

The Wilder Family History



**The True Life Journey of
Lee Ander Wilder and Elizabeth Fancher Ramsey
and Their Children**

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Lee Ander Wilder and Elizabeth Fancher Ramsey

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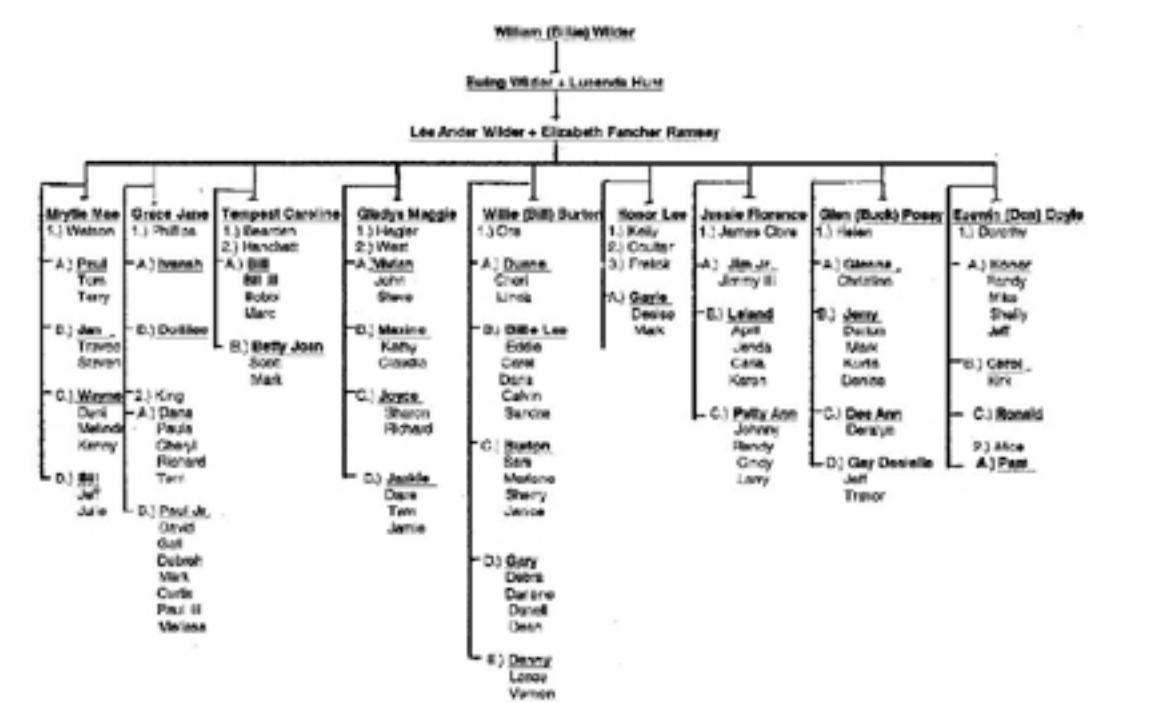
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LEARNING TO WRITE

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Lee Ander Wilder and Elizabeth Fancher (Ramsey) Wilder



Lee and Lizzie's wedding license dated August 30, 1888 in the County of Carroll in the state of Arkansas



Wilder Family

Left to right: baby- Honor, (Father) Lee Ander; Bill; (Mother) Elizabeth; Gladys; Myrtle; In the back left- Tempest and on the right is Grace



More of the Wilder Children
From left to right: Jessie; (in front of Jessie) Don; Glen (Buck); Honor



Wilder children
Left to right back: Jessie and Glenn (Buck) Front left: believed to be Ivanah; and Don



Scott Gentry on left and Lee Ander Wilder on the right, taken in Indian Territory



Left: Buck, unknown woman, Jessie, Elizabeth Wilder, and unknown man



Ora Burton; Grandma Lizzie Wilder, and Jessie (Wilder) Clore; taken in 3-Rivers, CA



Elizabeth Fancher Ramsey (Wilder)



Grandma Wilder 100 birthday

Left back : James Clore, Cindy Leach, front left- Jessie Clore, Jenda Clore, behind Jenda is Betty Clore, Carla Clore, Lee Clore, April Clore, Randy Leach, front right is: Karen Clore and Patricia Leach; front center is Lizzie Wilder; taken in 1970



Grandma Wilder 100 birthday with her children

Back left: Glenn (Buck); woman in front of Buck is unknown, little Denise Wilder in front left; Honor, center back-Bill, Gladys, Don, Jessie, front right-Grace; center front-Grandma Wilder.



Jessie and James Clore



Left to right: Ora, Bill and Buck



Left to right: Jessie (Wilder) Clore and Stella (Bunch) Hillis



Left to right: Dollilee, Jessie, Joyce, Darleen, and front right DeeAnn

IN MEMORY OF
ELIZABETH F. WILDER

BORN IN
GERRINVILLE, ARKANSAS
AUGUST 12, 1874

PASSED AWAY IN
VIRGINIA, CALIFORNIA
JULY 15, 1978

AGED 103 YEARS

FUNERAL SERVICES
FIRST CHURCH OF GOD
EXETER, CALIFORNIA

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JULY 19, 1978

AT ONE O'CLOCK
UNDER THE DIRECTION OF
RADLEY FUNERAL CHAPEL
VISALIA, CALIFORNIA

CEREMONIES
REV. GEAN HUNNILEY
REV. FLOYD TURNELL, REV. JOHN F. GOOD

ELOCUTION
ELLEN BOONE

ORGANIST
MELVA CURRY

INTERMENT
EXETER DISTRICT CEMETERY
EXETER, CALIFORNIA

CASKET BEARERS
LESTER CURTIS LOUIS DIVINE
ORAL RASHER PETE COBBES

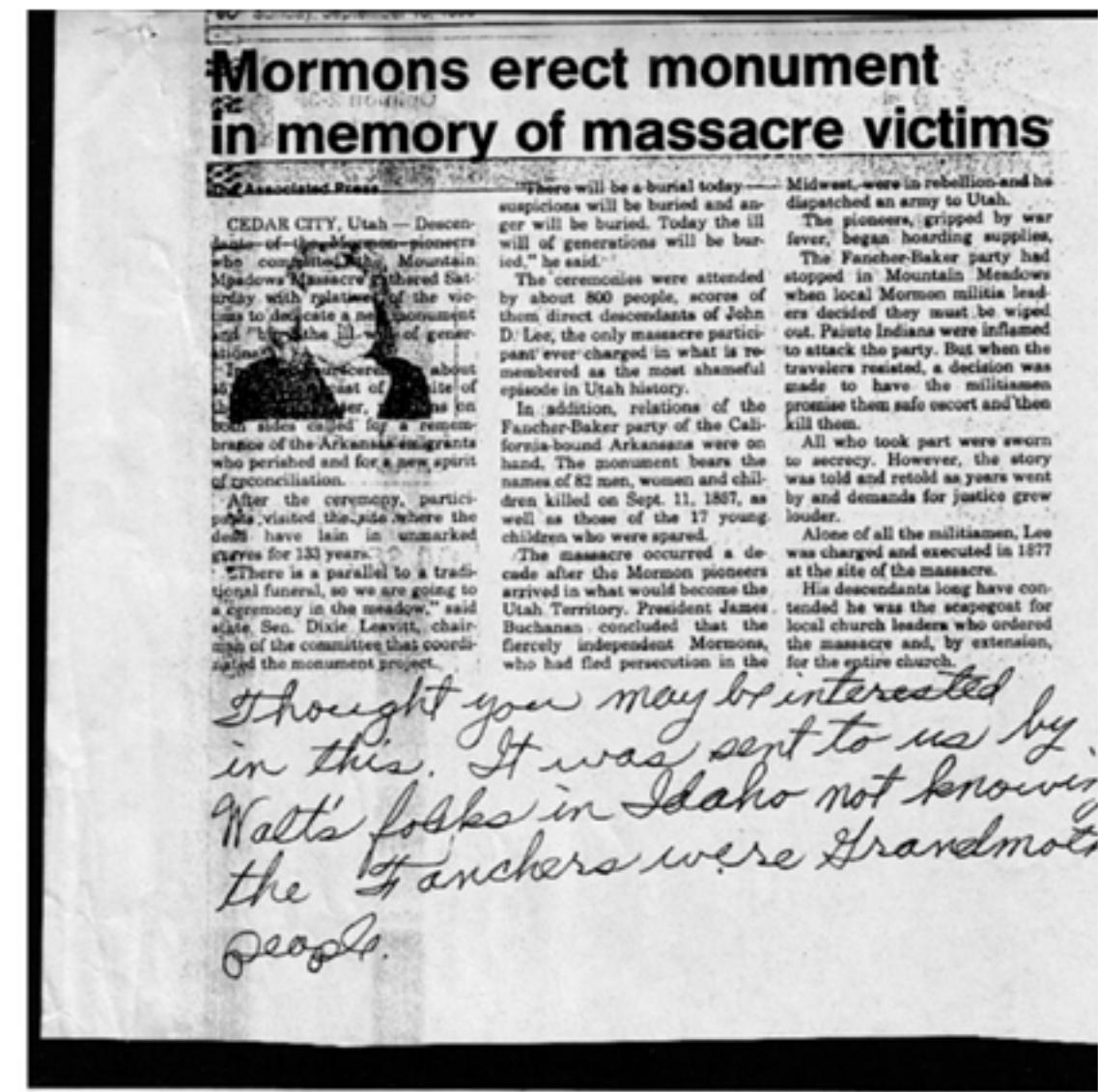
The Twenty-third Psalm
*The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
He leadeth me beside the still waters;
He reneweth my soul. He leadeth me in the
paths of righteousness for His name's sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
For Thou art with me, thy rod and
thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the
presence of mine enemies;
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow
me all the days of my life;
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.*

Death announcement for Elizabeth Wilder Died at age 103, just 1 month shy of 104



Jessie Florence Wilder (Clore)
Photo taken in 2008 at the age of 102

As of this writing July 2009; Jessie will turn 103 in August of 2009 and is still in fairly good health. She gave up caring for her own home in Grover Beach in 2008 and moved to Visalia to an assisted living home, but attends Sunday service faithfully each week at the Baptist Gateway Church. She is the last surviving Child of Lee Ander and Lizzie Wilder. She is affectionately known by her family as 'Gammy'.



This document pertains to the Fancher-Baker Party massacre that occurred on Sept 11, 1857 when a wagon-train of settlers traveling from Arkansas to California entered the Utah territory. Some Mormon militia leaders massacred most of the settlers when they reached Utah and blamed it on the Paiute Indians. Among the travelers were some of Elizabeth Fancher Wilder's relatives. 133 years later a monument was erected in tribute to the victims.

TIME PERIOD NOTES

Beginning in the 1820's, the Five Civilized Tribes from the southeastern United States were relocated to Indian Territory over numerous routes, the most famous being the Cherokee "Trail of Tears." Forced off their ancestral lands by state and federal governments, the tribes suffered great hardships during the rigorous trips west. The survivors eventually recovered from the dislocation through hard work and communal support. Gradually, new institutions and cultural adaptations emerged and began a period of rapid development often called the "Golden Age" of Indian Territory.

Following the destruction of the Civil War, the Indian Territory became a part of the booming cattle industry, ushering in the era of the cowboy.

On November 16, 1907; Oklahoma became the 46th state. Statehood had become a sure thing, in part due to a discovery which made Oklahoma the "place to go to strike it rich" –oil. People came from all parts of the world to seek their fortunes in Oklahoma.

The state is also the setting for vast horse and cattle ranches, rodeos, and working cowboys. Such famous cowboys as Bill Pickett, Tom Mix, Gene Autry, and Will Rogers hail from Oklahoma.

THE COWBOYS

America's working cowboy began his history on the Texas plains where, after the Civil War, ranchers found they had a plentiful supply of beef with no place to sell it. Demand for beef existed along the East Coast, but to fulfill that need, Texas ranchers had to move cattle to the railroads and the closest ones were in Kansas.

Between the cattle ranches and railroads lay Oklahoma, the land of the great cattle trails between 1866 and 1889.

THE OUTLAWS

After cattlemen and settlers came to Oklahoma and Indian territories, outlaws were attracted to this wild frontier country of the late 1800's. Law enforcement hadn't been firmly established in the territories and the landscape offered many places where outlaws and their gangs could hide. Outlaws in Oklahoma robbed banks and trains, stole horses and cattle. Some were quite infamous and dangerous, achieving legendary status and making heroes out of the lawmen who brought the criminals to justice.

The Wilder Family

During this adventurous time in history there was a man, Lee Ander Wilder, bringing up a large family. He was a hard working man with good morals and his wife, Lizzie, had a strong Christian faith. They traveled by covered wagon from Arkansas to Texas and eventually to the Indian Territory with their children before finally settling in California. This is the history and true stories of the Wilder Family as told by the children of Lee Ander Wilder.

Note: While in the Indian Territory Lee Wilder befriended a man named Scott Gentry and managed his ranch for a while. The following information is a short history recorded about Scott Gentry: Born: 2 AUG 1847 in CALHOUN COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, UNITED STATES Census Card Number 572 ; Indian Heritage 1/4 CREEK ; *Military Service:* 1875 LIGHT HORSE GUARDS OF THE MUS-KOGE DISTRICT, AND CAPTIAN OF LIGHT HORSE IN THE COWETA DISTRICT FOR ONE TERM. SERVED WITH THE UNITED STATES INDIAN POLICE, AND WAS A UNITED STATES DEPUTY MARSHALL. *Religion:* METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

THE GENTRY FERRY crossed the ARKANSAS RIVER about 1 1/2 miles due east of the present town of HASKELL, OKLAHOMA. SCOTT GENTRY owned this ferry. His grave is about 1 mile east of the river on the HIGHWAY HASKELL TO PORTER.

