Part 2
IN OUR OWN WORDS

Following is a collection of stories and other material written, told, and treasured by Heritage Family members, both living and deceased, presented in their own words, with minimal or no editing. Though they represent only a fraction of the collected record, these stories, photographs, and poems—sometimes humorous, sometimes heartbreaking—have been imparted with deeply held emotions, including pride, anger, and love. This collection is thus an important part of the inheritance of the present generation and those to come, the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of the Heritage Families of Camp Polk and Peason Ridge.

Elbert Chaney and Twila Shoults Chaney

Elbert Chaney and Twila Shoults Chaney. Elbert is the son of Ed and Emma Brister Chaney, grandson of Lawrence K. "Doc" Chaney and nephew of Finus Brister. Elbert was drafted into the U.S. Army in January 1969, conducted his basic training at Fort Polk and his Advanced Individual Training at Tiger Ridge (Peason Ridge), and from there went to Vietnam. Twila is a descendant of several former landowners of Camp Polk, including the Halls, Bracks, McKees, and Wileys.

Ed Chaney and Emma Brister Chaney Family Heritage

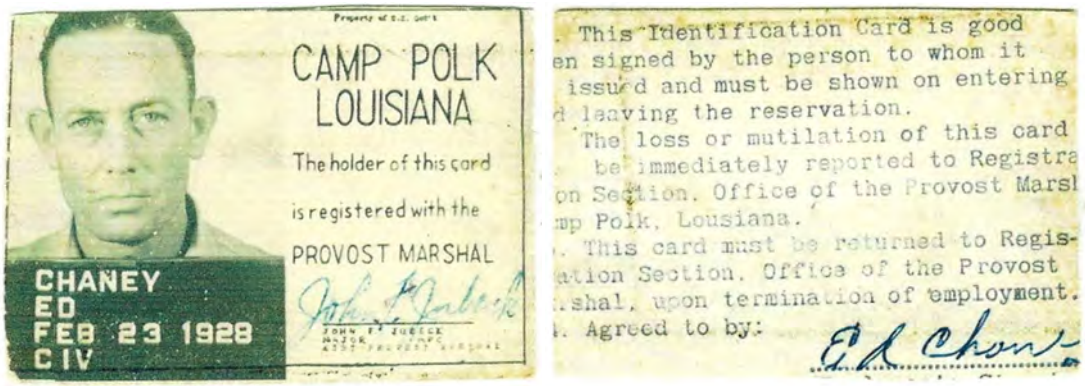
Ed Chaney was born February 23, 1908, to the union of Lawrence K. "Doc" Chaney and Josephine Watson. His birthplace is now known as the "rifle range." Ed was almost 20 months old when Doc Chaney was laid to rest between two cedar trees in the Haymon/Watson Cemetery.

Emma Brister Chaney, wife of Ed Chaney, and their two oldest children, Thelma, born in 1934, and Elmer born in 1936, in front of their home. Source: Twila Shoults Chaney.

Ed married Emma Brister on September 10, 1932. Ed and Emma lived in a small house built on the property of James "Jim" Brister, Emma's father. Jim Brister passed away on December 2, 1936; thirteen months after his passing, the land on which the Bristers and Chaneys resided was deeded from the White Grandin Lumber Company, Inc., to Finis "Finus" Brister, the son of Jim and Ollie "Media" Brister and brother to Emma Chaney. In 1937, Finus Brister requested that the forty-acre tract to be deeded to him because of long continuous possession, through himself and his father and mother. Ed and Emma Chaney lived across the Woods-Gill road (so named in the 1940 Census) from the Brister home place. Their water came from a natural spring, which to this day his children still call "Daddy's spring." Ed and Emma moved just outside the range when the land purchase began for Camp Polk. Since the Chaneys had moved just outside the range, they had a cup at this natural spring to drink with when they walked onto the range.

Ed Chaney held many jobs. Besides farming, he worked building barracks on Camp Polk. He and Harless Whistine also worked for the WPA building the Alexandria-Leesville Highway. The children of Ed and Emma Chaney relate a story from their family of how, during a lunch break while working on this highway, some other workers threw Harless into a deep pool of water and he drowned.

Ed and another half-brother, James Wesley Whistine, walked to the Alexandria area to work all week picking cotton and return home for the weekend. Ed and James would also travel just above New Orleans to work in the Godchaux Sugar Refinery. These are just a few of the many jobs Ed worked on during his lifetime to support eight children.

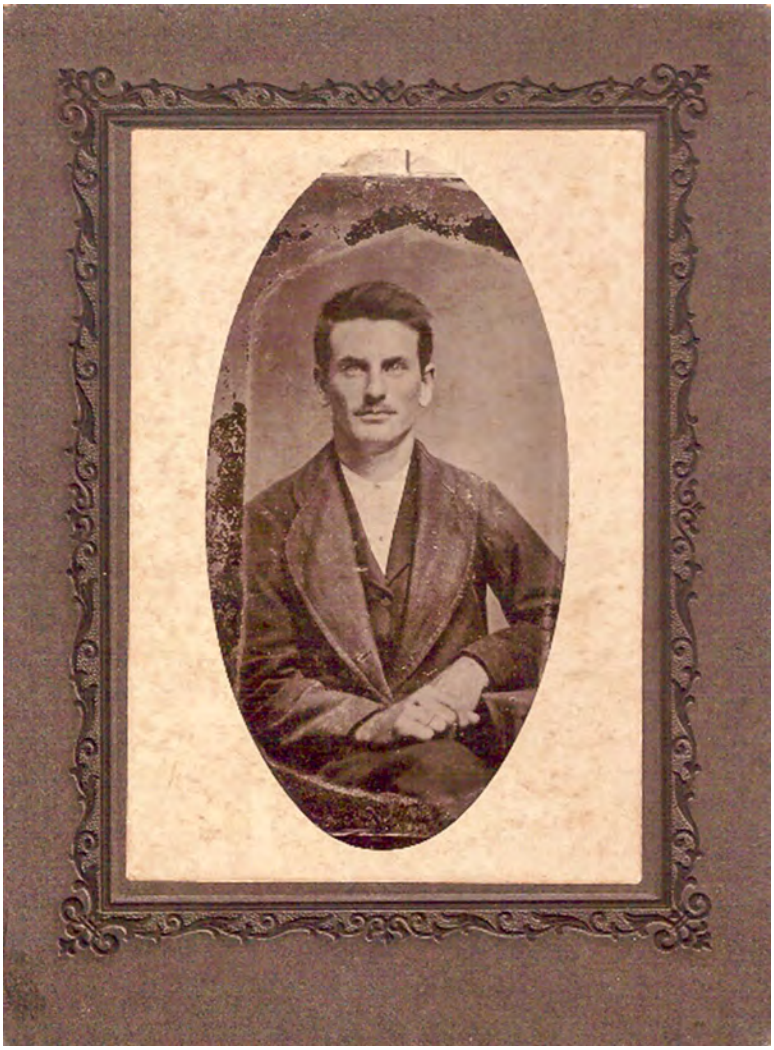


Camp Polk identification card belonging to Ed Chaney. Mr. Chaney's date of birth on the card is apparently an error, as he was born in 1908 rather than 1928. Source: Twila Shoults Chaney.

Finus Brister was inducted into the U.S. Army on September 17, 1942 in Shreveport, Louisiana, and received an Honorable Discharge on January 15, 1946; he re-enlisted on January 16, 1946, at Camp Fannin, Texas. His second Honorable Discharge was in Kanagawa, Japan on January 15, 1949. During his military service he received the Asiatic-Pacific Theater Ribbon, Philippine Liberation, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal and Occupation Medal for Japan. He returned to Seattle, Washington, from Yokohama, Japan, on November 13, 1953, traveling to Sugartown, Louisiana. He returned to Seattle, Washington on January 27, 1954, to travel back to Yokohama, Japan, for two more years. He eventually settled in Sugartown, Louisiana.

Finus Brister pictured while serving in the U.S. Army in Japan. Source: Twila Shoults Chaney.

On March 24, 2010, we attended an L.K. "Doc" Chaney memorial service, and a headstone was placed on his unmarked grave. Around 2005, due to natural causes, two Eastern Red Cedar trees that marked his grave had died and were removed. Doc Chaney was first married to Ellen Hinson and they had seven children. He and Josephine Watson had three children, with Ed Chaney being the youngest.



Lawrence K. "Doc" Chaney, 1857-1909, undated. Source: Twila Shoults Chaney.

Tressie Irene Craft Chitty

Written by Tressie Irene Craft Chitty, married to Luther Franklin Chitty, born on Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachitta Community, to Heritage Family members John Fedrick Craft, married to Mary Ella Cryer Craft.

Memories—Growing up

As for growing up, this stood out in my mind. My Daddy [John Fedrick Craft, called John F.][1] had a grist mill. This was his Saturday job. People would bring their corn to grind into corn meal. They gave part of the meal to him as pay to grind the corn. So far as I know there was no one else that had a mill in the neighborhood. It wasn't a big operation but on Saturday, Homer [son, Homer Craft] and Daddy would grind the corn and Mother [Mary Ella Cryer Craft] would sack the meal.

In my growing up, my Dad [John Fedrick Craft] also had a cane mill where we made our own syrup. The mill was located a ways behind our house. There was a creek or branch where he put the cane mill. So he had water as he needed it. It was always exciting to see the vat where the syrup was boiling. When ready, the syrup would be canned. I would like to have a can now.

Range Mail—Rain or Shine

Marie and I were talking about Homer Gandy, our mail carrier. I guess they got vacations every year, but rain or shine he was on every day except at vacation time. Mr. Columbus James [Christopher Columbus James] brought the mail while Mr. Gandy took his vacation.

[1]The spelling for "Fedrick" in John Fedrick Craft is the correct spelling according to Tressie. John Fedrick Craft's father was named John Fredrick Craft. They did not go by junior and senior.

Marrion Monroe "Skip" Cryer

Written by Marrion Monroe "Skip" Cryer, Jr., son of Heritage Family member Marrion Monroe Cryer, Sr., born on Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachitta Community, and Whiskachitta School teacher, Lydia E. McInnis, descendant of Heritage Family members Roderick M. McInnis, married to Catherine Martin of Peason Ridge and the Cold Springs Community.

Tragedy[2]

The people living on the range were busy, industrious individuals driven by one primary instinct, to survive in a world in which they could not afford to fall behind. Due to their life style, tragedy was their partner in life. Whether one talks about Willie Lee Haymon losing a leg working in the timber industry, Wiley Edleman losing his leg in a raging storm at the "Sharpie" Davis blow down, the Wesley Walker family giving birth to 14 children and watching seven die, six buried at Zion Hill, a quick burst of bullets and the smell of gunpowder at a church leaving mothers to mourn, or fire on a dark night erasing a church, school, or home, all have a common ingredient—tragedy.

With exciting anticipation a young couple sets up housekeeping in the old Daniel Hubbard James home on Drake's Creek in the James Community. Life is before them. They married December of 1931 in the office of the *Leesville Leader*, the end of a good year; 1932 will be better. Ima Jane Jones born in the Whiskachitta Community is a school teacher at the Whiskachitta School. She is 24 years old. Henry Hill Cryer born in the Cottonwood Community NW of Rosepine is approaching the age of 20. Henry Hill's older brother is a preacher. Maybe his preaching at the Mill Creek Church provided the connection between Henry Hill, Ima Jane, the communities, and the wedding.

April 9, 1932, was a fateful day. Ima Jane was in the house while Henry Hill was outside. Something caught Henry Hill's eye, causing him to call Ima Jane to bring his shotgun to him. In a hurry, Ima Jane handed him the gun through a window. As the gun was passed through the window it accidentally hit the frame and fired. The lead hit Henry Hill, killing him. This marriage of promise lasted about four months. Henry Hill Cryer went home to the Cottonwood Community to be buried in the Miller Cemetery—a tragedy.

[2]Information provided by Garsie James, Marie Cryer White, and others.

Wesley Walker's Whiskachitta Peanut Candy[3]

December 18, 2008—I met with Garsie James and wife Maudeen Cryer this date talking about yesteryear and going over the family pictures that I displayed at Heritage Day, Fort Polk, 2008. What was intended as a short show-and-tell with the pictures turned into a 3 hour journey through the past in the Whiskachitta Community, now Fort Polk, Zion Hill area.

One of the stories told to me was about Wesley Walker. William Wesley Walker was a peddler. Wesley was raised on Whiskachitta Creek by parents Johnson McD Walker and Frances Bond. He married Laura Ann Cryer, the oldest daughter of William Riley Cryer and Missouri Elizabeth Whitley.

As the story went, Wesley ran a candy route on a regular basis through the area. His specialty was peanut candy (similar to the round, pink candy displayed at cash registers) and he carried it in an 8 lb lard bucket as he made his rounds. The candy was good. Garsie, some 20 years ago ran into James Cecil Walker, son of Wesley Walker, in a DeRidder grocery store. In the conversation, Garsie mentioned the candy and how good it was and asked if there was a recipe available. James agreed and later sent him a copy.

Whiskachitta peanut candy sounds good to me and it is by experience.

Peanut Candy

3 cups sugar
3 cups peanuts
1 cup Karo
1/2 cup water
1 teaspoon vanilla

Cook sugar, Karo, and water until a long hair forms. Take off stove, add cooked peanuts and vanilla and beat until it begins get thick and white looking. Spread on buttered plate until hard and then break into pieces. Don't cook your syrup too long or your candy will be too hard.

Wesley Walker's peanut candy recipe. Source: Skip Cryer.

[3]Recipe copied by Skip Cryer from the original owned by Garsie James; handwritten original provided to Garsie by James Cecil Walker.

Bullying—A Whiskachitta Solution

I was about 13 years old. My Dad, Marrion Monroe Cryer, Sr., told me this story with purpose. Only as I got older with a son myself did I understand the significance of the intent.

Dad was born near the Whiskachitta Creek, the son of William Riley and Missouri Elizabeth Whitley Cryer. My Dad was one of 15 children, 13 living to marry and start families near the headwaters of Whiskachitta Creek.

My Dad was very reserved and stoic, seldom engaging me in talk, tempered by the rough life style of Whiskachitta families and a career in the military, retiring in 1945. He attended one of the earlier Whiskachitta Schools only completing the sixth grade, which was about normal for boys in the early 1900s. Farm work at home called them more than education.

I have no recall why my Dad would have picked this day for such a lesson. Once he got my attention he clearly and effectively transferred an experience he encountered with a much older boy at the school he attended. Like most youngsters of the era he probably took his lunch to school in a syrup bucket which had a lid on it. He wasted no energy or time on giving any color to his rendition of the experience other than the following:

> *At the Whiskachitta School where I went, all the students were thrown together, young and older. There were some grown boys that attended school much bigger than me. I liked to set in the shade of a big oak to eat my lunch. One day, one of the older boys walked by as I was eating and kicked sand in my lunch. The next day the same thing happened and then again. After several days I was looking out for him.*

Do you know what a Bull Nettle from the sandy hills is? If not, find out, for the story loses much of its impact without that knowledge. Think horrendous stinging pain.

> *I saw him coming. I looked around for a limb or anything I could use to fend him off. The only thing I saw on the bare ground was a big Bull Nettle growing against the tree. He was close so in a hurry I reached and grabbed that nettle up and just as he started to kick sand in my lunch I jumped up and hit him across the face. That guy never kicked sand in my lunch again.*

Point made. He never said anything about retribution. Knowing something about the culture of that era, there may have been more chapters.

Double Jeopardy—and More: The family of Riley Matthew & Zella Calhoun Cryer

The year, 1940, is marked in history as being a harbinger of change, change in military theory and application and an end to a long standing lifestyle for many families that lived on the land which became Camp Polk and Peason Ridge Artillery Range. The 1940 Louisiana Maneuvers, lasting from spring to fall, were central in winning WWII. They were also responsible for the disruption and finally the dislocation of hundreds of families in Ward 4, Vernon Parish, LA (Camp/Fort Polk) and the tri-parish area of north Vernon, southeast Sabine, and southwest Natchitoches Parishes (Peason Ridge). Memories of both the maneuvers and the trials of being forced from their personal property still elicits serious comments ranging from patriotic to deep resentment of family loss. These families would soon be sending their sons and daughters off to war while in the midst of trials from relocation and disappointments. All American families suffered hardships connected to the war effort. However, this dislocated group of entrenched farmers, without any public relocation assistance, amid inflated land prices, and historic economic roadblocks, were challenged to survive until they could rebuild their lives. Within this larger group of dislocated families a few were faced with even more uncertainty and conflicts with life.

Most years, late summer and fall bring feelings of accomplishment, security, and good will for the subsistence farmer and family. Crops are harvested and stored away for the harsher weather of winter to come. Firewood is cut, split, and stacked. Children scour the hills gathering lighter wood to quickly start fires in fire places on cold mornings. Ahead is cold weather, the year's butchering to be planned; meat to be canned, smoked, or salt cured. Food is generally plentiful.

The, 1940, growing and harvest seasons are the most difficult ever. The noise level from the air and on the ground is extremely troublesome, routinely day-in and day-out. Farm animals are extremely agitated, tending to disperse in all directions. It is difficult for farmers to control their horses in the field when thousands of strange people, low flying aircraft, roaring tanks, high pitched motor cycles, and whinnying Cavalry horses are constantly on the move. Milk cows need a placid environment to "let their milk down." One can only imagine the lady of the house trying to milk a cow under these conditions.

The U. S. Army's Louisiana Maneuvers have dominated the lives of the locals since spring. Farm life rarely appears routine. Dark clouds of impending war hang heavy on the horizon and in the hearts of the public. Instability and anxiety are everywhere. Poland has fallen—Europe is in turmoil. The Great Depression has had a suffocating strangle hold on the economy since the financial crash of 1929. Money is scarce as hen's teeth. Clouds of dust puff upward from everything that moves or rains bring seemingly endless quagmires. The roads, trails, and lanes have been essentially destroyed by the incessant passing of heavy equipment. The maneuvers slowly grind toward an end but the face of the landscape has been changed by the seemingly endless soldiers, horses, and mechanized equipment that roamed across the denuded hills left over from destructive tree harvesting methods from sawmill days.

People of the entire area are watching. Rumors are born and die on a daily basis. The government is

mute. The public does not know what to think or who to believe, if anyone. Newspapers are pushing. Uncertainty rules. Self interest abounds. Economic conditions and the threat of war are unsettling to the point some forget that humans and their future are involved.

No one, except possibly a few military officers, politicians, and land developers, could have known or had a futuristic vision of what is about to happen to: (1) Fort Polk—the area contained within an indistinct boundary created by the small, encircling communities of Bayou Zourie, Pickering, Johnsonville, Cravens, Pitkin, Fullerton, Cora, LeCamp, Hicks, Mayo, Slagle, and Castor, and (2) Peason Ridge—the area surrounded by the communities of Peason, Hornbeck, Cold Springs, Kurthwood, and Kisatchie. The lumber companies and the military indelibly changed the landscape, but what is to come will change people's lives forever.

One Family, Multiple Sets of Problems

In September, 1940, in spite of the world condition and the local turmoil, Vernon Parish brought to town one of the few fun and entertaining things for people to do to momentarily escape the reality of life. The annual Vernon Parish Fair arrived! People from all around gathered to see the exhibits, jostle to see who won the purple ribbons, and walk down the midway listening to carney talk.

Riley Matthew Cryer, raised on Whiskachitta Creek, married Zella Calhoun, December 26, 1919. From this union five sons were born, four of the five on land that became Camp Polk. One evening the family visited the fair which was located in Leesville. Money was short for all to enter through the entrance gate so the boys found a hole in the back fence. Regrouped and being short of money for foolishness, they walked along the midway looking at the sights. For people who lived in a pre-WWII, rural setting without electricity or other services, the sights and sounds of the carnival world were quite eye pleasing and attention catching.

While the family moved along, a gentleman approached the family, acknowledged Matthew, and motioned for him to step aside. An obvious discussion unfolded. On returning, Matthew had $5.00 in his hand, which in 1940 was quite a sum. He handed the boys a share of the money. Surely, a small band of young boys from the country had a great time that night. The content of the discussion is unknown. However, it must have been powerfully convincing since Matthew Cryer, a serious, hard working, family man agreed to give up his family's farm and home. Maybe previous negotiations had been involved aided by the swirl of rumor and misinformation.

Five boys and the fair are not the story—the $5.00 in cash passed to Matthew launches a discussion of hard luck and a touch of misdirected planning. This small sum can be considered the starting point of a forced exodus of over 200 families that owned property and a yet undetermined number of families (probably several hundred) that lived on and farmed property that they did not own, mostly either government land or timber company land. On a personal level, Matthew and Zella Cryer owned their farm and home since 1927. They self-built their home by hand with salvaged lumber from an abandoned Whiskachitta School where they lived when their fourth son, Fred, was born. The 20 acres of unim-

proved cut over land purchased from Henderson Timber Co. had been nursed into productive farm land. Now they were faced with losing their farm and moving on. Fred Cryer provided information that jump-started research that led to this narrative.

A great sense of urgency existed, in 1940, around purchasing property and starting construction on future Camp Polk, unnamed at the moment. Congress had not yet appropriated monies for purchase of land or construction of a training facility in Louisiana. The threat of war was growing more dismal and training facilities were urgently needed. The $5.00 handed to Matthew Cryer by E. D. Boone of Leesville was the down payment for the purchase of a home, outbuildings, and 20 acres of improved farm land located near the present day south water tower in the cantonment area, South Fort. The total purchase price was $500.00. Another Leesville resident, R. D. Schaeffer, was the actual recorded purchaser of the Matthew Cryer farm. The deed was filed October 3, 1940. The Cryer farm was one of five farms, Section 29, T1N—R8W, that were purchased at this time by a combine of local business men. The land from these five farms became the early center of construction for the new training facility.

On October 10, 1940, Riley Matthew Cryer purchased 40 acres of unimproved land from A. J. Weeks and Columbus Pitre for $500 located in Section 7, T1N, R8W, near Bayou Zourie. The military initially showed no interest in this property which was not far removed from his familiar community, friends, family, cemeteries, and heritage. This will change. These initial families, given 30 days to vacate, were allowed to take from their farms any removables they wished. The Cryer family dismantled their home constructed of lumber recycled from their previous home (abandoned school house), deconstructed their fences, gathered their belongings and prepared to move four miles north near Bayou Zourie.

They moved to this new location too late in the year to plant any crops; this free range timbered land had to be fenced, and sufficient area cleared before any future farming could be accomplished. Winter was on the way. Matthew and his boys built a temporary, essentially 3-sided lean-to for protection against the weather. They set to the task of building fence and started clearing land. Approximately 4 months after moving to the new location the military expanded their training plans, absorbing the Bayou Zourie site. Through eminent domain proceedings the Matthew Cryer family was evicted a second time, again given 30 days to vacate by the government. According to Fred they were not allowed to cut the virgin pine timber on the property and were paid less than half the amount his father paid to Mr. Weeks and Mr. Pitre.

Matthew Cryer entered into a lawsuit with a group of other displaced people who felt they were compensated unfairly for their land. The court ruled against the government, August 9, 1941. However, due to the pressure on available lands created by speculation and hundreds of families needing a new place to live, stability still eluded this Cryer family as many of the other families. Matthew and family ended up on a worn out farm in Evans, LA, called the old Presley place so infested with nut grass that it could not effectively be plowed. He even had his father, William Riley Cryer, visit and try to prepare the ground for planting. Matthew finally found property on Sandy Creek in the Good Hope Commu-

nity west of Anacoco, LA, near other Cryer family members from the Whiskachitta Community. He was able to live there and farm into the late years of his life.

A subsistence farmer's crops and farm stock are his grocery store. Their farm life is calendar driven, totally depending on natural cycles. To disrupt any phase is to disrupt the whole. During the period, 1940-1942, the doors to many family grocery stores were abruptly slammed shut.

Survivors of families who gave birth to their farms from scratch, built their homes and barns, gathered together to build their churches and schools, who buried their dead on this land, look back. At the end some say the changes were for the good, others say they were devastated—never to get over the impact.

In spite of their trials with the government and twice being relocated, Riley Matthew Cryer and his wife Zella Calhoun sent several of their five sons off to defend our country in WWII. They even signed approval for one son, 17, to volunteer. Fortunately they all returned.

Riley Mathew Cryer (1896-1983) son of William Riley Cryer and Missouri Elizabeth Whitley and **Zella Calhoun** (1905-1974) daughter of Lige Calhoun and Stella Bass married December 26, 1919.

ca. 1950 at home in Good Hope Community, Vernon Ph, LA

Riley Matthew Cryer and Zella Calhoun Cryer, ca. 1950. Source: Skip Cryer.

Luxury on the "Range"? Ridiculous one might say

Front
1-Mill Luxury Tax Token

Back
1-Mill equals 1/10 cent

Yet, during the regular session of the Legislature, during the regime of Governor Richard Webster Leche, in the midst of the Great Depression, the "Two percent (2%) Luxury Tax Act of 1936" was passed. After October 01, 1936, Louisiana Tax Tokens were used to pay sales tax of fractions of a cent. It was a complex system taxing a wide variety of goods, deemed "luxury" items, with many exemptions (including non-luxuries alcohol and New Orleans night clubs). Inconveniently, two sets of money, legal tender and tokens, were required when shopping. The patron would pay the sales person and if the tax did not result in an even cent the clerk would accept the difference in tokens, 10 or 5 to the penny. Sorting what was to be taxed and then calculating the tax which could result in a partial cent must have been confusing, clumsy and time consuming.

Forty-nine million 1-Mill (1/10 cent) and eight million 5-Mill tokens (1/2 cent) were distributed. The public did not like the system for obvious reasons. Public resistance influenced its repeal by the "Public Welfare Revenue Act of 1938," which required the redemption of all tokens by December 01, 1938. Only about seven million were redeemed. Apparently, the value of the tokens was mostly ignored. One thousand (1,000) tokens redeemed for $1.00. The also unpopular 1938 act (a 1% tax) was repealed July 9, 1940, by newly elected Governor Sam Jones, who was a strong supporter of the vision for Camp Polk.

The photos above are of a 1-Mill token that belonged to Adeline Jane Self Davis found in an old trunk in storage years after her death on the Range, June 14, 1941. She married William Jefferson Davis about 1893. Both are buried in the Davis Cemetery, Fort Polk. Their home place was located north of the old Hunt place and Hunt-Brack Cemetery not far west of what is now called Mill Creek Cemetery. While sitting on the porch of the Davis family, singing could be heard from the church. Adeline Davis died during the exodus in the home of her daughter; Sidney Jane Davis Smith, married to Cleon Smith. She died in the former home of Albert Jefferson Cryer and wife Gertrude Lula Willis Cryer.

The token was provided by the granddaughter of Adeline Jane Self Davis, Garnet Marie Cryer White.

John Fedrick and Ella Cryer Craft Home and Family, ca. 1940

L-R: Tressie Irene Craft Chitty (1924-Living), daughter, married Luther Franklin Chitty, Trudy Lou Ella Craft Davis (1920-2002), daughter, married Elmo Muriel Davis, Mary Ella Cryer Craft (1891-1973), mother, married John Fedrick Craft and Homer David Craft (1915-1988), son, married Ira Irene Jones. Photo ca. 1940, taken in front of the Cryer/Craft home, Whiskachitta Community, Section 13, T1N-R8W, Vernon Parish, LA.

This is a Heritage Family displaced by the Federal Government July 10, 1941. The government through eminent domain gained ownership of Tract #42; 52 acres of improved, fenced farm land, a large double pen home, barns, grist mill, service station, outbuildings and other improvements for $1200.00.

Homer Craft, like so many members of displaced families, found work as a carpenter building barracks and headquarters buildings on sites once owned and farmed by Heritage Families.

Early Farmers—Serious Stewards of Nature—Persistent Recyclers

Much is said and written, many fingers pointing toward farming operations for contributing to the constant attack on the environment. Modern farming with its many chemical applications; herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers, soil additives, and land leveling, bundled with heavy cultivation of millions of acres of land leading to water and wind erosion of soil is filled with potential for negative environmental impact. Everything, equipment and methods, are huge in modern farming to increase efficiency and reduce cost.

Step back to the early settlement of the South. A life style known as Subsistence Farming, now disregarded as a viable way to live—the world has changed dramatically. Traditionally, generation to generation, hand-me-down farming methods updated with learned skills, were tweaked to fit differing local conditions of soil and climate. These farmers and family leaders built a self-sustaining operation with few exterior needs. They were obsessive recyclers. A saying from the past tells us when butchering a hog "they used everything but the squeal." That is true, from pickled pig's feet to hog's head cheese.

