THE HISTORY OF
SANFORD PERRY TRACY
AND
DOROTHA ANN (HARRELSON) TRACY
AS COMPILED BY
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I'm writing this because I have so little knowledge of my ancestors. Therefore, I want to leave as much as I can remember for future generations. I'll record it by state, county, and towns, as some of the towns don't exist today.

Pappa, Sanford P. Tracy was born in Mills County, Texas on April 21, 1887. He was one fourth Cherokee Indian and never stayed in one place more than a year or two before becoming restless and moving on. He died in Fresno, California on April 26, 1960 and is buried in Mountain View Cemetery.

Mamma, Dorotha Ann Harrelson was born May 5, 1889 in Milan, Sullivan County, Missouri. She died March 1, 1950 in Fresno, California, and is buried in Mountain View Cemetery, next to Sanford. There is some discrepancy about her name. Whether it is Dorotha, Dortha, or Dorothy.

They were married June 26, 1906 in Sod, Washita County, Oklahoma. At first they lived in a half dugout at the school and farmed in that area. Then they moved to Roswell, Roosevelt County, New Mexico, where their first daughter, Lora May was born on May 5, 1909. She married Guye Henry Willis on April 26, 1927 in Gasoline, Brisco County, Texas. She and their infant son died May 10, 1934 in Elk City, Beckham County, Oklahoma. They are buried in Burns Cemetery in Washita County, Oklahoma.

Chloe Margarete was born October 13, 1911 in Gasoline Brisco County, Texas. She married Russel Lemaster November 30, 1930 near Canute, Washita County, Oklahoma. They had four children, Violet Jean, Raymond Victor, Cara May, and Ethel Ann. Cara May died shortly after birth. Chloe died June 28, 1996 in Fresno, California. She was cremated and her ashes are interned in North Burns Cemetery, Washita County, Oklahoma. Violet Jean died June 26, 1999. She was cremated and her ashes are interned in Clovis Cemetery on the corner of Herndon and Clovis Avenues in Fresno County, California.

Willie Lee was born September 12, 1914 in Cordell, Washita County, Oklahoma. She married Calvin Lee Morton October 22, 1933 near Canute, Washita County, Oklahoma. They had two daughters, Phyllis Gail and Janell Elaine.

The family moved from Oklahoma to Electra, Wichita County, Texas when I was a year old and Pappa worked in the oil fields. He fell off an oil derrick into a sump. (Oil as it comes from the ground is as thick as tar) That's what saved his life, but he broke his nose and had trouble breathing the rest of his life. He was so covered with the black goo, Mamma didn't even recognize him. When he went back to work he drove a freight wagon, hauling pipe for the oil company. (I have a picture of him on the freight wagon and a building in the background reads Electra.) We moved to Gasoline, Brisco County, Texas. Laura Leona was born August 15, 1916. She married William Travis Rowland April 26, 1936 in Dill City, Oklahoma. They had two children, Doris Annette, and Darrel Eugene. Laura died August 16,1984 in Ashford, Washington. She was cremated and her ashes were scattered over the Ashford area.

We moved to Lily, Collingsworth County, Texas. Glendora was born April 27, 1919. She married Charles Gailliot March 15, 1943. They had three children Martha, Michael, and Patricia. Glendora died May 26, 1989 in Berryville, Clarke County, Virginia.

We moved to Ramsdell, Wheeler County, Texas. Grace Irene was born April 13, 1922. She married Harold Wesley Ellis January 17, 1942 in Sentinel, Washita County, Oklahoma. They had three children Ruth Irene, David Wesley and Joe Owen.

Well, back to Gasoline, Brisco County, Texas. Edith Opal was born May 8, 1926. She Married Rex Avera May 20, 1944. They had four children, Lavona Jean, John Rex, Robert Tracy, and Carol Sue.

I will begin this article by the houses I remember living in. Some of this has been recorded before. As it covers a period of time from 1887 to 2000, there are bound to be some difference of opinions, but I'm recording it as I remember it. Some was told to me.

The first house I remember was in Lily, Texas. It had two rooms, one above ground, and a little hall that led to a half dugout. It was a poor, sandy land farm. There was a big sand hill near the front yard and we kids would climb to the top and roll down, that was in 1919. We only stayed there one year.

We never lived in one place more than a year or two until I was thirteen years old.

From Lilly we moved to Wellington, Texas. Pappa worked in Grandpa's wagon yard. (A wagon yard is where people left their horses and wagons when they came to town.)We were moving into what we called the Salter House and they were moving out, when I found a little green backed book. I offered it to Mrs. Salter and she said I could have it. I loved that little book, even though I couldn't read a word at that time. I used it all the way through school. I still have it but the mice have nibbled on the edges.

