OUR FAMILY LIFE:
Growing Up in Duplin County, North Carolina
in the Early Twentieth Century
# OUR FAMILY LIFE

by and for the descendants of Oscar Lee and Berta Page Ward

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Introduction

This book began with a packet of 29 7”x 9” typed index cards, tied with a string. The cards were found in Lucile Ward Mosback’s house in Rose Hill by her daughter and son, Ruth Ann Mosback Bramson and Bobby Mosback, after Lucile died in January 2002, one month before her 88th birthday. Without saying anything to anyone, Lucile recorded memories of her childhood and early family life. She wanted to keep alive for succeeding generations the memory of her parents and of how a family with seven children and very little money, living on a farm in Duplin County, North Carolina, in the early years of the 20th century, worked, played, was educated, and created the bonds that kept them close throughout their lives.

We think she had a good idea. A Chinese proverb maintains that, “To forget one’s ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root.” Lucile and her sister, Eloise Ward Phelps, often talked about how different life was when they were growing up on the farm from the life their children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews were experiencing. Lucile said she felt like she had lived in two worlds: the current world of television, computers, jet travel, cell phones.... and, the world of her childhood on the farm outside of Rose Hill. This loving account of the old ways is an attempt to remind us of the source and nourish the family roots.

Getting this information ready to share with you in 2003 has been a family project. It was written jointly by many family members who live distant from one another geographically. Many people have added their memories and stories to the project that Lucile began. Special thanks go to Kathy Phelps Lovell who compiled the final document and got it ready for printing.

Berta Page Ward, the mother of this clan, once said, “I hope the children don’t go so far from home that they can’t get back for Sunday dinner.” Imagine what she would say if she could know how far her descendants have traveled and how much they have seen and done. Consider this book a way of bringing you back to the family table, where you can listen to the old stories and hear about the old days. We hope you will enjoy it and that maybe someday you’ll find your own way to pass on to your children and grandchildren the changes you see in your lifetime.
Why write this book?
(first index card written by Lucile)

- To record life as I saw it in the first quarter of the 20th century in rural eastern North Carolina.
- To keep alive the memory of Mama and Papa and how they brought up and educated seven of us.
- To let our children and nieces and nephews know how things were in the "good old days" when we were young.
- To show how a family living on a farm with very little money went to college, and made useful citizens.
- To show the progress made in a generation or two.
- So that we won’t forget the things we take pleasure in remembering.

This is not too far removed from the way some rural eastern North Carolina farm families live today, but is quite foreign to some of our city-bred descendants.

Sources and font information

This book will give information on the early life remembered and written by Lucile and Eloise, with contributions and editing from others. Peggy Ward Rawheiser initially transcribed Lucile’s index cards. The focus is on the lives of Oscar and Berta Ward and their family, with some initial information on ancestors. Throughout the book, the text written by Lucile on the index cards will be printed in Comic Sans font. Text written by Eloise will be printed in Arial font. Other material will be printed in Times New Roman; most of the additional comments in the Family Life section are from Peggy. Much of the early history was taken from the Ward History: A History of Alfred and Elizabeth Ward, Edition I or Page History: A History of Abner and Rebecca Marcella Barden Page.
Ancestors

**Oscar Ward**
Alfred Ward – Elizabeth Robinson  George W. Robinson – Peggy Matthews
| James Edward Ward ---------------------------- Isabella Robinson |
| Oscar Lee Ward – born 1862 |

**Berta Page**
John Page Jr. – Mary Marshburn  John Barden -- Nancy Vann
| Abner Page---------------------------------- Rebecca Marcella “Mollie” Barden |
| Berta Cornelia Page – born 1876 |

Ward Ancestors
(mostly quoted from *A History of Alfred and Elizabeth Ward, Edition I*)

Edward Ward, the settler sailed from London to America and finally settled about 1740 in what is now Pitt County, North Carolina. He married Mary Cannon, daughter of Edward and Sara Woodard Cannon. Their children were: Edward, born 1744; several daughters; and William, born Dec 20, 1753.

William Ward married Mary Bell of Sampson County and settled on a farm of 400 to 500 acres on Buck Hall near Baltic. Later he bought a tract of land known as the Polly Ward Place, near Taylor's Bridge in Sampson County. He saw active service in the Revolutionary War. Of his six children, four moved to Georgia. Samuel and Alfred, the two youngest, stayed in North Carolina. Samuel married Mary Robinson, a younger sister of Elizabeth. Alfred married Elizabeth Robinson.
Alfred and Elizabeth Robinson Ward

Alfred Ward, son of William Ward and Mary Bell Ward, was born near Delway in Sampson County, January 12, 1790. He attended school at Evergreen School House. He married Elizabeth Robinson in 1815. After their marriage, they moved to a farm in Duplin County, eight miles west of Wallace, where they reared a family of eight children who were a tribute to their good judgment and management.

He was a surveyor, farmer and good business man. He served as chairman of the County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions in Duplin County. He was patriotic and was always looking for something he could do for the betterment of his country. He was a man of good influence in his community and was willing for other folks to do as they pleased. He was good help in settling disputes and troubles among neighbors and tried to be fair to both sides. He was a member of the Masons and the Universalist Church. Alfred Ward died October 18, 1869.

Elizabeth Robinson, daughter of William and Mary Matthis Robinson, was born July 18, 1793, near Delway in Sampson County.
According to hand-me-down information, she was intelligent, witty, and quick to help a neighbor in need. She was a neat, trim looking woman and enjoyed her jokes and fun and was always ready with her witticisms. She was of the intelligent type and could answer all your questions without any trouble. The neighborhood was her world because roads were inadequate, even for horse and buggy travel. Elizabeth died December 10, 1874.

James Edward and Isabella Robinson Ward

James Edward Ward was the fourth child of Alfred and Elizabeth Robinson Ward. He was born April 6, 1824, in Rockfish Township, Duplin County, on the farm known now as the old George Ward place. He received his education at the Bay schoolhouse. On April 29, 1852, Mr. Jimmy Ward, as he was generally known, was married to Isabella Robinson, daughter of George W. and Peggy Matthews Robinson. Jimmy and Isabella had ten children. Six lived to maturity. Grandfather Jimmy was a farmer and spent his entire lifetime within a few miles of the place of his birth. He was a Justice of the Peace, a member of the Masonic Order, the Farmers' Alliance and Red Hill Universalist Church. During the Civil
War he was a member of the Home Guard because an infected leg prevented his taking an active role in the war. He delighted in swapping yarns with his neighbors and often enjoyed a "nip" with them.

According to family hearsay, Grandpa preferred being the gentleman-type farmer rather than the hardworking plowman. At various times in his life he was also a postmaster and a teacher. He had a “Common School Teacher's Certificate” dated October 21, 1854. It said in part: “We, the Undersigned Committee of Examination into the Mental and Moral qualifications of such persons as make application for employment as Teachers of Common Schools in Duplin County, have duly examined James E. Ward and being satisfied as to his moral character do hereby certify that he is qualified as Teacher of Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Grammar and Geography as indicated by the numbers annexed to each.” His grades were 1 in Spelling, Reading and Writing; 2 in Arithmetic and Grammar; and 4 in Geography (1 is the highest grade of scholarship and 5 the lowest.)

Isabella Robinson Ward

Isabella, born April 10, 1828, has been described as an excellent wife and mother, patient, considerate and prompt. If an
hour was set for performing a duty or beginning a trip by any person in her presence, she saw to it that the plan was carried out on time. I can remember hearing her say, when people were standing near the door on the way out, "If you have to go, go on." She died August 7, 1919, at the age of ninety-one. I was eight years old then, and I remember her funeral in the yard at Uncle Bob's.