Memoirs of Grace Jane Wilder

I had never thought to write about my young life until one of my grand-daughters, Cheryl King Lewis, who loved to hear stories of the things that transpired during that time, encouraged me to do so. It is really about my family and especially about my father who was a very colorful and talented person.

Father was born in Kentucky and was the only child of his mother, Libby Hunt Wilder. He was christened Lee Ander Wilder. She died when my father was nine years old. His father was Ewing Wilder. After his mother's death, Father lived with an uncle, Tipton Wilder.

Ewing Wilder went to Texas after his wife's death, re-married, and started a new family. Father has two half brothers, but Father had never seen or heard from them until later in life. One of his brothers, William, learned where Father was and came for a visit. He never heard from William again after that.

I never knew much about my father's young life, but I knew he was well educated. I can remember what his handwriting looked like. It was Spencerian script, just a beautiful style. I never knew the extent of his schooling, but I remember him talking about attending a boy's academy at one time. Eventually, Father was sent by the government to the State of Arkansas to help clean the Moon-shiners out of the Ozark Mountains where they had built stills and were making Corn Whiskey to sell. The mountains were covered with the stills. I presume in this day and time, his position would be called working with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Being of an adventurous nature, he loved all the excitement.

While in Arkansas, he met and married my mother, Elizabeth Fancer Ramsey. She was from a very large family. Her grandmother Ramsey was a Fancer and Mother was given Fancer as her middle name. Mother's uncle was a close relative to Alexander Fancer, the leader of the famous Fancer Train who had started from Arkansas to go to California. When they got as far as Mountain Meadows, Utah, on September 11, 1857, they were massacred, supposedly by the Paiute Indians but later the Mormon Church, or some of their members, decided to set the record straight. Now they admit that the Fancer Wagon Train people were slaughtered by the Mormon Militiamen and the Paiute Indians 133 years ago.

Mother was born close to a small town called Rule, but later moved to Green Forest. Two of her uncles served as judges of the Superior Court, two uncles and a cousin were doctors, and they all lived in Carroll County. The county seat was Berryville. One man made a remark, that if you walked down the street of Berryville and met a man and said, "Good morning Mr. Ramsey," nine times out of ten you would be right. I recall seeing my Great Grandmother when she was 102 years old. My whole family has been blessed with longevity.

When my Grandfather, Henderson Ramsey, left for the service in the Civil War, he took a Negro slave boy with him as a body servant. They both rode horses and had silver studded saddles. No

wonder the South lost the war. When the war ended, Grandfather asked the young Negro if he wanted to go back to the plantation with him, or if he wanted to go free. The young man said he that he wanted to go free but he would go by to see all of them, as his mother remained on the plantation. Grandfather gave him the horse and saddle and a \$20 gold coin that he happened to have with him. Grandfather said this was the young slave that didn't get more than ten miles before the Bushwhackers caught and killed him for what he had with him. The Bushwhackers were a bunch of men that were roaming the countryside robbing and killing the soldiers returning home for whatever they might have. The young slave never came by and they never heard from him.

Mother's family was very wealthy before the Civil War, but they were so sure the South would win that they never changed their money. After the war, the money was no good to them. Mother said that when she was a child, she used to play with the money that was in trunks in her Grandmother's attic.

My Grandmother Ramsey owned fifty slaves. One couple, a man and his wife, never went free and stayed with her until her death. She lived to be 102 while my mother lived to be nearly 104. Both of them kept all of their faculties until their deaths.

After a while, Father decided that he would like to live farther out in the country. He bought some land where he could be closer to where the stills were located. He could get up early in the mornings and watch for the smoke that would be rising from the stills. The land he bought was in a beautiful part of the state, but was sparsely settled. The only other family in the area was about three miles away. There was only one road that led into that area. The land was close to a high bluff and overlooked the Osage River, a swift stream that ran far below. It was very picturesque with many trees. Along the stream there were lots of Pawpaw trees and the fruit was very good to eat.

Father built a house quite close to the edge of the bluff, overlooking the cascading river. There was a path made by hunters and trappers that curved around the edge of the bluff. Mother was very unhappy with this move because it was so far away from everything. For something to do, she decided to try raising chickens, but as fast as she could hatch the chicks, just that fast the hawks would swoop down and carry them off. There was a lot of timber around the place and all the hawks had to do was just sit and wait. She asked Father to buy her a gun so she could shoot the hawks. He thought that was very funny, mother wanting a gun when she had never held a gun in her hands. She said she would learn and kept after him. He finally gave in and bought her a gun. I think it was a Winchester. Day after day, mother would shoot at the hawks. At first, all she did was make a lot of noise and sometimes scare them off. She never gave up though, and after using a lot of patience and ammunition, she got to be quite a marksman, which really surprised father. He wouldn't believe it until one day he saw her knock a hawk out of the air with the first shot. In time, she became quite an expert with her gun.

A year after my parent's marriage, their first child was born. A girl whom they named Myrtle May. After Myrtle, there were three other children, two boys and a girl. Clifford, Pinkey and Essie, but they all died in infancy, which was later called cradle death. I was next in line and was named Gracie Jane. I was not a strong baby and mother was so afraid that I would die like the other three. She slept with me across her breast until I was a few months old.

Mother was afraid of the Moon-shiner's for fear they would kill father. They left warnings around the place at night. Father would go out early in the mornings and if he found any warnings, he would destroy them before Mother saw them. They usually left them in the barn. One morning she did find one. It was an ace of spades with a stiletto knife running through it and pinned to our front door. She said if a Moon-shiner ever came around the place while Father was away at night, that she would shoot him. One night when we were alone, she heard a noise outside. She took her gun, opened the door, and there stood a Moon-shiner. She could see the white shirt front showing in the moonlight and just as she took aim, the cow bawled. The black cow had gotten out of the barn lot and had wandered up to the house. What she thought was the Moon-shiner's white shirt front was a white blaze on the cow's forehead!

At this time there was another addition to the family, my sister Tempest was born. Father named her Tempie Carrie for a school teacher that he had been very fond of as a child. She never liked the name and later changed it to Tempest Caroline. That was easy since none of us were ever registered at birth. I found this a problem when I started to travel around the world and needed a birth certificate, which I finally did get.

Mother was becoming very unhappy with the place she had been brought to. There was no church and it was miles to a place where one could buy groceries. Father would pick up all the things that were needed when on his business trips.

One cold February day, my sister Gladys was born, and now there were four of us. Gladys had trouble with her eyes from birth. There were no eye doctors in those days and all one could do was to use home remedies. Gladys had to have constant care. Someone told my mother to get Epson salts and make a solution with water and to bathe her eyes in it. It did help and probably kept her from going completely blind. She had trouble with school on this account and she was very near sighted.

One day mother took us kids and started to walk to our only neighbors. We started early as it was a long way and she had to carry Gladys. There was lots of wildlife in that part of the state and especially panthers. These panthers were much feared. We took the path that circled around the edge of the bluff when we started back for home, and we hadn't gone very far until a panther started to scream beneath the bluff. Gladys, being too young to realize the danger, started to answer the creature. Mother was carrying Gladys, Tempest and I was too small to run very fast. Myrtle took hold of both our hands and ran as fast as she could with the two of us stumbling along behind her. The panther kept screaming every few steps we took all the way home. When Mother got inside the house, she threw herself into a chair, covered her face with both hands and started crying. The panther screamed around the house all that night. The next morning when Mother went down to the barn, she found that the animal had killed one of our calves.

The next day when Father came home; he, with a couple of other men, got on their horses and started out to look for the panther. That was the usual, when ranchers started to lose too many cattle; they would try to hunt the predator down. As a rule, the panther never got too far from what they had slaughtered. The men did find the panther and killed it, saying that it was one of the largest ones they had ever seen. There were lots of wolves also, but they didn't bother us too much. The raccoons we kids loved and made pets out of. The chipmunks were a joy as they would take nuts from our hands.

Now that the Moon-shiners were being cleared out of the mountains, my father, who never liked the state of Arkansas, started to talk about going some place else. Mother never liked the place where she was living, but didn't want to leave the state altogether. She was hoping to move back where she would be close to her family. Father started to talk about Texas and thought it would be a better place. Before he could start to make plans, his uncle Mack Wilder, that lived in Berryville and owned a lot of land in that area, came to visit us and tried to persuade Father to move there and manage one of the farms. Mother was all for this as it was only a few miles from Green Forest, where her parents lived. I'm sure it was just to please her that he said he would try it. When we got to the farm, we were all very happy. It was a beautiful place, with a large two story house with lovely grounds. It was early spring and the orchard was all in bloom. There were all kinds of fruit trees and so many flowers. Mother was delighted.

I don't remember how long we lived in Berryville, but the next March, my brother Bill was born. He was named William Burton and was always called Bill. Now we four girls had a brother, so there were five of us kids. Father was never happy there and soon started to talk about leaving. Mother said she knew that nothing was going to stop him from carrying out his plans, so she might as well agree to it. He said he was sure Texas was the right place to go. He bought a covered wagon, which were called "Prairie Schooners." It had four bows that stretched from side to side and canvas was stretched over the bows to keep out the rain and other elements. Mother was very unhappy with all his planning, but she also knew that nothing was going to stop him. The wagon was loaded with things that would be needed on the trip with water kegs strapped to each side. Mother insisted on taking her clock that had been given to her for a wedding gift. Gladys had to be carried, so Mother kept her on the seat in front, but the other four of us were hurtled in the back. We kids were all excited about going to a strange country.

Our first camp was in Van Buren, Arkansas. At that time it was called the Strawberry center of the world. It was harvesting time and there were hundreds of campers who had come to pick the fruit. There were strawberry fields as far as one could see of these luscious berries. We camped next to another camper that had a dog tied to a tree with a long rope. Father was away and Myrtle walked too close to the dog and it attacked her. He tore big chunks out of both calves of her legs and she had deep scars for the rest of her life. Father would have shot the dog had he been there, but when he did get back; they had taken the animal inside where he couldn't get to it. Myrtle's legs had to be bandaged for weeks and father had to carry her.

I loved all the campsites where we stayed. We always stopped where there was fresh water, so there would be lots of trees and birds. I have always loved birds. I would talk to them and they would answer me. When I told mother about this, she asked me what they said. I told her that they talked about their children. One would say "Kate, where's the children?" and another one would say, "Gone to the country" and another would say "You stay there." Mother told me that the Boogeyman would get little girls that told lies. I didn't believe her and kept right on talking to them. I had a great imagination in those days and I believe the birds were really talking to me.

It must have been a bad time for my parents, because Gladys had to have constant care and Myrtle was completely laid up with the dog bite wounds. They were getting so much attention that I was beginning to feel left out. I was wishing that something would happen to me.

One day we camped close to a country store and I went with my mother to buy some bread. She paid five cents for one loaf, which was called "Light bread". I had never seen bread like that before, because we always had biscuits or corn bread. Father didn't like the light bread, saying that it was like trying to eat cotton. We kids wouldn't eat it either and Mother had to mix up some pancakes for us.

There were more campsites and more places to explore. At each place, father would build a campfire, as that was the only way we had to cook the meals. He would warn us about getting too close to the fire. One evening, after the fire had burned down and all that was left were some live embers under the ashes, Tempest stumbled and fell with both hands into the live coals and burned her hands very badly. She had to have both hands bandaged and had to be fed. I was the one that had to feed her. That was like rubbing salt into a fresh wound, because now she too was getting a lot of attention. I kept on wishing that something would happen to me.

We stopped early at one camp by a stream and grass so the horses could graze and to keep the kids from getting too restless. I was exploring the area as usual, looking for something to show the rest of them when I found a green vine with some pretty red berries. I picked some and while going back to show what I had found, I started to chew on some of the vine. When mother saw what I was doing she yelled, "Poison Ivy!" They tried to wash my mouth out and made me drink some sweet milk. I had poison oak once and was very sick, covered with a rash all over my whole body. I thought now I would get some attention. I kept waiting for the rash to appear, but it never did. I asked the doctor about this later in life and he said that chewing the vine, I had probably swallowed enough of the juice to make me immune for life.

There was a lantern that always hung from one of the bows to give light for the inside of the wagon. One day, Myrtle tried to stand up and struck her forehead against the rim at the bottom of the lantern and cut a long gash across her forehead. It started to bleed profusely and when the rest of us saw all the blood, we started to scream. Father stopped the wagon to see what all the crying was about. We had to wash off all the blood and bandaged her head with sugar and turpentine. Now she was getting added attention!

I loved Myrtle though. She was my big sister and I adored her. There was a space of a few years between us and I would go to her with all of my problems instead of Mother. I thought she knew about everything. I felt sorry about all the bad things that had happened to her, but that didn't keep me from being jealous. I kept hoping that the poison ivy would hurry up and take effect.

I don't remember how long it took to get to Texas, but there were a lot of camps and we could always find something new at each one. There were different things to see and lots of birds to see and listen to, because they always had new things to say.

There were no Negroes in Arkansas and we kids had never seen one. When we entered Texas, the first person we saw was a black man. Father stopped to inquire about directions just so we could see him. All the impression he made on me was I wondered why he didn't wash his dirty face.

Texas was a big disappointment! Mother said, "I think this is the jumping off place," and started to cry which made us kids all cry too. Father didn't have anything to say, but I am sure he thought he had made a terrible mistake. There were fields of dead brown cotton stalks, since the cotton had been picked. There was a cotton gin and a large farm house where the people lived who owned the gin. The rest of the houses were just cabins where the people lived who worked at the gin. There was nothing green except a few trees and most of them were dead. There was about an acre of sugar cane next to each cabin that had been green, but started to turn brown, as it was getting toward the fall season of the year. It was unbearably hot and even the swift wind that blew was hot.

Father went up to the main house to inquire about better housing because mother said she would not live in one of the cabins. The woman must have been impressed with father, because she said there was a better house about a mile down the road that had been built for their son, but that he didn't live there anymore. She said if we liked the place, we could move in. She also said there was a cattle ranch a couple of miles further on. The house was quite livable and was partially furnished. We were all glad that there was a cook stove, because we were tired of eating meals prepared over a camp fire.