In 1919 or 1920 Pappa bought a Model T Touring car and drove a taxi in Wellington, Texas. (Remember the song in the movie "Oklahoma" about a car with isinglass windows?) Pappa's car had isinglass windows that could be rolled up or down, according to the weather. Isinglass was also used in oil stove globe windows. It wasn't very good glass. When it got old, it turned yellow and peeled off in layers. (I have a picture of Pappa and his taxi cab.) There was a little one room house in our back yard where Mrs. Salter had left a stack of MC Call magazines. Lora, Chloe, and I used the colored pages as wallpaper for the walls. It must have looked wild, but we thought it was beautiful. We saved the Betsy MC Call paper dolls. We cut them and their clothes out of the magazines and had fun dressing them. We took our toys out there. It made a good playhouse.

One day Pappa brought a colored boy home and said he was going to use our playhouse to live in. We weren't happy about that. We had never been around colored people and were afraid of him at first, but he soon won us over. When we broke something we would take it to James and he would fix it, if it could be fixed. He was good at a lot of things and we became very fond of him. His clothes were a mess when he came to us. Mama washed, ironed, and mended them. He was so grateful; he would do anything for Mama. He worked at the wagon yard and didn't get home until after we had eaten our supper. Mama kept his supper hot and he ate in the kitchen. He was about sixteen and when he got another job, we kids cried when he left.

I started kindergarten while we lived in Wellington. Kindergarten wasn't free. Mama washed and ironed for Mrs. O'Rear to pay my tuition. I used to tease her and ask if I was so terrible she did was washing and ironing to get rid of me. At school, we stood in a circle and closed our eyes while Mrs. O'Rear said the morning prayer. One morning, a little boy said "Mrs. O'Rear, Willie didn't close her eyes". I thought for sure I was in serious trouble, but she only asked "Do you know why we close our eyes when we pray". She explained, "If a little ant crawled across the floor, we would see it with our eyes, but if we close our eyes, we see Jesus with our hearts". Mr. O'Rear was a big, jolly, fat, man. When one of us would get upset, he would sit on his box, take us on his knee (he didn't have a lap) and tell us stories until he would have us laughing and forget our problems.

While we lived in Wellington, Lora got Rheumatic Fever, or I thought that was what she had. Chloe said it was cancer. She was probably right, she was 9 or 10 and I was only 6 or 7. Any way, Lora was bedfast. Pappa or Mama had to pick her up and put her in a wheelchair. I have a picture of her in the wheelchair, at a birthday party Mama gave for her. Chloe said Pappa and Mama took her to a doctor in Altus, Oklahoma, and they removed the cancer, any way, she recovered and was alright for the rest of her life.

We attended the Methodist Church, and I can't remember any girls wearing anything except white dresses. Mama made our dresses out of white embroidery, with scalloped edges. We might have a colored ribbon sash and a big bow in a gold bow

holder on top of our head. Mama cut our hair; she would part off a circle on top of our head and braid it in a pigtail. The rest, she cut off even with the holes in our ears.

We kids looked forward to the ice man like my kids looked forward to the ice cream man. (There were no electric refrigerators. We had wooden ice boxes, with a place for a block of ice in the top.) The ice man would break off a piece of ice to fit the ice box, and then give each of us a chunk of ice.

There was inside plumbing in only a few houses. Ours wasn't one of them. Our privy sat next to the alley. The scavenger man came once a week; he cleaned it and sprinkled lime in it. When we would see (or smell) him coming, we'd make a dash for the house and stay there until the smell cleared away. Mama would have given us a licking if she'd known what we called the scavenger wagon.

Grandma Tracy's brother, Uncle Jim Turner, lived on a farm outside Wellington. As soon as school was out, they'd take Lora and Laura to the farm for two weeks. When they brought them home, they'd take Chloe and me out for two weeks. There was a swing hung from the front porch.I spent many an hour in that swing with my dolls.

Uncle Jim and Aunt Mary (James Woodson Turner and Mary Jane Carroll) had six children of their own at home. Still they were willing to keep the four of us all summer. Susan and Blanch were grown girls, Bee and Dee were teen aged twin boys, Clara was Lora's age, 11, Elmer was Chloe's age, 9, and I was six. I remember Susan and Blanch standing behind me while Uncle Jim offered thanks. They never sat down until our plates were served. Great Grandma Turner (Mary Susan Amanda Younger)lived with them. Aunt Mary took care of her, while Susan and Blanch did the housework and cooking. I only remember Great Grandma as a small, dark woman, in a white flannel nightgown. I didn't know she was Cherokee Indian until I was fourteen years old. She died on Christmas before she would have been 100 years old on New Year's. Great Grandma'sname was Mary Susan Amanda Younger.

