Out Of The Black Patch

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CHAPTER ONE
Pictures Of Childhood

While pictures of childhood are still in my memory,
Before life’s short candle burns low and grows dim,
There’s a picture of home that must not be forgotten,
Though kept by the poor halting words of my pen.
The poets have told of old homes in Kentucky
And songs have been sung of its sunshine and rain,
But none have described the sweet home of my childhood
With half of its gladness, nor half of its pain.

—“Prologue” in Backward Glances, 5

I thought that maybe some of my children, or grandchildren, might just appreciate a story of my life. Not that there has been anything very extraordinary or wonderful in it, but one thing sure, it is different from that of any other.

My great grandfather, Benjamin Armstrong, came to Christian County, Kentucky from Greenville County, South Carolina shortly after 1800. He took up several hundred acres of land which was later divided among his several children. On one of these small divisions of land, in a humble log hut, I was born, on September 26, 1885.

I like the words of a Prophet of God who said, “Having been born of goodly parents. . . .”¹

We had a wonderful spiritual heritage, but my physical heritage was not so good. My mother had a serious case of a disease like cholera, a violent purging and vomiting, just before I was born. The doctor came, but

¹ The allusion is to the Book of Mormon prophet Nephi, quoted in the opening words of the Book of Mormon: “I Nephi, having been born of goodly parents . . .” (I Nephi 1:1).
none of his remedies were effective, and he said that it looked as if they were going to lose both the mother and the baby.

An old friend heard of mother's sickness, walked a long way, brought some hard cider and gave mother small doses of it often. She soon got all right, but when I was born, shortly after this, they said that I was a sorry specimen of humanity. Just a skeleton, and of course, mother had no milk for me because of her serious illness.

In those days there were no nursing bottles, so they fed me with a spoon, chewed food, and made sugar tits, and managed to keep me alive. I must have come out of it O.K. as they said that I walked early, though I was small. I was a scrawny child for several years.

We feel shocked nowadays when we think of grownups chewing food for a baby, but I have heard on good authority that it was about the only way that you could raise a baby in those days without a mother's milk, and without a nursing bottle. The saliva from the one who chewed the food helped it to digest.

I knew of a boy, in Utah (1913), who was sick and delirious, went for a drink, drank some lye that was in a glass above the sink, and it ate his swallowing apparatus out. They had to feed him through a tube below his throat, but it would not digest unless someone furnished saliva with the food. So I guess the chewing for the babies was sort of a scientific operation.

Anyway I survived, and if my older sisters are correct about my age when we moved to grandpa Armstrong's old place (my brothers and sisters say that I was only a little over one year old—1887) I can remember one or two happenings distinctly.

A certain rocky stretch of road leading from the house we were moving from, to the creek. We had just started out, our father was driving the team to the loaded wagon, and my mother was walking and driving a flock of geese. I insisted on walking with her and carrying a cat to boot. She endured that for a short distance, but, when I demanded the long stick with which she was guiding the geese, she lost all patience with me, jerked the cat out of my arms, causing it to scratch me, picked me up and soosed me down into a bunch of bedding in the back end of the wagon, and in no uncertain tones demanded that I shut up, which I did.

3. Sugar tits are cloths containing sugar and dampened with water, used as pacifiers.
4. John Armstrong (1803–1885) was the son of Benjamin Armstrong (b. 1778) and Jane Brasher (b. 1783). He was married to Susan Croft (b. 1807), Martha "Patsy" Boyd (1813–1853), and Drewsilla (Druscilla) Wooldridge (b. 1817).
Children know when their mother means business. This episode must have made a profound impression on my mind, as it is indelibly stamped there.

I also remember how the old house looked that we moved into. There was one big log room with an attic, and a smaller room about twelve feet from it, with an open hall between them. We called it a porch.5

Not long after we moved in my father took the old boards of the porch floor up (preparing to put a new floor in), leaving the old log sleepers standing there naked and ugly.

The old Seth Thomas clock probably needed oiling, anyway, in the night it started going squeak-squeak, squeak, squeak!6 I heard it in my sleep and dreamed it was a monkey sitting on one of those old log sleepers hollering.

I remember how my father and mother laughed when I told them of my dream. My dad asked me how a monkey looked, as he knew I had never seen one, and doubted that I had ever seen a picture of one, either. I told him that its head was like a coconut and it was a little bigger than a cat. There was more laughter, but I couldn't see the joke.

Next morning when we went out, there was an old mother cat lying under the sleepers dead, and several little kittens were trying desperately to find some breakfast. So much for my very earliest recollections.

This old log house, where my childhood was spent, was as crude and primitive as a home could be. It was the same type of dwelling the pioneers built when they landed in America.

5. Based on Effie's description and her drawing of John Armstrong's cabin, she is referring to what is traditionally known as a dog-trot house. The open hallway being the defining characteristic, dog-trot houses are sometimes called dog-run, possum-trot, turkey-trot, double-log, two-pens-and-a-passage, two-P; three-P; open-hall, hallway, double-pen-and-passage houses, or occasionally double-pen or saddle-bag houses. In his excellent study of Kentucky architecture, Lynwood Montell states, "As we now know it in Kentucky, the dogtrot house probably originated in Virginia. By 1820 it was fairly common in southeastern Tennessee through the influence of the central passage house described elsewhere. It is known in the mountains of eastern Kentucky, but it is far more common in central, western, and southern Kentucky, especially along the headwaters of the Barren and Green rivers. It is usually of log construction, infrequently of frame, but almost never of brick." See William Lynwood Montell and Michael Lynn Morse, Kentucky Folk Architecture (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1976), 21. See also Richard Hulan, "Middle Tennessee and the Dogtrot House," Pioneer America 7 (July 1975): 44-45, and Jerah Johnson, "The Vernacular Architecture of the South: Log Buildings, Dog-Trot Houses, and English Barns," in Plain Folk of the South Revisited, edited by Samuel C. Hyde, Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997): 46-72.

6. Seth Thomas (1785-1859) was an American clock manufacturer. Some of his most popular models were mantel clocks, often constructed with elegantly marbled wood. They had an 8-day, half-hour strike, with a cathedral gong bell.
Grandpa Armstrong’s cabin, where Effie lived as a child. Note the eyebrow window just below the eaves and the “dogtrot” passage through the middle. From *Down Memory Lane*. Drawing by Effie Carmack.
"Milking Time," by Effie Carmack. Oil on canvas, n.d., 11" x 14". "When we were through, we'd walk home in the twilight"; quotation from "Milking Time" in Backward Glances, p. 7. Original painting in the possession of Noel A. Carmack.

The logs were hewn out with a broad axe, notches were chopped in the ends to make them fit closer together, the cracks were filled with chinks and mud (called dobbin). The chinks and mud were usually whitewashed on the outside, and always whitewashed on the inside, making it look clean and fresh, and helping to reflect the dim coal oil lamp-light of evenings. In winter the open fireplace helped the light problem too. And in summer we usually worked as long as we could see, and were ready to lay our tired bodies down by the time it was dark.

To one who has been brought up with all the modern conveniences: bright electric lights at the touch of a switch, hot and cold running water

in the house, gas heat, refrigerators, washers that require only a small
amount of labor, candy every day, toys and beautiful picture books all
through the year, and all the many things we have today that makes life
easy and pleasant, I am sure it would be difficult for them to see how chil-
dren could find very much happiness in such a drab old home as the old
log house I have just pictured.

Somehow, though, even with all the inconveniences, with only a
very few cheap toys at Christmastime, with a little stick candy at rare inter-
vals; with the only cold drinks in summer cool water from the well, and
sometimes homemade cider, we seemed to appreciate the small things
that came our way with a keener thrill of joy than children of today do
with the multiplicity of things they have to enjoy.

In the springtime, when the grass came up, the daffodils blossomed,
the early windflowers and tiny bluets started opening along the path to
the spring where we went for water. The beauty of it all was almost more
than I could contain.

These flowers came in March with the first breath of spring. Later,
the bluebirds came and made nests in the bird boxes the boys put up out
by the woodpile. When the purple martins came it was a pretty sure sign
that there would be no more killing frost. This was usually around the
first of May. That was a red letter day in our young lives. Then we could
take off our wool petticoat and our home knit yarn stockings. They were
made of pure sheep wool, and so thick and sturdy they would almost
stand alone. I could hardly stand them when it got the least bit warm.
They always scratched my legs and made me uncomfortable. So we
rejoiced when the time came to shed them for awhile.

When shoes, yarn stockings, and heavy petticoats were off I felt as
if I could nearly fly. We raced down the smooth path to the big old
tobacco barn, climbed the orchard trees, made hickory whistles, pop
guns, and squirt guns from the bamboo canes and the alders that grew
down by the creek.

I remember every foot of the path that led to the spring that was
about a quarter of a mile west of the house. It led out between the stables
and the plum thicket, across the little foot bridge that spanned the big
gulley, across a little stretch of worn out field where nothing but sassafras

8. Windflowers are any plant of the genus *Anemone*; they are also related to rue anemone
(*Anemonella thalictroides*). Bluets (*Houstonia caerulea*, L.) refer to a delicate plant native
to the United States with 4-parted bluish flowers and tufted stems; also called inno-
cence, quaker-ladies, etc.

9. Alders are trees or shrubs of the genus *Alnus*. They usually grow in moist ground, often
forming thickets. The wood is used by turners and the bark in dyeing and tanning.
bushes and tiny bluets could grow, then through a stretch of enchanted woodland.\textsuperscript{10}

There was not a time in the year but what that woodland held some magic charm. Even in deepest winter, when the trees were loaded with snow, or the branches were glistening with sleet or frozen rain, it was a fairyland.

There were also the interesting tracks of wild animals, when snow was on the ground. It furnished us our winter wood, and the Christmas tree when that happy hallowed time arrived.

In springtime that woodland was a never ending source of delight. Early wild flowers, beds of moss, the sweet tender oak balls that grew on the young whiteoaks, the stems of the tender young hickory leaves to be peeled and eaten, the succulent young sassafras sprouts that grew slimy when we chewed them, but they tasted good anyway, and we liked them.

Then there were the dogwoods that really put on a show with their wealth of big white blossoms, the end of each leaf tipped with a little puckered up place of reddish wine color, with a center of tiny green balls.\textsuperscript{11} After the white leaves dropped off the green berries grew large and sturdy, finally turning a bright red. They then furnished dandy ammunition for our pop guns, and with a number one gun with a barrel that was long enough, you could just about raise a blister on a fellow, if you dared the risk of getting your gun taken from you for keeps.

The red bud trees bloomed about this time of year also, adding their color to the white of the dogwoods.

In the spring branch there were water dogs, tadpoles, bullfrogs, and water mocassins, which made it interesting \textit{and} dangerous. At rare intervals we would hear of someone killing a rattlesnake, and the deadly copperheads were quite common.

Blackberry briars flourished along the spring branch too, and down in the edge of the woods the luscious dewberrys grew. There were mulberry trees scattered around too.

It was in the fall of the year, though, when the woods \textit{really} paid off. There were wild grapes, huckleberries, hickory nuts, walnuts, hazelnuts, and down along the creek banks the sugar haw trees and the black

\textsuperscript{10} Sassafras (\textit{Sassafras albidum}) has long been used medicinally and has many useful applications. The oil of the sassafras contains a great deal of mucilage. It is often used as a diaphoretic and a diuretic. Sassafras is also helpful in abating fever, pneumonia, bronchitis, catarrh, mumps, etc.

\textsuperscript{11} Dogwood (\textit{Cornus Florida}, L.) is a tree with small greenish flowers surrounded by showy white or pink petallike bracts; it is well known in the southern states and has tonic and anti-intermittent properties.
Untitled, by Effie Carmack. Oil on plywood panel, n. d., 17½" x 38¼". Original in the possession of Noel A. Carmack.
haw trees thrived. The leaves would all fall from the sugar haw trees leaving only the big clusters of red haws, which were as sweet as sugar. They were clean and shiny looking, and there was nothing to prevent us from just cramming all we could hold, which we usually did, when we ran across them.\textsuperscript{12}

The black haws must have contained some magic vitamin that my poor scrawny body was starved for. They were oblong, flat and oval, and hung down from the limbs in different sized clusters. They had big flat seeds in them, but I didn’t even bother to spit them out, just swallowed seeds and all. If they ever caused any bad effects I have no remembrance of it.

I must have had a pretty good digestive system, as nothing seemed to upset me except the fresh pork at hogkilling time, when I would get a sour stomach and spit up clear grease. If I spat it into the fireplace it would blaze up a foot high. Sometimes I would belch it up on the way to the well, and when I would come back with my bucket of water there would be the big white dab of clear grease, cold and solid in the path.

It’s a wonder we lived through it. Mother nature must have foreseen that her children would not have very good judgment, and arranged many ways to help our bodies adjust themselves to all kinds of crazy conditions.

On the farm we children had never heard of parks or playgrounds, or playrooms where children have modeling clay to work with, and swings and teeter totters, seesaws and scooters. We didn’t really need them, for we \textit{had} most of these things, maybe in rather a crude form, but still very entertaining. We made seesaws of everything, and all kinds of swings.

The great washes, or gulleys as we called them, must have been a source of sorrow and regret to the owners of a farm, for they signified worn out soil, but the joy and entertainment they furnished we children would compensate in part for the loss of the soil.

We built bridges across these gulleys, made cellars and fireplaces in the sides of them. Made mills down their steep banks. We played like the dirt was our grist, and hauled it up the steps in the bank and galloped gallantly over the bridge on our sycamore horses. (We had made them ourselves.) Then we poured our grinding down the smooth trench we had made, and the coarse and fine meal was separated perfectly.

When I was alone, and no one to play with me, I would find certain places in the banks where there were great cracks where there was beautiful, moist, bluish white clay that was wonderful for modeling. Many long

\textsuperscript{12} Sugar haws or black haws are the fruit of a spring-flowering shrub called hawthorn, of the genus \textit{Crataegus} especially the American \textit{C. Coccinea}, L. They have shining, often lobed, leaves and white or pink fragrant flowers.
happy hours I have spent making horses, dogs, heads, pitchers, whole sets of dishes, and hundreds of marbles of all sizes.

Summertime brought its share of joys. When the berries were ripe, the melons and vegetables were plentiful, the peaches were ripened, and the swimming in the creek was fun.

But, there were serious drawbacks to it, too. The chiggers, ticks, and fleas; the terrible heat, when even the beds at night were as hot as if they had been exposed to the hot sunshine.

Then there were also the swarms of terrible flies, and the troublesome mosquitoes that came humming in the night, bringing chills and fever accompanied by terrific headaches.

No one in the country ever thought of having screen on the doors and windows at that time, and it had not been determined yet just what the cause of the chills and fever was. Some claimed they were caused by eating overripe melons; others thought that breathing the night air was responsible. Doctors claimed that they were caused from biliousness, and administered rounds of calomel as well as quinine. Groves chill tonic was sometimes an effective remedy, but often the chills persisted in spite of everything.13

There was one good thing; we were not easily daunted. We were accustomed to all kinds of unpleasant necessities, and took them as a part of life, never thinking of complaining, if there was no way of remedying it.

We didn't give up supinely, though, and put up with everything. I can remember when I would see the light from the old coal oil lamp suddenly appear about midnight. I would know that my mother was chasing a flea out of her shimmy,14 and if there was a cat in the house it would usually catch fury at the same time.

We burned wool rags and old shoes in a vain effort to scare the mosquitoes away. We finally learned that the smell of coal oil was offensive to them, and as that was one thing we usually had a supply of we would sprinkle it on the bed, or put it on a cloth and hang the cloth on the headboard of the bed.

Nature is a kind mother, and as far as it is possible for her to do, she builds up a resistance to those things that are harmful to our bodies; but I suppose in our case we did so many things against the laws of health that she could not possibly cope with all of it.

13. This probably refers to Grove's Bromo-Quinine tablets, a preparation for the cure of colds, manufactured and sold by Edwin Wiley Grove (1850–1927), a philanthropist and pharmacist.

