornbread, sausage, bacon, or home cured ham, fried eggs, jelly and preserves, real home-churned butter, coffee and milk. No one worried about getting too fat, for we were active and burned up what we ate. We had never heard of calories.

Late on cold and stormy evenings when my father went out to supervise the feeding of the live-stock, I often heard him say, "It's going to be a WILD night tonight! Give extra feed to all the animals." And I would shiver at his words. This saying, "It's going to be a WILD night tonight", has passed on to my children, and they repeat it in sepulchral tones on stormy nights.

On long winter evenings we gathered around the fireplace. Ma sewed or knitted. Pa read his Bible, farm journals, and the Atlanta "Constitution'.' We read everything that came our way, for story books and magazines were scarce.

Even on winter days when it rained or sleeted or snowed, Pa was not idle. He busied himself mending harness, repairing farm tools, tending the stock, shelling corn, and finding many other chores to do.

Christmas drew near and all of us had secrets, for most of our presents to each other were hand-made and required closed doors and lots of hiding as we worked on them. Shortly before

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Christmas, the big girls of the neighborhood gathered at our house to spend the day, bringing any pretty scraps of material they might have, and dressed the dolls my father always bought for Cousin Line's two little granddaughters and for the three little daughters of a widow named Roden. Always these orphan children were remembered with fruit, nuts, candy, perhaps a knife apiece for Cousin Line's three grandsons, or some other gift dear to the heart of a boy. Cousin Line's gift was always material for a new dress. Aunt Molly, Ma, and I baked cookies enough to fill a washtub and many of them went into the Christmas boxes. All of the tenant children and the darkies on the place were remembered. I recall that one year when there was a drought and the crops were short, Pa sold a yoke of oxen in order to buy gifts for the needy.

Early on Christmas morning, Uncle Andy's and Aunt Molly's children pounded on the door, shouting "Chris'mas gif', Marse Stowers, Miss Lizzie, Miss Dovie, Mr. Fred, Mr. Ben!" You can be sure that we were prepared for this very thing, and they always returned to their little cabin with full hands and shining faces. Aunt Molly always asked for and received a "snuff colored merino dress", and Uncle Andy always wanted a new "weskit" (waistcoat or vest). He must have had a dozen.

My Grandfather Roden had a beautiful custom at this season. About two weeks before Christmas, he placed in the front hall, a cradle with a large doll in it to represent the Christ child. All visitors-and there were many-who crossed the threshold were requested to leave there a gift in memory of the kind little Jesus. These gifts were left in and around the cradle and consisted of money, clothing, shoes, dress material, groceries, fruit, candy, nuts, and toys. Then a day or two before Christmas found the servants busy baking cookies, cakes, pies, and other good things that the needy ones would be glad to receive. These preparations were mostly for the widows and orphans of Confederate soldiers.

On Christmas eve, the time came when all members of the family and any guests who were in the home, were put to loading the wagon to start on its round of bringing cheer to lonely hearts. What a happy time Grandfather had, leaving all the lovely things at the doors of the less fortunate. Sometimes the sun would be showing rosy in the east with the dawn of Christmas day when he returned home, tired and sleepy, but well content.

This Christmas, in loving memory of the Little One Beneath the Star, let us bear in mind that JOY should be
spelled: J - Jesus first
O - Others next
Y - Yourself last.

Often in January the weather would be so bad, we could not get out of the house for days, but we used this shut-in time to catch up on sewing and reading. We spent few dull moments, for we had the household tasks, and the music with which we entertained ourselves.

Once a big snow fell on New Year's Day, then froze over as slick as glass. Gadsden declared a holiday. The next morning, Fred, who was working for Mr. Peden in Gadsden, hired a livery

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stable team and a sleigh and came home early. He took Ben and me for a ride in the sleigh, and we saw other sleighs on the highway, with sleighbells tinkling. As we drove down the road, we came to a sharp turn and there, hidden by a clump of cedars, were several boys with a big pile of snowballs. They let us have a barrage, but it was all in fun. Then they invited us to their camp nearby. They had driven forked stakes in the ground, laid a pole across, and there over the fire was a big pot of rabbit stew, with potatoes, carrots, turnips, and onions. They insisted that we sample their stew. I more than sampled it. I ate so much, I was so full of rabbit that I hopped instead of walked.

