**DOROTHY CHITWOOD RICKEY**

Remembers playing hooky on April Fool's Day from school. They picked wild flowers, made hickory whistles, but she remembered mostly the next morning when Mr. Clark lined all of them up in front of the room, standing there with a hickory stick and lecturing for several minutes. Some were very nervous, and a few girls cried, but after awhile he smiled and sent them to their seats.

**MEMORIES OF OKLA SIMMONS HORNE**

**Hominy**

My mother made hominy. She soaked the shelled corn in lye water for three days to remove the husks. Then it was washed through many waters. Mother was fond of hominy; I don't care for it.

**Wash Boards**

I still have a wash board. It is made of glass. There is no washing machine that will clean dirty clothes like scrubbing them on a rub board (wash board). I still use mine for specially dirty things before I put them in the wash. A wash board is really an antique, but I think they are still very useful.

**Grindstones**

We had one made of sandstone. It fitted into a frame. We would have to pour water on the stone as we turned it to sharpen an axe. It had a handle we turned the stone by. Don't know what happened to it. It was a nice stone. Once my little sister Margaret took the silver knives and ground the silver off the edges to sharpen them. She thought they were not sharp enough.

**Blacksmith Shop**

I remember Joe and Quincy Wells's father used to have a shop about where Mack Dyer's house or strawberry patch is now. Like the poem "The Village Smithy," I used to watch the sparks fly from the red hot forge as Mr. Joe worked. We would stand in the door of the shop as we went home from school. I liked to watch him shoe a horse. I wondered how he could drive the nails into the hoof without it hurting the horse's foot.

**Floods**

I believe it was the Spring of 1925 that the Arkansas River overflowed, and it was nearly up to Red Hill. We drove down to see it. Mother was with me. I remember that Will Teague rowed a boat into the flood waters, and I took a ride, but I can't recall who the other young people were. Mother stood and cried until I got back, she was so frightened. It was very foolish of me as I could not swim a stroke.

**Circus**

I saw the Ringling Brother's Circus three times in Arkansas. First time was when I was about 5 years old. We rode the train to Fort Smith. It was also the first train ride that I have any memory of. I can remember the train crossing the bridge across the Arkansas River between Van Buren and Fort Smith. Oh, I thought it was the widest river in the world.

I remember the circus parade, the animal cages, the big old black bear, and the calliope; I thought the music was so beautiful. The second time must have been when I was nine or ten years old. It was before my father died. We rode an open street car to the fair grounds to see the circus. We stood on a wide board outside the car and hung on. I had a new white sweater. I got too warm so took it off. Daddy was carrying it inside his coat that he had taken off, and it slipped out and was lost. I had never seen such a large crowd of people. The third time they played the story of Cinderella and it was so beautiful. I always enjoyed the clown.

**April Fool's Day And Hooky**

I remember a bunch of teenagers playing hooky on April Fool's Day. Aunt Maggie Dougan was one of them. Mr. Wasson was the teacher. Others were: Fannie Loomis, Della and Viola Chitwood, Joe Lawrence, Maude Wasson, Linnie and Sidney Miller, Bert Chitwood, Sarah Renfroe, Goldia Chastain, Vilas and Carl Manuel.

**Fourth of July Picnics**

Everyone took a lunch to spread together with friends to eat. I remember there was an artesian well upon the mountain, north of Alma where we gathered. It was like what we call a festival now. They would have a ballgame, a greased pole for the young boys to try to climb, and a greased pig for them to try to catch. It was great fun for the kids to watch, and I remember at one place they had a merry-go-round. Oh, how I loved to ride on it; and there was always a clown who was very funny.

**Sorghum Making**

Uncle Rome Peevy used to have a sorghum mill; during the country summer session of school at District 61, we kids would go by the mill and watch Uncle Rome. He would let the boys drive the horses around and some would feed the cane into the mill for him. He would skim the foam into a pan and let us eat it. We would eat and eat. How I wish I had some of the good sorghum. I guess that is about a lost art.

