MEMORIES OF OLA CAMPBELL MORSE

by

Irene Morse Hurd

In the year of 1900 Ola Campbell Morse was born to Claude and Ella Campbell. Ola was a twin sister to Olin Campbell. The Campbells lived at Ola, Arkansas, at the time of the twin's birth. They moved several times, finally living at Eureka Springs, Arkansas, for several years and moved to Dyer, Arkansas, in 1910 returning the Eureka Springs in a wagon. The children walked across a swinging bridge and Ola was scared to death.

In 1915 the Campbells moved back to Dyer. Lucy Nelson Thomas was Ola's first girl friend.

The Methodist Church had a brush arbor revival and Earl Morse asked Ola if he could walk home with her and about a year later they were married on August 10, 1918. Earl had received his call to the Army and was going for his examination when the War was over.

Charlie Morse, Earl's father, gave them a spot of ground to build their home on the Old Wire Road about a mile East of Dyer just below the Big House. The house consisted of one large sitting-bedroom combined and a small kitchen and a screened back porch.

Earl was an upland farmer so Ola helped him when needed until a wee one came along. In November 1919 Irene Francis Morse was born.

In the winter Earl and his father, Charlie, cut wood on the mountain and hauled it down to their house for heating as well as cooking.

In the Spring strawberries grown on a rocky mountain spot was the only money the Morses had until fall. Corn, cane, alfalfa, fruit trees along with garden and truck patch were grown to supply their needs as well as to sell.

The Morses grew all their food except flour and sugar. There was beef and pork at all times in the smoke house. Chickens in the barn yard. Fresh eggs and real cow's butter were plentiful.

In Summer, the garden produced vegetables and potatoes of both kinds. The vegetables and fruit canned or dried for winter use. The potatoes and some fruits stored in the potato house, turnips hilled in the garden. The potato house was also used for a storm shelter. When a cloud came up we could hear a familiar voice calling, "Earl, get Ola and that baby up here". Earl finally got tired of running and one night wouldn't go so the storm did hit and blew the house around and off the foundation, also ripping off the porches and when they tried to get out of bed it made them very dizzy and they could hardly walk, but to the Big House they went.

Years passed, 8 years and 2 months to be exact, and Earl and Ola became the proud parents of another baby girl, Earldean Elmina. About this time Earl's step-mother's health began to fail and banks were going broke in the big cities, men were jumping off buildings and committing suicide because of the loss of all their monies.

Everything the Morses owned was in the Dyer Bank, even Irene's Penny Bank money. It was safe, for Irvin, Earl's brother was the banker, but suddenly the Dyer Bank closed its doors forever. Everyone was left penniless. Earl had a new model T ford and owed less than a hundred dollars on it but it was lost too. Things were very bad but we were one of the lucky ones because we still had food and heat, maybe cornbread for breakfast or corn meal mush—but food.

14

In the latter part of 1929 Serena Morse died from cancer and as Ola lived near by she helped with the house keeping and laundry for Mr. Morse and Selmer, the youngest son. As Irene was about ten years of age she helped do dishes in both homes and entertained her little sister. Earl was working on the Highway in Lavaca at this time and moving his family from town to town.

The following year Ervin moved his family to Tulsa, Oklahoma, and Earl bought his house in town moving there January 1930. Earl continued to follow the highway work, but Ola and the girls stayed at home. They still had a cow, pig, and two mules, and chickens which had to be fed.

After the Highway work got so far away for Earl to follow, he returned home and rented some bottom land from Mr. King, rising at 4:30 A.M., doing the feeding and was in the bottoms by daylight to begin farming—growing cotton and corn—but the Johnson Grass always outgrew the plants.

Irene was small and the grass was tall but she had to help Mom and Dad chop cotton and corn. We dug up the Johnson Grass roots, it hurt Irene's side to dig and sometimes she had to go to the wagon and rest. Clyde King would tell Irene that she was having a "Johnson Grass chill."

Years passed and seemed like one thing or another would take the crops: floods, droughts, insects, and it seemed that Earl could never get ahead.

The girls were in school and needed many things so Earl ventured out with watermelon, cantaloupes, and green beans, still had most of the other problems but did some better.

Ola went to work at Alma Cannery making 12½ cents per hour. BIG MONEY? Irene was graduating and needed a class ring.

Earl became so weary of crop failures he decided to try factory work and worked at the Table Company for years until it closed its doors, and then went to the Chair Company and worked until he retired.

Irene married Hays Hurd on June 14, 1941, a few short months before Pearl harbor. Hays and Irene had twin boys in August 194?: Anthony and Wayne, Wayne died leaving Anthony and in May 1946 another boy, Joe Earl Hurd. We spent two years in California.

Earldean finished high school and met and married Gordon Summers on February 11, 1946. They had two children, Peggy and Larry Summers. They moved to Kansas and have lived there ever since.

Earl was finally getting ahead so Ola stayed home joined the Home Demonstration Club, quilted, canned, and had time to go places. Visited her Mom in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, every summer.

In the late '40 Ola's Mom came to Dyer and made her home with Ola and Earl, staying several years before she died.

Martha and Jewel Chitwood took Ola and Earl on week-end trips during the summer when gardens were harvested. They went to Kansas, Tennessee, and several other places. Hays and Irene would take them to Kansas some.

Earl retired and really began to work doing construction work until the "ole heart" started to acting up. Had two very severe heart attacks and later had a pace maker put in. He wore two pace-makers out and got to feeling very good so started farming in his garden, even had strawberries. Not a weed grew in or around his garden and sometimes mowed his yard twice a week. The old porch swing became his resting place, probably wore out several as he couldn't

15

do all the things that he wanted to do.

One neighbor got vexed at him thinking he was just sitting and watching him work in his garden. Earl was napping lots of time and passing a hot summer day as his sight was getting bad too.

Ola got arthritis and wasn't too swift on foot so Earl took over some of the house work too. He had to be doing something.

In September 18, 1981, Hays Hurd passed away leaving Irene a widow. In November 1983 Ola had gall stones surgery and by this time Earl didn't seem to feel too good.

July 14, Ola's birthday, Irene had to take Earl to the hospital again, he had heart and kidney failure, dying August 5, 1984.

Ola returned home determined to stay as long as she could; as of now Ola is still maintaining a home with the help of Irene and Earldean when she can be home—Christmas's are still spent at the Morse home. Grand, Great, and daughters, and son-in-laws all came.

Earl and Ola lacked five days being married 66 years. His wish was to live until August 10th but Our Lord saw fit to call him home. Before he left he told his family, "Everything is going to be alright, now."

Earl and Ola had a good life and a good marriage—two daughters, four grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

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