

# • TREE TALK •

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## Editor's Letter

This issue of TREE TALK concludes the childhood recollections of Dovie Stowers Nicholson 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, 1937 was 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.

We continue the story of Dovie Stowers Nicholson's family with her daughter Hattie Nicholson Schultz. Mrs. Schultz began Random Recollections in January 16, 1980 and died on October 18, 1988. Her grand daughter, Leigh Owen, arranged for the book to be published in Houston, Texas in December 1998.

**Gordon Bennett**  
**Editor**

**Dovie Stowers Nicholson**



**Potpourri of Memories****By Dovie Stowers Nicholson**

## A Happy Visit

Charlsie Malone and I were very congenial girlhood friends, and we spent many happy hours together. We were almost the same age, she being just a few months older than I. She once invited me to go on a visit with her to spend the weekend in the home of her aunt, who lived on Sand Mountain. We had new dresses, hats, fans, shoes, and parasols for this occasion, carefully packed to keep them fresh for Sunday.

We left home early on Saturday morning, for it took a long time to drive that distance, sixteen miles, over rough roads. We first crossed the ridge and came to Big Will's Valley. There we crossed the creek on a long covered bridge. We then drove about five miles down the valley, passing pretty farm homes, and beautiful crops and orchards. We saw happy, home-loving people, busy about their Saturday tasks, getting ready for the Sabbath, which was truly a day of rest. Yards were being raked or swept; and the smoke pouring from kitchen chimneys told of the pies, cakes, hams, and chickens and other good things that were being cooked, so that as little work as possible would be done the next day.

Next, we crossed the ridge between Big Will's Valley and Sand Mountain. What a contrast there was in these farms, houses, and people! The farms were small, poor, and sandy. The homes were shabby and ill-kept. The people were ignorant and undernourished, typical mountaineers with a "don't care" attitude. The cabins, yards, and fields were running over with children, hound-dogs, poor cattle, thin mules, and horses.

After crossing the ridge, we came to Sand Valley. The homes were more comfortable, and the farms more prosperous than the ones we had just passed. We went only about two miles down this valley, then we started up Sand Mountain over a winding road, with a beautiful view stretched out before our eyes. We could see Lookout Mountain, which was in front of our home. A blue haze that looked like smoke, lay between the tops of the ridges and mountains. Large trees, rocks, and boulders were on each side of the road. At one place, about halfway up the mountain, a waterfall of the clearest, sparkling water, came tumbling over a little rock cliff. With the sun shining on the falls, it was a pretty picture.

When we reached the top of the mountain, we still had about four miles to go. Now there was not a house in sight. Large trees, bushes, grass, and wild flowers were growing close to the road, making it lonely and gloomy. Cattle with tinkling bells around their necks were grazing by the road side. A covey of quail crossed the road just ahead of us, the mother walking ahead of her little brood of about fifteen. They scattered in all directions when she gave the alarm; and after we passed on, we could hear her calling to gather them together again.

All at once we rode into a clearing and Charlsie exclaimed, "I see Uncle Bill's house." Two little girls, Laura and Kate, Charlsie's cousins, came running to meet us. Uncle Bill and Aunt Rhoda came to greet us and make us welcome. It was about one o'clock and we were hot, tired, and hungry, and the long ride made the dinner taste good.

### Potpourri of Memories

They had just finished a new, one-story house, painted white, with green blinds, and it looked fresh and pretty. The yard was inches deep in white sand and the glare made my eyes burn and ache. The rooms were very large with more beds than I had ever seen in one house before. They had home-woven, "hit and miss" rag carpets covering the bedroom floors. An open hall or breezeway extended the length of the house and was used as a sitting-room in hot weather. The kitchen and dining room were combined in one large room, with a range for cooking, and a long table in the center was capable of seating all the visitors who might come. Soon after our arrival, a wagonload of their relatives drove up, but there was an abundance for all.

Uncle Bill was a tall, thin man, with deep-set brown eyes, always smiling and pleasant, and greatly beloved by many people. He was a missionary Baptist preacher; and although he could not read or write and did not know one figure from another, he could quote most of the Bible from memory, with the exception of the genealogy chapters, in which he was not interested. He could count rapidly and figure numbers in his head, without mistake. His wife had some education and read to him. She could read aloud simple chapters from the Bible, and he memorized them in one hearing. Long, hard chapters had to be read more than once in order for him to know and quote them.

Aunt Rhoda was a roly-poly woman, always busy and always neat and clean. She had yellow hair which she wore in long, thick braids hanging down her back.

Uncle Bill and Aunt Rhoda had a store near the house, and there they sold many things, including herbs and medicine made from roots and plants. Neighbors came for miles around to buy from them. Besides feed for the stock, the only thing they grew on the farm was herbs; and they also bought medicinal plants and roots from the mountain people. They had a drying house here roots, bark, plants, and blooms were dried. Some were powdered and preserved in alcohol and sold to drug markets. They said that ginseng root was the most profitable.

We children and young people played games after supper, then we gathered on the front porch to watch the moon rise. First, a rosy glow came in sight over the mountain in the distance, then one edge of the moon peeped over, then gradually the entire big, round bright moon was in full view, shining down on us with its silvery light. I thought, "How perfect is this moon, God's handiwork, that after all these years, it never makes a mistake, but rises and sets on the dot."

After a restful night, we arose, ready for the Sabbath. Their Negro cook had prepared breakfast and left it on the range. Then each person, as he wanted breakfast, would serve himself and wash and dry his dishes. The cook had dinner all ready and placed on the table, covered over with white cloths, so that when church was over, no preparation remained to be done.

The church and school house were one and the same, a short distance from Uncle Bill's house. It was a large, one-room log building. A large crowd was at the church. This was only the second meeting of the season, for scattered as the people were, in cold, bad weather, no services were held. The people entered into the services with a hunger that was pathetic. Laura lead the singing. She had a clear, strong voice and made a good leader.

### Potpourri of Memories

Uncle Bill called on a white-haired patriarch to lead the first prayer. In a high, sing-song voice he prayed for the people, telling the Lord all about everyone. Then in his prayer, he made himself out to be a cumberer of the earth, unworthy even to breathe God's air. Uncle Bill preached from the text found in Jeremiah 8:30. It reads, "The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." The people drank in every word.

When the sermon was over, the people spread dinner on the church grounds and began the eagerly awaited "visiting" with each other; for after the long weeks of staying at home because of cold weather and the busy crop-planting season, they enjoyed this fellowship to the fullest.

Our group went back to Uncle Bill's for dinner and what a meal! It was well cooked, and there was more than enough for about twenty guests. The children ate with everyone else, so had no long wait, scared that there would not be enough to go around. At some places it was customary for the children to wait for "second table"; and often the chicken would be reduced to necks and wings, for the "first table" ones would have eaten all the choice pieces. But not at Uncle Bill's.

When we returned for the afternoon service, the girls crowded around Charlsie and me to admire our new clothes, to feel of the material, asking the price or asking to borrow the patterns of any articles they admired. All of us had to make visits to the nearby spring, where at least a dozen long-handled gourds were hanging on a stump. No water ever tasted better than cool, clear spring water drunk from a gourd. Walking to the spring was a chance for "sparking couples" to be together and for the boys to "make eyes" at the girls.

A man named Horton preached the afternoon sermon, after which Charlsie and I, Laura and Kate went horseback riding, through a peaceful, quiet countryside.

Many of the homes were humble, one-room cabins, but there were always flowers and clean swept yards with little children playing. We visited in several of these homes, and I noticed that in every one there was an almanac hanging on the wall and a looking glass with a homemade holder for a comb and brush also hanging there. Laura said that everyone used the same comb and brush and that the almanac was frequently consulted, as it was full of helpful hints and long range weather forecasts.

She said that when a young couple married, the groom always had a house ready for his bride. It was customary for the bride's parents to give them a cow, hog, chickens, feather bed, pillows, and plenty of home-pieced quilts. The groom would carry the load of meat, flour, etc., into the home first, signifying that there would always be plenty to eat. Then he would carry the bride over the threshold, as a vow that he would guard and care for her as long as they both lived.

Most of the houses we visited had beds in at least three corners, a fireplace for heating and cooking, homemade rough table for eating, with benches to sit on, and shelves for supplies. Clothes hung on the walls on wooden pegs, and spare bedding was neatly stacked on a box and covered over with a sheet. Everything was sparse, but the people were proud and independent, with a strong sense of right and wrong, and a deep, abiding religious faith.

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We rode back in time for the evening service. A son of the man who preached in the afternoon, preached that night. His subject was from Ecclesiastes 12: 1, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth". It was a good, wise, and helpful sermon directed to young people, young homemakers, and young parents.

That night, after all was quiet, I heard a nightingale sing-the first and only time I ever heard one. It was a beautiful song and seemed a fitting close to the day.

Charlsie and I started home Monday morning, after promising to come again. I wanted to go back again but never did. However, I have never forgotten this happy visit.