Afterwards Fred took us home and went to see Olie, and they had a sleigh ride together.

Yes, winter, too, had its happy days.

A SKATING PARTY

As I write this it is the thirteenth of January, nineteen-hundred and thirty-eight. The cold gray clouds remind me of the cold, snow, and ice skating that we sometimes had when I was a child. On our farm there was a pond of water that would sometimes freeze solid, if there was a very cold spell.

There came such a time one winter; and my father said, "Honey, I believe you could have a big skating party tomorrow." Happily I wrote my invitations, and Henry (one of the colored boys) rode horseback to the different homes and let the people read it.

By eleven o'clock that morning, about twenty boys and girls were on the ice, having a fine time. Al Malone was the best skater in the country. He could make figure eights on the ice, skate on one foot, do flips, and other fancy things. The darkies would pop corn, make candy, play the banjo, mouth harp, and sing as we skated.

A large rock jutted out from the mountain side, making a sort of cave, and there we had a camp-fire to warm by. About one o'clock we saw the folks and darkies coming with our dinner. The boy in front had a big dishpan on his head. In it was a fifteen pound turkey with chestnut stuffing. Others carried potato salad, pies, cakes, vegetables, pickles, biscuits, milk, cream, coffee, and apples from our orchard. Our appetites were enormous, and we all ate heartily. We scattered crumbs and the birds would hop up close to eat, as the ground was covered with snow and ice and they were hungry.

Two tramps came along about this time; and we fed them all they could hold, for no one was ever turned away hungry in those days. They went on up the railroad rubbing their "tummies" and saying, "Full of grub one more time."

I believe that was the best party we ever had. One of our guests was a sweet, dainty little girl named Snow Bird, for she had been born during a big snow storm. Some of our guests went up the valley to their homes, some went down the valley, some went up the mountain, and some

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crossed the ridge to Big Wills Valley. Before they left, we sang, "God be with you till we meet again." I wonder how many of that crowd are still living-very few, I fear.

(To be continued)
Nicholson, Dovie Stowers. Potpourri of Memories. Jacksonville, Texas. Second Printing, Christmas 1979. Used by permission of her Great-grand daughter, Alyson Owen Ezell, August 14, 2012.

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Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray

ALBERT CASEY, Jacksonville, Texas - Born near Lewisville, Ala. Enlisted in the Confederate Army October, 1861, at Jacksonville, Texas, as private in Company K, Eighteenth Texas Infantry, Gen. Wall's Brigade, Gen. Walker's Division, Trans-Mississippi Department. My first Captain was J. C. Maples and first Colonel was Tom Ochiltree, Sr. Served the entire war in this department. Was wounded at Pleasant Hill, La., 9th day of April, 1861. I was soon promoted to First Sergeant of the company, which position I held during the entire war. Was in the battles of Bourbeau Bayou in Louisiana in 1863, Pleasant Hill, La., 1864. I experienced all hardships incident to long marches in Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas, was at Hempstead, Texas, at the surrender of Gen. Walker's Division in 1865.

Yeary, Mamie, comp. Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray 1864-1865. Dallas, Mamie Yeary, 1912, pp 127-128. Texas Technological College Library, Lubbock, Texas.

J. T. MOORE, Jacksonville, Tex. - Born in 1842, near Hazelhurst, Miss. Enlisted in the Confederate Army October, 1861, at Camp Moore. La., as private in Company C, Nineteenth Louisiana Infantry, Adam's Brigade, John C. Breckenridge's Division, Hill's Corps, Army of Tennessee. Kennedy, first Captain, and B. L. Hoge, first Colonel.
We were sent from Camp Moore, La., to New Orleans to assist in fortifying the city. From there we went to Corinth. Miss., where we remained for some time. Then we were in the battle of Shiloh, where I was wounded on April 6. 1862, in my right arm; the ball is still there. Was in the battles of Shiloh, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, on raid from Dalton to Atlanta, Ga.; Franklin, Nashville. Our last fight was at Spanish Fort on Mobile Bay. We surrendered at Madison, Miss., May 10, 1865.

Yeary, Mamie, comp. Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray 1864-1865. Dallas, Mamie Yeary, 1912, p 534. Texas Technological College Library, Lubbock, Texas.

