

Lucy Eula Edgemon-Henson
Transcribed by Audrey and J. W. Henson
1979

An Apology

The following manuscript was typed by Audrey and John W. Henson III from a handwritten book that Lucy Eula Edgemon-Henson wrote back in 1979. It will soon be 20 years since she shared these memories of the past with us. Mother did not outline the writings, but jotted them down as they came to her, and that over several months of time. For that reason the thoughts and subjects are interwoven, and often repeated. They do not follow a direct path across her life. One can get a clear picture that she was a dedicated Christian lady. It was the purpose of her life . . . the one thing that kept her going when times were rough.

LEH had a great love for her Father. Throughout the book she referred to him as ‘My Dad’. Her Mother does not enter into these stories as often as does her Dad. It seems that the things he did were more important, or interesting to her young mind than keeping house and doing the wash, though she did cover these items too.

There were stories that Mom told that our children can still remember today. Stories that we were all told a hundred times when we were young. Working with this manuscript has renewed many memories from my childhood, and I hope they will be meaningful to you, too. That is why we have transcribed them!

The items in parenthesis throughout this book were added by J. W. Henson

Note

On the night of October 27, 1997 Shandelle Henson told me that years ago she would see her grandmother Henson (LEH) sitting by her telephone writing in a book. One day she asked her what she was writing. She said, “Oh, its something that JW has told me to write. I sure don’t want to do it though, but I have to!” It was this manuscript that she was writing back in 1979. I bought the blank book and gave it to Mom to write all her memories of life on the farm and of the old family.

Lucy Eula Edgemon-Henson’s 1979 Journal
(A story of her early childhood on the farm, and the adult years)

When I was a small child (She was born in 1900), my Daddy's parents were both deceased but my Mother's parents were both living in Chattanooga. Also, she had two brothers and three sisters. My Grandparents lived on Rossville Avenue in a large house with four bedrooms upstairs. I was not used to upstairs, or city lights, or streetcars.

Each spring when most of the farm work was done, we all went to Chattanooga for a week to ten days. We took two teams of mules and two wagons. My oldest brother and next oldest drove one wagon pretty well loaded with hay bales and corn for stock feed, a coop of live chickens, boxes of clothes, food and things to last a family for a vacation. We scattered out among relatives.

My Dad owned a very large barn (1916) where folks drove their teams and wagons for the night or for as many days as they stayed. They used one corner of this huge barn. There was a small living quarter inside to take care of the place and collect for the rented stalls. There was a large space in the middle. They were called wagon barns. Some farmers would carry along quilts and pillows and sleep in their wagon at night, not a bad idea, some who came would steal from unguarded wagons. Finally after cars and trucks became plentiful, folks did not spend the night, they could make the trip and sell their loads and get home the same day. In time it put the wagon yards out of business.

Back to our spring vacation. Mother would get every ones clothes ready for the stay. Did we ever enjoy it! We planned for it, looked forward to going as to heaven. We all went to a movie at night. Really I did not enjoy them. I thought it was wrong. But my relatives in the city was part of this life. We rode the street car downtown. Two of my aunts lived on Main Street. Two uncles on Rossville Avenue. My Dad's brother lived on Rossville Boulevard, it probably has a different name now.

We were seven hours driving to town. We had to drive over the ridge, since there was no tunnel through it. It would be almost dark when we got there. And looking off Missionary Ridge with all of the lights on was a real thrill to me. I would soon see my Grandparents and all the rest. It was real excitement and joy for all us small ones. We were on the go all the time we were there. Then when summer came all these relatives would return our visit. We loved that too. So many of my cousins were around my age. My Mother's folks would come and stay a week or more and can peaches, blackberries, and apples. Most of them came by train to Apison and Daddy picked them up at the station. Then when he went to town he took all the canned goods to their houses. I will say we all enjoyed it so much, we the city and they the country.

My Dad's father died when he was seven years old. His Mother lived with Mother and Dad until she passed away, when John was a baby (1895). She liked my mother. She had five daughters, all fine folks, but just visited them occasionally. She lived with my parents. Mother would wonder why she would rather live with her than her own daughter. I guess it was because my Dad was her youngest child. My mother's Dad passed away when Lee was a small baby. Grandmother Dedmon lived until I was grown. During this time she always lived in Chattanooga. She liked that best.

Automobiles

We bought our first automobile when I was 12 years old. My Dad went to Chattanooga and bought a new Ford. A man came home with him and spent the night because he was teaching my Daddy to drive. We had the first automobile in the country around us so there was no one to teach him how to drive. Dad drove lots while the man was there the next day. He took the instructor to Apison to catch the train and he returned to his job and Dad had it all alone.

My Dad was a intelligent man. I have often said of him if he had had the education he could have been President of the United States. He had the brains. Back to his new car. He never had a wreck, learned to drive and as other folks bought cars he taught them to drive.

When I was small my Dad was the one called on when anyone died to drive them to the cemetery. He had a good wagon and a beautiful team of mules with a pretty harness. Folks felt honored to have his services, but best of all they were free. I have heard him say he never charged anyone. A neighbor lady said she kept a record of him taking over 100 persons to their final resting place. If it was anyone we know my brothers would drive another wagon and the family would go. I guess thats why I view death as I do. My Mother told us it was as natural as birth. When we are born we know we will die, so just stay ready for it.

Livestock; horses and mules were dangerous. Many people were killed and badly injured with them. My Dad was in lots of wrecks caused by horses and mules, but was never hurt. He had one brother killed and two other brothers with broken legs. One got well, and other one, my Dad's favorite brother, Pleasant, had his leg was so badly crushed it had to be removed near the hip. Pleasant had four small children. He had to leave country life behind and move to Chattanooga. He went into the grocery business, and was very successful. My Dad really loved him; they were so close as brothers.

My Mother was the worlds best. She loved folks and was always helping someone. I never remember her telling a lie. You could believe her like the Bible. She filled her place in life well, her children rose up and called her blessed.

Mother and Dad had 41 grandchildren and were very proud of them. There were eight children in our family and at the present time only Lee and I are still living. In my Dad's family there were seven boys and five girls. My Mother had two brothers and three sisters. Mother's maiden name was Dedman. Mother and Dad were both reared near Ringgold, Georgia.

I'm not sure where JW's Dad's folks were from; maybe Ellijay. Were John T. Henson was born I do not know, but Will was born in Ellijay.

JW's great granddad's name was Wiley Henson. His great grandmother's name was

Piney Harkins. JW's grandfather was John T. Henson and grandmother's name, before marriage was Caroline Southers.

JW's Dad and one of his brothers, George Henson, served in World War I. Each served overseas for several months. They were both in a city in France at the same time and did not know it until later. Where troops were stationed had to be kept secret for fear the enemy would move in on them. When they were home after the war each knew where the other was on certain days. All their mail was censored. And if anything was in it that the government did not want told it was cut out. You would get a letter with parts cut out. I believe they only did this overseas. When the war was ended Will was close enough to the front, where the fighting was going on, to hear the heavy artillery.

Religion

My Mother was a Methodist and my Dad's folks were mostly all Baptist. We lived close to two Baptist churches so we all joined that denomination. I have said that I inherited my first religion but the last time I chose it.

I was baptized in a creek near Mt. Vernon Baptist church. That weekend the creek was damned up. It came a hard rain and the water was up almost to my shoulders. It was so swift I could not walk out to the minister who baptized me without help. The pastor was W.J. Darnell. (Pastor Darnell would say, 'You'ns came back next Sunday!') That Sunday (September 5, 1915) Dad and Mother were baptized. Dad had never belonged to a church before. Mother changed from the Methodist church to the Baptist. Joe and Minnie North, Mary who was also changing from the Methodist church, and Jesse, John, Ollie and I were baptized all the same day. There were nine of our family baptized that Sunday. I remember it was a day of rejoicing for all of us. (They were baptized in the little creek down by the old Ernest Coffee place.)

When Pastor Tom Crews was causing that trouble down there about not allowing folks to be buried in the cemetery (about 1980), I was there and looked at the old records books of the church. There were all our names that left the Baptist church and joined the Adventist Church. All our names were dropped. Willard Maples was the clerk of the church. I asked him to drop my name and he said, "No! You have not done anything for which to be dropped." He said he would send my letter but I asked him to go ahead and drop my name. I could not support two churches. If it were to do over, I would have him send my letter to me. It would look better on the records. Mother and Dad's name were not dropped. Just John and Ella, their children, Ollie, Lee, and me.

This was the only time I ever saw the record book. It told who first donated the land for the church and cemetery. The records said it was given for a burial place for the community, so they had to continue to let folks be buried there. They really had a big fuss about it. It was on T.V. two or three times. I did not know they were making the pictures. Just then two other lady friends and I walked down from the cemetery. We crawled under the chain stretched across the driveway. My friends and I walked up and stopped not far

from the minister who was causing all the trouble.

Channel 3 TV. was making pictures of the preacher and there I stood facing the camera. I did not know I was on TV. until that evening I was out at Brenda's house watching it over her color set. She said, "Grandma, there you are in the picture!" I really was, but I thought I had stayed well out of the camera's range. There must have been 200 or 300 people there. The preacher stayed in the church with the door closed for a long time. Finally they persuaded him to come out. Sheriff J. D. Stewart sent a police car to keep peace, most of them were against the preacher. Guess I would of stayed hidden too, if I had been the preacher.

I was converted in a revival at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, and I have never doubted my conversion in that old country church. The Church caught on fire and burned (December 1936). I helped (financially) to rebuild the church. Now they have a new church there.

I was among a group of members from the Collegedale Church who moved their letters to Ringgold, Georgia. We helped build a new church and get it going. There were no members living in Ringgold at the time. It was a long hard job, but now there is a large church, and thank God its still growing. Its been twelve years (written 1979) since we built the church there. We started very poor; no money to hire a janitor. A group of the ladies would take turns being janitor.

One day Ms. Vernon Herod, her youngest son Doug, and I went down to clean the church and get it ready for Sabbath. There was no weather prediction of snow though it was cloudy. It was 12 miles from our home to the Ringgold church. We got there and started cleaning the large old dwelling house that was being used for a church. It was built before the war between the states. It was a strong building. It was torn down when the new church was built.

We got well under way with our cleaning when the snow started falling. They were the biggest flakes I have ever seen. My car was covered just in a matter of minutes. We hurriedly got all of the doors locked and started for home. It was two o'clock in the afternoon and at six o'clock we were still not home. The snow was so deep you could scarcely move. Cars turned sideways and some hanging off the road, over the banks. Believe me its nice to be on good terms with God at a time like this. He can help in every way when we would be totally helpless.

I started home over the road through the mountain in Collegedale. At the top of the hill there was a man stopped in the middle of the road putting on tire chains. Another car was setting sideways in the road and I am no good at backing long distances. Guess I'm a straightforward person. I had no chains for my car. Just when I needed help so much, God sent Mr. Ervin Baker, a good friend of mine along. He was walking to meet his wife who had gone to Chattanooga. So he said for me to back and he would walk beside the car and direct me. So I backed from the top of the mountain to the Ooltewah-Ringgold Road. I was thankful for the help and guidance.

