

# • TREE TALK •

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## Editor's Letter

Vivian Toole Cates, BS, MEd, writes about St Thomas Chapel, A.M.E. Church beginning on page 75.

We continue the story of 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. Another grand daughter, Alyson Owen Ezell gave permission for us to publish this memoir.

Thanks to the members who responded to our member survey. The results will help us decide the future direction of YOUR Society.

**Gordon Bennett**  
**Editor**

**St. Thomas Chapel, A.M.E. Church**  
**Compiled by Vivian Toole Cates BS MEd**



**A SHORT HISTORY OF THOMAS CHAPEL COMMUNITY**

(St. Thomas AME Church, Cemetery and Public School)

A few surviving records provide a very sketchy description of how the Thomas Chapel Community might have developed into a once thriving rural predominately black community in south western Cherokee County, Texas. The current generation, now into 2013, for a variety of reasons, has no records ready at hand of that earlier time period from the 1860's to the early 1900's. Some strong oral history traditions and family stories have survived in the minds of descendants of some of the early residents. Based on the limited surviving early records some of these strongly held opinions about the origins and development of Thomas Chapel do not match up very well. Such is the nature of most historical and genealogical research projects.

The legal description for the current seven acre property for St. Thomas Chapel AME Church listed with the Cherokee County Appraisal District in care of T. J. Ross, Alto, Texas is Abstract 4-A, Block 891, Tract 6 of the P. (Peter) E.(Ellis) Bean Survey, J 18. The surviving church and cemetery are about 4 miles west of the town of Alto. Alto, stop in Spanish, is a four way stop where U. S. Highway 69 N-S forms a cross roads with State Highway 21 E-W. About two



miles west of the church still on Texas State Highway 21 West is the present day Caddo Indian Mounds State Historic Site and about a mile farther west is the Neches River Bridge.

For some unknown reason a deed to St. Thomas Chapel AME Church was not drawn up or recorded until the 1905-1906 time period. No reason is known why the church trustees at that time chose to sell off lots on the north and east side of the church property to other black residents of the area. The original deed reference in Cherokee County is Deed Book 36, Page 116. In addition to the present much improved church building, there is a small frame house in poor condition formerly used as a parsonage on the other side of the county road from the church building. The current church building was originally a wood frame structure set on a pier and beam foundation. The church property is bisected in a general north and south direction by a county road that joins the north side of S H 21 West to form an intersection. The road through the property is known locally as the Lynches Chapel Road. On the north side of Hwy 21 in front of the church property Raymond Ross, a life-long resident of the community now in his early 90's has operated a scrap metal yard for most of his years, at least since the 1960's.

Cherokee County Deed Book 36, Page 116. John McCrummen for himself and as attorney in fact for my children of the county of Lubbock and State of Texas. No price or donation is given. The condition is that the Trustees, not named, of the African Methodist Episcopal



Church in Cherokee County, Texas, are to deliver to McCrummin a good and sufficient deed to 13 ½ acres of land in the P. E. Bean survey about 10 miles South of Rusk ...Beginning in the San Antonio Road 293 vrs N 58. E from the N. W. corner of the J. W. Foreman tract of land . . . . . Thence westwardly with said San Antonio road to the beginning containing thirteen and one half acres of land more or less. Dated November 4, 1905. The signature of John McCrummen notarized at Lubbock, Texas by a Justice of the Peace L. M. Knight.

The wording of the above deed is somewhat unusual. One best guess would be that the purpose of the deed was to clear up the title of the land to the church because McCrummen apparently owned a large tract of land in the area. It has not been researched as to any other land he might have owned. Nor has it been determined if this was where he lived. Mr. Crimmens (various spellings) had left the Cherokee County and was still living in west Texas in 1905.

Cherokee County Deed Book 36, Page 186. Information filled in on deed form. Trustees of St. Thomas Chapel AME Church were Irwin Lockhart by mark, Sam Holcomb, Henry Carter by mark, Charlie Thompson, O. L. Bonner Pastor. Sell to Abe Smith, wife Silvia. Surveyed May 4, 1906, filed May 10, Recorded May 15<sup>th</sup> 1906.

## St. Thomas Chapel, A.M.E. Church



Cherokee County Deed Book 36, Page 207. Filled in deed form. Dated May 5, 1906. The Trustees of St. Thomas Chapel A.M. E. Church were Irwin Lockhart, Sam Holcomb, Charlie Thompson, Henry Carter, all signing by mark X. Pastor in charge was O. L. Bonner For \$10.00 Selling to Labe Lee and wife Matilda, north side of San Antonio Road, part of St. Thomas Chapel 13 ½ acres, 2 acres for \$21.00. Legal description mentions Labe Lee's corner. E. A. Watkins Surveyor. Filed June 13, 1906, Recorded July 24, 1906.

Cherokee County Deed Book 58, Page 403. Dated November 17, 1906. Deed is completely typed. No form used. Trustees of St. Thomas AME Church. Irvin Lockhart, Sam Holcomb, Henry Carter, Mose Hamilton, Rev. O L. Bonner. Sell to Jiles Coupland for \$10.00. Four miles S W from Alto on S. A. Road, part of St. Thomas Chapel Church 13 acre tract, mentions Abe Smith Corner. Surveyed by E. A. Watkins, November 10, 1906. Filed November 18, 1912, Recorded November 18, 1912.

Cherokee County Deed Book 76, Page 497. May 5, 1906, from Trustees St. Thomas Chapel Church AME. Irwin Lockhart by mark, Sam Holcomb, Charlie Thompson, Henry Carter by mark, O. L. Bonner Pastor. For \$13.83 1/3 for 1 1/3 acres to Herbert Pope and wife Ella Pope, part of Thomas Chapel 13 ½ acres tract. Legal description mentions Labe Lee's corner and a

St. Thomas Chapel, A.M.E. Church



small branch and runs with S. A. (San Antonio Road). Surveyed by E. A Watkins, May 4 1906. Filed January 17, 1918. Recorded January 18, 1918.

As is true with present day deeds, unless the document is some type of loan or promissory notes, the price mentioned in the legal instrument might not be the actual amount of money that changed hands. Some of the terms seen in are some version of “\$10.00 and other good and valuable considerations” or “for love and affection . . . and other valuable considerations.”

No early documentation has been found on early structures. Only logical assumptions based on oral history can be made about what type of buildings were used on the property and when they would have been erected or torn down. Oral history claims there was once a lodge building for some sort of fraternal order and a two story school building. The stories get confused as to whether the school was held in the church or the church was held in the school or whether the school was held in the lodge building.

About 1937 another church named Williams Chapel was formed by members from St. Thomas Chapel AME who had moved into Alto or closer to New Hope, another predominately black community just north of the town Alto. Lack of transportation has been cited as the reason for forming the new church. Until the mid-1930’s sections of even the main roads like S H 21 West and 69 N-S were still unpaved. Members were still using farm wagons for transportation;



some walked; few had cars. Eventually a substantial frame building was erected on a small plot of land on the west side of U. S 69 north of Alto near the New Hope Cemetery. Unfortunately the membership declined in the late 1900's. The church was disbanded in 2006 and the building was torn down. Most of the active members recombined with Thomas Chapel.

Dates are somewhat "fuzzy" about when the current church building and the old parsonage were built. In the late 1970's an addition was built on the east side of the church building for a fellowship hall and cafeteria. The pastor at that time was Rev. Daniel Emmanuel.

In November 1989 a mechanics lien for \$8,500.00 was executed with Travis Smith doing business as Alto Butane for three five ton central heating and air conditioning units. At that time the church trustees were R. J. Ross, Milton Coleman, Britton Tilley and Lawrence Tilley. Cherokee County Deed Book 1091/338.

In 2000 the outside of the church building was bricked and other major repairs were made to the church including the entry porch. The pastor at that time was Rev. W. M. Vaughn, Sr.

Today Thomas Chapel's population is down to a few people. Probably because of expenses and declining enrollment, the tax supported public school closed in the late 1950's and consolidated with the black school in Alto, Booker T. Washington. BTW still has an active alumni

**St. Thomas Chapel, A.M.E. Church**

organization. The church, subject of this sketch, is still viable with an active congregation. The cemetery is the only black cemetery known and still used in this section of Cherokee County.

Early county school records and surviving oral traditions do agree that Thomas Chapel was a thriving rural black community with an organized church, school, and cemetery well before 1900. At one time there was even a gas pump and a small store.

Cherokee County was formed in 1846 from Nacogdoches County when Texas became a state instead of a separate republic. Between 1846 and 1850 many families moved into the south western portion of Cherokee County along the El Camino Real or the old San Antonio Road which eventually became Texas State Highway 21 West of Alto. Many of these families appear on the 1850 census of Cherokee County. Many of the settlers who came to this section of Cherokee County before the Civil War were slave owners.