Anyone from this culture will readily agree the saying "waste not want not" was practiced faithfully. No edible food nor much else was wasted. Everything had value as a reusable material. An old shoe tongue became a slingshot, a flattened tin can became a patch for a roof leak or a cover for a rat hole, animal waste became an organic fertilizer, corn tops were cut green after tassel and shocked for winter live stock food, feed sacks became dresses, bonnets and smocks, flour sacks became dishtowels and underwear, every piece of string was balled for future needs, bailing wire removed from hay bales was a reliable, much used, repair tool, cow horns became hunting horns to call dogs off the scent, no catalog was ever thrown away, and the list goes to near infinity.

Man and mule, a team breaking ground for a hill-top field. The man's identity is lost to history. Source: Marcelle Walker Perry from her mother's (Stella Cryer Walker) archives.

John Roderick Brown behind a mule plowing his corn field, Peason Ridge, Vernon Parish. Source: Skip Cryer.

Photo of John Roderick Brown and his horse, Peason Ridge, Vernon Parish, LA. John Brown is the grandson of pioneer family Roderick M. McInnis married to Catherine Martin. Photo provided by John Carlton Leonard and Ann Leonard from their private collection. John and Ann are grandchildren of John Roderick Brown and wife, Julia Rebecca Bush.

Subsistence farmers plowed contours one row at the time, used few chemicals, planted enough for family, neighbors, stock, and a portion for the bugs. The land was almost sacred for it was the medium from which plants sprouted to produce fruit and vegetables to nourish the family and the live stock they relied on for most of their protein. Their fields were their grocery store, the kitchen garden, their salad bar, their stock, their meat market. Without productive soil there would be no horses or oxen, no power to plow, till, harvest, pull a wagon or drag a log—no food, shelter, or warmth on cold days. These early farmers had practical skills learned beyond formal education, working the farm, providing for their wives and children. Usually, they had followed in their father's tracks as youngsters. Necessity bred ingenuity and determination, self sustaining qualities. Everyone developed their own techniques depending on their possessions and their skill levels but patterned around the basic concepts of subsistence farming.

Mr. John Brown from Peason Ridge had a large grey horse that he trained to be his partner around the farm. During neutering time for the latest litter of pigs, rather than chase sows and their pigs over the landscape, the horse was trained to calmly walk into the litter and wait. Mr. Brown used a rope with a loop on the end which he would slowly let down and catch a pig and lift it up to his lap in the saddle. He would then castrate the pig and let it back to the ground. With his horse, some corn nubbins and patience, the job would be done. He did not have to deal with a mad mama sow, either. A perfect example of cheap but reliable labor.

Mr. George Cryer from the Whiskachitta Community utilized a natural cut in back of his house which had a seepy spring for a "green house." At its base spring water flowed year round. It was a perfect place to start plants in the early spring. He probably also used it for rooting cuttings and fall gardening needs. The spring water coming from the ground was naturally a steady temperature, the walls of the cut provided protection from the wind and natural warmth from the soil. No manmade structure or humidity system was needed. He also recycled discarded metal turpentine cups to cover his tobacco plants when spring temperatures threatened frost.

The subsistence farming life style developed "jacks-of-all-trades." I reject the last part of that saying, "and masters of none." These men and their family members did far more than plow, plant, harvest, and preserve. They became skilled hunters, cobblers, blacksmiths, harness makers, oxbow makers, carpenters, casket makers, whittlers, log-notchers, fiddle players, home builders, preachers, nurses, midwives, peddlers—anything required for them to maintain their lifestyle.

Heritage Family: John Alvin Swain (1895-1950), wife, Della Cryer (1907-2003), baby daughter, Betty Sue Swain (1939-Living). John Alvin has a game bag on one shoulder and his hunting gun on the other, probably on the way to a squirrel hunt, ca. 1939. Source: Betty Sue Swain Gramling.

If a person ever hunted with a Heritage Family member it was obvious that they respected the wild, the prey, and safety. However, there was no doubt they were meat hunters. If a family had no live stock to butcher or a pen full of fryers to kill, wild game had to fill the breach. That could be an iffy proposition. By the time the virgin timber had been cut, large game including deer had disappeared. Quail, squirrels, and assorted small game became central in the pursuit of protein. If a squirrel was cutting hickory nuts in the back yard, it was soon found in Mama's mulligan. If Mama was picking peas and she saw a covey of quail, she or one of the boys set a trap. With luck, in a couple of days, a platter of fried quail and hot biscuits with cane syrup would be on the table. We won't talk "coon and sweet potatoes" or "baked possum." Then there was the "Depression Pig." I think at a point some foods became mostly tales. But I do not make light of comments from the past. Some families had incredibly tough times surviving. Most people have natural transportation ability, legs and feet. But people also have to eat sufficient food, stay dry and warm, and have uncontaminated water to drink. Sometimes it became an almost insurmountable problem over the long haul. The holiday, Thanksgiving, was and is still an important day for farming people. At times faith was the only hope for survival when pursuing the subsistence life style.

Modern farming is showered with many benefits: crop insurance, government subsidies, crop loans, the finest mechanical equipment, government training programs, government research, Co-ops, children driving their own cars to large consolidated schools, then off to the university. A long trek exists between this lifestyle and the world of rural, early America, that small wooden house of yesteryear on the top of a hill or in the hollow, man walking behind a horse, mule, or oxen along a ridge top, wife milking the almost dry cow, squeezing for the last drop so her children will have a few sips from a small reclaimed jelly jar, junior herding the kids dressed as well as possible out to the end of the lane to catch the school bus (a wagon or a flat bed truck with a dog house atop, oil cloth curtains flapping in the wind) headed to a one room, single teacher school house.

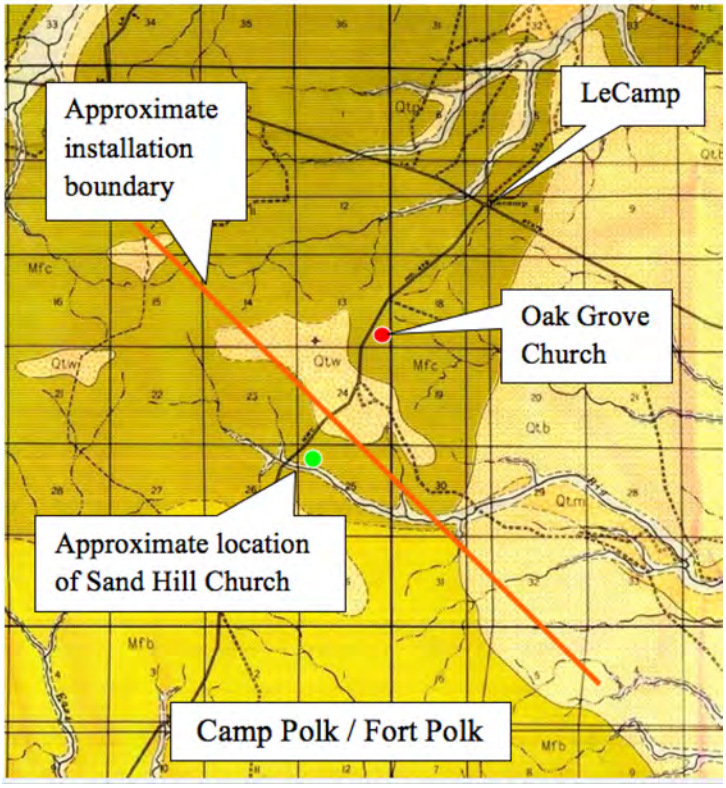
Social and fiscal evolution has brought us forcefully from the simpler days of a self-responsible farm economy filled with lurking tragedy to a modern existence undreamed of by generations of our ancestors. We now have unheard of educational opportunities, fiscal power, medical care, instant availability of food, all beyond comprehension of those living just 100 years ago or less. Yet life is still filled with lurking tragedy, though it may be of a different nature.

Sand Hill Church Became Oak Grove Church[4]

The Sand Hill Church was a small country church serving the people of what is now the NE area of Fort Polk. It was located on the Fullerton Road that ran north to south from LeCamp to the sawmill town of Fullerton. This road is now designated State Hwy 489 from LeCamp to the NE boundary of Fort Polk. The church was located in what is now the SE quadrant and to the south of the intersection of LA 489 and Artillery Road.

During the exodus this church was mandated to be removed since it was standing on land purchased by the government. A positive relationship developed around this church between the members and the government. The local population decided to move the church to the north and relocate it on LA 489 outside the Camp Polk boundary rather than letting it be destroyed. There was no cemetery associated with this church.

The church was jacked up. Logs were cut and placed on the ground under the building to protect it and endure the move. The military provided a bull dozer to pull the church building to its new location. After the church was moved into position it was jacked up again, logs removed, and lowered on blocks salvaged from the Fullerton Sawmill. It was moved intact about 1 ¼ miles north of the boundary on LA 489 and located on the east side of the road facing west. This church is still in use today as a wing on a modern church named Oak Grove Baptist Church.



Approximate location of Sand Hill and Oak Grove Churches. Source: Skip Cryer and Ralph Deason.

[4]Information provided by Ralph Deason. Mr. Deason identified the location, shown above, where this church once stood on government property. Mr. Cryer reported that there was evidence a building once stood there.

The original structure of the Sand Hill Church at its present location, now a part of the Oak Grove Baptist Church. The original church structure was rehabilitated and is resting on piers salvaged from the ruins of the Fullerton Mill. Source: Skip Cryer.

The double doors of the Oak Grove Baptist Church, shown above, are original to the Sand Hill Church structure. Source: Skip Cryer.

My Friend (My Foot)[5]

You have hung around
And you have covered some ground.

For 95 years you have took me around
And together we have covered some ground.

You work with me and we have had lots of fun
But now the time has come
You no more will run.

I have placed you snug in a sock
And a shoe that was only just for you.
We plowed the fields together.
We jumped in Whiskachitta Creek
And shared a bath or two.

You have taken me here and taken me there
And I have never worried
Because you were always there.

They say you are tired, I guess its true,
You shore don't look new.
So I'll say goodbye my friend,
My foot, my ankle, my shin.

We'll meet again so I am told
Where we'll neither be old.

By Andrew Jackson Cryer

Andrew Jackson Cryer (1908-2005), born and raised on Whiskachitta Creek, is the son of William Riley Cryer and Missouri Elizabeth Whitley. Source: Skip Cryer.

[5]This poem was submitted for publication by Skip Cryer and was dictated by Andrew Cryer to his wife in the hospital the night before his foot was to be amputated.

Research: Finding Freddie Walker—Mystery Solved

One day, while listening to Marcelle Walker Perry (daughter of Henry and Stella Cryer Walker) talk about her family pictures and genealogy, she commented on a lost brother. She related that a sibling, Freddie, had been born unknown, died unknown, buried somewhere, and the family had little hope of finding him or learning his story since her parents are deceased. I filed the information away in my memory with other unlikely successes and moved on.

Later, she told me she had been talking to family members and her older brother remembered Freddie dying in Texas and being buried in Louisiana. He was young at the time but remembered the private funeral was on what is now Fort Polk property. His description of the circumstances led to Zion Hill Cemetery, the Cryer family ancestral cemetery on Fort Polk. Now the family had a cemetery location but the cemetery listing had no Freddie. We faced another roadblock. Through other family interviews we knew that six Walker children from the Wesley and Laura Ann Cryer Walker family were also buried in Zion Hill. Yet we had only one named burial with grave marker and two other still-born children's grave markers, given names unknown. The mystery grew.

Late one night without purpose, while browsing the new Mormon Search web site of Texas death certificates, I randomly entered the name Walker. Suddenly, on the screen was a list including a Fredrick Walker with sufficient data to recognize Freddie, his birth date, death date, cause of death, etc. Now we had a cemetery and personal information including place of birth, but faced with seven Walker children buried at Zion Hill and only one identified, the task of locating the grave site still seemed improbable. However, clues were accumulating.

Working with descendants of Wesley and Laura Walker, identification of the six Walker children were assimilated but not their exact grave locations, yet we realized that the six were buried in a row probably in order of death. This information leads to another story, but that one is still incomplete. The new clues did tell us the burial location of Freddie other than elsewhere in Zion Hill. This valuable information was added to the list of clues.

In the summer of 2008, interns from Northwestern University were hired to produce a detailed record of all the graves in each cemetery [on Fort Polk], including location of the graves and any information on the grave markers. In reviewing this independent and very meticulously obtained information, it was noted that one of the Zion Hill weathered sandstone markers had been newly identified as a Walker burial. Additionally, the recognizable letters in the first name were (Fr). This was the seventh Walker child's grave, and without doubt, the grave of Fredrick Walker who most likely was named after John Fedrick Craft, who transported the body of Freddie to the grave site. He is the husband of Mary Ella Cryer Craft, sister to both Stella Cryer Walker and Laura Cryer Walker. Both adult male Walkers, Henry and Wesley, came from different areas of the United States and were unconnected genetically.

Mystery solved, Freddie has a new grave marker, and the family has a chance for closure 79 years after his death, July 14, 1930. Hopefully, Frederick (Freddie) Walker will never be lost again.

On the Road

My Dad (Marrion Monroe Cryer, Sr.) was a stoic, retired military man with strong ties to subsistence farming efforts of his family over many generations. He was the first member of his immediate family to break the trend of following ancestors into this lifestyle. As a young man he enlisted in the Army Cavalry, September 24, 1924, retiring at the end of WWII. He was very proud of his heritage, family, and his career. In one of his talking moods, though few occurred, he told me that he felt very fortunate to have lived during a time spanning the first flight of the Wright brothers, December 17, 1903, to Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin landing on the moon, July 20, 1969. He was born on Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachitta Community, September 28, 1902, one of 15 children and died, November 02, 1970, from a long debilitating health issue.

My Dad's comments to me probably 60 years ago provided me information for the following story. When he told me the story I listened but did not ask questions much to my dismay at the moment. The early Heritage Families, traveled by wagon, horse, or foot when headed to their destination. This story is about trips to Rapides Parish, Alexandria area, on the Red River, a major river and water highway utilized to transport goods and people.

Looking back, I am not sure if my Dad's discussion was specific to a trip or a generic compilation of experiences. Either way, his comments are similar to those from other sources. He did not go into the hardships of travel, but they were serious, especially if heavy rains came. He never mentioned shelter, but a narrative written by a member of the Franklin family that settled Anacoco said they slept under the wagon.

Marrion Monroe Cryer, Sr., at McDill Air Force Base, FL, ca. 1942. Source: Skip Cryer.

Sometimes it was necessary to go to the Boyce-Alexandria area for the purpose of selling farm products and for buying necessities, staples, plus what else might be needed. A trip of this sort took several days, length depending on weather, breakdowns or pace. My Dad told me that when the family traveled for this purpose a wagon was used since they were carrying a load, whether going or coming, and it provided a more pleasant situation for mother and children. Mom and Dad with the youngest would set on the wagon seat. The head of the household was responsible for the wagon, merchandise, and family members. He would drive the team, with the small children riding in the back of the wagon. The middle aged children would trudge along behind the wagon, inquisitive and poking around. The wagon would not be traveling at a fast pace. The older boys would be on horseback, fanned out as the family advanced, functioning as scouts. The "scouts" made sure they stayed on route, there were no roadblocks, and figured out how to traverse problem spots before their father and mother arrived. Though camping on the trail was not discussed, the family scouts probably picked a site and readied it for the arrival of the family.

Drinking water was no problem. My Dad said there was a spring under the brow of every hill. Perched water tables and green heads were common in this hilly country. Of course when the timber was cut the natural springs tended to dry up.

All evidence points to people traveling from the range to the Red River area and back follow[ing] the same path for much of the way. The road was a ridge road; what name it was called is unknown, nor is its exact location known. Time has masked any evidence. Actually, the route was probably a system of coalescing feeder trails along the way. Roads (trails) of that era followed the path of least resistance as direct as possible. If an area became impassable due to bad weather or a blow down, traffic just moved over and continued.

My grandparents, William Riley Cryer and Missouri Elizabeth Whitley never owned a vehicle nor, as far as I know, ever drove one. In later years when local travel was involved, usually by pickup, straight chairs would be placed in the bed of the truck for overflow. It seemed whoever was "in the back" had the most fun.

Harold K. Davis

Written by Harold Kenneth Davis (May 1934 – May 2014), born on the range near Jetertown to Heritage Family member Arther D. Davis and Gussie Lee Arnold. He married Heritage Family descendant Shirley Rose Walker.

My First Seven Years

I was born May 1, 1934 on a farm in what we called the forks of the creek. This was where Six Mile Creek and Davis Creek ran together. My Grandfather and Grandmother's farm joined ours on the west. They were Monroe and Nancy Haymon Arnold, My mother's Father and Mother; my parents were Arthur and Gussie Lee Arnold Davis.

My Father bought this place from a relative named Mitch Hinson. Through trust and bad business dealings my father lost this place at the height of the business depression of the latter 1920's. He moved about a mile south and settled on a place as many others did at that time.

We remained there until World War II began. At that time the military began extensive training in this area of Louisiana. They planned Fort Polk and appropriated this area of Louisiana as a training area. Everyone who lived there was ordered to move. A mass exodus ensued which changed many people's way of life, forever. I, as a small child found my life changed from an idyllic one of security and tranquility to one of uncertainty and turmoil.

Thus, I entered this life with a lot of sudden changes that [have] had an impact on me for most of my life. I will begin by describing some of those earlier days.

I remember very little of my infancy at the Mitch Hinson Place, only that Mr. Hinson claimed he had only sold my father the improvements and not the property. This was done on a verbal agreement and Mr. Hinson, being a relative, was trusted.

After moving and resettling on a small subsistence farm, we lived [there] until I was seven.

Being a child, I didn't realize the difficult times my parents were experiencing. Most of our neighbors were enduring the same hardships. War clouds were gathering in Europe, but this meant little to me until the country was overrun by Military Troops training for combat in Europe. Reconstruction was only one generation past and wounds were still sore.

We had the fact that we were fighting a common enemy also, which made us all comrades-in-arms. Emotions ran high as everyone prepared for war.

Germany and other European nations that had seemed extremely remote now seemed closer.

My Father had a battery powered radio, possibly the only one in the area. Neighbors used to visit after the end of the day to listen to the news. I was not aware of the turmoil in foreign lands, but the somber gravity of the discussion after the news was convincing. The world suddenly started getting smaller to me, and the bucolic area that constituted my domain was not secure any longer. I began asking, where is Germany, Poland, Hungary, France and other countries in the news. The only description was across the ocean. Finally I found a secluded spot where I could be alone and think.

My first problem was space, if it can change its dimensions, how can we define absolute space? I had no concept of infinity; I assumed that there was an end to all things. I looked at the clouds, but then saw the moon further away, and then I saw stars as far as I could see. Where did it end? Was a huge wall the limit to space? This didn't make sense, as all walls have two sides, so if you reach the other side the same condition exists.

Not once did it occur to me that if we have a God that supersedes space, that space can be infinite. I also couldn't determine its complexity, and told myself I would be able to understand things as I got older. I was wrong again as at my advanced age it is still elusive.

I next turned my thoughts to physical objects and tried to determine absolute size, but was foiled again. I watched as some ants killed and devoured a grasshopper, which could have escaped had he tried. By being still I was able to watch nature at work. All the insects were small and were afraid of me, but cattle and horses were large and they ignored me. Then the thought came to me that I couldn't be large and small at the same time. What was my absolute size? Was the world large or small? To know I had to have something to relate other things to. Was the universe very vast or did we all live in a fish bowl? How could I tell the difference? I concluded that I couldn't, so on May 1, 1941, the military arrived, loaded our meager belongings on a truck and moved us to a place near Pitkin.

My Father soon bought a place at Fullerton, a recently disbanded saw-mill town. The mill was gone and only small farms remained. I forgot my Day Dreams and began getting acquainted with the people of a new neighborhood.

Name Changes Blur History

The road from LaCamp to Fullerton passes through what used to be known as Jeter Town. This was because a number of relatives, mostly brothers named Jeter, had farms in the area near each other. South of Jeter Town the road crossed a stream known as Cow Pen Branch.

Some time ago I was talking to James Jeter and I asked him if he knew how it got this name. He told me there used to be a large cattle pen there that spanned this branch.

He said people used to make Cattle Drives from Western Louisiana and Eastern Texas through the area headed to Alexandria. He said they would pen their cattle there for the night. This clear-running branch provided water for their cattle.

Since the army has taken this area for training their maps they have listed this stream as Brushy Branch.

Arnold Family Tragedy

My Grandfather, Monroe Arnold first married my Grandmother's Sister, Ellen Haymon. They had one daughter named Lena.

One day they were traveling from Fullerton to Pitkin. For some reason my Grandfather, Monroe, was riding a horse and Ellen was driving a horse and buggy with Lena, who was an infant. They were traveling the East Fullerton road. The horse ran away with the buggy and Ellen couldn't control him. He ran down the road for some distance. Just north of the Harvey Gipson place the road crossed a little clear-running stream. At that crossing the horse ran off the road. The buggy struck a large pine tree stump. The impact suddenly stopped the buggy, throwing Ellen forward just as the horse was jerked backward on his haunches, crushing Ellen underneath the horse and killing her. Lena, the baby, survived.

Monroe Later married Nancy Ann Haymon, Ellen's sister. They had four children, my mother Gussie Lee, being the oldest.

Superstitions and Cemeteries

My Father, Arthur Davis, was born on a farm on Whiskey Chitto Creek.

He told me that as he was growing up a story was repeated numerous times of a cemetery in the area [and] that sometimes at midnight an eerie light could be seen at some of the graves.

He was never swayed by superstitions, but he said he was passing the cemetery late one night and suddenly a tombstone was illuminated by a light for a short time. He said he felt a little shaken, but felt he had to try to identify the cause. He said he walked to the side of the road and sat down on an embankment. He sat there for some time when a glow appeared on a tombstone. He said it was the grave of Nathan White.

He noticed that each time the glow appeared a car on a road a long way off appeared. As it rounded a curve and crested a hill the glow appeared. The light was faint from such a distance, but was enough to cause a glow on a monument. The mystery was solved.

Donald Talmage and Evalean Haymon Dew

Donald Talmage and Evalean Haymon Dew are from the subsistence farming culture practiced on the land that became Fort Polk. Evalean and her parents, Doc Veelmore and Edith Cryer Haymon, lived on the range. Wood houses with mud and stick chimneys were common. Many houses burned due to poor maintenance or poor construction of these chimneys, long a part of this culture and history.

Building Dirt Chimneys—Constructing Mud-cat (Mud-daubed) Chimneys[6]

In the fall of the year there were always chimneys to be built in the neighborhood. Somewhere, about every 5 or 6 years, a chimney had to be rebuilt from the ground up. Most homes had one or two chimneys. Some were for cooking while most were for winter heat. The whole neighborhood would help, 4 or 5 families. The building of a chimney would take about two weeks (build a little and let it dry). There might be several to build each summer. The families worked together; men, women, and children, with wagon and horses.

The men would get the sticks, 1" x 1"x 4' to 6' long. Each chimney would need 100 or more, usually made out of pine trees. About one wagon load of moss and small straw, [and] 2 wagon loads of special chalky silt sand—usually found at baygalls in fields where nothing would grow but pin oaks, called flats—were collected. The dirt had to be like bricks when water and moss were added.

All this was at locations ready to go before the job of building on this special day. The women would cook, the children would help the men who had specific jobs. One or two men would be boss and do the building. The old chimney would be torn down and placed in wagons to be hauled away.

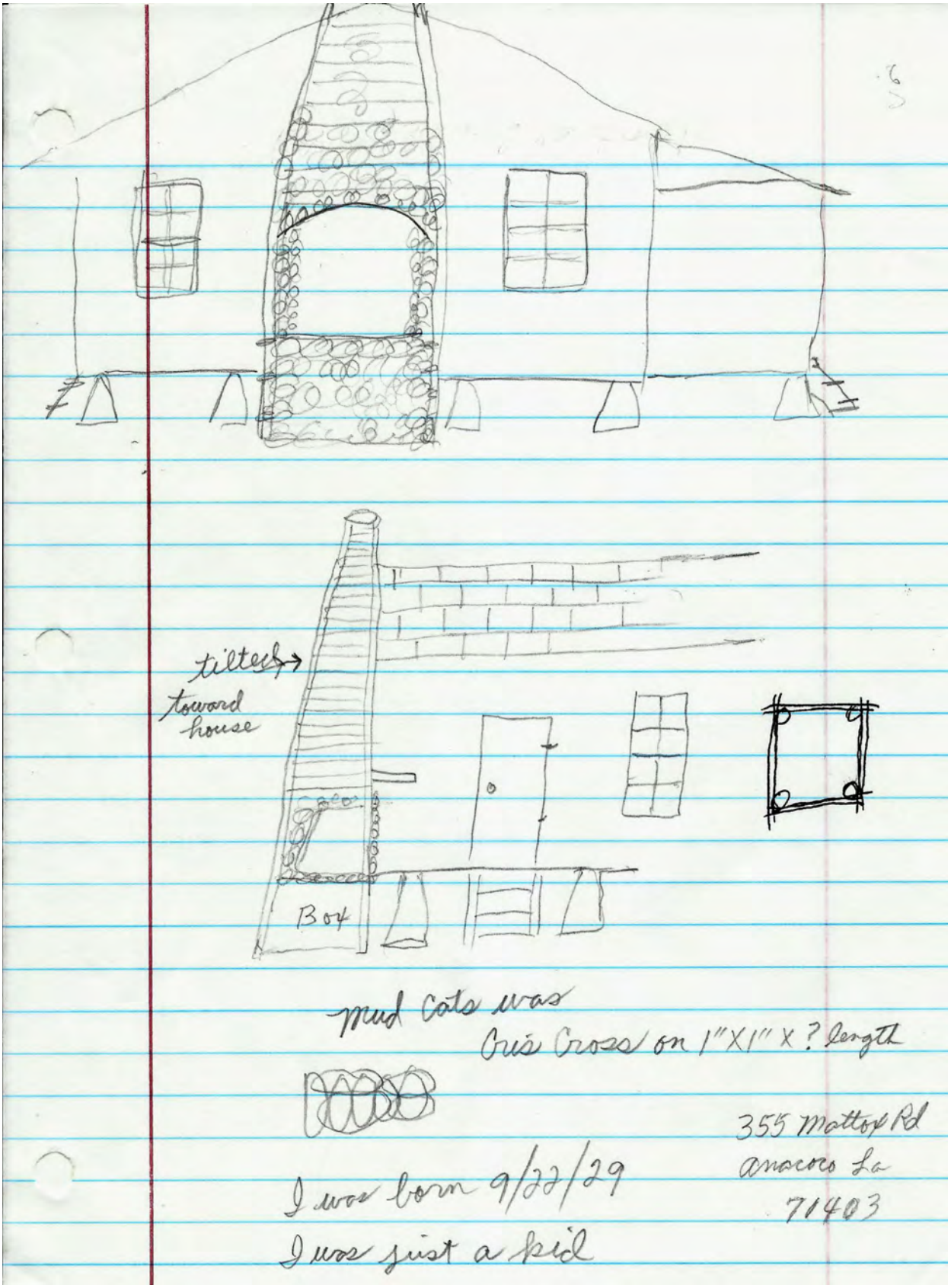
First a box was built to support the chimney to the level of the house floor. This had to be reinforced with logs and 1' x 1' boards. The hole in the wall of the house was to support the chimney size. Then round poles were placed in the box to go upward, 4 against the house and 2 to go upward to form the chimney size. The two on the outside were leaned inward to make the hole at the top smaller.

A box 3' x 6' was built with 8" sides to mix the chalky sand and water in. You took a hoe or rake to stir the sand and water. You had a table about waist high where you mixed moss and mud to make mud-cats about 6 to 8 lbs each. Not much water was added. The cats had to be long, about 10" and mixed well with moss or straw. Women and children did this mixing. The 2 men on the ladders would put 6-1" x 1" (2 on right, 2 on left, and 2 in front) and then place mud-cats on them as they went up with the chimney. Then more sticks and more mud-cats. The builders placed the cats around the corners and tied them together with moss and mud.

The place where the fire would be was very thick with mud-cats and walls inside the house were protected by stacks of mud-cats. The top of the chimney in the house usually had an old cross-cut saw bent like a rainbow to hold up the mud-cats. The builders had to let this dry. The builders would take mud and water and smooth the cracks with their hands so fire would not catch the frame on fire. After some time it would dry while they would work on other chimneys.