As we neared home, we came across a band of gypsies camped near the main road. They crowded around us, wanting to tell our fortunes. One old woman said to me, "You have such a nice hide, you should wear a veil." We were a little afraid of these gypsies, but they were picturesque, with their bright colored dresses, kerchiefs and beads. The little children looked fat, healthy, and happy. They had artistic, handwoven baskets for sale. However, we were brought up to be suspicious of them, for after one of their stays in the neighborhood, farmers complained of missing chickens, farm implements, or almost anything that wasn't "tied down" or locked up, and mothers sometimes scared their children with the threat that the gypsies would steal them. So Charlsie and I drove on as soon as we could get by them.

### Random Recollections

The first night I ever spent away from home without my parents is still a painful memory to me. The two Keener sisters had stayed overnight with me many times, but my visits to them had always been in the daytime. I loved Sally, the younger of the two girls, ever so much, and we were always good friends. She begged me to spend the night with them, so after much persuasion, one afternoon I went home with them to stay the night.

We had a good time playing until about dark. Then a hoot-owl and a whip-poor-will began their lonesome sounding serenade. I got frightened and homesick and began to cry. Their mother told them to take me to their store, give me a stick of candy, and divide one between the two of them. All went well as long as the candy lasted; then I began to cry again.

The girls said, "Ma, she's crying again!" (I think they hoped for another piece of candy.) The mother answered in a harsh tone, "Let her cry!" I thought I would die. From that day on I disliked that woman.

A year or two later I happened to sit between her and the preacher's wife at church. How in the world that came about I don't know, for I made every effort to avoid her. They were whispering together, criticizing every one who came in and thoroughly enjoying their malicious comments. A widow came in, dressed in a clean, crisp calico dress and bonnet. She had on a white ruffled apron, with the ruffles painstakingly fluted with a hot fluting iron. Mrs. Keener and Mrs. Ramsey had a lot of fun sneering at her "fluter".

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At the end of the sermon, the preacher made a proposition about agreeing to pray. One of them leaned over me and whispered to the other, "I don't need to go up on that proposition. Every breath I draw is a prayer." Then I said, "Were your praying when you made fun of Mrs. B's apron?" She quelled me with a look and muttered, "Impudent young'un."

After church one of them said to my father, "Your little daughter is sassy!" He called me to him and asked, "What did you say to Mrs. Keener and Mrs. Ramsey?" I told him my story and he said, "Fine! I knew you were not saucy."

I was converted at a union revival meeting when I was eight years old, and said that I wanted to become a church member. Some of the church members said that I was too young to know what I was doing, and they called on me to make a public statement of what I felt. Ordinarily I was a timid and quiet child, but I was told in later years that my testimony seemed inspired, so convincing it was, so I was allowed to join the church. At that tender age I chose the path in life which I wished to follow and have always tried to walk in the footsteps of our Lord and Savior.

In 1888 a Missionary Baptist church was organized in Little Will's Valley and called the Greenwood Baptist Church. There were seventeen charter members, and my parents and I were three of them. My father was the church clerk; and when our home burned in 1893, all records and minutes were destroyed. Today the Greenwood Baptist Church is still active and an influence for good in the community.

\* \* \*

One bitterly cold day, with a freezing rain falling, a neighbor came to our house carrying a little, newborn lamb whose mother had died in giving it birth. He asked if he could give it to me. It was so sweet and little and soft, I begged for permission to keep it, so my parents consented.

I dried it off and fixed a box in the kitchen by the fire with warm bricks around it. I fed the little lamb from a bottle and named her Bonnie Doon.

When the weather grew warmer, Bonnie Doon was dismissed from the house to the yard; but if I went out, she followed me everywhere, just like Mary's little lamb in the poem. We romped and played together. She grew bigger and bigger and got to be a trouble maker and a nuisance (sic), but I still loved her.

One day I came in from school, and there was no Bonnie Doon. Instead, for supper, there was a leg-o-lamb, roasted to a turn. I cried and felt betrayed. Not one bite could I eat of the meat, for I would have felt like a cannibal. Poor Bonnie Doon.

\*\*\*

Our family was visiting in Granpa Roden's home once, when Uncle Alec Roden, one of his ex-

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slaves, invited us to have dinner with his family. He lived in a little house on the Roden place. We accepted gladly.

Everything in the house was as clean as could be. They had a fine vegetable garden and lots of pretty flowers. Aunt Dicey was an excellent cook, and I remember the delicious meal she served us-all kinds of vegetables, fried chicken, fresh fish, corn light-bread and beaten biscuit, with boiled custard and pound cake for dessert. Aunt Dicey, in a snowwhite apron and turban, waited on us. Uncle Alec stayed in the yard while we ate. They were glad to have Miss Nancy's children in their home. We knew that our welcome was genuine (sic) and that they loved us for our mother's sake. We, too, felt honored, for they were high class, fine colored people.

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One day my father and I were together in Gadsden, when we met a charming, dignified, white-haired man on the street. They stopped to talk; and Father said, "Judge Carden, this is my little daughter."

The Judge replied, "So, you are Nancy's daughter. Well, child, your mother was a very bright woman. I used to examine her for license to teach." My father, with a beam, said, "Yes, she was very bright and our children learn fast, too."

I was pleased at the compliment and thought of the old saying, "Every crow thinks that his little crows are the blackest of all."

\* \* \*

When we were children, Fred had a dog named Watch. He and Watch were constant companions and loved each other with undying love. One morning Fred and the dog followed the cows to the woods and became lost. The hours passed, and our parents became alarmed, so began searching for him. They were joined by all the men on the place, for there were still a few wild animals in the woods, as well as a creek not far away. At long last, they found Fred sound asleep, with Watch standing guard over him.

When I was about six years old, my father and I were sick one day. We kept hearing Watch barking under the house. Finally I crept out of bed, went outside, stooped and looked under the house. I heard rattles and saw a rattlesnake just as it sprang and bit Watch. I screamed, "Pal A big snake!" He came with his gun and shot it.

Watch grabbed the snake, a big diamondback rattler, in his mouth and shook it as if he would tear it to pieces. Suddenly he dropped it and ran howling to the spring and buried his head in the mud. We did all we could to doctor him and ease his suffering, but his head was terribly swollen, and he was very feverish. He lived for a few months after that, but was always stiff and almost helpless. He was a good dog and well named.

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Living near Murdock's mill there was a mysterious and peculiar woman. Her name was Sally Campbell, and she was a Scot. She had come to this section alone, had bought a few acres of land and a tiny house, and lived all alone. She never told one thing about herself.

She would go to every church picnic or dinner-on-the-ground and eat all she could hold. She never seemed to have a new garment but wore quaint, old-fashioned clothing and a black silk split bonnet summer and winter.

\* \* \*

Another strange character was an old woman named Bedie Roberts, who was considered a half-wit. She roamed through the country, lived by her wits and claimed to be a fortune teller and have second sight. You had to cross her palm with silver before she would read the tea leaves or coffee grounds in your cup. She knew enough about the love affairs of the young people to make what she told very convincing.

All her life she had been cold, hungry, and poorly clad, so that when she told a fortune she usually made your future rosy and bright. Most of the time she would predict plenty of good food, warm clothing, warm fires, and good shoes to keep your feet dry.

I always had my doubts as to her being as dull witted as people thought. She would manage to get in sight of a house close to dinner time. Then she would sit by the highway until the proper time, then walk in in a nonchalant manner and appear surprised that it was dinner time. The poor old soul was very fond of coffee with lots of cream and sugar. Hot biscuits with plenty of butter were ambrosia to her.

One day she went into our parlor. When she came back to the kitchen she said, "Ain't them easy cheers? They would be so soft to set in and sing." I asked her if she would like for me to play a song on the organ and let her sing. She eagerly told me the songs she would like. She had a cracked, quavering voice, but singing made her so happy. Tonight, after the passage of more than fifty years, it brings tears to my eyes as I think of her old stooped shoulders, and white hair, and of the few happy moments she had in a long life of hardships. After this incident, she went to different homes and predicted that the little Stowers girl would go to Heaven for being so kind to a poor old woman.

\*\*\*

Sometimes in the evening, Pa and Ma and visitors would discuss some murders that had been committed in the nearby country. I loved to listen to all the scary stories from the safety of my father's lap, with goose-bumps popping out all over me. Here is one story

A Mrs. Broom, whose husband was away, fighting in the Civil War, lived alone except for her two small children. Her reputation was none too good. One dark and stormy night the two

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children appeared at a neighbor's house and said that their home was full of smoke and that they could not find their mother.

The neighbors sent a negro man to see about her. He found her dead, half in and half out of a hole burned in the kitchen floor. This crime was never solved but it was rumored that a jealous wife had had her murdered.

\* \* \*

Another story was told of a little girl who was murdered. Her body was found in a sink-hole, and the mystery was never solved.