Some heads of white families living in the vicinity in 1856 were W. C. Dawson, Wm. Shaw, David Hullum, Dial Peavy, J. W. Forman, E. H. Baxter, John Boaz, John Henderson, J. Musick, Colbert and Buck Black, W. Y. Lacy, J. P. Williams, David Foreman, Cartwright Henderson, J. P. Henderson, and Alonzo Whaley. This list of names is from a list of Roads Overseers from Cherokee County for 1856.

Some of these names can be found as slave owners on the 1860 Slave Schedule of the 1860 census of Cherokee County, Texas. There was also a slave schedule for the 1850 Census.

Of special interest in 1860 is the listing of J. W. Foreman with 14 slaves in Household #53 and W. C. Dawson with 10 slaves in Household #52. W. C. Dawson was a farmer, born about 1818 in South Carolina. He had three sons, William A., James S. and Thomas J. by a first wife, Jane, daughter of William Shaw of Lacy's Fort. He had a daughter, Martha J. G. by a second wife, Mrs. Martha Jasper whom he married in 1855. When W. C. Dawson died in Cherokee county, Texas, right after the 1860 census and before January 1861 his estate records named some of his slaves as two negro men, Manuel and Henry, a negro woman, Abby, and two other negroes, Mary and Harriet.

John W. Foreman was born 1802 in South Carolina, moved to Talladega County, Alabama, and then to this section of Cherokee County, Texas, before 1850 when he acquired several hundred acres of land on the south side of the San Antonio Road. Where his land is located on the land plats and where his family is listed on the various censuses definitely pinpoints the location of the Thomas Chapel Community in the 1800's and 1900's. All of the land on the south side of Texas State Highway 21 owned by the black residents of Thomas Chapel was sold to them by the Foreman heirs at various times after the Civil War in small acreage tracks. Many Foreman descendants still live in the area.

It is less clear exactly where John McCrummen (various spellings) actually lived though he did own a large tract of land on the north side of the San Antonio Road that apparently included the church property. John McCrimmon, presumed to be the "donor" of the church property, is

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shown in 1860 with 18 slaves, living in household #602 in Beat #3. His family is also on the 1850 census in Household #693. He and his wife Mary A. { ? } were both born about 1821-23, he in North Carolina and she in Alabama. They were probably married somewhere in Alabama about 1839 and moved to Cherokee County just in time to be listed on the 1850 census. Their children were Daniel b. c. 1841, John S. b. c. 1843, Elizabeth b.c. 1845, Margaret Eveline b.c. 1847-48 and Jesse C., a son, b.c. December 1849; all born in Alabama. By 1860 all of the children listed in 1850 were still living and had been joined by three more children, Sarah M. b.c 1852; Wm. T. b. c. 1855, and Malcomb b. c. 1857.

By the 1870 Cherokee County census John McCrimmon was Household #41 in Beat 5. The two oldest sons had married with household of their own nearby and another child, Luther M. b. c. after the 1860 census had joined the family. Also living with the family were four young black males. Their occupation was listed as wof, an abbreviation used on the census for "working on farm." Miles 21 b. TX, Rufus 18 and Crifford A. 17 both b. Ala. and Elbert Newton 26 b. Ms.

No extensive research has been done to date to determine if any of the later black residents of Thomas Chapel came from any of the slaves owned by the early white residents of the area. No oral histories are known to have been collected relating events back to slavery times in this area. Some family oral history stories and the 1870 and 1880 census records do indicate that black residents of Thomas Chapel moved to the area from other places after the Civil War.

The exact origins for the name St. Thomas Chapel is not known. One guess is that the origin might be in the given name of one of the local white land owners.

Parts of the St. Thomas Chapel AME cemetery are across the county road that bisects the property on the west side of the property where the last school building was located and parts of the cemetery are on the east side of the county road behind the church and parts are back into a wooded area towards the east side of the property. The well-kept cemetery is still being actively used for burials into the present year of 2013.

The exact age of the cemetery is not known. Most interested people will agree, after physically walking the cemetery, that the cemetery probably originally extended back up into a wooded area behind the church. There are probably many older graves back in that wooded area as claimed in oral tradition and stories perhaps even back into slavery times. Based strictly upon the general history of the area and a general understanding of how communities' social institutions developed, it is definitely within logical probabilities that there may have been slave graves there from those times. This is especially true given that both John McCrummen who "cleared a title" to the church property in 1905-1906 and John W. Foreman on whose land the residential area of the Thomas Chapel Community developed were both slave owners. When deaths occurred, the remains needed to be buried somewhere.

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By the very early 1850's the Shiloh Methodist Church had been organized northwest of Alto and the white settlers began burying their deceased family members there including the John W. Foreman family. The mortality rate was especially high among young children and some of the earliest graves there were of infants and young children.

Mrs. Raymond Ross (Alizabeth) d. 2012 compiled an updated cemetery survey dated March 21, 1986. The earliest marked burial date is 1933. About half the five and a half pages of one column single spaced names have no marker dates. The list contains approximately 211 names. Surnames with and without markers listed in the survey are Blackshire, Ballard, Brown, Burleson, Carter, Crumby, Easley, Freeney, Hamilton, High, Hicks, Hickman, Holcome, Hudson, Jones, Jorden(Jordan), Lee, Lewis, Lockheart, Lacy, Lofton, Land, Mickey, Mitchel, Morgan, Morrison, Palmer, Pope, Parker, Ross, Singletary, Simpson, Saddle, Scott, Skillern, Smith, Skinner, Thacker, Thompson, Tyler, William, White, Watson, Willis, Willie, White, Watson. Some names are just one listing and several have more than a dozen of that name.

The county school records from the old Cherokee County Public School Superintendent Office began about 1884. In Common School District No. 3 Cold Springs was the white school and St. Thomas Chapel was the black school. Some years the records were more complete than others. Teachers were not always paid on a regular basis. Total state and county funds for the fall of 1898 were \$680 with \$295.80 coming to Cold Springs and the rest to St. Thomas Chapel. For the term of 1900-01 the district had a total scholastic population of 140, 65 white and 75 colored, with \$4.30 per student. There were more specific names mentioned in the early records for teachers and/or school trustees for St. Thomas than for Cold Springs.

As previously mentioned, for some unknown reason a deed to St Thomas Chapel AME Church was not drawn up or recorded until the 1905-1906 period. Nor is any reason known as to why the church trustees chose to sell off lots on the north and east side of the church property to other black residents of the area. Since there was a St. Thomas Chapel black school listed in the old county school financial reports, there also had to have been some type of building in which school was held that would hold 75 students.

In 1915 two related white families, Dominy and Cates purchased a part of the John W. Foreman land on the south side of the San Antonio Road (S H 21 West) and purchased others tracts of land from other white owners on the north side of the San Antonio Road (S H 21 West). The families moved into the Thomas Chapel Community in December 1915. William Alexander Dominy and his wife, Charlotte Amelia Bradley and their three children; Mary Vera, Lizzie Iris, and William Glen Dominy, moved from Pennington on the Houston-Trinity County line between Crockett and Groveton. Mr. Dominy was looking for more acreage to farm along with his new son-in-law than he could obtain at Pennington at the time. The previous year Mary Vera Dominy had married John Early Cates in December 1914. The couple had met when they attended Rusk Academy in Rusk. The Cates reared a family of nine children just to the east of the St. Thomas Chapel Church property. John Early Cates eventually, through a series of land sales from the original owners, came to own the lots sold off the east side of the church property

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by the church trustees in 1906.

The Cates and Dominy families did general farming with row crops and ran dairies, milking by hand until electric milking machines became available. Their farms provided seasonal work for many of the black residents of both Thomas Chapel and Weeping Mary Communities. The nine Cates children performed seasonal field work on the Cates land, hoeing cotton, alongside their black neighbors who were paid for their work. The formerly row cropped fields are now in pine timber and improved pastures for grazing beef cattle. The Dominy family still has one of the few remaining dairies in Cherokee County. Some of their Jerseys cows are descendants of cows that were brought from Pennington in 1915. The Cates family even had a store on the south side of SH 21 in the 1940's.

The land surrounding the church property is now owned by Alto Investments, an entity formed by Gary Michael Dominy, the younger son of William Glen Dominy.

The youngest Cates child, Dan Bradley Cates, met his future wife while working as a professional forester for the U. S Forest Service in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1965. The couple married in Georgia in 1966 after the former Vivian Leigh Toole graduated from Florida State University. Dan was transferred with the U. S. Forest Service to Crockett, Texas, about 30 miles west of Alto in 1973. In 1979-1980 the couple built their home on Dan's share of the Cates farm and moved with their two sons back to the Cold Springs Community.