Sampler made by Isabella in 1849, at the age of 21

James and Isabella had 10 children:

- Sebastian Montgomery Ward -“Bash” (1853-1926)
- Elvina Agnes Ward (Robinson)-“Aggie” (1854-1919)
- Eloise Jane Sophia Ward (Johnson)-“Ella”(1856-1939)
- Abner Griffin Ward (1860-1870)
- Oscar Lee Ward (1862-1923)
- George Canty Ward (1865-1866)
- Margaret Ward (Wilkins Page) – “Mag” (1867-1941)
- Alfred Ward (1869-1870)
- Infant Daughter Ward (1859-1859)

Page Ancestors
John Page Sr., born 1760, was the father of eight children. John Page, Jr. was born 1804, New Hanover County, North Carolina, and married Mary Marshburn (born 1808). They had ten children, including Abner Page.

Abner and Rebecca “Mollie” Barden Page

Abner Page, ninth child of John Page, Sr. and Mary Marshburn, was born December 5, 1850. He married Rebecca Marcella "Mollie" Barden, about 1872, and they lived on Highway #41 between Wallace and Harrells. After the death of his first wife, he married Melissa Fryar around spring 1898. He died April 1, 1917, and was buried in the Page-Ward Graveyard.

Rebecca Marcella “Mollie” Barden, daughter of John Barden and Nancy Vann Barden, was born July 15, 1855. She was the youngest child and had eleven sisters and one brother. She died October 10, 1887, when her youngest child, Mollie, was six months old, and the oldest girl Berta was 11 years old. She was buried in the Page-Ward Graveyard.

Abner and Rebecca Page had eight children:
- Horace Preston Page (1874-1954)
- Berta Cornelia Page Ward (1876-1956)
- Leon Jefferson Page (1878-1967)
- Peyton Lucas Page (1880-1961)
- Bascombe Page (died as an infant)
- Bessie Jane Page Johnson (1883-1969)
- Daniel B. Page (1885-1886)
- Mollie Catherine Page Herring Dail (1887-1976)
Berta Page and Oscar Ward

Berta Cornelia Page – information from the Ward History
Berta Page, daughter of Abner and Rebecca Marcella “Mollie” Barden Page was born March 6, 1876. She attended the local school until after her mother's death when she stayed at home to care for five brothers and sisters. After her husband's death she cared for and educated their seven children. She was a charter member of the Rockfish Home Demonstration Club and was active in it for over forty years. She received a Certificate of Credit from North Carolina State College, where she attended short courses sponsored by the State Extension Service. She was an active member of the Red Hill Universalist Church. She died August 11, 1956 and was buried in the Page-Ward Cemetery.

Oscar Lee Ward – information from the Ward History
Oscar Lee Ward, son of James Edward and Isabella Robinson Ward, was born December 29, 1862 in Duplin County. He attended local schools. He was a charter member of the Red Hill Universalist Church and was active in church affairs. On February 16, 1898 he married Berta Page. They moved to a house on his father's farm, where he lived and farmed until his death on November 24, 1923. He was buried in the Page-Ward Graveyard in Duplin County. Oscar helped organize the Rose Hill Telephone Company in 1905, and held the office of Secretary-Treasurer until his death. He was also instrumental in getting a school for the community about 1907. The building was on land owned by Maury Ward and it was known as the Ward School. The one teacher was paid from County funds. This school continued until schools were consolidated and buses were provided, about 1923.

Life before marriage

Mama (Berta Page)
When Mama was a child, the children went to Wells Chapel Baptist Church in the buggy with her mother and father. As usual they went someplace for dinner. While they were visiting one Sunday, someone came to tell them that their home had burned. The only thing they had left were the few baby clothes brought along for the baby. This fire experience left quite an impression on Mama and her older brother, Uncle Preston. Both
of them as long as they lived were very, very careful of fire. This constant reminder of fire has made quite an impression on all of her children.

One Christmas when Mama was getting a little old for Santa Claus, she and the other children were staying with their grandfather. On Christmas Eve her Grandpa kept teasing the children, telling them that Santa Claus was too poor this year and would not come. Mama believed him. When the children started to bed, her Grandma asked her if she hung up her stocking. She said no. Grandma said "Run along and hang it up". She did and went to bed happy knowing that the stocking would be filled in the morning. It was.

On October 10, 1887, Mama’s mother died. She was eleven and the oldest girl of a family of six children who spanned the ages between six months and 13 years. Her father, like most men of that day, had little experience in doing what was considered "woman's work." Most of the responsibility for the house and children fell on Mama's shoulders. Uncle Preston was 13 and his father's helper. Mama tried to care for the household and go to school, but she found the combination impossible. One day the teacher scolded her for not having done the assignment. She cried all the way home, threw her books in a corner, and said she was never going back to school. She realized it was too much to go to school and take care of the house and children too.

Papa (Oscar Ward)

My father, Oscar Lee Ward, was the third son of James Edward and Isabella Robinson Ward. Even in his early years, it was evident that he had that fortunate combination of character traits that would make it possible for him to derive wholesome and genuine pleasure from living a good life. An important component of his philosophy was this two-faceted approach to life's problems: "If you can do something to help a situation, do it. If you can't help, there certainly is no use worrying about it." The ability to push little worries from his mind, along with a keen sense of humor, gave him an enviable zest for living.
Marriage and life after marriage

In 1897, at age 35, when his friends were beginning to suggest that he might be a bachelor for life, Papa started dating Berta Page, a petite, pretty 21-year-old. They met for the first time at a square dance party at a mutual friend’s house. Oscar and three cousins made plans to take their girl friends to Wrightsville Beach the first Sunday in June. He asked Berta if she would be his date and she said yes. The four couples met at the railroad station in Rose Hill to take the train to Wilmington. The friends had a great time on the beach and visiting the souvenir shops. Oscar bought a conch (kongk) shell for 10 cents. When he took Berta home he gave it to her and said he had something to ask her when he had more time. There is ample evidence that he found time, proposed, and asked her father for her hand in marriage. Grandpa hesitated because he knew he would be losing his housekeeper. He finally said “yes” and a few months later found a replacement in my stepgrandmother. Oscar and Berta were married February 16, 1898.

Wedding picture – Oscar and Berta Page Ward
Through all the years of family life the conch shell sat on the player piano in the parlor. When my mother closed the old house and moved in with my oldest sister (Lillie Belle Ward Brummitt) she took the shell with her. When she died, the family voted that I should have the shell to keep me company in far-away Colorado.

Oscar and Berta Page Ward had seven children:

Lillie Belle Ward Brummitt, born April 6, 1899  
Norma Rebecca Ward Stanfield, born March 9, 1901  
James Abner Ward, born June 26, 1904  
Virginia Lee Ward, born September 26, 1906  
Horace Griffin Ward, born March 7, 1909  
Eloise Ward Phelps, born July 28, 1911  
Ruby Lucile Ward Mosback, born February 27, 1914

My parents worked and played together, lived on what they made in bad farming years, saved what they could in good years, reared seven children, and made every effort to give us the best possible chances for development.

Oscar and Berta Page Ward

Mama (Berta Page Ward)

Berta Page Ward
In Mama's married life she ate at very few restaurants, made most of the family clothes, and had seven children at home with the help of a doctor who came as fast as a horse with a buggy could travel. On November 24, 1923, Papa died from pneumonia and Mama was left for a second time with tremendous responsibilities. Three children were in college, the others in public school, and the farm had to be run. It was her responsibility to oversee the house, the farm, and the children, and stretch the small amount of available money to cover the greatest needs. The main cash crops were tobacco and cotton, but income from both was low. The decade of the 1920's had many problems of its own prior to the depression. My
mother met the situation admirably and helped all of us get an education.

Mama was a charter member of the Rockfish Home Demonstration Club and was active in the program for more than 40 years. She was proud to receive a Certificate of Credit from North Carolina State College, where she attended short courses sponsored by the State Extension Service. For 25 years she had perfect attendance at her Home Demonstration Club, and she usually went to the annual meetings of the State Extension Courses.

