

I was born July 21, 1924 in a cotton mill village in Huntsville Al. known as Merrimac. I was the 12th child. ^{at birth time} Then I had 6 sisters & 4 brothers. A brother, Winford died before I was born at the age of 5 mos. He would have been 2 yrs older than me had he lived. He died of pneumonia. They had no antibiotics then to fight it with. My father and older sisters worked in the cotton mills to earn enough money to pay for the 120 A. farm they had purchased. When I was a year and $\frac{1}{2}$ they had enough money \$1200 ^{Twelve Hundred} to pay for it so we moved to the farm 6 miles ^{West} of Hazel Green. My sister Oma taught me to read before I started school. The first word I learned to spell was STANDARD. That was on the oven door of our wood cook stove. Our heat came from the fireplace in the living room. The living room had a bed for our parents and a few rockers and straight chairs around the fireplace for all of us. My sister Dechie was born in this ~~house~~ room. Across the hall was the parlor. It consisted of 2 upholstered chairs and a Davenette. We called it It was a sofa really. and a crank style phonograph we ~~had~~ called a Victrola and a Library Table. This was the courting room because then people were only allowed to court at home or at church.

2.

We were of the primitive Baptist Faith. That denomination had no church classes, Sunday school, or music only 4 notes singing. Jessie and I would soon tire of the long sermons. Eat the crackers my mother had in her purse which she took to keep us from getting hungry. Then go outside to play with the other kids. ~~when we tired~~ ~~that~~ We would go back inside. This happened several times. But the parents or minister never seemed to notice. The sermons were very long but not as long as they seemed to a child. I don't understand the sermons ~~then~~ but as I grew older I understood what I'd been "hearing" all my life. Mama or Papa neither ever drove our 1928 Model A Ford. So one of the older brothers always had to go along to drive. After church we'd go home to our dinner of chicken either fried or with dressing, vegetables again & the larger cake my mother had baked on Sat ^{always} ~~eat with~~ ^{and} ~~some~~ ~~berries~~ Sometimes the Preacher went home with us for dinner. Rossie & Ruby & Tom would usually come for Sun. dinner. ~~Rossie~~ Jessie & I would have fun Sun. afternoon playing Hide & Seek, Annie (we'd) a ball game, or just jumping in the hay loft with Orville, Edwin & Maybell our nieces & nephews who were around our age.

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I started school at Murphy Hill about 2 miles away but it seemed like ten on a cold morning riding to school in a T model Bus! I was lucky though, my older brothers and sisters had to walk or go in a covered wagon pulled with ~~two~~ horses. School started on my ^{6th} birthday. I started in Primer pronounced Primmer. But now its called First grade. We went 6 wks then school was out around the first of Sept. for cotton picking.

But other kids wrote about it.
I already knew how to read & write so Miss White, my teacher let me hold the book and listen to the other kids read. That was a delight to me. Married women were not allowed to teach in those days. Miss White got married during the school yr and tried to keep it a secret but word leaked out anyway but she ^{was able} to keep the job until the end of the school yr. On the last day of school she stayed in the room all day and cried, I guess because she knew she'd never teach again. The day after that several yrs later she came to our school to a fall game and I was so glad to see her and ^{she} was glad to see me.

On our farm we grew cotton, corn, and hay. Papa & brothers would plant the corn in April. My work would start in May because that's when we planted cotton. Bert would ^{lay the rows of} ~~till the ground~~. Sam would run the fertilizer distributor.

Back to the notes

A

We were the first in the neighborhood to have a good radio. Neighborhood kids would come to hear Joe Louis fights. They would come every night no matter if whether there were fight or not.

In winter we would pop corn which we had grown. And Roast Peanuts. Papa ^{raised big} kept a barrelful of each which we kept in the attic. One of the boys' friends had never seen so many. He would come over just to help himself to those peanuts. One day Dad grew tired of this, so he set a mouse trap to go off on top of the peanuts. Of course the boy saw it and took the hint. The only time he ate peanuts at our house again was when we gave them to him.

Bock to cotton planting 5
or cont)

Ernest and I would drag the ground and Willie C. would run the planter. Sometimes they would switch around but Sam always ran the distributor. The drag ~~consisted~~ was made of wood. After the rows were laid off and fertilized we would go over it with this flat drag taking 2 rows at a time pulled by Old Dock our red horse. We would usually get done with cultivating and chopping the cotton around the 4th of July. Chopping I was really weeding it. We started weeding it in June. Sometimes we'd get done with our cotton early and Papa would let us hire out to the neighbors for 50¢ a day ^{til we'll} get 30¢ The day was from sun up to sundown.

Picking the cotton was back breaking work. I started out with a 100 lb. potato sack. When I was about 12 yrs old I got a cotton twill pick sack. That was more comfortable as it had wide straps for my shoulders and couldn't dig in. We would drag our socks

on the ground and when they got a hole in them we'd have to patch them, early in the morning while the dew dried off. We couldnt pick wet cotton. I didn't like it on cloudy or windy mornings. That meant we had to go to work as soon as we got done milking.