We kids, from Bee and Dee down, would climb to the peak of the roof on the two story barn, run down onto a shed and jump off into a sand pile. When Uncle Jim caught us, he put a stop to that in short order. I can't remember them forbidding us doing anything else. I think they must have spoiled us terribly. Clare had two little china dolls about two inches long. She made clothes for them and let me play with them. I used match boxes for their beds. (Perhaps, that's where I learned to love china dolls. I now have a collection from one inch to sixteen inch character dolls and Scarlet will be twenty-two, when I get her stuffed.) The only thing I didn't like about Uncle Jim's farm was the old turkey gobbler. When he'd catch me in the back yard, he'd flog me all the way to the back porch, flapping his wings and gobbling. I especially remember the peach orchard. The trees were taller than the house and had the best peaches I ever tasted. (I was back there in 1934. That was after or during the drought. The sand had blown off the north side of the house, down to the hard clay. On the south side, it had drifted to the bottom of the windows and buried the peach orchard until only the top of the trees were above the sand hill. I was so sad to see it like that. The farm was deserted in 1934. Uncle Jim and Aunt Mary had died and Susan and Blanch had moved to Wellington. I don't know anything about the rest of the family, but they will always hold a special place in my heart. No place on earth has left the impression on me like Uncle Jim's farm.

When Uncle Jim Tracy (James Lee Tracy 1888-1968) came home from World War One, he brought Lora, Chloe and me a little pearl faced purse, with flowers and the word 'GERMANY' on the pearl front. Pappa scraped almost all the flowers off to get rid of the word 'GERMANY'. (I still have mine in my box of souvenirs.) Grandma Tracy (Leona Lee Turner 1866-1955) had a picture of Uncle Jim Tracy, in his uniform, with a small picture of his fiancé Buleah, in the upper corner. It was called a dream picture. Uncle Jim Tracy and Uncle Perry Turner were cousins. Uncle Perry came home from the war before Uncle Jim, and he and Buleah were married before Uncle Jim got home. (Uncle Perry and Aunt Buleah came by our house, in Fresno, in the sixties and they were still happily married.) Uncle Jim married a girl Named Nettie. They had a son, Alfred James. They separated and Uncle Jim married Myrtle. Aunt Myrtle glued a post card over Aunt Buleah's picture, in the dream picture. We couldn't understand why, she never knew Aunt Buleah and that picture had been made

fifty years earlier. She gave the picture to Edith Avera but the post card wouldn’t come off.

In 1921, we moved to Ramsdell, Texas. Grandma and Grandpa Harrelson (Newton Calvin Harrelson 1859-1927 and Laura A Harris 1859-1926) owned a hotel there. I suspect that’s why we moved there. The hotel mostly catered to railroad men when they had to lay over. Pappa worked on the railroad. We burned railroad ties for cooking. Pappa brought them home, sawed them into stove lengths. When a bum came by begging for a meal, Mama never turned them down, but she’d make them split ties to pay for their meal. Lora, Chloe, and I would take pails and pick up chunks of coal along the railroad tracks that had fell off the freight cars. There was no water on our place. We had to carry it from the community windmill on the hill, by the school. Thank goodness, it was down hill with the pails full of water. Pappa used a barrel, sled, and horse to haul water for bathing, and washing clothes. We had a cow and had to go to the community pasture and separate her from the other cows in the evenings and drive her home to milk and drive her back in the mornings.

Mama’s brother, Uncle Sam and Aunt Jewel (Samuel Walton Harrelson 1892- and Jewell Abt. 1903-) lived near us. It was fun to go to Grandma and Grandpa Harrelson’s hotel and explore the upstairs rooms, when they were empty, and go out on the upstairs porch. Mama had an old three gallon crock churn and wooden dasher and a little wooden box, with a flower carved in the bottom that made a flower on top of the pound of butter. Ramsdell wasn’t really a town, just the one room school and the hotel. Pappa bought our supplies from Shamrock or Mc Lain, Texas. One time he was in one of the larger towns and saw a new kind of churn, with gears and a handle to turn them. It worked much easier than the old crock churn and dasher that you jabbed up and down until the cream made a glob of butter.

I started first grade when we lived in Ramsdell. I had a little round, gray and white speckled granite lunch pail, with a tin lid. Mama would put a cup of fruit in and caution me to carry it carefully. I tried, but by lunch time, my ham or bacon biscuit would be soaked with fruit juice. Chloe, Edith and I were back there in 1978. All that was left of Ramsdell was Uncle Sam’s house and a newer hippie house.