Father went down to the cattle ranch to see what they had in the way of work. He was hired to buy cattle. He didn't like the idea, but it was a chance to make some extra money. Again he would at

times have to be away during nights.

One night when Father was away, the Negroes were having a camp meeting about a mile from our place. We couldn't imagine what it was all about. The noise was frightening because it sounded like something terrible was happening, they were moaning and groaning and stomping their feet. Mother sat with her gun across her lap. About midnight, when the meeting broke up, they started for their homes and some stopped just across the road from us where there were a lot of dead trees and the ground was covered with dead limbs. They started making sounds that sounded like hundreds of fire-crackers being set off. Mother found out the next day that they had stopped to break up the dead limbs to take home for fire wood.

Everybody in that part of Texas had to haul water for miles. There were wells there, but it was sulfur water and could only be used for washing clothes, bathing, etc. Even the drinking water for the horses had to be hauled. Mother would hang jugs of water in the well to keep it cool, but nine times out of ten, when she went to get it the Negroes would have stolen and drank the water, and then hung the empty jugs back in the well. Mother hired an old Negro woman to do out laundry. She would carry the laundry down to the well where there was a tree and she could be in the shade. I would go down to where she was as I loved to hear the stories about her childhood slave days that she would tell me. She was so old and so wrinkled that one could scarcely see her eyes. She said that when the Civil War was over, that her brother said, "Come on Mandy and go free and we will be riding in the carriages like the white folks do." She said, "Honey, I ain't ridden in a carriage since I rode with my old Misses." She said she was a body servant to her old Misses. I guess she was what is now called a personal maid.

The sugar cane was ready to be cut and trimmed and made into molasses. A man came and set up a strange looking outfit. He had two wooden rollers that he put in place. It was all very large when he got it put together. He had a mule that he hitched to it that kept walking in a circle that made the rollers keep moving. The man would feed the cane stalks between the two rollers to extract the cane juice. He would pour the juice into a large vat and start cooking it.

While it was cooking; thick sweet foam would rise to the top. He made a spoon out of a cane stalk and gave it to me so I could dip up the foam to eat it. It was an exciting time for we younger ones. I learned a lot of things on our travels that I never could have learned in school. There were lots of wild flowers growing along the road sides that I would pick and give names to. Mother called me a nosy kid. It worried her because I always wandered away from camp looking for something new.

One evening, when Father came home from work, he said he thought it was time to get out of this place. That was one time when Mother didn't object. She was hoping he would go back to Arkansas, but when she asked him what he had planned, he said that he had been thinking about going to the Indian Territory. He said it was a new country and there would be more opportunities. He said there was nothing for him to go back to in Arkansas. He said we could be there before winter if we started at once. The covered wagon was made ready again. I asked Mother about where we were going and she said there would be a lot of Indians. I asked her if they would be like Negroes. She had a hard time trying to tell me what the territory was like for she didn't really know herself. When we were about ready to leave, it started to rain. I hated it in the wagon when it rained. It helped some when Father would sing. We all felt that we were on our way to an unknown country, but were anxious to get there and kept asking Father how long it would take us.

There were lots of stops on the way and each one was different. They were most always beautiful since we always camped close to a stream of water. There would be trees and birds and I was happy with each stop. However, our last camp before entering the Territory wasn't a good one. It was barren and the only thing it had was a water hole. I was bored and there was nothing for me to do but to tease the other kids and make them cry, which irritated Mother. She had to think of something to keep me busy. She took the pots and pans that had been blackened on the bottom from the campfires down to the water hole where there was sand, gave me some rags, and told me to polish the bottoms.

I felt terribly abused because- not only did I not get the attention that I wanted, but she made me work. I had given up on the rash by this time and not one single thing happened to me on the whole trip.

It was beginning to get a little cool and I think it was October when we entered the Indian Territory. We landed on what was called the Bennet Farm, which consisted of several thousand acres of rich river bottom land that was held by a large company that was located in the States. There was a general store. The houses were poorly constructed and were just two room cabins built with rough undressed lumber with no paint. There were two very nice houses, one that the manager of the Bennet Farm lived in and the store manager lived in the other. There was another house that was better than

the cabins with more room. What and who it was built for we never knew, but it was empty. I don't know how Father got it, perhaps because he had money. The people that lived on Bennet Farm were all illiterate and were the off-springs of the ones that committed crimes in the states and had escaped to the Territory where they could not be found. There were no schools there, so their children never learned to read or write. The men all worked on the farm and they never saw any money. The store would issue blocks of coupons that ran from five cents up to \$10.00. When the women learned that Mother could read those coupons, they would ask her to go with them to the store and buy the things that they needed. That became a big problem because they would buy one item and would want the rest of the coupons in candy. Mother had a hard time convincing them that they would not be able to carry that much candy home.

The Bennet Farm was a beautiful place. It was on the banks of the Arkansas River with lots of timber, different kinds of berry vines and wild plums growing along the edge of the wide sandy beach. There was no bridge and the only way to get to the other side was to paddle across in a skiff.

Father loved this new country from the first. I think he felt that he had found his niche in life. It was a wild country, where every man made his own laws. All the men wore guns and some wore two. Father wore two and he was real clever about handling them. He could take a gun in each hand and twirl them around and hit a bulls-eye at several paces. He was wearing guns as that was necessary in the Territory.

Mother was nervous about this place though, and she was afraid of the Indians. Everything was so strange to her. There were no schools and no churches. When she was a young woman, she had taught Sunday school and was very religious.

We were in the Creek Nation and each tribe had been given a separate place which bore their name. The Creeks were very primitive and some of the men still wore their blankets. The outlaw gangs were very active. I remember them talking about the Dalton Gang. They never bothered the people in the Territory, but they would go across the border into the different states and rob trains and stage coaches. They would escape back down where they lived, where it was almost impossible to find them. The only crimes that were committed in the Territory were just petty crimes that were taken care of by the local men that would be selected by the manager of the Bennet Farm.

None of the cabin dwellers had a clock so they would send their children to our house several times a day to ask what time it was. They didn't have matches and when their fires died out, they would come to borrow some burning wood. They knew that we would always have fire, for we had a fireplace. One boy came one day with an old boot to carry the hot embers home in. It was hard to believe that people could be so ignorant. All the kids had head lice and the women had their hair clipped close. Mother said that it probably was done to keep the lice from bothering them. We weren't allowed to go near the cabins and play with those kids. I slipped over there a couple of times with Mother not knowing about it. One day she saw me scratching and called me over to her and found that I had lice. She examined the other kids and they didn't have any. She said that she knew that one of these days I would get into trouble because I was so nosey. She made a bed out in the wood shed and made me sleep there until she could rid me of the lice. Those kids also had the seven year itch. I had learned my lesson and stayed away from the cabins, so I never got the itch.

It was at that time that if anyone in the states committed a major crime, they could go to the penitentiary for life, or be sent to the Indian Territory as a United States Marshal. We got to know one very well. His name was Bud Ledbedder, and later he was written up in early Oklahoma history. There was another one, a Negro whose name was Saint Brunner. Bud Ledbedder stayed at our house nights when he would be on a trip. There were no hotels where we were and it was customary to take in anyone that happened to need a place to stay, but they would never charge for it.

I loved this strange country and the birds seemed to be different. There were lots of Tanagers, scarlet red birds. It was impressive to watch them flitting among the trees. There were groves of pecan trees and it was the season for them to fall. We had never seen pecan trees before.

Father thought there should be some kind of entertainment for the young people. He had a beautiful tenor voice and wanted to start a young man's choir. He began looking for young men he thought might be taught to sing. It was not easy, as no one had ever heard of such a thing. He finally got a bunch together, but there was no place for them to rehearse except at our house. The rehearsing went on night after night. It was a big task, for he had to train each section separately and then pull them together so they could harmonize. At last, he felt they were ready for their first rendition. They had to hold it outside, so the young men built a brush arbor and made benches for seats. News of the rendition traveled through the area and at first, residents only came to satisfy their curiosity, but in time they came because they enjoyed it. The young men got to be very proud of their performance and wanted more men to join. Father ordered song books from the supply wagons so they could learn new

songs.

It was getting close to the Christmas holidays and we kids were talking about what Santa Claus might bring us. Mother said that he might not be able to find us in this far away country, because it would be such a long way to come. We were sure he would so we tried to be very good. We hung up our stockings and mother made some molasses cookies to set on the table with a glass of milk. When Christmas morning came, we raced to our stockings to see what was in them. We knew he had been there because the milk and cookies were gone! In each of our stockings was a pretty red mug filled with candy and a big red apple. We hoped for an orange that we always got when we lived in Arkansas. New Years was a time when the other people would celebrate. Father bought some roman candles off of one of the supply wagons and invited some of the people over and mother made oyster stew for them.

Our closest neighbor was a family by the name of Dykes, which consisted of two brothers and their aged mother who was a midwife. They had rented some land from the Indians and were farming on a small scale. The oldest brother was named Joe and the younger one was Dan. The two could read and write a little, but the mother was completely illiterate. Dan had served in the Spanish-American War and would tell great stories about the things he did during that time. He'd talk about riding up San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt, which was probably untrue. Everyone called their mother Grandma Dykes. She got ten dollars for each baby she delivered. She didn't even know how much ten dollars was. She kept her money in an old tin trunk and she asked mother several times to count it for her, but each time mother would start to count it, Grandma Dykes would imagine she heard one of her sons coming and would slam the lid down. Mother never did get to count all of it. She said there were rolls and rolls of ten dollar bills and the trunk was full. I have wondered later where and how she ever learned to do that sort of thing.

I got to noticing that each time Grandma Dykes went to one of the cabins, there was always a new baby and that puzzled me. I went to my big sister Myrtle, for I knew she would have the answer since she knew about everything. She said that Grandma Dykes would go down to the river where there were a lot of trees, shrubs, and wild berry vines and she would chase the babies until she caught one of them. She would then give it to whoever wanted it.

I thought about that for a while and then went back to her to ask, "Why does Grandma Dykes have to chase the babies, because babies can't walk?"

She said, "Oh yes, they can walk at first, but when Grandma Dykes chases them, it scares them so badly that they have to learn how to walk all over again."

Myrtle would go down to the sandy beach and make little baby tracks like footprints in the sand and she would take me down there and show them to me. That satisfied me completely. After that, I spent a lot of time down on the river searching through the trees, shrubs, berry vines, and even in old hollow logs looking for babies.

On a hot day, Grandma Dykes would sit under a big pecan tree in her yard with an old split bonnet pulled down over her face. I was always curious about her. Mother had told me to stay away from her place, but I had gone close enough to hear Grandma Dykes mumbling something. I kept going a little closer and I found out that she was praying. She was saying the same thing over and over again. "God have mercy on our children and our children's children," and that was all there was to the prayer. One day when she was praying, an old hen and some chicks were near by when another hen came and started pecking at the little chickens. Grandma Dykes jumped up and grabbed a stick and said, "Get away from there you Son of a Bitch," and then went back to her praying.

There was another family that lived close, a widow with two young boys and a teenage daughter. The widow was almost blind. I had been warned to stay away from those houses, but I was anxious to learn what went on behind their walls. I had stopped at the widow's house, when she became angry with her daughter and started chasing her around the room with a butcher knife. That frightened me, but did not stop me from being nosey. I guess the Widow was too blind to catch the girl.

About five miles from the Bennet Farm was a little town called Choska. It had a General Store and a Drug Store and another large building where the Circuit Riders would hold their meetings. The Circuit Riders were preachers of the different denominations that would come by at different times to preach. The people not only had to keep and feed the preachers, but they had to feed their horses too. Father had looked the town over and thought it would be a better place to live.

A young doctor had just graduated from medical school in Texas and moved down into the Territory to start his practice. He and father became good friends.

Mother was glad that there would be some place where she could go to church. There was a better class of people in Choska. It was set up on the same plan as the Bennet Farm. It had a general store

and issued the same kind of coupons and everyone that lived there worked on the farm. The farm was owned by a bunch of people that lived in the states that had rented it from the Indians for practically nothing.

The housing wasn't much better though. The doctor had found a house that was a little better and had secured it for us. It didn't have running water, but no one else had inside water either. Father finally hooked up a pump in the kitchen which was a big help, as we had to take our baths in a large zinc tub.

There were two beautiful houses with lovely grounds and a wide white board fence with a big gate. The farm manager lived in one and the store manager lived in the other. The store manager's wife and mother became very good friends, so now we kids had better children to play with which mother was pleased about. The farm manager wasn't very well liked though. It was said he was mean to his help. Father said he was overbearing. The help had to put up with it as there was no other employment in that part of the nation to be had.

One February morning, Mother told me to go over to the store manager's house and tell his wife to come over to our place because mother needed her. I told Mrs. Redding what mother had said and she told me to stay there with her children and the Indian maid until she returned.

When she got home that afternoon, she told me that I had a new baby sister. I was so excited that I ran all the way home. I loved babies and was happy when a new one arrived. When I got home, my sister Myrtle was out in the yard and when I asked her about the new baby she said, "Yes, another mouth to feed and we have too many of these around here already." She seemed to be angry and I couldn't understand that. I thought she should be happy.

When I went inside, the doctor was still there talking to father and drinking coffee. Sitting on the floor beside him was a big black bag. I knew that Grandma Dykes lived too far away to bring this baby, so I went out to ask Myrtle about it and she said that the doctor had brought the baby in the black bag. My parents named the baby Honor Lee and I loved that little girl from the start. I was always small for my age and this was the first baby I could hold in my arms.