**Lard Making or Rendering**

My mother, Nannie Simmons, used to render lard outside in our big black wash kettle. One time she had rendered lard but had not taken it up. Evelyn was about 5 years old, went out, and poured the still warm lard on the ground around the pot, but fortunately the ashes were not hot enough to ignite. Someone saw what she was doing and got her away. I guess God was watching over her. It was 1000 wonders she was not burned to death.

**Making Lye Soap**

I still make lye soap. I use it in my washer. I use few detergents.

**I REMEMBER ~ by Blanche Porter**

I well remember the last 4th of July picnic I attended at Rock Creek. We went by wagon team. Took our lunch packed in a large wooden box. Carried ice wrapped in old papers and quilts.

About all I can remember about Halloween was waiting for the next A.M. to see what "Privy" was atop of what.

I can just see the huge Christmas tree on the stage in the old auditorium at Dyer school. It was always decorated with red berries and pop corn everyone had helped to string. We also covered sweet gum balls with foil from gum wrappers. Decorating the tree was as enjoyable as the "big day itself."

My mother used to make lye soap regularly, after hog killing. There was always lard to render, the cracklings were used for soap making, that is, after we had a few batches of "crackling bread;" then during the year trimmings from the meat that had been cured and the [?et] rinds were used for more scraps for another batch of soap.

Hominy making makes my mouth water. Can't go back on one's raising. All the kids helped to keep the fire going around the old iron wash kettle that was used to cook the corn in the lye water. Took lots of cooking and washing to remove the eyes of the corn but well worth the trouble.

I inherited the old grindstone that used to be a must in our smokehouse. Grandpa Chitwood used always to keep even his pocket knife sharp on it, but it was used primarily at hog killing time.

**I REMEMBER**

By Ruth Hurd

Mr. Summerville had a sorghum mill up the railroad just West of the Albert Cranford Place on the property now owned by Dr. Sherear. We lived just South of the mill on the Old Alma Road near the Sullivent Cemetery. The road went through there then. The North breeze would often waft the tantalizing aroma of boiling syrup over our way.

At night the neighboring families would gather and cook apples in the sorghum. Since the last boiling of the day usually ran until about 10:00 P.M. Along toward the end of the sorghum season we would gather there for a taffy party.

Some of the neighbors that I remember living in this area were: Billie Harris, Mrs. Dake and children, Jeff, Henry, Hurley, Beulah, Bertha and Robert; Mrs. Diddle Curnutt; Mr. Bob Lamb and Mrs. Addie; Mr. and Mrs. Coats; Mr. Lovett Harris and family; Mr. Will Summers and Mrs. Minnie; the Shelly family; Mr. and Mrs. Manuel and their family; Mrs. Eddie Drake and her children, Bertha and Clifford; Clarence and Mrs. Bess Harris; Mr. and Mrs. Pounds and family; and the Fox Family.

After we went to Granddad Hurd's to live, I remember many people who camped on the Hurd Branch. I think I remember most of all the Gypsies who would camp there. We would have to go by them going to school. We had been told they would kidnap children so we really ran by their camp. Some Greeks camped there one time. They ate some crow thinking they were black chickens, and they were real ill. When they left, we found a dead tree trunk stuck full of new clothes they had gotten dirty and, instead of washing them, they would just buy more. One time there was a man and two little children who stayed for about two months. We got acquainted with them and when they left they gave us their little white dog. They didn't think that they could feed it. There were so many different ones that it would be difficult to tell about them all. Anyway we gave them vegetables from the garden and not one ever bothered anything of ours. Even the circus would bring their animals down there for water. We would sit out and watch the elephants blow water out in our fields.

My first experience at school was at the 61 school. My first teacher was Mr. Leander Pounds. Our school seats were like old time church benches, we didn't have desks, we put our books in our laps. Once some of the older boys tied my sash to the chair and when recess came I could not get up so I began to cry. I was afraid to tell Mr. Pounds what was wrong with me. He started to pick me up to console me and found that I was tied. He calmly untied my sash and I happily went to play. And when this happened again I knew how to handle the situation.