Next, we moved to Uncle Perry Turner’s (Perry Turner Abt. 1860-) ranch, in Oklahoma. Mama, Pappa and some of the kids slept in the covered wagon. Lora, Chloe and I slept in a bed in the upstairs bedroom of their house. Pappa worked on the ranch for a while, and then we moved to Stratford, Texas. There was no railroad, and Pappa took his two wagons and drove a freight line. Sometimes, he’d be gone for weeks at a time. If it rained he’d have to wait for the water to go down before he could cross the streams with the loaded wagons. Stratford was where I heard my first radio. Some company brought one to the school and invited everyone to come and listen. It was a little square box, with knobs and a frame of copper wire that looked like a spider web. We could hear the voices, but there was so much static, you couldn't understand what it was about. Still, it was exciting, because it was coming all the way from Dallas, approximately 350 miles away.

There were no facilities for feeding prisoners in Stratford. One evening the sheriff took a prisoner to the café for supper. There was a very small, high window in the restroom. The sheriff didn’t think anyone could possibly get through it, and when the prisoner asked to go to the toilet, the sheriff let him go alone. No one knows how he got through that little window, but that is the only way he could have escaped. The sheriff warned everyone to be on guard because he was considered dangerous. One night, when Pappa was away, we heard a knocking under Mama’s bedroom. It finally quieted down and we went to bed. The next night it was there again. Remembering the escaped prisoner, Mama sent Lora and Chloe for the sheriff. He and two deputies came and listened. They felt sure they had found their prisoner. They looked under the house, but couldn’t see under Mama’s bedroom. They decided the only way to get him, was to take up the floor. It had been over a week since his escape and they thought he was probably hungry and was trying to get out, but had gotten stuck. They put us kids in the other room and locked the door, but Mama insisted on staying with them. The sheriff and one deputy stood with drawn guns while the other deputy loosened the floor boards. When he pulled the boards up, they were face to face with a skunk. Mama said he looked as surprised as they were. Thank goodness, he didn’t let go his stink.

The next spring, Pappa rented a farm near Garlington, Oklahoma. (In the Panhandle of Oklahoma.) That was the coldest place we ever lived. It was flat prairie as far as you could see. The wind blew a gale, cold in winter and hot in the summer. Our house had one big room upstairs and two half dugout rooms below. Mama and Pappa slept in the upstairs room and we kids slept in one half dugout room and the other was the kitchen. When we moved, there were no beds for us kids. Mama made mattress ticks and we stuffed them with corn shucks. Mama put a comforter over them. They didn't sleep bad, but they were noisy. We didn't have to sleep on them very long. The first trip Pappa made to Boice City for supplies, he brought back bedsteads and mattresses. One day Mama found a rattlesnake in our bedroom. She killed it and threw it outside, without making a fuss over it, so we didn't realize how dangerous it had been sleeping on the floor. Mama was like that. She'd be so calm to keep from frightening us. Two of the things I didn't like about that place were the rattlesnakes and tarantulas. They were everywhere. We seldom went to the pasture, for the cows, without seeing one or the other, or both. Most of our time was spent in the half dugout, because it was warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. Garlington was hardly a town, only a small store and the school.

When the weather was nice, Lora, Chloe and I rode a horse to school. If the weather was bad, Pappa took us in the wagon. Sometimes, the snow was so deep and hard, Pappa would take the wagon bed off the wheels, put runners on it and take us to school in a sled. We could go right over the fences, keeping an eye on windmills to guide us. Mama would make what she called tea cakes. They were like sugar cookies, except she made them about three quarters of an inch thick. She'd bake them until they were dry so they wouldn't spoil. Though I doubt they would have lasted that long with six kids in the house. She'd make that old three gallon crock churn full and put a cloth over the top to keep the bugs out. There was a cement tank, level with the ground, by the windmill. We wanted to put water in it to play in, but Pappa said it would attract every snake for miles around. One time, when there was rainwater in it, we found a rattlesnake in it and it couldn't get out.

One day, we went fishing in a big lake. We wanted to go wading but Pappa nixed that. He said there might be snakes in it, and he was right. There was a water moccasin in it. Its mouth was wide open and a glob of white foam was bulging from his mouth. It was the ugliest thing I ever saw, and they are very poisonous. Pappa didn't have to worry after we saw that awful snake.

Our farm was forty miles from Boice City, Oklahoma, where Pappa freighted our supplies from. That was a long way with a wagon and horses, so it was months between trips. I remember Pappa bringing home Twenty-five pound crates of dried peaches, apples, apricots, and prunes. He always brought two crates of twenty-five boxes of raisins. He thought raisins were a cure for everything from blood to brains. I remember Mama making stacks of dried fruit pies to last from Christmas to New Years. That took a lot of pies for eight people. That must have been a lonely place for Mama. She never went to town with Pappa and the nearest neighbor was miles away. But, I can't remember her ever complaining. With all she had to do I doubt she had time to dwell on it. She made all our clothes except our long johns. We could pick out a dress, in the catalog, and she would cut a pattern out of newspaper. When she finished, it was just like the one in the catalog. Mama had to do a lot of sewing that fall, because it was much colder than where we had lived before. Mama had the patience of a saint. She taught all of us to sew. We learned, because if we didn't do it right, she'd make us do it over. She never accepted a shoddy job. By the time I was thirteen, with Mama's help, I was making all my own clothes. Mama's hands were never idle, if she wasn't cooking or sewing, she was piecing or quilting a quilt.