When Honor was less than a month old, mother became ill with Typhoid Fever. She could not breast feed Honor and she almost starved to death. All that saved her was a wet nurse that had a baby older than Honor. She would let her own child nurse and if there was any milk left she would let Honor have it, but it was not enough. Honor cried constantly and it would break my heart to hear her. I would pile pillows in an old rocking chair and rock her for hours. I always felt close to her and wanted to be there for her if she ever needed me, which a few times I have been. She had so many things happen to her. When she was just beginning to walk, she fell against a heating stove and burned one side of her face. Later, she almost died with Measles and she had Scarlet Fever, which the rest of us never had.

Two years later another sister, Jesse Florence was born in 1906.

Mother never did get over being afraid of the Indians. When they were on a trek and became tired, they thought nothing of entering the first house they came to in order to lie down on the floor and take a nap. One day mother had taken us kids to the store and when we returned, there was a big Buck Indian lying on our floor asleep. Mother started to scream and he jumped up and started to make hand signs; first running his finger around his neck, and then pointing to his mouth. She pushed us kids out the front door and started to run. When Father came home, Mother told him that an Indian came and was going to cut her throat and eat her. Actually they were all really kind, wanting to be helpful, and what he was asking her for was a bridle. Our horses had gotten out of the corral and he wanted a bridle so he could bring them back.

Father, being from Kentucky, loved horses and racing. He, with the help of the doctor, tried to get some others interested in Sulking racing. In Sulking racing, a horse was hitched to a two wheeled cart called a sulky, and they would trot. If a man's horse broke the trot, he was disqualified. Father bought a beautiful dappled gray horse and started to train it. Each night he would turn him into a pasture with a short rope with a knot tied at the end. One morning when he went to get the horse, he found it dead. The horse must have been fighting off flies, caught the knot in the rope in the cork of his shoe, fallen and broke its neck. Father was devastated by this and that was the last of the horse racing idea, because he had blamed himself for the horse's death.

The young doctor, Robert Lester Allen, made a visit to Texas and when he returned, he brought with him a bride. She was a beautiful young woman and I remember the dress she wore the first time I

saw her. It was a light blue silk with a train, which was popular in the states at that time. It had rows of narrow black velvet ribbon around the top of the train. I thought, this is the kind of dress I am going to wear when I grow up, but when I did grow up, they weren't wearing trains. Now that I was six years old, Father started to look for someone that might be able to teach. My parents had planned on sending Myrtle back to Arkansas to our grandparents to go to school. Each time they mentioned it, she would rebel. Father found a retired college professor and hired him to come to the house and teach me and Myrtle. Mother was afraid that he was one of the people that had committed crimes and had escaped to the Indian Territory to hide. Father said he didn't care what he had done as long as he could teach. The only name I knew him by was Professor Daily. The professor made school fun and I could not wait for the school day to begin. He had plenty of time, and he taught me many things that were not required in the lower grades. He told me about far away places which gave me the urge to travel later in life. When I finally started to go to a regular school, I was two grades ahead of the other children my age.

Doctor Allen's new wife's name was Dora. She seemed to take in all the strange customs of the country in stride and became very popular. She even got used to the doctor wearing guns. She and Mother got a Sunday school started, but at first the children didn't seem to be interested. She got an idea and started to tell Bible stories. She could tell some good ones, as my own children later in life would attest to, and later people would come in droves to hear them.

Father started to look for talent around Choska to start another Young Men's Chorus. It was easier in Choska because people were more anxious to learn new things and was willing to try anything new.

Even the doctor, who had a nice bass voice enjoyed singing with the Chorus. There was even a building they could rehearse in. The building was long and narrow, with one end of the floor raised about four feet which could be used as a stage. There were rows of brackets along the side of each wall that held kerosene lamps. The Chorus could rehearse and hold entertainment for the town and surrounding country in this big building.

People would come from near and far, anyway they could to come to the entertainment. Some would come in wagons and some on horseback. The ones that lived too far to make the trip in one day would come and camp over night. There had never been anything of that sort in the country before.

Father could remember when he was a young man in Kentucky that they would have box suppers for the young people, and he thought perhaps one would be enjoyed by the young folks around Choska. He got one organized, and each young lady would fix a box and trim it any way she decided and filled it with nice food. After some entertainment, each box would be auctioned off to the highest bidder. If the drovers happened to be in town at the time, things would become very interesting if they bid against the local boys. If they happened to want a special girl's box, things would get really bad.

After a while, father was getting sort of tired of the Chorus and decided to write plays. He again started to look for talent throughout the area for the ones he thought could be trained to take the different parts in the plays. That was really a big effort because the rehearsing took a long time. He fixed curtains that could be drawn at the stage end of the big building and it worked out very well. When I look back now I am astounded at the talent my father had and how untiring he was to do the things for other peoples enjoyment.

Everybody enjoyed the Chorus, but they would not miss a single play. He could not show the same play too often and would keep writing new ones.

A little ways from Choska there lived a very strange man. He had been raised among the Indians and had a lot of their customs. In his younger days he would wear war paint and ride with the Indians. He had married a young Indian girl who had died young and left him with several acres of the rich river bottom land. No one seemed to know where he came from. He built a beautiful house on the banks of the Arkansas River and had not lived in it since his wife died. He had built a small two-room house at the end of the breezeway to the big house where he and his Negro servant lived.

He had been very wild and was called a "hard drinker." He said one day while lying on his bed that he had a vision. It lasted three days. Others thought he had consumed too much whiskey. He said that while he was having the vision, he was taken to heaven and to hell and was shown all the things he was to do and things he was not to do. After the three days were up, he took all his whisky and his guns and threw them in the river. After that, he would drive through the countryside and would tell anyone who would listen about his vision. When the circuit riders would come to preach he would insist on telling about what he had seen. It was an interesting story and the natives never got tired of listening to it, so the circuit riders could always count on a good crowd if they let him tell about the

vision.

Father became interested in him and later they became good friends. At the time my family knew him he was a gentle and kind old man and a very religious one. His name was Scott Gentry, but everyone called him Uncle Scott. He told us he was Scottish. He wore his hair long, hanging in waves almost to his waist, and he kept it shiny clean. He had a lot of old customs. He would make a deal with the supply wagon people to take care of his wants. He would have his suits made of the very finest of English wool and his boots custom made. When he received the boots, he would cut slits all around the ankles because he had arthritis in his ankles and he thought this helped. He had a habit of picking up pins and sticking them in the lapel of his coat until the lapels would be stiff with the pins. He was having a hard time trying to keep his land under cultivation with just the help of the Negroes. He came to see if Father would move into the big house and manage the land for him.

Father thought it was worth giving it a try. It was the most beautiful place one could imagine and it was right on the banks of the Arkansas River. The grounds around the house were very large with all kinds of trees, rose bushes, and a lot of different kinds of flowers. Behind the barn lot fence was the edge of the high river bank and the river ran a long ways below. It was a regular artist's paradise. When we moved in, Mother was delighted with the place. There was a large orchard with a lot of different kinds of fruit trees and a small family orchard closer to the house. The time we lived at the Uncle Scott Gentry's place was one of the happiest times in all our lives.

In the summer the house boats would come down the river and tie up just below our house. Fishermen would also come and tie up there. They were fishing for the Blue Channel Cat Fish. One boat that used nets caught one that weighed 150 pounds. They kept it tied up there for a few days just so people could see it and then they butchered it and peddled it just like the people who sold beef did.

We kids were very curious about each one of the boats and would wander down as close as we dared. One boat that came in had some funny noises coming from the inside. We kept getting closer and found that the noise was talking and singing. We knew there weren't that many people on board. A man came out and asked us what we wanted. I told him we were listening to the sounds from his boat. He invited us in and we discovered that all the talking and singing was coming from a box with a big horn attached to it and when we went back and told Mother, she wouldn't believe me. She thought it was another one of my imaginations.

The river had a wide sandy beach, but for several feet from the water's edge was quicksand and if one ever got into it, one could never get out. On that account, we children were not allowed to go near the water. We would love to go down when the drovers brought large herds of cattle across from the far side. The cattle would have to swim and the drovers would have to swim their horses also, and one could hear them by the time they started across. The drovers yelled, sang, and cracked their whips while some of the cattle would be bawling, which would make a very loud noise. We would run down to watch and some of the cows would get into the quicksand and had to be left behind. We felt so sorry for them and would take ears of corn and throw them as close as we could to get them to try harder to get out. They would sink slowly until they were completely under, but we would stay until only their noses were sticking out. We could not stand to see them sink out of sight and would run back to the house crying.

Each summer while we were living there, Uncle Scott would go to the hot springs in Hot Springs, Arkansas and bathe in the water for his arthritis. When he came home, he would bring dishes, mugs, and other items that he had held in the hot water which had turned them into lovely rainbow colors. He loved giving gifts and he gave me my first doll. He would keep candy in his room and when I would do an errand for him I was sure to get a nice piece of candy. I loved him and loved doing things for him.

The grounds around the place were so large that many vehicles could park inside the white board fence. He had a black shiny buggy and a span of beautiful black horses. I would watch for him to come home so I could run and open the wide gate for him. He was a soft touch and a lot of the natives had learned that he wanted to help anyone in need. When he would be driving through the country side they would stop him and ask for money for they were in distress and they would get what money he happened to have. My parents tried to tell him that their stories were untrue, but that didn't stop him.

His Negro servant Mose was quite a character. He did all the chores around the place. He took care of the livestock and did the milking. There were large fireplaces in the bedrooms as well as in the living room and I would love to watch him wrestle with the big black logs each evening at winter time. I learned many things from Mose. In the Orchard there were large pears and I tried to eat them, but they were too hard. I complained to Mose and he said he would do something about it, so he took me and the pears to the hay loft and hid them among the hay and told me not to bother them until

he took me to them again. When the time was up and we dug up the pears, they were just ready to eat.

He would dress the chickens for cooking and would ask Mother to fry the feet and neck good and brown for him. They were the only pieces of the chicken he would eat. Uncle Scott took all his meals with us. Mother would fix Mose a meal on the kitchen table after we were through. I was watching him one day eat those feet and cracking the bones and I asked him why he would eat only those two pieces. He said that he liked the parts that carried them along. At the table, Uncle Scott would try to teach us the names of the food in the Greek language. The only thing I can remember is 'Com Buc Shay.' That meant, "Come to Dinner." I presume the reason that sentence stayed with me is because I was always the one to tell him when the meal was ready.

When my parents had to be away for an evening, they would leave Mose in charge of us. We loved it, for he always told us ghost stories which we really believed in. He called them haunts. We loved the ghost stories, but would be so frightened that we had bad dreams at night. Mose knew I loved birds and taught me how to make a figure four trap so I could catch them. I did catch one, a Red Tanager, but when I tried to take him out of the trap, he bit me and just hung on! That was the last of my trapping experience.

My Aunt Rachel and Uncle Bert Snow that lived in Arkansas came to see us. She was a nervous wreck when she got there. They came by stage coach and she had expected to be robbed or killed before she got there. She heard about all the bad things that took place in the Indian Territory, especially the outlaws. She said, "Liz, you must be crazy to try and bring up a family in this God forsaken hole!"

One Saturday night, Father asked my uncle if he would like to go into town for some fun. Aunt Rachel was against his going, but he went anyway. Father buckled a gun on him and they were off. A bunch of men had gathered in the town square. The ground was frozen hard and they wanted to see what a big hole they could make in the ground by each one shooting at the same spot at the same time. Uncle didn't want to show his ignorance in handling a gun and he knew if the gun was not fired, Father would know it. When the others were shooting, he would run behind a building and fire his gun.

Bert had a wonderful time on his visit with us, but Aunt Rachel could not get started home fast enough. They persuaded my parents to let Myrtle go back with them. They said she could go to school there. Myrtle was never very interested in school, but she was anxious to make the trip. I was in tears for days after she left. I didn't know how I was going to live without her because I felt there would be no one to take my troubles to.

One late afternoon Father asked Tempest and me if we would like to take a walk with him. We were excited as he had never asked us to walk with him before. We adored Father and it was a chance to be alone with him. It was getting late when we turned toward the farm managers house. When we got there the manager was standing on his wide veranda and wearing his guns. The place was surrounded by a picket fence and it had a wide gate. Father opened the gate and walked right up to the man with the two of us tagging along behind, took out one of his guns and started poking the man in the belly with it. He was saying something, but we were too far behind to hear what he said. Then he shot a bullet through the attic of his house and as he turned to leave, I heard him say, "The next time the bullet will not be through your attic only."

On the way home he stopped and took both of us by the shoulders and said, "Now don't either one of you say anything to your mother about this," and we never did. Years later when I was telling Doctor Allen about it, I said that the man could have shot father. The doctor said, "Your father, Lee Wilder, was the bravest man I ever met up with. He was not afraid of the Devil himself." I imagined that the reason he didn't want us to tell mother was that he didn't want her to become superstitious. I always knew when Father was coming, even in the night, as the belt he wore from which the guns hung would squeak when he walked.

Just before Myrtle left for Arkansas, she wanted to go to a box supper being held. She was too young to take a box and was too young to be going out at night alone. Father was away at the time and wouldn't be there to escort her. She kept on begging Mother to let her go. Finally, Mother said if she would allow me to go with her and if Mose would drive us in the buggy, she could go. I was really young to be going any place at night and she was not happy to have me tagging along, but would have to tolerate me if she got to go. When it was over and we started home, the drovers who happened to be in town started to shoot their guns and of course the local boys started to shoot theirs also and it was quite a ruckus! The ground was frozen and the clods from the bullets were flying everywhere. We would stop and cover our eyes with our hands to keep the clods from hitting our eyes until the next volley started. We were so used to that sort of thing that we thought it was nothing unusual. The

drovers were young men that would come down from the states and drive great herds of cattle through the Territory. They would stop over night where the cattle could get water. No one seemed to know where they were from or where they were going. They were a lively bunch of men.

After a year or so, the doctor and his wife had their first child, a little girl. That got him thinking about starting a school there. He came to see father about trying to see what could be done. First there had to be a building and with the help of some other men, they got enough lumber together to build a one-room building. They even painted it red. It was on a rise overlooking a small stream about twenty-five feet wide. The Allen's made a trip to Texas and while there, the doctor found a teacher, a widow with a small son that was willing to come to Choska and try to teach for a year.