We were just emerging into that period when the best of the food was being removed from the wheat, and was being fed to the pigs, cattle and horses.

When farmers fattened great pens full of hogs; killed them in the fall, and made lard, sausages, hams, middlings and shoulders; to be eaten the remainder of the year.

When the best of the food from the sugar was being refined away, leaving only a predigested dead sweet.

When it was thought that vegetables were not fit to eat unless they had been cooked several hours with a great chunk of fat bacon to season them, and when hot bread was eaten three times a day, winter and summer.

When it was the popular thing for women and girls to wear a corset as tight as she could possibly stand it, and then to swear it was not the least bit tight; and with long pointed shoes, so tight it was a misery to walk in them.

No wonder we had terrible sick headaches. No wonder we suffered toothache, and lost our teeth early in life. No wonder our eyesight failed us, and we aged prematurely.

But, despite sickness and toil, we managed to get a great deal of joy out of life. Hardships and privation seemed to strengthen our love for one another, and to make us appreciate more keenly the few joys that came our way.

It is no wonder that we appreciated the different seasons when they came. Winter arrived when we had endured the heat, flies, chiggers, chills, and unceasing labor about as long as we could. Springtime, with its turnip greens, came as a welcome relief from the monotonous diet of bread and meat, beans and molasses. That is expressing the dead letter of it, but the spirit of it was joyous and happy.

It seems to me, as I remember it now, that no one in any station of life could have been happier than we were. The long winter evenings around a roaring fire were never dull. There was always something interesting and pleasant to do. We popped corn, ate walnuts and hickory nuts, read, sang, made music, or even danced.

My father played the fiddle and there was always a guitar or banjo for accompaniment, as most of the family could play either of them. Our father and mother had both been excellent dancers, and dancing in their day was really an art, and they took a delight in teaching it to us. The Lancers, the Minuet, the Virginia Reel, the Mazourka, the Polka, the Schottische, the Waltz, and the intricate changes of the quadrilles.

Often Lelia or Sadie would read a story aloud to an attentive audience, often we would have spelling matches, or have map questions from
the geography book.\textsuperscript{15} And drawing pictures on a big old double slate was something that never lost its charm.

One thing has been a source of wonder to me. It is the way that our mother managed to do all the work so smoothly and pleasantly for the vast amount of visitors we had. There was no commercial entertainment in those days, especially out in the farming districts. Maybe once a year there was a circus in town, ten miles away. I can't even remember a county fair until several years later; so an occasional dance was about all there was for diversion in winter, except visiting in each other's homes.

There were three sisters, and two brothers, older than myself, and one brother younger.\textsuperscript{16} With good natured parents who joined in with the young folks in their songs, games, and dances; with lots of music, fun, and food, our place was very popular. But I can't remember anyone but mother doing very much of the work.

At the time none of our family belonged to any church, though we were religious in a way. We never took the name of the Lord in vain, there was no swearing. In fact, I can truthfully say that I never heard my father, or one of my brothers swear in my life. We never worked on Sunday.

Sundays we usually had the house extra clean, and we all put on our clean clothes. Mammy would part her hair in the middle, twist it low down on her neck, and put her white apron on instead of the gingham ones that were worn every day. In winter she usually wore a little three cornered shawl around her shoulders, and on Sunday it was pinned in front with a breast pin, of which there was quite a variety in those days. The cameo type, or the long jet ones, or straight gold clasp.

Anyway, on a Sunday there was a different air prevailing. Mammy would find the only Bible we had, at that time, a little thick volume whose covers were loose. We held it on for several years, and finally discarded it entirely, and just used it without covers.

There was the chapter in Proverbs (?) which has 31 verses in it. By finding the day of the month one was born in, then find that verse which corresponded in number it would tell his fortune.\textsuperscript{17} I remember that my father's read something like this: "Not slothful in business, fervent in

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15. Lelia and "Sadie" were two of Effie's older sisters.
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spirit, serving the Lord.” We all agreed that it fit him exactly. Sadie’s read: “She shall arise while it is yet dark, and prepare meat for her household.”

As a general thing we didn’t follow the custom of the farmers around us, of getting up long before daylight whether there was any work to be done or not. We usually sat up late of evenings and slept until daylight, so we pitied Sadie, that fate had decreed that she would get one of those cranks who “arise while it is yet dark.” We never doubted but that it would all come true, and we were not a superstitious family either, though many around us were seriously afflicted with it.

One thing my father would not tolerate, was to have anyone tell a spooky story of any kind before his children. If anyone started to tell something of that nature he would raise a finger and very kindly say, “Pardon me, but that is one thing that we never allow before the children.” Consequently, I grew up without fear. I had clung to a sort of religion I had, that if we are not afraid, nothing will harm us; while fear of a thing will somehow cause that very thing to gravitate to us. I was past fifty years of age before I found out by an entirely new experience that such was not the case every time, for without any thought of fear, I found myself facing terrible, menacing danger (of which I will give an account later).

Anyway, we grew up with an abiding faith in God, with a deep respect for His Name and His Word. Though sometimes we did giggle a little when we came across funny passages where the Lord threatened to make His people “stink as a dung hill” if they continued in their disobedience. We didn’t let our mother know that we giggled. We thought it was funny where Baalam’s Ass talked back to him, and where Samson set the foxes’ tails afire and turned them loose in the wheat fields.

I hardly think the Lord will hold it against us, for underneath it all we had the most profound respect for His Word.

The little old log house we moved from, when I was about one year old became the home of mama’s half brother, Uncle Lawrence Armstrong, after we moved from it. My childhood was so closely interwoven with him and Aunt Fannie that I will have to bring them into the picture to make it complete.

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18. See Romans 12:11: “Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord.” The last chapter of Proverbs does have 31 verses. Verse 15 says “She riseth also while it is yet night and giveth meat to her household.” Sadie was born on December 15, 1877.
19. It is not clear what Effie is referring to here. She may have been making reference to a traumatic experience she had later in life. She did not, however, connect this statement to any subsequent narrative.
20. “Stink as a dung hill” could refer to any of several verses, such as Jeremiah 16:4. See Numbers 22 for the story of Balaam’s ass, and Judges 15:4-6 for the foxes tails.
21. Lawrence B. Armstrong (1835–1908) was the half brother of Effie’s mother, and his wife, Effie’s aunt, was Francis A. “Fannie” Boyd (b. 1834).
At regular and frequent intervals Aunt Fannie would come to spend the day. Their house was across the creek from ours, and it was quite a long road through the cultivated fields to the creek from our place. Some of us usually spied her coming slowly, long before she reached the orchard, and I usually ran to meet her. She always hugged my head against her stomach, and to this day I can recall the nice sweet smell of her clothing. She always kept perfume or a sachet of some sweet smelling herbs in the chest where she kept her clothing.

If it was cold, or muddy, Aunt Fannie always wore overshoes, and I would have to pull them off for her and clean them.

Aunt Fannie had big pockets in her skirts, sewed on the inside, and entered by a perpendicular slit on the outside. Sometimes she would bring me some ginger cake, a piece or two of candy, a pretty empty bottle, or some odd buttons for my charm string. I remember once she brought me a piece of blue checked material for a doll dress.

Aunt Fannie’s all day visits called for a good dinner, usually chicken and dumplin’s, as she had lost all her teeth from being salivated with

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calomel. She always declared that Mammy could cook the best dinners, and wash the whitest clothes of any woman in the neighborhood.

When Aunt Fannie started home she usually wanted one of us to go home with her and stay all night. I was always anxious to go at the time, but usually got homesick after I got there. They went to bed by dark, and I would toss around on the hot bed and could not go to sleep for a while. Lots of times I could hear some of them at home singing, as they went to the well for a bucket of cool water, and oh! how I would wish I was with them. Aunt Fannie would be snoring and puffing the wind out between her toothless lips. The frogs in the nearby creek would be croaking, and in summer the whippoorwills would sit right by the doorstep and send out their plaintive call.

In the morning the homesickness would be better. There was always a good breakfast of little brown sourdough biscuits, with butter and clear syrupy pear preserves in a clean shiny cut glass preserve stand, and even if it was not an ideal food for a growing child, it tasted good.

After breakfast there was usually work to do, especially in the spring when the corn and garden was to be planted. Uncle Lawrence usually got some of us to drop the corn for him in the crosses of the furrows he had laid off, while he came behind with a drag (usually a big flat rock) drawn by old Crockett, with which it was covered.

It was my job to go to the spring for water, and as the path lay through the woods it was a pleasant trip in spring and summer. There were always wild flowers, and the slippery elm tree just beyond the spring, with peeled places where bark had been obtained for Aunt Fannie’s periodical bilious attacks. I would always leave my bucket by the spring and run and peel off a piece of bark to chew. It grew big and slippery and slimy as I chewed it, but had a pleasant taste.

23. Aunt Fannie’s loss of teeth was a sign of mercury poisoning from calomel. Today calomel is sometimes used as a laxative or fungicide, but during the nineteenth century, it was used as an aspect of antiphlogistic treatment and ridding or purging the body of excess humors. In what was called the heroic period of medicine, rural practitioners in the South administered large doses of calomel for the treatment of cholera during the epidemics of 1833 and 1873. This was widely practiced in keeping with the teachings of Dr. Benjamin Rush (1746–1813) of Philadelphia. Dr. John Esten Cooke (1783–1853), professor of medicine at Transylvania University Medical School in Lexington, was a major proponent of the administration of calomel in Kentucky. Unfortunately, it may have been a cause of more deaths than the disease it was used to treat. See J. S. Chambers, “The 1833 Epidemic in the Bluegrass,” chap. 6 in The Conquest of Cholera: America’s Greatest Scourge (New York: Macmillan, 1938), 148–79, John Duffy, “Medical Practice in the South,” Journal of Southern History 25 (February 1959): 55–72, and Frederick Eberson, “A Great Purging—Cholera or Calomel?,” Filson Club History Quarterly 50 (April 1976): 28–35.
I knew that I must not loiter long, or I would hear Aunt Fannie’s voice from the back of the house calling, Effie-e-e! Then I would dip my bucket down deep in the spring, to be sure the water would be cool, then hurry to the house, and Aunt Fannie would say, “Law me, child, what made you stay so long, I thought maybe you had pitched headfirst into the spring.”

Aunt Fannie’s face was as round as a biscuit, and she had only a teeny wisp of gray hair left, that was just long enough to come together behind and be tucked up with a little tuckin’ comb. She was neatness itself, and took a bath regularly in a big dish pan that was kept for the purpose, and it was also used to rinse clothes in.

It was at Aunt Fannie’s that I saw my first roll of toilet paper. Her brother, Tom Boyd, who was a real estate and exchange broker on La Salle Street in Chicago, would send her boxes of things for her birthdays and for Christmas. Handy things that he thought she would appreciate, and, although there was not even an outdoor toilet, there was a rail laid in the low forks of two oak saplings on the brow of the hill just back of the house; they always took the roll with them when they went.

Aunt Fannie gave me one roll, but it was never used for the purpose for which it was intended. It was used as tracing paper, to put over pretty pictures, and trace them. It was placed on the old wall plate of the attic at home with my other treasured possessions, chalk box and trinkets, and was kept for years, a roll of my favorite pictures traced carefully.

Aunt Fannie’s house was different from ours. Ours abounded in all kinds of interesting things: the quilt piece box, where I could get cloth for doll clothes; the table drawers with pencils, letters and papers; the school books, slates, and pencils; the upstairs where grandmother’s old spinning wheel and flax reel and candle molds, and many other old things from the generation that had passed on before us were still stored. Hundreds of interesting things were at home, but Aunt Fannie was one of those immaculate housekeepers who kept everything but this year’s Almanac and this week’s newspaper cleared out and burned.

There was a big old heavy Bible on the lower part of the center table (Uncle Lawrence said it was no good, as it was a Catholic Bible), but we were never allowed to touch it.

Aunt Fannie had saved a smooth white board about 8 x 14 inches, with a hole bored in one corner, and a string run through to hang it up by. This was for us to write on in the absence of a slate. When it was filled she washed it with soap and water, and it was ready to be used again. That, and two Almanacs constituted the sources of entertainment in the house. One Almanac was advertising some kind of patent medicine, and was called the Seven Barks, and had pictures of seven different kinds of dogs
on the backs. The other was full of pictures of brownies, greenies, and little pot bellied dwarfs with sharp toed shoes.\textsuperscript{24}

There was a homemade carpet on the floor, with straw under it to make it soft, and it was nice to roll on in summer.

There was always the possibility that Aunt Fannie might decide to open her chest, and show me some of the things her brother Tom had sent her, or show us the pretty "shimmy and nightgown" she was saving to be buried in. They were trimmed with Hamburg edging, and were made very nice.\textsuperscript{25}

Uncle Lawrence would laugh at her about those things, and she would get the broom after him. He would dodge with his arm above his bald head and say, "Now you'd better be careful old lady, or I'll bust a limb under your big belly." But it was all in fun. He liked to tease her, and would tell her she was a freak anyway. She had two thumbs on one hand, the second one grew out at the big joint of her normal thumb, a little crooked dwarfed one. She wore a little gold ring on it. She never had any children. They were good to us, and we were always sure of a welcome anytime we wanted to go to their place.

These following things are all stamped indelibly on my memory, as a very pleasant part of my childhood. The smell of the Balm of Gilead tree by the kitchen window, and the salve Aunt Fannie made from its buds.\textsuperscript{26} The bed of dwarf striped roses, the little cedar tree that was by the path that led out to the orchard that was always kept trimmed as round as a ball. The long sloping lawn with flat rocks imbedded on either side of the path that led down to the front gate. The storm house in the northwest corner of the yard. The steep hill just back of the kitchen that led down to the spring branch where all the rubbish from the place was thrown.

I remember one time, when I was a very small child, (I think it was when I was seven), I had been at Uncle Lawrence's for several days, had been dropping corn for him, and pulling weeds for Aunt Fannie, and was getting quite homesick. Uncle Lawrence gave me four dimes, and I felt almost rich. I kept them squeezed tight in my sweaty hand. It was early spring, and flowers were in bloom along the creek banks, but I didn't

\textsuperscript{24} The \textit{Seven Barks Almanac} was published annually in New York by Lyman Brown. Extant issues are dated between 1883 and 1919. The second almanac cannot be identified based on Effie's description.

\textsuperscript{25} Hamburg edging is a kind of machine-embroidered edging, usually on cambric or muslin.

\textsuperscript{26} The flower of the Balm of Gilead tree (\textit{Abies balsamea}, \textit{Abies balsamifera}, \textit{Mich.}, and \textit{Pinus balsamea}, \textit{Willd.}) or American silver fir was commonly used in the South as an external application to wounds. See Porcher, \textit{Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests}, 506.
stop to pick any, as I was afraid I would lose my money, and I was in too big a hurry to get home.

I had crossed the creek, and came out into our field where I could see the house and orchards and I could see the peach trees in bloom. At first I didn't know what it was; I thought they had painted the hen house rosecolored.

I ran nearly all the way home, pausing a few minutes as I passed the sour apple tree, under which I had my little graveyard. Where the dead chickens, and the bird that fell out of the nest, etc., were buried (with genuine grief at each funeral, and plenty of tears). I remember that the flowers had dried and withered, and it looked very neglected. I also remember that I thought home was the most beautiful place in the world.

They had plowed and harrowed the orchard. They had raked and swept the yard clean. Autie, my baby brother, who was just learning to walk had had his first haircut, and had his first pair of pants on.

Standing bashfully at the corner of the house was a little Negro boy with one bare foot crossed over the other. They had found him on the way from town, and not being able to find his folks had just brought him home with them. The joy of that homecoming is still a hallowed memory. Springtime was always a happy time; of course there was work, endless work, to be done, but Mammy always found time to give the old place a thorough going over to get the grime and smoke of winter cleared away.