We used an oil stove to cook on and a wood stove, for heat, in the other room. There was no heat in the upstairs room. Trees are few and far between on the plains. When we ran out of wood to heat with, we went to the pasture and picked up dried cow chips. They don't smell, they burn hot and leave little ashes. This was in 1924. Pappa made a good broomcorn crop and could have stayed on, but with the broomcorn money, burning a hole in his pocket, he was ready to move on.

He and a friend, Bill Morris, decided to "make like pioneers". Mind you, this was seventy-five years after the California Gold Rush. They each covered two wagons, trailed them together, with four head of horses, we headed for California. On the

back of the last wagon Pappa built a chuck box. With a lid that let down for a work table. Our dishes were blue and white speckled granite. We had one large dutch over and one medium, with a rim around the lid to hold hot coals, to bake the top of the biscuits. We had a deep cast iron bean pot. That was the sum of our cookware. A thirty gallon water barrel was on the one side of the wagon, and two wash tubs on the other side, and of course, a wash board. Pappa's friend, Bill Morris, was foreman of his sister-in-law's large cattle ranch. He had been with her for years, ever since her husband died, and had helped her raise her three boys. Mrs. Morris thought the trip would be a great adventure. She and the two youngest sons, Billie 14, and Sidney 12, went along. Their Uncle Bill was their hero and they'd follow him anywhere he wanted to go. The older son, Sterling 18, didn't go with us, but he shipped his saddle horse and joined us for two weeks in Arizona, before shipping his horse and heading back to the ranch. When we reached Winslow Arizona, the Morris' decided to go to Colorado, before going back to their ranch. We had no place to go back to, so we continued on toward California.

People, in cars, carried letters back and forth between the Morris' and us. When Pappa was planning the trip, he didn't count on having to buy water. In parts of New Mexico and Arizona, we had to pay a dollar to fill the water barrel and twenty-five cents a head to water the horses. With our groceries and feed for the horses, his broomcorn money was going fast. We were near Flagstaff when he decided to turn around and headed back east. To where? I doubt he had the slightest notion. When we got to Mc Nary Arizona he was flat broke. He took a job in the sawmill. We camped by a cold, clear stream for two months. He was lucky, there was good grazing for the horses, but that was the only luck he had. All our supplies had to be bought at the "company store", and everything was so high, he couldn't get enough money to get away. One night there was a light snowfall. He realized we couldn't live in the covered wagons in the winter. The altitude was over six thousand feet; the only houses were for the mill owner and operators. Pappa contacted his brother, Marvin (William Marvin Tracy 1892-1962), in Gasoline Texas, and he sent the money to get us back there.

People, in cars, would stop and take pictures of us and our covered wagons. I thought it was great fun then, but now I'm embarrassed when I think someone might be showing the pictures to their Grandkids and telling them about the crazy people in the covered wagons.

One evening we camped by a big barn, near Currcoro New Mexico. Pappa nosed around and found it was filled with gunny sacks of cracked pinto beans, from the thrasher. He took a sack of those beans. Mama would soak them overnight and all the next day. When we stopped the next night it only took a little while to cook them. After they cooked, they were either bean soup, or bean dip. We ate beans every day for the rest of the trip. I didn't realize how desperate our situation was. I only knew there was no more butter and honey for my biscuits. In Datil New Mexico, we saw an Indian woman weaving a rug. She sat on the ground by a frame with strings running up and down. She wove the crosswise thread of hand twisted, hand dyed wool. Lora wanted to take a picture of her, but she shook her head, put out one hand and tapped the palm with her other fingers to let her know she would have to put money in her hand before she took a picture. Of course Lora didn't have any money, so there was no picture. It was a beautiful rug, and I could see by Mama's face that she wanted one of those rugs. I can't find Datil on the map. Perhaps it's too small. (Chloe and I did go through it when we went back to Oklahoma in 1978.)

When we came to a lake, or even a mud hole, Mama would have us fill the wash tubs with water. She'd put alum in it to settle the mud, the next morning, she'd dip off the clear water and wash our clothes. Sometimes, we'd find a barbwire fence to hang our clothes on, and other times we would spread them on bushes to dry. Poor Mama, she didn't have an easy life. Lora kept a daily log of every day of that trip, from the time we left Garlington Oklahoma until we reached Gasoline Texas.

