**MY PARENTS: FLETCH AND JEANIE MORSE SULLIVENT**

By Frances Sullivent Marx

I believe that it was destiny that my father, James Fletcher (Fletch) Sullivent, and my mother, Lou Jeanie Morse, fell in love and were married on Christmas Day 1912.

Fletch and his parents, Levi Thomas (Lee) Sullivent and Cordelie (Chitwood) Sullivent and his four sisters and one brother lived on the side of Georgia Ridge near Dyer, Arkansas.

Jeanie Morse lived down at the foot of Georgia Ridge with her parents James and Betty Allen Morse and her eight brothers and four sisters. In so large a family I'm sure each member had specific chores. I know that one of Jeanie's chores was to do the laundry. She said that she would get up before daylight to start her wash fire in order to get finished (scrubbing on the rub board) so she could go to school after lunch on wash day.

Fletch shared his books with Jeanie. Jeanie said that a pupil could advance a grade when they finished a book and could get a new one and Fletch always had more new books than she did.

Dad and Mom continued to share books the rest of their school years; Mom was an avid reader and very intelligent for no more formal education than she had.

Jeanie and Fletch were married on Christmas Day, December 25, 1912, at the home of Jeanie's parents. Fletch was 20 years old and his bride had her 16th birthday the previous April. They lived on Georgia Ridge, near Dyer, and Fletch farmed down in the bottoms.

Their first son, James Lee Sullivent, was born 20 November 1914, followed by Franklin Ray Sullivent 3 February 1917. Jewel Walter Sullivent on 15 September 1918 and John Herman Sullivent on 29 December 1920.

In 1921 Fletch and Jeanie moved with their children to a little white house on 10 acres on 19th Street in Lubbock, Texas, where they raised vegetables and Fletch did custom work with his mules. Fletch had brought his mules from Arkansas and had ridden in the box car with them all the way through to see that they were O.K. The 19th Street was unpaved and turned out to be a trail for ranchers to drive their cattle to market. One evening Jeanie said a trail drive was coming through, and one big old Texas longhorn steer evidently decided that he was sick of the drive, so he leaves the herd and came rambling up the steps onto the porch and into the house. His horns were so long he had to turn them to get them through the door. Knowing mom and her fear of bulls, I'm sure that she and the boys were not long in getting out the other door or a window or any available exit.

In the fall of 1922 Fletch moved his family two miles west of Carlisle, Texas, which is a farming community west of Lubbock, Texas. They had only been there a short time when Jewel, their little four year old boy, was killed in an accident.

In the fall of 1925 Fletch, Jeanie and the boys moved back to Arkansas on the "Old Home Place" on Georgia Ridge. On the 28 of December, 1926, a daughter, Elizabeth Frances, was born and 17 months later Fran had a new baby sister, Hazel Cordelia, born May 14, 1928.

Texas lured them back in the fall of 1928 and they moved to the farming community of Anton, west of Lubbock where they raised cotton and feed grain. The following fall they had a beautiful crop of cotton. The men, Fletch, John (his brother), and Dave Morse, his brother-in-law, walked across the cotton patch one Sunday afternoon admiring it and guessing that it would make a bale to an acre which was outstanding for a dry land farm. They had been back to the house only a short while when a black cloud came rolling in from the West and rain and hail beat the cotton into the ground and not one boll was gathered for ginning. A TOTAL LOSS.—Back at a time when I doubt if there was such a thing as hail insurance; I know that they didn't have any insurance.

After the fall of 1929 they moved to a place 3 miles north of Carlisle. Things went better for them there even though Fletch was bothered with arthritis a lot, but the boys were older and ever so much help.

Hubert Charlie was born the 31 of August 1931. He was a joy and wanted to be with everyone at once regardless of which way they went.

Jeanie had a kidney infection and was ill for sometime. Fletch bought a new Maytag washing machine for the family. Their first washer.

They lived there until the fall of 1936 when they had saved money to invest in their own farm. It was a great day when we moved to our own home—even though it was nothing fancy—four rooms and a "path". By then the boys were married or living in town working so it wasn't so crowded even at that. This place was 13 miles southwest of Lubbock in the Barton Community. I remember the first night, Dad and the boys had gone back for another wagon load of "stuff". Mom, Hazel, Hubert, and I were alone in the new place with no lamp.

Mom put some tallow or oil in a pan, made a cloth wick, sat it in the middle of the floor and lit it. She sat there and told us stories while the light flickered and the coyotes howled in the distance and our dogs howled at the coyotes. I have wondered later if Mom was frightened. We sure didn't know if she was.

Things went well at the new place and eventually dad sold his mules and bought a tractor. That was a sad as well as a happy day for him. He so hated to part with the mules, even though he was proud of his tractor.

Right in the middle of World War II Jeanie and Fletch decided they needed a new house. James was working in California at Northrop Aircraft, Ray and Herman were both in the army overseas. Maybe they wanted a nice home for the boys to come home too—I don't know; they had a house moved onto the place and proceeded to build onto it which was no easy chore with materials hard to come by due to the War, Fletch crippled with arthritis and help hard to come by. I'll never forget one afternoon when us younger kids came home from school, mom was up on the ladder putting up siding that dad was sawing and handing up to her. Daddy was standing on planks in the attic, he didn't trust his bum knee on the ladder, leaning out holding boards for mom to nail. They had worked their way nearly to the top when we heard "Wup, Wup, Wup"—they had worked so high that dad couldn't get his head out until they removed a board.

In 1948 Fletch and Jeanie got itchy feet again and moved to Lawndale, California, to be near James and Ruth and their kids and relatives, John and Rosa, Dora and Dave. California wasn't home so the following year they moved back to their old home in Barton Community where they had built the house near Lubbock, Texas.

Fletch retired from farming in 1955 and with some gentle persuasion from us kids they moved to a house on 22nd Place in Lubbock. In 1958 the moved to an even nicer home at 2803 38th Street in Lubbock.

Fletch and Jeanie celebrated their 50th wedding Anniversary in December of 1962 in a huge rented hall filled to capacity with friends and loved ones.

Dad, Fletch, died 28 June 1971 and our Little Lady, Jeanie, followed two years later—25 November, 1973.

They were buried in beautiful Resthaven Cemetery nearly in the middle of Lubbock, Texas. They left 4 sons and 2 daughters, 10 grandsons, 4 granddaughters and 9 great-grandchildren.

Written by Frances Sullivent Marx

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