When they got to the top of the house, they would go on up 3' and have a small hole for the smoke to escape (18" x 20"). The hole determined how well it would draw the smoke out, not in the house. To finish the job it was plastered inside and outside to make it smooth. There might be 3 or more chimneys being built at the same time. There were brick chimneys but not for poor folks, most people were poor.

[6]Transcribed by Skip Cryer from notes hand written by Donald Talmage Dew.



Hand-drawn diagram showing construction of mud-daub chimney. Source: Donald Talmage Dew.

Doris Delma "Dollie" Haymon Mayo Wilcox, Olea Haymon Johnson Fletcher, and Willie Vee Haymon Bolinger

Written by sisters Doris Delma "Dollie" Haymon Mayo Wilcox, Olea Haymon Johnson Fletcher, and Willie Vee Haymon Bolinger, born on the "range" to Heritage Family members Willie Lee Haymon and Viola Haymon. Pictured above, L to R: Sisters "Dollie" Haymon Mayo Wilcox (January 1921 – December 2012), Willie Vee Haymon Bolinger (April 1931 – Living), and Olea Haymon Johnson Fletcher (April 1928 – Living).

A Tribute to a Family of Survivors[7]

In the year of 1941, the Federal Government took the land and home of my parents, Willie Lee and Viola Haymon. They were given a certain length of time to move.

Here was a man with only one leg, no job, no money, no home, a wife crying with tears that could not be stopped, and no place to take his family. HEART-BREAKING, YES.

My parents with their (3) three daughters watched as a U. S. Army tank pushed and destroyed their home, blacksmith shop, grist mill, sugar cane mill, smokehouse where meat was cured and smoked, house where food was stored for winter use, chicken house, and barn—a shelter for animals—were piled up in a pile and burned. BUT WE ARE SURVIVORS.

Willie Lee and Viola had (3) three sons who served in the U. S. Military in World War II, in some of the hottest battles. When it was time to come home, there was no home to come home to. They fought for this freedom, you and I hold so dear.

Willie Lee and Viola were God loving, God fearing people. What a sacrifice and price they paid for America.

THEY WERE SURVIVORS

What did this do to the Willie Lee and Viola Haymon families? You guessed it.

THEY WERE AND ARE SURVIVORS
GOD BLESS AMERICA

Back, L to R: Willie Vee Haymon Bolinger, William Maurice Bolinger, Viola Haymon, and Willie Lee Haymon. Front, L to R: Karl Robert"Pete" Mayo, Jr., and Phillip Daniel Mayo, sons of Karl and Dollie Mayo. Vee and William were married in 1950. Source: polkhistory.org.

[7]By the daughters of Willie Lee and Viola Haymon, Doris Delma "Dollie" Haymon Mayo Wilcox, Olea Haymon Johnson Fletcher, and Willie Vee Haymon Bolinger; transcribed by Skip Cryer from a hand-written document.

Gene Haymon

Written by Gene Haymon, born to Heritage Family members Elijah Hezekiah Haymon and Etta Cryer of the Birds Creek Community.

Ridge Road: Part 1

Somewhere around the year 1954, my family had the occasion to take a Sunday afternoon visit back to Birds Creek and our family cemetery—the Haymon Cemetery. (Now it is called the Haymon-Watson, but up until the year 2000, my family claimed this to be the Haymon Cemetery.) Nevertheless, our family had taken a picnic lunch and we were spending the afternoon in the "rifle range."

We were all sitting under a large oak tree that use to be in the front yard of Lonnie Haymon's residence having our picnic, and my dad, Elijah Haymon, started reminiscing about life on Birds Creek. He told about how that in the Haymon community, that all the families farmed together. Even though all of them owned their own separate property, the farming of the land was not complete until every farm in the community was finished with the plowing of the crops and until the crops had been "laid by" for the growing season. The "laid by" term meant that the corn, peas, squash, beans, watermelons, cucumbers, etc., had reached a point in the growth cycle, that no more plowing of the earth was allowed, and the crops were "laid by" until harvest time. He told us how that every family depended upon the crops for their livelihood. There was very little money, just a small amount realized from selling some of their crops, but mostly the families survived by harvesting the crops and the women would "can" the vegetables and put them into quart jars and store for the winter. Some of the crops like peanuts and potatoes were stored in a cool place, like under the house or under the bam and would last into the winter months.

The same was done for what meat that was stored for the winter. Pork was the primary meat and the hogs would be slaughtered and the meat would be smoked in the smoke house to prepare it to last into the winter months. "Hog killing day" was a big event with families along Birds Creek. Most of the time neighboring families would get together and on a cool day the men would slaughter the hogs, put them into large pots of boiling water to allow the hair to be scraped off of them, and then the men and women together would "butcher" the hogs and cut the meat up and each family would have a large amount of pork to take home and prepare it for the smoke house and the completion of the process to have meat into the winter months.

It was on this afternoon picnic in 1954 that my dad, Elijah Haymon, recounted how the families got their goods to market if they had any left over after the harvest. He told us there was a trading post at Neame, which is present day along Hwy 171 south of Pickering High School, near the wood chip plant that is in operation today. There was also a place along Red River in present day, Boyce, that some of the crops were taken to barter for other goods the families needed—like flour, sugar, and whiskey (mainly used for medicine, we were quickly told???) My Dad told us about a cattle drive from Birds Creek to the market in Boyce, where the large steers were driven to the riverside and put in pens and then later the steers were put on large barges and shipped down river to New Orleans. This is the first time that I remember as a child hearing about the Ridge Road that was mostly a wagon trail that connected Birds Creek to the markets in Boyce and in Neame. This road also split south of Birds Creek and provided a way for horse drawn wagons to travel south toward present day Fullerton and the Six Mile area.

That afternoon my dad got out on a sandy area of the ground where we were having our picnic and he drew in the sand a map showing the way that Ridge Road ran through the hills of the Birds Creek area of Ft. Polk. It got its name from the fact that this road was formed along the natural ridge that ran through the area of Birds Creek running both North and South - North toward present day Hicks, Louisiana, and on through the woods toward Boyce, Louisiana. In fact the very first Haymon to come to Vernon Parish is buried along this road less than the length of two 40 acre tracts directly south of present day Hicks High School.

If you travel down into those woods, one can still see evidence of the old road that was so often traveled by horse or oxen drawn wagons carrying the goods grown on the farm to the market along Red River in Boyce, Louisiana. The southern section of [the] Ridge Road that led to present day Neame is also situated on the top of the southern ridge that runs from Birds Creek south to present day Highway 171 south of Pickering, very close to the Vocational College located south of Pickering High School. We know that this old wagon trail was there on the southern tip back in the late 1800's because I have attached a story told by my grandfather, Lonnie Haymon, that took place in 1894 [see below]. There was little population along the Ridge Road, but it was traveled often by all the people that lived in the present day rifle range of Fort Polk.

As we were finishing up our picnic back in 1954, we asked our Dad how long it would take travelers to go from Birds Creek to Boyce, Louisiana, using the Ridge Road. He told us that it would sometimes take a week, so when a group went it usually involved almost a wagon train - drivers set off to market and the entire community would get excited upon their return because for many of the residents this was the only time during the year they would get things from a store (certainly [there] was not a local supermarket at that time).

Most of the trips down Ridge Road, however, traveled south to Neame, because this trip was just a day's ride by horse drawn wagon or carriage. My Dad said that the ride was a beautiful ride because in my grandfather Lonnie Haymon's day the virgin pine trees that were here when our country was founded, were still standing and he told of the beautiful scenery of wildlife and floral displays of nature.

I forgot to put in my story about how we would go to all the old home places when we would go on our Sunday afternoon outings. In the 50's you could see for miles because the replanting of the trees had not hidden the views yet. I can remember leaving Lonnie Haymon's place, walking down by the old hog pens and barn area, and hitting what was little more than a trail, on our way to Granny Mae Cryer's place and to Elias Haymon's place. These two were behind Lonnie Haymon's place, and one had to go across a little branch of water to get to them. What made it interesting then was that Mae Jeane Cryer would be walking with us. She would recount how she reared 9 children on this little plot of land, beat the Depression, did it all without government [help]*, and then when she had accomplished the task God gave her, her own government came and kicked her off the land where all of her memories still lay! She had some help from her Dad, Dr. Jeane!!!*

Ridge Road: Part 2

According to Dempsey Haymon as told to me, Gene Haymon, there is a ridge that starts near Birds Creek and runs westerly through the woods [and] comes out on Hwy 171 South of Hwy 10 near what use to be Smokey's BBQ. Back then this area near Smokey's BBQ was called Neame. Dempsey told me that he got this story from Lonnie Haymon, and Lonnie should know the truth of the story since it is all about him. According to Dempsey Haymon, grandson of Lonnie and son of Floyd and Gertrude (Gertie) Jeane Haymon, the time was around Christmas of 1894. The reason we know the date is because our Grampa Lonnie told us he was 12 years old at the time. We know that Lonnie Haymon was born in 1882.

During this time, Lonnie said there was very little money. Most of the buying and selling was done through bartering. It seems that at Neame, at the end of the Ridge Road, was a trading post. So, in addition to the people along Birds Creek going to Boyce to trade, they also sometimes would go down the Ridge Road to Neame to get their goods, especially their whiskey! In this particular year it was around Christmas time, and many of the men of the community started talking about getting a little whiskey to help celebrate the holidays and of course also try to pick up a few things for Christmas, mostly food that they did not have during the rest of the year. So the men got together and decided they would send Lonnie Haymon in a wagon down the Ridge Road to pick up their liquor.

They gathered all of the items they wanted to use to trade for the whiskey and other things like shelled corn, dried peas, beans, some had snake roots, loaded them in the wagon, [and] hitched up the horses. Grampa Henry Haymon gave Lonnie some specific instructions on how to go down the Ridge Road, not to stray off the path, and to make sure that he did not stop along the way at a particular establishment. It seems that about half way down the Ridge Road there was a saloon that had been set up in a log building. Grampa Henry gave Lonnie specific instructions that he would be in deep trouble if he made a stop here!!! Lonnie knew what that meant, and he sure didn't want to be punished by his dad. So, off to Neame went Lonnie with all of the goods loaded on the wagon.

As a 12 year old he was excited that the men had given him that responsibility, and also it was giving him a little time free from the chores and downright hard work at home. As he was riding down the Ridge Road, however, about [half] way through his trip, he saw the Saloon coming into sight. As he got closer he noticed that several horses were hitched to the hitching post outside, and the curiosity got the best of him. Surely he could go inside and just take a peak. Pa Henry would never find out and he would get a firsthand look at what a real saloon looked like on the inside.

[Lonnie] said that he slowly pulled his wagon up by the horses near the hitching post, got down off the wagon, and tied his horses real good to the hitching post. He said he wanted to make sure that nothing happened to his wagon and the horses while he was on the inside, and he was also worried about the impending punishment if something happened to his goods, the wagon, or the horses. His conscience was also bothering him real bad because he knew that his Pa Henry had specifically pointed out that this place was off limits to him. Anyway, he walked up the steps to the saloon porch, opened up the

door and peered inside. He said everything looked calm so he walked on inside.

However, just as he got inside, all H E L L broke loose. He said there was two men sitting up at the bar and all of a sudden they started arguing and in a drunken stupor started fighting. One thing led to another, and before he knew it he was in the middle of a gun fight!! He said that first he crawled under a table, and then he crawled from table to table, getting closer to the door as the bullets flew over him. Before reaching the door, however, he said that he saw one of the men catch a bullet right in the chest, slump over, and fall to the floor.

Lonnie said that by that time, his heart was pounding, his feet and legs grew limp, and he could hardly carry himself as out the door he ran, down the steps, quickly untying his wagon team. He remember[ed] that it seemed forever getting his team backed away from that saloon, and when he did, he left dust in the air flying down Ridge Road. He told Dempsey Haymon that he just knew as he sat on the wagon that the one man left with the gun had one more bullet for him to silence his future testimony.

That didn't happen, and Lonnie was forever thankful that God gave him that one last bit of energy to remove himself from a situation that he should have not been involved in the first place. He went on [to] the trading post at Neame, traded his goods for the orders that he had, and returned back home with his goods, and especially 12 gallons of whiskey. The Christmas of 1894 was especially festive in nature along Birds Creek. He said that as he came near the Saloon on his return to home, he tried not to even look that way in fear that someone would still be looking for him.

Several weeks later, it got out in the community about the fight and eventual death of a man at the saloon, and unlike most events we witness in our life, we live to tell about them. In this case, however, Lonnie kept the story to himself in fear that Pa Henry would find out and punish him. It was only years later, after Pa Henry's death, that he finally came forward and confessed his sin to Dempsey Haymon, who then related it to me.

Church Singing Schools[8]

One of the characteristics of folks living on the rifle range of present day Fort Polk was that for six days of the week, they WORKED!!! Life was not easy at all because their very life depended upon each family doing its part in carrying the load for providing for the family. There was no government assistance at all—if hard times came as a result of the death of the bread winner, the family just dug in deeper and with the help of the other families in the community they made it somehow????

Most of the families living in the communities of present day Fort Polk had ties with a church, and the Biblical principles of the Ten Commandments guided their lives each and every day. Certainly there were those that strayed away, but for the most part the people lived lives that demonstrated a desire to help one another make it from day to day. After spending six days working in the fields, the folks took the Bible literally when it said on the 7th day one should rest—and rest they did!!! They did it out of necessity because they were tired!!!

Sunday's were spent in church activities, and many times these church activities spread over into the nights of the week. This was true for revival services and for singing schools. Their revivals could go on for weeks at a time and the same could be said for the singing schools. Everyone participated in the singing schools even if you didn't really care for singing. Parents ruled by the iron hand during those days, and when Pa or Ma said we are going to the singing school at Big Creek or Whiskey Chitto, that meant everyone was going, even the boys who could care less about singing or learning to sing.

During those days there was always a "song leader" at the church and this was a person that usually had no formal training but had gained experience throughout the years by attending church-related singing schools. If one could go back to the spring of 1940, ride slowly by one of the churches around Sunday night, close to dark, the sweet sound of old church hymns being sung by the individual notes of each song would be heard ringing out into the darkness. They used books that only had "shape notes" for the hymns. Each note was shaped in a certain manner that denoted the seven notes in a musical scale that helped the singer find the pitches within a major or minor scale. Instead of singing the words of the hymns, a student would be required to learn the notes that were used to sing this hymn. An experienced "song leader" or "song director" would teach these seven notes and their particular shapes—do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti—and once the students were ready they would sing the old hymn "Amazing Grace" in four part harmony, using only the six notes of the shaped note musical scale.

Once the shape of these notes were learned—and the corresponding tone of each shape—then wonderful four part harmony could be heard ringing out of the churches, especially on Sundays and other special events in the church throughout the week!!!!

[8]As told to Gene Haymon by his father, Elijah Haymon, one of the song leaders mentioned in the story.

Wash Day on Birds Creek[9]

The sun was peaking over the horizon on that warm summer day along Birds Creek, as Earnestine Haymon and her daughter Gracie scurried around the house to get everything together to go down to the creek and do the weekly wash. I, being a very young girl, looked forward to these days because I would be able to play in the creek as my Ma went about the laborious duty of washing the family's clothes.

My father, Lonnie Haymon, and my brothers, Elijah, Oscar, Floyd, and Noah were already in the fields plowing and weeding the crops that would help to sustain us throughout the rest of the year. My favorite vegetable was corn and today they would be plowing lots of corn, along with peas, beans, peanuts, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, watermelons, and okra. When the crops were ready, Ma would prepare many of the vegetables by canning them in a pressure pot. I always hoped the okra would not grow because I would rather take a whipping than to eat that slimy stuff. My Pa and brothers would load some of the crops at harvest time on the wagon and take them to other neighborhoods to sell or trade for other items that were needed by the family. This was always a good time of the year because maybe I would be able to get a new pair of shoes or a dress if the crops were plentiful.

I was sort of glad that I was a girl because at least I could sleep later than my brothers. Their day always started around 4:00 a.m. in the morning, as their chores carried them to the barn where they had to feed all the horses and mules that would be working in the fields that day, feed the chickens, hogs, [and] goats, and then after all that was done, they had to milk the cow for the family's daily supply of milk. After the boys brought the milk to the house, I would watch as Ma poured the milk through a strainer, dipped off the cream from the top of the milk, and then she would put the milk in a large glass jug, tie a rope around the top of the jug, and lower it into the well that sat in the corner of the yard, so the milk would stay cool throughout the day. The cream would be set aside and my afternoon chore on many days would be to churn the creamy milk into butter.

On this day, Ma and I headed off down the trail behind the house to the edge of Birds Creek to wash the clothes. This task involved a lot more than just dipping the clothes in the creek and hanging them in the sun to dry. My Ma always had a supply of Lye soap that she had made in the shed by the smoke house. First we had to build a fire under a big black iron pot that sat under the shade of an old oak tree at the top of the creek bank. The men's overalls and shirts were put into the boiling hot water along with some lye soap, and using a large wooden handle, the shirts would be swished around in the hot soapy water until all the dirt and grime would loosen from the clothes. Ma would not let me do this chore for fear I would burn myself, but I was always right there watching her complete the work, and then I would be able to take [the clothes] down to the creek to rinse them out in the running clear cool water of Birds Creek. This chore was always fun because before getting the overalls and shirts totally rinsed, I always made it a point to fall into the water accidentally, and before Ma knew I was getting my swimming time in while rinsing out the clothes. Later Ma would come down to the creek and together we would take a few minutes to swim and take a bath in the cool spring water of Birds Creek.

[9]As related to Gene Haymon by his aunt, Gracie Haymon Herring, daughter of Lonnie and Earnestine Haymon.

I will always remember that even though I knew my Ma was totally exhausted from the hard work of wash day, she took the time to play with me in the creek, acting like a kid and letting go of the stress of daily living on Birds Creek. I think that Ma took this time because she knew the value of having her family close and at heart. One would only have to visit the Haymon/Watson Cemetery, look a little to the right at the front of the cemetery and see the graves of three boys, buried in three consecutive days, March 3, 4 and 5, 1920, when a great outbreak of influenza killed many children in our area. Being so young and not understanding all that went on, I am sure I could never know what Ma had gone through, but all I know is that she was always concerned for our safety and probably a little over protective of the rest of her children.

LONNIE HAYMON FAMILY, 1915: This picture was received from Mrs. Albert Haymon, Route 4, Box 192A, Leesville, La. 71446.
The photograph was taken at Lonnie Haymon's old home place on Byrd's Creek.
First row: left to right, are Noah Haymon, Elijah Haymon and Allen Haymon, deceased.
Back Row, left to right, Mr. Lonnie Haymon holding Gracie Haymon Herrin; Mrs. Ernestine Haymond, holding Floyd Haymon.
The dog laying on the porch behind Mr. Haymond belonged to Mr. McKee, the photographer, who was from Texas. Mr. and Mrs. Haymon both are deceased.

Lonnie Haymon family, 1915. Source: Leesville Leader.

One of my brothers that died was Allen, and my Ma always said he was going to be her little preacher boy when he grew up. Later my Pa told me that while all of the influenza was going on in our family, he and Ma sat up day and night trying to nurse the children back to good health. Dr. Jeane would stop by to see about the children, but really there was not much he could do that they were not doing already, because there was no vaccine to cure the disease. Pa said that Ma would walk the floors continually praying for her children, and in the evening time she would go out to the magnolia tree that stood in the corner of our yard, and she would get down on her knees and pray—asking God to not take her little children (seven had contracted the illness and were gravely ill), and then she would specifically pray for Allen, her little preacher boy. Allen was almost 10 and before he got sick, he would line up the children and the dogs and cats in the front yard, and he would get up on a chair and preach to the kids and pets. I don't remember this, but Ma said he was already at 10 a pretty good spokesman for the Good Book. The tomb at Haymon/Watson attests to the fact that Allen succumbed to the disease. Little did my Ma know that God heard her prayers, and later after leaving our home at the Rifle Range, four of her boys became preachers, and one of her boys is still pastoring a church today. I heard my brothers often say they hoped they could make Allen proud of them as he watched from afar.

Well, it was getting late and Ma said we had to leave the creek and get to the house to start supper. Sure hated to stop enjoying the refreshing swim, but I knew Ma's work was not over for the day. Pa and the boys would be coming from the fields soon, and after a hard day's work, they would be very hungry, and Ma knew how to make up a pan of biscuits, cook some beans, and if we were lucky a little dessert, but most of the time that was reserved for Sunday's meal. Life on Birds Creek was simple, but it was such a happy time. We all worked hard, played very little, but there was always time for the family to get together every day. After the evening meal, we always closed our day by gathering in by the fireplace, sitting in a circle, and singing together as a family, and Pa or Ma would pray for us all before we retired for the night. I loved Birds Creek community and I will always cherish the love and memories of this very special place in my heart forever.

Snake Root Digging Time[10]

The crops were laid back and now all we had to do was to watch and wait for harvest time!! Maybe now that the field work had slacked up, the boys of Lonnie and Earnestine Haymon would be able to get in a little fishing, hunting, swimming, and just horsing around in the woods. That is what they thought, but of course, their Pa, Lonnie Haymon, had other intentions. This warm summer morning in 1940 would turn out to be an interesting one for sure.

Being one of the younger boys, I, Arthur Haymon, was hoping my brothers, Elijah, Oscar, Floyd, and Noah would be able to convince Pa to allow us boys some leisure, but as usual for Pa's like mine, [he believed] an idle mind was the devil's workshop, so there was no way my Pa was going to allow any fishing, hunting, or swimming down at the old water hole today!! Today, we were going to go to the woods and dig snake root!!!

Most of our time was spent in the fields as we prepared the land for farming, then planting our crops of corn, peas, beans, peanuts, squash, potatoes, tomatoes, peppers, cucumber, watermelon, and okra, and after that harvesting and storing the crops, kept us busy most of the year. So when we had a little off time from farming, my brothers and I loved to swim at the old swimming hole and fish up and down Birds Creek. This day was the day we were hoping for one of those leisure activities, but as I said today we were following Pa into the deep woods to look for snake root. In addition to our farming cash crops this activity of looking for and digging snake root was another way my Pa helped to support his family in early 1940. As a young boy I never knew what the roots were used for, but long after we were moved out of Fort Polk, I learned that these little roots were used to make medicines and that the dried roots were another way for families like ours to make a small living out on the farm.

Arthur Haymon, WWII veteran and Heritage Family member, Birds Creek Communiity. Source: Gene Haymon.

Digging snake roots was not a leisure activity. First it was very difficult finding the stuff and then when you found one, you had to be very careful how you harvested it from the ground. It sold by the pound but the problem [was] it sold by the dried pound. Once we dug up the snake roots, put them in our carrying bags, we then walked for miles back to our home, carrying these heavy bags of snake roots over our shoulders.

[10]As told to Gene Haymon by his uncle, Arthur Haymon.

It was hard work indeed. In fact after a week of digging snake roots we were happy to be back in the fields working the crops. Once we got the snake root home, then we had to sort it out into piles, lay it out in the sun, and dry the roots of all moisture. Once it was dried, then we tied strings around it, sort of making it into a small bale of snake root, somewhat like one would make a bale of hay today. I think today the root sells for like $115.00 per pound. That sounds like a lot of money, and we certainly did not get that kind of money in 1940, but the real problem is that it took a lot of snake root to make a pound of dried snake root, ready for the market. I figure it took me at least two days to get enough of it to make a pound.

Jim Huggins

Written by Jim Huggins born to Heritage Family members James Robert Huggins, Jr., and Vera Verene Johnson. Great-grandfather Robert Huggins was in the "rifle range" area prior to 1850. As a father, he and Mary Jane Swain Huggins rescued an infant and raised him to become James Robert Huggins, Sr., born in the Walnut Hill area. They gave him the Huggins name. James Robert was very active in the Six-Mile Community. He served as Justice of the Peace, Notary, and temporary Post Master at Slabtown. The Huggins family had been in the "range" for ninety plus years by the time of the government buy-out. Grandpa James R., "Big Jim", raised two families in the Six-Mile area prior to having to leave when he was about sixty-five years of age.

Heritage Farming

This Spring Day in 1940 likely was the same as the days of many springs past; the future could not be seen. Spring is the start of the renewal cycle—the awakening. The birds, bees, blossoms and yearnings all come alive. The rule was to "plant after the last frost." And, it was said that "if the corn tasseled by the fourth of July, it would be a good crop."

On this day, new land would be cleared, "turned over" and disked to let lay in rest for a short period prior to being rowed for planting and cultivation. Crops were planted on either "rows" or "hills" with the middles being wide enough for the plow horse to cultivate. The families planted high yield efficient crops so the entire plant could be harvested for human or animal consumption. Sweet potatoes, peanuts, corn, Irish potatoes and peas were primary field and cash crops. The seeds were largely saved from the last crop harvested. The sweet potatoes and potatoes (mostly the red variety) would be put out to start making "eyes." From these sprouts, slips or draws, were cut and planted. If the sweet potatoes had weevils, new slips would have to be obtained.

Most farms [were] worked by the men and older boys doing the plowing and the women and younger children doing the planting. The gardens were watered from a bucket and dipper when the little plants were seen wilting. Many of the small plants were given a little water daily until the root system developed if the rain was scarce. The entire family stood guard over the plants to keep insects, birds, cows and raccoons away.

These were subsistence farms. Primarily the food was grown for home consumption and to feed the support animals. At harvest time, the extra would be taken to town and to neighbors to be bartered or sold for staples and cash.

My father told me that after the gathering of crops and fattening of hogs all summer, just before the school session, that they would take hogs to Leesville and sell them to get staples and school clothes. He said his mother would buy him five new shirts for school. Much to his dismay, all of the shirts would be just alike.

Only after the field and garden work was done, could the kids play.

The Exodus: The Ending or the Beginning?

My range family lived on Six Mile Creek with the children attending school at Big Creek. I don't know the exact time this family moved from the range, but my father (Little Jim) graduated High School at Pitkin on May 15, 1941. The family moved to Carsey Road between DeRidder and Merryville. My aunts, Ruth and Wilma, attended school at Merryville with Aunt Wilma (the youngest) graduating from Rosepine in 1946.

I had heard some stories of forced removal and displacement of many families from the range, but my father never spoke of any adverse problems with the Huggins families' removal. My Aunt Ruth Huggins Calhoun told a story to the "Senior Advocate" that her father (my grand-father "Big Jim" [James Robert Huggins]) finally decided to sell and move when the Army built a rifle range in the field next to his house. It was said he moved for the safety of his family. This personal decision to go away was most likely the reason for the lack of hard feelings or a long held grudge.

On the range, Big Jim was a Justice of the Peace and Notary. Heritage Family Member Leon Swain remembers him holding court in his home for various local transgressions within his purview. After the family settled in Rosepine, again Grandpa Jim became Justice of the Peace. In the Rosepine home, I was present for weddings he performed and for the collection of fines for speeding tickets issued in Rosepine. Deputy Marshall Jeff Johnson would catch a speeder (early '50s) and escort him to my grandfather's home. There, the law breaker would have to pay the fine on the spot or...

As a child, I would go to the post office for my grandparents and some of the mail would be addressed to "Judge Huggins." Oh, to have one of those letters now! What school my grandfather attended, I do not know, but his adopted father, Robert L. Huggins, owned land near the Holly Springs Cemetery. That puts Big Jim in the same locale all of his "range" life.

Of the nine living children of James Robert Huggins, Sr., one moved out of the range to the Pitkin area, four to Rosepine, three to the DeRidder area, and one all the way to Lake Charles. All carried the small subsistence truck farming way of life with them except for one. There was a difference for each family socially as they individually dealt with the new world outside. New means of support were added for their families, with farming becoming secondary.

The huge war spending brought forth societal changes such that each displaced person was exposed to a more rapid pace than if they had remained in the relative isolation of the family community enclaves on the range. The war spending was the final straw that broke the Great Depression's hold on the nation. With that, there were many new things for the displaced households to experience. Butane stoves replaced wood burners; communities in some areas had [the] REA (Rural Electrification [Administration]) and cars.

I like to think that the late 1940's through the mid 1950's were years of the "great front-porch sitting." It was for our family. By this period, many families were relying on "store bought" instead of home

grown and preserved. This social change gave more free time. Cars gave rapid access to family and friends that had been longed for and missed. This wonderful time happened just prior to the advent of affordable air conditioning and television! The Huggins family was likely typical in their dispersion from the range. The families moved with and followed the "family unit" for love and support.