\* \* \*

A mysterious disappearance was that of a young man named Leatherwood, who was a Federal Revenue agent. He spent one night in Colonel Edward's home and left early the next morning on his beautiful black horse to try to locate a moonshine still. There were many stills in the mountains, and revenue agents were feared and hated.

About eleven o'clock, his horse came back to Colonel Edward's home, the fine silver-mounted saddle covered with blood. He was never seen again, although his people and the officers searched for him a long time. It was believed that moonshiners killed him and perhaps burned his body or hid it in a cave.

\* \* \*

A boy living just on top of the mountain in front of our home strung steel plow-points in a tree; then with a hammer he would play tunes on them by striking them. We loved to listen to his music. He could yodel too and the sound carried up and down the valley for a long distance. The same boy made a tom-tom of a short hollow log, and stretched rawhide over it. Then he got under a big rock that jutted out from the mountainside and would beat on it from time to time. It sounded just like a wild animal and had people frightened until they found out what it was.

\* \* \*

We once had a field hand named Howard Slocum. He was half Irish and half Indian. He had hair like an Indian and features like the Irish. Although this man had no family or place in society, God had given him a lovely talent that brought happiness to him and others. He had a clear, sweet, strong singing voice and knew many Indian and Irish songs and Negro spirituals. I believe my favorite was "Where the River Shannon's Flowing". He had a low, musical speaking voice and could recite poetry with great feeling, especially Longfellow's "Hiawatha." He would whistle beautifully and imitate the song of birds. He was a man of deep religious convictions, read his Bible daily and prayed consistently. He knew many Indian legends and told us children thrilling stories.

\* \* \*

When I was about grown, my father bought Ma and me sealskin jackets on one of his business

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trips to Chattanooga. They were beautiful, glossy, soft, and smooth. Mine was lined with changeable green and old rose satin and Ma's was lined with red satin.

Shortly after that Fred, little Lala, and I went to spend the day with the Rodens. It was a cool day as we set out so I wore my new jacket. When we started back the day was much warmer so I hung my jacket on the back of the buggy seat. When we reached home it was gone, having slipped off and fallen out of the buggy. Pa sent a boy on horseback to search for it and inquire of the neighbors, but I never saw my jacket again. Ma scolded me severely for my carelessness even though I was already heartbroken.

A few weeks later, Ma and Pa were preparing to go to Gadsden to the opera house to see a performance of "East Lynn". She dressed before supper, then came downstairs to eat, and hung her jacket, hat, and gloves on the hall-tree near the front door. After supper when she went into the hall to get her jacket it was gone as were her gloves and hat.

At first she thought that I had hidden them to tease her, but that was not true; and I convinced her that I had not touched them. We never found a trace of the things, but we always thought that a tramp saw them through the front door, slipped in and stole them while we were at supper.

I'll have to admit that I did not grieve too much, for I guess I had a bit of the "Old Ned" in me and could not forget how she had scolded me when my jacket was lost.

\*\*\*

Vanity was completely left out of my make-up, for I early learned that I was not pretty. But I want to tell you about the one exception to that knowledge, when I really liked my looks. Cousin Ben and Cousin Ella invited me to spend several days with them in Birmingham and said that as a special treat we would go to the opera.

I had a new green velvet gown that was lovely. My hair was piled high on my head, and I had two silver ornaments shaped like arrows to thrust through the knot. Excitement made my eyes sparkle; and when I was dressed, I knew that for once I was pretty.

**Potpourri of Memories**

My Mother

by Hattie Nicholson Schultz

Now that I am as old as my mother was when she wrote these stories of her girlhood, I realize what a treasure they are, to be shared with family and friends. On June 14, 1970, Mother would have been one hundred years old, so this is a fitting time for her stories to be compiled and printed. There are now nine great granddaughters, so I want to tell them a little of Mother's later years.

On April 14, 1894, in Attalla, Alabama, Dovie Stowers married Charles Chester Nicholson, whom she had met during her school days in Collinsville. This union was to last sixty-two years. They set up housekeeping in a little three room house given to them by Colonel Bradford Harrison Nicholson, Chester's father. Various renters had lived in the house, but the young couple scrubbed the walls and floors with lye soap, papered the rooms, and painted the house and proudly moved in.

A son was born to them on November 14, 1897, and was named John Bradford for his two grandfathers. A baby daughter, Mary Alyne, was born in 1900, but lived only two months. A few months later they moved to Colorado City, Texas, where my father's uncle, John Majors, had a jewelry store.

Mother was again pregnant and homesick and could not get used to the little, raw, Western town where the wind blew constantly. Hot, dry winds, frequent sandstorms, and the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables were all a trial to her. (I wish she could have seen this part of Texas in later years-progressive and modern, much of it producing fine crops under irrigation.) I visited Colorado City in 1963 and looked up some of Uncle Johnny's children, and must tell what Sam Majors remarked to me. He said, "Hattie, your mother was a very brainy woman." (You little granddaughters need to be told that this meant that she was very intelligent.)

I was born in Colorado City on May 12, 1902-fair, blue-eyed, fat, and placid. My Mother and I were always very companionable, and she said that I was the sister she never knew. I was named for my father's beloved sister, Hattie Faniel Nicholson, who married Jim Brown, so my name became Hattie Brown Nicholson.

Mother was so discontented in West Texas that she begged my father to move east. So they did, living first in Palestine, Texas, briefly; then in Shreveport, La., and for seven years in Marshall, Texas, before settling in Jacksonville in 1910, where they lived for forty-six years, died, and were buried side by side. He died in 1956. She died in 1960.

While they lived in Marshall, another little girl was born. They named this baby Lala Pauline, and Mother rejoiced because Lala inherited our Father's dark hair and beautiful, large, brown eyes.

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Let me describe my mother. To me she was a lovely woman, although she always deprecated her looks because she had red hair. Nowadays, red hair is considered beautiful, but to her it was a blight and a curse. As a child, she had been called "Red", "Carrot Top", and "Fire Top", and the boys teased her at school by pretending to warm their hands at her hair. My father loved her red hair, which was luxuriant and shiny, and she lived to see this characteristic transmitted to a granddaughter, Carol Schultz, and to a great granddaughter, Leigh Owen, with a grandson, Robert Renfro, having sandy red hair. She heard the compliments they received on their hair and saw their pride in it, but she never forgot how she had been teased.

Mother had a faultless complexion, a noble brow, a shapely nose, a tender and expressive mouth. She was never very strong and had many serious illnesses and several major operations; yet she lived to be ninety years old, with a clear, alert mind and a remarkable memory.

She knew hard work, stringent economy, sick children, days busy from dawn to dark; yet she always made time for books, church work, and civic affairs. She sewed, did "fancy work", was a splendid cook, and grew beautiful flowers. She faithfully attended the Methodist Sunday School and Church, which she joined with my father for a united family, but always had a tender spot for the Baptist Church, in which she was reared.

She held numerous offices in the Woman's Missionary Society and Mother's Club (forerunner of the P. T. A.) which she helped to organize, and served as its first local president. She was frequently called upon to pray in public and was noted for her beautiful and timely prayers. For a number of years, she was the last living charter member of the Greenwood Baptist Church near Attalla, which she joined at the age of eight years, and was honored each year at its observation of the founding of the church. She lived a consecrated, Christian life daily.

Her two sons-in-law loved her deeply. Carl always called her "Mother" ever so tenderly, and Terry pleased her very much by calling her "Dovie".

After Mother reached her later years; and her eyes grew too dim for reading or close work, she enjoyed two hobbies. One was drying rose petals, which she had in abundance, and making jars of fragrant, spicy pot pourri. She gave this to many friends, and even today there are still prized pot pourri jars in many homes. The other hobby was the knitting of dish cloths. She bought twine string in large cones and knitted cloths eleven or twelve inches square, crocheted a colorful border on each and gave them to friends. Best of all, her fingers had been busy and her time used to advantage.

Truly, the heart of her husband trusted her, and her children rose up and called her blessed.

\* \* \*

I remember Mother's telling me how and when she learned to dry rose petals for potpourri and for filling little pillows. She was visiting her aunts, Margaret and Sarah Roden, once as a small girl; and they taught her their method.

### Potpourri of Memories

Gather petals from full-blown roses after the sun has shone on them several hours to evaporate the dew. Include some of the stamen. Spread on newspapers on a flat surface such as a bed or table. Sprinkle generously with table salt. Stir once a day, leaving them to dry for about ten days, depending on the weather.

When the petals are dry enough to rattle, place them in layers in a pretty jar, alternating with spices such as whole cloves, nutmeg, stick cinnamon, and orris root. Cover jar with a well fitting lid, except to open briefly to scent a room. Or fill fancy little satin pillows for gifts to the sick, to be tucked under the head for soothing fragrance.

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.