Award of merit – Mama called this her “diploma”

On one of the trips to Raleigh, she received this card, and was very proud of it.
Mama grew up as a Baptist but became an active member of Red Hill Universalist Church, joining in 1922.

I cannot remember Mama's ever going to a hospital, or even being sick enough to go to bed, until, in her seventies, she had minor surgery from which she quickly recuperated. On August 11, 1956, at the age of 80, she died peacefully in her sleep.

Papa (Oscar Lee Ward)

Papa was an independent thinker and doer. He decided when to plant the crops – cotton, corn, peanuts, potatoes, strawberries, and tobacco. If he needed help beyond what the family could do, neighbors often pitched in or he hired nearby negroes.

Papa had the courage to stand up for what he believed and not just go along with the crowd. When most of the South was Democratic, Papa was Republican. With orthodox Churches all around, Papa went up in Sampson County and was a charter member of the Red Hill Universalist Church. His church activities included being moderator and Sunday School superintendent. When cotton and tobacco co-ops started, Papa was not afraid to join, because he believed it was a good thing. He refused to join the Ku Klux Klan. Some of the neighbors disagreed with his broad-minded beliefs about civil rights for negroes.

Although Papa did not have formal schooling beyond what we would consider high school and Mama stopped school after about the 6th grade to keep house for her father and five brothers and sisters, they both wanted education for their children. Papa was instrumental in lobbying for a school in the community about 1907. The building was on land donated by Cousin Maury Ward and was called the Ward school. He always helped secure the teacher and let her board at our house.

Through the efforts of Papa and others interested in better schools, consolidation was established in 1923. Papa made trips to Kenansville by way of horse and buggy to plead for the cause. My brother James drove a school bus to Franklin High School, where he
taught math and science, and I graduated as valedictorian in a class of 16 students.

Papa felt that he would like to have a piece of land to give to each of his children but when the two oldest ones married and left home, and the oldest boy went to college and started taking engineering, Papa said “It is better that they have an education than a piece of land.” From then on he worked for an education for all the children. All seven children have had a college education—some with graduate work and Masters degrees. All seven have taught school at one time or another. Papa would have been proud of the education of his children and grandchildren.

Pneumonia caused my father's death November 24, 1923. Unfortunately, antibiotic drugs were not available until later. He was buried in the family graveyard in Duplin County.
Family life

We grew up on a farm in eastern North Carolina, six miles from Rose Hill, the nearest town, which had and still has a population of about 1500 people. My earliest memories include helping in all stages of tobacco farming, picking cotton and strawberries, pulling grass in the garden, and standing in a chair to reach the sink to wash dishes. For fun we played hopscotch, hide-and-go-seek, fox and geese, checkers, old maid and set-back, an easy card game. We were a loving family in a friendly community. Most of our neighbors were relatives. People shared each other’s happiness and problems, including barning tobacco, hog-killings, and square dances.
Mama, with Lucile and Eloise sitting on a bale of cotton

Eloise, Norma, James, Lucile, Virginia, Mama, Horace, Lillie Belle
House

Before Mama and Papa were married there was a little two-room tenant house on the piece of property that Papa inherited from Grandpa Jimmie. Each son was given a piece of land when he got married. Before they were married Papa added on two more rooms. This was all until after about five children, when cousin Wright Carleton and his family came for an extended visit to help Papa build what was to become the dining room and kitchen.

The parlor was on the left as you entered the front hall. There was a set with couch and several chairs covered with black leather, a piano, a couple of tables, and another chair or two. This room was kept closed up so that it would be clean when company stopped in.

We lived in Mama and Papa’s bedroom, which was on the right as you entered the front door. There were two double beds in this room. The beds were handmade frames with cornshuck mattresses and feather beds on top. There was a fireplace for heat, the sewing machine, a rocker or two, several
other chairs, and a bureau. Here we did our lessons, worked, played and lived.

In back of this room was a small bedroom with room for a double bed, a bureau and a chair. There were hooks on the wall to hang clothes. This room was called the middle room or the girls' room.

The next room on the right of the hall was a bedroom that usually held two beds. It had a heater in it, a bureau and a chair. This was called the “fur room” because it was “fur” from Mama’s room. It was for the boys.

Next on the right side of the house was the kitchen. It had a wood stove and a sink, but the water had to be brought from the well. Later there was a pump on the back porch (which was on the left of the two smaller bedrooms.) There was a pantry and a food safe. Grandma’s cupboard was in there too. In the dining room was a homemade table with a bench on one side and chairs on the other. The children sat on the bench and the grown-ups in the chairs. As an older child would leave home or go away to school, the next oldest would get to move from the bench to fill the vacant chair. Any child who got to sit in a chair felt really grown up.

Behind the living room, to the left of the hall was another room built to house the school teacher. This room was initially called “Miss Lillian’s room,” for Miss Lillian Rackley, the first teacher who lived there. She was Horace’s first-grade teacher, and he was in love with her. After she had been gone for a while, the room was called the New Room.
Weekday meals

Breakfast: Besides the usual fried ham, bacon or sausage, along with eggs, there was often pork or leftover beef. Leftover fish with cornbread was a favorite of Mama’s. Many times, if we had company, she would go out into the back yard and catch a chicken, ring off its head, dress it and have it in the pan to fry almost by the time it stopped kicking. Fried ham or sausage and grits were a standby with us, as well as cornmeal mush with cream. There was little or no prepared cereal. Corn flakes were about the only one I remember ever having, and that was a real treat. I guess they were too expensive. Mama loved rice and
quite often we had it for breakfast with gravy. Maybe no meat, but left over gravy. Clabber with sweet cream and sugar was quite common. Hoecake corn bread or biscuits were cooked almost every morning.

Dinner—12 o’clock: This was the big meal of the day. Just after breakfast while the children did dishes, Mama usually went to the garden to gather whatever vegetables were ready, and then to the smokehouse for a hambone for seasoning. Cornbread and/or biscuits were considered a necessity. Fruit in some form was almost always available. Anyone who wanted more could always sop ribbon cane syrup and butter with biscuits.

Supper: There was usually enough left from dinner for supper. If not, jars or cans could be easily opened.

Bath night
Saturday night was bath night with no shower and no real bathtub available. Our substitute was a big, round tub used for rinsing clothes on wash day. Contrary to some stories about family baths, each of us had clean water. We had to carry water from a well in the yard to the kitchen to heat it, and then to the room with the heater for the baths. Each of the older children was responsible for carrying the water for his/her bath and for emptying it.

Canning
There were no freezers or TV dinners to depend on for all this food, but the shelves were filled with home-canned jars. Mama prided herself on her jelly. She often exhibited it at the fair. All fruits and vegetables, and a few meats, were canned. Pork was cured, and chickens were always available. The fish man would come around occasionally in a vehicle with wooden boxes of crushed ice and fish. Once in a while someone would kill a cow and peddle it out. We had no icebox, so all this had to be cooked immediately. We were the first in our vicinity to have a can
sealer. We would buy cans and lids, and seal them with a hand sealer. Tomatoes, string beans, soup mixture and all other vegetables were prepared in the yard—because it was boiling hot in the kitchen. Then they were blanched in the wash pot, put in cans, sealed, and then processed in the wash pot. This was a real modern invention—the hand sealer. To feed a family of seven children, it took a lot of cans and jars.

Washday

The washing was usually done by a negro woman. Marg did our washing for years. She and Mama had an understanding. Very little money passed between them. She would probably be allowed $.50 for doing the washing. When she was finished she would come in the house. Mama would say, “How did we stand last week” Marg would say, “You owed me ten cents”. Mama would rarely ever remember where they stood, but Marg always remembered. Mama would say, “OK, what do you want today?” She would probably say, “a quart of milk $.05, a pound of sugar $.05, a dozen eggs $.20, and a piece of fatback meat.” This would be figured up, and Marg would make a mental note of how they stood for the next week.