In 1985 Vivian Toole Cates researched an historical marker for the Cold Springs Methodist Church and Public School as a part of a graduate course in Local History at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches. The project turned into a 55 page monograph with extensive footnotes. Over 50 copies were eventually sold for a few dollars each to cover the cost of copying and binding. That research revealed extensive information on the early years of the St. Thomas Chapel Community that included citations to the black public school between 1884 and the early 1900's. Mrs. Cates has had a lifelong avocation for doing local history and genealogy research on both hers and her husband's family and for other people of like interest. Mrs. Cates is especially known for asking nosy questions that some people consider no(ne) of her business!

Since 1985 Mrs. Cates has made several unsuccessful efforts with various members of St. Thomas Chapel AME Church to obtain their interest in completing the process for obtaining an historical marker for the church, school, cemetery and community. Hopefully this cookbook project will be the push that is needed to get their congregation moving forward to finally obtain that goal.

Vivian Leigh Toole Cates (Mrs. Dan B. Cates)

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**Random Recollections**

By Hattie Nicholson Schultz

CONTINUED FROM TREE TALK v. 38. ISSUE 2

Neighbors (Continued)

Another neighbor family whom we grew to love was the Mason family. They were father, mother, and teen-age son and daughter. Mr. Mason was a deaf-mute. Mrs. Mason was deaf, and, back then, it was not known how to teach speech to a deaf person. She could make sounds but could not talk; however they communicated with sign language and could "talk" at a rapid rate. Their children, Edwin and Pearl, were normal. Mrs. Mason would visit Mama, always bringing a tablet and pencil and they would write back and forth.

One of my prized possessions today, seventy five years later, is a cut glass bowl that Mrs. Mason gave Mother one Christmas. I associate it with Waldorf Salad, which Mother made often for holidays or Sunday dinners, and I, too, use this bowl for that same salad.

The Muntz family who lived up the block had a daughter named Vivian who was a playmate of mine. Her younger brother was Jake and he, too, was a good little friend. Their father, Jacob, was called a "Dutchman" and spoke broken English. I don't know if he was German or was from Holland. He and Mrs. Muntz were very miserly or "saving." Maybe they had to be; at this late date I don't know. We children were never given a cookie or other tidbit at their house, as was the custom at other places where we visited.

Once, after we moved to Jacksonville and I returned to Marshall for a visit with the Woodleys, Mr. Woodley dropped Jessie Mae and me at the Muntz home for a short visit just before taking me to catch the train for home. He went on an errand. When noon time came and Mrs. Muntz had to give us a little lunch, I remember quite well all we had were cold biscuits and fig preserves-nothing else.

I've heard Mama tell that when Jessie Mae or I had a new dress made and Mrs. Muntz saw it, she would sometimes buy the same material, except not quite enough. Then she would ask if there were any scraps left from ours that she might have. This happened a number of times. Frugal?

Pleasure Outings?

Papa had heard of a peach orchard with many, many acres of bearing peach trees-a sight he wanted to see. So he planned that we would go one Sunday on the train to a stop that had been named Peach, Texas. There was no town, just a commissary which was closed for Sunday, and a few shabby tenant houses. The orchards were an impressive sight but unfortunately we grew hungry. Papa had supposed that we could buy food for our lunch, but nothing was available. He knocked on a door of one of the little houses and somehow persuaded the woman of the house

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to prepare a meal for us. She was rather reluctant but finally said that if we could eat what they did, we could stay. We waited until she called us into the kitchen where an oil-cloth covered table sat and where flies were plentiful. We sat down to a meal of pale biscuits, yellow with soda, soft butter, fried potatoes, and fried fat bacon, plus a peach pie with tough pastry. We could choose between warm milk or well water to drink. We tried to eat but could force down only a few bites. When the train came by on the way back to Marshall, we thankfully returned home. I knew early in life that, although we were not rich, we lived in luxury compared to what we had seen this day.

Remember, little granddaughters, this happened more than seventy years ago. Papa loved a change of scenery and took advantage of every opportunity to go somewhere-ANY WHERE!

I well remember a Sunday jaunt he planned with some neighbor men. They somehow got the use of a railroad handcar and gathered up their children for a little trip. The handcar was operated with hand levers-manually-by pumping up and down, up and down, bending the back with each pump. Of course, I wanted to go along with the other children. At the last minute, Papa decided also to take Lala, who was only about eighteen months old. It was a beautiful early spring day and the trip was due to last a couple or three hours, so Mama gave her permission and out we started.

All went well for some miles which, as luck would have it, were mostly downhill requiring little effort. Then clouds came up and a late "norther" blew in. It was cold and Lala began to cry. Papa wrapped her in his coat and the other men told him to hold her while they pumped. The return trip seemed to be all up-hill, a cold rain started to fall, and I feared we would never reach home again, though finally we did. The outing was labeled a fiasco but we appreciated the kind hearts that had wanted to give us children a treat, and understood.

### Lagniappe

In Marshall, which is very near the Louisiana border, there was a custom, no doubt derived from Louisiana and its French settlers, of "lagniappe"-which means a little something extra. For instance, if a customer bought a roast, the shopkeeper "threw in" an onion. Or if a dozen apples or doughnuts were purchased, an extra apple or doughnut was added. This custom was observed on the monthly paying of the grocery bill, when the grocer filled a bag of candy for the children or sent a banana or two. Or the meat market owner threw in some wieners or an extra weight of meat.

At any rate, we children looked forward to the monthly paying of bills, when Papa came home with treats. Mama carefully divided the candy into three even piles, one for each of us. J. B. locked his in his trunk. I ate mine in a few days, as did Lala. Then when we were without any more candy, J.B. would come before us, eating a piece with great gusto and saying, "Don't you wish you had some?" We would say, "Yes!" Then he would lick the candy and say, "Now

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you don't want it."

All my memories of food are of a "little something extra." Papa went out of town rather frequently in those days as he was often a delegate to meetings of the Masonic Lodge or Knights of Pythias. Also he made several trips to Austin when he was studying pharmacy or took state examinations. On his return, no matter what the hour was, we knew he had brought us gifts, plus candy and bananas. Yes, bananas. They were rarely to be bought, as refrigeration was not yet common and so bananas were a great treat. We would climb out of bed and, to this day, I can smell the aroma coming from his suitcase when it was opened. We got our goodies right then and there. Sometimes the bananas were not quite fresh and the candy had gotten sticky but we were not critical, knowing that he had remembered us.

It seems, in my memory, that summer Sundays were extra special on account of ice cream making. Nearly everyone had a cow and a flock of chickens, so with milk and eggs in plenty, about the only expense to ice cream would be the purchase of ice and ice cream salt. A ten cent block of ice would freeze a gallon and, in season, peaches from our own trees would be an added taste tantalizer. It was Papa's job to crank the freezer manually after J.B. and I had had our turn, and it was a man's strength that was needed for the final cranking. Who was the lucky child who would get the dasher? We were on our best and most helpful behavior until that was decided. The ice cream on the dasher seemed the tastiest of all.

In the summer when the gardens came in, our diet was delicious. We had snap beans, English and other varieties of peas, okra, new potatoes, onions, turnip greens, collards, cabbage, leaf lettuce, etc., in great abundance. With a vegetable meal, Mama would make delectable cornbread-either "fluffy egg bread" as she called it, or "pone" cornbread. This latter was made without eggs, was thicker, shaped into pones by hand, and baked brown. Mama always left a mark on each pone of two fingers pressed into the top as decoration. Sometimes she would add "cracklins" (the crisp residue of pork left after the lard has been removed) and this was a special treat. With butter melting in a piece of the pone-broken off, never cut, and vegetables, a glass of rich whole milk, perhaps a serving of peach cobbler for dessert with whipped cream on top-who could ask for more? Crackling cornbread made many an after-school snack.

To vary this summer menu we would have fried chicken several times a week. With this would go mashed potatoes, cream gravy, pickled peaches, and a platter of lettuce, tomatoes, etc. (not a salad, just the cold raw vegetables). Sometimes Mama bought chickens from a farmer and sometimes she raised her own.