When we started to school at Dyer we had to walk. Mrs. Goldie Manuel was teaching school at 61 then. We would be getting out here at Dyer about the time that Mr. Vilus would be going after her. Many tines he would give us a ride to our gate. He had a sleigh and the winter when the snow and ice was on the ground it seemed to me that his horse would go so fast that the sleigh would literally fly. I guess I thought that we were going as fast as a jet plane does today. We would wait at the gate mornings for the Shelly children to come by and we would walk together (Beulah, Herbert, and Willie), also the Simmons children, Oakley, Weldon, and Evelyn.

**A CHILDHOOD MEMORY**

**"The Summer Picnic"**

By Nita Wagner Dyer

The good old days of yesteryears may seem like way back there to most of you, but to me it was only yesterday. My mother always cooked large meals, three times a day. That was when you made everything from scratch, and raised mostly what you ate. Mother was known for her good cooking which she took great pride with. She loved to bake cakes and pies, and to this day I can almost taste the big fresh coconut cakes that she would bake. She always enjoyed baking and taking to the picnics the lovely cakes and pies that she had prepared. She would bake for several days before the picnic and put the food in the **pie safe**. Do you remember the "pie safe?" It was a large wooden cabinet with 2 shelves. The front was covered by two doors that had screens on them to keep the bugs out. That was where we kept our pies, cakes, and bread.

Each summer when the crops were laid ***[1. to cultivate (a crop) for the last time; 2. to harvest and store (a crop or crops)]***, we would have a picnic with several other families. The picnic was in the Lovett Harris Woods in the 61 community. This one picnic I recall was when I was about 6 years old. I had looked forward to getting to go for days, and I thought the time would never come. I was up early the morning of picnic trying to hurry everyone up so that we wouldn't be late.



There was no nonsense about mother's getting us ready to face the people at the picnic—we must look our very best. After all the splash, clatter, and flutter of bathing and getting clean, we were inspected to be sure there was no dirt hidden anywhere on us. This picnic we were all dressed in white: white dresses, white shoes, and of course white undergarments. Our hair was parted in a straight line between the eyes. There were rows of little curlers (strips of tin covered with paper) to be undone and our hair brushed into ringlets. Our shoes were high top shoes with the kind of buttons that we had to use a button hook to fasten. After going through all of this with us children, Mother sat us down on the front porch and very firmly told us to stay put OR\_\_\_\_. We were to behave like little ladies and gentlemen.

It seems there is always one in the family who likes to be adventurous and regardless, and this day it was our brother Jim. He got off the porch and was wandering around the back yard and found a baby chicken dead. Any dead animal at our house had to be buried in the pet cemetery in the orchard, and, of course, this one couldn't wait. We had on our church clothes so why not put it away properly while we were dressed? Brother Jim preached the funeral, Sister Ruth led the singing, and I led the mourning. We got down on our hands and knees, white clothes on, and dug the grave, with our hands. We weren't aware of what we were doing to ourselves and our clothes until my parents found us. We were dirty from head to toes, and our eyes and faces were red as beets from crying. First Mother told us just to forget the picnic: she was very angry with us, but Dad called her off to the side and they had a conference, and Mother took us back into the house and went through the same routine getting us cleaned up again.

George Shibley (lived where Ernest Cottrell now lives) ran a taxi from Dyer over there for 10¢ a trip. Had a ducking vat where you hit a trigger and Jim Renfroe fell into a vat of water.

**THE EVIL NECESSARIES**

How many remember in their youth how those long johns were a necessary evil and constant irritation? I must have been allergic to those wool things or I would not have had to scratch myself so often. Seemed like I itched constantly. My mother would look me over to see if I had the itch. She decided I'd just had to live with my underwear the best I could.