### Query

Where did the John McCrummen [McCru(i)mme(I,O)n] family actually physically live in Cherokee County, Texas? Did his family ever live in the Cold Springs Community west of Alto??? Or was he a land speculator of some sort who rented out the land for sharecropping, etc. Some of the McCrummon family still owned a large portion of land on the north side of SH 21 West until after the mid-1900's but did not live in the community. Cherokee County, Texas, Deed Book 36, Page 116 shows in 1905-1906 John McCrummen of Lubbock, Texas, gave/acknowledged title to the Trustees of St. Thomas Chapel AME Church for 13 1/2 acres of land. St. Thomas Chapel AME Church and Cemetery are located four miles west of Alto on the north side of State Highway 21 West at the intersection of SH 21 West and the Lynch Chapel Road that has a county road number. In the old Cherokee County school records about 1898 there was a public school at St. Thomas Chapel with 75 students.

John McCrummen (1822-1909) and his wife, Mary A. are buried in the Cedar Hill Cemetery in Rusk, Cherokee County, Texas. I found a record on familysearch.org where a John McCrummen married Mary Se(u)ttle in Bibb County, Alabama, in 1840. The family is on the 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, and 1900 Cherokee County, Texas, census. The census shows that their older children were born in Alabama and that he was from North Carolina. Where in NC??? In 1860 John McCrummon owned 18 slaves.

John W. Foreman owned 11 slaves in 1860. The land on the south side of Hwy 21 where most of the houses in the "Chapel" are and were located was originally the John W. Foreman tract of over 300 acres. The John W. Foreman family was originally from Talladega County, Alabama, and before that from South Carolina. They were here before 1850 and the legal description on portions of that tract date back to the 1850's. Much is known about the Foremans. Family members have markers in the Shiloh Methodist Church Cemetery and some of their descendants still own parts of that tract in the area and still live in the area.

In 1985 I did the research and wrote a 55 page monograph for the historical marker for the Cold Springs Methodist Church and Public School where my husband attended school for the first three grades until it consolidated with Alto in 1944. In that research I found information on St. Thomas Chapel which was the black school in Common School District No. 3. My husband grew up on the hill just east of the St. Thomas Church property. However, his family did not move to the area until 1915. Now almost 30 years later, because of a cookbook being put together by the AME Church district/conference, members of St. Thomas Chapel have finally gotten interested in knowing more about the history of their church. The cookbook is to feature a picture and some history about each church.

Vivian Toole Cates, Mound Prairie Ranch, Alto, Texas 75925-5706 1-936-858-3801 <http://www.myinu.net/vcates>

### Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray

ROBERT MIMS, Jacksonville, Texas.-Born May 23, 1842, at Tuskegee, Ala. Enlisted in the Confederate Army, March, 1862, at Tuskegee, as private in Company H, Forty-fifth Alabama Infantry, Lowery's Brigade, Cleburne's Division, Hardee's Corps, Army of Tennessee. Breedlove first Captain and Goodwin first Colonel. Was severely wounded at the battle of Resaca, Ga.; shot through the neck, the bullet lodging in the right shoulder. Was in the battles of Perryville, Murfreesboro, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Resaca and Franklin, Tenn. Our company numbered about 110 men and was made up at Tuskegee, Ala. After this we organized the Forty-fifth Alabama Regiment, and Capt. Breedlove was made Major and Bob Abercrombie, Captain. Neither tongue nor pen can tell the true story of the hardships and sufferings through which the Confederate soldier passed. We were thinly clad and poorly shod, but all the same we, as Johnny Rebs, were always there at roll call, ready to go out to the battle line as quick as the order came. My regiment joined Gen. Bragg's Army a few days after the battle of Shiloh, and was sent from there to Chattanooga. Then Gen. Bragg took up the march through Kentucky and met the Federal army at Perryville, where we were engaged in a general battle, which was the first fight for the Forty-fifth Alabama. I was slightly wounded in this battle by a piece of bomb-shell, in the left arm, but soon recovered. We lost two of our brave boys that day, John Martin and Pat Huddelston.

We had to retreat by the way of Cumberland Gap to Knoxville, Tenn., and from there to the battle of Murfreesboro. I came out all right, but we lost two more men out of our company. Our next battle was at Chickamauga. The next was at Missionary Ridge, and it so happened that my regiment was on the extreme right of our line of battle and we never lost a man. My division covered the retreat on the next day and at Ringold, Ga., we fought a hard fight, and a good many of my company were wounded.

We then fell back to Tunnel Hill, Ga., for the winter, and there, we all came near starving out. We were so hungry that it interfered with our sleep. Our rations consisted of flour and beef. The beef was inspected every morning, and, if the marrow in the bones happened to be bloody, it was condemned and we were not permitted to eat it, and it so happened that it was bloody every morning for two or three months during that winter.

Our next battle was at Resaca, Ga. about the 15th of May, 1864. In this battle I was struck by a ball in the left side of my neck, and I was not know anything for several hours. The bullets were coming too thick for the litter bearers to take the wounded from the battlefield. When I revived, my Captain told me that if I could get away from there that I had better do so, as I would be captured. Two of the boys carried me off the battlefield to the general battle ground hospital, where the doctors performed an operation and removed the ball from my shoulder. I was sent to the Atlanta hospital, and my mother sent our family physician after me. I secured a sixty days' furlough and went home. I remained at home for more than one hundred days, until after the fall of Atlanta.

Then I went to my command near Jonesboro. I found them about dark, and they appeared glad to see me. The doctor examined me and said that I was not able for duty and never would be. He then told my Captian (sic) to give me rations and that he would give me a light job later on, so I remained with the army until we surrendered.

**Reminiscences of the Boys in Gray**

I was with Hood's army in and around Nashville, Tenn. I was right there with the boys when they formed the line of battle at Franklin. One of our company was sick and got excused from duty. I volunteered to act in his place and went into the battle, which was the most severe battle of the war. We lost several out of our company in killed, wounded and captured, but I came out all right and returned the sick man's gun. We endured hard times on this march. Hood gave a quarter pound of graham bread, or two ears of corn, and a little beef every day. The army was almost naked and a great many of the men were barefooted. and we were forced to retreat back to Mississippi. All the barefooted soldiers were placed in a squad and sent ahead of the regular army. I was among the barefooted. We drew the skin of the beef legs every other day for shoes until we arrived in Mississippi.

The battle of Nashville was about the last battle fought by my regiment. Cleburne was killed at the battle of Franklin. He was a good General and loved by all his division. Gen. Joe Johnston was also loved a' respected by all the army. We all thought him the best General in the Confederate Army, and I believe so yet.

The morning I left for the army my mother armed me to the gate, and there was a great battle fought with tears and cries, but I had to go.

I had two brothers in the war. One, in the Twelfth Alabama Regiment, was killed in about the last battle Lee's army fought. My oldest brother was with me, and died in Knoxville, Tenn. Out of the three I was the only one who reached home. We surrendered at Greensboro, N. C. We all drew \$1.20 in Mexican money. When we passed through Atlanta, Ga., the Federals "shook our blankets" for Jeff Davis. We reached home in a few days. The Federal army had passed through our country under Wilson and had burned the cotton gins, homes, barns and everything that we had, and had taken all the mules and horses out of the country. I had the Mexican dollar and that was all that I had left me.

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

### Random Recollections

By Hattie Nicholson Schultz

#### My Alabama Forebears

Before I start my recollections, let me go back and tell something of my forebears. I realize these first paragraphs may make dull reading for anyone other than family members, but I wanted to include these facts here for their value to our family records.

Mother, DAVIS June Stowers, was born on June 14, 1870, and was reared on a farm in beautiful Little Will's Valley in North Alabama near Gadsden and Attalla. Her father, John Stowers, owned a prosperous farm in sight of the verdant Lookout Mountains which she loved and always longed for after she left Alabama. She had a happy childhood with a loving father and a kind stepmother, Elizabeth Walker Stowers. DAVIS' birth mother was Nancy Roden, from whom she inherited her beautiful red hair. Nancy was the daughter of a prominent farmer whose plantation, near Valley Head, Alabama, was quite large and who had a large family. Nancy died when Mother was only four years old. (DAVIS' younger years are chronicled in her book, *Potpourri of Memories*.)

John Stowers, my mother's father, was the son of Charles Stowers. [Charles was born in 1810 in Georgia, and married Alsey Scott, daughter of Lawrence Scott. Lawrence was born in 1782 in North Carolina. Lawrence Scott's wife was named Betsy Lowe, daughter of Aquilla Lowe.] Charles Stower's wife died young and John was reared by his grandfather. I never saw my grandfather Stowers, as he died before my early childhood visit to Alabama. But from what my mother told me, I know that he was a fine, upright citizen, a pillar of the church, and was sought out for advice by many friends.

My father, Charles Chester Nicholson, was born in Collinsville, Alabama, August 2, 1872. His father was Bradford Harrison Nicholson. The Harrison was in honor of President William Henry Harrison, who as a general fought at the battle of Tippecanoe in Indiana, completely routing the famous Indian chief, Tecumseh. So my grandfather's nickname became "Tip." And as an adult, he was addressed by the honorary title "Colonel."