Think a moment on what a fried chicken meant in terms of work. In early spring, when a hen got "broody," a nest was prepared for her in a quiet place. She was placed on a setting of fertile eggs that had never been refrigerated. There she sat for the three weeks it took for the chickens to hatch. We would watch to be sure she was fed and watered when she did leave the nest briefly. When the chicks had been carefully raised to about three months old, they were big enough for frying. Then Mama would keep them up for several days in a raised coop prior to wringing off their heads. (I don't know how they are killed now but that's how she did it.) After

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the chicken quit flopping, it was scalded by pouring a kettle of boiling water over it to loosen the feathers and then they were picked off. Next it had to be singed to burn off little undeveloped feathers and fuzz-usually by burning a rolled-up newspaper, moving the chicken rapidly above the flame. Then it was ready to be cleaned, dressed, cut into frying size pieces, salted, and chilled, preferably overnight, before frying. We looked down our noses at anyone who rushed the process: catching a fryer out of the yard-immediately dressing and frying it. In my childhood, fryers were a seasonal treat; only available in spring and early summer.

In later summer came Mama's busy days, when berries, peaches, plums, and apples came in. She spent hours over the wood-burning cook stove, putting up jelly, jam, peach and pear preserves, cucumber pickles, and always pickled peaches-a delicious sweet-sour side dish. (Cling peaches were needed for pickling while Elbertas were for canned peaches and preserves.) Mama would get very hot and tired but she had insured some fine winter eating for her family. All the other women had to do the same thing if they wanted these little extras-lagniappe. It was not as simple as walking into a store and buying them already in a jar.

When I got old enough I had to help peel fruit and I can assure you that a bushel of peaches or pears to be peeled is a daunting sight. Also, because my hands were small and could go down into the jars, it was my job to wash the jars, which were re-used year after year. They were stored on shelves in a shed and collected dust and a few spiders and wasps. No need to shudder or complain. It was my job, I had been told to do it, and I obeyed.

Crops were not grown with chemical fertilizer nor sprayed with insecticides-we used natural fertilizer. Potato plants were attacked by bugs, of course, and we hand picked them off the plants from day to day and dropped them into jars of kerosene. Turnip greens and collards were sometimes afflicted with plant lice and only careful washing in several waters got them ready for cooking. But we know now the danger of insecticides.

Papa was an expert gardener and got off from work early enough to plant and cultivate. Sometimes he called on J.B. to help but my brother was usually so immersed in reading or studying and came so unwillingly, that he was not very useful. The process of freezing fruits and vegetables was yet unknown and much of this seasonal abundance went to waste.

Our winter diet was heavy on starches. Dried peas and beans, corn bread, biscuits, homebaked light bread, preserves and jellies, baked hens with dressing, fried steak, beef roasts, pork sausage, ham, and pork roasts all made delicious eating. But as the winter went along, we had frequent colds, and "billious spells" and these were to be expected. Vitamins, daily citrus fruits and juices were in the future. We did have apples, canned fruit, and oranges at Christmastime, but the year-round abundance of fruits and vegetables was unknown.

### Random Recollections

Move to Jacksonville  
1910

About this time my father decided that he was qualified to take the state board exam for a license to fill prescriptions. As a young man, before he married, he had worked in a drug store in Fort Payne, Alabama and loved the work. Through the following years, he had continued to study pharmacy on his own. As I recall it, once earlier, he had tried to obtain his pharmacy license, but had not made a high enough grade to pass the board. Undaunted, he continued his studies and now was ready to try again.

Papa always liked to have one of his children accompany him on trips because it was educational for us, and he chose me this time. So one warm summer day we took the train to Austin. This in itself was a great adventure for me as I sat by the window looking out at the scenery flashing by.

When we got off the train in Austin, I was awed by the crowds, the ringing of train bells, puffing of engines, the huge (to me) station, so I clung tightly to Papa's hand. He and I walked to a boarding house where he arranged for a room and found a woman who agreed to look after me while he went for his examinations.

Papa would help me dress but could not braid my hair, so this good-hearted woman did that for him. I remember a new dress I had called "Buster Brown" style. It was tan linen with so called from Buster Brown shoe advertising which featured a boy dressed that way. I think the boy was really a midget, always accompanied by his bulldog, Tige. They were pictured on every shoe box. He also made personal appearances at stores and I can remember him in Marshall and Jacksonville, too.

Papa passed his licensing examinations and received his professional credentials as a registered pharmacist,\* and began looking around for a drug store to purchase. This was in 1910. He and his younger brother, Lamont, bought the Cherokee Drug Store on Main Street in Jacksonville, Texas.

Lamont lived in New Orleans where he was manager of the Crescent-Tulane Theatre, but he came to Jacksonville for long visits to see how the drugstore was prospering and lend some help and advice. Lamont was a very eligible bachelor, and dressed immaculately in white linen suits and Panama straw hats in the summer, as he dressed in New Orleans. He was outstanding among the natives of East Texas. Another side of this was the part Mama had to play (or work). She laundered his clothes, with the help of a part-time Negro maid. His baths and ritual of shaving, dressing, etc., awed me. He was young, handsome, and I idolized him. He dated Miss Susie

\*Roberts & Olson write in John Wayne, American (published 1995): "Pharmacy in the early 20th century, like medicine and dentistry, was leaving the barbershops and patent medicine wagons. The new generation of formally trained pharmacists viewed themselves as scientists and professionals, practitioners of a respected discipline. "

### Random Recollections

Bolton but her father considered him a "city slicker." This didn't matter to Lamont, whose heart was not involved.

Because of the drugstore purchase, Mama would have to move again. She was very unhappy about another move, for she loved Marshall-her friends and neighbors, her home, her church. She said, "Chester, I'll move with you this one more time, but no more. I want my children to put down roots, and moving is not the way." I was excited to be moving but it was hard to give up my friends.

Our furniture was shipped to Jacksonville in a box car, and we followed on the passenger train. How well I remember that train ride. Lala was almost two years old and chose this time to cry, whimper, or sob, nearly all the way. I suppose she was frightened of the train as she didn't seem to be sick, though probably teething. We entertained her every way we knew how, but she still cried. This was not pleasant for those sitting near us, and Mama was embarrassed. One man grew irritated and showed it, by frowning, throwing down his newspaper, making impatient gestures, and muttering something to the effect that women should have more sense than to leave home with a baby. Another man said, "Why don't you go to the smoking car if you are annoyed?" and then this man walked over to Mama and said politely, "Let me hold the baby awhile. I'll walk her around:" gratefully Mama allowed him to do this and Lala quieted immediately. Although we never saw the kind man again-would you believe it-the man who had been so impatient also got off in Jacksonville. It turned out that he was the son-in-law of the Cal Boltons, who would be our near neighbors on Austin street, We saw him from time to time in the years following and always thought of him as rude and unfeeling.

By and by, we reached our destination and there was Papa to meet us. He had gone on to Jacksonville earlier to take charge of the store and look for a place for us to live. We stayed at Mrs. Caperton's boarding house, just across Main Street from the park and less than a block from the drugstore, waiting for our furniture to arrive by train, which took several days. Then we moved into a rented house on the corner of Ragsdale and Nacogdoches.

I had more freedom in Jacksonville than we were allowed in Marshall. There I went to town only occasionally, dressed in my best, never alone but with my mother, and on my best behavior. Jacksonville was much smaller than Marshall, and not as "citized:" It was heaven to me to walk into the drug store alone, help myself to the ice cream, or even make an ice cream soda. I felt quite important. Throughout my youth, if I went into the drugstore with a friend, Papa always said, "Daughter, would you and your friend like some ice cream or a drink?" "Daughter" always did! Then, if I was with Margia Childs, we went to her father's grocery store where we were allowed to eat the broken cookies in the cookie stand, a display case with glass shelves. No wonder we were as plump as partridges.

Our move to Jacksonville was in March, which was too bad for my schooling. At that time there were no state regulations governing text books and in Jacksonville there were two subjects we had not had in Marshall in the third grade, geography and physiology. When school was dismissed in May, my report card read, "Retained in the third grade." My brother was promoted

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"conditionally," so even though he too had had difficulties with new subjects, he went on to the next grade.

When we started to school in Jacksonville, all pupils through high school attended an old two-story brick school house divided into four large rooms. (This was located at the corner of Rusk and Austin where a Dairy Queen is now, 1982.) In addition there were four wooden rooms, each standing separately. Such things as a chapel or auditorium were in the future. There were no fancy frills-just basic subjects which we mastered.

In the schoolyard between two trees was a row of tin water buckets with dippers, which served the school's water needs. To the south of the school were two wooden "privies"-one for the boys, one for the girls. Each could "accommodate" eight or ten occupants at a time. In Marshall we had had water fountains for drinking and nice rest rooms. We were glad a new school was under construction up on the hill (where the Tomato Bowl now stands.)

My mother had worked with the "Mothers Club" in Marshall. It was dedicated toward school improvement, with meetings between teachers and mothers. So she set about organizing a Mothers Club in Jacksonville (later the PTA, now PTO) and was its first president. She headed any number of projects to improve the school. I remember especially the comfortable circular benches built around a number of shade trees.