I never had a full tank of gas to start with, but it lasted from two to six o'clock with the engine running all the time. It was freezing cold and we needed the heater. We started on home by the way of Wells Switch (through Ooltewah to Edgemon Road and then back to the College). Fred Edgmon pulled the car over the mountain and headed it toward home. He was using a tractor. There we were on a two lane road. We were in the lane near the bank with a steep fill on one side. I asked Ms. Herod and Doug to pray for our safety, as I drove.

The cars going the opposite direction, and those in front of me passed so closely that they almost rubbed. When we got to Well's Switch (Over by Andrew Chastain's Chicken farm. Railroad double tracks used for switching were called switches, and named for the most prominent feature in the area.), and left Lee Highway we were on Edgemon Road. It was just solid with snow. God still guided the car so that it kept the road perfectly until we got past the old Chestnut home on Tallant Road. There we met a car coming toward us. I was taking my part out of the middle of the road, and as I moved over to let that car pass I started slipping into the ditch. Again God sent a young man along to our assistance. He got out of his car and came to our aid. He said he did not know how I stopped without getting all the way down into the ditch. He got in the ditch and pushed against the side of my car, and with what the car was able to do we got back on the road. We had no more trouble until we got to the Collegedale parking lot at the store. I parked there and told the Herods that I was not going any further.

The snow was deep and we did not have any boots. Ms. Herod went into the store and called her husband (Vernon) and he came down and got us. He had chains on his car. So ended a bad day, but with a lot of God's care and guidance we made it. I still had gasoline after the engine had run for over four hours without being turned off.

Farm Life

We lived on a large farm when I was a child. My Dad set out early and late varieties of apples, and peaches. Once we had an orchard of peaches that covered 7 acres. There was several different kind of early and late ripening varieties. We had pears of early and late varieties. We grew different kinds of cherries, and had a grape arbor that was rather long.

My Dad raised lots of sweet potatoes. I have seen him bed 100 bushels of seed potatoes from which we pulled the sweet potato slips for planting. They produced 3000 bushels. (30 bushels to one bushel of seed potatoes). It was not child's play to harvest all of these. Dad hauled them to Chattanooga 40 bushels a load in the wagon. It took all day to drive to town and he would spend the night, and be up first thing the next morning and peddled them to the grocery stores.

We had one-half acres in garden. We planted an early garden, a mid-season one, and a late garden. The local congressmen from our district would bring us free garden seed packets. I always loved to make gardens. My parents would always give me the free seed, and I would order additional seed from catalogs. I very carefully followed the

directions on the package of how to plant, fertilize, and grow. The family used my garden produce, and boy did I feel important! My Dad never forgot to praise me for doing so well with my garden. I remember that I grew parsnips but we never ate them. We just let them go to waste because we thought they were for stock feed.

We also had lots of chickens, geese, ducks, and guineas. When I was very small I caught one of our chickens by the neck. The harder it tried to get free the tighter I would hold. My Dad saw me and came to the poor chicken's rescue. I called that hen Billie. I was not trying to hurt her, but was killing her just the same. When my Dad saw me carrying her by the neck he rushed to her rescue. She was so near death that he had to open her mouth and blow breath down her throat. I felt terrible when I saw what I had done, and never did that again. Dad said it was a wonder that she lived, and from then on I called her 'Billie Wonder'. We kept her until she died of old age. Each spring she would hatch off a drove of baby chicks. I got all excited when they began to hatch.

My Dad grew lots of corn on the farm. He had rows that were half a mile long. He would haul fertilizer, and seed corn and put it in two convenient but different locations in the field. My sister Ollie and I would each stay at one of the places, and put fertilizer, and corn seed into the drill as Dad or one of my brothers would pass by. We always took water and a mid morning and afternoon snack along with us. We thought that we got so hungry. Sometimes my Dad would get hungry and send one of us kids to the house for a snack for him. You really developed a good appetite on the farm.

I always helped wherever help was needed. I learned to milk a cow when I was so small that I had to stand up beside the cow as I milked. Once I decided that I wanted to learn to cook, but Mother said no! that I was too small. Still I watched how she did things when she was cooking. I felt sure I could do what she was doing. One day I overheard her and Dad talking about me. I listened to hear what they were saying. Mom said, "I have trouble keeping Lucy out of things. When I am cooking she wants to learn to cook." My Dad said, "Let her cook. If we can't eat it, then feed it to the dogs." We always kept two dogs on the farm. This conversation made me so happy. I never told Mother that I heard them talking but I helped her and she never objected anymore. So I learned to cook just like she did.

Many times when company was coming, I would fix most of the meal, and let Mom talk to the visitors. I loved to cook, and still do!

Later I wanted to learn to sew. One day my Mother was not feeling well, and she was laying in bed. I got some cloth and cut a dress and made it all by myself. When I got through with it, I had cut it out too small and I could not wear it. I don't remember her scolding me, or any remark she made about it. Later I ordered some material and a pattern from Sears and Roebuck and followed the instructions. It turned out good. I wore it to church and had lots of compliments. That was the beginning of my sewing career. Its never been great but I have enjoyed sewing. I even made my Mother's dresses that she did not buy ready-made. I made my sisters' dresses, my sister-in-laws' dresses, my daughter-in-law's dresses and also my Grandchildren's. I like to make men's shirts. I

have lost a lot of my love for sewing.

When I was a small girl we made all our own clothes except for coats. We went shopping in the city once or twice a year. There were no shopping centers, except for groceries stores, nearer our home than Chattanooga. Twenty miles was a long way to drive a team with wagon.

My Dad worked in Chattanooga part time and really liked to select clothes. I always liked his taste in clothes. Most of the family shopping was done from Sears and Roebuck or Montgomery Ward catalogs.

Harvest Time

We grew most of our food on the farm. In the summer we canned many peaches, blackberries, dewberries and huckleberries. We also made jellies, apple jam, preserves and pickles. We had a variety of canned vegetables plus dried apples and peaches. Once my Dad decided he would dry some pumpkin, so he cut it into rings and hung it out in the sun. He strung it up on old broom handles. It looked like it would be fine. But for some cause it all molded and had to be put into the garbage. Ha-ha.

We kept enough Irish and sweet potatoes to last all year in a heated potato house. We stored bushels and bushels of turnips. We mounded up some ground then piled the turnips up in a big pile. It kept getting smaller until it looked like a cone. We then covered this with several inches of dry hay to keep out the cold. Next the hay was covered with dirt, several inches thick. Then we stood planks or boards around that. We had cut the tops off the turnips and after they stayed in this storage for awhile they grew new tops. They were mainly white, no green color and they were so tender; we cooked them with the turnips.

My Mother was the world's best cook. Even her Buttermilk pies were delicious, but mine were not, I never learned to make them .

Of course we had our own fowls. Chickens, guineas, ducks, turkeys and geese. Duck and geese eggs were not good to eat, but chicken and guinea eggs were delicious. We never ate ducks or geese, but chickens, turkeys and guineas we did eat.

My Mother put in her whole day every day cooking and house cleaning. She worked long hours. Of course we younger children who were not in school or working in the fields helped some. Housekeeping for a large family was no small thing.

When Lee was a baby there were 11 in our family. When he was six months old Laura and Minnie married. A few months later my cousin (Landrum Edgemon) who had lived in our home for seven years got married to my sister Dessie, so it took the family down some. Now there were only seven left. I was 12 years old when Jesse married. The family was getting smaller all the time.

When my older sisters married no one was left to wash the clothes and on the farm there was lots of washing to do. My Dad bought a washing machine. Of course we had no electricity. This washing machine had a ringer on it that you turned by hand. It had a large tub. You boiled the water in a wash pot and carried it into the spring house where the washing machine sat. You filled the large tub half full of hot water. You added your bar soap cut off in shavings with a butcher knife; no soap powders were available to us in those days. After all this was ready you sorted your clothes according to color, putting in the white ones first. The tub held near an armload of clothes. Then you put the lid on. There was a handle or hand grip on one side of the tub and you stood there and turned it in a half circle. It sloshed the clothes back and forth until they were clean. You then turned the hand ringer till you ran all the clothes into the rinse water. We rinsed them two times, the last time enough bluing was added in the water to make it look blue.

When the clothes were through with the rinse they were ready to hang on the line. Some of the more soiled clothes we boiled for awhile in the iron wash pot. This was supposed to make them white. Mother was hard to please about the clothes. If they were not as white as she liked they had to be done over. She always inspected all our work and it had to be done to her liking.

After my three sisters got married, I was seven years old, Jesse stayed off from work a half day each week to do the washing. He did it well. When he got married I was 12 years old. I wanted to take over the washing but Mother thought it was too hard for me, so she helped. I remember crying because she would let me do it all by myself.

Ollie would have cried if she had been asked to help. She never worried about helping with the work. She was good to carry in the stove wood and to carry water from the spring, but she never cared much about cooking, washing, ironing or sewing. Verlan helped teach her to cook after they were married. His Mother was sick a lot so he did much of the cooking. He was a pretty good cook. He had the patience of Job in teaching her to cook. I remember the first pie she baked after they were married. It made her so nervous she dropped it as she took it from the oven, and it fell upside down. Mother should have made her learn to cook before she was married, but Ollie did not want to for she did not like house work. She learned it all after she was married.

Sheep Growing

My Dad had lots of sheep. He had to keep close check or stray dogs would kill them. You have heard of sheep killing dogs. If once your pet dog got off and went with sheep killing dogs he would learn to do it too. They would eat the sheep they killed so they would take up the habit too. Dad always kept the sheep in a lot at night pretty near the house so he would hear the dogs when they came. Usually there were six or eight dogs in a pack. Our dogs would bark at them when they came and Dad kept a shotgun handy. He would join the kill, only he killed the bad dogs.

I will never forget one night the dogs came and Dad got his gun. He took out of the house to the sheep herd. We had a big black bulldog we called 'Black Joe'. We all loved him.

He was our night guard. That night he and one of the sheep killing dogs were fighting. Dad was going to shoot the stray dog but he made a mistake. Black Joe and the other dog were fighting and Dad tried to shot the other dog and shot part of Black Joe's head off. I do believe he said it was his jaw, so he finish killing him. When Dad came into the house he sat down and was near crying. He told us what happened and we children did cry. We felt like one of the family was dead.

Dad would not have parted with that dog for anything. We all felt so bad. Now there was no one outside to turn on the alarm when the sheep killing dogs came.

It was a big job training a dog to help on the farm. Bulldogs, English Bulls, I believed they called them were needed on the farm. They would help with the animals. One Bulldog we had could throw a cow very easily. He would get them by the nose and shake them side ways two or three times. The cow would lose her balance and fall flat on her side. It seemed not to do them any lasting damage.