***[Editor's note: See page 156 above for image of "Long Johns."]***

The other kids seemed to wear their long Johns comfortably and managed them quite easily. I seemed to be the only one who had trouble with the three button flap which hung in the back. Try as hard as I could, rarely could I button the flap smoothly. Usually I'd end up with the middle buttonhole attached on to either the right or left button leaving part of my posterior exposed. This in turn would cause a lopsided lumpy appearance to my outer clothing. When matched with the two lumps jutting out over the top of my high top shoes gave me the appearance of an unmade bed.

The art of folding that excess underwear neatly and smoothly around my legs was an art I never mastered.

From early fall to late spring (in fact we were allowed to take them off Saturday night before Easter Sunday): it didn't matter if Easter came in March or late April, they were just as much a part of me as a second skin. The only time I ever parted company with them was when I was doused in a galvanized tub for my weekly all over sudsing. Those few minutes between suds and changes were the only time that the bare skin was exposed until the balmy breezes blew again.

Winters then weren't as comfortable as they are now with central heat. The only warm spot was near the fireplace, and some places the pot bellied stove located centrally in the house. Those and the kitchen range were our only means of keeping from freezing.

I learned to appreciate those uncomfortable long johns. For regardless of the dangling flap and the discomfort connected with wearing them in the unheated bedrooms, under mounds of quilts, the warmth they provided me made those long, sub-zero nights bearable. Also to go along with those long Johns were "bear skin" long socks.

**THE BACKHOUSE**

I don't know the author of these beauties but the lady who instilled them in my memory assured me they actually were written inside the doors (where you couldn't miss them) of comfort stations of her childhood.

When to this place of ease you come

To do the deed that must be done

Be neat, and clean, and two things more

COVER THE HOLE AND SHUT THE DOOR!

This memory is priceless:

As far back as my childhood memory can go,

Our household memory greets me that was not meant for show

Beneath the bed 'twas-anchored, where only few could see,

But it served the entire family with equal privacy.

Some called the "critter" Peggy, and some, "The thunder mug"

While others called it "Badger" and others—just a jug.

To bring it in of evenings was hard enough, no doubt



But heaven help the person who had to take it out.

When guests came to visit, it tickled us a lot

To leave dry **seidlitz powder** within the guest room pot.

Then tip toe in the evening each one, his ear applied .

To catch, with gleeful relish the sound of shocked surprise.

Today our modernism relieves me, oh a lot,

And only in my vision do I see that homely pot.

**MY MEMORIES**

by Wanda Aldridge

The first radio that I can remember listening too at the home of Mr. Jim Davis. Grandfather Hurd had gone to their home to listen to President Roosevelt speak. I had never heard talk coming from a box before so I was very amazed at the "Box" in the corner. I sat very still because I didn't want that man to come out of the box and get me.

I remember when Mr. Gilmore built the present bridge at the Hurd branch on 61 road. I had a red coat and cap and he called me "Little Red Riding Hood."

I would go to town on Saturday and we would take cream to be tested at Elmer Belt's and we would also take eggs. Sometime we would take chickens to sell. I would go to Mrs. Dora Moss's to get my treats. She sold "Guess Whats" (a package with two pieces of candy and a toy). She would let me feel and take which ever package I wanted. I always loved to get the little china dogs that were in them. I still have one.

When I started to school, Miss Thelma James was my first teacher. My other teachers at Dyer were Miss Marie Brown, Miss Bonnie Rhea Henson (Wright), Mrs. Ruth Wade, and Miss Peggy Sue Formby (Mrs. Curtis Mason)

The first day of Spring all the older boys would play "hooky" from school and go to the Nelson Culvert to go swimming which had the name of "Hog Waller"

When a train would switch the local boys would hop on them and take a ride. A few times the ride lasted longer than they intended it to.

The boys from here went by the names of "Ten-horns." ***[Tinhorns???]***

We would gather and play games in the afternoon until we were called in to eat or to go to bed. I can still hear the mother's calling, "Come home, its supper time." Then after supper we would gather under the street lights and play some more. By the house there was a little knoll on the sidewalk. We would sit under the light and roll and roll BBs down the hill to the frogs. They would catch the BBS in their mouths; after they had swallowed so many they could not hop, the boys would take them by their back legs, shake them, and the BBs would fall out, and we would send the frogs on their way.