The improved economy was ripe with new inventions and opportunity, thus the "Greatest Generation" gave us the "gift." How will we spend it is still a question?

Now, back to the opening. Exodus: The Ending or the Beginning? I submit the answer is "both."

James Robert Huggins, Sr., and Mary Louella "Ella" Brannon Green Huggins. Ella Brannon Green Huggins had five children during her first marriage to Robert Thomas (George Robert) Green, all of whom died by approximately two years of age. After his first wife died, Ella married James Robert Huggins, Sr., and together they had three children, all of whom survived. In the photo above, they are pictured in one of the two homes where they lived after the "exodus" from the range, likely the "Carsey" place located between DeRidder and Merryville, LA. Behind them on the edge of the porch is a shelf, and next to the wall hanging high is one of "Granny Ella's" flower pot buckets. Above and to the right of her head is a wooden water bucket for drawing fresh water from the well each morning. If the water was left to sit too long, it would get "wiggle-tails" (mosquito larva). To the right of the water bucket is the wash pan. After hands were washed, the water would be tossed into the yard. Source: Jim Huggins.

Don Marler

Written by Don C. Marler, a much published author of history and genealogy, born in and living in Hineston, Rapides Parish, LA. The photo above shows Mr. Marler wearing a Navy "Frogman" uniform, a precursor to the Navy SEALS.

Vernon Parish 1940

Vernon Parish and surrounding parishes was home to vast stretches of Southern Yellow Pine forests that had never been harvested by mankind until the harvest began in the early 1900s. Long Leaf, the predominate type of pine, grew especially well in the hills and Short Leaf pine grew better in the river bottoms.

Through the centuries both types grew to be giants of the forests and their large crowns largely prevented sunlight from reaching the ground. The Southern Yellow Pine is coniferous (evergreen) losing about one third of its leaves (needles) each year. These needles created a thick carpet on the ground that further inhibited the sunlight from reaching the earth below. Periodically this carpet would burn due to lightening strikes, manmade accidents or deliberate action. The triple factors of limited sunlight, needle carpet and fires resulted in a park like effect under these majestic trees. The ground was relatively clean and free of underbrush making travel through the forest easy and pleasant.

Around 1900 wealthy timber speculators moved into this nature wonderland and began "clear cutting" the timber and "cutting out" in the early 1930s. Cutting out had, perhaps, an unintended double meaning—they "cut out" the timber and "cut out" of the area; that is, they abandoned the land. The huge sawmills and turpentine camps were closed and speculators were left barren land and no vision for its future except payment of taxes. The land lay open and unused by its owners. Into this vacuum moved the small subsistence farmers and stockmen. They had always used the open range but the forest yielded little forage for livestock. Now that the timber was gone grass began to grow. The farmers now had better resources for their horses, cattle, sheep and goats.

The landscape was littered with the residue from the fallen trees and the stumps that had nurtured them. The left over wood (known as lighter wood) and the stumps were rich in resin that was highly flammable.

The local farmers mistakenly believed that their livestock benefitted more if the old grass was burned just before the spring grass came out so they deliberately burned some or all of the range each year for the next 30 plus years. By 1940 most of the timber refuse was burned away along with the underbrush and pine seedlings that were trying to emerge. The stumps were still there and each spring the fresh green grass served as background for the black stumps. The burning also enhanced the growth of wild azaleas (aka honey suckle), huckleberry and other plants that benefitted from the burning. This beautiful sight was greatly enhanced by the size and height of the slopping hills that one could see for miles.

In the 1940s the government began trying to prevent and control wood fires through use of fire towers. These towers were manned and the person in the tower reported large plumes of smoke or fires he could observe; then crews were sent to control the fire.

Eventually a "stock law" was passed and the open range was no more. Most of the uncontrolled burning was stopped; now there is limited controlled burning and a few rogue fires.

In the late 1940s a new industry came to the area. A distillation plant was built in Allen Parish to render pine stumps into Naval Stores—turpentine, paint and medicine. The plant hired contractors who bought the stumps from landowners, removed them from the ground and brought them to the plant. Most contractors brought in the largest bulldozers available at the time. Some stumps were so large they could not be removed in this manner and had to be blown-out with dynamite. Most of the stumps were too large and heavy to be handled after extraction so holes were bored into them and dynamite was used to blow them apart. Virtually all the stumps in the region were removed to the distillery in Allen Parish.

Following this stump removal activity, new laws, and other efforts to stop woods burning, the underbrush, vines, briars and southern yellow pines began to thrive.

A Fast Red Roan

We had open range and our hogs and cows were free to go. Cows went 3-4 miles away from home, especially in summer. Since we lived in the swamp the hogs stayed closer in. My dad did not like to ride and I believe was afraid of horses. I was the oldest of 3 sons so it was my job to keep tabs on the cows. The horse was a red roan and was very fast; but most of all he loved to herd cattle. I got him when I was 12 and was about 14 in the photo below. The horse was used for plowing and pulling a "Jersey" wagon and a ground slide. I remember the days of the dipping vats but was too young to herd our cattle to be dipped. My dad did that on foot and sometimes teamed up with neighbors to bring them in.

Don Marler on his red roan horse, ca. 1946.

Cheryl Tilley Perkins

Cheryl Tilley Perkins is the daughter of Hoy and Gertrude Townley Tilley and was raised in Fullerton, Louisiana. She is descended from many of the Pioneer and Heritage families of Vernon Parish. She is currently President of the Vernon Historical and Genealogical Society and Vice President of the Heritage Family Association. She is married to Dalton Perkins, also a Heritage Family descendant, and has one daughter, Brandie.

History of the Fullerton Pentecostal Church

Many Heritage landowners and their descendants attended, and continue to attend, the Fullerton Pentecostal Church. My thanks go to Heritage Family descendants Donna Swain West, Ethel Swain Sweat and Rev. William (Billy) Nash, for helping fill in the blanks about the Church. The following is a brief history of the Church.

The Pentecostal movement had been introduced into the Whiskey Chitto and Mill Creek Communities as early as 1916 but for reasons I can only speculate about, it did not reach Fullerton until the late 1930's, when a Brush Arbor was built near the bank of the west fork of Six Mile Creek. The name of the evangelist who preached at the Brush Arbor has been lost to time, but it is believed that the first pastor of the Church was a Rev. Weeks. In 1938 a parcel of land was donated by Mr. Henry Mitchell Calhoun and his third wife for the purpose of building a permanent structure. The small building was completed in 1938, and with a few additions has been in continuous use since that time.

According to stories told to me by my Mother and other people who were members of the Church, it was a wonderful time of worship and fellowship. But like many good things that end, some of the families who attended worship at the Church were forced to move when the government took their land shortly after 1940. Additionally, many of the young people left the area after WWII to find jobs over in East Texas and elsewhere, and they never moved back. The teachings of the Church and the love of God was never lost though. It was expressed time and time again throughout the years every time there was a gathering, whether it was a family reunion, a wedding, or even a funeral.

By the 1960's, when I was a little girl, the attendance at the Church had dwindled to a few elderly sisters, one or two brothers, and a handful of children. Through the prayers and dedication of the faithful few, the Church survived and I have to say that some of my most cherished memories center around that church.

The doors were never locked. A person could go inside any time of the night or day. During the summers when our cousins would visit from Texas, a group of us would often go into the Church and someone would play the piano and we would sing for hours. Sometimes we prayed.

There was no air conditioning but we did have very nice "funeral home fans." When it got too hot inside, we went outside and had service under the big oak trees.

The pews were made of planks and we had no cushions. Pentecostals back then didn't sit down a lot during services anyway.

Our old piano was usually out of tune, but we sang anyway. If a song was written in too high a key, we would stop, change to a lower key, and keep on singing.

Some of us kids would bring mason jars full of water and sit them under the benches, so if we got thirsty during the singing we could reach under and get us a drink of water and then go back to singing. When a child got sleepy they would be placed on pallets under the pews. I never saw a child get stepped on even though there was shouting and worshipping all around them.

A Revival was not just held on special occasions such as Easter. One was held whenever the Pastor felt the community or church body had a spiritual need. The length of the Revival was more than three

days and the length of the services was more than a couple of hours each night. When we had Revival it could last for weeks! I think the longest revival that I remember was one which lasted 7 weeks without any day being taken off. The hours of the services were usually 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. That particular revival was during my senior year of high school and I never missed a service or any day of school and I still graduated as Valedictorian of my class.

Baptizing took place in the West Fork of Six Mile Creek (Rustville Creek) or in Little Brushy. I remember one time a young preacher was in the water getting ready to baptize someone and a snake slithered by. The young preacher was scared and wanted to get out of the water, but Uncle Harvey Goleman (who was blind in one eye and at least 80 years old) hollered "Go ahead and baptize him, preacher. If the snake bites you, we'll pray for you." Needless to say the young preacher had to go ahead and baptize the person or lose face. The snake didn't bite him.

That was years and memories ago and the Church has now been modernized with air conditioning, cushioned pews and a Baptismal. In 2013, a special homecoming service was held to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Church.

Below are some of the former Pastors of the Church. An attempt was made to list every Pastor, but someone could have been inadvertently left off. They are in no certain order, and their names are spelled to the best of my ability:

Rev. Weeks	Rev. Arnold Murphy	Rev. A. J. MaGee
Rev. Rickey Andreas	Rev. Jonas Willis	Rev. Joseph McKee
Rev. T. C. Bonnette	Rev. Charles Cooper	Rev. Roy Clark
Rev. Bayham	Rev. Malcolm Jeane	Rev. Louis MaGee
Rev. Bob Bunting	Rev. William L. McMahon	Rev. Milstead
Rev. McManus	Rev. Garnie McMullin	Rev. Johnny Glenn
Rev. Felix Morrison	Rev. Billy Harrington	Rev. Danny Keel
Rev. Oscar C. Dyess	Rev. Wesley Coon (current Pastor)	

Salvation by Whiskey Still?

I think Fullerton is where Bro. A.J. MaGee was pastor and prayed for the Lord to blow up all the whiskey stills in the area. A man came to church one night with a 6-shooter and told Bro. MaGee, "You prayed for my still to blow up and it did, and I have come to kill you." Bro. MaGee said, "Fine, but would you allow me to get down on my knees and pray one more time?" The angry man agreed. As the Pastor was praying and thanking God that he could die for preaching against whiskey stills, the angry fellow ran out of the church screaming, "I cannot kill someone praying like this!" Later that month, the would-be-killer was saved.

By Bro. Billy Nash, Heritage Family member (story of events from ca. 1940)

Fullerton Pentecostal Church, ca. 1935 - 1940. A numbered list of individuals follow. Source: Cheryl Tilley Perkins.

List of individuals identified in the photograph above of the Fullerton Pentecostal Church, as compiled by Cheryl Tilley Perkins, with lots of "help" from others.

1. Samuel Houston Sweat 3
2. Vernie Nessmith Sweat 4
3. Lydia Maybelle Jeter Scroggs
4. Maime Nash Morrison
5. Elmar Odis Morrison
6. William Reid Powell
7. Ottie Davis Powell
8. Claudia Johnson Townley
9. Emma K. Perkins Nash
10. Charlie Washington Nash
11. Rev. Archibald J. "A.J." MaGee (Pastor)
12. Sister Iona Talley MaGee (Pastor's wife)
13. Unknown (female evangelist)
14. Tommie Morrison
15. Irene Monk Morrison
16. Dawn Morrison
17. Unknown
18. Tommye Lou Morrison Bonnette
19. Unknown
20. Nellie Pearl Akin Cooley
21. Sherman Sweat (born 1926) or Johnny Sweat (born 1928)
22. Florien Townley Sensing Bailey Meaut
23. Juanita "Dutch" Sweat Rapier
24. W. M. "Buddy" King
25. James L. "J. L." Sweat
26. Unknown
27. Norma Lee Sweat Janeau
28. James W. "J. W." Townley
29. Willie Lee "Bill" Townley
30. Unknown
31. Willie Sweat
32. Opal "Opie" Pelt Morgan
33. Raymond Earl Sweat
34. Elmina Parker
35. Morris Ray Sweat
36. Gertrude Marie Townley Tilley
37. Unknown
38. Unknown
39. James Parker
40. Floy Ione "Jackie" Townley Jackson
41. Sherman Sweat (born 1926) or Johnny Sweat (born 1928)
42. Wanda Sue MaGee
43. Thought to be Odena White
44. Eirtha Lea White Schroeder (twin to Bertha)
45. Bertha Lea White Brister Poterpan (twin to Eirtha)
46. Unknown
47. Unknown
48. Unknown
49. Unknown
50. Thought to be Doris Parker
51. Unknown
52. Unknown
53. Unknown
54. Dudley Sweat
55. Unknown
56. Unknown
57. Joyce King
58. Lois King Machac
59. Unknown
60. Ronald Sweat
61. Freddie Sweat
62. Unknown
63. Unknown
64. Lavonne "Monkey" Sweat
65. Unknown

The Challenges of Identifying People on Old Photos

I am an "amateur" historian and genealogist and have been working on my family tree for 20 years. I can't begin to tell you what the picture of the Fullerton Pentecostal Church family means to me. It is basically a family portrait of my Mom's family since the majority of the people on the photo are her aunts, uncles, and 1st cousins on both her mom's and dad's sides of the family. Now just imagine the upset I felt when I began to try to identify additional people on the photo and realized that I had a lot of people identified wrong all these years!

Ethel Swain Sweat had given me a copy of the picture years ago, and right away I sat down and identified many of the people on the picture, even though my Mom and her siblings had died years earlier and I had no one in my immediate family to help me. Of course I recognized my Mom and her siblings, Bro. and Sister MaGee, my Great Aunt Claudia Johnson Townley, my Aunt Vernie and Uncle Sam Sweat, Sister Jessie McKee, my Great Aunt Callie Hall Townley (who is also my Great Great Aunt on my Hall side), and many of my cousins. I even went so far as to put the picture in the Vernon Historical and Genealogical Society's publication, *The Vernon Genealogist*! I was so proud. Boy, did I just have a rude awakening.

It is truly amazing that multiple people can look at the same picture and identify a person as someone different than the person before them did! I found out that the person I and others thought was Aunt Callie all these years was really Maimie Nash Morrison, and the lady I thought was Jessie McKee was Maybelle Scruggs. How in the world could these women look like the image I had in my mind of Aunt Callie and Sister Jessie?

There were others that were misidentified. Someone had my uncle's name on another person that I knew wasn't my uncle. Someone else had that same person identified as my Mom's 1st cousin who would have been about 11 years old at the time the picture was taken. The young man on the photo was at least 17 or 18 years old and could not have been my Mom's 1st cousin! I still don't know who he is, though he does look like someone that could be kin. A big problem with the photo is that many within the group are cousins several times over because of intermarriage within the family (our tree doesn't fork), so everyone has "that look!"

When I had a clear conflict on identification, I went to Census records to verify age and to determine what that person would have looked like, or their size, at the time of the photo. If the person looked 20 but was only 7 at the time of the photo, it was a very clear sign the person was misidentified. I went to cemetery records, I tried to match up children with parents, I tried facial recognition, etc. I went to the Church and looked at an enlarged version of the photo, but that only helped me with the adults. There were so many children, and many are hid behind another child. Even the list of persons that is at the Church has misidentified people on it. One person's name was on the list twice. I went to see Ethel and she agreed with me that some folks just "wished" their relative was on the picture, so they put down their name!

I have written the above to stress to you how important it is to identify persons on photos immediately after they are taken. If you have old pictures from your parents or grandparents, sit down and start now trying to identify the people, while those that may have knowledge of them are still alive and can help you. If you don't do this, you might find yourself in the same situation that I have found myself in—having a picture with lots of "unknown" people on it.

Clarriece Whitley Rector

Written by Clarriece Maxine Whitley Rector, born to Heritage Family members James Thomas Whitley and Cora Malora Jeane Whitley, and granddaughter of Heritage Family members Dr. James William Jeane and Marion Monroe Whitley, married to Jerome Wesley Rector.

The stories below of grandfather and grandmother Jeane, as written by Clarriece Whitley Rector, were passed down from her mother, Cora Malora Jeane Whitley.

The things that I can remember about Dr. Jeane from the time I was 1 yr. old until I was 17 yrs. of age. I am his grand daughter Clarriece Whitley Rector. My mother was Cora Malora Jeane Whitley the wife of Thomas Whitley. My mother was the sixth Child of Dr. Jeane, and there were 7 younger than her.

James William Jeane M. D.
Born in 1870 Died in 1947

Dr. Jeane was the first child born to the union of James Monroe Jeane Jr (1844-1925) and Orelia McDonald Jeane (1848-1943). Dr. Jeane was born at Hickory Branch near Lake Charles, La. on Feb. 7 - 1870. He was one of 15 Children. His father and mother had 15 Children in the span of 20 years. There is no doubt in my mind that she had several in diapers at one time.

Dr. Jeane's Siblings were as follows.

	DOB	DOD
John Thomas Jeane	1871	1947
Seaburn Jeane	1872	1956
Adam M. Jeane	1874	1901
Allen Augustus Jeane	1875	1953
Rebecca M. Jeane Fletcher	1876	1927
George Wesley Jeane	1879	1901

	D.O.B	D.O.D
Henry Irving Jeane	1879	1901
Charles N. Jeane	1881	1918
Martha Catherine Jeane Rae	1882	——.
Nancy J. Jeane Smith	1883	——.
Benjamin D. Jeane	1885	1981.
Zeby Jeane	1886	——.
Samuel Jeane	1887	1954
Beulah M. Jeane Childers	1890	1954

Personally I do not know the date of my grandparents marriage but I do know that they were 1st cousins.

My grand mother was Laura Cordelia Jean. She was the daughter of Henry Pamplin Jean and Mary E. Smith Jean. We all called her Granny Doc. She was born in 1872 and died 1949.

I do not know where Dr. Jeane's first home was but I knew the one at Fort Polk from the time I was 1 yr old until I was 10 yrs. old. It was About 1915 when he moved to what was known as the Mitch Calhoun place. If that be the true date then my mother would have been 15 yrs. old then and she would have had 3 more brothers and a sister older than her and 6 that were younger.

This home was located on a hill where he could look out over most of his land in the Whisky Chitto Community.

They lived in a wood frame home. There was 4 rooms on one side and two on the other

side with a dog trot down thraugh the center. One end of the dog trot made a small back porch. The house had 3 brick chimneys. One in the living room, one in a bedroom and one in the Kitchen. at this time he had a small medical office in the front yard. He alway had one bed room that he kept vacant in case he had a very sick person he had to bed down.

Dr. Deane went to Medical School in Tennessee in 1910, 1911, and 1912. He was just a good old Country doctor. He was a good Christian man and he was a lay preacher at 2 churches in the Fort Polk area. He never started or ended a day without prayer. In his early days of medical practice he went by horse back or buggy. It was told to me when he had to go and stay for days with a sick person and go without sleep that when he started home the horse knew the way home and Grandad would sleep all the way home.

He had many patients but his pay was slim. Some times he got money but a lot of people paid him with crops from their fields. Dr. Deane also raised mostly what they ate and my grandmother canned everything that she could. I always loved her pickled peaches.

Dr. Deane practice grew as the years went by And he got so many patients that Dr. Reid in Leesville became envious of his practice and took him to Court. He tried to prove that he was not

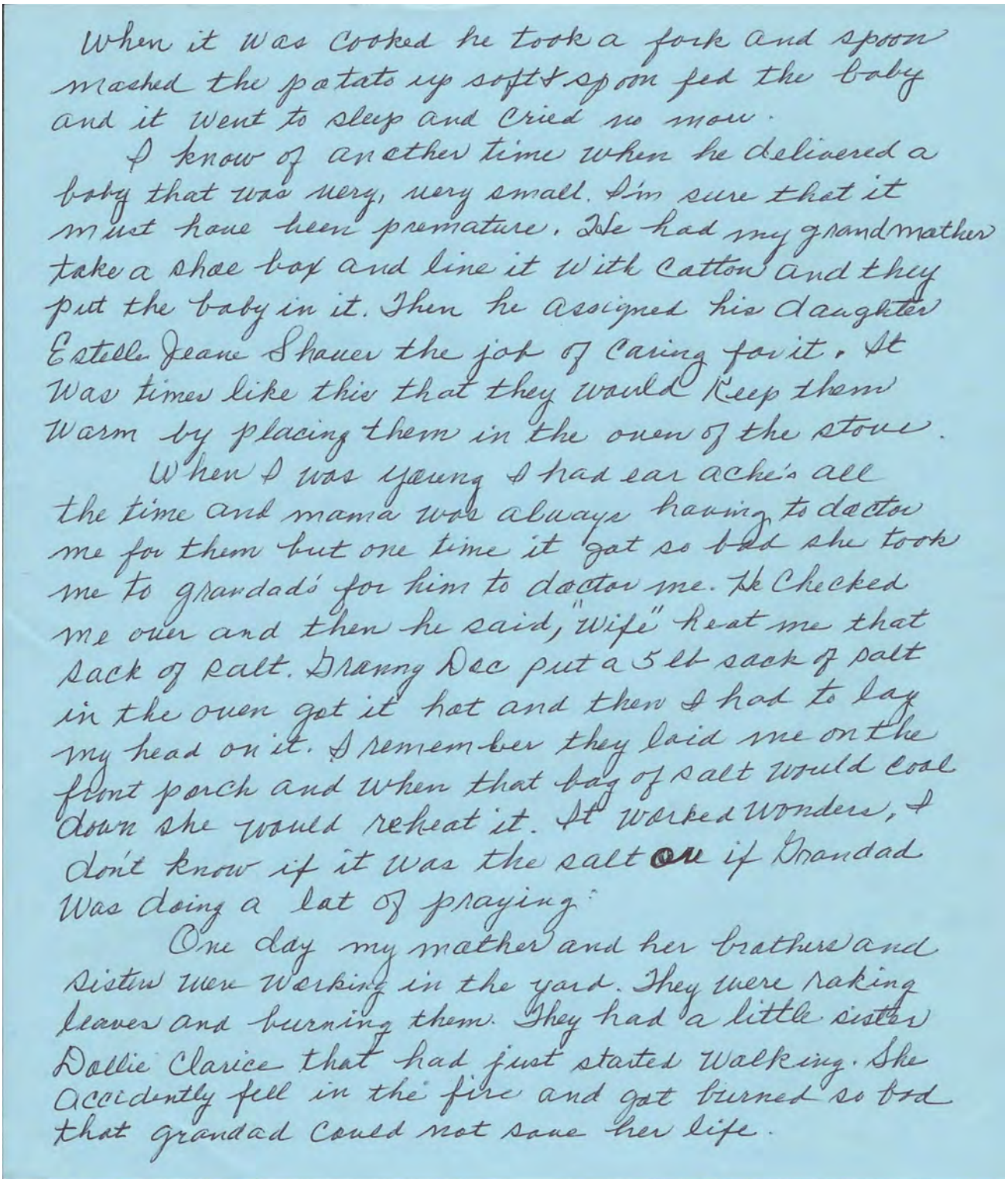
a legal doctor but so many people come to court and backed my grandfather that the case was dropped. After all of this Dr. Reid became a good friend and he would let grandfather use his hospital many times for different surgeries and other sickness.

This is some of the stories my mother told me about my grandfather.

One time they had a storm at Whiskeychitto. I'm sure it was what we call a Tornado. The storm hit Mr. Henry Eddlemons home. We had a son named Wiley and the storm drove a piece of Wood through Willy's leg so they came quickly to get Dr. Deane to save his life. Dr. Deane laid him on the dining room table and sawed his leg off With a hand saw. All that Doc had was a little Whiskey and ether to give him for the surgery but everything turned out good and Wiley lived to be an old man.

He delivered a baby one nite and the mother was going to breast feed but she had no milk and the baby was crying because it was hungry. Dr. Deane asked the father of the baby. What do you have in the house to eat, the man replied, All we have is Sweet potatoes. Dr. Deane said, go get me one and wash it up good. He came back With the potato and Doc laid it on the hot coals of the fire place and cooked it.

Editor's note: Marie Cryer White also tells the story of the tornado at Whiskey Chitto ("Whiskachitta"), described above by Clarriece Whitley Rector, and adds that it took place at what became known as the "Sharpie" Davis blow down. Vernon Davis Smith tells that his father, Cleon Smith, made peg legs and crutches for Wiley.



When it was cooked he took a fork and spoon mashed the potato up soft & spoon fed the baby and it went to sleep and cried no more.

I know of another time when he deliavered a baby that was very, very small. I'm sure that it must have been premature. We had my grandmother take a shoe box and line it with cotton and they put the baby in it. Then he assigned his daughter Estelle Jeane Shaver the job of caring for it. It was times like this that they would keep them warm by placing them in the oven of the stove.

When I was young I had ear ache's all the time and mama was always having to doctor me for them but one time it got so bad she took me to grandad's for him to doctor me. He checked me over and then he said, "Wife" heat me that sack of salt. Granny Doc put a 5 lb sack of salt in the oven got it hot and then I had to lay my head on it. I remember they laid me on the front porch and when that bag of salt would cool down she would reheat it. It worked Wonders, I don't know if it was the salt or if Grandad was doing a lot of praying.

One day my mather and her brathers and sisters were working in the yard. They were raking leaves and burning them. They had a little sister Dollie Clarice that had just started walking. She accidently fell in the fire and got burned so bad that grandad could not save her life.

Editor's note: Clarriece Whitley Rector and other family members referred to her grandmother Jeane as "Granny Doc."

The stories on the pages below were experienced and remembered by Clarriece Whitley Rector.

All of Dr. Jeane's Children had Children of their own except Oscar and Claude Jeane.

Uncle Oscar was my favorite. We use to stay With us a lot, but he lived in a log home next to Grandad Jeane's.

Uncle Oscar's first wife was a mail order bride from Rockford, Illinois. Her name was Clara Prentis. When she came to La. she brought with her a younger brother that she was raising. Uncle Oscar helped her to raise the boy until they separated. His second wife was Rachel Haymon and she had four younger siblings that she was having to finish raising. Their names were J.y, Woodrow, Delsie and Kirby Haymon. Then years later he helped Aunt Rachel to raise a granddaughter. He had no Children of his own but he always had Children. He was married the third time but I did not get to know his last wife.

My most memorable trip to Grandad's House.

It was on Friday and my Dad "Thomas Whitley" Came in that day and told my Mom, you and the Kids get ready I am going to take you to Hickey Chitto to see your dad. He said, I have arranged for my brother to take Care of our Animals while we are gone.

Before we left Dad went out to the pine pile and cut some long splinters and put them in the Car. Of Course I did not know what they were for but it did not take long for me to find out.

We did fine until we got on what they called terminal road and all at once a black Cat Crossed the

Road in front of us - My Dad was very superstious, so just at that moment he stopped the Car looked at my mom and said, wife we might as well turn back and go home for we are going to have problems. Mama said Oh! No, we have already come this far lets go on - From that point on we had 3 flats and thats when I learned what the splinters were for. If you were to poor to own a flash light you used a torch. We held the torches while Dad fixed the flats - That was when you used Cold patches and hand pumps to Air the tubes up. We had lots of trouble but an enjoyable trip after all.

During Dr. Jeanes medical practice he Delivered over 1400 babies, about 68 of these were his own grandChildren either living are deceased.