Marg would come in and sit on the back porch and chat for a while before she started home, about a mile away. She would always eat dinner with us in the middle of the day. She always wanted her plate served for her, and she would sit in the kitchen by the stove to eat. She might eat while we were eating, or while we were washing dishes, but there was always a steady conversation with Marg included in it.

Sometimes if Marg did not come, we would have to do the washing ourselves. First, you gather up the clothes in a sheet, and there was a sheet full, because we washed once a week.
Take them out to the washpot. The pot (a big black one placed near the well) had to be washed out, and filled with water from the well. Then you get firewood to start a fire around the pot. Fat lightwood splinters (pine cut in little pieces) were used to start the fire, and then bigger pieces of wood were added. If the wash tub was a wooden one, water must be put in it so that the wood would swell to make it not leak. Wet the clothes in a tub of water, put homemade lye soap on the dirty places and when the water in the pot is hot, transfer the wet clothes to the boiling water in the pot. Someone must punch the clothes most of the time in the hot soapy water in the pot to get them clean. After they had boiled a little bit, take them out by lifting up some at a time on the stick and transfer them to a tub with some water in it. This was the scrubbing water. The scrubbing board was used on all dirty places, then they were squeezed out and put into the rinse water. From there they were squeezed and put into another rinse water. Then they were squeezed and were ready to be hung on the line.

Marg
This squeezing was usually done by hand, but we were one of the more progressive families—we had a wringer. It attached to the side of the tub and was turned with a crank. Sometimes it seemed easier to wring the clothes by hand than to bother to get the wringer set up. But we must use the wringer because having these modern conveniences was a sign of status in the community. We seldom had enough clothespins for all the clothes. Straight pins were used, or the clothes were spread over bushes or a wire fence to dry.

To make the soap, Mama saved every drop of fat (grease) not consumed in cooking. Making soap required a large supply of grease, lye, and a stick of fat lightwood. This was cooked in the big black washpot in the yard. It was poured into molds to cool, then was cut into bars.

**Ironing**

Ironing was not a matter of plugging in an electric iron. A fire must be built in the fireplace. Then it must burn down to the point that there were hot coals (oak wood made better coals.) The irons were then set up on end in front of the fire until they got hot enough to fry when touched with your finger after it had been wet in your mouth. Three or four irons were used, so that there were always some heating while others were being used. This was the process even in 90-degree weather in the summer. Our desire for modern equipment showed up again, though. We got an iron that you put live coals inside. This stayed hot longer. You had to hold it up and blow in it every few minutes though to keep the coals burning. It even had a little door at the back that could be closed to cut down the draft to control the heat of the iron. We even devised a method whereby we would save charcoal and when we wanted to iron we would fill the iron with this dead charcoal, pour on a little kerosene and put a match to it. Then wait a few minutes for the charcoal to heat up and then we could keep the fire going in the iron by adding more charcoal to it.
This charcoal had to be saved from the fireplace. When a piece of oak wood would burn down to nice coals we would take the tongs and dip them into a pan of water and save it to put in the iron. In the hot summertime this really beat having to make a big fire to heat the irons. This was real progress.

**Killing Hogs**

In the winter when the weather turned cold, and you could see your breath, it was about time to kill hogs. It must be cold, and there must be indications that it would stay cold for several days, because the meat must get cold through and through or it would spoil. The men would get up early to get the water boiling to scald the hogs. Then they would go to the hog pen and the ones to be killed would be put in a separate pen. If they are not separated, a mistake might be made. A neighbor was out at the pigpen one morning where he went to kill a couple of pigs; someone heard him say "Scuse me old sow, I didn't mean to kill you."

The animal was given one hard blow on the head with an ax, and then its throat was slit to allow the blood to drain out. Then the hog was carried to the hot water to be scalded to get the hair off. For the hot water, a barrel was put about half way into the ground at an angle. This was filled with boiling water. The hog was then dipped in. He must be left in long enough, but not too long. Then the hair must be scrapped off. After that the hog was strung up by its rear heels to a limb of a tree, or if one was not available the right height, a scaffold must be built. The butchering was then begun. There was a slit down the abdomen, and all insides taken out. The liver and heart were cooked and chopped up and mixed with corn meal and seasoning to make liver pudding. The hind and fore quarters were trimmed for hams and shoulders. The lean trimmings were all saved and put through
the food chopper and mixed with sage and other seasonings to make sausage. The fat trimmings were rendered in the wash pot to make lard and cracklins. The head and feet were cleaned and boiled to get the meat off the bones. This meat was seasoned and packed in a pan to stay overnight to congeal and make sausemeat. The intestines were cleaned—and what a job! This was Mama’s job because she would not trust anyone else to get them clean enough to suit her. These intestines were used to stuff the sausage and liver pudding or chopped to make chittlins. The back was cut into chops and spareribs.

This was quite a day and was usually a community affair. The practice was: “You help me when I kill, and I give you some of my fresh meat, and when you are ready to kill I will help you.”

**Tobacco**

Working in tobacco was one of my least-favorite activities. The season lasted from planting in the early spring to marketing it in the fall. My most disliked activity was worming it. That meant going down each row, looking underneath the leaves, pulling off any worm hiding there and squishing it on the ground. Barning the dirty stuff was no picnic but it was more sociable. This process took about six weeks around August. As the bottom leaves cured, the croppers (usually men) pulled them off, laid them in a drag pulled by a horse or mule, and brought them up to the barn where the handers and loopers (mostly women) put them on sticks suspended on a wooden rack. These sticks, with the tobacco, were hung in the barns and cured. Someone had to stay with the barn at all times to keep wood stoked in the furnace to keep the heat at the desired temperature for the best coloring of the leaves. This job belonged to the men in the family.

When the tobacco leaves were cured to the desired stage, they were taken down and packed in a barn, ready to be graded and tied for market. This was a tedious job we came home to after the school day. Grading meant examining each leaf and putting it in a
pile with others of the same quality and color. Then we picked up a few leaves – maybe six or eight – and tied them together with another folded leaf.

**Other crops and chickens**

*Strawberries and cotton:* Picking strawberries for market had a definite advantage over working in tobacco. We could snitch a few along the way to eat. Pine straw mulch was placed in the rows to keep the berries clean. The usual pay for picking was two cents a quart. The set price for picking cotton was one cent a pound. The fastest picker could do 300 pounds in a day. My highest was 100.

*Storing sweet potatoes:* When the sweet potatoes were dug in the fall, they were stored in pyramid-shaped mounds to the right of the front porch. The potatoes were piled up and covered with straw and then a thick enough layer of dirt to keep them air tight. When one of these mounds was opened, the potatoes must be used in a short time or they would spoil. This was our answer to a “root cellar.”

*Pecan Trees:* We had pecan trees in the yard so in the fall, the pecans had to be picked up. The children all helped with this. There was a black walnut tree across the road near the barn. They were much more difficult to use because the softer outer shell had to be taken off before using a hammer to crack the walnuts.

*Chickens:* We always had chickens that ran loose in the yard to forage for food. The only time they were shut up was when Mama would set a hen on eggs to hatch them. She made a little coop out of tobacco sticks stacked like a rail fence. This made sure the hen stayed on the eggs all the time. With chickens running loose in the yard, any barefoot children were likely to find out what it felt like to have chicken droppings squished between your toes.
Medicine

A doctor could not be reached every time someone got sick. A doctor was called in an emergency, but it had to be something like the birth of a child or a broken bone. Mama had remedies that worked very well. For spring fever or any sluggishness there was castor oil at night followed by Epsom salts in the morning and if this did not do a good cleaning out job, then calomel was substituted for the castor oil. I can remember taking castor oil at night. It would be poured into a tablespoon and the spoon would be held over the oil lamp to warm it so that the oil would run out more easily. I would be given a half of an orange to eat after the oil. Then I would be given a fifty-cent piece to take to bed. In the morning I could never find the fifty-cent piece but the next time that I would take castor oil there was a fifty-cent piece and now that I think of it, all those fifty-cent pieces looked very much alike.