S. A. THOMPSON, Jacksonville, Texas-Born July 11, 1839, near Cotton Gin Port, Miss. Enlisted in the Confederate Army in July, 1861, Tyler, Texas, as private in Good's First Texas Battery. At the reorganization of the army James P. Douglas was elected Captain and it was known afterwards as Douglas' First Texas Battery. Had my windpipe burst at Franklin, Tenn. Was taken prisoner on the 17th day of October, 1862, and sent to Louisville, Ky., for a short time and was exchanged on December 22, 1862. Was in the battle of Elkhorn, Richmond, Ky.; Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Resaca, New Hope Church, Mt. Zion Church, Atlanta, Jonesboro, Franklin, Tenn.; Nashville, Tenn., and was in Johnston's campaign against Sherman for four months.

Yeary, Mamie, comp. Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray 1864-1865. Dallas, Mamie Yeary, 1912, p 748. Texas Technological College Library, Lubbock, Texas.

Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray

CICERO HIRAM SPEARS, Jacksonville, Texas-Born Oct. 13, 1835, at Pleasant Hill, Ga. Enlisted in the Confederate Army in March, 1862, at Jacksonville, Texas, as private in Company K, Ochiltree's Regiment, King's Brigade, Walker's Division, Army of Trans-Mississippi. My first Captain was J. C. Maples and first Colonel was Ochiltree. I left my home, wife and two babies in June, 1862, and was sick with measles six weeks at Camp Lewisville, and marched from there to Camp Nelson, thirty miles east of Little Rock, and from there to Des Arc on White River and back to Camp Nelson in October, and was taken with typhoid-pneumonia and stayed at an uncle's home till the next February. My wife left home with a year old baby in her arms and rode horseback in the dead of winter with the roads bad, bridges washed away, and rivers out of banks; after many delays and passing through many dangers reached me on the 4th of March, 1863. I was discharged at Pine Bluff, Ark., being unable to walk without crutches. After more than a year I was considered able to ride horseback and gather and drive beeves for the government and was employed in this way till the war closed.

Yeary, Mamie, comp. Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray 1864-1865. Dallas, Mamie Yeary, 1912, p 520-522. Texas Technological College Library, Lubbock, Texas.

J. A. TEMPLETON, Jacksonville, Texas.-Born Dec. 15th, 1844, near Bentonville, Ark., and enlisted in the Confederate Army on the 16th of September, 1861, at Rusk, Cherokee County, Texas, as private in Company I Tenth Texas Cavalry, Ector's Brigade, Churchill's Division, Leonidas Polk's Corps, Army of Tennessee. My first Captain was Robert B. Martin, and first Colonel, M. F. Locke. I first served in Northeast Arkansas, in the Trans-Mississippi Department, and was transferred in March or April, 1862, to Corinth, Miss., Gen. Beauregard commanding. After the evacuation of Corinth in May, 1862, we were sent to Chattanooga, East Tennessee, under Gen. E. Kirby Smith, and was with him in his invasion of Kentucky. After this, was in the Army of Tennessee, except for a short time was transferred to Mississippi, and then back again in 1863. Was in the disaster which occurred at the Zollicoffer House in Nashville, Tenn., where the floor on the fifth story gave way and precipitated over 100 prisoners to the bottom floor. It was said that fourteen were killed outright and 100 wounded. I was fortunate enough to be rescued from falling. Was captured at the battle of Chickamauga, Ga., on Sept. 19th, 1863, and sent to Camp Douglas, Ill., and reached that prison Oct. 4th, 1863, which was about the time the exchange of prisoners was discontinued, and there I remained just nineteen months, and came South on a cartel which had previously been arranged between the two governments for the exchange of the Federal prisoners in Tyler. Was duly exchanged at the mouth of Red River, on which was the last personal exchange of prisoners between the North and South. Reported for duty at Shreveport, La., and was furloughed for sixty days. Was promoted to Fourth Sergeant at Shelbyville, Tenn., in February, 1863. Was in the battles of Farmington, Miss., Perryville, Ky.; Murfreesboro, Tenn.; Jackson, Miss. during the siege of eight days, and Chickamauga, Ga. I reached my home in Cherokee County, Texas near this town, June 5th, 1865, and, thank God, I am still living in fair health and enjoying the blessings of life.-

Yeary, Mamie, comp. Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray 1864-1865. Dallas, Mamie Yeary, 1912, pp 743-744 . Texas Technological College Library, Lubbock, Texas.

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