**Remembrances**

J.M. Hopper Remembers:

Things that I remember that have happened and that were told to me over the years gone by since 1875:

About the year of 1875, Mr. John Sharp and a Mr. Thompson came to Dyer and purchased a farm of 650 acres located three miles south of Dyer and five miles east of Alma, on the Arkansas River and where Clear Creek, better known as Big Frog, empties into the Arkansas River.

Mr. Sharp came to the above location bringing my uncle, George Fears, my mother, and half-brother, John Lee, who is eight years older than I. My mother was cook and housekeeper in a large two-story house known as headquarters. Mr. Sharp kept several hired men to work on the farm, and some would make a crop on the halves. He also had a cotton gin and operated a grist mill to grind corn on Saturdays. That was the only way to have corn bread which I never cared too much about.

About 1880 a James Hopper and his sister came to visit the Cap. Woods who was John Woods' father. He worked for Mr. Sharp on the farm and married my mother. The dates are not known, but my mother continued to serve as housekeeper. My father left soon thereafter and so far as is known, he never returned. He was only heard of one time by a former resident of the Sharp farm, who said he talked to him once, having met him as he was passing by his place in Texas.

Then in 1889 my mother and Joe Wright married, and we moved to another house on the farm. This was shortly after Mr. Sharp and Miss Ella Wright were married. However, I always felt like it was my home and both Mr. and Mrs. Sharp made me feel like it was.

I shall never forget when Mr. and Mrs. Sharp were married across the river, and he brought her home. I was playing out in the yard which was fenced with six-inch planks with steps to cross over the top of the fence. It didn't take me long to get acquainted and to love her as my second mother, and I spent most of my boyhood days with them.

Mr. Sharp had bought some horses and among them there was a nice colt which he gave to me. But I was not old enough to ride him, so when we moved out to ourselves, my stepfather decided he would ride him to headquarters. But he would not go, so he beat him over the head with green corn stalks. A few days after that, I went out to feed him and he was gone. I located him in the woods. It was supposed that he took blind staggers, but at the time I thought it was his hitting him over the head with the stalks that killed him. So that was the end of my horse. They drug him out in the woods and I went to see him most every day until the buzzards ate him up.

In the meantime, Mr. Sharp bought a place on the red hill that formerly belonged to Mrs. Sharp's family, and we moved to the old house on the farm.

After I got old enough to work, I spent the greater time with the Sharps. In fact, it was as much my home as it was the Sharp boys', and they treated me that way.

Mrs. Sharp and a cousin of Mrs. Sharp's opened a store at Alma and they moved up there. Then we moved to his house on the red hill. We lived there until I was old enough to get out and look for work. So I was in Oklahoma when mother called and told me Mr. Sharp had passed away. I didn't come for the funeral as the call was too late.

The Sharp boys were old enough to secure work and one of Mrs. Sharp's brothers had them move to Altus, Oklahoma, and Claude started work in a drug store. They did a good

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business. From there they drifted around from place to place and wound up in California.

I remained at Dyer. I would work for the street car company at Fort Smith during the spring and summer months, but would look for other employment during the winter months.

During this time I kinder fell in love with a young lady by the name of Rose Bell Malone. So she informed me that she would not live in Fort Smith, so I had a chance to take the depot agency at Dyer. After we married, I decided to look for other work because the salary was so small. I went to Oklahoma to work for a gin company. I was getting tired of being away from home, so one day Rose called me and said she had a letter from the Superintendent of the Missouri Pacific Railroad at Van Buren and advising that the agency at Altus was open and offered it to me. So I wouldn't wait to write. I called the Superintendent at Van Buren and told him I would take the job. Then I called the Gin Company at Muskogee and told them I was checking over to the Superintendent of the Gin and was leaving for Altus, Arkansas. I believe I was about the happiest guy there was to know I would be home again with a very good job. I stopped at Van Buren and got my pass and letter of appointment. I was checked in at Altus on October 11, 1911, and remained there until I quit work in 1930. From then on my activities are very well known.