We reached Gasoline in time for the start of school and Pappa went to work in the cotton gin. They furnished us a two room house, with attached garage, on the edge of the gin yard. One room was the kitchen and dining room. The other room was the living room and Pappa and Mama's bedroom. Our bedroom was in the garage. There was no floor, but the clay was so hard we could sweep it clean. Instead of rugs, we put flattened out cardboard boxes beside the beds. One night there was a heavy rain up on the Caprock. (the Caprock was flat land much higher than Gasoline.) The

water came down like a river and flooded the garage. When we awoke, the water was up to the springs of our beds. We kept our clothes and other possessions in cardboard boxes under our beds. The boxes had fell apart and our possessions were floating around in muddy water. We washed our clothes, but many other things were lost. My doll, about 18 inches tall, had a sawdust stuffed body. She was so heavy; it took both hands to lift her. Her head, hands, and feet peeled off in big scabs and smelled terrible. The most important thing we lost was Lora's diary of that trip. None of the rest of us had read it. How I wish I could read it today. It would be especially interesting after all these years.

Our yard, like the garage floor, was clay. It didn't look as if anyone had ever planted flowers on it. We always planted flowers where ever we lived. We found an old dead tree, about fifteen feet tall. We drug it home and anchored it in the front yard. We planted morning glories around it and they grew all the way to the top. It was beautiful in the mornings when the blue flowers were open. We spaded flower beds, and fertilized them with cow manure (if you want good fertilizer, try that). By mid-summer, our yard was a mass of zinnias and daisies. We planted balsam apples to cover the chicken wire fence around the front yard (balsam apples aren't good to eat, but they grow on a beautiful green vine and the apples get warty and turn a bright red-orange in the fall. When school was out, we chopped cotton for Mr. Wise, the gin owner. We didn't actually chop the cotton, we chopped the weeds. We'd pick up little lizards, put them in our pockets, took them home and put them in the flower beds to eat the ants and aphids. We loved pork-n-beans. We'd take a small can of beans, a can opener and spoon, that was our lunch. We had been there two years when Pappa got his arm caught in the machinery and broke it. While he was off work, we went to visit Grandpa Harrelson in Dill Oklahoma. He was running the rooming house. Grandma Harrelson had died the year before.

Mama's sister, Aunt Lena, and Uncle Frank Feland lived on a farm near Cordell. There was a big cave on their place. With so much room to roam and explore, it looked like paradise next to our place on the dusty gin yard. We told Pappa that if he would rent a farm, we'd help him farm it. We went back to Gasoline, packed our belongings, and moved to Cordell Oklahoma. I had my thirteenth Birthday while we were there. We spent that fall picking cotton for the Dalton's and the Straly's. On both places they furnished us a small two room house. (For eight people.) Pappa put a tent on the back for us kids to sleep in. One of the places, I don't remember which one, let Chloe and me sleep in one of their bedrooms. The first night, something almost ate us alive. Mama said it was probably bed bugs. We'd never heard of bed bugs, and thought she was kidding, until she gave us a can of coal oil and a rag. She told us to go over all the crevices in the mattress. When we looked, the crevices were full of bed bugs. We used the coal oil generously and we didn't get any more bites, but it did smell. I wonder what that lady thought when she made the bed after we left. Chloe and I got up before daylight, cooked breakfast, and packed a lunch to take to the cotton patch. One morning, we had breakfast cooked and lunch packed when Pappa woke up, came in the kitchen, and asked "What the hell are you doing?" It was only one o'clock AM.

Lora had married Guye Willis while we were living in Gasoline. They had moved to Arkansas and Guye was working in a sawmill. Like Mc Nary, they had to buy everything at the company store, and couldn't save enough to get away. They didn't have a car, so Pappa took a trailer, and moved them to Oklahoma, in time to pick cotton. When we finished picking cotton, we picked black-eyed peas on the halves. When we finished, between Lora, Guye, and us, we had three, forty-gallon, wooden barrels full of peas. We moved to the Blackmore place that fall. The old, four room house had layers and layers of wallpaper on the walls, and even on the ceiling. Mama was afraid of getting bed bugs, so we tore all the paper off to the bare 1x12 boards. She made a paste of flour and water, put some coal oil in it and cooked it till it was thick. We put cheesecloth on the walls, then papered over that. Her coal oil method must have worked, we never had bed bugs.

Pappa had taken his insurance (for his broken arm) in one down payment, and the rest in weekly payments of $7.96. He could have taken it all at once and made a down payment on a farm, but he never wanted to be tied down to one place. He was always looking to hit it rich, just over the next hill. His weekly payments hadn't started, and our cotton picking money was going fast, buying groceries for eight people. One day, he was nosing around in a willow thicket, on the next farm, and found a whiskey still. He toted a thirty gallon keg of whiskey home, took it to Texas and sold it. He brought back a carload of groceries.