I well remember my Grandfather Nicholson from our visit to Alabama when I was four or five years old. He was a very large man. Years later after the death of my grandmother following her long illness, he went to New Orleans to visit his son, Lamont, and then he came to see us here in Jacksonville in October of 1911. He was grief stricken over his wife Molly's death and had no interest in anything. I coaxed him out of the house one day to take a walk with me. After just a block or so, he was out of breath, and we returned home. A few day's later, he said to my father and mother, "Chester and DAVIS, I'm going home to Alabama. I love your family and you have been good to me, but I can hear Molly calling to me. Now, don't think I'm crazy, I know she's dead but I still have to go back." So he returned home to Attalla, visited his daughters, Hattie and Annie, and died peacefully in his sleep in just a few days. Papa went to the funeral.

Both of my grandfathers, John Stowers and Bradford Harrison Nicholson, served in the Confederate Army during the Civil War. "Tip" was only seventeen years of age when he enlisted, much against his mother's wishes. As he owned a horse, he entered the cavalry and his

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captain was his brother-in-law, Henry Small. Tip's wartime adventures are recounted in my Uncle Lamont Nicholson's book about his life and family, *Recollections of An Alabama Hillbilly*. Tip was promoted to lieutenant for bravery on the battlefield.

Later he was taken prisoner by the Yankees and confined to Rock Island Prison in Illinois where many Confederate soldiers were imprisoned. (In *Gone with the Wind* on page 285, Rock Island is mentioned.) I have heard my parents tell of the horrors of that camp-cold weather, scarce food, scanty shelter, despair, and yearning for home. There, just a boy, he suffered hardships. When he and others were offered their freedom if they would enlist to fight against the Indians in the far West, he accepted. In later years he was not proud of this but he might otherwise have been one of the many thousands on both sides of the conflict who died in prison camp, so I can see no blame for him.

Tip had been among the fortunate few raised in comfort in the South preceding the Civil War. His father, Lemuel Madison Nicholson, owned many slaves and 20,000 acres of land, and died an untimely death at the age of forty-four. My Uncle Lamont wrote how this came about in his account of the family but I, too, will tell it. Lemuel, my great grandfather, had commissioned furniture to be built by a cabinet maker in Rome, Georgia. This included a marble topped table; the beautiful walnut wood from which it was hand-carved was from a black walnut tree off the Nicholson plantation. Lemuel went to get the new furniture in a wagon, accompanied by a Negro slave who held the marble top wrapped in a quilt between his knees. As they were returning home, dark came early and they were overtaken by a severe storm with cold rain. The mountain roads were steep and dangerous so Lemuel decided to wait for daylight and he and the slave spent the night on the ground under the wagon. This exposure brought on a cold which developed into pneumonia and Lemuel was dead within a week.

Later, Bradford Harrison Nicholson inherited the table. When his home was destroyed by fire, the table was one of the few things rescued. When my grandfather died, the table was shipped by train to my father and mother in Jacksonville, Texas. I am now the lucky owner, as it was given to me. It is one of my treasures and is as beautiful today as it was in the year 1853 when it was new. Colonel Tip had four sons; two died as boys. My father had one son, J.B., who never had children. Uncle Lamont, my father's brother, had three sons but there are no grandsons. Thus the family name, Nicholson, will die in our branch of the family so this explains why I inherited the table.

An interesting family anecdote handed down through the years concerns Polly Waddell, Lemuel's young widow. She was left with a number of children, a large plantation to manage, and slaves to oversee. It is said that she was quite capable; her plantation was productive and prosperous. She was also very attractive, proud, and imperious.

Sometime after her husband's death, a man, who lived in the area and was unmarried, began to pay frequent visits to her home, offering his friendship. Polly was very direct and after these visits had gone on for some little time, she asked him the purpose of his attentions. He replied that he was calling on her with a "view toward matrimony." Polly pulled herself up to her

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full height and, in a dignified and haughty voice, said, "Lemuel Madison Nicholson's widow I am and Lemuel Madison Nicholson's widow I intend to remain. Good day, sir."

Chester and Davis

I am telling all this as an insight into my father's character. I used to say that he should have lived in the days of the Old South, riding on a fine blooded horse, overseeing the work of the plantation, never working with his hands at menial tasks. He was educated to be a lawyer at his father's insistence and was admitted to the bar. But he had no ambitions along that line. He was attracted to the profession of pharmacy, having worked as a youth in a drugstore in Fort Payne, Alabama. However, many years were to pass before he got his license and became a practicing pharmacist. He traveled over much of the United States and in Mexico before marrying and settling down as a husband and father.

He and my mother were married on April 16, 1893, and he found work as an iron molder in a foundry in Attalla, Alabama. Always, though, his heart was yearning for travel, far horizons, distant places. His favorite reading was about exotic lands; he always subscribed to the National Geographic. After his family was raised and cars and good highways opened the door to easy travel, he was able to enjoy the feeling of freedom on numerous car trips.

Their first child, John Bradford, was born November 16, 1897, in Attalla. He was named for both his grandfathers, John Stowers and Bradford Harrison Nicholson. His name was shortened to the initials J.B. so as not to show partiality to either grandfather. J.B. was spoiled and indulged by the proximity of four grandparents, and loving aunts and uncles; also perhaps because he was a sickly child.

About four years after his birth, a sister, Mary Alyne, was born, but she lived only two months. When she was just a few weeks old, J.B. was seriously burned on his feet, legs, and hands. It came about this way. Chester, our father, was working in the foundry not far from his home. It was J.B.'s custom each afternoon to go outside to meet his father coming home from work. This was a safe enough walk in those days of no cars. There was little traffic and that traffic was horse drawn and people were law abiding. On this particular afternoon, Mother's clock was a few minutes fast so J.B. went too early. When he did not see his father, he ran into the foundry, stumbled and fell into red-hot iron castings (liquid iron). The foundry doctor, who was an expert in treating burns, was called and his care helped save J.B.'s life.

During this trying time his baby sister became ill. She nursed her mother and it was thought that worry and wakefulness as Mama cared for J.B. affected the milk the baby got. At the age of only two months, Mary Alyne died. The young parents were heart broken .

J.B. bore burn scars on his feet, legs, and hands from that time on. He was never active as most boys, and turned to books. He became a fine scholar; in fact, always brilliant.

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Papa began to dream of Texas. An uncle of his, John Majors, was already established in Colorado City, Texas, then considered the far West. He owned a thriving jewelry store there and had written letters with glowing accounts of the country, its cattle, ranches, prosperity, and opportunity. Papa began urging Mama to consider the move to Texas. She did not want to leave the country she loved, but her duty as a wife was an ingrained characteristic so the move was made.

One late autumn day in 1901, the following scene took place, as described by my mother. A little group waited at the train depot in Attalla to say goodbye and Godspeed to the young couple and their little son. Chester's brown eyes sparkled with anticipation as he said goodbye to his father and mother, to his two sisters Hattie and Annie, and to his younger brother Lamont. Not so the young wife. Her tender gray eyes were filled with tears as she kissed farewell her stepmother and two brothers, Fred and Ben. She had a special caress for her young niece Lala, daughter of Fred and Ollie. She was saddened at the thought of the tiny grave she was leaving behind, as well as the grave of her father who had died several years earlier and that of her mother, who had died when Dovie was only four years old and whom she only vaguely remembered. Family ties were dear to her and she loved her Alabama home. But it was her duty to go with her husband. She intended to be a helpmate, not a drawback. She had told no one that she was again pregnant, was ill, and apprehensive of the change.

Her little boy, J.B., was wild with excitement at the thought of riding on a train. At last the train pulled in with much chugging, coal smoke, and cinders. J.B. was seated by a window to wave goodbye, reveling in all the excitement and attention he was getting. The journey began. The young family traveled across Alabama, Mississippi, a bit of Arkansas and Louisiana, into Texas. The eastern part of Texas looked very much like the Alabama Dovie loved so dearly. The hills were not as high as the mountains of home, but the young wife took heart.

A day and night later and many miles away, the train was speeding over a monotonous stretch of flat land. The few little Texas towns were dreary and dusty and far between in that year of 1901. Papa and Mama were tired and J.B. was fretful. Dovie turned to Chester and said, "I've never seen such a large peach orchard. Just look at the trees." He laughed and replied that they were mesquite trees-that they would be seeing no peach orchards where they were going.

### Hometowns of My Childhood

#### Colorado City, Texas

Weary and disheveled, the little family arrived in Colorado City, their destination. It was the county seat of Mitchell County, with a population of about 1,500 people-a typical western town of that time, some 260 miles southwest of Dallas on the Colorado River and Pacific Railroad. This was an area of cattle ranching, cotton growing, and a trading center. They were given a warm welcome by Chester's uncle, John Majors, his wife Lula, and their large family. They were not many years older than Chester and Dovie. Uncle Johnny owned and operated a

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successful jewelry store and his sons were to go into this business as they grew older. Lula, too, was expecting a baby. (She would have nine in all and would name the last baby girl Nina.)