That fall, the stream froze over and the big kids would take a run from the bank and skate across to the other side. I was too small to skate across and too afraid to walk, so I would crawl across on the ice and by the time I got to the school house my hands would be hurting and I would cry. All the water we had inside was a bucket and a dipper and each one of us used the same dipper. The water was frozen though. The teacher would take the big cake of ice out of the dipper and rub my hands with it. That went on all winter.

Father was busy writing plays and managing Uncle Scott's estate. He seemed to know how to work with the Negroes and the land was doing very well. He learned to work with the Negroes in Kentucky as a young man. The Territory Negroes liked him and looked up to him and he could get good work out of them, most of the time.

It had been a long time since my sister Myrtle left and it seemed that she had no intention of ever coming back to us. She met a young man there that she had become interested in. I had managed to live without her, but still missed her dreadfully. Mother could hire Negro women to help in the house and that relieved me of a lot of the household chores. The hired help was appreciated at that time as there was much work to be done in the family our size and it seemed that we never got caught up.

At this time there were rumors that the Indian Territory might be voted in as one of the States and politicians started going through the Territory making speeches. Father said he was sure it would happen sooner or later and that it would spoil all the naturalness of the country. Years later, I found that to be true. Even the little town of Choska was gone, and I could not recognize the area where the town had been before.

After a while, we got word that Myrtle was going to be married to the young man that she had become interested in earlier. His name was Charles Watson. She told him about the Indian Territory and of some of the things that went on there. They were planning to come for a visit, which they did the following summer. Mother planned on having an ice cream social and to invite some of Myrtle's friends. The weather was nice and it could be held outside. Charles was a handsome young man and we all just loved him.

While the party was under way, a Negro man came in our orchard through different gates. To be in that part of the estate, one had to go through a bluegrass pasture and pass by our place to take the private road through a grove of pecan trees which was about one half mile away. The only reason for anyone to be down in there would be to steal fruit or cattle, and if the gates were left open all the horses and cattle would escape. Father jumped up, rushed to the barn lot, and grabbed a bridle. He jumped on a horse and took after the Negro, shooting on both sides of him all the way up to the county road. That was so common in that country that every one just went on with their party, all but Charles. He didn't know what to make of it. It was so different from what he had been used to. It was two years before they went back to Arkansas and he finally got used to the ways of the Territory.

Things were changing so very fast and Father was becoming more dissatisfied as time went on. Most of the people that lived down in the Creek Nation didn't want to see it changed. Uncle Scott was very upset and it affected his health. He never knew anything about any other places except where he was and he loved the place very much.

At last everyone knew that the Territory would be no more and the new state would be called Oklahoma. A few months later, we were saddened by the death of Uncle Scott. He had seen something about a white goose when he had the vision, and asked Father to see that a white goose was buried with him when he died. Father saw that it was done. We didn't know that he had any relatives until after he died and then they seemed to come from everywhere to get a piece of the estate because he left no will.

Just when the new state of Oklahoma was born we had another addition to our ever growing family. It was at this time my brother Glen was born. He was a very large baby and weighed 13 1/2 pounds at birth when he arrived in February. That spring my mother cut her hand on a piece of tin and developed blood poisoning and could not take care of Glen. I had become a teenager and I had all

the care of him. I was still very small and it was hard for me to handle him. We called him Buster and later changed it to Buck. He never liked the name Glen and insisted on being called Buck and he has been known by that name by everybody ever since. It's a good thing I loved babies because my whole summer was spent taking care of Buck.

Uncle Tip Wilder had moved to California years before and had bought a ranch a few miles from the town of Exeter. He had kept in touch with us and knew how unhappy Father was since the Territory was gone and all that it held for him, so he kept writing for us to move to California. Father was hesitant about taking the family so far. Before he could make up his mind and found there was nothing in the new state for him, the last of our family had arrived. Mother had another boy who we had named Ewing Doyle. Like Buck, he didn't like the name Doyle and he changed it to Don.

When Don was less than a year old, we started for another strange country, or it would be strange to us. This time we didn't travel by covered wagon, but we went by train. Trains ran through Exeter at that time and Uncle Tip met us there and took us out to his ranch. Later we found a house in Exeter, but as long as Uncle Tip and Aunt Flora lived, we always enjoyed going back to the ranch to visit.

We had not been in California long until Father started to have trouble with one of his ears. The local doctors kept treating him but could not find what the real trouble was. Finally they sent him to Fresno to a specialist. He was in the hospital there for a few days when his trouble was diagnosed as Mastoiditis and he died a few weeks later. It was a hard blow for all of us because we had been so used to depending on him for everything. As time went on, we learned that we had to realize we must depend on ourselves and we all did surprisingly well. I am proud of all my brothers and sisters because they have come through with flying colors.

When I started to write about my young life, I had intended on ending the story when we landed in California, but another granddaughter, Paula King, thought I should add something about myself, so I have added just this little bit more.

My first employment was with a millinery shop making and selling hats. We had to take orders and trim the bare frames. There was no such thing as a ready trimmed hat. Later, I was offered a position as inspector of all fruits and vegetables shipped out of the state. I was working for the county, state, and federal government, which at the present time was under one head.

While working there I met a wonderful man from the state of Washington. He had just graduated from college and was sort of looking for a place to settle. A year after we met, we were married. I was still working while he was looking for something, but he wasn't having any luck. One day he told me he could not get ahead as long as I worked at my position and that he would just be known as 'Grace King's husband'. He said we wouldn't have as much money for awhile but that he could support us. I hated to quit such a good paying job, but I did. Then I put in all my effort in seeing that he met the right kind of people. When he became known through the country, he was well liked and respected. He started buying orange groves and eventually became known as one of the best orange men in the valley. He built and operated the first wind machine that was in that part of the country. After three years, our first son was born and was christened Dana Wilder King. Seven years later we had a second son and he was christened Paul Byron King.

Their father idolized those boys and I think they felt the same about him. We had a beautiful marriage for thirty-three years. He built a beautiful Georgian home, but only got to live in it ten years when he died with a heart attack.

Editorial Note: Grace and her first husband, Mr. Phillips, also had two daughters, Ivanah and Dollilee. I'm not sure of the spelling but we wanted to include them as part of the Grace Wilder's generations.

The Memoirs of W. B. Wilder

As recorded July 5, 1992

Like my sister, Grace, I never thought of writing about my young history until my son, Burton, said, "Why don't you write about your growing up? Grace couldn't have remembered everything." So, here goes!

I was eight months old when my folks, Lee Ander and Elizabeth Wilder left Arkansas in a covered wagon and headed for Texas. I remember Mother saying later that they had run out of money and the only food left was potatoes. As we crossed the Arkansas River on the ferry, my sister, Myrtle, threw the remaining potatoes in the river. She liked to hear them "plunk".

We headed for Rule, Arkansas to get back on our feet and then set out for the Oklahoma Territory. (An Indian reservation which later became the state of Oklahoma.) I believe Dad was the first U.S. Marshall in that territory. Honor was born then and I was sure she was an Indian for the longest time.

I have heard many tales of what happened along the way. They had cut a road through the woods. One night as we were camping out, they heard the sound of a horse clopping...with the saddle squeaking. They hurried to move things out of the path. They heard the horse and rider ride on by, but they never saw anything! That was when Mother said, "Now, I believe in ghosts."

A few nights later, they were disturbed by a strange ruckus so Dad went to investigate. He discovered that the Negro's were havin' church.' Being a devout Christian since she was 17, my mother had missed going to church more than anything else, so she went to check it out. She prayed and read the Bible daily.

I was four years old when Oklahoma became a state. Dad was made the first Sheriff of Haskell, Oklahoma. This should be on record in Oklahoma City, but I've never looked it up. I always wanted the knife and gun collections he had. He had taken them all to California, where in his later years he 'got religion' and sold them all. The two 44 pistols he used had 8 notches in them. I saw those with my own eyes.

I also saw him put cans on fence posts, mount a galloping horse, ride by and shoot them off, not missing a one. Another feat of his was hanging an ace of spades on a tree and centering it with a bullet. He was quite a marksman with a pistol, but Mother could beat him with her rifle. She had shot so many chicken hawks that she could 'hit 'em on the fly.'

It's ironic that Dad's initials were L.A.W. I remember one time when he was sitting on the porch washing his feet and a man shot a hole in the pan he was using. The state was full of outlaws and he was always busy rounding them up. In his 'lawman' career, he met the likes of Wyatt Earp, Doc Holiday, Billy the Kid and Buffalo Bill.

One time, he came home with his clothes all bloody. Mother ran out to him thinking he was badly hurt. "No," he said, "this ain't my blood. It's from the boys I was quietin' down at the election."

When I was ten years old (1909), my cousin, Raymond Snow came to visit us with his dad and mother (my mother's sister, Rachael). We joked about picking cotton while the snow in the field was 5 feet high. Dad was showing my uncle how to twirl the pistol around on his fingers and then shoot. Raymond's dad twirled and shot...but the bullet nicked his underarm.

Since my dad spoke the Cherokee language, he thought it might be safer to teach my uncle to speak Cherokee. We had an Indian friend and my uncle was trying to talk to him in Cherokee. The Indian interrupted him by saying, "Why in hell don't you speak English?"

My Dad would tell us stories about when he was a young fellow and traveled from ranch to ranch breaking horses. He would act real stupid and say, "Have you-all got any hosses to break, huh?"

The farm boss would give all the hands a grin and say, "Can you ride?"

Dad would say, "Some. Will ya give me ten dollars if I break one?"

They all laughed as the boss said, "Sure." Then Dad would inch up to the horse and then back off like he was scared. The boss would say, "Get on 'em and ride."

Dad would take a flying leap onto that horse and ride it to a stand still. He said it never failed and he would get to ride one or more horses at every ranch he stopped. They didn't call them ranches back then...just farms.

Once, Dad won a beautiful saddle at a rodeo. It was trimmed in real silver. It was a beautiful thing...until me and Gladys got a hold of it. I don't think I would have been so ornery if it wasn't for my sister, Gladys! She was always doing something naughty.

One day, the folks had to take the wagon to a town that was 12 miles away. Mother would take whole tubs of eggs padded with cotton filling to help buy groceries. Once they were on the road, Gladys said, "Come on, Bill! We gonna ride that calf...but we gotta use that prize saddle." Well, we got the saddle on the calf and I got on him. He began to buck and the saddle began slipping down his back legs. He bucked and kicked that saddle and when it finally came off, it didn't look like the same saddle. We spent the rest of the day working to mend the damage, but no soap. Oh, we used soap all right, but to no avail. It was quite a while before someone came to visit and Dad went to show off his saddle. He had a powerful voice and when we heard him yell, "Gladys, Bill," we knew we were going to get it. And we did. I felt like we really deserved it though.

Dad bought from anybody that sold musical instruments. We had a piano, an organ, a harp and a violin. Dad could play just about any instrument he picked up. In Oklahoma, Dad led the singing in church, but didn't commit himself to a Christian life until we moved to California.

As Grace has said, Dad had a beautiful tenor voice. He had a hundred students in his singing class.

Mother couldn't carry a tune in a bucket, but she was a wonderful mother. We all loved her and she loved us and told us so.

Mother wasn't a nurse, but she always went to the homes of any neighbors who were expecting a baby.

She always planted a garden on Good Friday. This was a tradition.

One day she told us kids that she must go to take care of some neighbors and we must be sure to plant the garden as it was Good Friday. She gave us all the details and took off. We began planting the garden. Dad came by and asked us what we were doing. "It's Good Friday and we're planting the garden," we answered.

He said, "Didn't you know that Good Friday comes on Saturday this year?"

That was good enough for us. We went back to the house to play. When Mother came home she asked, "Did you get the garden planted?" We told her that Good Friday comes on Saturday this year.

"What? Who told you that?"

"Dad," we said.

"Get yourselves out there and plant that garden! NOW!" she yelled.

We did too. It was pretty dark by the time we finished.

We had three hired hands that were paid \$20 a month and board. Gladys was always playing tricks on them like putting shoe black in the shaving cream or making cotton pies. She pulled a good one on my sister, Tempest.

Tempest was the prettiest daughter in the family and won prizes in all the beauty contests. Well, Tempest was going to a Box Social, where the guys bid on a picnic box from their favorite girl. Of course they all wanted Tempest's. It took quite a while to auction off her box and they put out plenty of money. The lucky guy was sure tickled. But when he opened it, there was nothing in it but bones and stuff. "Gladys! Where are you?!" She yelled.

Gladys was long gone. She knew Tempest had a temper. Tempest hollered long and hard for Dad to whip Gladys. He finally did...but he couldn't stop laughing the whole time.

We had a black woman that came to work for us. Her name was Patient. One morning she came to our house all crippled up. Mother asked her what happened. She said she had gone to church and got happy, but nobody held her down and she hurt herself.

Mother said, "You need a new dress, Patient, for that one looks ratty."

"Miz Wilder," she said, "I ain't got 'nuff money 'cause my husband drinks and gambles it all away."

Mother said, "Why don't you leave him?"

"I can't do that!" she said, "I gotta have somebody to sleep with!"

Patient once told Mother about a new preacher they had. He told them what 'sinning against the Holy Spirit' was. Mother wanted to know his version, so Patient told her the preacher had said, "If the preacher asks you for a dollar and you don't give that dollar to him, you are 'Sinning against the Holy Spirit'." Mother tried, but could not convince her that her preacher was mistaken.

The same bunch of Negro's that chopped the cotton also came back and picked it when it was ready. We had small houses for them to live in. When the hired hands plowed around the houses, you should have seen the chicken feathers fly up!

The Negro's were all wonderful singers, and they sang all over the fields while they worked. They just naturally harmonized like a choir with bass, tenor, alto and soprano parts. They sure could sing!