My teacher this first year was Miss Clatie Harrell, whom I dearly loved. The following year, my teacher was Miss Tabby Brooks a sister to Miss Lucy Lee Brooks, and I remember her, too, with love and respect.

The second full year I went to school in Jacksonville, my teacher was Miss Mary Lewis. I disliked her and today can recall her cruelty to underprivileged children. She treated me all right most of the time but I suffered anguish at her unfeeling attitude. Only twice did she direct her sarcasm at me. I had started "taking music" and would be dismissed from school to go to my piano lessons. One day I raised my hand and asked what time it was. Since there was a clock hanging on the wall in full view, she said, "Can't you tell the time?" I answered, "No, ma'm." She rapped on her desk and said, "Children, stop what you are doing while we teach Hattie Nicholson to tell the time." I almost sank through the floor in embarrassment and today, seventy years later, I remember my pain and humiliation.

Another day while in Miss Lewis' class, I was running a high fever although I didn't realize I was ill. She called on me to read aloud. The words ran together before my eyes. I could not seem to focus, so I stumbled over the first few words. In front of my classmates, she remarked bitinglly that I was reading miserably and ordered me to sit down. Soon the bell rang for recess and we all went outside. I remember so well that Mama was coming in to a Mothers Club meeting and we met. I began to cry and told her I could not see. She took me at once to the doctor who said, "No wonder she can't see. She has a high fever."

**Random Recollections**

In the early days of our childhood, Papa sported a black, handlebar mustache, curling upward on each side. Our home in Jacksonville was just a few blocks away from his drugstore. Each day, about mid-morning, little Lala walked alone to the drug store for an ice cream cone or soda -a perfectly safe walk. One morning, quite unexpectedly, she came running back home, out of breath, and crying. When Mama heard her she rushed out to see what the trouble was. Lala sobbed out, "A stwange man twied to get me to kiss him-and he's FOLLOWED ME HOME!" The "stwange" man was Papa, who had had his mustache shaved off and was certainly much changed in appearance. They got a joke on me, too. They all went inside and Mama called me into the parlor where there sat Papa. Mama said, "Hattie, shake hands with your Cousin Oscar." I held out my hand and stepped closer, saying, "I'm glad to meet you, Cousin Os ... aw-shucks, it's Papa!"

I remember a few other anecdotes about my little sister, Lala. She disliked the long cold winter days when she couldn't get out to play. She had heard that one of the first signs of spring was when the geese began flying north after wintering along the Gulf Coast. Well the geese had flown over, when another cold spell came. Lala, heart-broken, said to Mama, "Mudder, de geese is done flewed and it's cold wedder yet," Lala played with the Davis boys-Franklin, Edwin, and Harmon, next door neighbors. One day a rarity occurred. An airplane flew over and seemed to land near Ragsdale Lake. In a little while Mama missed Lala and began looking for her. Edwin and Harmon said that Lala and Franklin had "taken off" running to follow the airplane. It had landed in a cleared spot near Ragsdale Lake. J,B. was sent post-haste to find them and bring them back. And, sure enough, there they were, examining everything about the airplane, talking to the pilot, thrilled to pieces, and unaware of the worry we had felt. This was about 1914.

Lala was deathly afraid of the city fire alarm, which wailed and screeched and blasted our ears. She started to school at the age of six years, and one day the fire alarm began howling. Miss Whitfield, who taught music at our house, said, "I'm going to run up to the school and calm Lala. I'm afraid she is scared and crying."

So she hastened up the hill, only to find Lala going around consoling the other children in her room, as calm as her teacher, Miss Lavinia Monkress, assuring them there was no danger.

**Taking Our Medicine**

My childhood was plagued with a series of contagious diseases, as there was no immunization for them with the exception of smallpox. The day was just around the corner when children would not have to be subject to these diseases. I had mumps, measles, typhoid, chicken pox, malaria, and scarlet fever. Jessie Mae and I had whooping cough at the same time, so we could still play together-when one coughed, the other coughed also. By the end of a coughing spell, we would be so weak we would hold each other for the final whoop. Doctors made house calls and usually prescribed a purgative. This treatment would make the patient feel so wretched for a few days that the original ailment would be forgotten or heal itself. I was the sickest ever when I had chicken pox. The doctor came every day, because I had such a severe

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case that it looked like smallpox. My hands were bandaged to keep me from scratching. One day I was so sick Papa stayed home from work to help take care of me. I recovered in due time and had only a few scars.

We were living in Jacksonville when Dr. Jones, (a half brother to Jessie Jones Dolan) returned from his studies in Germany. He was a surgeon also. Though, like most doctors in those days, he had scant training in surgery. Papa was convinced that infected tonsils and adenoids caused many of the bad colds we children were subject to. So after he had us examined by Dr. Jones, who agreed that our tonsils and adenoids should be removed arrangements were made for J.B. and me to have this operation. A table was put on our screened back porch, and each of us in turn was chloroformed and the procedure carried out. In spite of crude facilities, we recovered just fine.

Mama always had a colored maid (only we called them "help") and one I remember well was Aunt Harriet Scott. (We were taught to call elderly colored women "Aunt" and elderly colored men "Uncle" to show respect. All others were called by their first names-never with titles of Mr. or Mrs.)

Aunt Harriet was a real African Negro in appearance, with a flat nose, thick lips, and very black skin, and she was sweet, kind, and loyal. She had been born a slave to the Bolton family of Jacksonville, but of course was freed by the Emancipation Proclamation. It was told on her that when she was a little child, she disappeared one day. When the family grew alarmed over her absence, they searched everywhere, finally even dragged the well. At the height of the search she emerged from under the "Big House" rubbing sleep from her eyes, bitten by mosquitoes, covered in perspiration. She had slept for hours.

In 1910, there were many cases of typhoid fever in Jacksonville and among those who came down with it were the Nicholson children. At this time we lived on Neches Street where Mrs. Obie Childs now lives. We used well water and one day we began drawing up clumps of ants. We, of course, discontinued using the well and Papa had city water installed. But they always thought that ants had carried the disease of typhoid fever.

I was the first to succumb with typhoid. This was in August. I do not know how Mama could have managed without Aunt Harriet. She walked from her house to ours, everyday, rain or shine, doing whatever was needed. Starvation was the treatment for the fever, and when I was able to get up after weeks of fever, I was as thin as could be, for only fluids had been my diet.

Then J.B. came down with typhoid and he was extremely sick. For days and even weeks it was not known if he would live or die. Dr. Guinn and Dr. Canon came every day and sometimes twice a day, so very ill was he. Miss Mamie Trantham, a practical nurse, came to help care for him and, of course, Aunt Harriet did such washings of sheets, towels, pillow cases, night-shirts you wouldn't believe. Much of the care of Lala fell to me as I grew stronger. Only Mama and Miss Mamie were allowed to touch J.B. and each time they washed their hands in a solution of chloride tablets dissolved in water. Their hands became almost cooked.

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Someone sent word that an old-time remedy of peach leaves, boiled and made into poultice, then bound onto the stomach of the patient, might be beneficial. By this time it was autumn and most leaves had fallen, but a neighbor boy, Sam Boles (Lois Boles' father) went to their peach orchard and found enough leaves for the poultice. At the depths of J.B.'s illness, Mrs. Woodley left her home to come stay with us for a few days. She was a help and comfort to us all. Who would do that in this day and time?

During this hard time, a funny incident took place. Harriet's son, Henry, came with his mother to bring in wood, run errands, and help in other ways. He came into the house, looked for Mama, and said, "Mis' Nicks'n, Mis' Nicks'n, yo' baby done lost her hippen (diaper) in the back yard." Mama heard a strange, little weak sound. It was J.B. trying to laugh. He began to improve and that was the first indication.

About this time some friends, Mr. and Mrs. Cobb, invited Lala and me to go with them for a little outing. They fixed a picnic lunch and we went to Ragsdale Lake. (Don't look for this lake, as it has now filled in to level ground just across the railroad tracks from the Tomato Bowl-but then it was where we went swimming, and the woods around it made an attractive picnic spot.) Lala became listless and feverish so we went back home, and thus began her bout with typhoid fever. She was still almost a baby, perhaps two years old. Her illness was trying on her and especially on Mama.

All this time, Aunt Harriet came every day and she heard much talk of germs. She was putting wood on the fire one day when she called Mama to come see if a bug crawling on the bricks of the fireplace was a germ.

Finally, after many weeks, we three recovered. Then the doctor told Mama to burn the carpet, the mattresses, quilts, etc. from the sick rooms and to fumigate by burning sulfur candles. These candles smelled terribly and for weeks the odor clung to the rooms, worse in damp weather.