**SOMEWHERE I REMEMBER**

By Ruth Hurd

At school we had to carry water in a bucket from Mrs. Sula Moss's well. The older girls always had to take a younger girl with them so they would hurry back to school. Lula Chitwood would always take me with her.

Miss Beulah Chitwood would hurry home from school and stand at her fence and hand out candy and cookies to us sometimes on our way home.

When Grandmother Hurd would run out of yeast starter or "Mother" for her vinegar, she would borrow some from Mrs. Manuel or Mrs. Mae Hurd to get a new start.

The family would keep some Jews while they peddled in this area. We would sit at night and look through their things. They would give us a few items for putting them up for the night. Some names that I recall are Hadem and Salem Gamill and Charlie Shoffee.

Did anyone remember to mention the "Dummy" or "Dinkey?"

Baptizings were always held in the creek or branch. To have one inside a church was unheard of. Brush Arbor revivals were popular in the summer time after the. crops had been laid by. People would come and services would last until the wee hours of night and children would fall asleep on pallets under the seat where their parents were sitting.

**I REMEMBER**

By Lucy Stephens

I grew up on a farm and I have many memories of my childhood and growing up on the farm. We worked hard, but we also had a lot of fun. There were no milking machines in those days and most farmer's children learned to milk by the time they were eight years old. Then, of course, in the afternoon there came the chore of gathering eggs. For in an earlier day, getting the family flock in production and keeping it there was vitally important to rural families. And woe be to the hen who wasn't producing: she was apt to end up in a pot of dumplings, victim of the slogan "chicken every Sunday." The farmer's wife depended on the eggs not only to feed the family but also for extra spending money, and also she set her own eggs to hatch chickens for the coming year.

Grandmother saved the ashes and ran rain water through it and made her own lye. She never bought soap; she made her own from scrap meat and grease. She also made hominy. She would select the nicest ears of corn and use them to make her hominy. She also dried her apples and peaches on a south porch on a table covered with mosquito netting so the flies could not get to them.

Grandpa Hurd had a blacksmith shop, and I thought it was a treat to get to go to the shop and pump the bellows for him. Here was where he repaired his tools, fitted horseshoes, and sharpened plows. He did this for himself and for friends. I would get hold of the long handle and pump hard so that he would get a good fire. Sometimes I would give the bellows a big jerk, and this would cause sparks to fly all over the shop and sometimes in his face. When I did this, he would really lose his temper.

We always had a lot of cotton to pick. We would have a lot of people picking for us; we would pick cotton all fall and sometimes into the winter months. We had a little house where people lived that were picking for us; some of the people who lived in that little house from time to time were: Shan and Minnie Toy; Jim and Sade Moore; Mr. and Mrs. Pharis Jeans; Dad Martin; Paul and Jessie Minyard; Uncle Joe Hurd and his family; and some Sizemores from up in Madison County. We would have contests to see who could pick the most cotton. I never won one of the contests because I would crawl up under the wagon and go to sleep.

One morning we were on our way to work, and the mules ran away with us in the wagon. Jim Moore (not the Jim who lives here now) was driving the team, and, as they went through town, the merchants ran out to help stop them. They waved their brooms and, of course, this only frightened the team worse. They tore a piece of concrete out of the sidewalk and kept running until they ran up in a briar patch at the old school.

I saw my first and only eagle down on the ash pond in the bottoms. Ruth saw it fly up and she called "There goes a fence post flying through the air." Sure enough, she was right. We told what we had seen and everyone thought we were joking. On Sunday some boys were down there and captured the eagle and brought it to town.

Truman got snake bit one time in the bottoms. He walked as far as he could and crawled on his hands and knees until Bet Hargrove heard him calling for help, and she went to help him home. He had crawled so far that he had worn the hide off his hands and knees. He almost lost his leg over this bite.