For sore throat, there was Spirits of Turpentine. Tip the bottle over with your finger on top and then rub your finger over the back of your tongue. Or a few drops of kerosene on a teaspoon of sugar was good for a sore throat. For spring fever, or what ails you, there was Wampole’s Extract. And Mama was a firm believer in Carter’s Little Liver Pills. I wore asafetida in a little bag around my neck one winter, so that I would not get flu.

Mama’s home remedies seemed endless. Her chicken soup beckoned everyone, sick or well, to the kitchen. If that didn’t take care of all ailments, other cures were waiting: salt water to gargle or a mixture of honey, lemon juice and whiskey for arthritis, sore throats, bad colds, and coughs.

If anyone was sluggish, and had no pep, the best medicine was an egg-nog with a little whiskey to flavor it (made with a raw egg whipped up in a glass). For bruises or wounds, the treatment was Arnica ointment.
Flies

With seven children in the family there was nearly always a door open and flies did come in. But there were many ways of attacking these pests. One could put out poison in the form of little black pieces of paper in saucers with a little water to wet the paper. The flies would drink the water and die all over the place. Or there were strings of sticky paper to be hung from the ceiling. These were called Tanglefoot. They would swing and sway in the breeze. As a fly would fly by and attempt to light on it, he would stick fast. He would stay there and swing back and forth and struggle until he gave up the ghost and died. Another method was for all the family to get together in a cooperative effort of fanning the flies into one room. The door was then shut and someone was selected to go in and spray the room with Black Flag and then get out fast. Later we had to go in and brush all the flies from the windowsills and everywhere else and then sweep the floor.

Still another method was to swat them with a fly swatter. We also learned to count, because we were given five cents a hundred for all we killed. There was also the peach tree branch to be used as a fan over the table to keep the flies off the food while everything was being put on the table. That was usually my job as the youngest member of the family. This was done especially on Sunday or when there was company. This wasn't a bad job really, because I could watch the food come to the table, smell the wonderful aromas and hear all the conversation that went on in the kitchen.
School

The one room schoolhouse was started early by members of the community. The Articles of Agreement for a School are listed in the Ward Family History:

We the subscribers, agree to pay Jas. E. Ward three dollars each for the number of scholars to our names severally annexed in compensation for which said Ward is to teach our children for the term of one quarter or sixty days and is to use his best endeavors to advance them in whichever of the following branches they may choose to study viz. Spelling, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, English Grammar, or Geography. School to be commenced on the 7th day of September if twenty scholars be subscribed. September 1st 1846.

We attended the one room schoolhouse about a mile away. It was called the Ward School - I guess because Cousin Maury Ward donated the land for it. The teacher usually boarded at our house. We walked to school in good weather, but when it was rainy, Papa would hitch up the horses to the surrey or wagon and take us and everyone else along the way. Everyone took his lunch and ate it at recess. There were about 20 students in grades from one through eight. In earlier years the school went up to about the 10th grade. Lillie Belle and Norma attended this school and then went to Teachey High School, eight miles away, for one year. On Monday mornings Papa took them to Teachey where they boarded with Hubert and Helen Boney until he picked them up Friday afternoon. Lillie Belle and Norma went to summer school after that and taught the next fall.

There was a pot-bellied stove in the room and on cold days one of the older boys would be assigned to go to school early to get the fire going. There was a pump in the yard for drinking water. We became real sanitary about this time. We learned to make paper cups to drink water from rather than use the dipper that hung by the pump. One boy in school had a pocketknife. He was the official pencil sharpener. We never had enough new
pencils to go around in the family and so the new ones would be cut in two. I always got the end without the eraser. They always said since I was the youngest I should not have as much need to erase. To this day, I like a nice new sharpened pencil with a good eraser on it.

There was a recitation bench up by the teacher’s desk. One class at a time would go up and sit on this bench and recite the lesson while the others were supposed to study.

At recess most all the school would play together. There would be Hide-and-Seek, Hail Over, or Fox and Hounds.

My last year in high school I rode my brother's bus, a noisy, old vehicle, about ten miles to our assigned school, Franklin High School, where my brother James was a teacher. Our 16 required state units included four English, four math, two Latin, four social
studies, and two science. We had no library, no labs, and no lunch room. A large six-holer outhouse was provided for the girls and, in the opposite direction, a much smaller building for the boys.

![Picture of the Ward schoolhouse taken in 1991 by Carla Rawheiser; the building is completely gone now. In this picture the roof on the left is still intact (but there is sunlight reflecting off it); the roof on the right has deterioriated and only rafters are seen.](image)

**Company dinners**

On Sundays there always had to be plenty extra, "because someone might come for dinner". Seldom a Sunday passed without some relatives or friends stopping in and staying for dinner. After living in New York for over twenty years, I often think back to this. There we would not think of visiting even the closest in-laws without an invitation, and an acceptance. I admit that my cupboard was not as well prepared for this sort of thing as my mother's was. Or rather, I was not as well prepared to cope with having six or more drop in at a moment's notice for
dinner. I have longed for this informal living though, and many times have longed to have someone drop in. In preparation for Sunday dinner there was always a cake baked on Saturday. It might be a sheet cake in a pan about 18 inches square, or it might be a pound cake, or a big three layer. Sometimes there were pies, but I seem to remember more cakes. There were usually fried chicken, rice and vegetables in season. The churning had to be done whether it was Sunday or not, and there was always fresh butter and butter milk. Sunday night supper was usually light, but there was always plenty of it, because someone might stop in. Sometimes there was plenty left from dinner, but sometimes there was bread and milk, or clabber. Sometimes Mama might make cush, or cook cornbread to go with what was left over. If we planned well, there might be a sheet cake, a half-gallon jar of home-canned peaches with plenty of whipped cream and plenty of milk to drink.

On the first and second Sundays we went to church. On the third, fourth, and fifth Sundays relatives from nearby small towns often came for the day. A typical Sunday dinner consisted of ham, chicken, biscuits, cornbread, whatever breads and fruits were in season, and pound cake or Japanese fruit cake for dessert. When I was a little older, I was often the cake maker on Saturday - with no electric mixer, just a slotted spoon and a good right arm.

Church

On the first Sunday of every month we went to Wells' Chapel (my mother's church), which was eight miles away. The second Sunday was the day my father's church (Red Hill Universalist Church), which was 12 miles from us, had services. We often took a picnic basket and stopped at the overflow for lunch after church. A pipe, about two feet above the ground, kept cold water running all the time. When I was bored with the sermon, I memorized the beliefs of the church hanging on the front wall or poems I sneaked in. I still know the six tenets of our Universalist faith:
• The Universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man
• The Spiritual Authority and Leadership of His Son, Jesus Christ
• The Trustworthiness of the Bible as Containing a Revelation from God
• The Supreme Worth of Every Human Personality
• The Certainty of Just Retribution for Sin
• The Final Harmony of All Souls with God.

When I was about 10 years old, I was going to join the Baptist church with my mother, to keep her company. Mama learned more about Universalist beliefs and decided to join Red Hill Universalist Church in 1922.

There have been six generations of the Ward Family in the Red Hill Universalist Church. George W. Robinson (Isabella Robinson Ward’s father) and James E. Ward signed the Constitution of the Southern Convention of Universalists in 1827.
Holidays

Very few holidays were celebrated, except Christmas. This was a big day. We would get up as early as possible—maybe 3 or 4 o’clock to see what Santa Claus had brought. Then we wanted to go to Uncle Bob’s to see what Thelma, Edith and Robert had gotten. When you would see someone on Christmas morning, each one would try to say, "Christmas gift" first. The first to say it would get a present from the other.