Another funny story connected with Aunt Harriet concerned her son, Henry. He did not always do to suit her and she would fuss about some of his actions. One day Mama said, "Harriet, I believe you hate Henry." She replied, "No'm, I don't hate him. I loves his soul, but I sho hates his ways."

Henry was killed in the first World War and Aunt Harriet drew his pension, so she no longer had to work. After she grew old, she lived with her daughter, Rose. I remember Harriet for her patient ways, her gratitude for kindness or little gifts, and her thankfulness for small blessings.

Neighbor women helped the doctor when a baby was born, as hospitals were only in cities. They carried in food where there was an illness, cared for the children if the mother was ill, and "laid out" the dead.

Children nowadays cannot imagine the horrible taste of the medicines we had to take. Mostly it

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was in the form of powder, folded neatly by the druggist into little squares of paper. The powder was dissolved in a teaspoon of water and swallowed. Calomel and quinine were most unpleasant. No matter what the disease or illness, the first treatment was a purge by calomel-and a violent treatment it was. If we had malaria-and it was common those days in East Texas, spread by mosquitoes which bred in stagnant ponds, wells, etc.-we were given bitter quinine until our heads would ring.

Always I had-and still have-a queasy stomach. It was torture to have to take medicine, either liquid or powder. I welcomed a doctor who would give pills or capsules, for these had no taste if swallowed fast. The time came once when I was sick when Mama got the maddest at me that she ever was. I had malaria and was having a severe chill every other day followed by burning hot fever. The doctor came every day, but I was so nauseated I fought the medicine or refused to take it. Mama called Papa one day to come home and help her make me take it, for that day the doctor had said that I was very sick and in danger of "congestive chills"-whatever was meant by that. Papa tried holding my nose, putting the medicine in my mouth, and closing my mouth. When he released me, I promptly spat it out. In disgust, he went back to work.

About this time, my teacher, Mrs. Harrell came in to visit. She said in a pious, gentle voice, "Give me the medicine. Hattie will take it for me, won't you, Hattie?" To Mama's great chagrin and irritation, I swallowed the bitter concoction like an angel. When Mrs. Harrell left, Mama said, "HAT NICHOLSON, you will take your medicine from now on or I'll know why!" Mama always called me "Hat" when she was angry with me, so I realized I was defeated and after that took my medicine.

### Laugh at Myself

Looking back over my life, I realize that one ability I had was to laugh at myself whenever I "pulled a boner" or made a trivial mistake. That isn't true today. I get infuriated at myself when I forget what I should remember, get facts wrong, fail to remember names I should know, etc. (Could age be responsible?) Here are some little incidents that I laugh at now and did at the time they happened.

I was introduced to some strangers as "Miss Nicholson" and since I didn't recognize such a grown up sounding name as my own, I held out my hand and said, "I'm glad to meet you, Miss Nicholson!"

At Sunday School one day I was invited to go home with Mattie Lee Seymour. I asked my mother for permission. The Seymours were a fine, ambitious family who lived on a farm on what we now call Burma Road, so permission was granted. We rode home with Mattie Lee's older brothers. Since I had on my "good" clothes, I changed into some of Mattie Lee's clothes. We stayed outside in the afternoon, went to look at new little animals, and went horseback riding.

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It was a hot afternoon, so I rode under the shelter of my parasol. It must have been a laughable sight—two girls on one horse, with an umbrella. I wasn't an expert rider and when something frightened the horse, it began to cut up and rear. In (error I threw my arms around the horse's neck without dropping my parasol. It went over the horse's head and frightened her even more. She began going in circles, round and round, and I fell off. We laughed then and I never forgot.

J.B. used to tell this story on me and die laughing. One day we were playing on top of a bale of cotton stored in a lot where Piggly Wiggly is now located across from the Tomato Bowl (later location of Jacksonville's Norman Activity Center). We were having fun rocking the bale backwards and forwards when it flipped over. In falling I was hurt and my breath was knocked out of me. I didn't cry and J.B. said, "Aren't you going to cry?" I replied, "There's no use to cry. Mama's not at home."

I enjoy telling this funny tale, which took place in Marshall. My Aunt Hattie always sent me a nice birthday gift and her Christmas boxes were received with great anticipation. One year she sent me a diamond ring. Perhaps the diamond was a small one. I don't remember that unimportant detail. Just to have a diamond ring was a heady experience. I wore it as J.B. and I walked to Sunday School. As happened frequently, we got into a spat, which developed into a scuffle and, of course, I lost. He pushed me to the ground and somehow my ring fell off unnoticed. When I missed it, I searched diligently but could not find it.

Mama put an ad in the newspaper, describing the ring and offering a reward if the finder returned it. A woman sent word she had found a ring and would return it if I came for it and could describe it. Mama drilled me on the description—"a gold ring with a small diamond set in it and the name 'Hattie' engraved on the inside." Then she sent me to claim it. When the woman came to the door at my knock, I remembered to tell her my name but alas! I got mixed up and told her the ring had "Hattie set in it and a diamond was engraved on the inside." She laughed but returned the ring. I can remember in childhood photographs I would pose holding my hands in such a way as to show this ring.

Several years later there was a final chapter regarding the ring. By that time we were living in Jacksonville, Texas. I was nearly nine years old and my ring was still a valued possession. At the old East Side School one of my classmates begged to wear it "just 'til recess." Reluctantly I allowed her to talk me into this. When recess came I could not find her. The next day when I asked for it, she said she had lost it, and I never saw it again.

### Piano Lessons 1910

When I was eight years old, Papa bought me a new upright piano. It was made of rosewood and had a beautiful tone.

My first music teacher was Miss Mary Bolton, who had studied abroad, and I loved her very

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much. Mama paid for my lessons by letting her teach other pupils in the parlor on our piano. For a short time we lived on the corner of Rusk and Jackson so students could walk the short distance to our home from school.

My next piano teacher was Miss Anna Harris. She was very prim and precise. I remember one day when she "got after me" for not practicing my lesson. She said gently, "Hattie, I'm afraid you are indolent." I had no idea what "indolent" meant-it certainly sounded serious. Wide-eyed, I asked and on learning that it meant just plain lazy, I tried to do better.

About this time we moved to the house on the corner of Rusk and Austin (where my parents lived until the mid - forties) just across the street from the school. Miss Bessie Whitfield started a music class and Mama paid for my lessons the same way. I studied with Miss Whitfield for years; until I started to Alexander Collegiate Institute for my high school credits. She gave me my first pair of silk hose and the gift was just wonderful. I remember what a light and airy feeling my legs had, and how loose my shoes felt.

Miss Whitfield began going with a widower, Mr. O.D. Jones. For some reason he frequently drove past our house, and how she recognized the sound of his car, I don't know, but she would peep from behind the curtains every time. They married and she went to live at the home he had on El Paso Street. [511 El Paso-the house is still standing.] His first wife's mother, Mrs. Richmond, lived with them until her death years later. Mrs. Richmond was a gracious and refined lady, and I loved to visit with her for a while after I finished my lesson. I think those three had a pleasant relationship.

I began to take more interest in my music, practicing diligently. I was never allowed to "play by ear." Sometimes I would start to pick out a tune and Mama would call out, "Are you playing by ear? Well, stop it," How mistaken they were. People with natural musical talent and a good ear for music are the real musicians. I learned to read music rapidly and skillfully; yet still envy those who do have the ability to play without written music. "Runs" were my greatest talent. My fingers could move very rapidly and my teachers always saw that my "pieces" featured many runs.

I graduated from Miss Whitfield's music course when I was fifteen and gave a graduation recital at the Methodist Church. I still play for my Sunday School class and for my own entertainment and pleasure at home, but I am far from being a "musician." [Hattie Nicholson was regarded by all who heard her play as a quite talented pianist.]

In the fifth grade my teacher was Miss Boaz, who married Herman Byrd and made Jacksonville her home for many years. Margia Childs remembers one incident which took place that year, and which "curdled" her feelings toward Miss Boaz. Margia had been sent to the blackboard to diagram a sentence, then took her seat. Miss Boaz came to Margia's sentence, which had a mistake or two, and asked, "What little mutt diagramed this sentence?" Years later Margia's feelings still rankled and when I became a teacher, I tried to remember how sensitive children are and what long memories they have.

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One of my best school friends during these years was Beulah Hughes, whom I had gone to school with in Marshall. Coincidentally, her family moved to Jacksonville shortly before mine did. When I entered school in the new town, feeling homesick, knowing no one, whom should I meet face to face but Beulah. She was a welcome sight and became a dear friend of many years. Later the Hughes moved to Tyler, but we stayed in touch. Both of us married, each of us had daughters, and continued to visit each other through all the years. [Beulah was Mrs. Ed Gage of Kilgore.]