That winter, Pappa's brother, Uncle Wes (Charles Weston Tracy 1898-1973), his wife Aunt Zella and their four kids came and stayed with us. Feeding fourteen people, our groceries were almost gone, and the blackeyed peas were going fast. There was no work in the winter, so there was no income. It didn't seem to bother Pappa, but I know Mama was worried what she would feed us when the black-eyed peas were gone. Luckily, Pappa's insurance started before the last of the groceries were gone. $7.96 was a lot of money in those days, but it was still hard to stretch it to feed fourteen people. It was so cold all fourteen of us had to stay either in the kitchen or the front room. The rooms were small and it was wall to wall people. Wes and Zella didn't bring any beds, so some of the kids had to sleep on the floor. Pappa and Wes built a floor and sidewalls and put a tent over it. We had a little oil heater. They managed to get a bed, and Wes, Zella, and the two little boys slept in the tent. The two older girls, Ollie and Leona slept in the bed with us. Some at the head of the bed and some at the foot. (If you want to know what uncomfortable is, you should try that sometime.) Wes' family still ate their meals with us. We kids didn't mind the crowded conditions, but I know it was hard on Mama. She was a Saint to put up with all she had to put up with. I hope God has a special place for her in Heaven.

The next spring Pappa rented the place he'd stolen the whiskey from. Some of it was sandy and some, down by the willow thicket, was swampy. Even during the drought, we made a fair crop on the swamp land. We were share croppers. Mr. Stamm, the owner, got one fourth of the money from the cotton and one fourth of the grain. We had a four room, cement block, house with an attic, that's what the upstairs was. An unsealed attic with a floor and a window in each end. It was the first time we had a house with two floors above ground and we kids liked to sleep up there. There was no banister around the stairwell, but there was a brick chimney on one side, at the head of the stairs. When I had to get up in the dark I would feel for that chimney. One night, we had company, I had to let them have my bed, I slept in the other end of the attic. I got up and was feeling for the chimney, but I was turned around and walked off into the stairwell, landing three or four steps from the bottom. I was bruised and shook up, but not badly hurt. A couple of months later, I took sick at school. Pappa and Mama thought it was from the fall, but when they took me to the doctor, he said it was my appendix, and I'd have to have it removed. I thought sure I was going to die. I didn't believe they could cut me open without killing me. Of course, I came through it fine, but the doctor said I couldn't ride the school bus for two weeks. Pappa boarded me with a family that lived across the road from the school so I wouldn't have to miss any more school. When I got back home, Pappa had put chicken wire on both sides of the stairwell.

When our crops were laid by, we chopped cotton for the neighbors. In 1929 the depression hit and the banks closed. We didn't have money in the bank, but it hurt us because no one had money to hire us. I can never remember when we didn't have enough to keep us from going hungry. It seemed something always came up when we were running low on food. I guess that crazy trip to Arizona was the worst, but we still had beans. Mama always raised a big garden, even during drought, we had plenty of water, from the windmill, and we would carry water to the garden. She was never happy until all three shelves, in the 10X12 cellar was filled with canned goods from the garden. We were better off than many people. Especially people who lived in towns. We had our chickens to eat and for eggs, cows for milk, cream, butter and cottage cheese. We usually butchered two hogs and sugar cured the meat. Mama would make sausage, fry it and pack it down in a crock of lard, rendered from the hog fat. Mama made hominy and we ground our own cornmeal. We raised sugar cane and had it made into sorghum. During the drought, the government went through the country and killed cows, the farmers couldn't feed (to keep them from starving). They paid the farmers a little for the cows and buried all the ones the people couldn't use. You could keep all the meat you wanted. Pappa took a nice yearling and butchered it. Mama hada pressure cooker. I don't know how many jars of beef she canned, but it was a lot. She rolled the round steaks, put them in half gallon jars and pressured them. When she opened them, she'd roll them in flour and brown them. They were so good.