He was a good father, a good grandfather And a great doctor but was unable to help his own self when he became sick. Cancer took his life in 1947 and my grandmother died in 1949 With Rumatoid Arthritis

The Children that they left behind to carry on the family tree were as follows,

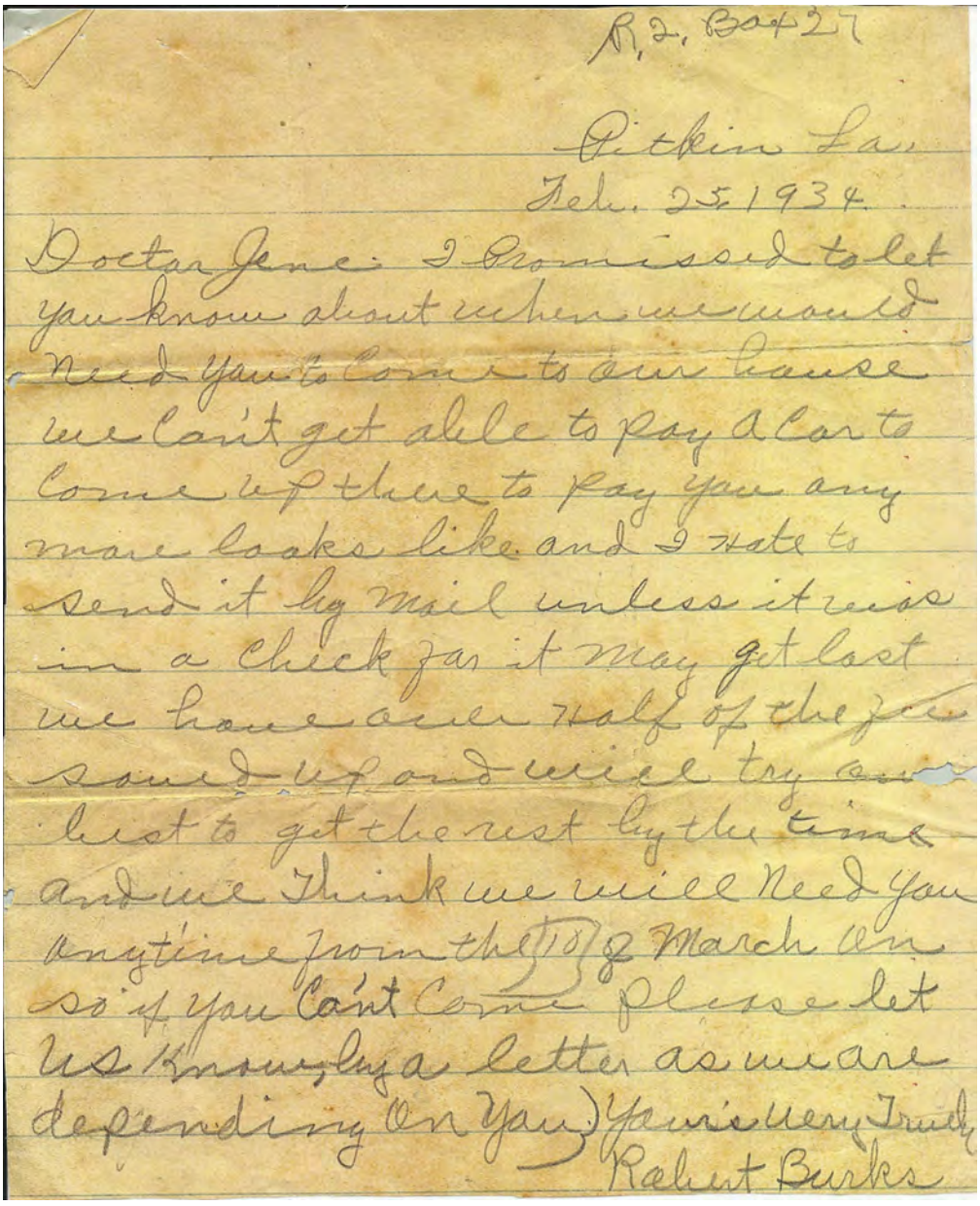
		No. of Children
Joseph Adam Jeane	———	(4)
Mae Augusta Jeane Cryer	1891 - 1977	(8)
Garrett Edward Jeane	1891 - 1978	(14)
Wilburn R. Jeane	1898 - 1992	(12)

Children

Cora Malara Jeane Whitley 1900 - 1991 (3)
Almer Alexander Jeane — 1905 - 1974 (2)
Oscar Allen Jeane — 1903 - 1975 (0)
Claude Cecil Jeane — 1907 - 1978 (0)
Estelle Olar Jeane Shaver — 1909 - 2001 (10)
James Sheldon Jeane — 1912 - 1997 (8)
Blanche Cordelia Jeane Craft, Haymon 1914 - ——. (5)
Gertie Madyline Jeane Haymon 1916 - ——. (4)

Girls, L to R: Estelle Jeane Shavers, Mae Jeane Cryer, Cora Jeane Whitley, Blanche Jeane Haymon, Gertie Jeane Haymon; Boys, L to R: Wilburn Jeane, Garrett Jeane, Sheldon Jeane, Claude Jeane. Photo taken at one end of the Dr. Jeane home. Source: Clarriece Whitley Rector.

Some people had no way to get a hold of Dr. Jeane's but by letter. This is a letter from a family that was expecting a baby and they wanted to make sure they could get Dr. Jeane's there in time.



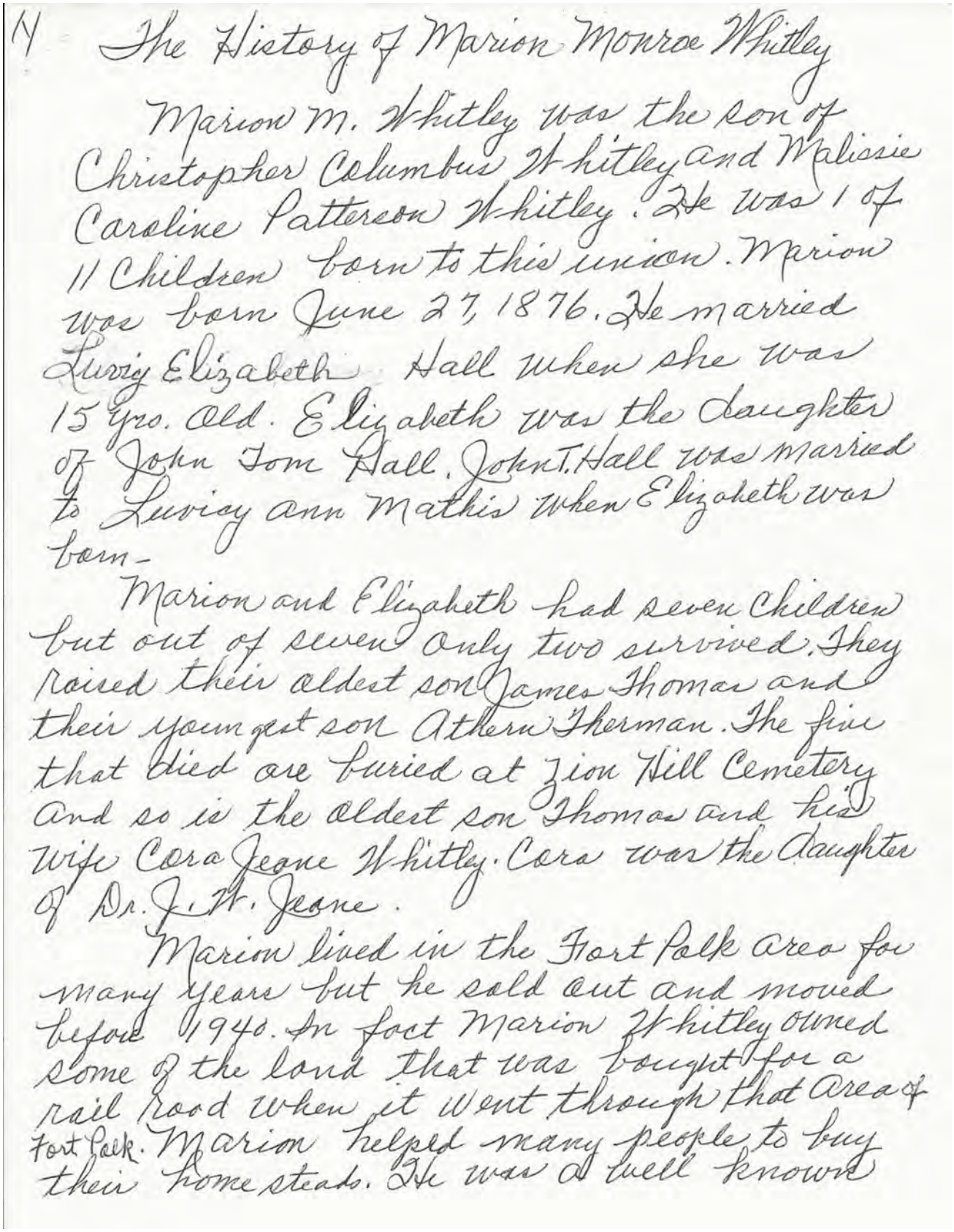
R. 2. Box 427

Pitkin La.
Feb. 25 1934.

Doctar Jene: I Promissed to let you know about when we would need you to come to our house we can't get able to pay a Car to come up there to pay you any more looks like and I hate to send it by Mail unless it was in a check for it may get lost we have over half of the fee saved up and will try our best to get the rest by the time and we Think we will need you anytime from the 10 of March on so if you can't come please let us Knowing by a letter as we are depending On You. Yours Very Truly
Robert Burks

Editor's note: "Baby Burks," soon to arrive in the letter addressed to Dr. Jeane above, is Darval Burks, now living in DeRidder, LA. His parents (W.R. "Robert" and Beulah Burks) were living in Cravens with a Pitkin address, and they later moved to Cole Central Community (also known as Horse Branch, about three miles from Whiskachitta). His dad's letter asked Dr. Jeane to come around March 10, 1934, but Darval was born on March 6 (early). Dr. Jeane made it there in time.

The following are memories written by Clarriece Whitley Rector about her grandfather and grandmother Whitley.



The History of Marion Monroe Whitley

Marion M. Whitley was the son of Christopher Columbus Whitley and Malissie Caroline Patterson Whitley. He was 1 of 11 Children born to this union. Marion was born June 27, 1876. He married Luvicy Elizabeth Hall when she was 15 yrs. old. Elizabeth was the daughter of John Tom Hall. John T. Hall was married to Luvicy ann Mathis when Elizabeth was born-

Marion and Elizabeth had seven Children but out of seven only two survived. They raised their eldest son James Thomas and their youngest son Athern Therman. The five that died are buried at Zion Hill Cemetery and so is the eldest son Thomas and his wife Cora Jeane Whitley. Cora was the daughter of Dr. J. W. Jeane.

Marion lived in the Fort Polk area for many years but he sold out and moved before 1940. In fact Marion Whitley owned some of the land that was bought for a rail road when it went through that Area of Fort Polk. Marion helped many people to buy their home steads. He was a well known

honest man and he would loan them the money or help them to get a loan so they would be able to buy. He signed lots of papers for different people so they were able to buy their farms at Fort Polk.

Marion was a farmer by trade. He raised all kinds of fruits, vegetables, corn, cotton, but his main crop was watermelons. Many years ago he was known as the "Watermelon King". His melons were the best that you could buy. He peddled and sold watermelons, vegetables and fruit. His wife Elizabeth stayed mainly at home. She was busy cooking, canning and taking care of the home chores. After she finished breakfast every morning the first thing she did was churn and make butter and butter milk. They raised their own beef and pork for their meat. Of course they canned the beef in jars and they were put in an iron wash pot and they would let those jars cook for hours to be sure the meat would not spoil. The pork was salted down and then smoked. They would make sausage out of some of the pork. They would fry all the sausage up then they were packed in big earthen ware churns and covered with Lard. When you needed some you just went and dipped

With them out. Marion and Elizabeth helped many people. They use to keep school teachers in their home. They also helped to raise some of her sisters' children. Personally I do not know what year he left the Fort Polk area but I know when he died in 1937 he was already living in Anacoco, La. At that time, I was his only granddaughter and I was 7 yrs. old. He was a good provider, and a great, grandfather to me.

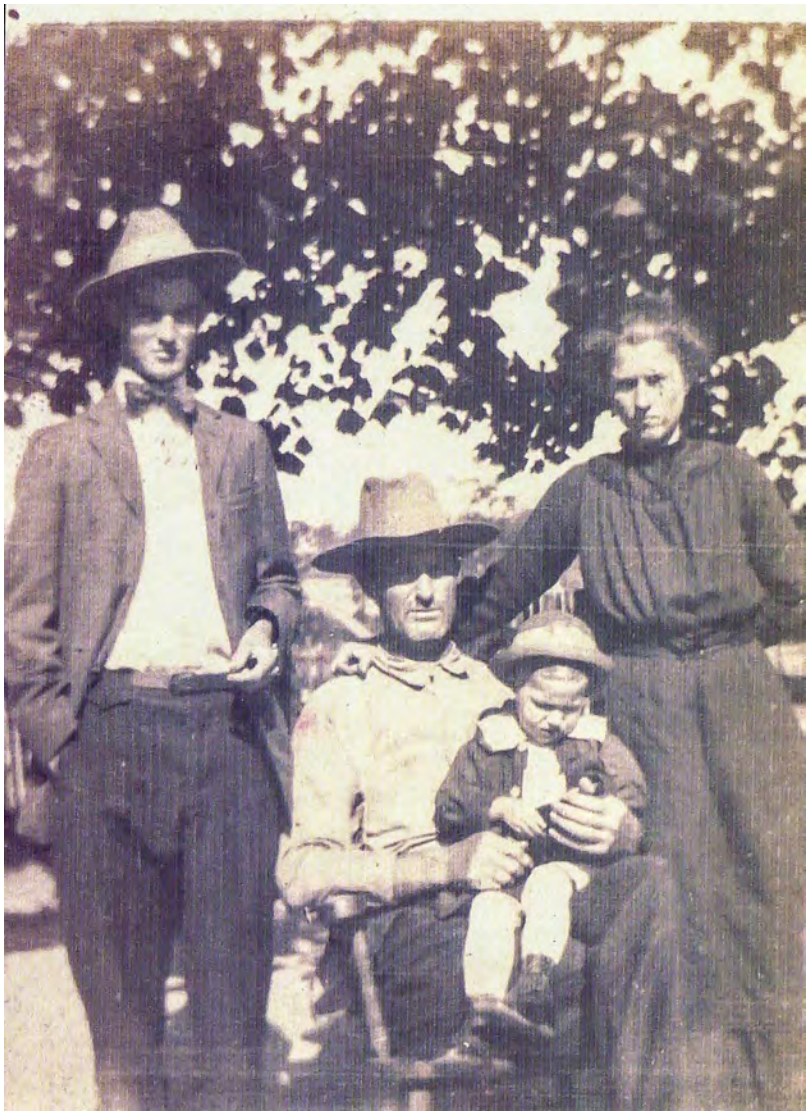
Written By
Clarrice Whitley Rector
Granddaughter of
Marion Whitley

Marion + Elizabeth had 7 children

	DoB	DoD
James Thomas Whitley the oldest	1899	1981
Infant Deceased buried Zion Hill		
Infant Deceased " " "		
Infant Deceased " " "		
Infant Deceased " " "		
Woodie Sheldon Whitley " "		
Deceased at 7 months of age		
Athern Sherman Whitley	1915	-

Marion + Elizabeth had 7 grandchildren

A. B. Whitley
Clarrice Whitley Rector
Sue Whitley Franklin
Bobbie Whitley Stasny Zyp
Shirley Whitley Taylor.
2 infant boys deceased.



L to R, Thomas Whitley, Marion Monroe Whitley holding Therman Whitley, and Luvicy Elizabeth Hall Whitley. Source: Clarriece Whitley Rector.

Rickey Robertson

Pictured above, Rickey Robertson and Patsy Byrd Robertson. The following stories are written by Rickey, a much published author of history both local and military, born into the Heritage Family of Bernice Doyle "Bud" Robertson and Minnie Craft Robertson from the Peason Ridge area.

The Grazing Lands of Peason Ridge

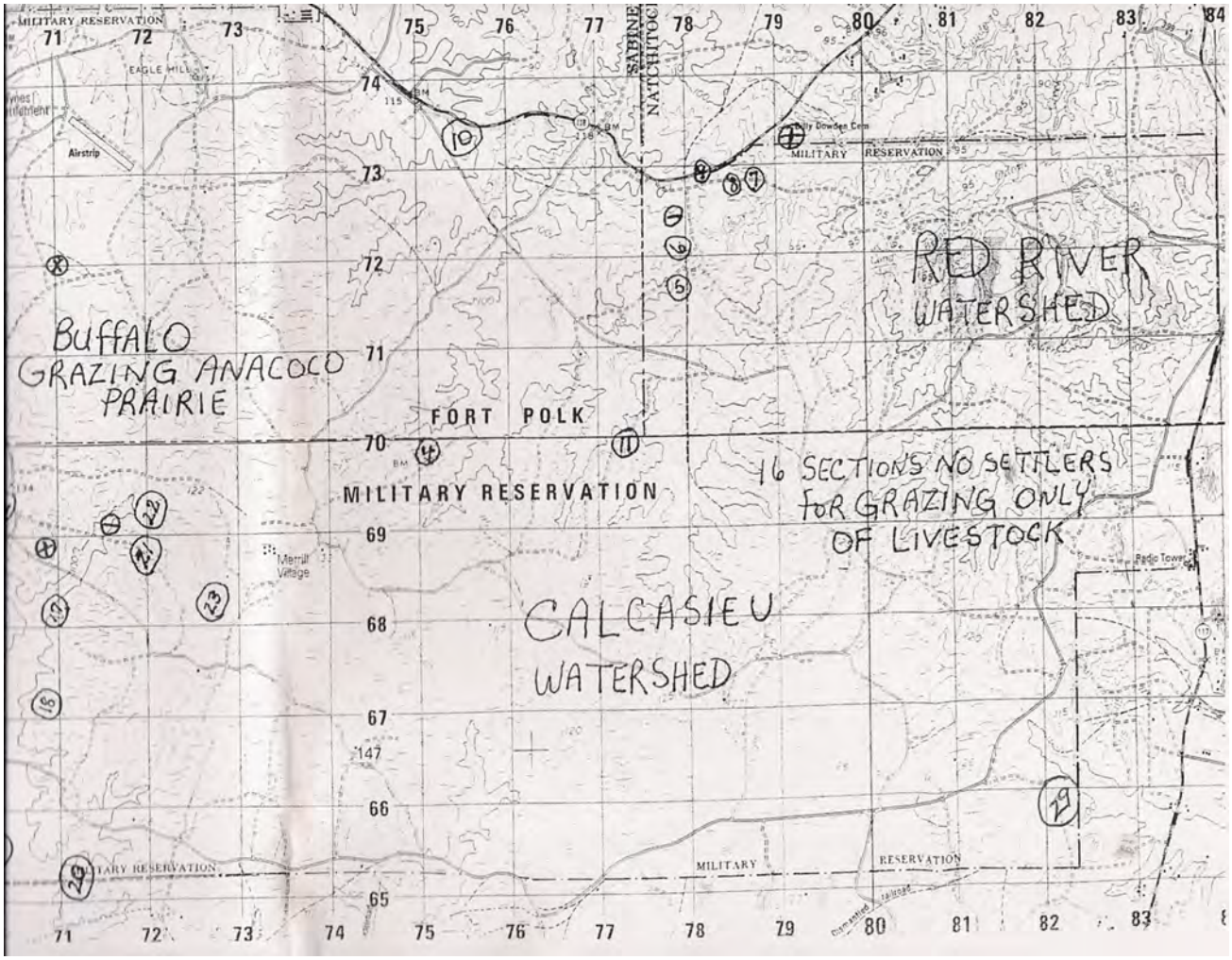
Beginning in 1818 my ancestors and other hardy folks begin to settle in what is now known as Peason Ridge. This land has great historical value and has many stories of the people who settled these lands. When they first settled the land and began farming and raising livestock, they had many neighbors from nearby Native American tribes, such as the Caddo, Adais, Hasinail, Ais, Natchitoches, and Petticaddo tribes living throughout the area. Eagle Hill, located here, is known as one of the largest Indian sites in western Louisiana. Eventually there were a total of 29 homestead families and many sharecropper families residing on Peason Ridge. And eventually the Indians dwindled away leaving the settlers to their farms.

When these settlers first arrived on Peason Ridge they found virgin forests, cleared highlands where crops of various types could be planted, and there were deer, bear, turkey, and other animals for food. As these settlers began farming, they worked hard to survive. Besides farming, these settlers brought in livestock which included cattle, horses, mules, sheep, and goats. Water was plentiful for the livestock, along with plenty of rich grass to provide forage for these animals. Having vast herds of livestock had a two-fold meaning. The livestock could be sold to provide much needed cash monies and they were a food source for the settlers. But these settlers brought a tradition with them, all the way from England many years before, concerning their grazing lands.

The Peason Ridge settlers had a special area for all the livestock to graze. They set aside a total of 16 sections of land where no one was allowed to settle or farm. This tradition was brought from England from the days where landowners set aside specific areas for livestock to graze and they policed the lands to keep the serfs from moving into these lands to settle them. On Peason Ridge, if anyone came and started to camp or attempt to build in the grazing area, the men would mount their horses, ride over for a visit, and give the "squatter" the information to pack up and be gone in a few days. This was especially prevalent during the great westward migration in the 1870's and 1880's. If the intruder had not left the grazing lands in at least 3 days, the men would again mount up and would ride over to have a talk. This time it was different. The intruder would be looking down the barrel of several Winchester rifles and was advised to be gone by daybreak the next morning. Looking down the barrel of a Winchester rifle would definitely make up a person's mind for them!

There are many stories where the settlers had to fight for their land, crops, and animals. Many of those coming through the livestock grazing area were "jayhawkers and outlaws." These undesirables would attempt to steal livestock and forage from the settlers. But these settlers fought back, kept their farms, buried their dead after these fights and continued their way of life. The settlers kept the old English tradition of setting aside and policing the grazing lands until the U.S. Army purchased all the lands from the ancestors of these first settlers beginning in 1941. As the families were displaced from their farms and homesteads, many families ended up leaving livestock on the open grazing range. These lands were special to the people but also even to the animals. A way of life and a lifelong tradition came to an end.

My family was blessed to actually have use of the old grazing lands after the families were moved out. My father, along with other cattlemen from our area, [was] allowed use of the range for livestock grazing. As a boy I have seen 2,000 to 3,000 head of cattle grazing on Peason Ridge. My father ran nearly 700 head of cattle on Peason Ridge until 1995 when the JRTC requested that the cattle be removed. And where were the best lands for our stock to graze? Yes, the old grazing lands that had been set aside so many years ago by our ancestors. These 16 sections of land are still remembered by the Heritage Families of Peason Ridge and will always be a vital part of our history.



Location of grazing lands maintained at Peason Ridge. Source: The Rickey Robertson Collection.

The Peavy-Wilson Lumber Company Corral Site Located On Present Day Peason Ridge

In December 1916 A.J. (Andrew Jackson) Peavy, a young logger from east Texas, began his career as a lumberman in Louisiana by purchasing 45,000 acres of land in the southeast section of Sabine Parish, LA. Mr. Peavy did not have any experience as a lumberman and partnered up with R.J. Wilson, who was very experienced as a mill manger. When these two men partnered they also purchased several thousand more acres of land, this being in northern Vernon Parish, LA.

The two partners began building their sawmill and sawmill town in March 1917 and named the new town PEASON, a combination of the two surnames of the men. Lumbering and logging operations were began in 1918 by the Peavy-Wilson Company owned by the company.

As the logging operations began, my grandfather, Ora A. Robertson, returned from his service in the U.S. Army in World War I. My grandfather had experience with horses, mules, oxen, and all the leather and metal harnesses and equipment since his father, Robert Lee Robertson, had been a blacksmith. My grandfather could train horse, mule, and ox teams for logging. He had a good ox team and hired out to Peavy-Wilson company to both haul and skid logs. In some of the old Peason records, I have documentation where Peavy-Wilson Company bought a brand new factory built log wagon in 1922 for use by my Grandfather Robertson. On my grandfather's team he had a young boy, Grover Owers, who rode the "offwheeler" mule or oxen. Grover would help rein the team as a turn was being made. Even though there were many spur log railroad tracks and re-haul skidders to bring logs to the mill, there were many situations where my grandfather could go into an area and would skid out logs to a set near the railroad where they could be loaded.

As the logging operation got bigger, the Peavy-Wilson Company need a corral site away from the mill site itself to house, feed, and doctor the livestock needed in its daily field logging operations. This site is now located on present day Peason Ridge Military Reservation.

In its heyday, the corral site was of vast importance to the company. Even with modern logging equipment, animals such as horses, mules, and oxen were still needed. Peavy-Wilson Company had a very large number of these animals, with even other animals being kept for use at the main mill-site in a separate corral in Peason.

As a youngster I grew up with knowledge of this corral site and went to its location literally hundreds of times with my father, Bud Robertson. My father and grandfather ran cattle for several decades on Peason Ridge (until 1995 when Joint Readiness Training Center advised all cattle must be removed) and we were in and out of this location regularly as this was part of the grazing lands where our cattle fed. In the early 1960's my grandfather's health became very bad and my father bought all of his father's cattle. Over the years my father grazed at times 500 to 600 head of cattle on the open range lands. On many occasions we would sit and watch the cattle grazing and my father would tell me of the importance of the corral site, because it allowed the lumber company to have instant access to

the much needed logging livestock. My Dad walked with me many times around the corral site and showed me the dimensions of the pens and corrals, locations of the 2 springs used for watering, the railroad spur, the loading ramp at the rail spur for the livestock to be loaded onto rail cars, and the site where the workers lived and camped.

In a description of the site it is about one and a half miles south/southwest of the main mill site in Peason. The site could be reached by traveling on the rail spur, or by the wagon road that came to the site. And the site is in Ward I of Sabine Parish, LA. At the corral site the "west corral" was the largest of the pens. This corral was about 4 acres in size. In the northwest corner of this corral was a large running spring that provided an abundance of water for the stock. At the southwest corner of this corral was a large gate (remains of the corner posts and fence posts still there) and a road/trail that led to a loading ramp at the railroad spur, which was about 50 yards west of the "west corral pen." At the loading ramp, it was built where the livestock could be loaded onto rail cars, with it being built up and the same height of the door of the rail cars. As with most livestock, these animals continuously walked around the fences of the corral. All the way around this 4 acre site you can still see the worn down trail inside the old fence lines that the hooves of the stock wore down over the years. For shade there are large oak trees in the "west corral." As you look at the pen site you can see it had good drainage to prevent flooding and excessive mud (see diagram of site below).

Just across the wagon road is what we called the "east corral." This corral was about 2 acres in size. There are also shade trees inside this pen and the walk line can also be seen where the livestock walked the inside of the fence located there. On the east side of the "east corral" is another large flowing spring that provided water for the animals housed there. Again, there are the remains of old fence posts around this site. This corral is also well drained. It may be possible that this smaller pen was used to house oxen, who would not associate with the horses and mules, and would fight and injure them (see diagram below).

South/southwest of the corral site about 100 yards is the location where the men who worked at the corral site lived. This site is on a small sand hill that provided good drainage. Also located at the site where the workers lived (most of the corral workers were African-American, one of the bosses was Coburn Sanders who lived on Peason Ridge) are 2 concrete markers and a large sandstone rock all in a row. These concrete markers are not section or survey markers (they have no brass tag on them), they have no numbers or initials inscribed on them, and were never used as artillery fire point markers (over the years we never saw a military unit camped near the corral site since it is located in the Impact Area).

As you look at these markers and rock, these 3 items may be the grave stones and markers for the graves of African-American workers who were not allowed to be buried in organized cemeteries in the area. And sadly, most of these workers and those in the turpentine camps are not listed on any census records, since they were not living in the town of Peason or area towns or communities. As you get to the top of this small sand hill, you can look further south and my Dad always advised that he thought my grandfather Robertson had told him that there was another smaller corral located there where sick

or lame livestock were kept (see diagram). He advised that my Grandfather Robertson, though not a veterinarian, would on occasion be asked to come and "doctor" a sick animal. My grandfather had his own set of old veterinarian needles and tools, and I still have these items that he and my father used over the many years. Granddaddy Robertson also hand made some of the leather gear used on the animals, and made many ox yokes for these teams from [Bois d' Arc] wood.

At this corral location, the complete area including the possible small corral site would be 15 to 20 acres in size and ran between the 2 large springs. According to what I have been told, at the corral site there would at times be 200 to 300 horses, mules, and some oxen. Livestock that were injured and were not able to work in the logging operations were often "turned out" to live and graze freely around the corral area. When the mill shut down in 1935 and the corral site was closed, 2 good log mules were turned out that year to run free with the large number of animals already free. These 2 mules lived for many many years on Peason Ridge with the wild horse herd. My Dad told me in 1978 that the mules, still running free on Peason Ridge, were 45 years old. In the next couple of years both mules eventually died, with them being nearly 50 years old at their time of death.

In 2010, I was able to carry several folks from Fort Polk to this site. According to these men who have conducted much historical investigation and documentation, they have never seen or heard of a historical site such as this and they were able to see firsthand the site and hear the stories I have of the site. And as we were departing the site, about 15 wild horses came grazing up, just like they were coming to visit the site where their ancestors once lived. And who knows, their blood lines may lead right back to the animals who were housed in these corrals over 90 years ago!