You were considered an excellent cotton picker if you could pick 300 lbs a day. Effie could. 200 lbs was real good. I got picked 200 lbs a few times in my life.

No sew them

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I really liked the rainy days then we could either go fishing or swimming in the creek on our farm.

We didn't have T.V. of course then. Our ~~one~~ ^{old} radio neighbors Travis & Morris had ~~an old one~~. But it was so staticky you could hardly hear it. Sometimes we'd go to Travis' and listen to Amos & Andy. That radio was made before R.C.A. came out with the ones with a dog & horn. In 1934 we got our first radio. I was so excited I could hardly be still. It was an Albie from Wards. Had a huge antenna and a battery like a car. We would listen to the grand ole Opry or anything for as long as we could stay up. My favorite Soap Operas were Ma Perkins & Stella Dallas. I liked the Guiding Light we called them stories, then. For our paper dolls Norma Lee, my cousin & I used to cut out ~~women~~ people from the Mail Order Catalogs! We would find about 5 ladies who looked alike and that would be 1 lady and she would have all those different outfit. We'd do the same for the men & children they would have a play outfit, a church one & one for parties etc. We would make them furniture ~~for~~ from cardboard. And we'd play for hrs. How I used to love to go to Aunt Agie's! Norma Lee was 4 yrs older than I but we felt we were the same age.

Getting back to farming 7

At 11:30 we would hear the old dinner bell ding danging for dinner, when we were working with the horses they would hear the bell before we did and rush toward the barn after being unhitched for their noon meal of hay. We didn't take them out at noon as we called it. That meant taking their gear off, but we took it off at night so they could rest comfortably.

Our dinner was usually potatoes, beans; dried in winter, green in summer. The beans were cooked with a huge piece of salt pork. Sometimes we'd have sweet potatoes, sometimes turnip greens we called sallet. ^{or} what I would like ^{most} was the huge fruit cobbler sitting in the middle of the table. The cobblers were made from the berries we picked, ^{wild} or the pruned in our orchard. We picked black berries on our farm and ^{by the time} we got our quals full, we were ^{near} the spring where we could get a delicious drink of water on a hot day. How good that was to a thirsty child!

Our beverage at noon would be grape juice ^{we made from our own grapes} or a kind of beer, non alcoholic, we made from special seeds. Sometimes we'd have buttermilk. For supper we'd have sweet milk, corn bread, pure butter and molasses. Papa made molasses every year from cane we grew. The cane was also good ~~and~~ juicy & sweet to chew on.

We only had ice from the ice man on the 4th of July so that was the only time we had ice cream in summer or Kool Aid.

In ~~the~~ winter we would freeze ice in a zinc wash tub. Break it up & put in a large bucket. We didn't have an freezer. We put the milk, sugar & flavorings (extracts) into a gal. syrup bucket & froze the ice cream by turning it in the ice.

We always bought the extract, flavoring from the Watkins or Raleigh men who came with a little black bag.

We bought our groceries from a peddling truck. Mama bought flour, Baking powder & Soda, coffee & snuff and usually paid for it with eggs. Eggs were 12¢ a doz. She would give Deochie & me one egg for a huge lollipop or a big hunk of Bubble Gum and we'd stand by the ^{road} for hours it seemed looking for the peddling truck. Sometimes we bought Octagon Bar soap to wash our clothes with on the rub board but sometimes our soap was homemade. It was made from lard from our hogs & lye boiled together and allowed to harden for a few days before being cut into bars. That huge black pot in the back yard was a life saver. After we'd rub our clothes we would put them into that boiling pot to get clean. Then we'd take them out rub them again before rinsing. And starch some items with starch made from flour & water boiled on the stove.

When we were in the fields working we would wear huge straw hats or homemade bonnets and long ^{trousers} & long sleeves to keep the sun off because high class girls back then didn't have suntans. But as hard as we tried we still come out the color of mexicans or Indians. My Dad never bought an axe handle or dining chair or baby High chair those he made from Hickory wood. He would bottom the chairs with ~~the~~ Hickory bark strips. Hickory trees served a lot of purposes. Papa smoked the chops, shoulders & bacon with hickory in the smokehouse he built himself in back. We harvested the hickory nuts off the trees in the fall to use in cooking or just for eating. We especially liked the Scaly Bark hickory nuts. They got their name from the appearance of the bark on the tree. Scaly. Getting back to the chairs and axe handles. He would ~~just~~ cut the parts. Then "sand" them off with a piece of broken glass. He had no sandpaper. He would turn the glass edgewise and run it over the wood back & forth, back & forth, taking small strokes until it was sleek & shiny. Then he would paint the chairs but not the axe handles. usually he didn't paint the chairs either. Us kids would sit & watch him for hrs. chewing on the sweet & juicy Hickory Bark.