During these two years I went to school in the "new building" on the hill across Rusk Street. The old four-room brick building continued to be used, though for the primary grades.

In the sixth grade, Mr. Quick was my teacher. He was a real character. He was little and wiry and had a handlebar mustache. He was always kind to those of us who behaved. But if one

of the big boys stepped out of line, or failed to "pay attention" he would take a large bunch of keys out of his pocket and throw them fast and accurately at the boy. He didn't say a word, but those keys delivered the message. He had had the custom of throwing his keys at girls as well as boys. Mrs. Carter Childs told me one time what broke that habit. Long years before, he had been her teacher, and one day threw his keys at her. She picked them up and threw them as hard as she could back at him, then walked out of the room and went home. Her parents were angered and took the matter up with the school board.



*Graduation recital program at the Methodist Church upon completion of Miss Whitfield's class at age 15.*

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Mr. Quick was an "old-time" teacher, expecting instant obedience. The boys delighted in giving him a hard time. He emphasized mathematics and I thank him for a thorough grounding in addition, subtraction, multiplication, and especially in fractions (a subject still mysterious to my teenage granddaughter). After he stopped teaching school he was a well known figure about town as a tax collector.

#### Camp Meeting

The Woodley farm was a few miles from the little town of Elysian Fields and the Bethel Campground was five miles from the farm. In August, when the crops were "laid by," a week's protracted meeting was held at the campground. It was my privilege to go there as a child and as a teenager after we had moved away to Jacksonville. I went as a guest of Grandma Woodley until her death; then as a guest of Mr. and Mrs. Jess Woodley after they moved to the farm.

In my memory, this was a happy occasion—a time of much preaching, visiting, good eating, and fellowship with others our age. We were expected to be quiet and reverent, and we were. But there was still time to visit the "stand" for soda-pop and ice cream, for boys and girls to walk together, for courting couples to be with one another at the services and afterwards.

We usually arrived for our visit at the farm a day or two before the meeting and so helped with the preparations and packing for the week at camp. Two wagons were filled with mattresses, feather beds, pillows, linens, clothes, many groceries, etc. I got to ride the five miles to the campground atop one of the wagons with the other girls. It was lots of fun and we laughed and chattered all the way.

Let me describe the campground. There was, in the middle of the pine forest clearing, a large tabernacle with open sides. A rostrum at the front was for the piano, the preacher's lectern, and chairs for the other dignitaries. Acetylene lanterns all around gave good lighting but also attracted many flying insects. Rough, homemade benches out front held the congregation. The dirt floor had a layer of sawdust.

At one side was a big farm bell, which was rung before each service. One man was appointed to be the "bell ringer." His duties caused him to ring the bell for sunrise service at an early hour; again at ten o'clock for the preaching service, at five for prayer meeting and at seven for the evening preaching service. In between we had freedom to do as we wished. Another man was designated to see that quiet prevailed, for this whole week was set aside for spiritual renewal, and an air of reverence hovered over the camp. Somehow, too, there was plenty of opportunity for visiting with old friends and making new friends.

The road was to the west. On the north and east were the two rows of "tents"—really cabins. The Woodley's cabin had a large front porch, lined with plenty of chairs. The house had a breeze-way, with a large bedroom on each side. In three corners of each bedroom there were rough, plank beds, made up with mattresses and feather beds. One corner was curtained off and, behind the curtain, we hung our clothes and, if we wanted privacy to dress, we went behind the

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curtain. Water for drinking, cooking, and sponge baths was carried from a spring of cold, clear water down below the stand. Negro men saw that we had plenty of water.

At the back of the cabin there was a long porch on which sat the eating table, with long benches on two sides. There was always company to eat with us, so at times there would be two or three sittings for a meal. An ice box was there also. A shelf on the other side of the porch held a wash basin, a bucket of water, soap, towels, etc. The end was partitioned off for a pantry, where the food supply was kept. A few feet away, in the yard, was the cook shed. It contained a wood-burning cook stove, a rough work table, shelves.

How the Negro cooks were able to serve such delicious meals, I don't know. Mrs. Woodley always allowed about sixty fryers for the weeks' eating. These were confined in large coops and each day some lost their lives and ended up on the table, brown and juicy. Each morning a Negro man arrived with fresh milk and butter, freshly gathered vegetables, ice, etc. We girls had no chores at all, but attended meetings, made friends, "walked the line," and visited the "stand." At the stand there were rough wooden tables and benches and here we bought soda pop and homemade ice cream. By the age of fourteen, I had invitations to visit the stand with boys, as did the other teenagers.

This year, my little sister Lala was also attending the camp meeting. We had gone on the train from Jacksonville to Marshall, where we were met by Mr. Woodley in his open car for the sixteen mile drive to the farm. All the way he chewed tobacco and, from time to time, spat outside the car. After a few times of this, when I caught a slight baptism of the juice, I crouched down on the floor to escape and rode there the rest of the way.

A funny incident took place when, on the first day, I accepted a boy's invitation to go to the stand. Lala was greatly chagrined and envious. Mrs. Woodley, seeing how indignant Lala was, said, "Cheer up, Lala-pop, Here's a dime. You can go, too!" Gleeefully, Lala traipsed along behind us, and took her seat across the table from us. Every time I looked at her, she silently mouthed the words, "I'm going to tell Mama on you." I tried to ignore her, but was embarrassed. When, at the end of our visit, we returned to Jacksonville, she raced into the house thrilled to announce, "Mother, Hattie walked with a BOY!" She just knew I would be in trouble. Mother calmly answered, "That's all right. She is old enough." Lala was crestfallen. I was saved.

Don't get the mistaken idea that these dear people I've told about were ignorant or coarse. This is still, as it was then, a section of fine farms with prosperous and refined people; the salt of the earth. The young people were either in college or would later attend. Families left comfortable homes for a happy week of religious services. It was a vacation time; a lull in the year's work. Visitors and relatives came from far and wide.

Alas, the campground is no more, but, for perhaps a hundred years, that week in August had been a highlight each year. I once heard Grandma Woodley remark that she had spent fifty-five birthdays there. Tradition is valuable and I gratefully acknowledge the debt I owe for those who made these visits part of my dearest memories.

**Random Recollections**

The Corner of Rusk and Austin  
1912-1924

When I say or think of "our home;" it is always the one on the corner of Rusk and Austin Streets. I am guessing about the date when Papa purchased this house, but it was probably around 1912. There I lived until I married in 1924 and the house held many happy memories. (My parents lived there until the mid -1940's, when they bought a house on Myrtle Drive near my husband and me.)

There was a large concrete front porch with a brick rail. In warm weather Mama displayed her many lovely pot plants here. The front door opened into a hall. At the end of the hall, another door opened onto a long screened porch. Two doors off this porch led to the kitchen and dining room. Off the front hall there was a large square room which was J.B.'s bedroom and another square room which was the parlor. By and by, my parents had the partition removed that divided the hall from the living room so that it became one very large, attractive room. In it were my piano, the marble topped table (in my eyes at that time it was old-timey and out-of-date, now it is my treasure). We had two oak rockers, an overstuffed couch and matching chairs (horsehair stuffing would sometimes poke through the fabric and stick), a long library table, two sectional bookcases, and hospitality from wall to wall. Our friends were welcome and I remember our good times. Mama always had cookies (usually molasses) or cake, lemonade or milk, and generously let our friends help themselves.

There were three bedrooms, one small one behind the living room where Lala and I slept; one on the front opposite the living room, and one behind that where Mama and Papa slept and where we children studied our lessons, and where we sat in the winter. The two larger bedrooms had fireplaces, while the "little room" was never heated. How well I remember on cold winter nights Lala and I got ready for bed in the warm room, held our pillows near the fire to take off the chill, then ran across the hall and jumped into a cold bed. Soon we warmed up and drifted off to sleep, although Lala's feet stayed icy all winter. (She says they are still cold.)

The neighborhood children (Childs, Haynie, Beard families, etc.) in going to town, had a habit of coming in the back screen door into the kitchen where there was always a cooler of ice water in warm weather, getting a drink, and leaving through the opposite door. The Sory children, who lived where the old high school gym has recently been torn down, came in the opposite way.

I loved to have parties where we either played "42" or active games, had written contests, played the piano and sang popular songs. Mama would help us make delicious fudge or divinity, or we would have a taffy "pull," Just to be together was fun, besides calories hadn't yet been invented so we ate all we could hold.