Dovie needed all the comfort and consideration they would give her for she was homesick, ill much of the time, could not adjust to the hot winds, sandstorms, scant rain, and a diet lacking in fruits and vegetables. Until their furniture arrived by freight from Attalla, they stayed with Uncle Johnny and Aunt Lula.

Chester soon found himself the proprietor of a small restaurant in the Colorado City railroad station. The chief foods on their menu were meat in abundance, dried peas and beans, chili con carne, coffee, and the dried fruit pies Dovie baked each morning. She had little choice of ingredients so customers chose pies from dried apple, dried peach, or mock mincemeat made with raisins and spices. These pies proved to be a drawing card but their profit was small. The restaurant made a bare living and Chester realized that this was not the land of opportunity for him.

J.B. was often sick, doubtless due to the monotonous diet. He had been and still was a difficult child. As with most boys, he was full of mischief and many harmless things he did turned into disasters. Here is an example. Once in Colorado City he was playing Indian, with a bow and arrow, a headband with a feather, silently creeping through high grass, then suddenly rising with a wild war whoop. Unfortunately he was near a horse hitched to a wagon. In fright, the horse ran away and lore up the wagon, for which Papa had to reimburse the owner.

Once while living in Colorado City, Mother had an embarrassing experience. On a sunny day, she put pillows out to air and hung quilts and blankets to sun. A sudden violent sand storm blew up, and scattered many of them to the four winds. One quilt landed on the courthouse weather-vane and there it hung for days. No one could reach it and it finally blew away in shreds.

Along about the first of May, 1902, my Grandmother Nicholson and my young Aunt Annie arrived for a visit and to be present when the expected baby was born. The baby apparently was in no hurry to come and by and by the visitors had to go back to Alabama. The next day the baby chose to arrive. It was May twelfth and I was that baby. I like to think that I have never been late since.

My parents named me Hattie Brown, for Papa's beloved sister, Harriet, who had married Jim Brown. Unfortunately I have gone through life disliking the name Hattie; I would not have objected to Harriet. Many times my parents assured me that I should be proud of my name because my aunt and uncle were such fine people. Jim Brown was a successful businessman somewhat older than Aunt Hattie; he had lost his first wife and child and was extremely proud of his daughter, Mae, who was near J.B. in age. Mother and Aunt Hattie had spent many hours together back in Attalla while their two children played. Mama said that often she would find gifts such as a ham or side of bacon that Uncle Jim secretly tucked into J.B.'s carriage while she visited with Aunt Hattie. A little boy, Ralph was born to them and Uncle Jim's "cup runneth over," he was so proud.

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Because I was my aunt and uncle's name sake, I was always remembered at Christmas time and birthdays by beautiful gifts. I remember at about the age of five, the present of a beautiful French doll complete with wardrobe, my first jointed doll (this means that her arms, legs, and head could be moved-a new and uncommon doll.) Aunt Hattie started for me a collection of sterling silver demitasse spoons, salad forks, and souvenir teaspoons. They are still treasured possessions and are displayed on my kitchen wall in a pretty wooden rack these sixty-five or seventy years later.

But back to my babyhood. Mama told me that I was a very pretty, fat, good baby, content to lie in bed playing with a toy or to sit on a quilt on the floor while she baked her pies or did other chores. Though Mother was thirty when I was born, I like to remember that she said I was a great comfort and as I grew older like a sister in my companionship.

#### Shreveport, Louisiana

Mother was most unhappy living in Colorado City. She told Papa she so desperately wanted to go back to green grass and trees that she was willing to walk and carry me, if he would carry J.B. Papa was already discouraged, so he consented to leave. Of course, they did not have to walk but went by train. They reached Palestine, Texas, and since there was a foundry there and Chester was a master molder, he got immediate employment. They lived in Palestine briefly, two or three months, then moved to Shreveport, where he had no trouble getting the same type of work.

Mother loved Shreveport. Their house was next to a convent and the nuns made a pet of J.B. One of them taught him to read when he was no more than five years old. Mother enjoyed Louisiana Creole cookery and learned to make seafood gumbo, always a favorite dish with us.

#### Life in Marshall 1904~1908

Then opportunity beckoned from Marshall, a Texas town not far from Shreveport, approximately 35 miles, where Papa was offered a job as a master molder in yet another foundry. At this job, he received a good salary. They bought a brand new home with an acre of ground and a good barn; had chickens, a cow, a horse and buggy. I seem to remember the street was called Sexton Avenue. We had a well of good water, electric lights, cooked and heated the house with wood; no telephone. We took our baths in a round zinc wash tub and we were clean. Up until the move to Marshall, I have no recollection of anything, but I remember many of our happy days there.

Papa decided to dig a cellar for storing Mama's canned goods, vegetables, coal, etc. It was a big effort and, after he had excavated, a heavy rain came and the possibility that the house would cave in was a scary thing. This did not happen, luckily, as Papa propped up the floor boards. He cemented the walls of (he cellar. Then I made my play house there.

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It was in Marshall that I started to school in the fall after I was six years old in May. I went to the East Side School but remember very little about it. There was a music teacher who came to our room several times a week and who fascinated me by always wearing a little black velvet bow in her hair, a black skirt, and a white shirtwaist. I can still sing some of the songs she taught us, especially, "Come Little Leaves Said the Wind One Day."

#### THE LITTLE LEAVES

"Come little leaves;' said the wind one day.  
"Come over the meadow with me and play.  
Put on your dresses of red and gold,  
Summer has gone and the days grow cold."

Soon the little leaves heard the wind's loud call,  
Down they came fluttering one and all.  
Over the brown fields they danced and flew,  
Singing the soft little song they knew.

"Cricket, good-bye, we've been friends so long.  
Little brook will sing you a farewell song.  
Say you are sorry to see us go.  
Oh, you are sorry, right well we know."

So dancing and whirling the little leaves went,  
Winter had called them and they were content.  
Soon fast asleep in their heavenly beds  
The snow laid a blanket over their heads.

#### Bees, Billy Goat and a Balky Horse

Papa decided to cultivate bees. He had a row of hives some distance from the house at the side of the barn. In my mind's eye, I see him now as he went one day to "rob" the hives of some of their honey. He had on heavy gloves, a veil over his hat covering his face, and a smoke maker, I was cautioned to stay in the house but my curiosity overcame my fear and I slipped away after him. Of course the Bees became furious and, since they could not harm him, some of them took after me. After all these years I don't remember how many stung me, but enough so that the doctor was called and I was very sick.

One Christmas, Santa Claus brought J.B. a little wooden wagon, complete with driver's seat and harness, and a billy goat to pull it. We had some pleasant rides but the goat became a pest. I was afraid of him after he caught me in his pen and chased me up the high board fence, where I sat crying until I was rescued. He had horns and would butt at every opportunity. Another day, he got out and ate clothes which were hanging on a neighbor's clothesline. Papa had to pay for this. My parents deemed it wise to sell the goat and wagon. I didn't grieve after it.

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When I look back on my years in Marshall it is to visualize a happy, peaceful, safe life. Times were good in the early 1900s. People were moral and law-abiding, churches thrived, parents were respected and obeyed, old people were cared for and venerated, children were loved. Of course there must have been problems that I knew nothing about. But no radios or televisions broadcast the news as it happened, so we missed the sordid, spectacular. I could play outside, walk to visit friends, walk to school and Sunday School, and did not have to watch out for traffic-what there was, was horse drawn.

When I was about five years old, Mama saved my life, or at least spared me from serious injury. Papa had bought a new horse, only to learn that he was a "balky" horse. This meant that he was very temperamental. He would "balk" or stop when it suited him to do so.

Mama and I had dressed to go to town after she had first hitched this horse to our buggy. I went to open the gate so Mama could drive through. I stepped back against the gate post to wait to close the gate again. The horse had a balky spell and Mama took the whip to him. He suddenly started up again but pulling at an angle. Mama realized I was in danger of being crushed against the post. Just as the horse went through the gate, she reached down and, with one hand and the strength of desperation, pulled me up into the buggy. The back of the huggy scraped violently against the post where I had been standing just a second before, making a deep gouge in the wood of the post. I would have been hurt badly or killed if Mama had not acted so instinctively. She shook uncontrollably for several minutes; then drove on. Papa sold that horse and bought another.

Our house had few conveniences, like most of the other houses we knew, but never having had them, they were not missed. Mama cooked on a wood stove. It was hot in summer but, oh, so cozy on winter days. We had electricity, which consisted of drop lights in the rooms. We drew water from a well, bathed in a wash tub, had an outdoor toilet. Colored help was cheap and easy to get, and my mother always had help.