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Getting back to the laundry. We didn't boil the colored clothes just whitened. That lye soap really got the clothes clean but didn't do much for the colors in our dresses, shirts & overalls we ordered from the mail order catalogs. We didn't make paper dolls from the newest editions.

Washing took all day Monday. Ironing all day Tuesday. Our ironing board was an old quilt spread on the dining table. We heated our irons on the stove in summer. Fireplace in winter. Each person had 2 irons each. While they used one the other heated. I can still smell the steam from our kitchen on ironing day.

When ~~is~~ it was True Romances. The boys had Westerns. And we read the ^{old} comics from our 2 day old newspaper the mail man brought. The paper was almost in shreds by the time all us kids got done reading it. Papa liked the comics as well as us kids.

We didn't have electricity of course so no deep freezers. Mama & the older sisters would can 100's of cans of vegetables & fruits in 2 gal Blue Mason Jars. Vegetables from our garden & fruits from our bountiful orchard. I always got the job of scrubbing those fruit jars clean. While sitting outside under a tree washing them in a zinc tub of water. Mama said it's was a kids job as grown ups hands wouldn't go inside a jar to wash it. Our light came from Kerosene lamps known then as coal oil. Those light fixtures would get ~~smoked~~ up and it would take awhile to clean them. When we would go into another room we'd take the lamp with us. But we still had plenty homework to do by those lamps.

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A good time of the day was when we would sit on the porch at night and the whole family would join in on the pea & bean shelling for our noon meal next day.

Mama died when I was 10 yrs old with cancer. We missed her but were taken care of by other family members never having to leave home until we married. Papa married again in 7 months to a woman we always called Miss Dolly. She moved her 2 adult daughters & 1 son & numerous bed bugs into our house. That marriage was a bad mistake. It ended in divorce 4 yrs later.

After Mama died if Papa had had a nap he'd go to Ed Lock's store and buy us a can of salmon for ~~ten~~ ten cents for supper. This was after everybody had gone from home except Papa, Lee, Jackie & me. When I first started school & up until I was about 10 or 11 we didn't have ^{wear} shoes in summer except black patent ones to church. In winter for school we had Hi-Tops that come above the ankles! When the soles wore out papa half-soled them on his last when the first soles wore out. Papa cut strings from a big piece of rawhide. They didn't look pretty but didn't get into knots like the cotton ones! I hated lacing those tall shoes on a school morning with numerous knots in them. I found out the best way to handle those was with one of Mama's hair pins, pulling it loose. Those hair pins were also a great nut meat picker. Those hair pins were about 3 inches long and were used to hold up Ladies Long Hair. (the Bun in back.)

I'll never forget the day Ernest got shot in the ¹²
elbow from a hunting accident. He was 15, I was
5. Bert's gun accidentally went off. They were in
the woods rabbit hunting. Bert showed Sam how
to tie the tourniquet. I didn't find out until later
that gun had already killed a man. Papa bought it
after it killed the man. That gun should have never
been manufactured. But I remember Ernest was
singing to keep people from worrying about him.
Our kitchen floor was made of wood. And there ~~were~~
spots of blood & tears all over that floor. They
took him to Dr Dickey at Hazel Green. He couldn't help him
so sent him to Huntsville Hospital. Dr. Caldwell
amputated his arm that night. When he got
out of the hospital ~~that~~ he went to Rossies to stay
to be near the doctor in Huntsville. I was a
nervous child and they had something in a pkg lying
on the dresser. Drville would say, That's Ernest's arm
is in that pkg. I'd look so scared and he'd just laugh.
He got killed in World War II. They buried his
remains in Holland.

Papa said Ernest would need a good education because he couldn't
farm with only one arm, so he went through High School at Hazel
Green and on to Teachers College & became a teacher.

We are at the

13

are at the

Please if you want

to see us.

Yours

Write about your Xmas

+ our making clothes

Also about hole but stopped

in + Sun Riting day.

Ernest was teasing about the hot lighting
would see him coming + dried his

Mum. will be

"picking"

Give you details

Easter

Thanksgiving

1st fireworks

Valentine's

Holiday 2 yrs.

Also a fire

Joe remembered

Litter swimming.

(14)

When I got round,
I could stay away from any birds.
J.W. cause I didn't have any



I had a box of Candy from Santa packed in
but I got to share.

I spent Christmas at Possiet Petey's

I got a present for Christmas for Possiet
+ a tablet + pencil box
(Possie?) She watched me eat the water as I hung
my upon on the line (with all
its shades)

All went to town, I stayed home, they went to Russia,
She embroidered me a pillow that day. It was
green with lace. She made it to send back
to me for them to the bank. I was so proud of it
pillow.

She used to the top cards
embroider flower on her chairs.
put flowers on her chairs.