They always bought a barrel of lime, and everything on the place was whitewashed, including the hen house and chicken coops. It is miraculous what a barrel of lime can do towards changing the looks of an old place, for a while at least. Sadie was an artist at making an old log house attractive, and a wizard at turning out work.

Etta, my oldest sister, was a cripple, caused by infantile paralysis when she was a baby, so there were lots of things she could not do.27 By the time the first blue bird appeared I would begin to tease her to go fishing with me, and it was never very hard to persuade her. Oh! the fun of getting ready, digging bait, getting hooks and lines rigged up, and selecting the proper fishing poles. There was usually a good supply of fishing tackle that the boys used, and they didn't mind us using them if we would put them back. There was always a surplus of fishing canes, as the canebrake was only a mile or so down the creek from our place.28

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27. Infantile paralysis, poliomyelitis, or polio, is an infectious viral disease that occurs most often in children and in its acute form attacks the central nervous system and produces paralysis, muscular atrophy, and often death.

28. A canebrake is a dense thicket of cane.
The fish were not very large, six or eight inches was usually the limit in length, but it was fun just to be on the creek bank and watch the little red cork bob up and down when I got a nibble; listen to the myriad of songbirds, and hunt for wildflowers. Later, when the spring went dry, we moved the big wash kettle, and the tubs to the creek, and did the washing there.

Then too, there was the task of making soap in the springtime. Mama would save all the trimmings and scraps of fat all winter, she saved the ashes from the hickory wood, and put it in the ash hopper. It was my task to carry water from the spring to run down the lye. The ashes were dampened when they were put in the hopper, just enough to rot them, and then were kept covered, to keep the rain from washing the lye out of them. It seemed to me that it took hundreds of buckets of water before the lye started dripping from the little trough at the bottom.

Mammy would test it with a feather to see if it was strong enough to eat the fringe of the feather off, if it was not, she boiled it down till it was strong enough; then she added the grease she had saved and boiled them together till it was soft soap. There was quite an art in soap making, and mammy had the reputation for being a number one soap maker.29

I have an idea there was lots of satisfaction in getting a barrel of good soft soap made, for plenty of soap was needed for the domestic shirts and drawers the men wore to work in. The chemise, nightgowns, pantalets, and other everyday underwear for the girls and women were made of unbleached muslin also. Of course the corset covers and the petticoats worn for Sunday were made of bleached domestic,30 usually with homemade crochet edging, and plenty of tucks, and often embroidered.

I was the sixth of seven children, and up until the time I was five or six years old my mother had sewed for her entire family on her fingers.31 At that time none of the clothing except the men's coats and pants were bought ready-made, although many of the boys' pants were made at home.

Mammy also carded the wool and spun the yarn and knit our winter stockings and gloves. Our parents were of the firm belief that we would

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29. The following description of soft soap making appears in Porcher, *Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests*, 135: "To make soft soap—Take ten pounds potash well pulverized, fifteen pounds grease, and three buckets boiling water. Mix, and stir potash and water together until dissolved. Then add the grease, stirring well; put all into a barrel, and every morning add two buckets cold water, stirring it well each time, until the barrel is nearly full, or mixed to the consistency of soft soap." For a description of how to mix lye in hickory potash as part of the soap-making process, see pp. 327-32. See also Andrea Burrell, "Soapmaking," in *The Foxfire Book*, edited by Eliot Wigginton (Garden City: Doubleday, 1972), 151-58.

30. Domestic is a common cotton cloth such as sheeting.

31. By hand.
have died of consumption if we had dared wear cotton stockings in the winter, and they were never discarded till the first day of May.

She usually carried her knitting with her, and every spare minute the needles were flying. It was not necessary for her to look while she knit, and the conversation was never hindered in the least.

We never bought blankets. Homemade quilts were used entirely. Mammy said that one or two new quilts, made each year, would just about replace the wear and tear of the old ones. (Etta pieced quilts)\(^{32}\)

Since I have had a family of my own I have wondered how Mammy ever did all that she had to do. I have never knit socks or stockings, and have never had to make soap. I have bought most of the covers for the beds, and I have always had a sewing machine, yet I didn’t seem to have any more leisure time than she did.

I remember one spring when she had the new bolt of domestic laid out on the bed, and was cutting out shirts, underwear, straw bed ticks, etc. to be sewed on her fingers; every seam of which was felled to prevent ripping.\(^{33}\) She stopped, propped both hands on her hips, and, as she eyed the stack of garments to be sewed she said fervently, “I wish to the Lord I had a sewing machine.”

Less than a week later a man came by selling American sewing machines. He was a highpowered salesman, and didn’t even ask if he could bring the machine in, he lugged it in uninvited. Mammy argued that he was just wasting his time, that they couldn’t afford to pay forty dollars for a sewing machine. Pappy came in, and the man asked him how he was fixed for farming utensils. He said that he was very well supplied.

“I’m sure you are,” said the agent, “I’m sure that if you needed a farm implement half as badly as your wife needs this sewing machine you would persuade yourself to buy it, whether you had the money or not.”

He also said that with that nice flock of hens he could see out in the orchard she could make the monthly payments with eggs. Papa told Mammy to get it if she wanted to. But she remembered that even with the chickens, eggs, and butter, they had hardly been able to pay the interest on the mortgage the past year. The salesman said that if they would only make a very small down payment he would leave the machine for them to try for a month, and if they could not finish paying for it he would take it back. There was no money for even a small down payment, so he said at

\(^{32}\) This and similar parenthetical notations in the autobiography are probably just reminders for a paragraph or two Effie intended to write at a later time. She refers briefly to Etta’s piecing again at other points in the autobiography.

\(^{33}\) Double-stitched with the raw edges of fabric turned inside the seam; Effie defines this term at a later point.
last that he was going to leave it anyway. He took me up on his knees and
gave me four shiny new copper pennies, told us goodbye, and left. (1889)

That was the last we ever heard of the sewing machine salesman. We
waited for him to come back for the machine, but no one came, and no
one wrote. Finally, my father found where the American Machines were
manufactured and wrote a letter telling them of the one that had been
left at our place. They answered that they had no agent in our part of the
country; so we had a sewing machine.

Our mother’s petition was answered, and that quickly, though she
didn’t expect it to come in the way it did. The joy and luxury of that new
sewing machine was unbelievable. There were hemmers of all sizes; ruf­
flers, and tuckers; it was magic.

Sadie sewed everything she could get hold of, and oh! the ruffles!
Ruffles around necks and wrists, around the shoulders, knee ruffles, dou­
ble ruffles on the bottoms of flared skirts. I was too small to be allowed to
sew. The sewing went on at a rapid rate. Sadie soon learned to lengthen
the stitches and loosen the tension so she could fairly fly up and down
those seams.

Those old sewing machines were made good ^well^,34 and up until
a few years ago (this is 1944)35 when the old house owned by my step­
mother was burned, it was still in running condition; although I don’t
suppose there were very many garments sewed on it in its last years, as my
stepmother didn’t know how to sew.

My father often said that he once thought, and argued it was right,
that you didn’t get something for nothing, but that sewing machine was
one exception. We got a good machine and four new pennies to boot.
(Autie’s and Vera’s birth before this)36

We were a sentimental bunch. I guess everyone was more sentimen­
tal, and more romantic in those days, than they are now. We used to all sit
out in the old porch, as we called it. There was usually a pallet on the
floor, an old soft comfort, where Autie, the baby had played and slept
during the day. Mammy would get two long limber twigs, bend them over
the pallet, stick the ends in under the sides, and stretch a thin plant-bed
canvas over him while he slept, to keep the flies away.

In the evening this pallet was pulled to the edge of the porch, and we
would lounge on it and the doorstep. Lelia or Sadie would get the guitar
and sing old songs. The sad ones always made me cry—“Oh Yes, I’ll Take

34. “Well” is written by hand over “good.”
35. Effie was working on later parts of the autobiography well into the 1960s.
36. Vera Alice (1891–1927) was the daughter of Effie’s sister, Lelia, and William Henry
Ferrell.
You Home Kathleen”—“The Years Roll Slowly By, Lorena”—“Ronald and I”—“The Dying Cowboy.”37

The boys were good singers. John would add his bass, and Elmo his tenor.38 Elmo would have been a good radio singer, high and low. Sometimes Pappy would get his old fiddle out and play softly some sweet old harmony.

Some of us would be washing our feet in the washpan out by the doorstep, and drying them on an old meal sack towel. Whippoorwills would be calling. Bats would be diving for insects, and the crickets would be chirping loudly in every corner.

The memory of those peaceful evenings together, after a long hard day's work is very sweet in my mind.

My father was so constituted that anything that worried his mind also made his body sick, and after a few years of crop failures, and the mortgage still hanging, he developed a serious stomach trouble. He grew thin and sad looking, and his shiny auburn hair was dry and lifeless. For months the old fiddle lay in its case untouched.39

Lelia was a beautiful girl, good and sweet, and very popular. With a plump little body that looked pretty in most anything. I remember once when there was to be a big moonlight dance somewhere (I was too small to remember now where it was), they had decided to make it a cheese-cloth ball. I’ll never forget how pretty Lelia looked when she was ready to start. The dress was made with a tight bodice, and a full gathered skirt, made long, and there were plenty of roses for her hair and for a corsage.

There was not a better dancer in the neighborhood than Lelia. There were some pretty gay fops in those days, and one of our neighbors,

37. See appendix one for more on these songs.
38. John and Elmo were Effie’s older brothers.
39. The falling prices of tobacco between 1898 and 1904 brought serious economic problems to growers of dark-fired tobacco. Overproduction, poor crop quality, and changing consumer demands, forced many farmers to take collective action toward a marketing cooperative.

On September 24, 1904, over five thousand tobacco farmers gathered at the Guthrie fairgrounds, near the Tennessee border, to organize a formal cooperative called the Planters’ Protective Association (PPA). The Association challenged the monopolistic practices of the American Tobacco Company. Devout members of the organization often engaged in pressuring reluctant farmers to join the Association, resulting in violence and destruction in the Black Patch. Hooded Association loyalists who burned the farms of resistant farmers were called “night riders.”

Walter Owen, was one of the prize winners. He wore fancy vests, tuxedos, stove pipe hats, and toothpick shoes. Walter was always scheming some new enterprise to get-rich-quick, with the minimum of labor. I can remember once when he and Carlos Owen came around with a device for cleaning feather beds; they did it real cheap; but after they left we found that the remaining feathers had only a temporary fluff to them, and when they went down there was only about one third of what was there before cleaning.

Then Walter told us about going out in his father's old worn out fields that were grown up with dewberry briars, digging them up and selling them for everbearing strawberries. He said he eased his conscience by thinking that if they cultivated the dewberries right good they just might do them as much good as the strawberries would have anyway.

The one redeeming feature about Walter Owen was his frankness. He usually told it worse than it really was. He was smart, likable, and a marvelous dancer. His whole family had plenty of sense. Mr. Nat, the oldest, was a school teacher of high degree. Miss Lizzie was also a teacher. She taught our school and boarded with us. The two younger boys had nicknames, Bunkie and Ernie. I never knew their real names. Bunkie was always inventing something. One thing I remember was a tobacco setter. Bunkie and Ernie were confirmed comedians. Bunkie was the magician who could drive a pin in a certain place in his leg clear up to the head. He could also wiggle his ears up and down.

I remember one time when we were passing their place coming home from cousin Boone's; Etta was riding a mule on a side saddle, and I was riding behind her. The boys were out in the barn and scared the mule (though not intentionally), he jumped, the saddle turned, and we both fell off, but neither of us were hurt. That's the only time I ever fell from an animal.

Mr. Nat taught a subscription school, after the free school was out, about Christmas, there being no High School in the community at that time. He taught the higher grades as a private school, each pupil paying

40. A fop is a young gentleman who is preoccupied with his appearance, clothes, and manners. Obviously, Walter R. Owen (1870–1930) qualified.
41. Carlos Owen is not listed in the 1880 census.
42. *Rubus trivalis* Michx., low bush dewberry, or creeping blackberry, was sometimes used as a substitute for more costly foreign wines.
43. Effie repeats this story of Walter's clever scheme on page 197.
44. Nat or Mat G. Owen (b. 1866). Lizzie Owen (b. 1874) was listed in the 1880 census with her brother Walter. Bunkie and Ernie Owen are not listed in the 1870 or 1880 census returns.
two or three dollars a month tuition. Sadie attended at least one spring
session of his school, and I think she boarded at Aunt Fannie's, as it was
the rainy season, and by staying there she would not have to cross the
creek which was swollen lots of times during that time of year, and hard
to cross.

I remember our spring flood that reached a disastrous climax. Cousin Elijah Armstrong was a fruit agent at the time, and was at our
place taking orders for fruit trees, grapevines, shrubs, etc.\textsuperscript{46} I remember
yet how attractive the colored pages of the peaches, apples, grapes, flow­
ers, etc. were to me, and I'm sure I was not over six years old. I think it was
in the spring of 1892. Mammy was cooking dinner while the rest of the
family looked at the books.

It began to grow dark, and the wind started blowing. As that section
of country was often visited by tornadoes and violent windstorms we were
a little nervous, but it was more of a downpour than anything else. One
that continued steadily for an unusual length of time. Soon there was a
small river of muddy water coming right through the yard. Another was
roaring down by the little stable where Pappy made axe handles, and
another between the yard and the horse lot. There was water everywhere.

After the rain quit falling we went out in the yard barefooted. There
were drowned chickens all over the yard. The coops where they had taken
refuge were standing in deep puddles with the chickens drowned inside.
The results of long hours of patient labor swept away in an hour.

From the direction of the creek there was a roar like a mighty river.
When we got out where we could see, the creek was already out of its
banks, and was away up in the fields. Papa remembered the flock of sheep
that were across the creek in a little meadow, and he knew that by now it
would be covered with water.

The table was set, the dinner was ready to be eaten, but Mammy
spread a sheet over it and told me to take care of Autie, the baby. This last
order about broke my heart. All of them were running excitedly in the
direction of the flooded fields, which had reached proportions we had
never seen or heard of before, and I wanted to go too. So I set in to get
the baby to sleep. Never did he get such soothing, rocking and singing as
he got at that time. The rain had cooled the hot air, and it was a good
time to sleep, so he was soon snoozing peacefully. I arranged the canvas
so a fly couldn't touch him, then flew to the scene of excitement. (1892)

\textsuperscript{46}. Probably Elijah H. Armstrong (1863–1954) who was married to Jean Brasher. He
should not be confused with Elijah "Lige" Armstrong (1811–1888), his father. See
The flood was filled with all kinds of floating debris. Sheep were bleating as they were being carried down on the muddy current. The folks were shouting to each other as they strove to rescue animals. It was an awful sight. The best part of our crop was under water, our daddy wasn’t well, the sheep all being drowned, and the biggest part of Mammy’s chickens were laying stretched out stiff.

I don’t believe many people realize how much little children worry over the troubles of their parents, brothers and sisters, or how seriously they think of the problems of life.

The boys had most of their clothing off, and were out in the water trying to rescue what they could. A pet lamb named Dick, who had grown so large and troublesome around the house, butting every stranger who came on the place, had been put with the flock of sheep. When he came floating down, floundering desperately to keep his head above the water, he heard someone call, “Come on Dick, come on.” He turned his head towards the water’s edge and bent his energy to reach us, and soon came close enough that he was rescued and brought safely to land. If all the others had acted as intelligently as “Dick,” many more could have been saved.

After it was all over, the wet mud bedraggled clothes were hung on the fence, and the tired hungry bunch sat down to the cold dinner. Mammy scolded me soundly for leaving the baby, and not minding her.

Everyone recounted their experiences. Mammy told how she had kept hearing the sheep bell tinkling regularly, and at last had found the old bell ewe hanging with her neck in the fork of a grape vine, still chewing as if she was perfectly contented.

All the chickens that had the least signs of life about them, and many that didn’t were brought in the house and laid on the warm floor under the cookstove, and on old rags on the stove door. Several of them that had looked like hopeless cases came back to life.