Back then we did not have fence laws. So everybody kept as many animals as they pleased and let them run lose where they pleased on the country side. You would wake up some morning and the neighbor's hogs would be rooting up your lawn, or maybe they would wake you up in the night under your house. You had to have a fence around your house and around your crops so they could not get through. Your crops were not safe anytime. A drove of cows would come in the night . Most of them had horns and they would learn to throw the rails off of the fence. You would wake up some morning or come home from somewhere and find a herd of cows and calves in your corn field eating their fill, and breaking down the corn. Most people depended on their crops for food and to sell some for their clothes. So it was a very bad business.

Dad kept a big bad Bulldog and a small dog to wake up the big one. He said the little dog could hear a flea hop. You really had to have those farm dogs to protect your crops. Many times I have seen Dad set his trained Bulldog on strange cows and the dog would run in front of the cow or bull, jump up and catch them by the nose. The dog would hang on until the animal had stopped. Dad would then catch the dog by his hind legs and lead the cow out of the field. That one would generally not come back. She learned to fear the dog. My Dad loved animals but you had to protect your crop. You would need it when winter came. Every one seldom ever left home all at the same time. Folks had a hard time to make a living in those days.

Believe me my Dad lead out in getting the fence laws. That meant if you had stock of any kind you must keep them inside a fence. If they broke out and damaged the neighbors property the owners were held responsible for the damage. People never kept so many animals after they had to furnish their own pasture.

After I moved to Collegedale Helen Byrd, Don's Mother, did not know we had fence laws. Her cow ate my garden. She told me I should have a fence around it. I was glad to tell her I could make a garden beside the road without a fence and the owner of the cow had to keep them fenced in. She sold the cow after Mr. Starkey moved into the

community. She had to pay for damages a few times and she did not like it. One day I was busy in the bedroom-making bridesmaid dresses. Finally I went outside and her old cow had about eaten my garden clean. I had cooked my first English Peas for dinner. She ate the pea vines and all my corn. My beans were quite small. I found her in the garage eating dry cow feed out of the sack. She was a big cow and half starved. Her pasture was woods so she would break down the fence and roam around looking for something to eat.

That time I charged Helen for the damages and she sold the cow. The (W.C.) Starkeys had moved out here by us. He had seen my garden and he had a garden. He knew his might be the next one the cow would eat. He urged me to make her pay for damages. He said it was one widow woman after another. If she ate his garden he would hate to charge her because she was a widow. She paid me five dollars and was not very friendly anymore after that.

War Between the States

My Mother's Dad was a young man so he had to go war for three years. My Grandmother did not know if he was alive or dead. As I remember she heard once from him through someone who got to go home. Granddad was a Captain. My Mother was born shortly after he left. They had one older girl so my Grandmother was left to make her own living for two very small children. Her small younger brother lived with her. They had one horse so the brother farmed. Grandmother taught school so they got by all right. During the war crowds of thieves would come and rob the women and children taking their food, stock or anything else of use.

One day two men came to rob my Grandmother. It was at twelve o'clock and her brother had quite work and had come home for lunch. He rode up in their yard and these men told my great uncle they were going to take the horse. Ladies wore big full skirts in those days. Grandmother owned a very sharp butcher knife. She hid it in her skirt for protection. She slipped out this large knife and said whoever puts their hand on the horse she would stab them through. They believed her and left. She needed the horse. It probably meant starvation for her family if they took it. When I first remember her she was a good Christian lady and I first learned about the prophecies from her reading the Bible and explaining them to me. I made her a ready listener.

My Dedman Grandparents

They were from North Carolina. Grandmother was a quarter Cherokee Indian. She was a large lady. When my Granddad got home from the war he had never seen my Mother. She was born soon after he left for service. They did not get furloughs. Mother was a afraid of him. I have heard them laugh about how hard it was to get acquainted with Mom. They were all afraid of strange men. Many men who were not in the service went about stealing property and food.

I had an Aunt Jane who was older then my Mother and when the war was over they had

four more children Aunt Mary, Uncle John, Uncle Joe and Aunt Hattie. They all lived in Chattanooga except my Mother. Uncle John Dedman later moved to the country down below Ringgold. Lena Luttrell lives on the farm. She now owns it. She had the house where Uncle John lived torn down and a new one built on the spot.

On Mother's side I have the following first cousins living Ruby Robinson, Lena Luttrell, Vivian Hammontree, Helen Black, Johnnie Mae Cornelison, and Beatrice Stone. This is all of Mother's family.

My Dad's family

My Grandfather on my Dad's side was too old to go to the war between the states. My Dad was the youngest of the family and was born during the war. Dad's brother, John Edgemon was married and had one child Elizabeth, when he was in the army. His wife died but I can't remember if she died before the war or after. Anyway his parents, my Grandparents, took Elizabeth and raised her. Elizabeth was older than my Dad.

One of my Dad's brothers was on his way home after the war. He had the pay the government paid him for his services. He was robbed and killed. They could never find his body. Granddad had a young son who was 16 or 17 years old. He volunteered for the army, he was too young to be drafted. He and my oldest uncle got home all right and lived to be old men.

My Grandfather went to the Carolina's and the brothers got lost from one another.

My brother Lee was the youngest of our family. He was married when we moved to Tennessee in 1927. I liked the Tennessee laws better than the Georgia laws. In Georgia they taxed all your household furniture. Someone would come around to your home and ask about all your furniture. If the husband died the wife only got the same inheritance that the child got. Tennessee is different. Anyway I'm glad I adopted this state, or it adopted me. I was really surprised when my Dad decided to move away from the old home place. I am thankful he moved to Collegedale for maybe I would have never become a Seventh-day-Adventist. I am so happy in the SDA church. It made my life so much more enjoyable. I have loved every day of it.

In September of 1938 JW and I moved from where we lived with my Dad down to Camp Road in Collegedale. We had a new house built. I still live there after 41 years. JW was near 8 years old when he started to school in Collegedale in the second grade. Miss Myrtle Maxwell was his teacher. She was a fine teacher and he enjoyed his school year. The next year a Mrs. Harter taught third grade. She was not a very good teacher. She was a music teacher for the school and was good at that.

I had a job waiting for me when I moved to Collegedale at the College Puffery. They puffed corn and rice into a cereal that was sold across the country. It was not a success so it finally closed. Then I worked in the laundry for a while. Next I worked in the kitchen for a long time. I left there and worked at the dairy bar. I did inside work taking care of milk, making cottage cheese and selling short lunches. I worked there for five or six years and then went to the College Press. I worked there one or two years. From the press I

went back to the laundry. I worked there a long time until they called me for a checker at the store. At the same time Erlanger Hospital called me to take a job with on the job training for a LPN license. It never worked out so I quit the hospital and went back to the kitchen. I worked there several years as assistant matron until I retired when JW and Audrey got married, or shortly after. I did part time work at the laundry until I was 69 years old and retired for good.

I could find lots of work to do at home and in Community Services. I loved working with Community Services because everyone was so friendly and kind to one another. I worked on quilts all the time. Everyone did the kind of work they liked to do best.

First Marriage in Our Family

I had three grown sisters. They were each dating young men. My middle sister Laura Jane dated different boys. One young man thought so much of her he came to see her one Sunday afternoon. She had gone to church with another boy. So he stayed and talked to my mother about her. He cried, his heart was just broken, his name was Claude Vasser Haynes, I thought it so silly. One day, she and Vasser, planned to get married without telling my folks. My folks did not like him. Mother called him "Pea-Eye" because she said his eyes were so small and close together. He and Laura went to Sunday school and after it was over they got the preacher to marry them. My Mother and all of us children had a cry session. It was too bad that none of us liked him. They loved together for more than 50 years and had a large family. Laura just passed away at age 89 last June a year ago (June 1978).

There was no law to say what age you should be when you got married. Now Minnie was dating a man seven years older than she. She was fourteen years and he was twenty-one years old. His name was Joe North. A few weeks after Laura got married Minnie and Joe went to Sunday school and got married at the end of the service. We did not cry when she got married. She had been hard to control so my Mother thought maybe she would mind him. Minnie would come home on a visit and cry like a baby to stay home with mother.

Mother told her she had slipped off and married, that she had a nice man and would have to stay with him.

Near our house was a house on our farm that my Dad called the weaning house. (This was an old log house. It had been the dwelling of Allen and Mahala when they moved to Georgia. LEH was born in that house, as were all of her brothers and sisters. When the new house was built in 1910 it became available for others to live in.) Laura and Vasser moved there first. They lived there a year or so and bought a home of their own. Minnie and Joe moved in. They lived there several years. Irene and James were born there. Next Dessie the oldest in the family married her cousin, Landrum My Dad was so angry it was awful. Said he would rather she had married a Negro instead of her cousin. When Jesse was nineteen years old he and Mary got married. My parents approved of his wedding, for they liked Mary. She sure was good to them. None of us ever had hard feelings toward her or her to us.

When my brother, John was 22 years old he and Ella Mae Haddock got married. I was

the next child in line of birth, but I did not get married until I was 29 years old. I kept watching my brother and sister's homes and decided that I would stay single. When I started dating, Will and I found that he had the same idea. We dated for three years and ended up getting married. I had never dated one boy for long for fear that I might fall in love with him.

Ollie and Verlan dated for two or more years. They got married and lived together for over thirty years, until she died of ovarian cancer in 1957. They had no children. After Ollie died Verlan remarried to Chloe Loren the widow of Felton Loren, of Collegedale.

Lee was the youngest child of the family. He and Dovie Ruth Lansford were married. They only dated for a few months. They have been married for 53 years. There was never a divorce in our family!

Salvation

Most of us can never tell when we were converted and started a new life with God. I can.

It was during a revival in the Baptist Church when I was 12 years old. I went forward when the call was made and took a seat with lots of others. Ollie went forward with me. I gave my life to Jesus and have never once doubted my conversion. With a Mother like I had it was easy to follow the Lord. She did each day and each step of the way.

My dad loved good books, and when he met an Adventist book salesman he bought their books. We had a lot of Adventist books, and I read them all and believed them. I would say that I was all mixed up. I was in the Baptist Church until I was 36 years old.

There was a crusade down in Georgia just about a mile from where I was raised. It was so far from our Tennessee home that I thought I would not be able to attend every night. The meetings lasted for four or six weeks.

My Dad went every night, so I was able to go along too. One night it was raining so hard that we had the meeting at Collegedale because the roads were so poor. The meetings were held in a tent along the Keith Road in Catoosa County, Georgia about one-fourth of a mile south of the Headrick Road. The tent was located on the east side of the road near some large oak trees.

I joined the Adventist Church from this series of meetings. My Dad believed it, but never joined the church. My Mother accepted it, but was not baptized because of poor health. Anyway she had been baptized into the Baptist Church so she joined the Adventists by Profession of Faith. She really loved the Adventist message.

John, Ella and several of their children also joined the Church.

Landrum, Dessie, and Cecil Edgemon all joined the Church. They all eventually dropped out of the church. Cecil first and then later his parents followed him. I don't believe they were ever happy after leaving the Adventist Church.