Dad paid 75 cents for every 100 lbs. of cotton picked, so all of us kids would pick, too. I could pick 200 lbs. a day and make \$1.60. That was real good money in 1911. I'd go out real early while the Negro's were waiting for the dew to be dry enough to pick. While they were waiting, they would shoot dice. I would listen to them talk to the dice. I remember one big black buck saying, "If I don't make that eight, there ain't a hound dog in Georgia and there be two at ever door."

We had an apple orchard that the young Negro's would sneak in and steal the apples. Dad had me and Gladys watch for them. We would hide and wait with the hoes we both had, let them pick a few and then we'd holler and take after them. The girls would turn around, pull up their dresses and pat their rears at us. The boys would shake it at us, dropping the apples they were carrying.

All us neighbors had what we called 'hog killing time'. They would come to our house and butcher all the hogs and at night, we would have a party. Mother would not allow dancing, so they would have a skip-to-my-Lou party. It was similar to square dancing, but they would sing, "Gone again, skip to my Lou, gone again, skip to my Lou. Skip to my Lou my darlin'. They were skipping, so it wasn't dancing.

While the men killed the hogs, the women would quilt and telling some pretty racy stories. I'd hide behind the door and listen. Boy! Some of them were dillies. I sure learned a lot behind that door.

When they finished with Dad's hogs, they would move on to the next neighbor and so on until all the hogs were butchered.

The same thing happened in what they called 'laying crops by'. This was the last crop of the season. Dad and the hired hands got busy making hams, hogsheads, etc. We had stacks of cured meat in the smokehouse for the winter.

I remember winter was almost over one year, and a neighbor came to our house and said, "Lee, I'm all out of meat." Dad said, "Go help your-self. You know where the smokehouse is." Dad never went to see how much he took or anything.

We had a cellar that had a spring running through and the water was cold. Dad said, "I'm going to fix it up for Mother. He put a roof on it and made sliding drawers underneath the roof so Mother could use it for a 'Frigidaire'.

There was no electricity or running water in those days. Dad installed a pitcher pump in the kitchen with wooden troughs. The neighbors thought that was really something. We also built troughs in the smokehouse with straw in them to put the vegetables in. This started a new phrase, "What will they think of next?"

About once a month, Dad would give us kids 50 cents apiece to walk 6 miles to Haskell to see a show. The show was 15 cents. We would have 35 cents left for candy, soda pop and hamburgers. (hamburgers were 10 cents.)

I had my own team of horses, Jack and Toby, and nobody could drive them but me. A neighbor borrowed them one time, but they wouldn't do anything for him. They were used to a kid's voice.

There once was a camp meeting and people came in their wagons from all over, bringing their kids. So the teenage boys got together when church was going good and the kids were asleep. We carried the sleeping kids to different wagons. Boy, was that a mix-up! It took days to straighten it out. It tickled us kids. We enjoyed it!

We had no TV or radio, but we had lots of fun with box socials, spelling bees and plays of all kinds. At night, we would sit around and tell ghost stories.

I remember my sister, Tempest, practicing for a speech she was going to give at school. She said it out loud around the house for days. When we all went to the play they were giving, they called on me first. I couldn't remember mine, but Tempest's lines were going through my mind, so I said hers. When they called on her, she said, "Bill already said mine!"

I hope you enjoyed these stories. It's been eighty one years since it happened.

Dad sent off for a special corn seed one year and made a special place to plant it. Tempest, Gladys and I held church there with some neighbor kids. Tempest got happy and trampled the corn down. The plants were about a foot high. Dad wanted to give her a whipping, but Mother said, "You can't do that. She was happy in the Lord!" Of course, Dad had to give in.

We had lots of cyclones, so we kept plenty of food in the cellar just in case. One time, a cyclone was coming and Mother started praying. It leaped right over our land and hit the next door neighbor's house.

We walked four miles to school. On the way, we stopped at all the neighbor's houses. Their kids would then go on to school with us. One Monday morning, the kids at a neighbor's house were not waiting for us. Gladys said, "I guess they are already left." But, when we got to school the kids weren't there. The School Marm told us to tell our folks so they could check on them. We told Dad and Mother and they went to investigate. What happened was that on Friday, a cyclone had blown a tree across the cellar door while they were still in it. Dads got the team of horses and drug the tree off.

There were three children and their parents, still in good shape. The mother said, "We're okay, but we don't smell so good." They thanked us and thanked us for getting them out.

I have said that we walked four miles to school. But in the winter time, the creek froze over so we skated all the way there and back. Boy! Did we have fun!

When we got out of school one day, Gladys said, "Blow that snotty nose of yours and don't wipe it on your sleeve, either!" Well, I don't know if I even had a handkerchief or not, but I grabbed a girl's shawl and blew my nose in it. What a fight that started! The girls were pulling hair and the boys were kicking each other.

"Wait a minute," Gladys hollered. "I'll take care of this! I'll make Bill wash and iron your shawl and it'll be as good as new."

I said, "Gladys, I don't know how to clean and iron a shawl."

She glared at me. "You will when I get through with you."

It was quite a job for me, but with the help of Gladys, I finally got it done.

Gladys and I rode everything we got our hands on. I remember once when she sat on a horse that didn't have a bridle or saddle. It darted into the barn and Gladys was hit in the chest by the barn door, knocking her to the ground. I have often thought that was the cause of her many bouts with breast cancer. She had 22 operations for cancer but lived to be 82. She was always the spunky one. I don't think she ever stopped pulling practical jokes either.

She would tell the little Negro kids ghost stories just to see if they could turn white. It was funny to watch their eyes get wide as they became engrossed in her tall tales.

One of her favorite gags was to give a new guest for dinner a plate that had a crack in it resembling a hair. It would tickle her to watch the visitor try to move it to the side with their fork. She also had drinking glasses with holes in the design, so that when the person drank from it, the water would pour on them. I remember her scooping up bowls of ice-cream for everybody but one girl, who she scooped up a bowl of butter. We went into Haskell one time in Oklahoma and she pretended she was all crippled up (she was double-jointed) and she begged for money while I would tell people about my poor little crippled up sister. We made quite a pocketful that day. Gladys never failed to have a witty remark to break the ice.

I was behind the plow handles when I was seven years old. I had to pull the horse up to a stump to get the collar and harness on. The hired hands cut the trees down in what they called 'clearing the land.' Then they would blast the stumps, but it left a lot of roots in the ground. When the plow hit a root, I was knocked off the horse. So, I would cry all through the new ground and sing all through the old ground.

We would let the cows out into the woods in the morning. One of my jobs was to round them up at night. One evening it began to rain. The thunder and lightning flashes scared Dolly, the horse I was riding, and she bolted. She ran between two trees that had a grapevine attached to them and that vine threw me for a loop. Luckily, I wasn't hurt, but it was a long walk home.

I never met my grandpa, Union Wilder. He was originally an English big shot in Germany and moved to the U.S. with a bagful of money. I don't know how he got it, but he was an excellent furniture and cabinet maker. He made all of Dad and Mother's furniture when they got married.

Grandpa Wilder was a big man like my brother, Buck. One Sunday he lifted a rock that four men together couldn't lift and he died an hour later.

I've heard mother tell a story about when Dad was courting her. She was out on the porch with her sisters talking about their sweethearts and she made her eyes real big and said, "I'm getting wilder and wilder." When she turned around, she saw Dad standing there. Her face turned 50 shades of red.

I never met Grandpa Henderson Ramsey either, but Mother told stories about him. One story took place during the Civil War. He and a couple of soldiers stopped at a house to get milk and a pretty red-haired girl gave it to them. He and the other two soldiers sat down on a bench to drink it and Grandpa sat in the middle. One soldier would take a drink and pass it to Grandpa, who would take a drink and pass it to the other soldier. Sitting in the middle, he got twice as much as both of them. When they finally caught on, he said, "Serves you right for being so dumb."

Grandpa told that girl what beautiful hair she had and she said, "Take your milk and get out of here. I've heard all that before!"

He told the other two that when the war was over, he was going to come back and court that redhead. They said, "Yeah, and get your head knocked off." But that's what happened. He went back and courted her and they were married. She was the niece of General Gauge. Grandpa and she had seven kids, but there was not a redhead among them.

Other stories Mother enjoyed telling were about Negro slaves. It was raining one day and one of the slaves said, "Mo rain, mo rest for Uncle Pete."

Grandpa Ramsey said, "What's that, Negro?"

"Oh, Massa! I said mo rain, mo grass for cows to eat."

In the fields one day, Grandma Ramsey overheard a slave say, "Jesus Christ, God Almighty." When asked to repeat what was said, the slave answered with, "I said my cheese and crackers got all muddy!"

We came by train to California in 1913. I was 12 years old. I told Gladys, "I'm going to count every tree between here and California." Gladys said, "You little fool! You can't do that! 'Cause we're here and then...Zip! We're there!"

Mother had big baskets of fried chicken and other eats of all kinds to enjoy along the way. It took us three days.

One night, I went to use the restroom, but there was a man there handling two pistols. I thought he was a train robber. I was too scared to use the toilet, so I went back and wet the bed. Dad had to pay \$11 for the damage. I thought I'd be in trouble, but Dad got a kick out of it.

When we landed in Riverside, all the oranges were frozen. Dad wanted to go back to Oklahoma, but Mother said, "Here is where the Lord wants us." We stayed.

I'm going to tell of something that happened in 1918 while we were living in Exeter. I was 17 years old.

Myrtle, Grace, Tempest and Gladys were all married. Mother was a widow by then and I was the head of the family. At home was Honor-14 years old, Jessie-11, Buck-9, and Doyle (Don) who was 6. As widow women didn't get any help from the county in those days, Mother and I had to go to work. We had several jobs before we found this good paying one. We were "prune-pickers." The prunes weren't actually picked. Two sheets were placed on each side of the tree. The prunes were shaken off the limbs into the sheets and then put in the shaker to get the leaves and stuff out. The smaller kids picked up the 'windfalls'. I believe I made about \$150. I always gave Mother 30% of all my wages. Mother and I headed for Visalia. I of course was feeling rich.

We went to a clothing store where I intended to buy a brand new outfit. The clerk had a cold. When his nose dripped on the suit I first picked out, I refused to buy it. Mother kept asking me why I didn't take that suit. All I could say was, "I'll tell you later."

I paid \$15 for the suit, \$3 for shoes, \$1.45 for the shirt and .75 cents for a snazzy tie. (I don't remember what I paid for the BVDs.) At the barber shop, you could get a bath for .50 cents, a hair-cut for .75 cents, and a shave for two bits. That's when I started the phrase, 'Shave and a haircut-6 bits' plus a bath. Needless to say, I got the works.

Once I got all spruced up, Mother asked, "Are you going home with me?" I said, "No, but I want you to take my old clothes home and I'll be there later." Then I bought a foot-long cigarette holder and began walking by all the stores that had a looking glass. I spent most of the day walking all over town smoking cigarettes and admiring myself.

When I got home, I wasn't feeling too good. Mother took one look at me and said, "I know you don't smoke, but I'd advise you to get yourself some milk." I took her advice and headed for the refrigerator. It worked!

I had a girl in every town (Porterville, Tulare, Visalia, Lindsay, and every place in between) until I met Ora Beatrice Bainter at the Church of God in Exeter where Mother and I attended. There was a

Judge's daughter, Zeta Kirk, who would always introduce me to the new girls. On a particular Sunday, she was going to introduce me to the latest prospect, but she didn't show up to do so. I looked around and saw a new girl with long black hair and eyes so dark they were almost black. I walked over to her and said, "Where's Zeta?"

She said, "I don't know any Zeta."

I asked her if I could walk her home. She said, "I'll have to ask my mother."

I said, "Well, where is she?"

"Home," She said, her black eyes sparkling. If I were to walk her home, I would have to meet her parents. So I did. We began going out together. Within a year's time, we fell in love and were married in Visalia in 1919.

We moved into a housekeeping room for \$8 a week in Sacramento. I got a job at S.P. Shops (blacksmiths). We had 30 minute breaks between 'heats' and the workers all rolled their own cigarettes. I learned to roll a Prince Albert cigarette with one hand. It was there that I heard of an opening at a canning company. So, I went there to ask for a job. The supervisor said, "Tomorrow is the day we do the hiring." So I said I'll come back the next day. When I got there on the morrow, there was a line of men a mile long. I was standing to the side thinking, "I'm not going to stand in that line all day. Just then the supervisor came out and when he saw me, he said, "Hello there, Wilder. You come with me." I got some strange looks from the men in the line, but I got the job there at the Libby, McNeal and Libby Canning Company for about \$5 a day.

Duane was born in that 'housekeeping room' at 619 and a half, J Street in Sacramento on May 10, 1919. Mom and I both got home-sick and moved back to Exeter where I worked in a packing house. We lived in a chicken coop that Ora fixed up like a little ginger-bread house. She was able to make every place we lived look wonderful. She could make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Rumor has it that I boxed welter-weight for side money and wouldn't tell Mom, but I only remember being a street fighter. They didn't call me 'Wild Bill', for nothing.

After some time, we got a letter from my sister, Gladys and her husband Claude from Maricopa, saying that there might be some work in the oil fields. I left Ore in Exeter and took a bus to their home. I remember walking six miles through the oil fields from Maricopa to Taft asking for work. I finally got a job with Pacific Oil and Gas (Standard Oil). I rented a house in Ford City and sent for Ora.

Standard "loaned me out" to Richfield which is now ARCO. I became the gangpusher with a crew of five men building a compressor plant. When the Great Depression came, they laid-off one oiler... then another and another and then the operator, until I was the only one left to do all their jobs. There were 12 engines and 12 compressors. I had to run to get everything done, but I was thankful to have a job making \$7.12 a day as the absorption plant's engineer. Standard wanted me to come back and work for them, but I was already making more money than they offered me. It was the start of a career that lasted 41 years.