In our stockings there would be one big toy for all the family—probably a game. One year it was the carom game that we played for years. Then there would be a small toy or two and fruits and nuts and candy and a bunch of raisins. We would each put our things on a paper and keep them separate and nibble on them all day.

Social Events

Cousin Oscar Owen’s birthday dinner—Cousin Oscar was crippled with rheumatism. For many years he was confined to a wheel chair. In the summer on his birthday, all the neighbors and relatives would bring a basket lunch and we would have a day of eating, visiting and playing.

Square dances-- Our greatest social events were square dances. These were family affairs. They might be in a new house or in a barn at someone’s home. All the children who were big enough to walk took part in the early evening, but later on the little ones would find a coat or a bed to lie on and go to sleep. Then when the dance was over, they would be picked up and carried home. Papa would call figures and loved to dance. Mama was brought up
in the Baptist church where she was not allowed to dance. As long as she lived she never learned to dance, but she had no objection to it and enjoyed watching.

The Ward Reunion---This was an annual affair with a picnic dinner. Papa was one who helped get the reunions started. The relatives from Georgia came up almost every year to visit. One year they were visiting at our house, so Papa invited many other relatives to come on Sunday afternoon to see them. Everyone had such a good time, but they said there was only one trouble—the time was too short. Next year they decided to bring dinner and stay all day. Thus the Ward Reunion was born. For many years it met at our house, in our yard.

Granny's birthday—Another time to get together and have a picnic dinner was Granny's birthday.
Family Sayings and Stories

These came from a variety of people and some were taken from the Ward family history. When a specific contributor is known, the name is indicated.

Sayings of Oscar Ward:

"You can't tell if a person's life has been worthwhile until you see how his grandchildren turn out."

“I’d love to stick around just to see what the next generation is going to do.”

“I don’t know what people do who don’t have children to blame things on!”

“Always leave while you’re still having a good time!”

Sayings of Berta Ward:

One of Mama’s favorite expressions was “Everything happens for the best.” She believed this too. She would say there is a reason for everything and it will work out for the best.

Another expression was “Have a place for everything and put everything in its place.” There was not a closet in the house and very few places to put things away. I cannot say that Mama was a fussy housekeeper. She never had time to be but if she had an opportunity she would have had a place for everything, and everything would have been in its place.

From Susan: I believe another one of Grandmama Ward’s sayings was something like this: “As soon as you finish one breath, here comes another one!” Mama has mentioned this one a few times over the years – it so perfectly captures that feeling of being in the thick of things, with no time to rest!

Other sayings:

- Moderation in all things
- A penny saved is a penny earned.
- A stitch in time saves nine.
- Idleness is the devil’s workshop.
- Two wrongs do not make a right.
- What has been said cannot be unsaid.
- Politeness is to do and say the kindest things in the kindest way.
- He who gives should never remember; he who receives should never forget.
From Ruth Ann: I don’t know where this came from but my mother often said: “Good, better, best. Never let it rest, ‘til the good is better and the better is best.”

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Cousin Cassie: "We are all peculiar, but we should make our peculiarities as attractive as possible. It never hurts to put your best foot forward."

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On a windy, rainy night when Papa was a young man, he went to a party. On his way home he came to Rockfish Creek, where there was water standing on both sides of the bridge. Cousin Charlie Vann, approaching from the other side, thought he recognized my dad's voice as he talked to his horse. "Is that you, Oscar," he called. Papa's reply was, "No, this is some damn fool who ought to be home in bed."

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Papa always had a bottle of whiskey hid in the bottom of Mama’s trunk. It was hid there in case of snakebite or something. He was not averse to taking a toddy occasionally. When Uncle Francis would come, the bottle would come out. He and Papa would sit by the dining room table with the bottle. Each would fix a drink with water, sugar and whiskey. They would sit and talk and sip on that drink all afternoon.

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From Eloise: My earliest memories include a table set for nine people, with my father always at the head and Mama at the foot. There was a bench at the back for the smaller children to sit on. Papa was a very patient man about most situations, but I learned at an early age that making disparaging remarks about food – any food – was not tolerated. My nemesis was oatmeal, but I ate small helpings of the slimy slush until I learned to like it.
From Lucile: When Lillie Belle was a baby, Mama and Papa went up in Sampson to visit Aunt Aggie. While they were there, a snowstorm came up. They wanted the baby to be still on the way home in the buggy so she would stay under the laprobe. They made her a toddy and she slept all the way home.

From Susan: One day Grandpapa Ward was talking with a neighbor lady, who was telling him all of the things she was worried about. In response, he offered her his philosophy that there are two kinds of situations you ought never to worry about. For one, if you can do something to fix it, you should go ahead and do it. For the other, if you can’t fix it, you should learn to accept it. She listened to him, then looked at him sternly and replied, “Oscar, I’m going to worry just as much as I please!”

From Eloise: The family history gives no details of Grandpa’s death, but word of mouth has it that he went by horse and buggy to visit a sick cousin several miles away, spent one night, and was on his way home when the horse and empty buggy reappeared at the cousin’s house he had left a short time before. Members of the family immediately went to investigate. The horse led them to Grandpa’s body lying beside the road. He evidently had a fatal heart attack and fell out of the buggy. Uncle Alfred secured his brother’s body across the saddle and fastened his horse to the back of the buggy for the drive home. As a reward for alerting the family to Grandpa's location, the horse was given a good home until her death.

From Eloise: We had a surrey with the fringe on top and two beautiful red horses. Usually when we went anywhere, all of us went. Baby sitters were unknown. My brother Horace often sat in the foot of the front seat. One day my mother asked him if he was comfortable. "Yes", he replied, "I'm comfortable - if that means scrounged to death."
A favorite story of Mama’s was about the man who came to visit at a home. The woman of the house excused herself to fix dinner and told the man to make himself at home. When she returned a short time later she met the guest going out with a bucket of ashes. She said, “Oh, you didn’t need to take out the ashes.” He said, “You told me to make myself at home and if I had been home and the ashes needed taking out as bad as they did here, I would have done it.”

Another story that she liked was about a family moving. As they neared the new house they saw a man beside the road. They stopped and asked him how the neighbors were in this new community. He said, “How were the neighbors where you came from.” They said, “Very bad. That is why we moved.” The man said, “That is the kind you will find here.” Another family came by and asked the old man the same question. He asked them how the neighbors were in their old town. They said, “Wonderful, we hated so to leave them.” He said, “Don’t worry, you will find just as fine neighbors here.” This story has a nice little moral to it as many of Mama’s stories did.

Once when Mama was heard to admonish the children because they were arguing, Virginia’s response was “Let us fuss, Mama, it’s fun.”

James, the first boy, was pretty smart, or his parents thought so anyway. He walked at an early age, and just after he learned to walk, he started talking. He put his first two words together one morning as he pulled himself up to the window and was watching a dog disappear around the house. He said, ”Dog gone.” I don’t know that this has been an indication of his later language.

Horace, not to be outdone, used an expression that has gone down through the ages. Papa was going to Rose Hill to take some strawberries to market. Horace wanted to go, but felt there was not much chance of his
being allowed to go, but he asked anyway. He said, “Papa, I want to go to Rose Hill mighty bad, but I know I can’t, can I?” I expect he got to go.

Another expression credited to Horace is one he used when he was quite small. He was worrying Mama wanting something to eat, wanting a drink of water, wanting other things. Mama said “Horace, you don’t know what you want.” To which Horace replied, “Well, I want something to want.” In later life we have found this to be true many times, that we want something to want.