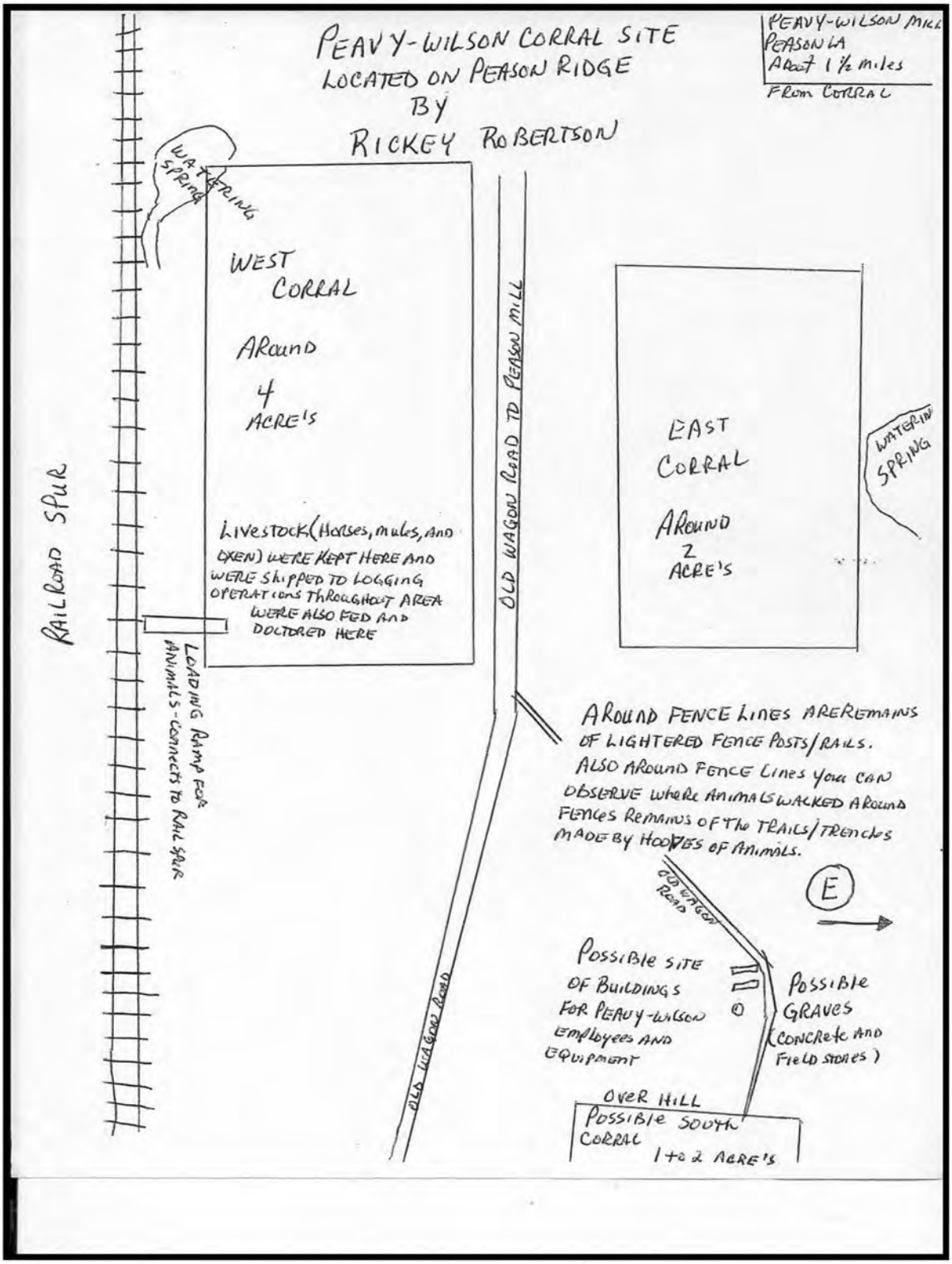


Diagram of the Peavy-Wilson Corral site that was in operation from 1917 to 1935. Source: The Rickey Robertson Collection.

Ox team skidding logs for Peavy-Wilson Lumber Company. Ora Robertson, owner of the ox team, is in the background driving the team. Source: The Rickey Robertson Collection.

View of the west corral located at the Peavy-Wilson Corral site. Source: The Rickey Robertson Collection.

Vernon Davis Smith

Written by Vernon Davis Smith, born in the old Cole home located on the east side of Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachitta Community, born to Heritage Family members Cleon Smith and Sidney Jane Davis. His grandparents carry the Heritage surnames Smith, Jeane, Davis, and Self.

Blind Sam: Samuel Edward Jean, a "Red Cob"

PROLOGUE

Family history has it that the great, great granddad of Samuel Edward Jean[11] (Blind Sam) was born in Franklin County, North Carolina in 1784.

As a farmer, corn was one of his major crops; he was very specific that only seed corn from a red cob could be planted. This trait was passed down to James Monroe Jean, Sr. then onto James Monroe Jean, Jr., who was Blind Sam's Father.

Over many years this trait of planting only corn from a red cob caused the Jean Family to be called 'Red Cobs," by family members and friends a-like.

The James Monroe Jean, Jr., family consisted of 15 children, of which Sam was the 14th child. All the children were outstanding in their own respective ways.

In this narrative I am high lighting Blind Sam, a RED COB and the most outstanding semi-handicapped person I ever knew.

"With Love," I also mention my grandmother Nancy Jane Jean,[12] who is Blind Sam's sister, the 11th child born to this Family.

Blind Sam: Samuel Edward Jean

Blind Sam was sightless from a very serious illness, possibly scarlet fever, contracted at approximately his eighth month.

When he was around eight years old, his oldest brother, James William Jean, who was a country doctor, arranged for Sam's enrollment in a school for the blind, located in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he was an excellent student. He excelled at Braille reading and other skills they were teaching that enhanced all of his remaining senses.

He was also taught the trade of piano tuning and the skills involved in repairing the Victrolas and other wind-up, spring powered entertainment devices. It is not known how long he attended the school in New Orleans.

When he returned to Vernon Parish, he lived with his brother, Dr. Jean and helped with the farm work, where he started perfecting his phenomenal abilities for traveling the roads and byways using only his 4.5 foot tapping cane. He could also ride his horse to any home in the Whiskachitto Community, without any assistance or guidance.

At an unknown time, probably around the time of his father's death (1925), he moved back to his par-

[11]The author uses the spelling "Jean" for his family members described in the story, but elsewhere the spelling "Jeane" is used for this family surname.
[12]Wife of J. L. (Fate) Smith, Vernon Smith's grandfather.

ent's home at Jeans Chapel, near Pickering, Louisiana.

Sam's piano tuning business never flourished, probably due to the small number of pianos owned in Vernon Parish. It seemed that many people owned pump organs, but few owned pianos.

This lagging tuning business is probably what propelled Sam and his blind friend, Walter Smith of Evans, Louisiana into the business of cutting and selling stove wand heater wood.

They would engage a helper, whose only duties were to furnish a wagon or truck to haul their firewood to their buyer and guide the felling of tall trees between neighboring trees so they would fall all the way to the ground.

Then they would proceed to fell the selected tree. Notching it where the helper indicated so as to lay it on the ground, then they would cut the trunk of the tree into the desired length.

Next the trunk cuts would be split into approximately 2.5 inch wide slabs, and the slabs would be split (chopped) into several pieces producing a piece of fire wood 2.5 x 2.5 x 22 inches long or whatever lengths their customer desired.

All this splitting and sawing was accomplished using standard double bladed axes and crosscut saws with no loss of thumbs or fingers and yes, NO BLOOD.

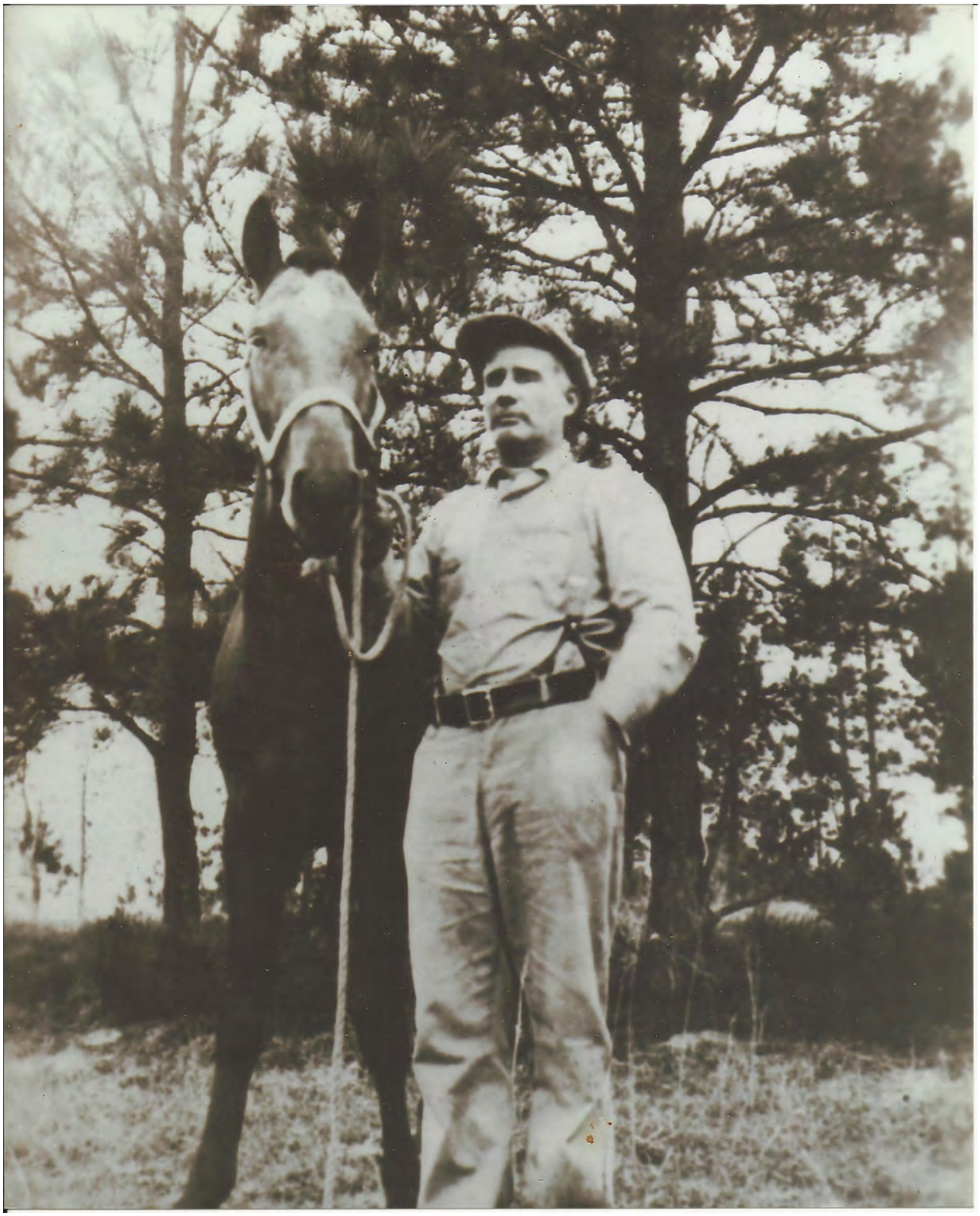
Sam, like many of his neighbors, loved to quail hunt.

You may find this hard to believe, but I have personally seen the fresh blood of quail on his hunting vest. And seen the fresh killed quail sitting in an aluminum pan in my mother's kitchen, and yes, I ate half a quail for breakfast that was killed on our small farm by Samuel E. Jean who was blind, but not an invalid, only slightly challenged.

On one of Sam's walking visits from Jean Chapel to the Whiskachitto School community, he encountered several dogs on the road between the Garrett Jean home and the W. L. Jones home. The dogs started baying Sam, with one particular aggressive dog snarling and biting on Sam's pants leg. Forth with Sam jerks out his old .45 six-shooter and shoots the dog in the head. Reportedly, the remaining dogs yelped and fled the scene, and Sam continued on his journey.

Many times as a young boy, I would accompany my Dad, Cleon Smith, to Jean`s Chapel, to visit his grandmother, Orelia McDonald Jean (who lived to be 95 years old) and Sam would be rocking on the front porch. He would stand up and say, "Come on in Son. Bet we can scare up some coffee." I would still be in the car and he would say, "Oh, I see you got Vernon with you," and as a 5 or 6 year old, I always wondered if he could tell I was there by my smell.

Sam Edward Jean was one of the most remarkable individuals that I ever knew and should be remembered and honored for his vast achievements, and his ability to over-come his loss of sight, which I regard as the most precious attribute known to man. He was 62 when he died.



"Blind Sam" (Samuel Edward Jeane) and his horse, "a fine-looking animal." Source: Clarriece Whitley Rector.

A Horse for Vernon
Subtitle: The Last Cavalry Charge

PROLOGUE

This short story covers a portion of my youth, in the old Whiskachitto Community, inside the Kisatchie National Forest, where Fort Polk is now located.

When I was born (June 8, 1931), my grandmother Adeline Jane Davis gave me a cream-colored short horned calf, named Vivian. When I was eight years old in 1939, I owned 10 brood cows and 4 steers ready for market. I was very proud of my little herd.

I had long wanted a horse, so it was decided within the family that we would sell my four steers, at the auction barn in Alexandria, LA. Then purchase a horse with part of the proceeds, and "NO," I could not go to the auction. I was too young.

The day of the auction, my dad left home with my steers at 5 am. This was the longest day of my life. I was on pins and needles all day, worried about what my horse would look like. Would he be a sorrel, a gray, or a paint? Golly, a paint would be real neat.

I was worried and fretting and thinking to myself, "How much longer will it be until my dad gets home: What's the hold up?" when I heard the old truck and trailer rumbling up our road.

At long last, I jumped up and yelled, "Dad's home!" and started running outside with mother yelling at me not to go outside barefooted, and to take the Coal Oil lantern with me.

OK!! At last, there in the trailer was the biggest and most handsome horse that I had ever seen. He was so sleek; a dark sorrel with a lighter main and tale, beautifully curried and brushed, with his head held so high.

I was overjoyed, and looked at the white blaze on his face, with the four white fetlocks, I was so happy even with my mother telling me it was my bedtime.

The happiest event of my life, I now owned a beautiful horse.

* * *

My first project was naming the new horse, I chose the name STARLIGHT, taken from a Louis [L'Amour] short story published in a Pulp Western Magazine written in 1938.

The year 1939 was a very exciting one for me. We were having army maneuvers in the woods, all around our small subsistence farm, with the R-A-T-T-Y-TAT-TAT of machine guns and mortar rounds going off at all times of the day and night.

Blimps hovered in the air directing the simulated fighting, with two of the NEW GYRO PLANES practicing landings and take-offs, and flying around observing all the action.

There were rumors of the cavalry moving into our area to participate with CAVALRY CHARGES. Horse drawn cannon barrage and action involving [the] newly formed motor cycle core.

Most of my time was taken up with making friends with STARLIGHT. He was only happy when he could be in the pasture with my dad's two horses. I could not get STARLIGHT to eat corn from his trough in the stable.

He would only eat corn if I placed it in a bucket and held it up under his nose. He would then eat out of the bucket.

One day two of the sharpest dressed soldiers I had ever seen, a Major and a Master Sergeant stopped by our farm. They were dressed in [olive drab] woolen shirts with [olive drab] bloused boot pants, the shirts had three ironed pleats on their backs and leather Jim Bowie belts, and leather shoulder straps and knee length brown leather boots, highly polished.

They requested that we strived to keep our livestock (we had open stock laws at that time) on the west side of our field fences. They wanted the property in between the two roads along the meadow land in-between, because they were staging a TWO TROOP CAVALRY CHARGE and CANNON BATTLE for the coming Friday.

My dad Cleon Smith readily agreed.

As they were leaving, the Sergeant told me to be sure and watch the CAVALRY CHARGE, saying, "I think you will like it."

The day of the CAVALRY CHARGE was a beautiful summer day, no clouds with little wind.

It started around 11:30 a.m. with a battery of horse drawn light cannon setting up on the acreage between the two roads entering our little farm.

STARLIGHT and my dad's two horses were in a pasture alongside the road.

Suddenly, at least two bugles were blowing spine-chilling bugle calls and two double columns of Charging Cavalry men with drawn sabers were racing towards where my horse STARLIGHT was going wild, running up and down the fence line, nickering, neighing and snorting, with big clods of dirt flying from all four hooves, with head so high, as he was trying to join his old stable mates, as they thundered by. This CAVALRY CHARGE was so thrilling it gave me the shivers.

After the charge was over and all the cavalry horses had been cooled by walking. The Major came to our front gate, saying, "Young man, you know your sorrel horse was a Cavalry Mount." I thanked him for telling me, even though I had already figured it out due to the way STARLIGHT reacted to the bugle calls.

I say, "Major can you tell me why my horse will not eat corn out of the trough in his stable?"

He said, "Young man, cavalry horses are fed out of a nose-bag fitted over their nose and mouth."

As he was leaving the Major said, "Tell your dad to come over to our bivouac area around 10:00 A.M. on Saturday morning." That morning, my dad and I were at the cavalry bivouac area, and true to the Major's word, he gave us 12 sacks of oats and 8 bales of hay. He also gave me a nose feed bag with a broken head-strap, which I was able to repair. Old STARLIGHT loved it. As we were leaving, the

Master Sergeant came up and asked me what I thought of the CAVALRY CHARGE. I told him it was awesome, and he said he thought "awesome" covered his feelings also.

He then said that the CAVALRY CHARGE of the day before would probably be the last CAVALRY CHARGE ever held in Louisiana, as the cavalry was being dismantled.

The maneuvers continued, with a large group of motorcycles, foot soldiers, half-track armor, etc. All very exciting for this eight-year-old.

STARLIGHT adjusted to civilian life and became a family member with many privileges. My memories of him are alive and well.

The Cleon Smith Family Exodus from Camp Polk Rifle Range, 1941

Some time in the early spring of 1940 we had our first contact with the *un-masked daytime raiders,*[13] whose mission was to remove all persons, land owners, and squatters a-like from the Whiskachitta School Community and the Kisatchie National Forest, to make way for Camp Polk. They came in a 1938 olive drab Chevrolet four-door auto, a party of three, one cigar-smoking Army Major and two real quiet U.S. Marshals. Being Saturday my father was home plowing our family garden.

During the week my dad worked as a carpenter foreman at Claiborne, Louisiana, where a military installation was being built. This was the best job he had secured since the Crash of 1928 when he had worked at the Texaco Refinery in Port Arthur, Texas.

I greeted the visitors at our front gate and escorted them around the house to the back porch, arriving there as my dad came up and started unhooking Sam, our old plow horse from the Georgia stock plow he had been using. Mom walked out about that time saying, "Cleon, I have fresh coffee made."

My dad walks over extending his hand to the Major saying, "I'm Cleon Smith, and his is my wife Jane." Mom places her arm across my shoulder saying, "And Major, this is our son, Vernon." The Major introduced himself and the two U.S. Marshals (Dad already knew one of the Marshals).

As was the custom of our family, my mother offered our visitors coffee and tea cakes (lemon flavored, my favorite); they accepted.

I have always been a people-watcher and I noticed that the major had started acting a little strange, ill at ease, and nervous.

We were enjoying our coffee when the Major fires up the fattest cigar I had ever seen (I now realize it was an expensive Havana hand-made job); he puffed and puffed until he got a long ash, takes a big puff and blows the smoke toward my mother and father and says, "Mr. and Mrs. Smith, we are here today to evict you all from this property as soon as possible. My superiors would like it to be today or at most within the month."

My dad jumps up and asked "Mr. Major, why so fast? Won't it be over a year before there will be troops at Camp Polk? I have a crop in the field, cows and hogs in the woods, and no place to move to. Please give me 8 months and I'll be gone." He then says, "I know of at least 4 families that have been given 6 months."

At this time, the Major jumps up, dropping his coffee cup and breaking the saucer, knocking cigar ashes all over my mom's dress collar and neck and yells, "I have the Marshals here to move you if I so decide." My dad replies, "Mr. Major, I don't think you brought enough evictors to do the job, and if you don't calm down I'm going to start doing some evicting myself and I won't need any help."

[13]Author's note: In lieu of masked night raiders.

Then my dad turns to the U.S. Marshal that he was acquainted with and says, "Please tell this Mr. Major whether or not you think he brought enough help?" The U.S. Marshal says, "Major we don't want to go there." My dad then tells my mother to get the Major another cup of coffee and to take me in the house and stay with me until he calls her.

Then the Major and my dad had a private conversation, where in the Major agreed that he would work with my dad and give him as much time as he needed, up to 8 months, if my dad agreed to move sooner if he could. We stayed on until we had our crop of figs, peaches, pears, tomatoes, speckled butter beans, etc. preserved or canned.

Our next project was to herd all of our cows into our field, so they were behind a fence and easily caught and waiting to be transported to a new location. We had cross-fenced our field so the cows could not get in the corn field. By this time a little more than 4 months had lapsed.

My dad arranged with some of his friends to swarm at our house that was to be vacated with 3 big trucks and 3 pickups and load up all our household goods and personal items, plus all of our farm equipment. Then [we would] move approximately 2 ½ miles to the Shelton Jean home site, which was located on the Dr. Jean place (that still had 3 months left till it had to be evacuated).

The Shelton Jean place gave me new areas to explore, with a lot of new trees to climb, big trees with rope swings hanging from high limbs, [and] new kinds of fruit trees with lots of delicious fruit. I was really enjoying myself. My mother even did some more canning as the Jean's garden was still producing veggies.

My best friends (also my cousins) Marie and Dudley Cryer came to visit us and stayed a whole week. Marie was about 5 years older than me, but Dud (Dudley's nickname) was my age and we really had a good time. Mom even let us go barefooted. We explored all the surrounding area, made Chinaberry pop-guns, built a fort, played soldiers, etc. We really loved each other. I was so sad when they had to go home.

My dad still worked at Camp Claiborne, but he found time to gather his corn crop and store it in a barn in Pickering, Louisiana, where we planned to move when we finally did relent and move from the area, but not yet. Mr. Carney Sellers, one of dad's best friends, gave my dad the OK to move all of our cows and hogs onto property adjacent to the barn where he stored our corn. We only took 6 hogs, [and] the rest we left on the range.

After about 4 months, my dad again called in a bigger group of friends, and again they swarmed at the Dr. Jean's place and loaded all of our belongings and traveled approximately 5 miles to my grandfather's, [the] J.L. (Fate) Smith place, and moved in.

This place was a lot nicer than our old home place or the Dr. Jean place. Boy this was a fun place. I went fishing almost every day; the creek behind this place was full of pan size frying perch. Thirty

minutes of fishing would yield 30 fish. Again there were new kinds of fruit trees, orange, tangerines, nectarines, and they were not ripe and we would probably move before they did ripen.

Mom went fishing with me and she read to me a lot during this summer. We were staying by ourselves 3 and 4 days at a time. It was real lonesome for we now had no neighbors. My dad was working 3 to 4 days in Claiborne, then coming home for one night and going back to Claiborne the next morning.

Then one night we heard a panther scream in the swamp behind the house, so down comes all the windows and we closed all the doors, [and] boy was it hot in the house. The next day my mom and I nailed 1x4 wood strips over the windows about 6 inches apart so we could leave the windows open and let cool air circulate through the house. Naturally, the panther screaming every night put a stop to our fishing. The screaming, which sounded like a woman screaming, continued for about 4 weeks; after that time we never heard the screams again.

Around the middle of August, my dad came in saying we will be moving to Pickering before school starts, so I could start to school the first of September 1941. We would be living about 300 yards behind the school. He also informed my mother that he was transferring from the Claiborne job to Camp Polk at the end of the next week and that his friends would again be swooping down on us and get[ting] us loaded and moved within 4 hours. It was getting easier to move because we had not unpacked anything other than essential items, so it would go real smooth.

The final day on the rifle range went real easy, as we were headed out as a convoy, 3 stake-bodied trucks, one 1940 Chevy car and 2 pickups. As we were passing by the burned sight of the old Whiskachitta School, we were stopped by Mr. Major and eight armed soldiers. He says to my dad, "Mr. Cleon, I am certainly pleased to see you moving today, as you were the last evacuee remaining to be removed from the range, and as you can see, I came with a big enough crew to get the job accomplished." My dad grins and extends his hand for a parting hand shake and he said, "Major, I for one am glad we are not going to <u>find out for sure today</u>, because we would have been handicapped by the fact that only two of my people were upset enough to really want to resist you and the whole army. Those two are my wife and our 10 year old son (ha, ha, ha). Major, stay safe, and thank you for giving us more than the 8 months we had agreed on at the time of our first meeting."

We continued on to Pickering, [and] our arrival there would be the beginning of the next 4 years of my young life, which will be covered in another short essay titled "*The War Years,*" which will be written in the future.

Funerals and Their Preparation, 1937

My first memories of funerals started when I was almost 6 years old.

My mother and I were walking to my grandmother's home early in May; we were hurrying as we approached my Uncle George and Aunt Oda Cryers home. I always enjoyed our little visits, when we passed their home because I would get to see my two cousins, Marie and Dudley. They were also my two best friends; also my mother was always so happy after visiting with her sister.

When we arrived at the Cryer home, we learned that Aunt Oda was seriously ill and that Dr. Jeans was not expecting her to regain consciousness. He was sitting with her seeing to her comfort.

We walked on to grandma's house which would normally have been a happy time for me, but this visit to my grandmother Davis' home was the worst experience of my life. My mother and grandma tried to explain funerals, death and hereafter, plus what the community would do for the bereaved family. It all was so confusing, I had many questions.

When my uncle Willie G. Davis came in (he lived with my grandmother) I approached him with many of my questions. "Hold up, not so fast, let me tell you about funerals and how they are handled by the whole community."

When there is a death in a family the whole community (friends and neighbors) gather around the bereaved family to help them by assisting with all things that must be accomplished before the funeral which is normally conducted approximately 24 hours from the time of death.

"Uncle Willie what has to be done before the funeral?"

The preparation of the body normally three or four of the oldest active women in the community will bathe and prepare the deceased for burial, decking them out in their finest garments. Nickels will be placed on their eyes to insure they will stay closed (the nickels will be removed when rigor mortis is complete). Another problem is many corpses have a gaping mouth, this is corrected by tying a scarf under the chin and tying it over the head tight until rigor mortis is completed.

Next the attending ladies will remove a door from the least used room in the house and place a ladder backed chair at each end of the door, forming a platform. Then it is covered with a bed sheet to display the body for viewing then they would place a coal-oil lamp at the head of the corpse.

Normally while the body is lying in state (if available) Kate Jasmine (carnations) would be placed around the body to soften the odor that accompanies a non-embalmed body.

While the body is being prepared for burial three to four of the best wood workers in the community will build a wooden casket using pine or cypress lumber to contain the body.

The features of the casket are normally governed by the amount of money available at the time of the death. The most common casket will consist of a simple pine box, but build with excellent workmanship.

The more affluent family would use rolled cotton quilting tacked inside the coffin then covered with white, grey or black sateen cloth adding a pillow of the same color, also possibly adding brass hinges and carrying handles.

Graves are dug within the first 12 hours after death, weather permitting. Size of the grave is dictated by the decease size, rule of thumb 6 ft. x 3 ft. x 6 ft. would be the average dimensions. With the walls of the grave opening being reduced at the 4 ft. level by 4 in. all around the perimeter so boards could be placed over the casket to keep the dirt from falling directly on the casket when the grave was covered.

When possible, Vernon, all of what I just told you is completed the first day and then that evening everyone would come back with covered dishes and most would stay for an all night vigil and wake.

I forgot to tell you about a grave markers, every community has someone who makes wooden grave markers. The man in our community is the same person that cuts your hair, Murphy Eddlemon.

My mom is a nervous wreck, we spent the night with grandma and we did not know if Aunt Oda was alive or dead.