#### Visit to Alabama 1906

When I was four years old, the four of us, went back to Alabama to visit our relatives. I enjoyed the train ride. We had to "layover" in Birmingham for the night and stayed in a big downtown hotel. Papa sat me in the window, holding me tight, to let me look down at the people so far below in the street. To me they looked like toys. I was awestruck and a little frightened.

Mama wanted her little girl to look as pretty as possible for her introduction to the relatives, so she rolled my hair on kid leather curls. By that time I was groggy with sleep so Papa held my head while she rolled my curls.

At the railway station in Attalla, we were welcomed by a large contingent of relations. There were Grandpa and Grandma Nicholson; Uncle Fred and Aunt Olie Stowers and their daughters,

### Random Recollections

Lala and baby Kathleen, (who is still my dear friend), and son Maxwell. Also Mama's younger brother Ben, his wife, Aunt Mollie, and their children. Uncle Jim and Aunt Hattie with Mae and Ralph were there. As were Papa's younger sister, Annie, her husband, Guy Woodliff, and their two daughters, and also Mama's stepmother, Elizabeth Walker Stowers. You must understand that, back then, meeting the train was an important ritual welcome. We went to visit from one house to another and I was kissed so many times that I offered my lips to everyone I met.

All was not completely ideal. One of the first things I did was to disgrace myself by trying to hitch a ride on the back of a passing wagon as Mae, J.B., and Ralph were doing. Alas, I fell and skinned my face thoroughly. Now it was my face the relatives noticed-not my many beautiful dresses Mama had sewed with such loving care. The embroidery, lace, ruffles, ribbons, and curls were wasted.

One day Mother and Aunt Hattie went somewhere and left us four children playing. As boys have done forever, J.B. and Ralph decided to play a joke on us. They persuaded Mae and me to climb with them on a ladder to the top of the barn; then they took the ladder away and laughed at us. We had to stay on the roof until our mothers returned. It was a hot day and it seemed that the time would never pass. The boys got spankings for this prank and that partially soothed our indignation.

I disgraced myself again by dropping one of my baby cousins, whom I was allowed to hold awhile. I felt so remorseful, I "slunk" up the staircase crying and wouldn't come down for a long time.

On the whole, we had a wonderful visit but looked forward to returning to Marshall. Mother was not so sad to leave for Texas this time, as she had grown to love Marshall.

#### The Woodleys 1906

(One morning soon after our return from the Alabama trip, Mama gave me permission to go to play with a little neighbor girl, Vivian Muntz. Across the street from our house, a new house had just been completed and occupied while we were gone. As I passed by on the sidewalk, two dogs ran out and barked at me. Frightened, I began to cry. A window flew up and a woman said, "Don't cry, little girl. The dogs won't bite you." .

This was my first sight of Mrs. America Harris Woodley, who became one of the dearest friends we ever had. A young and pretty woman, with curly black hair, twinkling eyes, and a kind, happy way about her, she came out to reassure me. I remember she commented on my red hood, crocheted by my dear mother. It had a gathered ruffle in the back to keep my neck warm and two pom-poms swinging from the point at the back, somewhat like a pixie would wear.

Mrs. Jess Woodley was named America because she was born in the Centennial Year 1876, on February 11. She was affectionately called "Ms. Mec" by almost everyone. The other members

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of the family were Jess Woodley whom we called Mr. Jess, and their three daughters, Lois, Nora, and Jessie Mae-just the right age to be playmates for J.B. and me. As children in Marshall, Jessie Mae and I were inseparable, playing together much of the time. I was timid, quiet around grownups, rather backward. Jessie Mae was the opposite. She was pert, out-going, and the word for her was "feisty." That is a word you don't hear nowadays but it describes her.

Often our mothers went shopping together, first in one family's buggy, then in the other's buggy. I would be dressed in a well-made dress, trimmed in lace, braid, or embroidery, with carefully curled hair, matching hair ribbon. Jessie Mae would be much more casually "put together"-she would get into mischief, give saucy answers, maybe tear her dress or spill something, and get all the attention. That was all right with me, for I, too, loved and admired her cute ways.

Mr. Jess worked with Papa in the foundry. (I have, as a prized possession, a cast iron door stop in the shape of a frog which Mr. Woodley made in this foundry.)

Over the years, the Woodley's were our closest friends. Equally beloved were Mr. Woodley's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Billy Woodley. They lived on a large farm, a thousand or so acres, about sixteen miles from Marshall, near the small town of Elysian Fields. I was often included in the visits of their three granddaughters and they seemed to love me as much as I loved them. I called them Grandpa and Grandma Woodley.

Grandpa Woodley drove into Marshall several times a week bringing vegetables, eggs, chickens, and other farm produce to sell. Sometimes we four girls drove back to the farm with him. What fun it was to drive in his "hack," a buggy-like contraption with room in the back for his produce-and where we stood up for the ride. He always had time to stop at a creek on the way to let us wade if the weather was warm enough. Then he would make a big thing out of getting us to leave our wading. We were reluctant to do this, so he would finally say, "Well, you will have to walk the rest of the way." Then tell his horse to "Giddup" and drive off. Out of the water we would scramble and run after him, knowing all the time that this was part of the fun.

Many Negroes lived on the farm as tenants and hired hands. Hundreds of acres of cotton made up the chief crop and cotton picking time was very busy with many Negro hands picking the cotton. Some of the older ones had been Woodley slaves. Grandma Woodley did not do much work but had to oversee the cook, the man who milked, the butter making, the woman who washed and ironed for her, etc. Every morning in the summer, a Negro man would bring in all sorts of vegetables, peaches, berries, apples, and such. The pantry was kept locked to guard against having supplies pilfered or stolen. Each morning, Grandma would unlock her pantry with the key hanging at her waist and measure out flour, sugar, lard, and other staples. In the pantry she had shelves of canned fruit and vegetables, jellies, preserves, hams, bacon, etc. In the summer, fryers were killed, dressed, and fried every day. She had an ice box for milk and butter

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and fresh meat and always soda pop for us children (later Coca-Colas were added but not in those early days). We children played nearly all day or rode horseback. At night Grandma would play the organ and we would sing.

I have always loved to "go"--anywhere-anytime. I remember only one time when I got homesick, It was a painful experience.

This probably happened the first time I spent the night at Grandpa and Grandma Woodley's, with Ms. Mec and the girls. We had had a happy day and after supper we went to the parlor, where Grandma began to play the organ and sing sacred songs and soulful ballads in a minor key. I began to feel mournful and homesick and leaned out the open window (there was no screen) to cry. Grandma Woodley realized what my trouble was, so she broke into a happy tune, singing, "Hipero, hold your horses/ or they'll get away/ Ain't it pleasant with your sweetheart/ Riding in the sleigh?" We children started dancing around the room, singing with her and that was the end of my homesickness.

At bedtime, after hearing our prayers, she would hover over us tucking us in, asking if we were comfortable.

#### My Little Sister, Lala

I started to school in Marshall when I was six years old, which I could do because Papa paid tuition the first year. The customary starting age was seven years; though Jessie Mae Woodley was my age, she started to school the following year. We all walked together, carrying our books and lunches. Jessie Mae and I got out of school earlier in the afternoons than the older sisters and J.B., and we would walk home together. If the weather was warm, we always saved part of our lunch to eat on the way home. Half way home there was a favorite tree underneath which we liked to sit for our little picnic.

The last of May, 1908, I went with Mrs. "Mec" Woodley and the girls to visit on the farm. We started back a couple of days later and met Grandpa Woodley as he drove home from Marshall. He stopped and said, "Well, Hattie, guess what you have at your house?" I said, "I don't know." He replied, "You have a baby sister." I answered firmly, "Oh, no Grandpa Woodley! I don't have a baby sister." He said, "Oh, yes you do. I saw her."

I didn't see how this could possibly be. I thought he had mistaken my baby doll for a real baby, but I told Mrs. Woodley to whip up the horse so we could hurry. When we got home I jumped out of the surrey and ran into the house. Sure enough. There was a little baby on the bed with Mama and a nurse who let me hold the newborn Lala Pauline. I was proud and happy and J.B. was even prouder. Not one inkling had we had of the impending birth.

A few days later, J.B. was sent on an errand to town and, on his way back, Lois Woodley met him and said, trying to joke, "J.B; the doctor came and took the baby back." J.B. later said he got so mad he made up his mind that when he got to be' a man, he would kill the doctor. Of

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course, Lois had only been teasing him. But, after that, he never forgave her and always insisted that she had lied to him.