When I went home, after doing housework, Mama was canning fruit and little yellow bell tomatoes for preserves, without sugar. She had sold some eggs. She and I put in a dollar and a half each and bought a hundred pounds of sugar. Although shoes were cheap, one dollar to one dollar and 98 cents would buy a pair of leather

shoes, it took a lot to buy shoes for eight people. With the depression, Pappa had no money to hire help and he couldn't farm our place alone, with just the horses. No one in our area had a tractor at that time. There was no place to borrow money on future crops. Pappa said Laura and I would have to take turns staying out of school to work on the farm. I knew neither of us could make the grade like that, so I quit school and went to work on the farm. I didn't blame Pappa. He didn't cause the depression and I wasn't being a martyr. Many kids had to quit school and go to work during the depression. Besides, I liked farming. I loved the smell of fresh earth when I turned the ground in the spring. We walked behind an A plow until the cotton and grain were tall enough to use the riding (horse drawn) cultivator. I didn't like riding the stalk cutter in the winter. The tall cotton stalks had to be run over with a disc to break them into small pieces so we could plow them under in the spring. I'd wrap my tennis shoes in strips of burlap to try to keep my feet warm, I suppose it helped, but my feet were still cold. When I wasn't working in the field, I pieced and made quilts. I still have some of the quilts I made before 1933. They're well worn, but they mean a lot to me. When school was out, in the summer, we all chopped cotton, but like us, none of the neighbors had money to hire help, so we chopped our own cotton.

In the fall, when we picked cotton, Pappa paid us half of the going wages. We used it to buy our clothes and our school books. Usually for half price. If we took good care of them, we'd get most of our money back the next year by selling them to the next class. Our coats and best dresses were more expensive and Pappa would pay for them. Pappa had an old mare, that was so mean, he wouldn't let me work with her. She was just plain mean. One day she had her foal in the edge of the lake in the willow thicket. Pappa tried to get the colt, but that old mare chased him all over the thicket. He did manage to get it out of the water, before she chased him from the thicket. He came home so exhausted he could hardly walk. He swore he was going to shoot her, but he knew better than to do that. He needed her to pull the plows. Thatold mare stayed in the thicket for several days before she brought the colt to the barn.

When our crops were laid by, I went to work keeping house for other people. The first place I got a dollar a week and room and board. One hot summer day, she took her two children and me and went shopping for a dress. She left the children and me in the car for two hours while she shopped. She still didn't buy a dress. When she came back to the car the children were crying and we were all soaked with sweat. I was so angry I quit that night. I was only there one week, so I only got one dollar. I was worth more than that at home, helping Mama. The next place, I worked, was for an old couple. I got two dollars and fifty cents a week. They had a big, two story house and raised baby chicks to sell. Besides helping with the cooking and housekeeping, I had to help with the baby chicks. They had 2 two-hundred and fifty egg incubators. He would yell up the stairs, in the middle of the night, for me to come down and help him with the chicks. This went on for several nights, until all the eggs had hatched, or all that were going to hatch. We'd take the chicks that had hatched from the incubator and put them in the brooder. That old woman accused every girl, who had worked for them, of stealing from them. I knew some of those girls and I don't believe they were thieves. She kept little bits of money stashed in different places all over the house. Some in the kitchen, some in the living room and some in a pitcher on the sideboard in the dining room. When the old man went to town, she'd have me take a little from first one place and then another. She always told me just how much to take from each place. I know she knew how much was in each place and checked to see if I'd more than she said to take. I knew that eventually, she would accuse me of stealing, so I quit. I knew all the neighbors and didn't want them to think I was a thief. That old man went to Pappa and tried to get him to make me go back to work for them. I had told Pappa and Mama why I quit and I heard Pappa tell him off in not very nice language. Next, I went to work for a Doctor Tracy. He made much about us having the same last name. They had a beautiful home and I got three dollars and fifty cents a week. I thought this was going to be a cinch. Mrs. Tracy was an invalid and a nurse took care of her. The only thing he told me to do was make oatmeal and toast for his breakfast. I'd never used an electric vacuum cleaner and was having fun vacuuming the living room carpet, when he came home. He took the vacuum away and said that wasn't my job, the colored girl would do it on Saturday. We didn't have running water, but they did, so I decided to wash off the sidewalk. Well! He caught me and said that wasn't my job either. It seemed all I was suppose to do was cook his breakfast, and dust, if I could find any dust to dust. He was an old goat and I was afraid of him. I stayed three weeks and when Cal (Calvin Morton)

came to take me to a movie, on Saturday evening, I had my clothes packed and left without telling him I wasn't coming back.

Mama wasn't well and the garden was knee high in weeds. I told Pappa I quit because Mama needed me. I hoed the garden and helped Mama can beans, tomatoes, beets, and watermelon preserves. When we went back to Sentinel, I watched for that old goat and if I saw him, I quickly crossed the street to keep from encountering him. I didn't do housekeeping after that. I'd had my fill of other people and their housekeeping.

I worked on the farm for three years, until Cal and I were married and I had my own house (such as it was) to keep. I know it will be hard for young people today to believe what I've recorded here, but I'll swear it's all the truth, as many other people of my generation will agree. This was just the way it was in our time, and don't feel sorry for me. I still like farming.

Compiled by: Willie (Billie Tracy) Morton
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