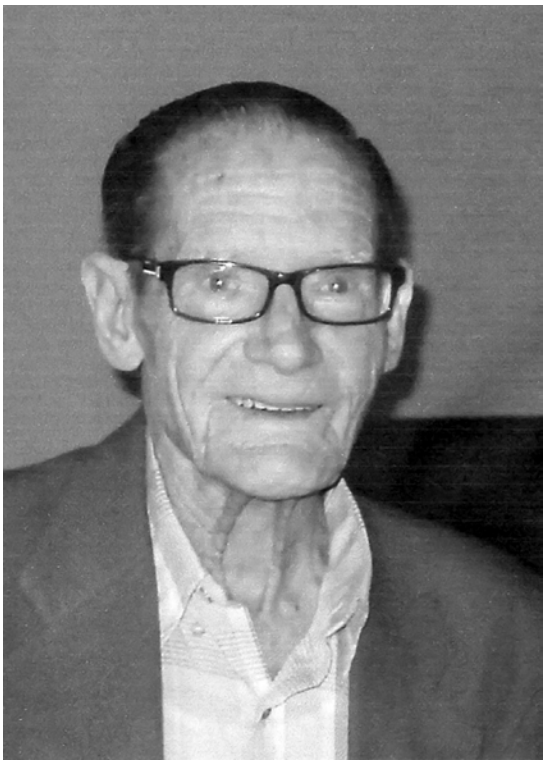
We start on our walk back home and this was the longest walk I ever had. When we reached Aunt Oda's home we found that she had just passed away and people in the community were already stopping by and offering their services.

The community acted just like Uncle Willie had told me it would, they took care of everything.

Life was so saddened for a long, long time, but after a few months the hurt was not so great. Marie and Dudley spent a lot of time with us (my family), this helped them with their grief and really helped my mother. Gradually after about 4 months my cousins and my mother started to smile again and laughing more.

Time heals a lot of HURT. But after 76 years, writing this story has been very saddening to me.

Cecil Raiford Walker



Penned by Cecil Raiford Walker, son of James Henry Walker and Heritage Family member Stella Cryer, born on Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachitta Community.

Mr. Cecil R. Walker wrote the poems on the following two pages about veterans and his service in WWII. On pages 311 through 313 are poems and a narrative written by Mr. Walker specially for this book.

SACRIFICE

A TROOPER'S GIFT TO HIS COUNTRY.

As a Vet, I came home a changed man,
because, my service was in great demand.
Many bugs, spiders, and other insects,
the war had many, other side effects.

I was called a night crawler in the mud,
and would surely get killed, if I stood.
Like a snake, I wound my way,
hoping God , would end this mess today.

By many people, Veterans are hated,
it was for their freedom, I participated.
Now I have problems of every kind,
blurry vision, and a foggy mind.

Before leaving home, I felt really good,
and I would go back there if I could.
But I live the war over, every day,
how many times, does a Vet have to pay.

had you seen; the awful thing's I did,
you'd welcome me openly, not keep it hid.
I will live with that, if you can,
though I'm a Veteran, I am still a man.

Please won't somebody, for a Veteran care?
with some kindness, and love to share.
I'll be going soon, out that one-way door,
and you won't see me thus, any more.

Written by a WWII Vet, and Post Commander
#8557 Toledo Bend Texas.. Cecil R. Walker

Good luck from a Patriot; Cecil R. Walker

COULD BE THE WORDS OF OUR SOLDIERS!!

We chose to be Soldiers for a good cause
And we fight to the finish with hardly a pause.
For the USA is where we stand,
To keep our freedom in this great land.

We know the entire Country is in our care,
You know how we feel if you've been there.
We surely must go where we're led,
And retrieve our wounded and our dead.

War is a hell that we just have to bear,
It's so true for service men everywhere.
But we stand tall in this world of woe,
And serve with gladness where ever we go.

At times our efforts seem to be in vain,
But we look around and see our gain.
Then our sweet hope revives a mite
So we march on with the fight.

We are all in it to do some good,
And hope that its not misunderstood.
There is Victory just over the hill,
And we will make it, you know we will.

By Cecil Walker WWII Vet.

The 1940 Census

I, Cecil R. Walker, was in the area of question in 1938, and maybe through 1940. I'm not sure; but I was working for, and living with my Uncle George Cryer on his farm during that time frame, on Whiskey Chitto Creek. My Uncle Albert Cryer's family and my Uncle Matthew Cryer's family had already left the Range before the census of 1940. They settled in the Good Hope Community in the Anacoco, LA area. Uncle George Cryer family moved to the same area after the 1940 farm year was over, but I never saw any people doing the Census during my stay at my Uncles place. I know that it was very hard times for those folks, both in Vernon Parish and Peason Ridge.

The trickle down dollars from Camp Polk didn't do a lot of good for people in either area, but that would all change when they opened up North Camp Polk, bring in thousands of more troops.

I know that the census was necessary to count heads in the community, township and Nation, in order for the elected officials to know how many people they represented, or if more representatives were needed. They also need the information in order to help displaced persons find homes or jobs, or both.

The people in Peason Ridge got the worst of the deal by being in the wrong place at the wrong time, through no fault of their own; but that is the way our good Government works, to their advantage not ours. I don't knock Fort Polk, it has been a boom for our economy in Vernon Parish and the State of Louisiana for so many years. Everything keeps changing, population going up every day, more Census Takers will be needed in the future. All things work together for good to them that love the Lord.

Farming

Farming was a way of life all across the south,
It was not from advertising, or by the word of mouth.
You were born a farmer; there was nothing you could say,
And you ground the corn, for the bread you made that day.

Life's all work and effort, and must be understood,
You don't just work for yourself, but for the common good.
The Lord made you sturdy, that you might able stand,
And gave God some thanks as you tried to till the land.

There was time to give aid to any that were ailing,
Calling on a Doctor was not considered failing.
A job well done meant so much, in their time of need,
You counted it not charity, as you did a good deed.

Farming was a form of work like unto no other,
It was hard but honest, and good for your brother.
You were somewhat happy with what you called your own,
Because you knew in a moment it could all be gone.

Maneuvers

Louisiana roads were either gravel, or just plain dirt,
There were some chug holes could actually cause you hurt.
Army vehicles carved ruts many inches deep,
The only way to move about was by Tank, Truck or Jeep.

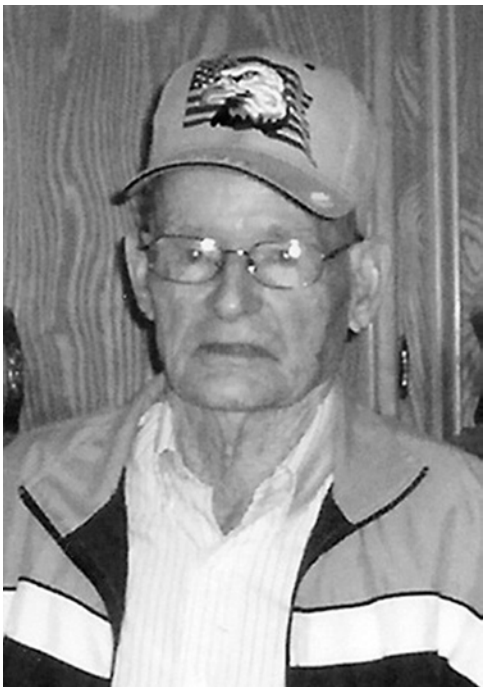
Maneuvers had soldiers on every inch of ground,
And it was that way for a hundred miles around.
Biscuits and fried chicken was the order of the day,
And soldiers, licking lips, surely coming our way.

Many, many families left the Range and found,
War-like conditions, they could tell by the sound.
There were men and horses, every way they turned,
Men were much smarter from the lessons learned.

They never took for granted that times are always good,
They just kept on going, doing what they could,
Life never presented them a time to slow or quit,
Life is hard to the finish with every grin and grit.

If you didn't care for Soldiers, you did not say it out loud
Whether in battle or not, they still did us proud.
If you were among our troops and showed them kind respect,
Or a special thank you was all that they expect.

James Kenneth Walker



Written by James Kenneth Walker, son of James Henry Walker and Heritage Family member Stella Cryer, born on Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachitta Community.

Excerpt from Life Story

The following is an excerpt from the autobiographical life story written by Mr. James Kenneth Walker.

This is the story of my life as I remember it. I was born in St. Petersburg, Florida on April18, 1926 during the Depression days. I guess I was about 3 years old when we moved from Florida to Beaumont, Texas, where we lived for a short while. It was there that I got my finger caught in the porch swing and I still remember how bad it hurt me.

From there we moved to Vidor, Texas which I remember very well. That was when my sister, Geraldine, was born but she only lived a few minutes. She is buried in Vidor in an unmarked grave. I don't know whether Dad was renting the place or what but yes there was a lot of new ground to be cleared by digging up stems and roots. I did a lot of hard work to start out so young, but we raised something to eat. It was a very low, wet, muddy place with water and mud holes everywhere most of the time. We had a mud chimney and it rained so hard one night that the chimney came loose at floor level and slid right out into the living room.

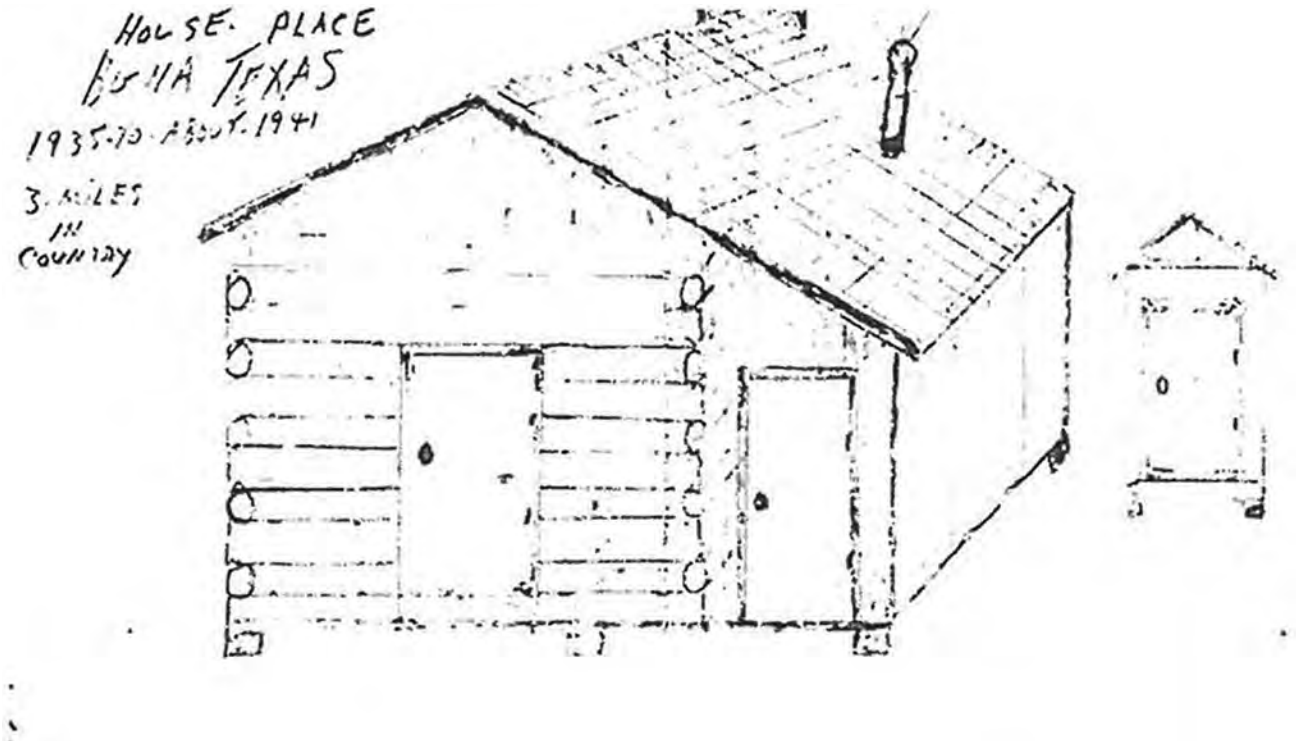
This is also where my brother, Fredrick, died at the age of 3 years and 4 months.[14] Fredrick was confined to some kind of enclosure where he died of a burning hot fever. I was 4 years and 3 months old. I remember Dad building his casket and afterwards putting it in the back of a 1929 Studebaker car and bringing it to Zion Hill Cemetery. He is buried a short distance from Grandpa and Grandma Cryer's old home place which is now part of Ft. Polk, LA. We crossed the river on a ferry boat on the way up there from Beaumont, Texas.

Things were really rough during the Depression days. I remember the old T-model log trucks hauling logs from out behind the house. After the logs were loaded, a team of mules were hooked to the log truck to pull it out of the woods.

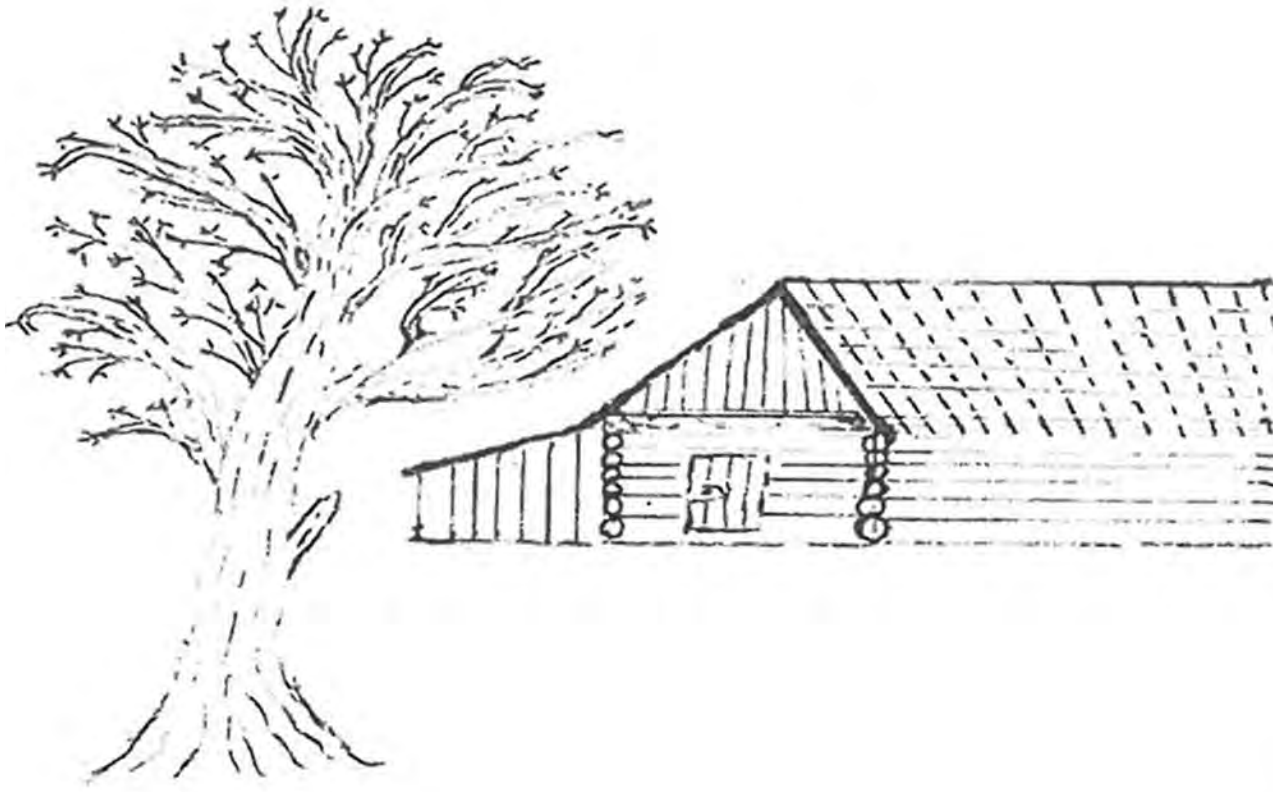
I remember going to school in Vidor, Texas but I don't think I went but a few days. After moving from Vidor we went to Buna, Texas to a place called the Hester place. My sister, Joan was pretty small. The house was a big old house with a wide hall all the way through. We played in the hall way and would scare Joan when she came out in the hall. She would be so scared she would almost lose her breath and Mama would get on to us.

We planted a field of cotton and a patch of tobacco. We made our own chewing tobacco by putting the folded leaves in a little wood box, pouring syrup on it and putting a weight to press it. Besides farming, I started back to school in the first grade and went a few days here and there. I must have spent part of three years in the first grade, two years in the second grade, and two years in the third grade. I made it to the fourth grade before I just didn't go back. I think I was about 14 years old at that time. I didn't really learn much until I was drafted into the Army in 1944.

[14]See the story "Research: Finding Freddie Walker—Mystery Solved" earlier in this Part.



Drawing by James Kenneth Walker of the homeplace at Buna, TX, ca. 1935–1941. Source: James Kenneth Walker.



Drawing by James Kenneth Walker of barn at Buna, TX, ca. 1935–1941. Source: James Kenneth Walker.

Marie Cryer White

Written by Marie Cryer White, married to Willie Carrol White, born on Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachittta Community, to Heritage Family member George Richard Cryer, married to Oda Adeline Davis.

Accidental Death by Batted Ball

Late 1937 or 1938 on a Saturday P.M. Rudolph Weeks was batting a ball pitched to him by his brother Frank Kenneth. They were getting ready to stop play for the day but Frank Kenneth wanted Rudolph to bat him one more. Rudolph batted the ball hitting Frank K. in the heart. They rushed him to Dr. Jeane but he was dead when they got him there. Rudolph was a late teenager and Frank K. was 11 or 12. He was attending Whiskachitta School at the time and we all had a hard time dealing with it. Rudolph and Frank Kenneth were sons of Frank and Martha Davis Weeks. Rudolph was planning to go see Trudy Craft that evening; that made it all more personal. I have talked about this with Garsie James and Tressie Craft. It's hard to forget!

Finding and Robbing Bee Trees

Finding and robbing a bee tree provided both fun and food. We would put a saucer, lid, etc. out with something sweet, likely syrup on it as bait. While they were loading up we would attempt to dust flour on the wings. This made it easier to focus on them as they flew away. Seems they always flew in a straight line (bee-line) to their hive, usually a tree with a hollow.

After the hive was found, if it looked promising, Dad would mark it to identify it. It became the finder's property. The tree was only robbed early in flowering season to give the bees time to produce enough honey for the next winter. Not everyone abided by that rule tho I know Dad did.

Recycling

The word "recycle" had never entered our vocabulary but we understood "reuse." Nothing was thrown away until all possible reuse was exhausted. After the men's and boy's denim overalls were patched and repatched and completely unusable the legs were cut off and rolled up very tight to make smoke to use as mosquito repellant. This was effective, portable, and of course, cheap. Granny Cryer (Missouri Elizabeth Whitley Cryer) could make a smoke that lasted for several "sessions." It would be crushed out and saved for another time (of course bedtime came earlier for everyone then). At times we had to use smoke to be able to fish, the insects were so bad. Dry cow chips were good for smoke also and most times readily available. On the subject of recycling, one would be remiss not to mention the obvious. Though many jokes have been made about corn cobs and Sears catalogs, their importance is legendary.

Fishing

Fishing was an important part of our lives, both for food and past time. Besides daytime fishing, setting out hooks was an afternoon and night activity. Bait had to be prepared and locations determined before dark. If hooks were put out before dark 'bait stealers would clean them, this it was a night time "sport." The hooks were checked a few times early in the night, then left 'til morning. Catfish was the objective of this type of fishing. Catching fish was much fun but then came the chore—the cleaning and preparing. (The piper must be paid.)

Salesmen: Watkins, etc.

Several salesmen came through the community on a regular basis; 'namely the Watkins Man and the Raleigh Man. I think most everyone was partial to the Watkins Man. He sold extracts, pie fillings, etc, but the most popular item was the Watkins liniment. Printed on the bottle was: "For external use only" but it was used for colds, stomach, etc. A general "cure all." It was <u>really hot</u>. Magazine sales people came thru often. They would take a chicken as payment for a subscription. I remember one of them was "Farm and Ranch." Also, someone came thru wanting to work on Mom's sewing machine. No one dared put a hand on her sewing machine. For that I am very grateful.

Picnicking

Getting a group together for a picnic was not a problem. A picnic was usually included with a fishing trip. Some were spur of the moment which was just the family. We'd get food together and head for the branch or creek. Food had to be on hand in case fish were not biting; Always coffee!

July 4th was an important day for us and most others. Families had big get-togethers. Probably 1934, we had a big gathering for fishing and dinner on the grounds across the bridge below our house. Several families took part, Uncle Albert's family, Aunt Della's, Aunt Ella's, Uncle Matthew's, Grandpa and Grandma Cryer and us. Must have been the next year we had a get-together at Uncle John F.'s and the following year on a creek close to Uncle Matthew's that also included fishing. These meetings were actually reunions of all the family that lived in the area at the time. There were probably more in the later years before the exodus but in 1937 Uncle Albert's family was gone and Dad's family had changed.

Picnicking at the Hunt Homestead

The Hunt home-place was another favorite place to meet up to eat and gab. It was a central place to meet and home for Eliza Eddleman and family and Addie Smith and family and sometimes Nancy Jones. Granny Davis, Uncle Willie, Aunt Jane's and Mom's families joined with them on occasion but several times it was just our immediate family.

Coffee

Many families in the community bought green coffee beans—parched and ground it. Serving coffee to anyone who dropped by was an expected social grace as it is today. Oh! It smelled so good!

Horace Cryer—Missing

In spring of 1936, before school was out for the summer, quite a bit of excitement occurred. Horace Cryer went missing from school. Everyone, especially the teachers were in the worst kind of panic, calling, whooping, and yelling. A big commotion! Still no Horace. Eventually, someone happened to look under the school house and there was Horace fast asleep on the slab of the foundation of the previous school that had burned several years before. Oh what a relief it was!

Syrup Making

Syrup making time was always exciting. Many families in the community raised cane (no pun intended). There were few syrup mills, making it necessary to schedule each batch for a specific time. I remember only three mills: Mr. Fate Smith, Mr. Garrett Jeane and one in the James area. Seems there was one in the Big Creek area, too. Cooking off the syrup required a special skill, also. Very few experts around. Cutting the cane, getting it to the mill and processing had to be done before a freeze. Several days were involved making for a very tight schedule.

Wash Day w/Battling Board

Wash day was not an exciting time. Several number 2 or number 3 wash tubs plus the wash pot had to be filled. This was drawn from the well by means of a rope and bucket. (No electricity, thus no pump.) The clothes were pre-washed before boiling in the wash pot. This was done on a wash board or by beating on a large block or stump with a battling board. This was a very strong board, something like an oar, probably oak or ash. Some used a round pole shaped battling board. (This term is probably Whiskachitta slang; Mr. Webster doesn't know about it.) After boiling, the clothes were put thru the rinses. If they dried in time, the ironing was usually done the same day.

Grapevine Swing

On a steep bank across the branch to the front of our place grew a grape vine in a very high tree that afforded much entertainment for us kids. It was really a high flyer; it would go out over the branch, high up. Granny Cryer thought it was too dangerous and proceeded to eliminate that danger. She brought her axe and chopped it off as far she could reach. Several times we pulled it down and kept swinging but that didn't last; she kept cutting 'til we ran out of vine—end of story.

Muscadine Catastrophe

One Sunday afternoon, probably '39, we all went for a walk to the Hunt Cemetery. Arriving almost home we found someone had cut the tree that muscadine vines grew up in. There had always been an abundance of fruit for us and neighbors. That was the end of a good thing. Leesville people often came out on Sunday afternoons "sight-seeing." Go figure!

Wild Hog Saga and School Upgrade

Before renovations and upgrades at Whiskachitta School, wild hogs presented such a problem it was almost impossible to carry on regular school activities.

When the school bell was rung for recess or lunch the hogs would come running and squealing from all directions. They knew that bell meant there would be scraps (if they were lucky possibly the whole lunch) from those dinner buckets. Edna Davis was bitten on the leg by one and the injury was really bad for quite a while. Everyone was concerned.

Aside from the danger of personal injury, the hogs slept under the school house, producing filth and fleas.

Hogs died under the school house during the summer. They had depended on the children's lunches for nine months and died waiting for the bell to ring. (Even hogs die when the handouts cease.) Evidently no responsible person had checked out the situation before school opened. Mr. Bray and the older boys removed the carrion and used disinfectant. We smelled creosote for a long time.

The problem was eliminated in the summer of 1937 when a strong fence was built with a stile over it instead of a gate. At the same time, the school was repaired and repainted. The floor was either replaced or repaired.

Looking back, I am sure Edna getting injured and dead hogs under the school was the motivation for the upgrade.

Raising and Tending Hogs

Most families raised hogs for bacon, grease, etc. Most were raised on the open range. When the pigs got to a certain size the males were neutered. A few weeks before hog killing time ones to be butchered were penned up to fatten and clean out.

Piney woods rooters became corn fed pork!

Hog Killing and Processing

Of necessity, hog killing was a cold weather activity. No electricity thus no refrigeration; we had to depend on Mother Nature. Not only dealing with the cold, it was a "hurry-up" work. After killing the hog it had to be cleaned and scraped and that required much scalding water. After this it was hung and gutted; then taken down and butchered. Different cuts of the meat were processed in different ways, some for cooking immediately, some for sausage and some for salting down to be smoked for bacon, etc. The fat was rendered out for grease and cracklins. All this in "Hog Killin weather"!

Soap Making

Soap for laundry cleaning, etc. was made from hog lard that had gotten rancid, old cracklings and any left-over meat product. This was mixed with lye and water and boiled in an iron wash pot. A certain formula was used but it was probably never written down.

After cooling and setting until it was the right firmness it was cut into bars and stored in an outbuilding. It had a strong scent but not disagreeable.

Bought laundry soap that I remember is OK, Octagon and P&G.

Range Mail—Rain or Shine

The importance of mail delivery to our area cannot be over stated. Mr. Homer Gandy was our mail man for most of the time of my memory. A Mr. Merchant took over the route shortly before the "exodus." Mr. Gandy probably retired.

Much shopping was done by mail and it was an exciting event when the new catalogs came in. Sears Roebuck, Montgomery Ward, and Spiegel were the main general merchandise ones. All the seed catalogs were very important. Ordering seeds and planning for the next spring planting was a winter time pick-me-up.

Mr. Gandy did personal favors beyond his official duties. While waiting for the mail one time, I lost one of the three cents Dad had given me to mail a letter. I knew I was in trouble but Mr. Gandy told me "never mind." Of course, he supplied the penny and posted the letter (First Class postage for a letter was 3 cents).

Mr. Gandy would drop notes off for us and friends with the condition they couldn't be sealed (and they were to individuals along his normal route).

There are many examples of the importance of the RFD Postal System to all our community.

Herding and Milking Cows

The cows that were milked had to be rounded up each evening if they didn't come home voluntarily. The calves were kept up during the day and put with their mothers in the P.M. for their share of the milk. How it was decided depended on how productive "Betsy" was. The calves were put out for the night and let back in the next morning to begin the cycle again.

After the milk cooled the cream came to the top. It was skimmed off and set aside to sour to be churned for butter (and buttermilk).

In summer milk was put in a bucket attached to a rope and let down in the well to keep it cool.

Cotton as a Cash Crop

Cotton was grown by many as a cash crop. Often the up-coming cotton crop was used as collateral for credit to buy the fertilizer, seed and other supplies needed for the spring planting. A lien was placed on the crop and if it was a bad crop year little would be left after the debt was paid off.

Cotton was the main source for money for school clothes and needs for the up-coming winter. It was a time for celebration to have a bale of cotton free of debt.

Water Melons and Other Produce

Watermelons and other produce was peddled for a little extra income. Dad would take a load of watermelons, tomatoes, string beans and corn when there was a good crop to the Quarters [in Leesville] in the T-Model and the people would converge on it and everything would be sold out in a very short time. Corn was a favorite but usually scarce, the season being so short. Of course, most of the corn had to be reserved for bread and feed.

Most of the time the produce money was spent at Lopar O'Banion's store on the way home for necessities not produced on the farm: coffee, sugar, rice, etc. Don't forget a bottle or two of Garrett snuff!

Dad grew fine watermelons but could not compete with Uncle Matthew Cryer; he was rightly known as Watermelon King of Vernon Parish.

Snakeroot Digging and Processing

Snakeroot was a cash crop that was provided by Mother Nature but was earned by "the sweat of the brow." It was readily available but hard to dig enough to weigh up. After digging it had to be washed and spread to allow for drying; not from the washing but it couldn't be sold while green. The shrinkage was great and it took a large amount to weigh a pound, but it helped eke out a living.