Dessie and Landrum adopted a boy out of an orphanage. He died this year and I went to his funeral. His name was Roy Hicks-Edgemon. He lived in Cohutta, Georgia, and had

lived there for many years at the time of his death. He was a nice well thought of fellow. At his death he left behind a wife, Eunice Garrett-Edgemon and a daughter. They had had another daughter but she was dead at this time.

I remember the first time I ever saw Roy. My sister had adopted him from the Vine Street Orphanage in Chattanooga. A sister, my brother, and I had been to school. When we came home a small boy came to meet us. He had on a blue velvet suit with a white collar and buttons on it. He was a handsome little fellow. His adopted parents had sent him out to meet us. We of course did not know who he was, and he did not know us. He came smiling along as he met us. He was three or four years old. All the years that I lived near him I can never remember a time that he was not smiling. We all like him. After he moved to Cohutta, Georgia we seldom saw him. Roy was laid to rest by his daughter. He will certainly be missed. They were a very devoted family. They loved one another so very much, and I loved them for they are lovely people.

Our Family Dogs

When we moved from Catoosa County, Georgia to Hamilton County, Tennessee (1927) we had a rather large, young dog. We had raised him from a pup. He was really an intelligent dog and it was easy to teach him to do things. My Dad liked to keep a big dog and also a feist. After we moved to Tennessee my Dad bought a small dog. It was around 15 miles where we moved.

This big dog had never gone back to our old house by himself, but one day he took the small dog, left home, went back to our old community. We missed both of the dogs but no one knew what went with them. So my Dad went down to our old home place. He drove through Apison and saw a small dog in a yard of one of the houses. He thought it was his dog. So he stopped, went to the house, and knocked on the door. The lady of the house came to the door and Dad asked where she got the dog. She said it just came to her house the day before and she did not know where it came from. He told her it was his dog. The dog was very glad to see him. The lady told him to take it along. Still the big dog was gone. Dad went on to where we had moved from. A neighbor called while he was there saying our dog was at his house. It had come the day before. So Dad went and got the big dog and brought them both home.

The big dog was very intelligent with some German Shepherd blood in him. We always thought he was jealous of the young dog. My Dad petted the small dog a lot so the big dog just took him off and got him lost. My oldest brother lived in the house we moved out of and this dog knew him well, but he never went to his house, our old house, where he had been reared, but went to a neighbors. So Dad had to learn to pet the big dog and take notice of him just as he did the small dog. The dogs never left home again. The two dogs lived together and were great friends. My Dad loved dogs and they loved him.

(I can remember the two dogs. The little dog had a "fit" one-day while we were all out in the front yard. He must have had parasites, and it frightened me very badly. He yelped, turned flips, ran around the house and finally ended up under the front porch. The men discussed the situation, and I overheard one of them say that you could give the dog a penny and it would stop the problem. I guess that the copper in the penny would kill the

parasites.

About the winter of 1933 I awoke one morning to Mom's announcement that the little dog had frozen to death during the night. I went to the window and scratched at the ice that had accumulated on the inside of the window so I could see across the road to the garage where the tragedy had happened.

The big dog was bitten by a "mad dog" and was chained within the garage. In due time the poor animal went mad with rabies, and a few days later Grandpa shot him. So it was on the farm. Animals being born and others dying. Death and the miracle of birth were no strangers to young people growing up on the farm, at a very early age.)

Prayer Meeting

In Elder Beckner's day as pastor of the Collegedale Church (1947 to 1960), the prayer meeting at the church had died out. I always liked to go to prayer meeting so it bothered me a great deal. One Wednesday night I went somewhere with JW and Audrey. We came home through Ooltewah and every church in Ooltewah was having prayer meeting and that really worried me. We had been having prayer meetings in homes. I always had one at my house, but when we would get a good size crowd at a home our pastor would move the meeting over to the church. Folks would then drop out until there would not be enough to have prayer meeting. So it just died out.

Without the Elder's consent I decided to have prayer meeting in my house again. I asked a good lay member, Ervin Baker, if he would lead out and have the talk and he agreed. We set the time and I started inviting folks. When the time came for prayer meeting we had a room full of worshipers. The sermon was very good, it had seemed I had never heard a better talk even by an ordained minister.

I had told the folks to bring someone with them. A man who worked where I did brought a non Adventist who was here from Atlanta, GA. He was a brick layer and was helping build one the buildings on the campus. He wore a large gold ring and seemed very nervous. You could tell he was ill at ease. He told the man who invited him, that he would come if they would not call on him to pray. He was assured no one would ask him to pray. After this good sermon his heart was touched. We had prayer around the circle and when it came to him, he prayed a real heart felt prayer. I could not keep from noticing it for I knew he was not a member of our church. After prayer meeting was over he went around to Mr. Erwin Baker and asked him if he would come and give Bible studies to him and his wife. They asked to have two studies a week so they could finish them before moving back to Atlanta, as their job was to soon to be finished here. When they finished the studies they were baptized. When Camp meeting was held they attended and seemed so happy. I was glad I got that prayer meeting going that night.

Farm Life

I grew up on a very large farm in Catoosa County, Georgia. We had most every kind of fruit. Our grape arbor reached from the house all the way to the springhouse. It may

have been 200 yards long. There were pears, peaches, and apples. They were the earliest to the latest bearing varieties. We put lots of them up for the winter. Upstairs in our house we had four bedrooms and a long hall. We put things that would keep through the winter up there where it was cool.

Chattanooga was over 20 miles from our house and it took seven hours to drive that distance with team and wagon. There was a small country store with a grist mill and several houses near our farm. It was really just a wide place in the road, but we thought it was up town. (I believe she is talking about Headrick, a little community a couple of miles to the south of their place. John Tilman Henson, my grandfather ran the grist mill there at one time.)

Lots of people came by our house driving wagons and buggies. If it were late in the evening my Dad always invited them in, to spend the night. Lots of them were salesmen who offered fruit trees, vines, and seed for sale. Some were agents or photographers. We would have our photos taken when they were there. Sometimes they would have a store on their wagons. We really liked to have the store come to us.

Upstairs in our house we had three classes of beds. (First class, second class, and third class) If it were clean folks they were given the first class bed for the night. If they were tramps, and low life we put them up in the tramp bed, third class. (Grandma had some broom handles that she used to remove the covers the next morning and carry them to the wash house so she did not have to touch them. The fear was bedbugs, lice, scabies, or itch.) The people were always happy to have a place to sleep. Most of our neighbors would refuse them lodging for a night. In fact they would send them to our house for the night. Its difficult to imagine how many would come along! I thought it was fun. My Dad had no fear of traveling folks.

One person that my Dad kept often stood out in my mind. It was Sam Parker an emigrant Jew from Russia. He did not speak English clearly. As we came to know him, we liked him. He had started one of these rolling stores. Before we met him he had been sleeping nights in a barn loft in the community. My Dad liked him and could tell that he was not the trampy type. He was really a fine person. Dad let him sleep upstairs in one of these company beds.

When we first met him, Sam was driving a wagon with one mule to it. It was not long until he bought a panel body truck, and hauled lots of goods; most anything you wanted. We bought lots of things from him. Not long after this he bought a large farm. His wife was a nice person. They had a son that they named Julius. This has been more than 60 years ago. Mr. and Ms. Parker are both gone to their rest. Julius is on the editorial staff of the Chattanooga News-Free Press in Chattanooga.

In the early 1940s we would take children from the school to down town to do Ingathering (Church begging). I had taken JW and another lad. As we were working one of the streets we met Mr. Sam Parker. He was with another man. He introduced me to his friend. Sam knew what we were doing so he put a dollar into each boy's can. He told his friend to do the same. He said, "These people took me into their house and gave me a bed and food when no one else would. We got to be close friends!" The Parkers were nice people; strangers in a strange land. Later my Dad would visit in their home and eat with them. He thought they ate strange foods.

Changing Churches

In the Fall of 1936 we attended an effort held by Dr. Klooster, President of Southern Junior College at Collegedale, Tennessee. It was held in a tent out in a field along Keith Road beneath some large oak trees. The College took all of their musical talent, and instrumental music. It was well planned.

My Dad liked to attend services like this so I attended every night, not liking to stay alone at home. I only missed one night and that because of the poor weather. I was a “dyed in the wool Baptist.” Just a couple years before this I had help pioneer a new Baptist Church at the south foot of Grindstone Mountain. I was busy working in the Church and well satisfied.

My husband had passed away four years before and left me living with my parents with a small son. The crusade lasted for six weeks. They had a question box at the tent, and you could write out questions on the Bible and drop them into the box. The next night your question would be answered. I soon decided that he was the smartest minister I had ever listened to. I was glad they did not know who had written the questions when they were answered. His answers were so plain and right from the Bible, so I could see that he was right and I was wrong. When the effort was over I had changed from Baptist to Seventh-day Adventist. After all these years I love it more and better every day!

Within a year I was wanting to move to Collegedale so my son could go to their school. We had no car so he had to walk to school. I bought five and one-half acres joining the College property on their south along Camp Road. I had a house built for \$3,000.00 and I have lived there ever since. JW was as good a son as any mother could ever wish for.

Collegedale was the nearest Heaven anyone could get, and yet it is not perfect. We still have to strive for something better. I thank God for putting me here and my faith is very strong. Someday I will see Him face to face and thank him for His saving grace.

Soon after moving to Collegedale (We moved on Saturday night September 17, 1938) a lovely family, Elder and Ms. Manuel, and their three children who were at home, moved near us. I believe they had six children in all. They said they had adopted us into their family, and they did act like it.

Their two youngest daughters stayed with us for we needed the company.

While the Manuels lived in Collegedale the King and Queen of England visited the USA. in Washington, DC.. The Manuels were Canadians and they wished to see their Royal Monarch and his family. They asked us to go along to Washington with them. We traveled up in their car. (We slept at night in a field along the road as we traveled.)

We stayed with the Rafferty family on Carroll Avenue. They had lived in our apartment when they were in Collegedale. It was good seeing them again. After seeing the zoo, President and Ms. Roosevelt, the parade, and the King and Queen, JW and I returned home on the bus. We were on the bus late, and as evening came on JW was tired from being on the go so long. The bus was loaded with school teachers going home from seeing the King and Queen, and etc..

JW said he was going to go to sleep so he got up, leaned his seat back. We were seated at the front of the bus. JW kneeled down in the aisle and said his nightly prayer. Everyone was busy talking and he must have thought they would not notice him. But they did and they all stopped talking. He got up and was soon fast asleep.

A young teacher across the aisle suggested that we put him in the two seats and I would come over and sit with her. When I got settled down she asked, "What church do you belong to?" I told her that I was an SDA, and she asked me to tell her about them. She told me that she did not believe the Bible, and I told her that I could not tell her about the church without telling her about the Bible for "We are a Bible based church!" I was thankful that JW did not have teachers who did not believe in the Bible.

When I traveled I always carried along literature to give to people that I met. I gave her one of the tracts, "An Hour With Your Bible!" The teachers who were sitting behind me on the bus asked if I had more of the pamphlets, and I gave them all one. The teachers turned on the interior lights and read the little tracts in silence.