I can’t remember now that we suffered any extra want because of the loss of crops and livestock. We were used to financial calamities. Often, when they had worked all year, and made a good crop of tobacco, they got nothing for it when selling time came.47

I can remember that every bit of soil was washed away from the fields near the creek, clear down to the hardpan clay. On this hardpan were the prints of wagon wheels and horses’ hoofs. I wished it were possible for us to know who made those wagon tracks. It was probably the bed of an old road at one time.

47. See Rick Gregory, “‘Look To Yourselves,’” 286–87.
Just south of the horse lot, under the brow of a little hill, was the storm house. I have no idea when it was made, probably some of the older children know, but it seemed to me it had always been there. I can’t remember of us ever persuading Pappy to go into it, even when the blackest, most threatening storm clouds were coming up. He said that he would be more afraid of snakes and spiders in that old storm house than he would be of a storm outside. We kids enjoyed throwing old coats around us and running and piling in there. I can still remember the damp earthy smell, the piece of old homemade carpet that was on the floor, and the logs above that held up the thick dirt roof.

There were thorn trees growing above and back of the storm house, so that was one place we steered clear of, for fear of sticking thorns in our feet. I remember when John stuck a big thorn through his foot, and it came out on top. That was on the little branch that ran south from the spring.

Just in front of the storm house, in a big depression, was a big flat rock, a natural bridge. It was hollow underneath, with crevices in the rock. This was a favorite place to play, as it was usually shady there, with the plum thicket on the east bank, and elm trees on the west bank. We had a swing under the elms, and spent many happy hours there. The plum thicket was a favorite spot, the branches overlapping above making cool green shade underneath. An ideal place for a play house, and a retreat for the chickens in hot weather.

I remember one time when an old mother partridge made her nest in the thick weeds, on the edge of the plum thicket, and hatched out a brood of little partridges. If I would sit real still, I could hear them talking in tiny little languages to each other as they moved about looking for weed seed and bugs, but with the least movement there was a warning from the mother, and every little quail flattened himself among the weeds, and you’d never guess there was anything there but weeds.

Among the things that have left pleasant memories, there are none any sweeter than the walk in the garden, a hard smooth path, with flowers growing thick on either side. Spice pinks and “love in a mist.” Larkspurs, golden flax peonies, and double hollyhocks.48 The big beds of peonies were in the yard, a bed on either side of the walk that led to the front gate. On the left of the gate, as we went out, was a big clump of privet

48. Spice pinks possibly refer to small yellow or pink flowers of an aromatic shrub called a spice bush (Lindera benzoin or Laurus benzoin). “Love-in-a-mist” (Passiflora incarnata, L. or Passiflora lutea, L.) is a passion flower enveloped in finely dissected bracts. Larkspurs (Delphinium tricorne Michx.) are showy but irregular flowers of five sepals with spurred calyces. They have astringent properties and yield blue dyes. Peonies are garden plants of the genus Paeonea with large pink, red, or white flowers.
bush, and right by the privet bush was a peach tree, with deep red leaves, and white peaches. There was a flowering rose vine by the front room window, and other rose bushes scattered all over. An American beauty, that belonged to Etta, grew near the porch. It bloomed the year around, all but January and February. Etta often wrapped her apron around it to protect it from frost. Many times we have had roses at Christmastime.

Northeast of the house, and near the path that led across the field towards Mrs. Moore's, was the little old log stable; not used as a stable anymore, but where our dad made axe handles and hammer handles. There were lots of young hickory saplings on the place which were excellent for these necessary articles.

There was usually a supply of timber sitting in the corners of this little old stable, and on rainy days, when it was impossible to work in the fields, Papa would spend his time blocking out handles, or shaping them down with the drawing knife; then of long evenings in the fall, we would all help polish them down to the finished article. First with wood rasp, then with pieces of broken glass, and last with sandpaper. Papa had the reputation of being an excellent axe handle maker, and he never had any trouble selling them for $3.00 a dozen. The blocking out was a quick and easy task for him, and the polishing up process was fun for us around the fire of evenings.

Near this old stable was a big hickory tree that produced an abundance of pig nuts, as we called them, with a hard, thick shell, and small goodies that were sweet as sugar. I can remember distinctly the delicious flavor of them yet, even though it has been at least forty five years since I tasted them.

Back of the garden, which was directly east of the house, was a big persimmon tree. In the spring, its pale yellow bell shaped blossoms made a thick carpet on the ground beneath the tree, and they were heavy with honey. We would suck them while they were fresh, and had just

49. A privet bush is a shrub of the genus *Ligustrum* with small dark-green leaves, widely used for hedges.
50. Ailsie (or Allice) Moore (b. 1838) was listed in the 1880 census with her husband Marion (b. 1841).
52. A tree with hard wood and orange-red, edible fruit, the persimmon tree (*Diospyros Virginiana L.*) was often used as an "... astringent and styptic. The inner bark is used in intermittent fever, in diarrhea, and with alum as a gargle in ulcerated sore throat." See Porcher, *Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests*, 385-86.
fallen. In the autumn there was usually a big crop of persimmons, but they were not fit to eat till after it had frosted, and they became soft and mellow. Up to that time they were bitter and puckery.

I remember one time when John and I were playing under the persimmon tree, and old Bruno was chasing a rabbit up north of the house. I said, "Now that rabbit will come right down by the garden fence, and if you will hurry and get there at the corner and surprise him you can catch him." I had no idea it was a true prediction, but John hid by the corner, and just then here came bunny with Bruno right behind. John jumped out and the bunny ran right into his arms.

There is a magic charm in water, especially in early spring, when it begins to rattle and sing as it babbles over the rocks.

There were lots of cowslip along the creek banks, and when they began to bud I felt as if my heart would burst with joy. We always called them bluebells, and the name cowslip will never fit them for me. The little rosepink buds, the soft lavender as the buds grow larger, and the heavenly blue of the fully opened bell, all on the same stem, makes a combination of beauty and color harmony that is not often found on one plant. There they were before me, acres of them, and even if I took an armful, you wouldn't even miss them. I felt rich and perfectly happy.

Another thing that was so beautiful was a wild crabapple tree. The trees were usually round, and not very large. The buds were in clusters of ten or fifteen, in different shades, from delicate pink, to deep rose. They looked like tiny rosebuds, and I don't believe there is a more exquisite perfume. Often, when going through a woods, when the wind was right, we could find a blossoming tree by the perfume. Wild grape blossoms have a heavenly scent too, almost equal to the crabapple, but do not possess the beauty.

Even though we were poor, as far as money was concerned, and lived in a crude log hut, we were rich in a few things, such as a fervent appreciation for the beauties of nature around us.

We possessed a stretch of stream that was far more entertaining, as a playground, than the most expensive of parks. There were minks, weasels, foxes, ground hogs, squirrels, and even tales of bobcats and panthers, though these were seldom seen, except down where cliffs and caves

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53. These cowslip to which Effie refers are probably bluebells (Mertensia virginica); or bell-shaped flowers of the genus Campanula.

54. The crab apple tree (Pyrus coronaria, Linn. or Pyrus melanocarpa) was not used medicinally. "The fruit is very acid to the taste, and is often made into preserves. The bark, with that of the white hickory, gives a yellow dye." See Porcher, Resources of the Southern Fields and Forests, 149.
afforded hiding places. Oh! the fun of finding a grinning old possum in a persimmon tree in the fall. Then there was the canebrake, with lovely bamboo canes, free for the carrying home.

There was a big hill beyond the creek, the very biggest hill in the community, with all kinds of interesting and lovely things. Wild flowers of every kind, gorgeous ferns, mosses, flowering shrubs. Along the foot of the hill near the creek there were lots of black haws. The best things. I was crazy about them.

There were plenty of rocks and holes, that were good refuge for foxes, and Uncle Lawrence's one weakness was a fox chase. He kept several hounds, and lots of times we could hear him out on the hillside of a morning, before daylight, whooping his hounds up. We had one big old black hound we called Ponto. He was wise, and saved himself lots of running. When he would hear Old Rice, and the other hounds start a fox chase, he would sit out and listen till they came around the hill towards our stretch of the creek, and then he would go down and head the fox off before it got to its den.

I remember one time hearing old Ponto and Rattler barking for a long time down by the creek, so Papa came by to see what the excitement was all about. They had something in a hollow log. John was going to take the gun down, so I went along. Papa was chopping a hole in the log when we got there, and I was terribly excited, trying to guess what kind of animal was inside. When a good sized hole was made, suddenly a big groundhog dashed out and flew at the dogs. He was winning the fight when my dad fired a shot into him, then he gave up the ghost. I felt sorry for him. With three men, two dogs, and a gun against him, he didn't have a fair show.

There was a cave away over towards the west side of the hill that they say a horse fell into once, and its skeleton was still in there. Then there was the gar hole, a real deep hole in the creek, down towards the canebrake, that they said a big fish, called an alligator gar, was caught out of it once, and several eel had been hooked there, too. The eels were so hard to kill that pieces of them jumped out of the frying pan when it was being cooked.

According to our judgment it would have been hard to find a place anywhere more full of beautiful and interesting things than our farm was.

There were also the big mulberry trees, that were always loaded with luscious mulberries in the spring. They were so sweet and good (only in locust years we must not eat them, for they might have locust eggs on them, and then they were poisonous), and when the mulberries were ripe, the boys would take their guns and kill the squirrels that came there to eat them, which meant that we would have squirrel for dinner.

Then there was the well with nice cold water, and plenty of it. It had no cover on it, and often, there was not even a rope to draw the water up
with, if the rope was needed elsewhere. We used a sycamore hook, and let the bucket down with it. It required real ingenuity and skill to sink the bucket and bring it up full without losing it off the hook, and it sinking to the bottom of the well. Although the well was a quarter of a mile from the house we took the milk, in long slim coolers, and cooled it in the well in hot weather, and then we really did have to be careful, for if the least bit of milk was spilled in the water it would ruin it.

Then we had a big grape arbor of green and purple concord grapes. What a luxury! And then there were the big walnut trees, in the woods, up towards the graveyard, north of the house, that usually had oodles of walnuts, with hulls that were good to color yarn for our stockings and gloves. They stained one’s hands almost black in hulling season, but it wore off in time.

Then there were the big scaly bark hickory nut (hickernut) trees that bore an abundance of rather soft shelled nuts with big rich goodies in them. The old fields off to the north of us that at one time had been rich, and bore good crops, but now were worn out and grown up in blackberry and dewberry briars, free to anyone who chose to pick them, and where the cows could graze all summer free.

There were also the birds, all kinds of song birds. The purple martins and bluebirds that built their nests yearly in the bird houses we put up for them. The martins were real helpers, as they kept the chicken hawks away from the place.

Last, but not least, there were the good neighbors. To sum it all up, according to our judgment it would have been pretty hard to find a place anywhere with more interesting and beautiful things on it than our old farm. Besides, it had been grandfather Armstrong’s home where Mammy was born, and the land had been given to him by great grandfather Ben Armstrong, who was Scotch Irish, and had come straight from Old Ireland, when he was a lad of fourteen. 55

Grandpa Johnnie freighted to the Mississippi River. He hauled tobacco and other produce, and it was taken to New Orleans and traded for sugar, molasses and other things that they raised that we didn’t.

One time grandpa said that he had to think up something to do. He was scheduled to wrestle with a man a third taller than he was. A rail splitter whose muscles were strong as iron, who was working on a flat boat taking produce to New Orleans, and bringing back their commodities to trade for it, as he was.

Grandma said she knew what he could do, take his shirt off and let her grease him all over good, then the other fellow would not be able to

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55. Benjamin Armstrong (1778–1864) who was married to Jane Brasher (1783–1864).
hold on to him, and wouldn’t be able to throw him. Grandpa thought it was a good idea, so she did it, and it worked.

In a book I read about Lincoln it said that he was a champion wrestler, and never failed to throw his opponent but once. When he was working on a flatboat on the Mississippi River a fellow named “Jack (nickname for John) Armstrong,” who was short and strong, used some unfair tactics, and he failed to throw him. (The grease was the unfair tactics.)

I read another book about Lincoln that had this story in it, and a lot of junk was added to try to make it more interesting that was not true.

I was sure that this story would be interesting to some of my grandchildren and great-grandchildren, to know that their grandmother’s grandfather had wrestled with Lincoln.

It was during this time, when Lincoln was working on this flatboat, that he saw them auctioning off slaves on a raised platform, and he swore that if he ever had a chance to hit this slave trade, he would hit it hard, and he did.

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These kinds of stories are often transmitted orally and persist in multiple versions. The phenomenon of family oriented stories is discussed in Mody C. Boatright, “The Family Saga as a Form of Folklore,” in Mody Boatright, et al., The Family Saga and Other Phases of American Folklore (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1958), 1-19.

58. Effie is referring to an incident related by William Herndon, Abraham Lincoln’s law partner and biographer. According to Herndon, “a vigorous and comely mulatto” girl was receiving a thorough examination at a slave auction in New Orleans. “They pinched her flesh and made her trot up and down the room like a horse, to show how she moved, and in order, as the auctioneer said, that ‘bidders might satisfy themselves’ whether the article they were offering to buy was sound or not. The whole thing was so revolting that Lincoln moved away from the scene with a deep feeling of inconquerable hate. Bidding his company follow him he said, ‘By God boys, let’s get away from this. If ever I get a chance to hit that thing [meaning slavery], I’ll hit it hard.” See William H. Herndon and Jesse W. Weik, Herndon’s Life of Lincoln, edited by Paul M. Angle (Cleveland: Fine Editions Press, 1949), 64.
The Armstrongs were good people, and it was always a source of great satisfaction to me to know that they were noted for being kind to their negro slaves. I am thankful that I can remember seeing one of the Armstrong slaves, Old Gloss, a barber, a tall intelligent looking man with white hair. We were going to grandma Marquess' and papa teased our mother, and said he guessed she would want to stop in Crofton and see her kinfolk (an old slave). We stopped, and I remember the old negro crying when he saw mama, and he called her "Miss John Susan." She asked him about others of the Armstrong slaves that were still living at that time, and he said that Cindy was living down towards Empire. Mammy's mother died when she was three months old, and I guess there was quite a close bond of friendship and love between her and the negroes who took care of her, and did most of her bringing up after the death of her mother.

This trip to grandma Marquess' must have been when I was real small. I can't remember of ever seeing Gloss again, but I remember many other trips to grandma's, they were the mileposts in my young life. It was talked of for days before the happy time arrived. All our clothes were washed, starched, and ironed, and packed in a little yellow trunk. The work must be all caught up with. The fishing tackle inspected to see that it was in trim. A lunch, which was an important part of it all, was made ready. Mammy made luscious layer cakes, with the layers thinner than we have them now, and applesauce or coconut between the layers flavored with nutmeg and spice. There was usually boiled ham, or fried chicken. One thing sure, we always had plenty to eat, probably too much of the heavy greasy type.

If we had not been of the foraging sort, who was always scraping the woods for oak balls in early spring, the succulent stems of the hickory leaves that were peeled and eaten, the tender sprouts of the young sassafras, wild grapes, nuts, haws, huckleberries, etc., we probably would not have fared as well as we did.

If the trip was in the springtime, we would stop in certain old fields, after we reached the top of the Jane Barnes hill, and hunt for wild strawberries that were hidden in the saw briars and broom sage. They were small, but as sweet as sugar.

The short stop at Crofton was always exciting to me, as our trips to town were few and far between. It had to be a special occasion, for we children to all lumber the ten miles to the county seat in the back of a bumpy old two horse wagon.

The thought of getting to go in the stores a few minutes was a real thrill. We usually bought some candy, and I remember one time when Sadie and I bought a fan each, the kind that folds and opens out in little accordion pleats. But *nothing* could equal the joy of just getting to
Effie’s grandma Martha Pettypool Marquess (wife of Robert Elliot Marquess) at age 80. Courtesy of Itha Carmack.

grandma’s. I think our love for each other must have been a little unusual. It doesn’t seem to me that people love each other now as we did then.