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From Eloise: Dresses have been important to me since my first day at school. Since I was the sixth of seven children and the fourth girl, I had many hand-me-downs. But for the very special occasion of going to school for the first time, my mother made a new dress for me – blue and white checked gingham with red cross-stitch on the front. She happened to have a big scrap of solid blue material for bloomers to match. The Queen of Sheba could not have felt more elegant than I did when I marched into our one-room school building the first time. I proudly carried a Second Reader by Free and Treadwell. Since I had learned to read at home, the teacher thought I might be ready for that. I read to her until she told me that was quite enough. She gave the book back to my father and told him to exchange it for a third reader. That’s how I started to school in the third grade. When the teacher asked me to sweep the floor at the end of the day, I was delighted. I took the little broom and leaned way over so those around could see my matching bloomers. As soon as I strutted into the house after the mile walk home, I preened in front of a mirror to view my beautiful outfit. Imagine my horror when I discovered that I had my bloomers on wrong side out with the raw seams in full view!

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From Eloise: I was a copycat; I wanted to do everything my older brothers and sisters did. When they went to school and Lucile was asleep, I climbed into her high chair with my book and read to my mother as she worked in the kitchen. When I came to a word I didn't know, I spelled it for her to tell me the pronunciation. My memory does not tell me how or where I learned my alphabet or numbers. I do remember memorizing the multiplication tables, and many poems including Mother Goose rhymes.

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From Eloise: After my sister Lucile was born, I was the knee-baby, one who stands by her mother’s knee to hand her whatever she can’t reach. My mother used to tell people that, even when I was very young, she could trust me to watch the baby. One day, as I was sitting by the bed doing my usual “watch” job, while Mama gathered vegetables from the garden for dinner, the baby rolled to the edge of the bed and kept going. I raised my spindly little arms to try to catch her, but she rolled right through them. I can still feel my arms giving way as the weight of the baby hit them on the way to the floor. I ran out in the yard toward the garden screaming, “Mama, Mama, come take care of your baby child.” I was afraid she would break something or die, but the bed was low enough she wasn’t hurt at all.

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From Eloise: In my family every time two more children came, another room was added to the house. We did not know the luxury of having “a room of one’s own,” but we were very happy with what we had.

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From Eloise: One of my happy memories was the community traveling library located at our house. It was a wooden trunk with shelves filled with a variety of books that could be kept for ninety days and then exchanged at the North Carolina Library Commission for another collection. Sometimes I would hide a book in my jacket, climb up the big apple tree in our backyard, and read until somebody found me and made threats until I came down.

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From Eloise: On a visit to North Carolina I went to see the little one-room schoolhouse that, during my elementary school years, had put its loving wooden arms around a teacher and an average of 15 students in seven grades. As I looked at the tumble down vine-covered building, my mind suddenly focused on a memorable day when I was in fourth grade.

Sometimes Melva and Lila razzed me about being a baby so I was not surprised when, on this day in 1918, they met me at the edge of the school yard and started chanting, but when they continued, I was horrified. Their voices were a combination of duet and solo as they disclosed the following bits of information:
"We know somethin' you don't know."
"Yeah, it's about your daddy."
"Somethin' bad may happen to him. I know it's true because we heard the men talking at a meeting at my house. That was before they put on their white sheet stuff."
“One of them said ‘he’s a nigger lover and he’s refused to join us for the march.’"
"You know what happened to Mr. Luther when he wouldn't go with 'em. His barn burned down."
"No telling what they'll do to your dad. They might even burn your house down."
My mind was whirling for the rest of the day. In geography class I couldn't remember any of the assigned states and capitals.
At home, when I could control the tears, I told my parents about my scary day. They gave me my first lesson in race relations. My father said he had refused to join the Ku Klux Klan because he did not believe it was right to use racial slurs or harm any one. He made another statement I have never forgotten: "Some people say we should hold the black people down to keep them from rising up and taking over. But I believe any time people are held down they will eventually find their way up, as the Israelites did in the Biblical story of Moses. We should all work together for the welfare of all. Always remember that. I am not afraid, because I don't think the KKK will hurt us, and I don't want you to worry either."
My father died four years later. Our neighbors, even those who were KKK members, and the blacks we knew best, came to his funeral, and they all did everything they could to help us in our grief.

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On their march through the South, the Union soldiers stopped at Grandpa Jimmy's place. The two oldest children were in the woods with a mule and cart getting firewood. The Yankee soldiers unhitched the mule and took him with them, leaving the frightened children with their load of wood.

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An elderly cousin told this story: "When I was a teenager attending the School for the Deaf in Raleigh, General Sherman and his troops were camped close by. Food for the school was scarce. A teacher asked for volunteers to go see General Sherman and tell him the children at the school..."
were hungry. I volunteered, took my slate and went to see the very unpopular general. I explained the plight of the school by writing on my slate. After the General went north, barrels of flour, sugar, and other provisions were sent to the school.

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Joab, a cousin, was known for his lack of physical energy. Sometimes he liked to sit and take life easy. An expression arose among the relatives who were not busy. When asked, "What are you doing?" the answer would be, "I'm helping Joab."

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From Eloise: When my turn came for college, four years after my dad's death, finances were very bleak. My cousin, Sally R. Wilkins, was an only child whose father had died when she was three months old. Before his death, he had loaned a considerable sum of money to Cousin Maury Ward. Sally, down through the years, had not been able to collect on that loan. One day I heard her say she would probably never see any of the debt owed to her. A bright idea occurred to me. I got my mother's approval and then approached Sally.

"If I can collect money from Cousin Maury," I asked her, "May I use it for college and pay you back after I graduate?"

She said I could take advantage of all I could get from him without paying any interest. I was apprehensive about talking to Cousin Maury. When I finally gathered the courage to ask him, he agreed immediately, probably because he and Papa had been such close friends. In fact, one time their teacher asked Cousin Maury how much kin they were.

He replied, "Half brothers. Our fathers were brothers, so we are half brothers."

I think he wanted to help me because of his love for my father and for the dedication both of them had to education. Cousin Maury's reputation included being "land poor and cash short", but with me he was true to his word. Every time I wrote him for a payment, he sent it on time. Sometimes the check looked as if he had carried it in his pocket for a week or two, but not one ever bounced. I am very grateful to him and to Sally. My younger sister, Lucile, was able to use the same method for some of her college expenses.

***************
From Peggy: Grandma told me once that when Papa died, she was left with only $200. The worst decision she felt she ever made was to spend that on a tombstone, but at the time in her grief that seemed the thing to do.

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From Ruth Ann: When she was a baby, Lucile was very sick with pneumonia and almost died. Of course, there were no antibiotics. Every day the doctor would come in his buggy to drain her lungs. The family said that as soon as she heard the horse’s hooves in the distance, Lucile would begin to scream. She must have had a strong constitution, because she recovered and was rarely sick again.

Another perspective on this event from Susan: When Aunt Lucile was a baby, she developed pneumonia around Christmastime. It was a very scary situation. They had to keep a fire burning in the fireplace day and night to keep her warm. With that fire going all the time, Daddy (Horace) was really worried that Santa Claus wasn’t going to be able to get down the chimney to fill their stockings. He said his Mama and Papa told him not to worry about it, that Santa Claus would find a way, but he went to sleep on Christmas Eve worried anyway. He said he woke up in the middle of the night, and in the darkness he reached down and felt the toe of his stocking at the foot of the bed. It was flat and empty. Sadly shaking his head, he thought, “I knew he couldn’t do it.” But in the morning, when he woke up, his stocking was full. An orange had gotten stuck in the foot of it, and that had kept anything from going down to the toe!

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From Eloise: Along with kerosene lamps, a smokehouse for meats, and a surrey with the fringe on top, we had a party line telephone with eight other families. Each subscriber had a different number we could dial without going through central, who was one long ring. The others I remember were: Uncle Bob – four long rings; Cousin Maury – two long and two shorts; Cousin Charlie – three shorts; Cousin Albert – one long and one short; and our ring was one long and three shorts.