My little sister, Lala, became the neighborhood pet. We made much to-do over her. I was six years older and J.B. was eleven years older and we adored her. The neighbors, too, especially Mrs. Woodley, loved and spoiled her. When Lala was just a few days old, it was discovered that she had an inguinal hernia (we called it a rupture). The doctor told us not to let her cry, for then it "came down," and she grew nauseated and vomited. The doctor buckled a truss on her, with a pad over the weak place to hold it in. She was, of course, very uncomfortable and miserable. She had attention from everyone and every whim was gratified if at all possible. We could afford a colored maid, so between the maid, Mama and Papa, J.B. and me, it is a wonder that she grew up sweet and unspoiled.

Mama bought a big baby buggy and, on every warm summer morning, it was my pleasure-not task-to roll Lala up and down the sidewalk while Mama attended to household chores.

Mrs. Woodley always had an appropriate comment on every subject and since all of us admired the baby's big brown eyes, her remark one day was that Lala's eyes "looked like two big flies in a crock of clabber."

Mama bought red shoes for Lala her first winter and Mrs. Woodley admired them extravagantly and kissed them. So Lala expected this and held her feet up to everyone for petting and kissing.

### May Festival

(One spring, the Mothers Club of our school decided to have a May Festival, with every grade participating in maypole dances. We practiced diligently around the maypole, each child holding a colored ribbon, doing a little dance step, weaving in and out until the ribbons braided around the pole in a really lovely design. We were to march up Congress Avenue to the courthouse lawn for our festival. The teacher told the girls to wear white dresses and any color of hair ribbon and hose that we wanted. My mother bought red hair ribbon and dainty red stockings for me. Just before the festival, I was ill for a few days and missed school but went back on the day of the festival. When my teacher saw me, she threw up her hands in anger and dismay. She demanded to know why I had on red hair ribbon and stockings. I replied, "You told us to wear white dresses and any color we chose." She scathingly answered, "You should have known that I meant pastel colors." Then she turned to an overgrown-yes, fat-girl who was not in the dance and ordered us to go to the basement and swap hose, as the teacher could not have red in the dance. Also I was to remove my hair ribbon. Of course, we obeyed. I put on coarse, sweaty black ribbed stockings, and the other girl stretched on my new sheer red ones. I felt completely desolate and betrayed.

The march started and on the parade route among the spectators we saw Mama with Lala in her lap sitting in a buggy. I grimaced and pointed to my black stockings but went on and took part in the festival. My mother later took the matter up with the teacher but now, more than

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seventy years later, it is a vivid and painful memory.

As a student, I must not have been too intelligent, because I got a low grade in spelling and the teacher recommended that I study spelling that summer. So five days a week I trudged reluctantly along the railroad track to reach the home of the tutor my parents hired to teach me. Her efforts must have paid off because I became a pretty fair speller. What I remember most is the hot sun and my poor feet.

Our house sat on a terrace up from the sidewalk and it was head high-to me. In my mind's eye, I always pictured it as quite high. In later years when I was a teenager and went back to Marshall, I was shocked to discover that the terrace was only about two feet high. In my mind, I guess it grew as I did.

My parents joined the Marshall Methodist Church. J.B. and I entered Sunday School. We had fine neighbors and life was very pleasant in that beautiful, historic town. (Briefly during the Civil War, Marshall became the seat of civil authority west of the Mississippi River, and as a fortified city, it housed the wartime capitol of Missouri.) J.B. started to school in the second grade since he could already read. Papa's younger brother, Lamont, lived with us from time to time and we loved him dearly. Through the years, we remained close though many miles separated us. My close relationship with Lamont continued until his death at the age of 90 in 1978.

#### Grandpa Woodley's Death

Grandpa Woodley developed what the doctor called "leakage of the heart." He was put to bed in his son's home in Marshall and by and by he died. We were all very sad. The day he was to be buried, Jessie Mae came to our house and asked to borrow my brown beaver hat (sailor style with a grosgrain ribbon streamer) to wear to the funeral and to leave her red beaver hat for me to wear. It was not thought proper for a granddaughter to wear a gaily colored hat. The funeral procession was made up of horses and buggies, traveling the sixteen miles from Marshall at a very slow pace. It seemed to take forever to reach the country cemetery near Elysian Fields.

Mr. Jess Woodley was his parents' only child and inherited the farm. So, soon after his father's death, Mr. Jess gave up his job and moved his family to the farm. Grandma Woodley lived with them in the home place until her death. The Woodley family remained our very closest friends through all the years that followed.

We moved to Jacksonville in 1910 when I was nearly eight years old. Jessie Mae moved about the same time with the rest of her family to the fine farm her father inherited. She attended the country school near her home, then went to high school in Marshall. Her dad bought her a car and she could tell tall tales about her escapades. Mr. Woodley once remarked that any time a pig or dog or cow got struck by a car, he got the bill, for Jessie Mae was always the culprit or, at least, the accused. (there were very few cars.)

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She was a bridesmaid in my church wedding and I played the music at her home wedding. We visited each other often and, throughout the next sixty-odd years, we kept in touch. I loved her dear husband, Roy Beggs. They had only one child who died very young.

About 1970, Jessie Mae gave me a printed account of the Woodley heritage. I was very glad to get it and found it most interesting. A young member of their family had done it as her college thesis. Jessie Mae died in 1978 and we drove to the funeral in Elysian Fields. I miss her and think of her with love.

Through the years, I would go to visit Mrs. Woodley or we would chat on the telephone every few months. It is sad that her husband and all three daughters have passed away. In her last years, she became frail in body but with an indomitable spirit that has never failed. She spoke just as pertly and gaily as ever, but reported that she "can't see without glasses, hear without a hearing aid, or walk without a walker."

About 1980, her picture and a write up appeared in Jacksonville's Lon Morris College newsletter honoring her as the oldest living alumni, having attended the long ago Alexander Institute in Kilgore, the forerunner of Lon Morris. She graduated in 1894 when Dr. Alexander was president of the school.

Mrs. Woodley passed away on November 6, 1982 at the age of 106. I attended the funeral in Elysian Fields. Faulk Landrum, president of Lon Morris, invited me to ride there with him. Margaret Carol was in Pascagoula, Mississippi, so without Faulk's kind invitation, I don't know how I would have gotten there, as I was 80 and not driving as much as I used to.

### Neighbors

We had next door neighbors named Bradshaw. Their son, Marion, and I were the best of playmates. Not so the younger sister, Flossie. she was humored and spoiled, and Mrs. Bradshaw was always quick to blame a neighbor child if one of hers was hurt or, in her opinion, slighted. One summer day, the colored girl, Elsie, who helped Mama with the housework and caring for Lala (we never referred to her as a "maid") took a quilt, put it under a tree, and we laid the baby on it for coolness. I played around and Flossie came over. Something displeased Flossie and she spat on Lala. Quick as a flash, Elsie slapped her-an unheard of thing for a colored person (we also never said "Black") to raise a hand against a white person. Flossie ran home, bellowing at the top of her voice. Instantly here came Mrs. Bradshaw, furiously angry and breathing fire. She called Mother out and said, "That (expletive deleted) slapped Flossie for nothing at all. You've got to fire her!" Mother answered, "Let's hear Elsie's side of the story. Elsie did you slap Flossie?" She answered, "Yes'm, I did, and if she ever spits on my baby again, I'll slap her again!" Mother told Mrs. Bradshaw, "She will not be fired." There was a coolness between them for awhile but soon Marion and Flossie were coming over again. Many years later, Flossie came to see us here in Jacksonville and it surprised me to find she seemed quite nice.

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In Marshall, on summer afternoons, it was the delight of the children of the neighborhood to walk to town, happily clutching a nickel or sometimes a dime. We would troop into the Candy Kitchen where five cents bought an ice cream cone or a dime would buy an ice cream soda.

One Saturday as we all got ready to go, there was some reason why Mrs. Bradshaw told Marion that he could not go. We did not notice, but he followed along after us.

On our route to town there was a long wooden sidewalk, similar to the footbridge at Rusk now, with a creek flowing under the middle of the "bridge" perhaps eight or ten feet below. Marion stopped on the bridge as we other children went on. There were plants with big flowers called Elder plants, similar to Queen Anne's Lace, growing along the sides of the creek. We liked to pick these flowers and hold them over our heads, pretending they were umbrellas. This day Marion leaned way out to pick one, was overbalanced and fell to the creek below, striking his head on a rock. A little later, a woman crossing on the sidewalk saw him, picked him up unconscious and carried him home. A doctor was called. On examining him, the doctor said that he had a fractured skull and an operation would be needed to remove the crushed bone. Hospitals were nonexistent except in the cities. Sick people had to be cared for by their families and doctors who made house calls. Practical nurses (meaning experienced but not formally trained) were to be had for serious illnesses. Mama was called in to help, by giving Marion the anesthetic. Imagine this: one doctor, operating on a patient lying on the kitchen table, with only a neighbor woman assisting. The doctor cut away the hone-Mama said she could see the pulsating brain-put in a silver plate, sewed the incision up, and Marion recovered completely. Characteristically, Mrs. Bradshaw put all the blame for the accident on us children. She said it never would have happened if we had stayed home.

To be continued

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