When we neared grandma’s place, if grandma saw us in time, she always ran to meet us. She was a thin little woman, with white hair, but as active as a cricket, even after she was real old.

When we came in sight of the house papa would be looking, to see if he could see any of them; and I remember one time the first glimpse we got of any of them, grandma and some of the grandchildren were out in the garden, and grandma was chasing a butterfly. We had heard that she was not feeling well, and we all had a laugh. We had expected to find her in bed, and we had caught her chasing butterflies.
Pappy was her oldest child, and as she was left a widow, with several small children to support, they were drawn very close together. He would recall how he used to have to hold the candle for her in the evening so she could see to weave. He would grow sleepy and drop the candle, and she would say, “Poor Bozie, you’re so sleepy, aren’t you?”

She always took great delight in showing us all they had done since we were there last. The blankets she had woven from the best parts of the worn out wool socks and stockings. Her dried ginseng and angelico, and her herb and wildflower garden. The flowers on either side of the walk. The new quilts, the chickens, and there was always an exchange of seeds and plants and quilt patterns, and everyone talked at the same time.
In the evening there was always music. Papa and Uncle Curg both played the fiddle, and all the girls played the guitar, and Aunt Emma, especially, had a very sweet voice. Her hobby was making guitars and violins. We exchanged songs as well as flower seeds, quilt patterns, etc. How we did enjoy that and Aunt Emma’s and Aunt May’s singing.

If it was fishing season, we would all go to Pond river, camp out, fish, take the music and sing.

When the time came for us to go home, we began to dread the thought of saying goodbye, knowing it would be at least a year before we would see them all again.

Once Uncle Curg saddled his horse and rode part of the way to Crofton with us. When he turned to go back I can remember how very sad I felt. Sadie sang:

Look down that lane, that lonesome lane,
Hang down your head and cry,
Last words I heard my true love say
Was goodbye, my darling, goodbye.

That was the tap that opened the fountain and we all blubbered freely.

One glorious winter Uncle Curg built a new house for Uncle Jim Marquess, his half brother, and he slept at our place. He brought his guitar, and oh, how we did enjoy him. He was a good singer, could read notes as easily as most people read English.

We had a motley bunch of old knives and forks, no two alike, and he named them. He said that they all had so much personality that they needed names, and every name he gave them suited them exactly. There was Old Case, and Old Butch, and Stump, and Sideswipe, and Fro. There were funny stories and lots of laughter.

Pappy and Uncle Curg would tell of things that happened when they were younger, when they lived in Trigg County, till [they moved to?] Wallonia, and the names of people they associated with seemed like old friends to me. (Dr. Waller, Drew Standard)

When Mammy and Pappy were first married they moved into a house that a man by the name of Fay Tally had been killed in.

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61. Probably James “Jim” Washington Marquess (1843–1928). In contrast to Uncle Jim, Effie and most of the other musicians she mentions apparently played mostly by ear. When Effie talks about “collecting songs” and writing them down, she apparently means the texts of the songs only; they relied on their memories for the tunes.
Our father and Uncle Curg were playing for the balls at the summer resort at Cerulean Springs, near Willows. Aunt Sue was staying with mother, and one evening, after Papa and Uncle Curg had gone, mother heard someone fumbling at the side door.

There was a latch fastener, with a leather string through a hole in the door, and when someone wanted in they could pull the latch string, and it released the fastener, and they could then open the door.

When mother was left alone she pulled the latch string in so no one could open the door. When she heard the fumbling she thought either Papa or Uncle Curg had forgotten something, and had come back for it, so, as she had the baby on her lap she said, “Just put your hand through that opening and you can raise the latch.”

Whoever it was, when he heard other voices, and found that mother was not alone, he ran, and they could hear his feet on the frozen ground till the sound grew dim.

Another time, while they were living at this place, Uncle Curg had to come back for something they had forgotten. He knocked on the door and mother said, “Who’s there?” In a hollow voice Uncle Curg said, “Fay Tally.”

Mother said, “Sue, hand me that shotgun there in the corner.” Immediately Uncle Curg decided to make himself known. The joke was on him. Mama said that she really should have peppered him with a little buckshot. It was bad enough to have to stay alone every night without having the liver scared out of her, to boot.

Little Bud Marquess, son of John Marquess, of Pee Dee, Kentucky, had got into a dispute with Fay Tally over a dance that each claimed he had engaged with the same girl (Alice Proctor—her mother was Sarah Pettypool before she married). The dispute ended in a vicious fight, and Fay Tally was killed. Later, grandma Marquess’ youngest brother, William (Uncle Billy) married the girl the fight was over.

When the officers came to arrest little Bud he had skipped out, and they arrested his brother. He told them that he was not little Bud, but

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62. Cerulean Springs, some thirty miles from the Hopkinsville area, would have been too far away for a daily commute by horse or buggy. The Cerulean Hotel, near the famous blue (“cerulean”) springs for which the town was named, is no longer standing. The hotel was undoubtedly the site of these dances.

63. Aunt Sue was Tabitha Sue Marquess (1850–1884).

64. According to Mary Ann Willis of Princeton, Kentucky, this person was actually Oliver Marquess (b. 1851), son of James Porter Marquess (b. 1830) and Melinda Ryan Marquess, widow of Thomas Marquess.

65. Alice Proctor and Sarah Pettypool could not be identified.
they didn’t believe him, and by the time they learned the truth, little Bud was far away, in the west, and was never found.66

66. The accounts of the killing of Fay Talley are sketchy. However, according to Mary Ann Willis,

My grandmother Permilia Ann Boaz Childress and Frank Marquess and his entire family were very close due to age and they had the same grand-
These Marquesses were distantly related to us, but we have never found just how. Aunt Emma said that they used to go to Todd County to visit a William Kidd Marquess, a relative, father of Pee Dee Dolan, who was born in one of the cabins at old Fort Nashboro, where Nashville is now.

The first Fort was built by a Marquess in very early days, when there was not another white settlement anywhere near.67

A group of men came by from the old Wautauga settlement of East Tennessee, among them a Capt. [Francis] Nash, who married a Marquess girl, and rebuilt the Fort and called it Nashboro.68

This William Kidd Marquess, of Todd County, Kentucky, married Carlotty Armstrong, and they had a large family.69

Capt. Nash, and his son-in-law, _______ Robinson, were on their way into Kentucky for supplies and were both killed by Indians near where Guthrie, Kentucky is now.

mother. My mother d. age 101 yrs. old, know [sic] all about the killing of Fay Talley. It was Oliver b. 8 Dec. 1851 d. unknown. He shot and killed Fay Tallly at a place called Red Hill, Caldwell Co. Ky. now near the location of Boaz Cememtary [sic]. After the killing he went to my Grandmother's house and told her goodbye—He did go West and joined an Indian Tribe. Mother could not remember when he came back to see his Mother but my grandmother received word that he was back and my mother remembers Mamaw leaving her home about nine P.M. and returning about 5 AM the next morning. It took from 3–4 hours on horseback to get to Pee Dee from Mamaw's house. Mamaw told her children that Oliver had married an Indian girl and that he had brought her home, said she was very pretty and had long braids and they were below her waist. hair very black in color-her dress was long and looked like it was made from some kind of animal skin. (Mary Ann Willis to Noel Carmack, April 16, 1998)

The reason Oliver killed Fay Talley was over a pretty girl that ditched Oliver (so my mother said). Oliver took off joined an Indian Tribe therefore since Malinda [Ryan Marquess] was my grandmother’s—grandmother was the reason she sent John Frank and my grandmother word when Oliver brought his wife home. (Mary Ann Willis to Noel Carmack, July 12, 1998)

68. It has been confirmed that William Kidd Marquess (1744–1812) was, indeed, born at Nashboro in 1804. Records have yet to be found that Captain Nash married a Marquess. It is believed that he married a Moore (John Wesley Marquess to Noel Carmack, March 10, 1998). For more on the founding of Nashville, see Thomas Perkins Abernethy, From Frontier to Plantation in Tennessee: A Study in Frontier Democracy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1932), 26–32, 194–210.
69. William Kidd Marquess (1804–1890) was grandson of the above named William Kidd (1744–1812). He was married to Charlotte “Lottie” Armstrong (1808–1859). They had eleven children: Sarah Ann Margaret (b. 1828); James Porter (b. 1830); Jacob Holland (b. 1831); (male unknown) died or left home before 1850; Matthew (b. 1834); John Curry (b. 1836); Elizabeth (b. 1842); Mary (b. 1845); Jasper Newton (b. 1849); Joseph R. (b. 1852); and (unknown).
I've tried in vain to find how we are related, so far I have failed. Aunt Emma said that they called William Kidd “Uncle Billy,” but that they knew he was not really their Uncle, but a relative.

He and his wife are buried near Elton, and a relative went there and copied the inscription from their gravestones, and it confirmed what old Mr. Marquess, of Princeton, told Edna, - b. 1804 in a cabin of old Fort Nashboro.

Pee Dee, Kentucky, where John and James Marquess lived was not far south of Hopkinsville.70

Long years later, after we moved to Arizona, my brother, John, had a store in Joseph City, Arizona, and his name was out in front on a sign board. Another John Marquess (of Phoenix, grandson of our grandfather’s oldest brother, Thomas) saw the name and came to our place, next to John’s.

Sadie was there, and we had a long interesting visit with him, and found how we were related, and it resulted in several visits, and in a whole new line of Marquess relatives for my Marquess family record.

He had been a contractor, and one time, when he was working in what was to be the basement of a building, a man above him said, “How about a job?”

This distant cousin, John, said that when he looked up at him he knew the moment he saw him that it was little Bud Marquess.

He gave him a job, and they roomed together. There was never any confession of his real name, or where he was from, but he said that they learned to love one another.

Another thing that I think of now is about my mother and the burning roof. On March 1, 1883, when my brother, John Robert (Johnnie Bob), was three days old, and everyone had gone away and left my mother and the little ones there alone for a little while, she kept hearing a crackling that sounded like fire. She suddenly realized that the roof next to the chimney was on fire.

She got up, ran to the barn and carried a big old heavy ladder, took the axe from the wood pile, and climbed up on the roof and cut the burning boards out, and succeeded in putting the fire out completely. She knew that everything they possessed depended on it, and she risked her life to put that fire out. She was thankful that she succeeded, and said that there was no bad after effects from it.

She also said that when it was absolutely necessary to do a tremendous job of that kind, that she firmly believed the Lord would protect you

70. Pee Dee is located approximately 14 miles southwest of Hopkinsville. Effie is probably referring to James Porter Marquess (b. 1830) and John Curry Marquess (1836–1916), both of Pee Dee.
in doing it, but if it was not necessary, you had better be careful, “We have no promise of protection.”

Our mother was a strong, practical woman, that didn’t shrink from tackling anything when it was necessary. She was also a woman of sound judgment, and would not be found guilty of doing a rash thoughtless thing when it was not absolutely necessary.

She had, of course, first took her three day old baby, wrapped in a blanket, and laid him safely away from the burning roof, then had the other little ones watch by him till she had the fire all extinguished.

This is one of the family stories that has lived, and has been handed down. I am thankful to be the child of such a brave, practical, courageous mother.

When we would go to grandma’s, or they came to our place, we didn’t do much sleeping; of course there were never beds enough for all, so feather beds were made down on the floor, and oh! the fun we kids would have rolling and tumbling on them.

Once, when we went to grandma’s, there had been a sawmill on the creek, and we children were having a glorious time playing in the sawdust, when suddenly we heard frantic yelps from the house, “Get out of that sawdust this minute.” We wondered if there were rattlesnakes or something worse in it. When Mammy and Grandma came out, meeting us with an armful each of tobacco stems, they informed us that a bunch of hogs had roosted there all winter, and that it was alive with fleas.

They stripped us all naked, and then smoked our clothing with the tobacco stems to chase the fleas out, way down at the back of the garden.

A bunch of fleas can make life miserable for everyone in a house, and the lumps that come where they bite keep burning and itching for days, and sometimes weeks.

I remember once when Kate Miller, Maud Morris and I were playing in the gullies.71 I happened to go up on the bank for something and saw a wagon load of people coming through the big gate up at the big road. With the second look I saw that it was Uncle Curg driving. I was so excited that I didn’t go on the path to get to the house, but plowed right through a briar thicket and stuck a big briar in the knuckle of the third finger of my right hand. It broke off in the muscle, and is still there.

One of the horses they had to the wagon was a beautiful bay mare named Dilsie. Uncle Bob was with them with his new wife that we had not seen, and a tiny baby, not a month old. It was too long a trip for such a lit-

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71. Kate Miller was the daughter of Mary and Juatt Ivison Miller. Maude Morris (1886–1915).
ittle one, and she cried all night. They walked the floor with her, made catnip tea and administered all the home remedies, but no one slept very much. The jolting of the wagon had probably made her sore and miserable. Poor Aunt Bertha, she vowed she would not take her on another trip till she was old enough to walk alone. That baby girl has grandchildren now. 72

Uncle Curg had married also. A sweet, quiet girl named Ada White, and they had a little girl named Lily, a little round faced miss with dark hair and eyes, very pretty and sweet. 73 She was just learning to talk, was the center of attraction, and kept things lively.

There is a very dim memory of one of the grandmothers' daughters, Aunt Matilda, who was left a widow with three children: Alva Lee, William Robert (called Willy Bob), and Sam. 74 They lived with us for a while after her husband died, when I was very small. I remember that Sam would sing awful old Negro spirituals.

There was another Aunt, on my mother's side, Aunt Ann Armstrong Martin. She was my mother's half sister, and was also left a widow with two children; cousin Mary Susan, and cousin Jack. 75 Aunt Ann used to stay at our place quite a lot when I was small.

Aunt Ann was Uncle Lawrence’s own sister, but they were not alike in any way. I have often wondered what made the big difference in them. Uncle Lawrence used perfect language. He had a western brogue, instead of southern, he said crick instead of creek, and he never left his g’s off, as most southerners do. He had a good education, and was especially interested in astronomy. He always knew just what star would be the evening and morning stars, and just when they would change. He knew all the constellations, and kept up to the minute with all the eclipses, etc.

Aunt Ann was just the opposite. Her grandchildren used to tease her and say, “I’ll bet you can’t guess what granny did this morning, she ‘sot a hin in a barl.”’ She lived with cousin Mary after she married, and just worshipped her children. She had a lot of funny old things she would sing to them as she trotted them on her knee, like: “jing ety bung—jing ety bung.” She just about raised cousin Mary’s family, especially Otho, who was sick a lot. 76 I know now that he had adenoids. Aunt Ann watched him like a hawk, to keep him from getting his feet wet, or anything that

72. Robert E. Marquess (1871–1956) and his wife, Bertha Barnett Marquess (b. 1875).
73. Ada White Marquess (b. 1856) was the wife of Lycurgus Marquess.
74. Matilda Jane Marquess (1858–1941).
75. Mary Susan Martin (1858–1940).
76. Otho Fuller (b. 1883) was the son of Mary Susan Martin (1858–1940) and Nathan Boone Fuller (1854–1942).
might make him *snore*. She was always warning him, if we played out when it was the least bit cold or damp, "You'll snore for *something* tonight, young man." But she was as good as gold, and we all loved her, and were always glad when she came. She was especially fond of egg bread (made of cornmeal), butter, and strong coffee, and she took a *round* of some kind of purgative regularly, usually epsom salts.

I must have been about three years old when they moved to one of the old Dr. Wood houses. Bert was still wearing dresses then, boys wore dresses much longer then than they do now. I had a nice little red rocking chair at that time, and when we went to cousin Mary's they had made Bert a rocker by removing the front round of an old homemade chair, and put a low seat in the next lower set of rounds, leaving the side pieces as arms. I fell in love with that chair, and wanted it for mine so much that I could think of nothing else, so we traded, and both of us were better satisfied. They all thought that I was very foolish to trade my new red rocker for the old homemade one, but I still liked the comfort of the low split bottomed chair, better than the high narrow seated, hard bottomed rocker, even if it *was* painted red.