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We think that after the 1898 flood, Mr. and Mrs. Wright probably moved to Dyer. I recall them living in a large two-story house south of the depot. At least one part of the upstairs was used as storage and must have been unfinished as I remember Grandpa hung the tobacco he raised to the rafters to dry. One thing I remember being in the storage room was a spool chest. Years later my sister had it refinished beautifully and now has it in her living room. She stores her silverware in it.

After living in Dyer for many years, Mr. and Mrs. Wright moved to Van Buren where they lived for several years. From there they moved to Altus to be near Matt and Rose who had moved to Ozark. Following her death in 1930, Joe Wright lived in Ozark with Matt and Rose until his death in 1932. Both are buried in the Highland Cemetery in Ozark. Matt Hopper's half-brother, John Fears, lived in Dyer for a number of years. He married Eva Lynch and they had eight children, some born in Dyer. They were: Bertha, Flora, Myrtle, Charles, Anna Mae, Avon, Johnnie, and Bennie.

They first moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where they lived for several years. From there they moved to California. John Fears worked for the Shell Oil Company in Long Beach until his retirement. In 1952 they celebrated their 58th wedding anniversary, he then being 78 years of age. They married in 1894. John Fears died May 17, 1960, at the age of 86 and is buried in Bell, California.

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Mr. Hopper died October 16, 1962, and Mrs. Hopper died on October 23, 1966. He was 80 years of age and she was 78. Their oldest son Joe was killed in a truck accident in Texas on October l4, 1976, and is buried in Lewisville, Texas.

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Mr. Hopper was mistaken about several of his dates as can be seen in the Goodspeed biography of Mr. Sharp. Also the marriage of his father, James T. Hopper, and his mother, Piety J. Fears, is recorded in Book A of the Marriage Records in the Crawford County Court House which took place on August 15, 1880. Later in August of 1888, she married Joe Wright with John Sharp serving as Justice of Peace.

After leaving the job as Agent for the Missouri Pacific Railroad at Altus, Mr. Hopper moved to Ozark where he worked for the gas company and W.P.A. Then in 1940 he became Welfare Director for Franklin County and served as Director until 1952 when he retired. He was Mayor of Ozark from 1955 to 1958 and was manager of the Franklin County Fair for 25 years.

In the Dora Moss Library in Dyer, Arkansas, is an old ledger of the Clear Creek Plantation for the years 1885 to 1889. Mrs. Sharp said that each book covered about four years. In it are the records of the many floods which the Plantation suffered and which led to the Sharps giving it up eventually.

Mrs. Sharp's home was across the Arkansas River at Lavaca. She came to the Plantation to teach school after studying at Fayetteville. The Sharps had four sons: Claude; Charles; John; and Gabe. Mr. Sharp died in 1904 at the age of 53 and is buried in the Highland Cemetery in Ozark, Arkansas. Mrs. Sharp later moved to California where she died in 1963 at the age of 100 years. Her body was brought back to be buried by the side of her husband.

SUBMITTED BY VELDA FERN TILLERY

Daughter of J. M. Hopper

HOPPER-MALONE

At the home of the bride's parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Malone, near Dyer, on last Sunday evening at 5 o'clock, J. Matthew Hopper was married to Miss Rose Belle Malone. Rev Horton, pastor of the Methodist Church at Mulberry, officiating.

Mr. Hopper until recently has been engaged in the street car service at Fort Smith, but will now have charge of the Depot office at this place (Dyer). He is quite talented and is a nice Christian gentleman.

Miss Malone is a most affable young lady, possessing that trait of character that makes one feels better by having met her.

Quite a number of relatives and friends were present to which was served a most excellent supper.

This was one of the prettiest home weddings that has ever taken place in this neighborhood and was a real social event.

***Filename: WeRememberDyer post-1986 Book 03, 037-039 ~ JM Hopper***