I was so glad that I had some literature with me. They wanted to know what made a small child pray before going to sleep. It was his habit and he was not going to let riding on a bus stop him.

Who knows what good that child's simple prayer may have done. There may be some of those people in the Kingdom as a result of that prayer. He still prays today, and I am so thankful. May God bless him and his family, and may they be in the Kingdom too.

Sickness and Health

In the late 1950s I was unlucky enough to come down with Arthritis. The pain was most terrible; like a giant tooth ache. I consulted with four doctors and they all told me that there was no cure for it and that I would just have to learn to live with it. It grew worse by the days and weeks. My oldest granddaughter said to me one day, "Granny do you know what my Dad said about you? He told Mother (Audrey) that you would be in a wheelchair before too long." Well, that was no news to me for I was sure that was where I was headed.

One day I was keeping my two oldest grand children, Brenda and John. Brenda was in the first grade. She was in a program at school, and wanted her Mother and Dad to see her. JW was taking flying lessons over at Lovell Field and someone had to go get him. This particular day I was so sick I could hardly walk at all. After lunch, before Brenda went back to school, she and John had become so quiet that I thought John had walked with her back to school. The school was close by and the kids could walk to and from school. Brenda was six years old and John was three. I slowly made my way to the front door. There the two kids sat on the front steps, their heads bowed, their face in their hands, and I could see that they were praying. John looked up at me and said, "Grandma you are going to be all right. We are praying for you!"

They were wanting me to be able to drive to the airport to get their daddy. Brenda went on to school and John took his afternoon nap, and I prayed about my health too. I told the Lord that it would harm their simple faith if I did not get to feeling better for they were so sure that I would be. That afternoon I was much better and could drive to the

airport. They were two happy children. Their Mother came and took them to the program.

Well, from February to August I lived with this terrible pain both night and day. So it dawned on me to go to God with it. I believed that he could hear me and would heal me, so I began to pray most earnestly. I was healed. I could have gone out with the children and jumped rope. I have not had one touch of it since. Praise the Lord. It was the swelling kind and my knees were 23 inches around. It all left me and the swelling went down, all an answer to prayer.

Snake Story

When I was a girl about 12 years old we had to go about a mile each way to get our daily mail. We went through a clean pasture and climbed a stile over a woven wire fence. The fence was head high and the stile was a wooden ladder on both sides of the fence and nailed together. It was not a bad crossing, but it did take some time. I left home and was walking across the pasture.

It was clean for the cattle kept it grazed down pretty short. As I went along I noticed something moving. To my right about 10 yards lay a big snake with its head raised about eight inches above the ground. It was looking at me, and I was frightened for I did not want its company as I walked along. When I looked at it it started right after me. Believe me I ran and so did the snake. I was never so afraid in all of my life. I thought of that fence that I had to climb over and knew that the snake would overtake me there. I ran as fast as I could but it seemed to be keeping up with me. I was passing a stack of brush that a brother of mine had cut and stacked in the pasture. When I got to the brush pile I ran around it. The snake took a shortcut and ran into the brush pile. I ran faster than ever, reached the fence and went up and over and out on to the public road. Believe me I never went through the pasture field again, but always went the road which made my trip much longer, but safer. That was the first and last; the only time I was ever chased by a snake in all of my life.

Syrup Making Time

We children looked forward with glee to syrup making time on the farm. We grew sugar cane by the acres, and made the syrup by the barrels. The men would strip the blades off the canes. The canes were then cut and hauled to the place where we squeezed the juice out of it. There were two big iron rollers (they stood up vertically). Our mules were hooked to a long pole and went round and round, thus turning the large rollers. One of my brothers would feed the cane stalks into the rollers and they extracted the juice by squeezing them. The juice ran through a pipe into a large barrel with a strainer on top. A pipe ran out of the bottom of the barrel, and the juice could be feed to the large cooking vats. The vats were divided into three sections.

(There were baffles in the sections between the vats so all of the cooking juices had to follow the same path and be cooked the same amount. A fire was built under the long vat

pans to cook the syrup. The fire was usually fed with slabs from the sawmill. They were long and could be slid the full length under the vats/pans. Grandpa had a sawmill so there was no trouble getting plenty of fuel for the fire. This process was more of an art or skill than a precise process. The skill was to cook the syrup to just the proper thickness. If it were too thin it would sour, and if it were too thick it would crystallize into sugar in the wintertime.)

When it was boiled to the proper thickness it was drawn into one gallon jugs for home use and sales, and into various sizes of barrels for the market. Some of them would hold fifty gallons of syrup. When it was fresh it was very good for breakfast with fresh butter and biscuits. We loved it.

Syrup making would last for a week or more. Sometimes the neighbors would bring their cane to us and we would cook it off for a percentage of the finished product. (Syrup making was done in the month of October. The cane had to be cut before the first frost or it was ruined. If an early frost came the cane would be cut the night before and then later stripped and made into syrup.) Many times we would work at it until after dark. We really enjoyed that with the lanterns hanging from poles and tree limbs to furnish some extra light.

Before Lee was school age, he, Ollie, and I went down to the syrup mill. It had to be placed by a stream of water for it took lots of water. They had dug a large hole out in the ground where they would put the foam that was skimmed off the top of the cooking syrup. The hole was in the grass and when the foam formed it looked green. We were running to get to where the family was working and Lee made a terrible mistake. He ran headlong into the sticky goo in the hole. When he crawled out he was covered with these skimmings. He was covered from head to toe. He was crying and Mother took him to the house and stripped off his clothes, skimmings and all. She gave him a bath, but believe me he was always careful after that when he was around that hole full of skimmings. So was Ollie and I. It was all part of the fun

Eighteenth Birthday Party

JW never wanted to have a birthday party. He told me that if I ever had a surprise party for him that I would be the one surprised, for if he found it out he would not be there. But he was having his 18th birthday (Tuesday, November 30). His friend, J. Quinten Eller, was boarding with us. I asked him to help me give JW a surprise birthday party. He thought it would be fun. So we planned to invite the young folks from where he worked. There was about an equal number of boys and girls, and we invited a young faculty member to be a chaperone. We got it all planned for Saturday night. (November 27, 1948). Barbara Jacobs (Later married J.Q. Eller) baked the cake, and I had the ice cream reserved where I worked.

Everything went well until the day that we had the party planned for. It was on a Saturday night so no one had to work or study. After church a couple of the girls came up to me and were talking. JW noticed it, and it being so near his birthday he began to think about it. Then a man who worked with him at the press said to JW, "I'm mad at

you for not inviting me to your birthday party!” The man thought that the party had already happened. So, JW said, “I have not had a birthday party and am not going to have one!”

When we came home from church and were eating dinner JW said, “Mother are you planning on having a surprise birthday party for me?” Quinten Eller was eating there at the table. Of course we were planning one for that very night. JW asked me why those girls were talking to me. The girls and I had talked about other things besides the party. I could get by without telling him an untruth. It was my motto never to tell an untruth. JW said as he was leaving the table, “I am going to call one of the girls I saw you talking to. She lives in the girl’s dormitory. I am going to tell her that I am Ray Edgmon, JW’s first cousin, and ask her if they are giving JW a surprise birthday party. She will tell me all about it.” And she would have to. We did not have a telephone then. He left the table when dinner was over and went down to the school to use a telephone.

I told Quinten to hurry across the street, in front of our house, where a faculty member lived that had a telephone. All of the faculty members had telephones, but the community folks did not have one. So Quinten hurried across the road and used the neighbor’s phone and called the girl telling her that JW was going to call. He told her what had been said. I don’t remember whether JW called her or not. JW had a job to do on Saturday night, so Quinten went with him first thing after sundown to help him get his job done in a hurry. When they came back home JW had on his work clothes. His boss at the printing press told him he was coming to see him after Sabbath. I said to JW why don’t change your clothes since you are expecting company. He said, “I see him every day dressed like this so what does it matter.”

About this time his first cousin John Edgmon and his girlfriend knocked on the door. JW answered the door and when he saw them all dressed up he rushed to his room and changed clothes. By that time the crowd began coming. I had asked that no one bring presents but everyone brought something. The young faculty member who was chaperone knew more cute games to play. I sent JW and a girl friend, maybe three of them, after the ice cream that I had reserved where I worked, in a short lunch place. One of the girls, Barbara Jacobs, had baked a cake. She brought it and cried because it did not look like she wanted it to. It was a real nice birthday cake. I loved it. I was afraid to make the cake myself for fear JW would see it and find out about the party plans.

When he discovered that we had really slipped the party over on him he never said a word against it, he enjoyed it very much. They all gave him the birthday presents and he opened them commenting on each. Some of them were just jokes from his friends. After all, he enjoyed the party very much and was just the life of it. I think everyone enjoyed it.

Quinten Eller and Barbara Jacobs had their first date at the party. Quinten took her home and a year or so after they were married.

Religious Experiences

A couple in Collegedale who were friends of mine was giving Bible studies in Dalton, Georgia. (Louise Putnam-Kennamer says that the friend’s name was Orville Rogers Henderson, a student at Southern Missionary College. He was known as Rogers Henderson. He graduated in May of 1947. Rogers’ wife’s name was Mary. She

graduated a year or two before her husband. Louise says that she attended some of his meetings there at the spread house that belonged to her brother Oscar Putnam.) One Sabbath afternoon they invited me to go with them. As we were returning home from Dalton by the old US Highway 41 (This was before the freeway days) we passed my sister's house, Laura Edgemon-Haynes. I commented that I wish we could give Laura's family Bible studies. The lady that I was with said, "Lets stop at their house and ask if we can give Bible studies to them!" When we got there my brother-in-law and my sister were not at home. They were away visiting at a neighbor's house. (Uncle Vasser Haynes died in 1950, so this had to be in the mid 1940s, plus Rogers Henderson graduated in the spring of 1947, so it had to be sometime before that.) I went after Laura and brought her home. They left her a picture of Daniel four (Mom may have meant Daniel two) which they liked very much, and they invited us back. We asked them to invite some of their neighbors and friends. The meeting was scheduled for night and when we arrived the house was full to overflowing with people.

We got a "spread house" down on US Highway 41 for future meetings. (The bedspread business in the Dalton area was a prelude to the modern carpet industry there. Many of my family was in the spread business and had "spread lines" along the US Highway 41 where they featured their spreads and other chenille products.) We took singers and special music to the meetings. Several people were baptized from these meetings. I really enjoyed the series of meeting as several of my husband's people were baptized. (Aunt Sarah Putnam was baptized. She was my Dad's sister. She had a very large family, and a lot of them were baptized. Back in the mid 1980s Dalton, Georgia SDA Church had a pastor by the name of Daniels. He told me that, "About half of the Dalton church members are people who were the result of the little effort held down on US Highway 41 back in the 1940s!" I went with him to visit his members one Sabbath afternoon and most of them were our family.) None of my sister's family was converted, for they dropped out of the meetings before they were over. Laura's family never attended any church.

Another Experience

My nephew Deward Edgemon wanted to work and go to school here at Collegedale. He had no place to live so I let him board with my son and me. (This was in the Camp Road house.)