About this time Papa and the boys tore an old house down somewhere. An old log house with a floor that had cracks in it, through which the children had dropped things. I'll *never* forget how excited I was over the collection of things they brought home that they had found under that old floor; marbles of all sizes, buttons, pennies, china doll heads, arms and legs, tiny toy cups and saucers.

We didn't have the stacks of toys laying around in the way in those days as children do now, and we really appreciated what we did have.

I had no girl playmates when I was a small child. There were three sets of cousins, in which all of the children were boys. Cousin Mary Susan Fuller's, just mentioned. Uncle Jim Marquess' family. Cousin Narcissy Armstrong Cook's family, who lived on the farm adjoining ours, on the west. Clifton and Ben were the ones nearest my age.

Where we only visited the others on rare occasions, the Cook cousins were always near. When school started we walked the mile and a half there and back together, throughout the term of five or six months.

Clifton was one year younger than I was, but he was unusually large for his age. As an example, when he was 10, and I was 11 (our birthdays came at the same time), I weighed 60 lbs. and he weighed 160 lbs. Cousin

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77. This probably refers to Dr. Ben S. Wood (b. 1835).
78. Narcis E. Armstrong Cook (b. 1848) was the wife of Isaac Cook.
79. Clifton P. Cook (1885–1910). His brother Ben could not be identified.
Narcissy gave us a birthday dinner and weighed us. The great difference in our weight didn't spoil our friendship in the least.

We didn't visit so very often, as we children were not allowed to do very much visiting without our mothers being with us, but we made us a secret post office that was a great pleasure to us, and kept things from getting monotonous. We dug a little cellar, sank an old wooden box with a door cut in the side, made a shutter for it, and covered it over with dirt packed down so the rain could not find an entrance. It was right by the fence that separated their farm from ours. This fence was at the top of the hill just west of the spring where I went for water every day, and it only took a few minutes to run up to the post office to leave a note and to see if there was one for me.

We would exchange thumb cards (they were cards we used to protect our school books from our dirty thumbs), soda cards, and anything we might have that we thought the others would like to use for a day or two. Hickory whistles and pocket knives were two popular articles; popguns and squirtguns were on the list also. Pencils and chalk were passed back and forth, and once or twice we left candy, but the ants found it, so that was out. Dancers made of half a spool, with a sharp spindle in the hole of the spool, was a favorite.

There was a chinquepin acorn tree on their place. The acorns were sweet as sugar, and Clifton would leave little sacks of them for me in the fall, and gooseberries in the spring.

When school started in July, the Cook boys would “hee hoo” as quick as they would get to the west corner of our field, and by the time they had gotten to the east corner where the cutoff path crossed the fence we were usually there to go with them.

I still remember every little crook and turn of that road to school. I can remember where every wild grape vine grew, the crabapple tree, the wild plum tree, near the old Hubbard Steward house, across the branch at the foot of the hill just back of cousin P. Armstrong's, where they said the deer used to come to lick salt. I think it was at this salt lick that grandpa Armstrong wounded a big buck, and then had quite a fight with it.

The spring, that supplied the school with water, was in the woods, northwest of the Hubbard house. It was in a cool shady wood, with the friendliest little atmosphere about it. I have lately learned that it was the

80. The chinquapin tree (Castanea pumila, W.) sometimes attains a height of thirty feet. The fruit is edible, much like the chestnut.
spring near the house of great aunt Peggy Armstrong Lindley (grandpa Armstrong's sister, who married Jonathon (Jot) Lindley).\textsuperscript{82} Their house stood at the upper end of the clearing just back of the Hubbard house. The remains of the old chimney is still there, I guess.

That was the childhood home of cousin Parthenia Lindley Ferrell (who married Alec Ferrell), and cousin Jane Lindley Brasher (who married Larkin T. Brasher, the lawyer—parents of David, Mollie, Carrie, and Minnie, etc.).\textsuperscript{83} I think this was on land that great grandfather Ben Armstrong once owned, and divided out among his children, but at that time I knew nothing of it.

Clifton and Ben and I were of the fourth generation from great grandfather Ben.

The fields, where the slaves had worked, were worn so thin they would not produce crops any longer, and were lying idle. Many old homes, where the second and third generations had flourished, were torn down, but a few, our old home included, was still in use.

Clifton's mother, Narcissy, was a granddaughter of the emigrant Ben, and they lived at his old home place, though the original home, the three story log mansion, with the giant fireplaces, that were so famous, was burned before my time. Some of the log cabins, that were the slaves quarters, were still standing, and part of them were used for stables for the cows and horses.

Cousin Ike, Clifton's father, was one of the most prosperous farmers in the community.\textsuperscript{84} He had the finest horses, and the best hereford cattle around, and always had money to lend. He had fought in the Civil War, and I think he drew a pension. He drank quite a bit, but the family didn't seem to mind it much. I thought it was terrible, and asked Clifton once if he didn't hate for his father to come home drunk. He said no, he didn't mind, that he was pleasant when he was drunk, and would tell them interesting things that happened during the war, that he wouldn't tell when he was sober.

The old gooseberry bushes, raspberry vines, pie plant, and walnut trees, and the well of cold water on their old place had all survived from pioneer days. Greatgrandpa Ben, and his good wife, Jane (Aunt Helen said they called her Aunt Jean, she was French), had planted them when

\textsuperscript{82} Margaret "Peggy" Armstrong Lindley (b. ca. 1806) and Jonathan "Jot" Lindley (1807–1884).

\textsuperscript{83} Parthenia Lindley Ferrell (1782–1824). Larkin T. Brasher (1840–1912) married Jane Lindley (b. 1846) on December 3, 1864. Their children were: David Romelus (b. 1866), Vic. (dates unknown), Mollie (b. 1868), Carrie (b. 1874), and Minnie Isabel (b. 1876), Omie (dates unknown), and Lark (dates unknown).

\textsuperscript{84} Isaac Cook (b. 1841) according to the 1880 census.
their family was young. We often went up on the hill, west of the house, to
the graveyard, where these two were buried. Someone had cut giant slabs
of rock, and had made a kind of vault for each of their graves. They were
buried in a pretty place. The ground was smooth and mossy, with giant
oak trees for shade, and lots of wild flowers bloomed there every spring.85

They must have been quite an enterprising couple, judging from
the things they have told me of them. He burned all the bricks for two
giant chimneys himself, he and the slaves. Cousin Filmore Smith, one of
Ben’s grandchildren, said there was brick enough in either chimney to
have built a small brick house.86 There were fireplaces in each of the
three stories, and the ones in the big rooms on the ground floor were
wide enough to hold logs six or seven feet long. He owned many slaves,
and was noted for being kind to them. Some of his neighbors, who beat
their slaves, could never figure why Armstrong could get more work out
of his slaves than they could from theirs. Even when he went to town they
doubled their efforts just to surprise him when he got home.

I have heard glowing tales of the good times at Thanksgiving and
Christmas time, when all of the children and grandchildren on the
adjoining farms (that had been given to them from the original tract)
were all invited home for dinner. There was a table that reached the
entire length of the big old combined dining room and kitchen. Cousin
Fil said that there was a pantry as big as a corncrib, where Negro Lize, the
cook, stored the good things she prepared for these occasions; boiled
hams, salt rising bread,87 stuffed hens, cornbread, pumpkin pies, puddings,
and all kinds of good things.

Cousin Elijah Armstrong,88 one of the grandchildren who still lives
in Hopkinsville, and has served his county seat in many ways (Chief of
Police, City Commissioner, and other capacities) was left motherless
when a tiny baby, and the Negro mammy, who raised him, let him have
milk from one breast, and left her own little picaninny with one. He said
that had caused more fights in his life than any other one thing. The boys
would tease him, and tell him he was part nigger, because he was raised
on nigger milk.

All of this happened at the place where Clifton and Ben lived. They
had four older brothers; Ed, Bob, Charlie, and Jim; all of them were

85. The Armstrong graveyard, to which Effie refers here, is located: “From Hopkinsville at
intersection of 68E and 91 NW go 5 miles turn right, go 2.2 miles turn right and go 1
mile, the cemetery is on the left by the barn.” See Meador, Cemetery Records, Northern
Section of Christian County, Kentucky, 18.
86. J. Filmore Smith (1854–1942).
87. Bread leavened by means of a fermented mixture of milk, salt, flour, sugar, and soda.
88. See above, note 46.
unusually big. Cousin Narcissa was tall, and weighed between three and four hundred pounds. I think Clifton reached the five hundred pound mark before his death, which was caused from taking medicine to make him reduce.

He had numerous offers by circus men, but was not inclined that way. They were all good scholars. Ben became County School Superintendent. Cousin Bob was one of the best teachers I ever had, and he later was our representative in the Legislature.

I remember an incident that happened when he was teaching; it was in the old log school house, with the long plank benches without any backs, and one big desk up in front. The cracks between the logs were chinked and daubed, with boards nailed over the chinking inside. One day a child, who was sitting next to the wall, heard a slight movement behind the board, about even with her head. Through a crack she could see a monstrous snake moving along. She let out a war whoop, and for a while there was wild disorder, till cousin Bob found the stove poker, pulled a board off, and then plunked down on the floor a writhing mass of chicken snake about six feet long. After it was dead he held it up by its tail with his hand out about level with his head, and its other end touched the ground, and he was a very tall man.

Another thing that happened while he was teaching; we were having a game of baseball, the girls against the boys. I was on first base, and someone at the bat knocked a fly. A boy caught it and threw it to me, but threw it too high. I jumped up to catch it just as the runner scooted into the base, knocking my feet from under me. I hit my mouth on a rock, knocking an eye tooth through my upper lip, and knocking me unconscious. When I came to cousin Bob had me laying across his lap, and he was washing the blood away with his handkerchief, and saying, "Now they've just killed my poor little girl." There's a hard lump in my lip yet, after fifty years.

Other games we played were: bull pen, fox and hounds (Sadie, Elmo, and Bunkie Owen were the champion runners), bear, in which we made a circle in the dust with a stick, all of us but one, who was the bear, got in the circle, and the bear on the outside tried to touch us without getting inside the line. A very simple game, but we managed to get a lot out of it. It was a wild, pushy, pully, scramble to all of us to keep on the other side of the circle from the bear, who dashed madly around on the outside. 89

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89. In the game of Fox and Hounds, one child plays Fox and the rest play the Hounds. The Fox leaves a trail of paper or broken twigs in the woods long enough for the Hounds to know which direction he is going. Once sighted, the fox must return to the den without getting caught. For more details, see "Fox and Hounds," in The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Toys & Games, edited by Linda Garland Pace and Hilton Smith (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 15. These games were common among young school children of western Kentucky. See Bernard Bolton, "Folk
“Elija Armstrong, son of ‘Uncle Lige’ who was brother of my grandfather Johnnie Armstrong.” He was, for a time, chief of police in Hopkinsville, Kentucky. Courtesy of Itha Carmack.

Another thing that kept we girls busy at recess periods, especially before it turned cold, was our playhouses. Some were on the hill above the school house, and others in the bed of the dry stream that was just south of the school. In spring, during the rainy season, it was a good sized

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stream, but it seldom rained during the autumn months and it was a clean swept stream bed, with trees on either side.

On the hillside we swept clean paths through the carpet of leaves, put rocks on either side, and made charming roads from one playhouse to another. We made leaf hats with streamers that reached to our heels, and trimmed them with lots of flowers. We made dressers and chairs, of rocks with moss on them.

Then sometimes we had climbing streaks, and for weeks we did nothing but climb trees. We would bend the slim hickories out, and as they were real springy, we would hold to the top and jump. With a good one we could jump ten feet in the air. It was lots of fun, only sometimes we would catch the top and swing out, but it wouldn’t bend close enough to the ground for us to turn loose; then what a strain on muscles and nerves, to somehow manage to get back up, to climb down again, the way we went up. Our mother was bitterly opposed to climbing, as we were always tearing our clothes. But it was hard to resist.
There was a long log in the school yard, that we sat on while we ate our lunch. Our school lunch usually was biscuit and bacon or ham sandwiches, with a glass of molasses; or blackberry jam and butter, a bottle of milk each, with gingerbread, or occasionally halfmoon fried pies for dessert. Apples or peaches were put in to eat at recess. The violent exercise gave us good appetites, making the plain food taste good.

We tried to manage to go to the spring for water during "books," so we would have the recess periods to play. Two of us usually went. In the old fields, that we had to go through before we reached the woods the spring was in, there were tiny "catbells" growing in the grass. They were seedpods not quite an inch long, very dry, with seeds that rattled unusually loud. We would leave the path, wade out through the grass and weeds, and hunt catbells.

There were "last rose of summer" blooming in that old field, too. A sturdy plant, with a bunch of pretty pink flowers in an oblong cluster. They seemed to all blossom at the same time, and they came when most other flowers were gone. Just they and the golden rods were usually left.

I can shut my eyes now and just smell the nutty flavor the wind had in its breath, when it came across those old fields. Fields where my ancestors had cleared the land of its virgin timber; plowed, planted, toiled and harvested. Then, like the owners, were worn out, and were lying idle, dreaming. Now, (1944), those old fields and hillsides have all been reclaimed, the soil built up, and good crops are being raised on them once more. A highway has also been built.

There were myriads of songbirds along this way to school, and we used to try to mimic them, and put into English what they were saying. Lawrence and Worthy Smith (other great-grand-children of Ben Armstrong), went a part of the way with us. Worthy didn't like school, so she thought one specie of bird was always suggesting, "Quit Worthy, Quit Worthy," and that another said, "I wouldn't go Worthy, I wouldn't go." One clearly said, "Pharmaceti, Pharmaceeta, Pharmaceeta." Another called, "Dick Taylor." Still another one said, "Peetab, Peetab, Peetab."

The red bird, with his top-knot, would get in the very top of a tree, and sing in the rain. Two clear notes like we whistle to the dogs, followed by three short ones, "Whuet, Whuet, tew, tew, tew." There is no way of mimicking the song of the blue bird or purple martin, the friendly birds that came in early spring, and liked to build in the bird houses we put up for them.

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91. In her senior years, Effie apparently intended to record these bird mimics for her posterity. See appendix two.
The martin was the ardent love maker. He could talk in the sweetest language to his modest little mate. How happy we were when the first ones came to the bird boxes in the spring.

There was a season in spring of forced idleness, when it rained for weeks at a time. The men were anxious to be plowing, and mammy was in a hurry to get something planted in the garden, but nothing could be done while it rained. It was the time of year when it was almost warm enough to not need a fire, and a little too chilly and damp to be without one.

I can remember wrapping mammy’s big old soft woolen shawl around me and sitting in the door while it rained. Watching the water dimple and splash, as it dripped from the eaves into the little ditch that the years of rain had made. There was ground ivy that grew right against the house, and covered the rocks that were the foundation.

I must have been somewhat of a dreamer. I can remember sitting in the dusk, on the stair steps, where they turned to go upstairs. There was a door, to shut out the heat, and the cold, from the upstairs rooms. I would close the door, and sit there alone, and just think and wonder about things. I remember thinking of the different names of Deity, and wondering just how many there really were. There was Lord, and God, and Jehovah, and Christ, and Jesus. It was a puzzle to me, but I was not brave enough to ask anyone about it.

I can dimly remember going with Mammy to see Grandpa Armstrong (I guess it was) when he was sick. It was muddy, and she carried me to the door and sat me up in the door while she cleaned her shoes. Grandpa was on a bed to the right of the door, and the window was darkened. I was afraid, and bawled till she got her shoes cleaned and took me.

Aunt Helen Gilliland Marquess, daughter of great aunt Eliza Jane Armstrong Gilliland,92 said that greatgrandma Jane had a child born when she was sixty years old. She said that she knew it to be the truth. She remembered hearing a relative say that she went to see her when the baby was first born, and grandma Jane said, “Isn’t this something? Me laying here with a new baby, and my hair as white as snow.”