Truman and I were married by Bro. Al Jeans at the old home place. Our first place to live was where the Assembly of God Church is now. My neighbors were Daddy Harris, Tom and Ola Wells, Dick and Bonnie Wells, Grandma Cottrell, Mrs. Hattie Porter, and Uncle Joe and Aunt Piddy Wright.

When we first married we had lots of young people come to visit us: Sam and Bertha Stephens, Andy Moss, Stella Campbell, Ruth Hurd, Mary and Olen Campbell ~ to name a few.

One time an apple peddler came by, and Andy Moss threw off enough apples for me to bake him an apple pie. Olen Campbell worked for R.M.B. produce, and he was always bringing home bananas. We made banana pudding every night seemed like. We ate so many bananas that it is a wonder that we didn't turn into one.

We had an old victrola but the springs were out. We couldn't find another one, so we wanted to hear the records so bad, we would take turns turning the record with our fingers so we could hear the music.

Yes, those were hard times, but we had more time to visit our relatives and friends than we take time to do now. I will always treasure my memories of growing up on the farm and working on it.

**1976**

We have taken a glance over our shoulder at the early days of our little town that means so much to so many of us. There are some who have never left its soil to live and some who did leave but have returned to retire, and many who remained away have written that they have very fond memories of their childhood here and have a tender spot for their old home town.

We have only hit the high spots of events in Dyer and feel sure we have missed a lot that many of you wish were in these data; if you would like to have some of your memories included, then write me about them, and when we compile another "LOOK AT DYER" we will include your memories too.

***[Editor's note: Today's date is Monday, March 30, 2015 ~ Alma Lorena Moss Lancaster is no longer with us. However, if there are readers who would like to share their "I REMEMBERs" with others, write your story, then forward them to me by one of these two means:***

***1. Via email: tom1936@san.rr.com or***

***2. Via US mail: Thomas Lancaster***

***10750 Gabacho Drive***

***San Diego, CA 92124-1407***

***I will include them in one of the three books compiled by Alma Lorena Moss Lancaster. I am currently in the process of digitizing these books compiled by my mother, which makes it easy to include additional stories into these books.]***

We have so very much to be grateful for the heritage that has been handed down to us and for opportunities and improvements that now make our town and life here an easier life than that which our forefathers knew. As we now have water piped into our homes we can turn on a tap to have a bath, gas and electricity to warm our homes without having to cut wood to fire up the fireplace, telephones to call up our neighbors to have a chat instead of walking several miles to visit with them, and cars to drive whenever we want to run into the city to shop instead of having to wait for a train to run.

These days we do not have a bank to keep "all our monies in," no depot to gather at on a Sunday afternoon to see who is leaving town or who steps down from the train to visit in our Community. But we don't need a depot as we have no passenger trains coming into town. Neither do we have a school but the children do have a good school to learn the three "Rs" even though they must ride a bus several miles to reach a school. Nor do we have a gin but neither do we raise all the cotton we once did. No sawmill, Grist mill, Lumber yard, nor are there any lodges.

But we do have four lovely churches to worship in according to our choices: Baptist, Methodist, Church of Christ, Assembly of God. Not a lot of store to trade in but we do have a nice little Grocery store which someone said this about:

**OUR LITTLE COUNTRY STORE**

This little country store of ours,

That stands in Dyer town,

Isn't just a quick run stop

Or a place to fool around.

But its a part of all of us,

And means so much more,

Than just a close place to shop

Or another grocery store.

Inside those double doors

You'll find your choice of food

You'll also find the nicest folks

And they aren't ever rude.

They always have a pleasant word

A smile, a hint of cheer

Their special way of showing you

That they do really care.

Of all the places that I have gone

And all the folks that I have known

None can compare in any way

With that little store that stand today

In the heart of Dyer Town.

***Filename: LookingBackAtDyer 1838-1976 Book 01, 164-173 ~ I Remembers***