Every night after supper we had a Bible study. He had been in a series of studies in his home, but had no interest in them. He was so thankful for a place to live that he would sit and listen. After several months of these studies he was baptized. Eventually he began to study for the ministry. He is now a minister, and a very good one too. (Even in Deward's retirement he has continued to give Bible studies and start branch Sabbath Schools. So like a pebble thrown into a still pond of water the circle of Mother's labor continues to spread and widen. The results of Mother's little effort for the church will only be known in eternity, for man could not measure it.) Deward told me once that if he ever did any good as a minister that I would share in it for what I had done for him. I feel very proud of Deward. He is at present a pastor near Atlanta, and serves as an evangelist, too. At every camp meeting he has people on the platform that he studied with and brought into the church. He is a good worker!

Ila Yates

One Fall day when the weather was warm and pleasant I was working down at Southern Missionary College. I had a bad cold that just seemed to hang on, so I decided that I needed to be out in the sunshine. I got off work and went out to my sister, Ms. Verlan (Ollie) Massengill's house. They were picking cotton. (There was never a job that I hated as I did picking cotton) I joined them, and among those who had been hired to pick the cotton was a Black family (named Yates).

One of the Yates was an intelligent 18 year old Black girl. They lived over in the Summit area. She had a good voice and sang quite a bit for us while we were working. She got my interest. I thought of Oakwood College, our Black College down at Huntsville, Alabama. I had just visited the College and it was very nice, so I told Ila's mother about the school.

Ms. Yates said that she would love for her to go, but that they did not have any money. I also talked to Ila about the school and she was very interested, but kept thinking of the money problem. I told them that I would help her and that after she got there she could work her way through school.

Her mother told me that she had an older daughter who had married a good for nothing over where they lived and they had three children. The father drank up most of his paycheck and Ms. Yates was afraid that Ila might end up the same way.

The next day on the job down at the college I told my boss and fellow workers about her case. They all helped out. We got the bookkeeper there to keep track of the money as it came in. The boss gave her sheets, pillow cases, bath towels, and wash clothes with soap. Our bookkeeper's husband was in school taking the ministerial course. When we got everything together he and his wife took little Ila Yates to Oakwood College to attend school. The Yates family moved back to Chattanooga, and I lost track of them. I often wondered if Ila stayed with her studies, or got homesick and returned to the area.

I heard nothing from the for several years. Then one day at campmeeting I saw the minister who took Ila to Oakwood. He spoke to me and asked me to wait a minute. He soon returned and asked me if I remembered the Black girl that I helped to send to Oakwood College. At first I did not remember, and thought that he was mistaken about who I was. Then he called her name and I remembered her. He said that when he was working in the Missouri Conference one day this handsome looking young Black couple came up to him and the lady asked if he remembered her.

Ila Yates had graduated from Oakwood College and she had married a minister. The Conference President told him that they were really good workers. I was glad to learn that she had stayed in college and was telling others of the wonderful love of the savior. I was reminded of the saying that from small acorns mighty oaks grow.

Living on the Farm

JW was a small child, but could talk very plainly and intelligently. He had a name for everything. It would give my Dad lots of laughs at the names he gave things. The glove

compartment on the dash of the car he called the “pistol pocket”. My Dad called it that from then on, too.

My Dad bought some small Jersey calves from the College farm in Collegedale. They were thoroughbred Jersey stock. JW immediately named one of them Jimmie after one of his friends and we all called her Jimmie. He played with her at the gate. He would reach through the gate and she would try to butt his arm and hand with her head. She got so mean trying to hurt him that I had to notice and keep him away from the gate.

One morning early I went down to the barn to milk the cows. I had several head of cows and calves and one of the cows had a new baby calf. When I came back to the house I told JW about the new baby calf. He became all excited about it. I was busy and soon missed him. I called but got no answer. I thought of that new baby calf and it scared me. I knew he had gone to the barn to see the new born. I went running across the road to the barn and sure enough he had crawled through the gate and was in the hall of the barn looking at that baby calf.

Standing back of him was that half grown Jersey threatening to butt him with her head. I knew it was only his guardian angel that kept him from harm, with no one there to help him from getting hurt. When he saw me coming he called to me and said, “ Oh Mother, Jimmie is learning to talk. Every time I tell her to look at the new born calf she nods her head, to show that she had seen it.” He was so excited about her learning to talk. I was so scared when I saw him standing looking through an opening at the new calf. That half grow calf was standing behind him threatening to butt him into the wall. Our guardian angel will someday tell us of the many times he saved us from harm.

My Grandson John

I took John over to our next-door neighbor’s to watch the cartoon Dennis the Menace on TV. Dennis had just gotten a new pony. He was going to get on the pony and ride. The pony kicked him flat on the ground. John looked over at me, and said very seriously, “If that happens again I’m going home.” I could not laugh like I wanted to for he was so serious. I had to wait until he was not around to laugh. The next-door neighbor died several years ago and John is grown and married and studying to be a doctor.

My Granddaughter Brenda was visiting me for a few days. She always liked dried navy beans so I cooked some of dinner. In the afternoon my sewing machine would not sew, so she and I went to Lora Stewart’s house, and used her sewing machine. Every few minutes Brenda would say to me, “Grandma lets go home and eat those beans.” To me it was kind of embarrassing for fear that Ms. Stewart would not think she had enough dinner. Every few minutes as I was sewing she would say, “Grandma lets go and eat those beans.” Finally I took her home. She really liked beans.

One time many years ago we had one cat too many. We wanted to get rid of one of them. My Dad loved animals and it made him very angry to see someone take a cat or a dog off on a lonely road to starve to death. He took this cat to Cohutta Georgia, a small rural town. All the older men would gather in front of the business places to talk. My Dad

drove up with his cat in a cardboard box. He got out of the car and fumbled the box letting the cat loose. Since this was the cat's first car ride it was so scared that it jumped out and ran as fast as it could. Some of the men saw it running and called, " Mr. Edgemon, your cat got out of the car." Dad said, " Oh my pet cat!" And he took out after it. All of the men who were able to run joined in the race to catch the cat. But that only frightened the cat worse. They never caught it, but at whatever house it chose to stay they must have welcomed the pet cat. We hoped they gave it a good home thinking it was Dad's pet cat. He laughed over that for weeks when he thought about it. My Dad had a big sense of humor and when he was feeling good was a lot of fun to be around.

Once my Dad was walking down the street in Chattanooga. An old beggar came up to him and asked for a dime. Most of the time they wanted to buy beer and whiskey with it. My Dad said to him, " You go over yonder and work that side of the street. I'm working this side!" That was his way of getting rid of the beggar. They used to sell beer and whiskey at any store. I guess no one had to buy a license to sell it back then.

I often laughed over something I heard him tell once. He was walking down the sidewalk in town one day and a small boy came riding a bicycle behind him. The boy ran right between his legs and it stirred up his anger. He said he caught his balance and never fell, but the boy did. He said he stamped the spokes out of the bicycle and laughed about it when he got home, and was telling it.

Reunion Day

August 10, 1980

The Edgemon family and Henson family had their reunion on the same day. The second Sunday in August this year. I wanted to go to the Edgemon reunion but I didn't know if I could get a way to go. JW got the idea that he wanted to go. He went to work at the shop for awhile Sunday morning and then came home at 10 o'clock. We went to the reunion, near a place called

Ten Mile, Tennessee. We left Highway 58 and turned east for three miles to the Edgemon cemetery. They have a pavilion for their services there. We ate lunch with them and stayed into the afternoon. It was very good. When we left there we went to Apison, Tennessee (at the home of Gus and Rowena Young, my father's sister. It was there that day that I first met my cousin Charlie Henson). They were having their reunion that same day.

SMC School Days

Dear JW

I love you so much for being such a good, trustworthy child. Thus for through your life you have been truthful and honest. Son, I could always trust and believe you, and I still can. Not everyone has this kind of children. You were full of life and fun and as honest as the days were long. I could have let you carry my billfold. You might have lost it climbing a tree or something, but you would never have taken money from it. It was a great pleasure to raise and train you. You always wanted to earn your own money. You did not want me to give you any, and its a good thing for I did not have much!

Love,

Mother

(This ends the journal that Mother wrote so many years ago. We will hear no more from her own mind in this life except from the stories and memories that live on and are recited from the mind of others. We will never know what thoughts she meant to include under the heading of "School Days". JWH.)

Wilderness Deliverance

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Twice in my lifetime have I been forced to deliver myself from a wilderness. It really was not too different from that of the early settlers in the United States.

My first move into a wilderness was in 1938 on Camp Road just to the south of Southern Junior College in Collegedale, Tennessee. Before that year we had been living with my grandparents Huse and Carrie Edgemon at the corner of Tallant and Edgemon Roads in present day Collegedale.

My grandmother had died on November 22, 1937 and it was just a few months after that that the old man (grandpa) began fraternizing with Myrtle Strickland of Collegedale. She was a woman about 40 years of age and he was 75. Summer and winter joined not too long after that in unholy matrimony. When the courtship had gotten serious, Mother, Lucy Eula Henson, bought five acres on the west side of Camp Road just south of the College's property and hired Mr. Williams and two of his sons to build her a house. She lived for the next 60 years in that house and considered it the center of civilization. She also bought three lots on the east side of the road just opposite her new house.

The following is taken from an article that I wrote about "Camp Road of 1938".

"Camp Road was gravel in those days and lined with trees on both sides as you left the College orchards, and started up the hill. There was one place in the road that I remember well, because it was a little narrower than the balance of the road. I could lay down and by stretching put my fingers into one ditch and my toes in the opposite ditch span the entire road. It goes without saying that two cars could not pass in those narrower spots. As you left Apison Pike to the south onto Camp Road, the first house that you came to was at the foot of the hill. It was occupied by the Rogers family, and later by the Bottomleys. I never did know the fate of Mr. Rogers, but there were Mrs. Rogers, Ray, Eloise, Rex and Robert. There could have been other members of the family that I have forgotten. Miss Myrtle Maxwell, my second grade teacher, had lived in that house before the Rogers.

"The next house was the new house on the west side, built by my Mother in 1938. Following south on the road was the Artress Home, called Hill Top House. On up the

road at the top of the rise stood the two houses that belonged to the old grandpa Byrd family (called grandpa in deference to his old age, and not that he was related). The next house was that of the Camps. It was almost a mile from the College. That property later belonged for years and up to the present to the Harry Z. Ward family.

“All of those houses were erected on the west side of Camp Road. There were no houses on the east side. It was thought in the pre-electric days that the house should face the rising sun. That way as you sat on the front porch in the afternoon, with the sun setting to your back the porch would be cooler.