I loaned a lot of money out in those days. I paid one guy's rent for 2 weeks. I bought another fellow a big box of groceries for \$5. About a year later, I got a check in the mail for \$10 from somebody I didn't know. Mom said, "That's the fellow you bought groceries for." He was the only one who paid me back.

One of the first places Richfield sent me to work was Cole's Levy near Tupman, where a carpenter and I built our house. Sister (Billie Lee); was born in that house on December 24th, 1924. Burton was born there on July 21st, 1927, and Gary's birth was on February 21, 1935. We later sold that house and bought two houses in Taft where Danny was the only one born in a hospital on September 19, 1946. Ora was one month away from being 46 when he was born. Sister already had a son, Eddie (E.J.) and a daughter, Carol. Danny was born an uncle.

It took three days to sell both houses in Taft and we bought a three bedroom mobile home that was hauled to New Cuyama and placed on one of the foundations that would become Richfield's town-site for its employees. The first day we moved in, the sun was shining and then it began to rain, then sleet, then hail, then it snowed and then the sun came back out again.

We lived in Cuyama valley for almost 18 years. It was like a little utopia with a "resort climate". It snowed at Christmas and got so hot in the summer you could fry an egg on the sidewalk. We never

had to lock our house up or worry about crime and there were plenty of community activities for the families. We enjoyed pot-lucks, little league sports, and a highly accredited school system. The high school gym was one of the finest in California and they had Olympic style swimming and a diving pool where Danny was a life guard. There were also seven churches for 1100 people.

When Danny was 8, he started going to the Church of the Nazarene. He was saved and talked Mom into going too. She became a devout Christian soon afterwards and the two of them were very active in that little church.

During the early years in Cuyama; I built a vacation home with the help of hired construction in Arroyo Grande. The idea I had in mind was to eventually retire there. Well, Mom wanted new furniture for our new home in Cuyama, so we sold that house and were able to make a wonderful home there in the valley. Some people say I spoiled her, but she was worth it. I still have the maple furniture she picked out in my home today.

She would drive to Maricopa to make beautiful ceramics for the house. She also made woodworks, scalloping around the windows, lattice work and a screen door so fancy that everybody that saw it wanted one. I guess all our kids have some of her ceramics as she gave them away, saying she didn't want them to fight over them after she was gone. She built the knick-knack shelves to put them in as well.

She was very artistic. She painted beautiful landscapes in oil and was always making some kind of arts and craft creations. Every Christmas there were prizes for the best decorations. Mom always won first place. Eventually, they stopped having the contest. They knew she would win.

She came home from shopping one time, and I told her about the prizes for the decorations down at Montgomery ball. It took her thirty minutes to put something together and, of course, she won first prize again.

Sometimes, I would go with her to Taft when she wanted to shop, but I would go to the Brass Rail and play Pan-goofy for two or more hours. Mom would be through with her shopping and have to wait for me. On our 68th anniversary somebody asked her if she ever thought of divorcing me and she said, "No, but if I had a gun, there's a couple of times I'd have shot him." She was probably thinking about my Pan-goofy days. Thank the Lord I don't gamble anymore.

We moved to Ventura in 1967 to be close to our daughter, Billie Lee (who has always been called Sister). Now she's Aunt Sis too. I was retired then but worked as a crossing guard for 14 years and painted houses and pruned trees in my spare time. The children cried when I finally retired from that crossing guard job.

I too had become a Christian at 70 years of age and finally quit smoking. Mom and I enjoyed our fellowship with the members of our church. I was hit by a car as I was returning from one of my daily walks and racked up my knee. Shortly after, Burton and Mary encouraged us to move close to them in Lompoc where we lived together in a comfortable mobile home a couple of blocks away from them.

We didn't sleep together in our last years. I snored and flopped around keeping her awake. She had hot flashes and kept me awake. But she would holler from her room and say, "Do you want me to come to bed with you?" Of course you know, I'd say, "Yes."

We shared a rich and rewarding life together for almost 70 years before she went to be with the Lord on Easter Sunday, 1990. She was 88 and a half when she died, living longer than any of the rest of her family.

She was a wonderful woman. I sure do miss her! She was great with the kids. If they came to me and said, "I don't have anything to do. What can I do?" I would say, "Sit on your fist and lean back on your thumb!" But Mom would always have ideas to keep them entertained. She always kept her imagination alive, and that creative talent she had was passed on to our children.

Duane and Gary are both noted artists for their oil paintings. Sister is as 'artsycrafty' as they come. Burton is a remarkable carpenter and cabinet maker. Danny can always keep the kids entertained.

Mom always encouraged Danny in his music and he eventually became a professional musician, singer/songwriter and actor.

I gave Mom whatever she wanted and provided for our family, but I left every one of our children in her capable hands and I think that's the reason why we have such a fine bunch of kids....all five of them, and all 17 grand-children...all 33 great grand-children...and all 3 great, great grand-children.

My mother, Lizzy, lived to be almost 104. My sister, Myrtle lived to be 99 and my sister, Grace, was 97 before she passed on.

How long am I going to be around...at least until I'm 110 or until the second coming...which ever comes first.

W.B. Wilder

Memoirs of Jesse Florence Wilder

Lee Ander Wilder was born in Clay County Kentucky to Ewing Wilder and Lucenda (Hunt) Wilder on May 14, 1867 and died in Exeter California on Aug. 12, 1917.

Originally, Lee's grandfather, Billie, and his three brothers came from Ireland and settled in Virginia. Billie and one brother left Virginia and went to Kentucky. They lost track of the other brother who stayed in Virginia.

Billie's son, Ewing Wilder, was born in Louisville Kentucky and married Lucenda Hunt, who was also born in Louisville Kentucky. Ewing and Lucenda had Lee Ander Wilder. Lucenda died when Lee was nine years old. Lee lived with relatives until his father re-married. His father was a stone mason, cabinet maker, and furniture finisher. He built the Crescent Hotel in Eureka Springs Arkansas. It is still standing today.

Ewing and his new wife had five children but I don't know any of their names except Will and Charlie.

Lee was very unhappy with his home life and left home when he was fourteen. With a few dollars he went to the train depot and waited around. He saw a man buy a ticket to Cherryville Kansas and he knew he had enough money for a ticket there. Arriving in Cherryville, he met a group of cattle drovers who took him back to camp with them. He learned to be a cowboy and broke wild horses. He stayed with them until he was eighteen.

Lee then drifted into Arkansas where he homesteaded land. He met Elizabeth Fancer Ramsey and they were married Sept. 2, 1888 in Rule Arkansas. To that union was born twelve children: Myrtle Mae (Watson) July 1889; Clifford, Essie, Pinkey- these three children died soon after birth. Next came Grace Jane (Phillips) (King) Nov. 4, 1894; Tempest Carrie (Bearden) (Hanchett) Dec. 2, 1896; Gladys Maggie (Hagler) (West) Feb. 23, 1899; Willie Burton March 8, 1901; These children were born in Berryville Arkansas.

Lee Wilder took his family by covered wagon to Texas, but didn't stay there long, and then went on to what was the Indian Territory. Honor Lee (Kelly) (Coulter) (Fralick) (Pontius) Feb. 5, 1904; Jessie Florence (Clore) Aug. 9, 1906 were born before it became the state of Oklahoma. Glen Posey (Buck) Jan. 28, 1909; Ewing Doyle, (Don) Aug. 18, 1912 were the last to join our family.

While in Arkansas, Lee Wilder was in charge of searching and closing stills besides farming. After moving to Oklahoma, he was appointed Marshal of the Creek Native Indians.

There is a photograph of Father with another man. The other man, we children called Uncle Scott Gentry. His wife had died and he had no family, so he treated us like his own. We lived on his ranch

which my father oversaw. They raised cotton and cattle.

I remember my father riding his horse down the rows to break the stalks. The cotton grew rank and was poor quality. He broke the stalks down so the pickers could get through. It was all hand picked. I don't recall much about Oklahoma. I remember Uncle Scott with the pipe either in his mouth or hand. He always had peppermint candy in his coat pocket and let us search for it.

Before leaving Oklahoma, my folks had an auction sale. People came from all over. I remember riding on the old flat bed wagon and trying to get to the back part to hang our feet off.

We came to California by train, arriving in February 1913 in Orange County. That year was a big freeze, so we came on to Exeter, Ca. We stayed with my father's Uncle Tip and his wife Flora for a few days. They had a ranch just out of Farmersville. My father and Grace's husband, Jeff Phillips, found a house in Exeter, so we moved there.

My father bought a house at 403 S. Filbert Ave. Originally, there were only three rooms in the house, but he added on the rest. I lived there until I married. Grace and Jeff bought the lot next door and my father and Jeff built a house there. They are still there today as of March 4, 1992.

My father never owned a car. We had only horses and wagons in Oklahoma. In Exeter, he rode a bicycle. I remember riding on the cross bar and going with him to pick grapes. I would spread the paper trays on the ground between rows and put a dirt clod at each corner to hold it down. My father would bring a bucket of grapes and dump them on the trays. He would tell me what a good worker I was and made me feel so proud.

I remember him mostly leading the singing at church in Exeter. The little church had no organ or piano. He had what was called a 'tuning fork' to get the right sounds. He had a good singing voice and used to sing to us what he called 'little ditty', mostly folk songs.

My father was a Christian. I never saw him take a drink of any kind of liquor or hear him swear.

He had to have surgery for Mastoid in May 1917. There was no antibiotics in those days. When he came home from the hospital in Fresno, it was a great day, but he never recovered from the surgery.

I was eleven years old on the ninth of August and spent the day with my father. I remember that he always wore these long white night shirts.

He went to be with the Lord on Aug. 12, 1917 at around two o'clock in the morning. We were all gathered around his bedside. He was a young man who had once been so healthy and full of life. He was a hard worker to provide for a large family. He was a father to be proud of.

Jessie Wilder Clore: April, 8, 1992

My Life and Memories with my Husband and Children
Written by Jessie Wilder Clore

My daughter asked me to write more about my life. Most will find it dull and not very interesting- but here goes.

I was born in what was Indian Territory (Aug. 8, 1906), which became Okalahoma State that same year, 1906. It was a small town, close to Miscoga; either Choska or Coweta. I was never sure as my mother couldn't remember either. My childhood was spent mostly in Exeter, California. We moved from Okalahoma in February 1913. My father died August 12, 1917.

I attended Woodrow Wilson School from second grade to eighth grade. I started first grade in Indian Territory, then we moved to Exeter where I finished first grade in a little one-room place on Main Street. That little School was later turned into a service station. We had to provide our own pencils, chalk, slate, and books in those days.

My mother was struggling to keep five children at home (the others had married and moved out). We all worked in pitting sheds cutting apricot & peaches, placing the cut pieces on large trays. We

had to stack field boxes on top of each other to stand on as the trays were stacked higher and higher. We also picked prunes, Mother and Bill (my oldest brother- 16 at that time) pulled and spread big canvas sheets under the trees and used long hooked poles to frail the prunes off. The prunes missed the sheets a lot, so Honor, Buck, and I had to round them up. Then while they poured the prunes off the sheet onto the shaker, made of slats with little cracks to let the leaves fall through, we went ahead and picked up what was called 'windfalls', so Bill and Mother could lay the canvas sheets down. The three of us would go back and pick up any prunes fallen off the shaker. We were there about three weeks every year until Bill left home.

So, you see there wasn't much fun time left. But, we did have some good times. Not many toys but mother always seemed to be able to feed and cloth us, nothing fancy. I learned to sew at an early age; was making my own clothes by the time I was 13 years old. May not have looked so hot, but I was proud of them.

Enough of hard work! I grew up in a hurry. I started dating at age 14, but wasn't allowed to go out alone with dates. Always double dated. My first date (if you can call it that) was Clifton Alexander. He would take me home from school on his bicycle. His folks had a Dodge automobile. We all felt they were in the money. Not many people had cars then. My father never owned a car, always rode a bicycle.

Double dating is how I met Jim Clore. He was a blind date for my girlfriend. We, my date and Jim and his date went to barn dance. Square dancing was pretty big then, and I loved it. Jim didn't know how to square dance, so I didn't see much of him that night. He didn't care for his date either, so never called her again. He had a new 1921 Ford open air.

I saw Jim again at another dance place, also an open air, at McKay's Point. He then asked me for a date. I wasn't too crazy about him. He never talked much, but had a car so we went to a couple of dances. He was a great ballroom dancer!

I went by bus to Maricopa to see my sister Gladys and her husband Claude. Claude had just had surgery and was in the hospital. Joyce, their daughter, was about two years old then. I met Fred Burley there and started going out with him. I was there three weeks and then Fred drove me home. He stayed around Exeter and we got engaged. It really didn't mean that much to me and it didn't last long, but I did have a ring. Then Jim came back over and we started going out again, pretty steady. He was over on Wednesday and Saturday nights, and also on Sundays. We would go together and breakup. Honor kept telling me that I should marry him. She was married to Jack Kelly at that time.

We decided to get married. His mother was married to Al Fickle at that time (1923). We were supposed to live on the Clore ranch and Jim was to run it for his mother. Just before we got married, she separated and moved out on Goshen Avenue in Visalia in a large old house (a rental). Jim, Ben, John, and Delia all were there. So, there is where we spent our honey-moon. Then we all moved into the Clore ranch house. This was not anything I had planned on. Jim told me I wouldn't have to work anymore. At first, he wouldn't let me do anything outside the house. That didn't last long. First thing you know I was doing a lot!

Jim's mother wasn't easy to live with and being disappointed with the arrangement, I wasn't very happy. One day we (Grandma & I) had an argument and I went to the barn and told Jim that I couldn't live there anymore. He unhooked the horses. We packed up the few things we had and took off. I didn't know it but I was pregnant at that time.