But, I have never been able to find the name of the child, or real proof that it was true. I do wish I could. The census records are not much help until 1850 and after. But Aunt Helen says that she knows it was true. If it is true, I never knew of anyone else having a child born to them at that age.

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I have wished that I could have known Grandpa Armstrong. Mammy called him Pap. He was a strong, short man. Shorter than most of his brothers, and they called him Runt.\(^{93}\) His father’s nickname was Britt.

I can remember Uncle ‘Lige (Elijah) Armstrong, Grandpa’s brother (he was tall).\(^{94}\) He is the only one of them that I can remember seeing. We went there once when I was almost a baby. Mammy helped the womenfolks cook dinner, and I played out in the yard where Uncle ‘Lige was sitting in the shade of a tree. He took me on his knees and talked to me. He was a kind, gentle man. Their house was on a hill, east of our place, and we could see it from home. A big, nice, lumber house. There was an old log house, just back of it, that was probably the first old home. There was a distinguishing feature about this old place, or rather two of them. There was a big old apricot tree just back of the house, and a spanish dagger just outside the front fence. They called it a century plant, and we were under the impression that it only bloomed once in a hundred years.\(^{95}\) I have no idea where they got it, but it and the apricot tree were the only ones I ever saw when I was a small child. There was a Passion Flower vine there too, the only one I had ever seen at that time.

Between our place and Uncle ‘Lige’s, was our nearest neighbor, Marion Moore, and his wife, Ailsie, and one son, Eddie.\(^{96}\) They had a dark little log house, settled down among some big old gloomy cedar trees, and there wasn’t a sprig of grass in the yard. The house itself had a sort of mysterious charm. There was a front room, on the east wing of the house, with the floor a foot lower than the rest of the house, so that they stepped down into it. She had a deep padded carpet on the floor, and kept the blinds pulled down all the time. I don’t know why, as the only window was on the north side, so there would have been no danger of the sun fading the carpet. I was never in this room more than half a dozen times in all the years that we lived by them. I recall the musty odor that was always there.

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93. This John “Runt” Armstrong is Effie’s grandfather, John Armstrong, who was believed to have wrestled Lincoln. See pages 60–61.

94. Elijah Armstrong (1811–1888), son of Benjamin and Jane (Brasher) Armstrong, owned about 415 acres in the Hamby Precinct. His wife was Cinderella C. Hamby (1825–1864), daughter of Philip Hamby and Jane Croft. He was the brother of Eliza Gilliland, and John and David Armstrong. See William Henry Perrin, ed., County of Christian, Kentucky: Historical and Biographical (Chicago: F. A. Battey Publishing Co, 1884), 557, and Meacham, History of Christian County, 436–37.

95. A Mexican fleshy-leaved species of the *Agave* genus (*Agave Virginica*, L.) commonly cultivated in North America. It flowers only once and then dies. The thick leaves of this species contain a juice with laxative properties.

One thing that charmed me, above all others (in that house) was a life-sized painting of a young girl, which stood on an easel in one corner of this room. It was the first hand painted portrait I had ever seen. It must have been good work, it certainly charmed me, and when I got a chance I gazed in awe and wonder to think that anyone could make a picture look as much like life as that one did. The details are dim in my mind now, but there was the small waist, and bustle, lace and ruffles, and bangs.

There were lots of mysterious things in that room, but we never dared touch a thing. Just to get to go in there and sit awhile was almost too good to be true.

Once I went with my family to a *musical* in this parlor, as my father was one of the main performers. I think Sadie played the guitar, and Pappy the fiddle. The music charmed the cat, that probably had not heard music before, and they could not keep it out of the room. My father told them to let it alone and see what it would do. It climbed up on the back of his chair, then onto his shoulder, and looked right down at the fiddle while he played, causing a lot of uproarious laughter.

Eddie, their son, was about the age of the older children of our family, with a long face like his mother. A face that was a bright red, and one of the sharpest noses I ever saw. But he was a good kind fellow with plenty of sense, and a good education. He was a good singer, and could read music.

It was at this place that I saw my first Sears, Roebuck Catalog. The first ones that came out cost money. I can’t remember how much, fifty cents I think, but anyway we didn’t have one until they became free. Eddie’s last year’s catalog, when they got through with it, was one of my prized possessions.

*Miz* Moore saved her seed catalogs and soda cards for me, too. She always bought the big boxes, that had the big cards in them. They came in series; first animals, then flowers, and last birds. I still have some of the bird pictures, but none of the animals or flowers.

Another thing that charmed me was the glass bowl of an old coal oil lamp. The burner had been broken, and she used it to put buttons in. All kinds of buttons. I would have given most anything to have poured them all out in my lap, and looked at all the many different kinds of buttons it contained; but she was rather stern with children, and I never dared to ask her. Remembering that bowl of buttons I have always kept a glass container of some kind with buttons in it. If any child seems interested, I ask them if they wouldn’t like for me to pour them out in a pan or a box lid, where they could see all of them. They usually enjoy it.

Not long ago, when I was browsing around in an old curiosity shop in Los Angeles, looking for an old book, I ran across a big old carpet bag with about two gallons of buttons and beads of all descriptions in it. I bought it, and gave it to my grandchildren, who were living there at the
time. Violet said they and the neighbors’ children amused themselves most of the time, during that winter’s evenings, sorting those buttons, and sewing them on cards and classifying them. It has furnished buttons for the family ever since.

And now, to return to Moores, our neighbors. Every evening, rain or shine, summer or winter, as soon as they finished their supper, Eddie came whistling across the field to our place. He didn’t stay long; exchanged the news of the day, mentioned what he had read in the papers (he was a great reader, and took several papers and magazines), spoke of the trend of politics, or neighborhood gossip, and at dark would suddenly be gone. He became a part of the evening landscape. One evening, as he was sitting with his chair propped back against the wall, I drew a side view sketch of his face. It looked like him, only more homely, maybe, the nose a little sharper. It’s the only time I can ever remember of him getting mad. I felt real bad, as I certainly didn’t intend to hurt his feelings.

While I was still a very small child, a very tragic thing happened. A mad dog came through our neighborhood, and bit one of Mr. Moore’s milk cows. At that time there was no remedy for hydrophobia, at least not close enough to be administered to a cow, so all they could do was wait and see what the results would be. In due time she went mad, and then people came for miles to see the mad cow, before she died. She would run till she could hardly stand, and then bawl and bawl till she was exhausted. She would plow her horns into a bank, and paw and snort. She really lived up to the name of a mad cow. I remember how horrified I would be, to wake up in the night and hear her bawling and bawling. If anyone went near the fence, she would run up to it and stand there panting, with her nostrils spread, and the foam running from her mouth. I was awfully sorry for her.

That, and the tree falling on Bruno, our dog, were the two worst tragedies of my early childhood. The men were in the woods cutting timber for something, and Bruno got in the way of a falling tree, and it hit across his hips. We, at the house, saw something peculiar looking coming down the road from the big gate to the house, a funny little bundle of yellow and white toddling slowly along, not the gait of a dog at all. As it came nearer, we saw that it was Bruno, walking on his two front feet, his hind end balanced up in the air, both hind legs dangling loose, and broken all to pieces. We were so sorry for him, and hurried to get a piece of old quilt for him to lay on. Pappy came in a little while, made some nice splints, set the bones the best he could, bandaged it up good, and for weeks Bruno walked on his front feet, till the broken hips and legs were well.

Bruno lived for several years after that. One day he treed a squirrel up in the woods. Cousin Ike Cook had a bunch of young dogs, just about
grown; big yellow fellows, two of them were named Chump and Sharp. I can’t remember the others, but anyway, they heard Bruno barking, went where he was, and killed him. We were so sad. It was the greatest sorrow that had ever come into my life, at that time. After he was dead I would imagine I heard him scratch at the door, and whine to be let in, and the tears would start afresh.

No other dog could ever fill Bruno’s place. We owned several others. Old Rattler, who would fight at the drop of a hat. Ponto, the hound, who would listen to the fox chase, wait till they were coming around the hill southwest of us, and would then go down and head the fox off, before he got to his den. He believed in saving himself. Then there was beautiful Joe, who would go away for a year at a time, and then come back, so proud to see all of us again that he was almost beside himself with joy. But he never stayed long, and we never knew where he went.

Then for one short season we owned a greyhound, but not long enough to get very deeply attached. That constitutes all the dogs that I can remember of us owning.

Bruno stands out above all the others, though the smallest of any, he was the most intelligent. He would go with me in the evenings to find the cows in the big old Dr. Woods fields. I think that these uncultivated fields was land that Dr. Woods had taken as payment for doctor bills, from people who had nothing else to pay with. There were two or three old abandoned homes on the land. These fields furnished pasture for our cows, and they had big patches of blackberry briars, where we picked our berries in summer (there was no one who cared).

It was often hard to locate the cows if they were lying still, in the shade somewhere. The old fields and woods, where they grazed, were wide and lonesome, but I was not afraid if I had Bruno along. In some places the weeds grew high, far over a little dog’s head, but he would run and jump up where he could see over the weeds. He would run far ahead of me looking in this little stretch of woods, and then down another way, and would almost always find them.

If there was a horse in the stable, I would ride. Old Felix, a slim sorrel with white feet, was not much of a work animal, and was used for a saddle horse. It was fun to go for the cows when I could ride Felix. He and Bruno enjoyed racing across the smooth level old fields, past the graveyard, that was just in the edge of the woods, on towards the baseball grounds, where the men and boys of the neighborhood played baseball on Saturday afternoons.

If the horses were too far away in the pasture, and I had to walk, I started earlier, and went by the graveyard. It was called the Armstrong graveyard, and was a pretty place at that time. Many of the graves were a solid carpet of myrtle. There were other pretty flowers that had grown
wild down in the woods. The myrtle had myriads of blue flowers, and often I have taken a needle and thread and made long wreaths of these blossoms.97

The first funeral I can remember was that of Hosea Simpson's wife.98 The mourners made a terrible impression on my mind. The two daughters were grown young women, Lulu and Lizzie.99 I have since learned that this mother who died was William Ferrell's sister, daughter of my mother's half sister, Kezia Boyd Ferrell.100

But there! I had almost forgotten my cows. I think I was on foot, if I remember right. If they were very far away, and I was very tired when I found them, I would ride old May back. She was a lanky red cow, very gentle. Her back hips made a perfect saddle with my face turned to her tail instead of her head, so that's the way I rode. Her tail was pulled up to have something to hold on to, and to serve as a sort of guide, which I could twist to the right or left. Sometimes one of the cows would give the others a wink, and off they would all go in a full gallop. It was pretty rough riding, but I can't remember ever falling off accidentally.

There was a little wide spreading dogwood tree, down by the milk gap, whose top was one solid mass of grape vines, forming a complete umbrella. After the calves had their supper, and were drug away to the calf pen, I was free to climb trees, or do anything I chose to do. That little old dogwood had been climbed so many times that the limbs were worn slick as a button. The memory of that milking place, the low spreading dogwood with its canopy of grape vines, the walk home with my mother when the milking was done, the clear view of the sunset sky across the old fields, the talks as we walked slowly home in the twilight, has left some very sweet impressions in my mind. [See the painting on p. 35].101

< I think I wrote somewhere that Sadie said that she and Lelia and Etta wore linsey dresses in winter. I was not sure about the spelling and looked it up in the encyclopedia, and it said it was called Linsey-Woolsey, because it was woven of half linen and half fine woolen thread, making a nice warm linen and woolen cloth suitable for warm winter dresses for children, and for other purposes.

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97. See page 90 for another description of this gravesite.
98. According to the 1880 census, Hosea Simpson (b. 1839) was married to Louisa (b. 1834).
99. Luretha "Lulu" (b. 1870) and Lizzie Simpson (b. 1868).
100. This seems highly unlikely considering William Farrell (1863–1938) was nearly thirty years younger than Louisa Simpson. Kezia Jane Boyd (1830–1879) was married to Obediah Henry Ferrell (1824–1871).
101. Effie repeated the following section in triangular brackets almost verbatim near the conclusion of the autobiography. See epilogue, note 78.
I like for my older sisters to tell me about their childhood, and their
first schools, etc. (Mother said that Lelia walked when she was seven
months old. ) Lelia says that she started to school when she was five. She
didn’t want to go, and mother took her part way, and carried Elmo, a big
heavy baby.

When mother started back home Lelia jerked her hand away from
Etta, who was leading her, and ran after mama, so mother sat Elmo down
in the path and took her the rest of the way to the school house (not very
far) and set her over the fence and told her to stay there.

Lelia said that she was mad at mother for leaving the baby alone.
She was afraid that some sheep, that were near, would come and hurt
him. She said that she screamed, and told mother that when she got
home she was going to make our dad whip her, but she stayed, and after
that she was willing to go with Etta.

There was another little girl in school who had been born the same
day Lelia was. Her name was Annie Stewart.102

The school house was a log room with a fireplace and chimney. It
had been a blacksmith shop, and it was across the road from cousin
P. (Philip) Armstrong’s place. They sat on puncheon seats (a log split in
half with a broad axe, and holes bored in each end and legs put in the
holes — see picture). [This picture is not included here.]

Henry Durham (later a doctor) was her first teacher, he was nine­
teen years old.103 They studied in a “blue-backed speller” (I have one), and
they made them study aloud. It was called a “blab school.” There were only
two benches, long ones, sitting slaunchways in front of the fireplace.
Cousin Pairlee Croft was her next teacher (grandfather Armstrong’s first
wife was Susan Croft).104

Lelia says that grandmother Marquess wove linen cloth, and she has
seen some she wove.

Lelia says that our mother didn’t have a cookstove till about the
time that I was born. She can’t remember whether just before or just after
(1885). This shows the marvelous changes from my mother’s time, and
even from my birth, to the present time.

We had little bullet molds, and I have molded lots of bullets, one at
a time. I liked to do it. I felt important, and they used them.>

I had a deep and abiding interest in my sister’s beaux. I was most too
small to remember Lelia’s first ones. I know that she and Lewis Hamby
were cronies in their school days, and Lawson Causler [Cansler] came reg-

104. Pairlee Croft (b. 1857).
ularly for a long time. There was talk of a wedding, but Lawson got sick and the doctor ordered a change of climate, so he went west for awhile. While he was gone, William Ferrell, with a pair of shiny boots, a black moustache, a banjo, a wide hat, and a dashing saddle horse, rode right into Dawson’s [Lawson’s?] warm place, and camped there. Mammy didn’t like it, she didn’t have anything personal against William, but she said that they were too closely related, and she would never be happy if she married him.

Mammy was a quiet, peaceable soul, usually agreeable with most anything. She put up with poverty and hard work without a murmur, but

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105. Louis B. Hamby (b. 1872), according to the 1880 census, and possibly John or James Lawson Cansler.
when Lelia told her she and William were going to be married, I saw another side of her that I had never seen before. She cried, begged and pleaded with Lelia to wait a while before she decided. She told her she would rather see her dead and in her coffin than to see her marry him, but it all fell on deaf ears. They were soon married, but they were never suited to each other. Their dispositions were entirely different, and she endured much unhappiness in her life with him. However, they raised a family of fine children, good and intelligent. William loved his children, and he was a good father to them. But he and Lelia clashed continually.

I was a little child of four or five years when they married, and William was my pal. He would make dancers for me of empty spools, and would show me lots of little tricks; how an Indian pinches, how to feed a crow. He would pretend he was cutting my ear off with the back of his knife blade, and make an awful face at the blood. He could knock off tunes on the old banjo, and played with my dad for dances. He was a good dancer, wore pretty shoes, and kept them shining till you could see yourself in them, almost.

William Ferrell was part Indian. I have never found how far back it was, or of what tribe. Probably Cherokee, as they were the ones who lived in that part of the country when the white men came. But, since I have seen the Navajos, I have thought that William surely must have been part Navajo, as I can see distinct resemblances in every movement they make. The way they point, the way they tie a leather knot, or fasten a saddle girt, or walk, or laugh. In every move they are so like him.