I think a dealer/agent in Leesville bought it and shipped it off. I don't know these details.

Trapping for Fur

In winter, Dad put out traps to catch animals for their pelts. He would put the traps out late in the P.M. and check them early in the A.M. If he had caught anything the skin had to be removed and prepared: My job was being a "gofer" and holding the animal for Dad to remove the skin from the carcass. (It was an awful chore.)

Dad caught possums, coons and a few times a mink. Possums brought very little, coons a little more and mink quite a bit, but mink were rare.

Special care had to be taken in preparation of skins; a slip of the knife or improper preparation would ruin the value of it. Dad had a book with diagrams on skin preparation, I think.

The pelts were sold to the St. Louis Commission Co.

Saga of the Dam that Wasn't

One summer; it must have been about 1936, several men in the community built a dam on the branch in the front of our house, two or three hundred yards above the crossing. It was quite an engineering

project; they worked several days on it. It was going to provide fish and recreation—a big community betterment project.

This fast flowing little stream was too much for this little dam, especially if there was rain run-off. Surrounding hills drained into it. Anyway, when they checked the project sometime later it had "blown"—timbers and debris scattered downstream. Oops, there went "Another Million Kilo-watt Dam!"

Cattle Drive Trail (Fact or Fiction)

Periodically, men would come asking permission to search for treasure on the bluff below our house close to Whiskachitta Creek. They always had a map that pinpointed that exact location.

Seems the story or myth was that the old road right by the bluff was the main route for the cattle drives to Texas thru No-Man's-Land; valuables were hidden to out-wit the would-be thieves that roamed the area. The persons who buried the treasure never returned to retrieve it.

This must have been going on for eons; there were old digs, later digs and modern digs. Dad always told the treasure seekers to "Have at it!" One time they almost dug up his hog pen.

I discussed this with one of the Heritage "experts" (Ms. Ibert, I think),[15] and I was informed that the cattle drive trail was many miles from there.

But it made for a good story; don't you think?

Mad Dog (Rabies) Scare

In the Whiskachitta Community, in 1939 or 1940 we had a mad dog (Rabies) scare. A boy, last name Barrington, was bitten after the same animal had bitten some yearlings. The family lived across the creek in the Big Creek Community. They had to carry the boy to Dr. Jeane every day to get his rabies shots. I think someone from Health Services, etc. assisted Dr. Jeane. The boy never came down with rabies but we were a frightened community for a long time. It was easy to imagine a dog behind every stump or tree. Everyone was really traumatized.

Dipping Cows, Typhoid Shots, etc.

In the years 1936-1939 several things went on that affected the area as a whole. Some Federal Agency made a decree that all cows had to be dipped for fever ticks. Dipping vats had to be built and that took material and expertise, lacking in the local vicinity. Someone came in to demonstrate, probably a Fed.

Herding range cows into pens was a tremendous undertaking; mostly had never been penned at all. Schedules had to be worked out for each herd. Some tempers flared but nothing serious. It's a wonder!

[15]Former Fort Polk cultural resource specialist.

Then one summer everyone, adults and children, had to have a typhoid vaccination; this was a series of three shots—a week apart, I think. Dr. Jeane was swamped for quite a while.

Zion Hill Singing School

In summers, two week singing school sessions were conducted in the Zion Hill Church building. O. C. Thompson and Uncle Willie Davis alternated these classes. At least, I remember both of them teaching the classes. Uncle Willie did his best to teach me; what a waste of his time!

Home Demonstration, WPA, etc.

In 1937, the Home Demonstration Club came to our area to teach a variety of home crafts: pine straw basketry, embroidery, scarp piecing, recipes and such. Ima Jones Cryer was our instructor. She had been taught to conduct these demonstrations by the Home Demonstration Agent. I was a child but I made a pine straw basket and did embroidery, maybe something else.

They also had a program for families to use their scrap cotton to make beds—Ones that didn't have cotton beds, too. They would go somewhere in Leesville and help in the bed making process.

Also, when what we called the CCC Road was built, the work was done by the WPA workers. So many men needed jobs and they could use such a few each man would get only a few days along. It was a blessing during those lean years tho.

Marie Cryer White at age 16, ca. 1940. Source: Marie Cryer White.

William Young

William Dan Young, married to Nelda Bilbo, is one of 10 children and is a grandson of William Riley and Missouri Elizabeth Whitley Cryer. His mother, Martha Elizabeth Cryer Young, was one of 15 children and a daughter of this Heritage Family, who arrived in the Whiskachitta Community in the late 1800s.

Prologue from "Along the Way"

An Even Dozen

William Dan Young, the son of John Allen Young and Martha Elizabeth Cryer, has authored a family history, "Along the Way." The following is a slightly abridged version of the Prologue to the full story. It is about a young man, whose family traveled west from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, looking for opportunity as so many did in the 1800s and early 1900s. John stopped in Vernon Parish where he met and romanced Martha. One day John proposed to and then married Martha. John found work in the turpentine woods around Kurthwood, Louisiana, maybe on Peason Ridge at times. The family was blessed with their first born, Mamie Marie Young, delivered by Dr. Jeane on January 26, 1918. Mamie was born on Whiskachitta Creek, Whiskachitta Community, in the double-pen house belonging to her grandparents, William Riley and Missouri Elizabeth Whitley Cryer. The spot where she was born is still marked by a curbed well that was dug at the east end of the front porch. This moment of birth began a succession of nine more siblings, all joining John and Martha in forming a happy, productive family of an even dozen. Read with joy for this is what the Young family is about.

By Skip Cryer, Heritage Family member

This is a story about the John Allen Young clan, and events that happened along the way, as seen through the eyes of William Dan Young, his seventh child. It is a tale about hard times, love, survival and ten children to sweeten the mixture. We had a time!

The story begins in the tall timberland that flourished in Vernon Parish, Louisiana, in 1916. Money was scarce and times were hard for everyone, but people endured as best they could. In the midst of it all, John was a young man looking for a girl to spend the rest of his life with. He had his eye on Martha, one of Bill Cryer's girls he had met accidentally at a local store.

Entertainment was rare in those days, except for dances on Friday or Saturday night. This particular week the dance was to be held at Joe Craft's place. He had a sizable house with a very large living area that accommodated large crowds. Joe had thrown several successful parties before and all were well attended. Moonshine was not allowed, at least [not] openly. A local farmer, Fred Walker, played guitar, Jack King played the fiddle. Occasionally, Henry Clark showed up with a banjo, but all in all, the dances were lively with waltzes, square dances, schottisches and two steps. John was not much of a dancer, but he enjoyed the frivolity of a dance, and could keep an eye on his favorite gal Martha. The music played on and on until daylight met the revelers on the way home. Many had to go immediately into the fields to hoe and plow for twelve hours. This made for a long, tiring day, but most didn't mind. Farming was a family effort, considering it furnished the major source of their livelihood. Both men and women had vital chores to perform, along with the children. There were women who plowed with a horse and singletree[16] when a man was not available.

Martha was the tenth child of William and Missouri Cryer, who lived near Whiskachitta Creek. I am amused by the various spelling of this creek. An old 1895 map identifies it as the Whiskey Chitta; another roadside sign spelled it as Ouiskachitta. I guess someone in Vernon Parish should research the spelling and put the various spellings to rest. Martha was born July 12, 1900. Young women were

[16]The pivoted or swinging bar to which the traces (straps), chains, or ropes of a draft animal's harness is attached.

accustomed to marriage before the age of twenty, so Martha was practically an old lady at seventeen. One thing led to another, and John popped the question to Martha at Christmas time in 1916. In her best homemade dress, Martha and John were married in Grandpa Bill Cryer's living room on January 28th, 1917. Little did they foresee the events that would occur in their lives together. They started a lasting relationship with practically nothing but each other.

Their first home was in Kurthwood, Louisiana. It was a small wood framed house, similar to most in the town. It did have electricity, but no indoor plumbing. Mother prepared meals in a meager kitchen on a wood stove. Their life together was blissful, at least momentarily.

The major industry in Kurthwood was connected to turpentine production. Daddy worked at Camp #3. He tapped the longleaf and loblolly pine trees for sap, which was ultimately refined into turpentine for making paint and various products. The dollar a day pay he received kept them with the bare necessities. The work was long and hard. Everything required manual labor. The marking of trees, taps and sap gathering began at six in the morning and went on until six in the evening, with a brief break for lunch, which he carried in an old syrup can.

Daddy was born March 28th, 1896 near Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The family migrated west around 1900, looking for more opportunities. He attended public school through the eighth grade, but years of work taught him more wisdom than most colleges afford. He, and others like him, are true heroes that have made this country great.

In midwinter on January 26th, 1918 Mother and Daddy were blessed with the first of their ten children. She was Mamie Marie. Mamie was delivered by a local doctor by the name of Jeans [Jeane]. It is not known if Dr. Jeans was a full-fledged medical doctor or perhaps a partially educated medicine man. Nevertheless, everything came off without a hitch.

In the fall of the following year on September 13th, 1919 Gladys Eva was born. No explanation was ever made why Mamie and Gladys' names were selected. Neither one was named after other family members. Gladys was delivered by a midwife. This was common for certain ladies with a penchant for nursing to aid in child birth.

Times were still hard, and two more mouths to feed didn't help any. Daddy continued working in the turpentine camp, but did receive a little more money as a midlevel supervisor.

It wasn't long before Aubrey Riley and John Preston were born. Aubrey was named after Grandpa Cryer, and Preston was named after Daddy. They were born October 28th, 1921, and February 5th, 1923, respectively. Midwives delivered both of them, probably the same one previously mentioned.

Two years later on February 10th, 1925 Eleanor Maudine was born. She was delivered by Dr. Connors. Eleanor disliked the name Maudine, and never used it.

The next year Hazel Clarice was born on July 19th, 1926. She didn't like her middle name either, and never used it. Hazel was delivered using the services of a midwife also.

Mamie and Gladys both attended a small one room schoolhouse in Kurthwood with other local children of varying ages. An education consisted of the basics in those days; the three Rs—readin', ritin' and 'rithmatic. Gladys recalls her teacher's name as Miss Fisher. A standing joke with this teacher was that she would rather be Fishing than Crying (as in Cryer).

With the passing of time, and six children later, Daddy felt the need to quit his job at Camp #3 and move to Texas where better work opportunities were available. He loaded all their worldly posses-

sions on a borrowed company truck and set out on their journey. Daddy had an old Ford touring car, probably a model A. It had open sides with no windows. It was in the middle of winter in 1928 and very cold. Mother, Daddy and all six kids loaded into the old car. Mother prepared buttermilk biscuits, cured bacon and some homemade peanut brittle for snacks along the way, and some warm blankets. And off they went. On the way it began to rain. The roads were very bad and treacherous. It really poured. The kids were covered with blankets, nearly freezing from the wet and cold. Top speed of the old car was about thirty miles per hour. The Sabine River was crossed at Burr's Ferry. The old Ford rolled up to the chain at the end of the ferry boat, and the brakes brought the car to a screeching halt. As the ferry crossed the river, they could see Texas on the other side. The unknown future was an exciting moment. The ferry docked, and the family saw Texas for the first time in their lives.

Texas had dirt roads, as did Louisiana. They were rutted, rough and sometime hazardous, but the old car rolled into the community of Barnum, Texas, after several hours on the road. Daddy had been promised a job with another turpentine camp in Barnum, doing essentially the same work as before, but nearer higher paying jobs in the area. This was the appeal that brought them there.

There were only two white families who lived at the camp in Barnum, so customs of the black people became well known. Superstition prevailed according to Mother. On one occasion, an elderly black man died. It was the job of other friends and family members to build a casket for burial. As the casket was being constructed, all the small shavings and bits of wood were gathered up and placed in the casket with the corpse. This was done so the ghost of the dead would not come back and haunt the family.

Mamie, Gladys and Aubrey attended a small country school for the year spent at Barnum.

The Texas Company Oil Refinery began hiring in Port Arthur, Texas offering good jobs in 1930, so another move was made to that port city. Daddy was hired into the maintenance gang, and eventually promoted to the machine shop as a boilermaker. While living on Ninth Avenue in Port Arthur, I was born, the first native-born Texan on March 2, 1932. I was delivered at home by registered nurse Mrs. McGee. We lived on Ninth Avenue for a few years, and then moved to 30th Street in Pear Ridge. I was named after Daddy's brother Uncle Dan, who died in the flu epidemic of 1918.

On September 26th, 1935 James Allen was born. Jim was named after Daddy also. He was also delivered at home by nurse McGee. On February 26th, 1938, their ninth child Mary Elizabeth was born. Mother finally had a child named after her. Mary was delivered by Dr. I.T. Young (not related to us) at home.

On November 6, 1939, Nelda Ruth was born. She was the tenth and final child. She was also delivered by Dr. Young. It took twenty-one years for Mother and Daddy to learn how to stop having kids, but Nel was the caboose. I commented about this at one of our family reunions, and got a rousing response. In total, Mother was pregnant seven and one-half years. Can you imagine the discomfort? Looking back, they had two girls, two boys, two girls, two boys and two girls. Why they did it, God only knows, but I'm sorta' glad they did.

Today there are only three of our immediate family members living. As each sister and brother passed away it left an indelible scar in my heart because each was much loved and cherished. But we all play an assigned role in life, and I thank the Lord to have had a role in it.

Enjoy my story.

Surviving children of John Young and Martha Cryer Young. L to R: Gladys Eva Young Hall (oldest living daughter), Nelda Ruth Young McCarver Lamont (the baby of the family), and William Dan Young (the only surviving son).

Appendix A

HERITAGE FAMILY SURNAMES FROM THE 1940 CENSUS

Appendix A
Heritage Family Surnames from the 1940 Census

This appendix lists the Heritage Family surnames identified in the 1940 Census within the enumeration areas that became Camp Polk and Peason Ridge Artillery Range. A total of 428 surnames, including 344 distinct surnames, were identified. Spellings of family names are listed below as they appear in the 1940 Census handwritten entries, some of which are likely to be in error. Additionally, there are known Heritage Families, such as the Bolgianos, who do not appear in the 1940 Census enumeration records for the Camp Polk or Peason Ridge areas. It may be that they had moved out of the area by April 1940 when the head count was taken.

Newly identified Heritage Family surnames in the Camp Polk and training lands area (221)

Achin, Adair, Airhart, Allen, Anderson, Ashworth, Babin, Bailock, Bales, Balton, Barber, Barington, Barnes, Bates, Bedgood, Beeson, Bennett, Bickham, Blackmon, Blackwell, Bond, Booty, Boyter, Brady, Breazeale, Brewer, Brewton, Brinkley, Browning, Bryant, Bunn, Burks, Burleson, Busby, Buxton, Byrd, Cain, Cannady, Caroway, Carroll, Caruth, Chance, Childers, Childress, Chory, Clark, Claud, Cleveland, Cloud, Cobb, Coburn, Coker, Cole, Combs, Coody, Cook, Cooley, Culpin, Curtis, Davies, Dazio, Deeson, Denard, DeRabon, DeRamus, DeVore, Dickens, Dickerson, Doss, Dousay, Dove, Downs, Doyal, Doyle, Droddy, Dudlis, Duffee, Dugan, Durbin, Edwards, Evans, Everitt, Fee, Fish, Fontenot, Free, Fremon, Frisby, Galeman, Gaskin, Gibson, Goens, Goins, Goodman, Gordon, Goss, Grant, Hagan, Hamilton, Hamons, Handcock, Harper, Harris, Hayes, Hays, Heard, Hebert, Henton, Hext, Hickman, Higghinbothan, Hill, Hilton, Hinderson, Honeycutt, Hughes, Hughs, Ingalls, Jeans, Kemp, Key, Keyes, Kile, Killett, Knight, Koones, Lambright, Lawson, Liby, Locke, Lockhart, Magee, Manasco, Mancil, Mancill, Mannisan, Maricle, Marshal, Martine, Massey, Matthews, Matthis, Mayo, McCallon, McCollough, McCullough, McDade, McKinney, McNeely, Merchant, Miles, Moore, Moss, Murrey, Musslewhite, Neal, Nichols, Nippers, Nolen, Norris, Norsworthy, Ottinger, Owens, Ozbolt, Parker, Parks, Parrott, Patterson, Paul, Perault, Pickering, Pigatt, Pinchback, Pittman, Pollard, Potter, Powel, Prewett, Pringle, Puente, Ray, Redmon, Richardson, Robertson, Robeson, Roebuck, Rogers, Ross, Roy, Scott, Shaw, Sigler, Simmons, Spergeon, Stoker, Stracener, Streetman, Strother, Stuckey, Sweat, Talbert, Tarver, Taylor, Teagle, Templeton, Thornton, Townley, Townly, True, Urzalik, Vehan (may also be identified as "Behan," a previous Heritage surname), Ware, Wells, Whitman, Wiggins, Williams, Williamson, Withers, Woodsod, Wright, Yates

Previously identified Heritage Family surnames in the Camp Polk area (117)

Anding, Armstrong, Arnold, Ashmore, Bailey, Bass, Boyd, Brack, Bridges, Brister, Brown, Calcote, Calhoun, Carr, Carter, Cooper, Craft, Cryer, Davis, Dear, Deason, Dixon, Dowden, Eddleman, Ferguson, Fletcher, Ford, Funderburk, Gill, Goetzmann (may also be identified as "Goetzmon"), Goines,

Goodwin, Graham, Grandmougin, Green, Gunter, Haight, Hall, Haymon, Haynes, Hicks, Hinson, Howard, Huggins, Hunt, Hyde, Jackson, James, Jeane, Jeter, Johnson, Jones, Jordan, King, LaBleu (may also be identified as "LeBlue"), LaCaze, Lee, Legg, Lewis, Lyons, Maddox, Martin, McDaniel, McDonald, McInnis, McKee, McMullen, Mitchell, Monk, Morris, Morrison, Nash, Nolan, Oakes, Owers, Palmer, Pelt, Perkins, Phillips, Poe, Polson, Reed, Roberts, Rowzee, Sanders, Sarver, Scarber, Self, Sellers, Shankle, Sharp, Shaver(s), Singletary, Smith, Snell, Spears, Stephens, Stevens, Stewart, Swain, Thompson, Turner, Wadsworth, Walker, Ward, Watson, Watts, Weeks, Weldon, West, White, Willis, Wilson, Wingate, Wisby, Woodworth

Newly identified Heritage Family surnames in the Peason Ridge area (by parish)

Peason Ridge – Vernon Parish: Allen, Brister, Chance, Coburn, Davis, Dorr, Duke, Harris, Hayes, Killen, Nippers, Parker, Prewett, Sterling, Stiddent, Vehan, Williams, Withers

Peason Ridge – Sabine Parish: Carr, Cook, Goins, Hinderson, Robertson

Peason Ridge – Natchitoches Parish: Airhart, Anderson, Balton, Bates, Blackwell, Booty, Boyter, Brady, Brewton, Burleson, Calhoun, Clark, Craft, Dove, Edwards, Fremon, Funderburk, Goss, Hays, Key, Kile, Lee, Manasco, Marshal, Martin, Nash, Norris, Norsworthy, Ottinger, Paul, Pigatt, Ray, Roberts, Ross, Roy, Stuckey, Tarver, Taylor, Wells, Williams, Wilson

Previously identified Heritage Family surnames in the Peason Ridge area

Vernon Parish: Brown, Curtis, Dowden, Grant, Jones, McDaniel, Mitchell, Moore, Owers, Sanders, Simmons, Snell, Spears, Stewart, West

Sabine Parish: Bridges, Browning, Carter, Dowden, Haynes, McCollough, Simmons

Natchitoches Parish: Carter, Dowden, Simmons, White

Appendix B

HERITAGE FAMILY VETERANS

Appendix B
Heritage Family Veterans

The Heritage Families of Vernon, Sabine, and Natchitoches Parishes have consistently served this nation proudly in its national defense. The list of names below has been compiled since the Fort Polk Heritage Project began in 2007 and includes a number of different sources, including information obtained through research by Fort Polk cultural resources staff members, and information supplied by Heritage Family Association members and participants at Heritage Reunions and other Heritage Program events.

The editors wish to acknowledge that a list of this scope and span of time may not be complete, and we openly apologize if some Heritage Family veterans have been unintentionally omitted. Similarly, it is possible that some names are duplicates and that other names may have found their way onto this list for individuals who are not veterans, based on misinterpretations or errors in data collection. With over six hundred families living on the land that became Camp Polk and Peason Ridge Artillery Range, the research and development of a complete and accurate list of Heritage Veterans remains a dynamic endeavor. Though it is a work in progress, our intent for the list included herein is to demonstrate, honor, and celebrate the breadth and depth of military service by our Heritage Family veterans, who have performed their duty to this great country with pride, dignity, and selflessness. It is hoped that in some way this list may pair a veteran's story from a former generation with one of his or her contemporaries serving today.

1. Anderson, Winfred Dale, Sr.
2. Arnold, Royce
3. Bailey, Delton
4. Bass, Lynn
5. Bass, Roy
6. Bass, Vernon
7. Behan, Eugene
8. Behan, Louis
9. Berwick, Gregg Morgan
10. Bloodsworth, Tommye Lou
11. Bonner, Aubrey Lindbergh
12. Brack, Arthur "Marvin"
13. Brack, Homer Gordon
14. Brack, Luther McVale
15. Brack, Merle Ray
16. Bridges, Andrew L., Sr.
17. Bridges, Andrew L., Jr.
18. Bridges, Jardis "J.C." Cleo
19. Brister, Clayton
20. Brister, Finus
21. Brister, Jasper W.
22. Brister, Jim J.
23. Brister, Wash Richmond
24. Brister, William Vincent
25. Brister, Wheeler "Willie"
26. Brown, Billy Frank
27. Brown, Ray
28. Brown, Roy
29. Browning, Elmer Hoyt
30. Bryers, Delbert Samuel

31. Burns, James “Polk” Knox
32. Busby, Ernest Nathaniel
33. Calcote, Oscar
34. Calhoun, Alfred
35. Calhoun, Amos Cornelius
36. Calhoun, Benjamin “Buddy” Franklin
37. Calhoun, Daniel Benjamin
38. Calhoun, Luke
39. Calhoun, Nelon Hubert
40. Calhoun, Reese
41. Calhoun, Samuel
42. Cavanaugh, Patrick H., Sr.
43. Chaney, Elbert
44. Chaney, Lamar
45. Clear, Charles C., Jr.
46. Conner, Robert Thomas
47. Craft, Lloyd
48. Craft, William Bill Jefferson
49. Cryer, Fred
50. Cryer, George Richard
51. Cryer, Holland
52. Cryer, Marrion Monroe, Sr.
53. Cryer, Monroe
54. Cryer, Riley
55. Cryer, William Honor
56. Cryer, Woodrow
57. Curtis, William Wiley
58. Davis, Carrol “Shorty”
59. Davis, Ervin Curtis
60. Davis, John Washington
61. Davis, William Allen
62. Davis, Willie Gordon
63. Deason, Donald
64. Deason, Ralph Wesley
65. Deason, Steve Edmond
66. Dedmon, Luther Lee
67. Deters, Clarence Jerry Joseph
68. Dew, Donald Haymon
69. Dowden, Michael
70. Driver, Clinton
71. Dunn, Albert Johnson
72. Eddleman, John Peter
73. Ferguson, Otis
74. Fletcher, Clyde
75. Franklin, Allen
76. Franklin, Leo
77. Franklin, Winston Deray
78. Gramling, Paul
79. Groves, Penderson
80. Hagan, Almon Aubry
81. Hagan, James Dewey, Jr.
82. Hagan, John Louie
83. Hagan, Othel Dewayne
84. Hagan, Ottis Bernell
85. Haley, Catherine Terry
86. Hall, Gladys Eva Young
87. Hall, John Tom
88. Haymon, Albert
89. Haymon, Arthur
90. Haymon, Auzie Adverse, Sr.
91. Haymon, Auzie Adverse, Jr.
92. Haymon, Charles Richmon
93. Haymon, Derryl Houston
94. Haymon, Elbert Eugene
95. Haymon, Floyd
96. Haymon, Harold
97. Haymon, Hezekiah, Sr.
98. Haymon, Huey P.
99. Haymon, Huey Thomas
100. Haymon, Ivy Isaiah
101. Haymon, J.W.
102. Haymon, J.Y.

103. Haymon, J.D. "Jimmy"
104. Haymon, James Kerby
105. Haymon, James Monroe
106. Haymon, James Pinkney
107. Haymon, Jessie Willard
108. Haymon, Joseph Samuel
109. Haymon, Joseph
110. Haymon, Leruew Manuel
111. Haymon, Lloyd
112. Haymon, Malachi
113. Haymon, Marvin William
114. Haymon, Moses Arsend
115. Haymon, Narie
116. Haymon, Oscar
117. Haymon, Peggy
118. Haymon, Pink
119. Haymon, Sam
120. Haymon, Scott
121. Haymon, Wendell Wilmer
122. Haymon, Woodrow
123. Inman, Kermit
124. Jackson, William W.D. David
125. James, Cornie W.
126. James, Garsie
127. James, Wallace
128. Jean, Clifford "Jack"
129. Jeane, Claude Cecil
130. Jeane, Clyde
131. Jeane, Raymond Carlton
132. Jeter, Dale D.
133. Jeter, James
134. Jeter, Judge Lee
135. Jeter, L.T.
136. Johnson, Almon
137. Johnson, Josiah
138. Johnson, Zealie, Sr.
139. Jones, John Sam, Jr.
140. LaCaze, James A.
141. LaCaze, Jim
142. LaCaze, Theophilus Harold
143. Legg, Theodore Lincoln
144. Locke, Alvin
145. Locke, J.C.
146. Massey, Jack Nelson
147. Mathis, Harmon C.
148. Mathis, Harold
149. Mathis, Hiram James
150. Mathis, Jesse Lee
151. Mathis, Roy Allen
152. Mayo, Karl Robert, Sr.
153. Mayo, Phillip
154. McCollough, Dave
155. McDaniel, Roy, Jr.
156. McInnis, Thomas Willard
157. McKee, John S.
158. McKee, Reagan
159. McKee, Silas
160. McMullen, Alvin Dwight
161. McMullen, James Larry
162. McMullen, John Harvey
163. McMullen, Joseph Cossgrove
164. McMullen, Kenneth Wayne
165. McMullen, Malcom
166. McMullen, O'Thell Calma
167. McWilliams, Andrew Andy
168. McWilliams, Roy
169. Merritt, Edmond
170. Merritt, Levell
171. Monk, Douglas
172. Monk, Floyd
173. Monk, Sherman
174. Monk, Steve "S. A." Abraham

175. Nash, James "J.W." Washington
176. Nash, Joseph "J.C." Charles
177. Neal, Scott Allen
178. Nichols, Thomas "Tom" Watson
179. Osmun, Michael W., Sr.
180. Owens, Buford
181. Perkins, John William
182. Phillips, Allison M.
183. Poe, Lloyd George
184. Sandell, Alvin
185. Sandell, Troy D.
186. Savell, Larry Paul
187. Sawyer, Frank Rodney
188. Self, Albert
189. Shavers, George W.
190. Shavers, John D.
191. Smith, Lyndon
192. Smith, Mickey
193. Smith, Shelby
194. Smith, Thelbert Allen
195. Spears, A.J.
196. Stebbins, Russell J.
197. Swain, Chester
198. Swain, Earl
199. Swain, Henry Clifford, Sr.
200. Swain, Ivan
201. Swain, John Alvin
202. Swain, Marvin
203. Swain, Wendell
204. Tanner, Carlos Dean
205. Thompson, Kenneth Virgil
206. Thornton, James Elton
207. Thornton, Paulus
208. Turner, William "Uncle Bill" R.
209. Turner, William "Bill" Sherfield
210. Underwood, Sidney Alton
211. Underwood, Wallace Lee
212. Walker, Arthur
213. Walker, Cecil Raiford
214. Walker, George Arthur
215. Walker, James Kenneth
216. Walker, Jefferson Lee
217. Walker, Johnny
218. Walker, Joshua "J. J." Jackson
219. Walker, William "Bill" L.
220. Walker, William "Billy" L.
221. Walker, Marvin Clyde
222. Walker, Wesley Lloyd
223. Ward, Roy Virgil
224. Watson, James Park
225. West, Jim "Jimmy"
226. Whitley, Christopher Columbus
227. Willis, Stewart
228. Willis, Sherril Martin
229. Young, James "Jim" A.
230. Young, John Preston
231. Young, William "Bill" D.

The End