“The driveway up to Mom’s new house began two lots to the north and came through the woods up to our house. The entrance to her driveway on Camp Road also continued to the valley and behind Mother’s house, past our barn and ended at the Hazel Byrd residence. Rennie Byrd, the husband, had spent time in prison and was never at home during the days that I can remember. The family was raised in his absence. The children were Warren, Ted, Iris, Vance, and Richard Byrd. They were a brawling bunch of pretty good kids. Ted spent his life at the Review & Herald Publishing Association, I know nothing of Iris. Warren lived with his mother and her new husband in Dunnellon, Florida. He had Polio as a child and was left crippled in limbs and speech. Vance Byrd was living in North Carolina, and still faithful to the church, the last that I heard. Richard was retired from the U.S. Navy after 20 years of service. He had attended Forest Lake Academy, in Maitland, Florida. There he met Audrey Gackenheimer and dated her before I ever knew that she existed. Dick and Vance were my playmates when we first moved to Collegedale.

“Our house was finished and we were to move in on a Saturday night after sundown on September 17, 1938. Mr. Dewey Ballard had a large coal truck, and Mother had contracted with him to move us. We stood in the gathering darkness at the south west corner of the old house on Tallant and Edgemon Roads. All of our belongings had been brought out of the house to be loaded on the old coal truck. There was very little said as we waited. Grandpa showed up and started a fuss with Mother over some chickens that she was taking. He told her to take them back to the chicken house. Mother said that she had set the eggs from some that she had gotten from a neighbor, and that they were hers. He raised his five cell flashlight in a threatening manner, and she said, “Old man, if you hit me, you won’t come out as easy as you did the time you hit mother!” He turned without saying anything more and went into the house. The separation was now almost complete.

“Mr. Ballard soon came and with the help of Lee Edgmon our things were delivered part and parcel to the new house. Things were just piled here and there. There was a long carpet that was rolled and left in the middle of the living room floor to be stepped across until it could be laid down. Mother covered the windows with sheets, made the bed, set the shotgun against the wall, so it could be pressed into service at a moment’s notice. The men had not stayed to help arrange the furniture. That had to be done by woman and child power.”

The following is copied from an article by J W Henson entitled “Back Then”

“The community that existed around the College until 1938 was a few families with large holdings of land. Until these were broken down into small acreages and lots, heavy expansion was not possible. On March 14, 1938 Mr. Don Byrd, Sr. died. The Byrds lived to the south of the college and owned a lot of property that stretched along both sides of Camp Road. I consider his death to be the occurrence that marked the beginning of the rapid growth of this community.

“Later that year, 1938, Mrs. Helen Byrd*, the widow of Don Byrd, sold about 20 acres of land to another widow, Mrs. Lucy Henson, my mother. She built a small house on a lot on the West Side of Camp Road, up against the college property. Mom and I were moved into the new house on Saturday night, September 17, 1938 by Lee Edgmon and Dewey Ballard. The only other houses on Camp Road at that time were occupied by the Rogers family, the Manuals, two Byrd residences, and the Camps. Those were the only houses on Camp Road from the College to the point south where the Standifer Gap Road came into Camp Road. . .

- Helen Byrd later on was in charge of the dining room at Southern Junior College. She followed Joe Rainwater. Joe could make the best cinnamon rolls that I have ever eaten. Mrs. Charles Williams followed Ms. Byrd in the dining room. My mother, Lucy Henson worked there with Ms. Williams. Dr. Douglas Bennett as a student worked there in the early 1950s. JWH.

“Ms. Henson’s lot was five acres in area having been surveyed from the south. Later the College did a survey from the north. Her north line did not meet the College’s south line. It left her with two extra acres in between. She fenced the line between her and the College and maintained a lawn there for seven years. At the end of that time she went down to the County Court House in Chattanooga and had the two questionable acres added to her deed, according to the seven-year law.

Lucy Henson’s House on Camp Road

“Across Camp Road (University Drive) Ms. Henson sold three lots. The middle one of the three sold first to the Walter Williams family. Mr. Williams was the College Nurse, and his wife was also a RN. They had two children; Barbara Elaine and a son Wally. They built a brick house on the East Side of the gravel Camp Road. . .

“The southern most of the three lots was then sold to Elder J. S. James the Editor of the Southern Tidings, the Southern Union of Seventh-day Adventist weekly journal. His office was in the College Press building between the Men’s Dormitory and the Administration Building. The James had been missionaries to Burma before coming to Collegedale. Ms. James said that she could trace her ancestors back to Mary Queen of Scots. She was a very frugal individual, as one would expect with such a noble pedigree.

“The Northern most lot of the three was sold to Ms. Mary Dietel who taught Spanish and other courses at the Southern Junior College. Before building their house on the two acre lot she and her daughter Margarita had a cabin built about one hundred yards back into the woods across from the Henson residence in 1940. They called it “Dew Drop Inn”.

“A college student, Wallace Lighthall, was the original builder. When he left for Atlantic Union College the project was finished by Raulston Hooper. It was wholly built from trees taken from the property. There was no electricity as yet in the community. It was a well appointed, little one room log cabin in total seclusion. A wet weather stream flowed before it and a natural log bridge was built to cross the wet.”

I was not invited into the negotiations for the purchase of the lots down on Camp Road. I was too young and children were to be seen and not heard in those days. In fact the property construction was almost finished when I first remember seeing it. I had been to school and was put off the bus at the corner of Tallant and Edgemon Roads. Mr. Ed Miller was the bus driver. He ran a very tight ship. We were not allowed to talk much above a whisper; so different from today's bus load of noisy children. They say the only person with all of his troubles behind him is a dead person or a school bus driver.

I got off carrying my little metal lunch box and stepped on to the front porch of our house. The front house door was closed and locked so I tried other doors all around the house. No one was home. Now it wasn't really like Mom not to make provision for my supervision, but she had not this time. I was angry that I had been left to my own resources. I sat the lunch box in the porch swing and headed south along Tallant Road toward Collegedale in a fast run. I crossed the iron bridge over Wolftever Creek and was about half way up the grade by the Franzini house when I got a terrible cramp in my right side. It was the spoken wisdom of youth in those poor days that when this happened you bent over and spit under a rock. I did and like magic the pain was ended and I continued my run to the new property. When I arrived there were the builders, Mr. Williams and his two sons, Landrum Edgemon and Lee Edgmon and thankfully my Mother.

I was perspiring heavily and Mom put me in the new wooden garage to cool down. One must avoid drafts at all costs in those days. The buildings and other amenities required on our frontier home site were a chicken house, garage, barn, well, outdoor privy, the house, and a hardy garden.

The Garden

Just to the south of the new house lay the garden. It was a stone encrusted soil and in the morning when I awoke I could hear Mom hoeing. She got out early in the morning before the heat became oppressive and went to work. Mom always loved growing things. The clash of hoe and rock made a sharp metallic clang. Mom hired someone each year to plow the garden. The plowing turned up new layers of rock. We would gather these in buckets and throw them over the rim of the bank into the valley below, but could never tell a lessening of the stones due to our efforts.

One year Helen Byrd's cow got on the loose and ate Mom's garden down to the ground. Mom told Ms. Byrd that she must pay for the damage. Then came the tiff over how much. Mom suggested that they get three 'disinterested parties' to appraise the damage. Mr. W.C. Starkey, our next door neighbor, was one of them. The settlement came to around five dollars. That does not sound like much today, but it was about a week's work for a

man with family back then. That did it! Ms. Byrd paid up and she and Mom were enemies (perhaps a little over spoken) from then on. Well, now the garden had to be fenced for security. There has always been 'homeland security'!

The rectangular fence ran west to east along the Starkey's line, turning north about 50 feet short of Camp Road. The fence ran about where the front of the house stood that Lee Edgmon later built for Mom. (This was the house where we were living when John was born.) The fence again turned west and joined the corner of the wooden garage. At the point where the fence turned west was put a gate large enough for a team and wagon to enter. There was no fence across the back of the garden. It was so steep at that point that neither man nor animal could gain entrance from that side.

Along the side next to the garage Mom planted a bed of strawberries. They proved to be a pain, because of the few berries produced and the weeds that grew in the midst of the spreading patch. One spring day Mom sent me to cut the weeds down with a sling blade, a thing that we called a 'lively-lad'. I would swing the blade cutting the weeds before me and then step forward to cut another swathe. On this day as I swung the blade to and fro, I was just ready to take my next step forward when I saw a copperhead snake coiled with his head facing me. He was just where I would have stepped had I continued forward. The blade was at the limit of my right stroke when I saw the varmint. I continued the swing around into an arc that came crashing down, cutting the snake in two everywhere the blade crossed his circular coil. It was a vicious blow that I gave the ground, and Mother said, "Isn't that a little hard on the lively-lad, son?" I called her to come take a look and she had no more to say about the mistreatment of her tool.

Mom planted the garden very early, and if there was good weather we had fresh produce to eat very early. These foods that she grew could not be bought back then in our little College Store not until the local farmer's crops began to come in season. However, and this happened rather often, when a late frost fell across the land we would have to replant much of the garden. I have seen our foot high corn get bit back to the ground. On any night that frost was suspected we were very busy covering the plants with buckets, glass jars and newspaper tents. If a high wind blew it would remove the paper tents and leave the young plants susceptible to being killed by the cold. Mom always said that if the leaves of the plants touched the glass of the jars or the metal of the buckets they would freeze right through.

One spring after a winter of burning wood and coal in our Warm-Morning Heater Mom took the ashes and dumped them inside the garden by the gate. Where they lay leaching out their chemicals into the soil neither weeds nor plants would grow for several years. What Mom had thought would be good fertilizer for the soil turned out to be its poison.

From an article by J W Henson called "Camp meeting Time"

"On the west side of the Tabernacle stood the latrines, built, of course, in the general appearance of all the other structures on campus. They invariably did a flourishing business between services. My Mother always planted a large garden. She planned it so that seeds and plants were put into the ground in time to have an abundance of salad foods at camp meeting time in May. She would bundle radishes, lettuce, green onions,

and other foods, tied with string. The going price for these items was 10 cents a bunch. I was appointed by Mom to be the walking salesman for her produce. Now, these people had been away from their homes and their gardens for a week or so, and were very hungry for those things. I did not go from tent to tent but centered my activities around the entrance to the toilets, where I did a land office business.”

The Barn

The barn sat down in the deep valley that ran north and south behind our house. It was a one-stall arrangement with a hayloft above and a ladder nailed to the wall for accessing the loft. The door was a wooden sliding door set in channels of wood below and above.

A barn means a cow, and we had one. Mom and I fenced in the valley. It was a three barbed wire fence. We were not able to dig post holes because we had no post hole digger nor the power to operate one if we did have it, so the fence was attached to trees, some of which were no larger than a man’s arm. There was not a lot of grass in the narrow valley, but a small stream meandered its way north through the valley floor so that we did not have to carry water for the bovine. Much of the provender that the valley furnished the cow was roughage from small tree leaves as well as the aforementioned weeds and grass. Large trees furnished shade for the animal to give relief from the torrid summer heat.

Like humans, cows are gregarious by nature and ours would grow lonesome and walk the fence down to go in search of companions. It was always my job to fetch the rogue back home. There were miles of unfenced forest and hill over which the beast could have roamed, but bring her back I did . . . I must.