About a year after they were married Lelia had a baby boy, born prematurely, who lived a little while and then died. The first dead baby that I had ever seen. He was the first one of our family to be buried at the Armstrong graveyard. Etta and I carried many a tubful of rich dirt, to put around that little grave, the flowers we planted had to have good soil so they would thrive and grow. We never guessed, while we were working at the little plot, that Mother's and Etta's graves would be the next ones adjoining it.

My conscience has bothered me when I think of how hard Etta worked to keep that little grave clean and pretty, and how sadly neglected her grave has been. We sold the old place, and moved away the year after she was buried, and the graveyard has long been neglected. We have gone back there a few times, at long intervals, and cleaned it, and put a fence around their graves. Each time the bushes and weeds had grown up until we could hardly find where they were buried.106

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Family portrait of William Henry Ferrell and Lelia Marquess Ferrell, Effie’s sister, probably taken in Jerome, Arizona, ca. 1902. Left to right, standing: John Robert Marquess (Effie’s brother), and Vera; sitting: William, Norman, Leone, Lelia. Courtesy of Itha Carmack.

<When grandmother Marquess was living at the Dr. Hendricks place, not so very far from Wallonia, mother and her three little ones (Etta, the oldest, Lelia, next, and Elmo, the baby) were visiting at grandma’s. Grandma and mother were expecting our father and Uncle Curg to be home for supper soon, and were busy getting it ready. The table was set and most of the food was on the table.

The children were playing quite a little ways from the house. Grandmother noticed that it was suddenly getting dark, and when she went outside to see where the children were, she saw a black cloud coming, and she could hear the roar of the wind. She ran for the children, and she and Aunt Emma, her oldest girl, hurried them as fast as they could, but by the time they reached the house it was almost as dark as night. The chickens were huddled together frightened. The cows were bawling, and the dog whimpered by the door.

By the time they were all in the house the storm was on them in all its fury. The din and the roar and darkness was terrible. The air was full of

107. Dr. Alex A. Hendrix (b. 1830). See Perrin, County of Christian, Kentucky, 564–65. This sentence begins a section which is repeated verbatim near the conclusion of the autobiography. See epilogue, note 77.
flying missiles, and the house was shaking as if it would go any minute. The roof of the kitchen was blown off, and the rain and debris was pouring in on the untouched supper. The dishes and the food was scattered, the tablecloth was carried out and to the top of a big tree, where it remained for a long time.

The big living room where they were huddled close together was blown from its foundation, and lamps, vases, mirrors, and other things were crashed to the floor, but the walls remained intact.

Papa and Uncle Curg were on their way home and saw the cyclone writhing and twisting along. As it came nearer the roar of the wind was frightening. They had no doubt but what it was a destructive one. They were out of the track of it, but it seemed to be heading straight for grandmother's place, and they hurried on as fast as possible.

When they came in sight of the house they could see that the big living room was off its foundation, the roof was blown from the kitchen, and the tablecloth was caught in the top of one of the big trees in the yard.

Their supper was demolished, but they were all thankful and happy that no one was hurt. The house could be rebuilt, and more food could be cooked, and all would be O. K. again. They were so thankful that the men had been clear of the track of the tornado, and that it had not touched them.

I only remember going to grandma Armstrong's one time. I was small, not over three or four years old, but there were a few things that happened that were stamped on my memory to stay. Some of Uncle Jim's folks went with us. Jimmie and I (we were about the same age) were sitting in the back of the wagon, and Mammy kept warning us not to be looking over the side of the wagon bed, as there was danger of getting our mouths mashed. We were sure that we could be careful, and nothing of the kind would happen, but when the team broke into a trot, down a rocky slope, I was bounced over against the edge of the wagon bed and cut a place in my upper lip, knocking some teeth loose. After that I minded my mother, and kept my face away from danger.

It clouded up and started to thunder before we reached the Tradewater river, and as some of the men folks were going to stay at the creek and fish, I began to feel worried, for fear of a storm. By the time we reached the river bottoms, the wind was tossing the tall tree tops about, and a storm was threatening. I was afraid for them to stay.

I had heard them tell of Uncle Jim and Birchfield being on the river once when there came a storm. After it was over, they could see a house
on the hill. The roof had been blown off. They went up there to see if anyone was hurt, and it seemed that the storm had caught a mother and a new-born baby alone. When she saw the wind was about to demolish the house, she got up on her knees and elbows over her baby to protect it. A heavy timber from the roof, a joist, I think it was, had fallen, and struck her on the head. She lived only a few minutes after they got there. The baby was unhurt, and a family by the name of Stevenson took the baby and raised her. Her name was Emma. They gave her a good education, and she became a school teacher.

This story had left the impression in my mind that the Tradewater river was an especially bad place for tornadoes, and I didn’t want Papa and the boys to stay and fish. It was dark and windy, and the thunder was crashing, but they stayed, and I was miserable.

Elmo drove the team for us, on to grandma’s place. When we came to a stream we had to ford, which was usually shallow, it had been raining up towards its source, and now it was a rolling muddy torrent. We stopped, and were debating whether to drive into it or not. While we were waiting, we saw a man with two big oxen, and a wagon, coming towards us on the other side of the stream. Elmo decided to wait and see if he made it across all right, and if it wasn’t too deep, we would try it. The oxen didn’t want to go down into the water, but the man cracked a long whip, and hollered whoa at them, and they went in with their tongues out, and bawling. They had long horns with brass knobs on the ends of each horn. He came through safely, so we tackled it too.

It was raining, and we put quilts over us, and by the time we got to grandma’s it was just pouring down, and the wind was blowing a gale. Grandma put a feather bed on the floor, and we children all lay down and covered our heads. I suppose we thought that would keep the lightning from striking.

No one lived there but grandma Druzilla (Mammy’s stepmother) and her nephew, Ned Wooldridge, but it was interesting to us. They had an upstairs in their house, and the floor of it was nearly covered with hazelnuts and walnuts, drying, while we were there.

The next day after it cleared off Ned took us and showed us his coal mine, which was on their farm, near Empire.

We were wondering how our men made it on the creek during the storm. They had a tent and were O. K. We went back to the river the next day and joined the men. Then we all tried our luck at fishing.

109. Possibly Emma Stevenson (b. 1872), according to the 1880 census.
110. Druzilla (Drewsilla or Drusilla) Wooldridge (b. 1817) was the wife of John Armstrong, Effie’s grandfather. Ned Wooldridge was born in 1858.
They usually caught lots of big catfish in this river, and they were
good to eat. They had no scales on them like most other fish have. They
had to be scalded and scraped to clean them.

They visited the Stevensons who had taken the motherless Emma. I
went out in the yard where some other children were, and a little boy, a
little larger than myself, came up and pushed me backwards. I fell flat on
my back, and bawled. Someone came to see what the trouble was, and the
boy, pointing at me said, "I downed the little bitch."

I don't remember anything about the trip home, it must have been
uneventful, probably raining.

It's funny how smells get mixed up with memories, as I have men­
tioned before. When one comes back, the other comes with it. We always
burned wood. In the fireplace, and in the old iron stepstove in the kitchen.
We burned hickory and oak wood in the fireplace, as they made hot fire,
and lasted longer, and the ashes were good to make lye for the soap.

The smell of coal smoke became associated with going to town, and
consequently I adored the smell of coal burning. It had a charm with it.111

One would think that a long jolt over rough roads in an old two
horse wagon, usually in the hot summer, would leave unpleasant impres­
sions, but not so. Those trips to town stand out as glorious monuments in
my memory. I asked who lived in every house along the way, and our
patient father usually told us.

There was the Hiram Moores, the slow, quiet, soft spoken people,
whose daughter Melissa, was the most decided blond I ever saw.112 She had
long thick hair that was almost white, and her eyelashes and eyebrows were
white as cotton, and I'll bet she never spoke a loud harsh word in her life.

When Walter Owens would be prompting at the square dances he
would call out, when he started to swing Melissa, "And I'll now swing the
gal with the bean soup hair," but she didn't resent it, for he had some­
thing original to say about each girl he swung.113

111. Hopkinsville was the center of Kentucky's dark-fired tobacco market and the process­
ing center for the region's coal mining district. It was also the junction for the
Louisville & Nashville Railroad and Illinois Central Railroad systems. The smell of
coal smoke would have been strong given the climate of industry in this town. For
more on Hopkinsville, see Sue M. Wright, "Spotlight on Christian County: Patriarch
of the Pennyrile," Back Home in Kentucky 8 (July-August 1985): 25-30; Meacham,
History of Christian County; and William T. Turner, Gateway From the Past: A History
Commemorating 175th Anniversary of Hopkinsville and Christian County, Kentucky
(Hopkinsville, Ky.: Burdine's Print 1974).

112. Hiram H. Moore (1834-1906) and his wife, Eliza (1835-1915) had a daughter,
Melissie F. (b. 1873).

113. According to Burt Feintuch, callers were a necessity at these dances. "Generally, the
caller stood to one side of the dancers, although he himself sometimes danced or
moved through them. In instances where several people knew how to call dances, they
Well, things like that were discussed, as we passed Hiram Moore's place. Then next was John Knight's place. He was noted for making good cider, and when something was just right, it was like John Knight's cider.¹¹⁴

Next was Bill Cotton's place, at the top of Cotton's hill.¹¹⁵ We always felt sad for poor Mrs. Cotton, a good woman, who had given birth to three idiotic children, one girl and two boys. The girl had fallen into the fire and burned to death; but the boys were both big strapping fellows, Bob and Bert. Bob grew so unmanageable that a special room was built in the back, to lock him in.

Next was Pleasant Green church, on top of the hill, where we could see clear down into Trigg County.

Then came a stretch of Negro cabins, and the Negro church, then Smith's big farm. He had the family of pretty girls, who were nearly all named boys' names: Tommy, Willie, Johnie, and Jimmie. Probably he wanted them to be boys, anyway they were very popular. The oldest girl was named Jennie.

When we came to the fork of the road, we could smell the smoke from the train, and from the coal grates, and could see the Princeton Pike, leading off to the west, and could hear the telephone wires singing (for years I thought that humming noise was the messages being sent along through those wires). Here the country opened up. No more woods, hills, or rocky stretches. To the south, as far as you could see, lay the broad fair acres of South Christian County.

Off to the southwest, a little ways, was John Young's mansion. The top of the house, which was three stories high, had a flat square enclosure, with a banister around it. They said that there was a fishpond with a white swan, etc., or a swimming pool, or something mysterious up there.

Other imposing homes could be seen in the distance. There were fine Jersey cattle, and thoroughbred horses, and Negroes working in the fields.

The forks of the road was just a mile from town, and about halfway there was the toll gate, where Alec Poindexter was always waiting to raise the long bar and let us through, and collect two cents. There was a tiny little

¹¹⁴ Probably John Richard Knight (1872-1935). The making of apple cider in western Kentucky has been a long and cherished tradition among rural families. See Karen Stewart, "Making Apple Cider in Western Kentucky," Kentucky Folklore Record 18 (1972): 92-95.

¹¹⁵ Probably William Cotton (b. 1869) and his wife, Ellen Gilkey (b. 1873?).
square building out on the side, that I suppose he could retreat into if it rained, snowed, or sleeted.

Just after we crossed the river bridge we came to William Owen's grocery, on 7th street, and we usually got out there and waited while Pappy took the wagon and team and disposed of them. He usually hitched them in the lot back of Pink Nolan's saloon.116

William Owen's family lived in an apartment over the grocery. They had two beautiful children, Willie and Violet. Violet was my age, and she had a swing in a little storeroom, back of the grocery, and a playhouse, where she kept her toys, dolls, etc. She could draw too, so there was a sort of bond between us. I could draw also, better than any other child in school, and was always called on to make drawings on the blackboard for Thanksgiving, Pioneer celebrations, Christmas, etc. Violet said that someday she was going to an Art school.

Besides the Owen place, there were three other places we always visited. Cousin Larkin Brasher (who married Jane Lindley, daughter of Susan (Peggy) Lindley, my grandfather's sister) for one. He was a lawyer, and had a big family. David, the oldest, who lived on a farm out near us, and a bunch of girls, who were all school teachers. Miss Vic, Miss Carrie, Miss Minnie, and younger one, Omie, a little older than myself, and Lark, the baby.117

We usually stopped for a visit with cousin Elijah Armstrong's family, too.

Then in town, we went to Joe P. Pool's Racket store.118 It was a fore-runner of the present dime stores. It had 5 cent counters, 10 cent counters, 25 cent counters, etc. There was where we spent our hoarded nickels and dimes. China dolls, toy cap pistols, fans, combs for our hair, toys, ribbons, and all kinds of attractive things. But they were always in too big a hurry to go, before I got to see half of what I wanted to see.

In the evening, going home, one or two of the girls would usually have a sick headache. Probably from the jolting, and the hot sun, or from looking and looking at everything, or too much candy, or sour stomach from wrong foods. Anyway, we rarely ever got home without one or two being prostrate with a headache.

I remember one such evening, when my head was splitting. Cousin Ike Cook passed us in his nice springy buggy, with its leather top, to keep the sun off, and old Joab, a big gray horse hitched to it. He halted, as he passed our wagon, and asked if some of us would like to ride with him. Mammy said, as my head was aching, maybe I had better be the one. I didn't

116. Probably refers to Charles P. Nolan (b. 1849) a saloon keeper in Hopkinsville.
117. See note 83 above.
118. Joe P. Pool (b. 1873).
want to ride with him, as I was a little bit timid, and afraid of him. His eyes were red from drinking, and he smelled loud of whiskey, but it certainly was nice to sit on the nice springy cushions of the seat, and bounce along so easy. It seemed a pleasure to old Joab to trot glibly up hill and down.

When we got to Hiram Moore’s field there was a little country lane that crossed it, that led to the fields, and across to Uncle Lawrence’s place, but it didn’t look wide enough for a buggy. It was a road that was not used anymore, but he turned off and went that way. I kept telling him that was not the right way, and that he couldn’t go that way with the horse and buggy, but he said old Joab could take us anywhere we wanted to go.

After the road turned into the gate at Uncle Lawrence’s back field the road played out entirely and there was nothing left but the creek bed. I was scared stiff, but he wouldn’t let me out. When he ran the side of the buggy up on a big log, and the other side up on the bank of the creek, with the old horse way below us wading through a deep hole (Ike was busy with the lines) I took advantage, and made a wild leap, landing in a briar thicket. But I didn’t care, briars were a welcome change. He called, and begged me to come back and get in. He said that we would soon be to the long lane that led up to Mr. Moore’s house, but I didn’t listen, I was running as fast as my legs could carry me. I waded the creek, climbed fences, and soon I knew where I was. I was in Mr. Moore’s bottom field, the one where the cow stayed, when she went mad. I knew that as soon as I crossed them I would be to our fence, and then I could see our house.

I made for the big sweet gum tree, with the two scalybark hickories near it. I was hot from running, the briars had torn my Sunday stockings, and my best shoes were wet and muddy from wading the creek. My head was throbbing, but I was glad to be out of that buggy and in sight of home.

I got home about the same time the folks got there in the wagon. They stared in open mouthed wonder when I came dragging up, all briar scratched and bedraggled.

“Where in the world have you been?” Two or three of them asked me at the same time.

When I told them of my experience Pappy was so mad he could hardly speak. He was going right over to Ike’s, and give him the beating he needed, but Mammy wouldn’t let him. She said that they should have

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119. The sweet gum tree (Liquidambar styraciflua, L.) is of rapid growth and is ornamental. The bark has astringent properties and is sometimes used to tan leather. The scalybark hickory or shagbark hickory (Carya ovata) is common to the area and is used in making lye, cogs, and millwheels. The bark is often used as an astringent.
had better sense than to let me ride with him when he was drunk, so it was their fault after all.

Mammy was so sorry for me that she treated me like an invalid. She washed my face, fanned me, and rubbed camphor on my aching head. For a little while I was the hero.