One thing I am proud to remember is our mealtime habits. We ate as a family group in the dining room and the meal was preceded by a blessing. Mama used white cotton tablecloths for everyday, linen damask with matching napkins for special occasions. Papa could not always be

### Random Recollections

with us on account of his long working hours, but Mama and we three children observed good table manners and we remembered to compliment Mama for our good meal. She took pride in serving delicious food and always there was a bouquet of some sort in the middle of the table. Flowers in season were used. She grew many different flowers, beautiful roses and, in the spring, sweet peas. In the fall, she would fill a vase with colorful autumn leaves; in winter, perhaps evergreens, some pretty twigs, a spray of nandina or holly with red berries.

Even with her many household duties, Mama found time to visit the sick (of course, walking), to help the underprivileged and, to do "fancy work" such as embroidered doilies, dresser scarves, etc. Once I remember she crocheted an edging for curtains and we thought they were very pretty. She sewed most of our clothes. I remember one fall she said she made and "set in" fifty-eight sleeves. I know it is true, for she made gowns and dresses for herself, Lala, and me, and shirts and pajamas for Papa and J.B.

Mama often entertained us with stories of her early life, stories of the Civil War years which her father and friends had told. Papa also could recount tales of the same war which he had heard from his father.

Since we lived so near the schools, our home was the refuge when a child or teacher was taken ill during classes. She would put the sick one to bed, call the parents if they had a phone, or get word to them in some way. I felt honored one day when my teacher, Miss Lewis England, became ill and went to bed in my room.

When I was naughty or "sassy," Mama could and did give me spankings. It was never severe but it hurt, because I loved her very much, and wanted her approval. My father was differcut. He never spanked us girls, but once in awhile he did chastise J.B. I well remember the last time he tried to punish him and J.B. resisted. It scared me nearly to death, and Papa must have realized that J.B. would not tolerate physical punishment, so our father never again resorted to that form of control. How did he control us? He fixed his piercing brown eyes sternly on the offender and said, "Ap!Ap!Ap!" That was enough. We quailed under those "Aps." Mama never told on us when we displeased her. She could handle the situation and did. All was forgiven and forgotten, after the spanking.

One spanking stands out in my memory. When I was about eleven years old, a neighbor girl was to be married in a home wedding and I was asked to serve refreshments after wards. This was a signal honor. The afternoon of the wedding, Mama decided that I needed a new hair ribbon, so she called Miss Allie Newson, who worked at Frank's Dry Goods Store, to make me a bow at once and I was to run to the store for it.

The store was where Duke and Ayres is now located (southwest corner of the intersection of Commerce and Main), so it should have taken me only a few minutes. But I sauntered along the way, stopped to visit with some friends, and took my time. Mama was really "put out" with me and promised me a whipping *after the wedding*, because she did not want my eyes to be red for the ceremony. Can you imagine my next few hours of suspense and dread? I knew that I needed

**Random Recollections**

to be punished and I could have understood swift retribution-but a spanking in COLD BLOOD? After we returned home she knew she had to keep her word, so I got a few half- hearted swats. I never forgot this particular time and never again loitered.

Here is another lesson I learned and I ask everyone who reads this to be careful of what you say to another person-maybe in an unthoughtful or critical way. Here are two incidents that I remember and still feel my hurt today; yet they happened nearly seventy years ago.

Mother and her friends often "went visiting;" especially to call on the sick. One of Mother's friends was a much older woman named Mrs. Nunnaly, who spent much of her time calling on people. Now, by the time I was twelve years old, I grew almost overnight to my adult size and was very self-conscious. I yearned to be slender, dainty, delicate, but was just the opposite. One day, I answered a knock on the door and it was Mrs. Nunnaly. Her greeting to me was, "My lands! Hattie. You look like a skinned mule;" I gulped, invited her in, and went off to shed unseen tears.

On a later visit I overheard Mrs. Nunnaly say, "Hattie's not pretty but she's a good girL" Now it was beneath my ambition to be called a "good girL" "Pretty;" I envied. Anyone could be "good" but "pretty" was more to my desire. Another time she assured me that I had "legs like mill posts." Mrs. Nunnally, herself, was old, tall, ungainly, and had suffered the loss of eyesight in one eye so that it was clouded over and rolled uncontrollabl--so she was not very attractive herself. She prided herself, I hough, on being "plain spoken;" which I consider no virtue.

Friends

One of my friends was Herman Genschey. His mother was dead so he made his home just up Rusk Street from us with a Mrs. Hays who ran a boarding house. His father was a traveling man and away much of the time. He was an indulgent father and Herman had lots of toys and a bicycle before any of the rest of us did. The most wonderful gift was a little merry-go-round which his father set up in the yard. It had seats with footrests for six children, with power furnished by handles we moved back and forth, pumping for dear life. It had a little music box which played as we pumped. Herman was a generous host and made us welcome on his merry-go-round.

Mr. Genschey also owned a bakery, run by other members of his family, on the corner of Bolton and Commerce Streets. On Saturday, they sold six loaves of bread for a quarter and that was when people with large families always tried to buy their bread.

Herman had a little sweetheart named Loma Rae Summers. She was small and dainty and had natural curls. She used her feminine wiles to the nth degree-helpless and appealing. When she was sent to the blackboard, she wrote so delicately the words could hardly be deciphered and her voice was low and delicate when she read aloud. Hate her? You bet we did! Herman moved away when we were still children and we never saw him again.

The Carter Childs family were our close neighbors and friends. Margia Childs (Hamlin) and I

### Random Recollections

were the same age and were "chums" many, many years. We walked to school together, to high school, and to Lon Morris. Some other girls I loved and visited during these years were Maurine Beard (Virgie Acker's sister), Merle Williams (aunt of Frances Beall Harris), Inez Settles, Maggie Andrews, Loleita Gray, Beulah Hughes, and Anna Fama Harrell. All of us lived in the same neighborhood. Nowadays friends can live far apart but transportation was such then that we usually walked everywhere we went. Consequently, our neighbors were the friends we knew intimately. Our mothers borrowed from each other—a cup of sugar, a spool of thread, or maybe an aspirin or a dose of castor oil, which was the medication of first resort back then.

Some of the boys I remember as good friends were William Stallings, Gleason Barber, Herman Genschey, Ford and Kenneth Dixon, Travis Todd, Ned Ragsdale, and William Wall Pruitt.

We had parties at the Carter Childs' home many times, because Mrs. Childs would give her children parties on every occasion. These continued even after we were grown. Mrs. Childs' teas were outstanding, and the one she gave in my honor when I was a bride-to-be will never be forgotten. I had lots of parties as a young girl, always in our big yard if the weather was warm enough. We played games, had questionnaires, and paper contests. None of us danced (except secretly) as our church-going parents forbade it for it was against church rules. We had a presiding elder in Jacksonville once whose daughters had gotten caught, or else some good soul reported to him that they were attending real dances. He got up in church, reported their crime, and demanded an apology from them (evidently previously arranged). They got up, looking not the least bit repentant, and the first one tossed her head and said defiantly, "I'm sorry I danced and I won't do it again." The other sister followed suit. We young people resented this father's arbitrary demand, but sixty years ago the father was the final authority, not to be crossed.

Another friend who lived near was Imola Brock. She, too, moved away but just to Rusk. I was invited to spend the day with her once. I walked over to the I & GN (International and Great Northern) railroad station, and bought a ticket to Rusk. The little train we called the "Jitney" pulled in and, with a fast beating heart, I embarked on the fifteen or so mile journey, returning the next day. She and I lost sight of each other after that, so she is dim in my memory.

To be continued.

Schultz, Hattie Nicholson, *Random Recollections*, Houston, Texas, 1998. Used by permission of her Grand daughter, Alyson Owen Ezell, August 14, 2012.

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Annual membership dues are \$15.00 (single) and \$20.00 for a two-member household. The membership year ends August 31, 2013. Membership entitles you to four quarterly issues of our publication Tree Talk. Tree Talk is normally published the first week of October, January, April and July of each fiscal year. Members joining after the first issue is published will receive all issues of Tree Talk, but back issues of Tree Talk will be mailed with the next issue unless \$1.00 for special handling is enclosed. The Society meets the second Monday of the months September through May at Bonner Plaza, 421 S. Bonner, Jacksonville, Texas at 7 p.m.

Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_ Paid through 8/31/ \_\_\_\_\_

Single Membership \$15.00 \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_

Two-Member household \$20.00 \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ 9-digit Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (include area code): \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Maiden Name (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Surnames you are researching: \_\_\_\_\_

Gift of \_\_\_\_\_, bill to: \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the information above, make out your check, and mail to:

**Cherokee County Genealogical Society**

**Post Office Box 1332**

**Jacksonville, Texas 75766-1332**