Each evening Mom would go into the valley about dusk with milk pail in hand and return with a bucket of warm, white foaming milk. When the cow first came fresh she would have to be milked twice a day. The Harry King Family lived about half a mile from us. It was my job every evening to carry a quart of milk to their house and return with a nickel. A quart of milk and one mile of walk for five cents! There was no electricity so the milk could not be kept very long without spoiling. It was not pasteurized either. If the cow were healthy you had good milk.

The path into the valley was steep and rocky, so Mom decided to terrace the walkway. We went to the head of the trail with all manner of tools and were soon placing trees across the path and raking earth and stone to level the step. It did make walking up and down easier and prevented gullies from washing along where we continuously walked.

The Chicken House

The chicken house sat just to the north of the garage and about 30 feet further back from the road than the garage. It had a dirt floor that stayed covered with hen-do! The hen house was enveloped on two sides with a chicken wire fenced-in lot. Mom would chink the holes along the ground with boards, stones and earth to keep the hens in and the foxes and opossums out. There was a door on the left side of the front when facing the building. There was a window opening about 4’ x 4’ to the right of the door and covered

with chicken wire. The roof sloped from front to back† and was covered with the 5V metal roofing. The building sat on a short concrete foundation.

One night around midnight Mom awoke me and asked that I come out on the porch with her. I could hear a frenzy coming from the chickens and knew that something was after them. She had the shotgun in one hand and a flashlight in the other. The importance of my being on the porch was for her security. I never knew what I could do in the event that she needed help, but a coward is comforted by the presence of another, regardless how weak he might be. She entered the hen house and saw an opossum trying to catch a chicken. She discharged the shotgun, which made a terrible roar in the dead of night, in the interloper's general direction but completely missed the varmint. She then took the gun and beat him to death with the butt of the stock.

I never liked the interior of the hen house. For one thing the smell was not to my liking. Another was that sometimes snakes, my mortal enemies, would get in and swallow an egg, and I feared that I might happen up just in time to interrupt their meal. I would shoot an eye from ceiling to ground in a search for the beasts.

Each spring Mom would go into the chicken house and close the door behind her. She had in her hand a can of mite dust. She would catch the chickens one by one; give them a good dusting by holding them upside down by the legs. What a squawking they made! Then with a pair of scissors she clipped one wing very closely but not close enough to cause bleeding. That kept the hen from flying over the fence into the yard, for as she went into the air the larger wing would cause the flight path to be circular and thus miss the intended goal and freedom. The treated hen was thrown into the lot and search for another began.

After all of the chicks were dusted, trimmed, and set free she would take an old fruit jar lid full of Flowers of Sulfur, put it on the roost and set it afire. The fumes made sulfur dioxide and killed any mites that were left within the henhouse. I was warned against going in while the sulfurous vapors were in the air. It was strictly a rhetorical warning for I only entered the building under her orders and then much against my pleasure.

† Roofs that sloped in one direction were placed so that they sloped down from east to west. Most of our storms blow in from the west and this arrangement reduced the danger of blowing the roof off during heavy winds.

The Garage

The old garage was built in 1938 at the same time the house was being built. It stood to the south of the house and about 30 feet further back from the road than the house was. It was one very homely building! It was about 25' x 30' with a 5V metal roof, a concrete foundation and unpainted 1" x 10" wooden boards vertically attached. The floor was earthen and remained dry even in the wet season. Facing the building on the left hand side of the front were double doors secured with a hasp and lock. The door on the left dragged against the earth at its bottom, but with small effort could be opened perpendicular to the front of the building. The space behind the doors was left open for an unexpected automobile. The other half was full of junk as any unattended place soon is. I was always watching for snakes when I made an entry into the garage in the

summer. When Mom bought her first automobile, a new 1948 Chevrolet coupe, she let it sit outside most of the time.

I was ashamed of the eyesore from the very beginning and was happy when Mother gave it to Sam Greeson to tear down and haul away in the 1950s.

The Well

The 65 foot deep well was in front of the hen pen and about 10 feet from the back porch of the house. It was dug by a man named Lum Smith from Ringgold, Georgia. I would watch the machine lift the six foot bit and drop it back into the hole, thus punching its way down into the earth. To a seven year old I thought this was real technology. I believed that Mr. Smith knew great secrets about the lower structure of the earth and I plied him with many questions about the under-world. He charged about \$2.00 a foot for the drilling. Down to the rock level it had to have a six inch diameter metal casing. The casing locked into the rock a couple of feet so that it would not shift and let the well become useless. The casing and drilling was as expensive as was the drilling through rock further down so the price was uniform whether in earth or stone.

When Mom told me how much per foot he charge for drilling I told her that I would get a pick and shovel and dig down two or three feet to save that much money, but she did not think that to be a good idea or one worth pursuing.

A 4' x 4' x 8" concrete slab was poured and a green Meyers hand pump installed. I was given the job of pumping the new well until the water was mud and oil free. It was no small job.

I heard the kids at school talking about touching their tongue to the handle of a pump when the weather was well below freezing. They said that your tongue would stick to the cold metal. I had to try it one time in the dead of winter, and you know what? It really does.

This arrangement of hand pumping continued until about 1943 when Mother had a well-house built around the well to cover the entire concrete base. It stood about five feet tall at the front with a roof that sloped from front to back, and the pump was connected to an electric motor. The building was painted white in contrast to the unpainted garage, but still not a very handsome piece of work. There was a water storage tank inside of the well-house and the building was insulated by a double wall that was filled in between with sawdust. Another technological advance, I thought. The roof of the well house lifted off to give access to the pump and tank when repairs were required. This arrangement served the house with water until we finally were able to connect on to the city water system some years later.

The Privy

The outdoor toilet was to the north of the chicken house and about 10 feet further back from the front of the building. These buildings were never allowed to be near the well for obvious reasons. Some men from the WPA (Works Project Administration) came and dug a pit and erected the toilet above a concrete floor. The great depression was still very

much with us in the latter 1930s. The WPA was a President Franklin D. Roosevelt project to keep the public working. I was totally unaware that the WPA did private projects. I have seen many bridges in our area with the WPA monogram molded into the concrete. Some of them exist to this day.

The House

The house had a full basement underneath it. The entire house was 24' x 30' and had four small rooms and a bath on each level. Of course neither bath was connected because there was no septic system or running water in the house. The house sat on a n eight foot tall concrete wall with a door and five windows in the basement. There was a metal shingle roof on the house and Mom would have it painted every few years with aluminum paint to withstand rusting.

The exterior of the basement foundation was rough concrete. Mom hired her brother-in-law, Verlon Clay Massengill to stucco the surface. Mom had a lovely shotgun which had filigree covering the metal surfaces. Uncle 'Mack' Verlon wanted the gun so she traded his shotgun and the stucco job for her shotgun. The stucco greatly improved the appearance of the exterior.

Mom had the house wired for electricity when it was built because FDR's REA (Rural Electrification Act) was already in effect and she knew that we would soon get electricity. (Electricity finally did come in 1942). Most of rural America did not have electricity in the late 30's and early 40's. The house was also plumbed in anticipation of the day when we could have water piped into the house.

When I was 16 years old I dug the septic tank on the north side of the house and poured the concrete wall and floor inside. I put reinforcing iron rods in the cover to add extra strength. I then dug the field line and installed the clay pipes and gravel and covered it all over again. To this day the system is still working without having ever been pumped or repaired.

I remember leaving a concrete door about 18" x 18" x 8" in the top of the tank. All four sides of the door sloped inward so that the removable door would not slip down inside the tank. I curved a piece of rebar and embedded it into the wet concrete to use as a handle to remove the door.

I removed the door once the concrete had completely set and lowered myself into the tank and tore out the forms that I had built to hold the concrete for the cover. The forms for the side walls of the tank were torn out before I formed and poured the top. The wooden forms were made a half inch short on each side so that when they expanded from the wet concrete they could be torn out the more easily. When I exited the tank after throwing out all of the scrap lumber from the forms of the cover it was snowing.

A year or so later after Miss Ruby Lea had built next door to us and placed her well between our house and hers, she came over one day and said that we must tear out the septic system that we had just installed because it was too near her well. We told her that the septic system had been there for several years before she moved there and she should have noticed it before placing her well so near. I often wondered if her drinking water had a meaty flavor! She did abandon the well however.

When we moved into the house in 1938 there was no back porch. We gained entrance into the kitchen by two 2" x 8" boards with cleats nailed across them. It was no problem for me but was somewhat a pain for Mom who was now 37 years old.

Mom provided a loving home for a young growing lad. It was always a pleasure to come home and find the windows steamed over in the winter from things cooking on the old wood cook stove. She loved to cook but knew very little of the seven basic food groups so necessary for a young, growing boy.

The Yard

The yard was full of small stumps where brush had been cleared away for the building. One day Mom told me that she would give me a penny for each stump that I removed. I took my wagon and a maddox and went to work. Later in the day I came in the house to collect. I had dug 140 stumps. Mom was alarmed, but she paid up and cancelled the contract at once. We had a old reel type push mower for cutting the grass. It was not a very efficient machine and was hard to push.

About 1947 Mom had a driveway cut between her two houses, because Miss Ruby Lea had bought the lot to the north of us and we were no longer allowed access across her property. The new drive ran directly up to the garage from the road. Camp Road was still gravel at that time.

Mom would bring home plants and flowers when we returned from visiting friends, neighbors, and relatives. She was always begging for them when we were visiting. These were planted around the house and gave a feminine touch to the surroundings. She was equally generous when other ladies came and asked for cuttings or root stock for their homes.

One day Mom came home carrying an arm full of privet hedge cuttings. There were no roots on them and I really doubted they would live. We planted them along the rim of the lawn just before it breaks to fall off into the valley. I kept an eye on the cuttings and at last every one of them put out roots and grew into a tall thick hedge that had to be trimmed back as the years went on. They lived under the shade of the great white oak trees that were in the yard. It seems that Privet will live anywhere.

The Foods We Ate

During the summer we had a variety of fresh produce on the table. There was enough for our current needs plus some to can for the coming winter. We would go to the Farmer's Market in Chattanooga and buy additional things for canning. Mom canned beans, tomatoes, grape juice, blackberry juice, tomato juice, corn, beets, soup mix, kraut, jellies, marmalade, jams, blackberries, apples, apple butter, pears, applesauce, peaches, pumpkin, and a variety of other things that might be in super abundance in one year or another in the summertime. She always canned more than we could possibly eat, but that was insurance against unforeseen hunger.

Chickens were more than just egg producers. They were also a source of protein. I remember when she killed a hen she would take out the immature eggs and boil them in

milk. We were not heavy meat eaters but the meats considered clean by the church were eaten in a limited amount.

So went the planting of this seven-year-old lad's life in the village of Collegedale, Tennessee during the great depression of the 1930's and in a wilderness so foreign to today's modern world. Other memories survive, but the foregoing serve the purpose for which they were intended. And for what purpose *were* they intended? They were written for the pleasure of retaining those fleeting memories for the writer's pleasure and for those loved ones who may have never undergone such primitive ways of life.

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