As usual when we had a problem, we headed for Gladys & Claude's home. Honor & Jack happen to be there; then the four of us headed for down south. We were in our car and Honor & Jack in theirs. Gladys made us some sandwiches and fortunately we had them with us, as we had very little money. We got separated from them and we went by Myrtle & Charlie Watson's, stayed all night there. Thought maybe Honor & Jack would come there. We left and I can't remember, but I think we went to Taft, then back to Exeter. Uncle Tip came to Mother's and wanted us to stay at his ranch with him. I was to do the cooking (poor men) for his son and grandson. Jim was going to work for Ross; Tip's other son that ran Giant Oak Ranch, a large ranch on Farmersville highway. We stayed there until morning when I woke up early and knew Jimmy wanted out; so back to Mother's we went where Jimmy was born on 4th of July, 1924. Tempest was there and she had every labor pain that I did! She always felt she gave birth to him.

I wasn't quite 18 years old when Jimmy was born and didn't know much about babies. I tried to nurse him, but he had colic and nursing didn't agree with him. We didn't go back to Uncle Tips, so Jim lost his job at the Giant Oak Ranch.

Mother and Doyle (changed to Don later) left to go up north to work. Buck stayed with us. He and Jim picked figs for Mr. Brundage (who owned a store in Farmersville), but when they went to get their pay, they were told that they had to spend a certain percent at the store! That didn't go over so good. We stayed at Mother's while she was up north.

Later, we moved into an apartment next to Honor and Jack. Jim's mother wanted to keep little Jimmy, as he still wasn't doing well. The doctor put him on a bottle with formula that really got him going good. When he was 5 months old he weighed 22 lbs. Of course, we thought he was the best looking baby anywhere. When Grandma Clore had him for a couple of months, I packed grapes and Jim made boxes at Rocky Hill.

Another couple, that we knew, moved into one of the apartments close to us. They had a little boy about 5 years old, no car or money. They talked us into quitting our jobs and taking them to San Diego or Ensenada. They said we could get a job in the tire factory there. He had worked there before. We had saved up a hundred dollars, which was a lot of money in 1924. We took Jimmy and the three people and left for San Diego (a short stay). Rented a house for \$25.00, gasoline was 20 cents a gallon, and the Ford didn't use much gas. There were no jobs at the factory or anywhere else. Our money was soon gone and the other couple moved out with some friends there. Jim got a job to drive truck loads of Turkey's to Imperial Valley. When he got there he was supposed to drive boot-leg whiskey back. He wouldn't do that, so there went the job. He was paid \$5.00 for that and it was Christmas time. Mother sent us \$5.00, so we packed Jimmy in the car and headed for Exeter. We made it on old tires that had boots in them. They had patched up inner tubes, but we made it back.

Jim's mother talked him into coming back to the ranch and here we went again. We stayed at the ranch until after Leland was born. When the Cannery (East Tulare Ave.) started, I took little Jimmy and Leland and moved into one of the Cannery little houses they provided. Dollilee came and stayed with the boys while I worked. Jim came to see us often. I had no intentions of going back to the ranch as long as Jim's family was still living there. I finished the season and then we rented a place close to Mooney Grove. The Findley's lived close by and their daughter, Myrtle Hartline & her husband Monte lived in a little house on the Findley ranch. We were close friends to all of them. They helped us through some rough times. Myrtle and Monte had no children and our kids were real close to them.

After a year living there, Jim's mother bought a house on south Giddings. She, John and Delia moved there (this is where she remained). Ben and Edna had married by this time, and so had all the others married, except for John and Delia.

So once again, we moved back to the ranch. We stayed and worked the ranch until 1935. Patricia Ann was born there in 1929. By that time we had our own cows. I hated it; washing the old separator, feeding calves, pigs, chickens, ducks and turkeys. Up early to milk by hand (around 20 cows); we didn't make much money then. We exchanged eggs in town for groceries. Occasionally, Jim worked for the other farmers for 20 to 25 cents per hour. He then would come home and milk our own cows. But we did have some good times. There was always plenty of food, as we always had a vegetable garden and fruit trees, and all the milk the kids wanted.

In 1935, I wanted to get off the ranch for good. Every summer, I worked in the Cannery, which helped a lot. Then, I started packing oranges, so I was working pretty steady. I remember my first check that I got for \$50 that week. I was really proud. By this time we had gotten rid of the cows, except one family cow.

I started looking for a place in town. I found this place off Mooney Blvd. on Crow Ave. There was four plus acres and a two bedroom house, a water well, chicken houses, and also an outhouse. Jim had started working at the Cannery, hired by the superintendent, who was a friend of the family. He worked his way up to Foreman on the night crew. Things began to get better for us. We stayed here for nine years.

While we were there, Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941 and World War II was declared. Jimmy was 17 years old when he went down to enlist in the Navy. This was the very next day after Pearl Harbor bombing. I wouldn't or couldn't sign for him. But he talked Dad into signing. He left a couple of days later. That was heart wrenching to see him go. He was in boot camp only three weeks and then sent over seas on a destroyer "The Chew". We didn't get to see him again for a year. His ship came into San Francisco. Jim and I, Leland and Pat, cousin Norene and Marian Raybourn (Jim's girl friend) all went to San Francisco to see him. He came back to Visalia with us for a couple of days.

Then, Leland decided with a couple of friends to enlist with the Coast Guard. His father signed for him also. Two sons to worry about, but God was good, they both came home safe.

Just before V.E. Day, we had word from Jimmy that he was coming home on a 30 day leave. He was headed for Brimerton Washington, and would phone from there. At 5:00 AM one morning the phone rang. I jumped out of bed and answered it to hear the words... "Mother?"

I said, "Jimmy where are you?"

He said, "This isn't Jimmy, it's Lee."

I was so excited. He said he was in Visalia on Main Street, and I told him I'll be right there. I woke Dad and Pat, grabbed my robe and house slippers while Dad was dressing. Pat got her robe and slippers on, and we were on Main Street before we realized that we had left Dad at home. We saw Lee and stopped the car right in the middle of the street... hugs and kisses, tears and laughter. What a day! We went back home and the phone rang again. This time it was Jimmy, saying he was on his way home. He arrived in Goshen Junction at midnight. A group of his friends was there to greet him and bring him home. If I could live over one day of my life, I would choose that precious day.

We had moved to 1205 W. Tulare Ave. after selling the house and four acres on Crowe Ave. The boys had never been there, so it was all new to them. Jimmy and Lee didn't have to go back over seas again, as they were home when V.E. Day was declared. Jimmy was sent to Chicago to the shipyards. Lee remained in California until they were through their terms of service.

Jimmy loved to ride his motorcycle; he had gone to work at the Edison Company. He and the family had gone to Farmersville Grange to a wedding shower for Alfred Hifner. He rode his motorcycle. Coming home he was driving down Main Street when a couple of drunk Mexicans ran a stop sign and hit him broad side, he and the motorcycle both went over the car and he was seriously injured with a concussion and fracture of the skull. He was semi-conscious for twelve days, but he survived that. After this he had after effects with blackout spaces.

He and Lillian Robinson were married on August 14, 1949. He was sent in April 1950 to Kern River to work on high power lines near Bakersfield. After work one night, he decided to drive his Buick convertible (no seat belts) to Taft to see Aunt Gladys and Uncle Bill. Coming home, he said he felt drowsy and reached over to turn up the radio. That was the last thing he knew until he woke up in the hospital in Bakersfield. We took Lillian and went directly to the hospital. Honor and Dan Fralick lived in Bakersfield with their adopted daughter, Gayle. We all stayed there. Jimmy asked me to go get Grandmother Wilder to pray for him. I went but that really did something to me. My son knew I wasn't the one who could pray for him. I couldn't get over the thought that I wasn't the one who could pray for him. This really bothered me. He told me that when he got well he was going to take Lillian and the baby and he was going to church. Before he died, he told me he was ready to go and asked me to look out for Lillian and the baby. Our son fought hard to live, but after 11 days he lost the battle on May 6, 1950. This was a terrible time for all of us. Lillian was 7 months pregnant at the time. Then, James Clore III was born on July 11, 1950. We were so grateful for him. He was a God send.

In September 1950, our daughter's (Pat) baby boy, John Louis Leach, was stillborn, which was another shock to all of us. A baby we never got to see or hold. But a year later on September 28, 1951, she had another son, John Craig Leach. We were blessed, as he filled an empty space in our hearts.

Lee was married to Joyce Latimar at that time. We loved her very much, but they divorced shortly after that time. He worked hard for the Edison Company also. While they were on strike he went to Greenland to work in 1954.

The same year we purchased a motel in Three Rivers, the Hill Haven. The Cannery had closed down so Jim was out of employment. He could have gone to work with the County if he wanted to move to Sunnyvale California, but we did not want to do that. He was going to run the motel and I would keep my job at Nash De Camp, but he had applied for a job with Tulare County Parks. We had already closed escrow at the Three Rivers motel. He decided to work for Tulare County. So, I took on the motel by myself and also kept my jobs. Mother came up and stayed with me. Jim stayed in Visalia with Pat and her family. He came up to Three Rivers on week-ends. There was always something for him to fix. Dee Ann Wilder helped me clean the cabins. Mother's wrist was in a cast, so she checked the people in and loved doing that. Everyone enjoyed talking to her. We were only busy during the summer months. So Mother went home to Exeter after the rush.

The next year Gladys came up and ran the motel. She was such a help. We had a lot of fun times together. She made everything a fun place. We had a lot of strange people in, and a lot of very nice people. We kept in contact with some for years.

The next year Ruby Core's mother, Florence Ayres, came up to Hill Haven to help out for a short while, which was appreciated. We were always hoping people would check out early, so I could get the cabins cleaned before going to work at the packing house.

Meanwhile, in the second year Jim was there at the Motel each day after working for the County Parks, and he was greatly needed. Jim was always good at fixing things that had gone wrong. During the second year there, we had the big 1955 flood. It did a lot of damage, but again, the Lord was good to us. None of the cabins washed away. The flood moved the river bed quite away from the cabins, so it wasn't as nice as before. There were rocks and boulders everywhere. We decided to build five more units. The carpenters that we hired wanted to buy the place, we decided it was too much work to care for everything and the people were going to move out of our own house on Tulare Ave., which was rented out at that time. We sold the motel and moved back into our house on Tulare Ave. in May 1957. In 1961 we had the duplex unit built on the back portion of the same Tulare Ave. property.

I was always changing the house, remodeling. Every time Jim went hunting or fishing, he never knew what wall would be knocked out and replaced some where else! He always liked the results, even when he said it couldn't be done.

In the meantime we had really got to be Grandparents, which we both loved. Lee had married Norma Damson and April was born on January 27, 1955, then Jenda on April 24, 1956; Carla on December 22, 1957 and Karen on February 4, 1959. Pat had given birth to Randall on December 9, 1953; Cynthia on April 25, 1955; Larry on October 10, 1956. In a short time, we had a total of nine grandchildren, all very dear and loved very much.

On November 1, 1968, we moved to Grover City in our new home on 831 North 3rd. What a time that was. Jim had retired from the County in September 1968. I retired November 1, 1968, the same day we moved from Visalia. Several years before this, we purchased a home from Gladys & Adam located at 152 Park View, Grover City. It was used as a vacation place for anyone who wanted to stay there. We finally sold this to get our new home. What a mistake that was, although we didn't loose any money on it. But those houses are now selling for fabulous prices. But then, that makes my home more valuable also. Grover City is now named Grover Beach.

We rented the Tulare Ave. house and duplexes out for awhile after we moved here, and Jim wanted to sell the Visalia properties as it was a problem taking care of things for the renters.

Pat was having marital problems at that time, and was planning to sell their house on Vassar Drive and move into the house on Tulare Ave. and take care of the duplex rentals for us. After she filed for divorce, we decided to sell the place to her. I'm so glad that we didn't sell it to any one else.

The years here at Grover Beach have been great. I found a church where I felt at home with.

God has always been a big part of my life. I had always gone to church, believed in the bible, but had never really accepted Christ as my personal Savior. It took a long time for me to really ask God into my heart to forgive my sins and fill my life. In March 1958, I did just that and God has seen me through many hard times.

When Jim had his first problem with his heart, he was in Arroyo Grande Hospital. Pastor Larry Pitcher led him to the Lord and a year later he was baptized. I'm so grateful to Pastor Larry. I have prayed for years for Dad and family. It was easier for me when Dad went to be with the Lord, as I knew he would have a better place and be waiting for me; and some day we will all be united there. (I miss him so much).

I am always praying for my family and what a great reunion that will be. Thank you Lord for my wonderful caring family, what more could anyone need!

Jessie Florence (Wilder) Clore

The following is a poem that I learned in the first grade while still living in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma State); and I have remembered it all through my years.

LEARNING TO WRITE

Learning to read is awful, but nothing like learning to write.
I would be sorry to have you see it, for my copy book is a sight.

The ink gets all over my fingers, and the pen cuts all sorts of shines.
My fingers won't do as I bid them, and the letters won't stay on the lines.

They go up and down and all over, as if they were dancing a jig,
They are in all shapes and sizes, medium, little and big.

But my teacher says little by little, the mountain top we must climb,
It isn't all done in a minute, only a step at a time.

Jessie F. Wilder 1912

Acknowledgements

My name is Donna Leach. I am married to John C. Leach who is the son of Patty Ann (Clore) Leach, who is Jessie (Wilder) Clore's daughter.

When I read the memoirs of Grace, Bill, and Jessie Wilder on the history of the Wilder family, I was intrigued and fascinated by the stories and felt compelled to gather them into book form for future generations to enjoy. Please forgive any errors or omissions that you may find. I edited through the writing to put everything into book format. I also restructured a few sentences and corrected some punctuation in the memoirs for easier reading; but I tried hard not to take away from the creative flavor that the authors penned.

Special thanks to Jerry and Wilma Wilder for sharing copies of their photo's and documents for this book. Also, thanks to Patty Ann (Clore) Leach for her input as well.

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Special hugs and kisses to our 'Gammy', Jessie (Wilder) Clore, for being the beacon of light that illuminates so many of our lives.