Our family always recognized one long and three shorts wherever we heard it. Many years later we were on a trip near Chapel Hill and decided to drive by the University to see if we could locate my brother who was in school there. We knew he worked in the library so we drove up to the back of the building and blew one long and three shorts. He quickly
opened a window on the top floor and whistled – yes, a long and three shorts. If I heard that combination of sounds today, I would immediately perk up.

***************

Story as told by Horace: One Sunday afternoon, Thomas Rackley and I were just rambling around. We found ourselves on Huffam’s Hill, which is sort of a steep bluff for that flat country. Thomas said, “Let’s make some bear signs, so it will look like a bear was here!” So we pulled up some sparkleberry bushes, and then Thomas put his hand down and made bear tracks in the loose dirt. He knew how to do it so they looked real. Then we scratched trees to make it look like “bear claws.” We had fun for a while and then went home.

Thomas’s daddy was a great hunter. Early the next week, he took his boy on a possum hunt. Thomas sort of steered them toward Huffam’s Hill. Thomas was carrying the lantern, and he “discovered” the bear tracks in the soil. His daddy saw them and said, “That’s a bear all right – let’s get out of here!” So they went home.

The next Sunday morning, I saw Henry Williams, who lived near Huffam’s Hill, talking to Papa out in the front yard. I drifted out there to see what they were talking about. Henry was telling about the bear scare that had taken over the whole neighborhood. His wife and children were afraid to go out of the house at night for fear of the bear. I realized then that it was our bear tracks that had caused all the commotion. I went in the house and sat down on the dining room bench and broke out in a big laugh. Virginia came in and asked, “Boy, have you gone crazy?”

Papa came in the house just then and called a neighbor, who had already been up there and said, yes, they were bear tracks all right. Then Papa called Cousin Charlie, who lived just down the road. He had heard about it, too, and was getting ready to go see a friend down in Pender County who had some bear dogs. Papa went out to hitch up the horse and buggy to ride over and see the tracks. He asked me to go with him. That was when I lost my nerve. I knew that if I rode up there with him and then he found out that it was all a hoax, I would get a good dressing down – at the very least.

I was scared to tell Papa, so I went and told Mama what had happened the Sunday before. She went to the door and called Papa, and then she told him what I had told her. Then Papa came into the room where I was. He looked down at me silently, looking me straight in the eye. Then he burst out laughing!
Afterward, he called Cousin Charlie on the phone to catch him before he left to go to Pender and get his friend to come with the bear dogs. I heard him say, “It was just those devilish boys making tracks with their fists.”

For several weeks after that, we heard accounts of it in the black community around Huffam. A bear had not been seen in that section for at least a generation, but the fear of them still persisted.

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Story from Horace, sent by Susan: There were several boys in the neighborhood who liked to some over and play with us. They liked to go swimming in the creek and sometimes just mess around. One day we all decided we would make a flying jenny. One of the boys knew how, so he sort of organized it. You first find a young pine about five inches in diameter in the right location. Then you cut it off about waist high or a little above. You cut the limbs off and cut the top off where it gets too small. Then you start to mark on the stump. You make notches all around it and split off the sides about eight inches from the top. You keep this up until you have a cone about an inch and a half wide. Then you split the pole, as near in the middle as you can. You start with an axe to get it as near in the middle as you can. Then you drive an iron wedge in, then two ghits to widen the split. A ghit is a wedge made of wood. When the split is big enough to fit over the cone in the stump, several boys take up the pole and place it over the cone of the stump. When the ghits are knocked out, you have a flying jenny. A boy can get near the center and push it around, and the ends move at a rapid pace. A boy can straddle the pole at each end and move back and forth to balance it. Then another boy can push it to give these two a ride. With the one doing the pushing trotting along, the boys on the ends can travel at a dizzying speed. It’s fun. We would take turns pushing and riding.

Virginia heard the boys having fun, so she came out and watched it for a while. Then she wanted to ride, so they let her. Her skirt was a handicap in getting astride the pole, but she managed. Perhaps she went faster than usual, but she didn’t know how to hang on to the pole. She fell and got up crying, holding her arm. She ran back to the house. That sort of put a damper on the fun for that day. Virginia’s elbow stayed stiff for some time. Years later Mama said it was one of the regrets of her life that she didn’t take her to see a doctor.

***************
From Susan: Daddy (Horace) broke his arm when he was about six, or a few years older. It may have been from the spinning wind-up lever on somebody’s Model T. Anyway, they took him to see Dr. Carr, and Dr. Carr wanted him to go see a doctor in Wilmington. He went with Daddy and Grandpapa Ward on the train. They stayed overnight, and they went to a movie, the first movie he had ever seen. It had a train in it that seemed to be roaring straight at him, right off the movie screen and into the theater! When they saw the doctor, and he told them how he wanted to handle the broken arm, Dr. Carr said, “Well, I can do that at home!” And they went on back home, and he took care of it himself.

*********

From Peggy: Every respectable young girl was expected to learn to play the piano. Since no teachers were available, the older girls ordered a mail order piano course so they could learn to play. James ordered a “fiddle” out of a catalog but never learned to read music. A mail order fiddle course came with it.

*********

From Susan: Another toy from the woods that Daddy (Horace) made us from his childhood was tom-walkers. These are homemade stilts. You find two small saplings about the same size, each with a low sturdy branch growing out at an angle. You cut them down and trim off all the branches except for that low one. Trim it off a few inches long. Then make sure you trim the bottoms of the trees so that those branches are at the same height, several inches off the ground. Trim the top so that the tree is about as tall as you are. To walk on them, you stand with your feet in the crotch of the branches, and hold on up at the top. It works!

*********

Story as told by Horace: The Ward School was a one-room school with one teacher, who taught all the grades through the seventh and even beyond. We had to learn to read and write and cipher. This ciphering was arithmetic. Learning the multiplication tables was not easy. Nor was it easy to learn to read and write. As the days wore on it was always good when recess time came. You could eat your lunch and have some time to mess around. Just beside the schoolyard was a clay hill. One time it rained
and it rained. The clay hill got rutted and muddy. Model T Fords, which were the elite way of transportation then, would sometimes get stuck in the mud. When someone was in trouble out there, the teacher would often let us out to go push them out. This was a welcome break from the boredom of school. It quit raining, the road dried up, and cars were not getting stuck any more, so we mean little boys found buckets and tooted water from the branch and poured it in the wheel ruts and mixed it up with sticks to make mud so the cars would get stuck! (But most of the drivers learned to steer around the ruts, and it didn’t work very well.)

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From Dot: In the 1930’s when I was a child we went to Grandma’s house for summer and Christmas vacations. It was a 5-6 hour drive from Brown Summit, a small town near Greensboro. Grandma would always come out on the front porch with her arms outstretched to greet and hug us all, wearing her usual shirt waist cotton dress and apron. I don’t remember too much about my early days with Grandma except I thought she was very old, very small, a happy person who sang or whistled a lot and spent most of her time in the kitchen. Cooking did take most of her time and with extra children and grandchildren in her home, there was little time to entertain us. I remember the water used in the kitchen was pumped into the enclosed porch and there were buckets to relay water back and forth. The cook stove was heated with “stovewood” (chopped small pieces) which was stored on the left next to the fire opening. This also heated the hot water in a reservoir on the right side and there was a “warming closet” above the heating surface where food was kept warm. The oven, of course, was below the top cooking area and I can remember Grandma taking biscuits and cornbread out for us to eat hot. One other thing about Grandma’s kitchen that I remember was its unusual smell that came from the egg shells parching on the back of the stove. When these were “right” they were broken up and fed back to the chickens. Those were days when nothing was wasted.

Peggy adds: Grandma’s theory for parching the shells was that in their original form, if hens ate them, they might peck their own eggs.

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From Eloise: There were three Sallie Wilkins in our family: Sallie K., Sallie V., and Sally R. They were all cousins to each other and all were our cousins. When we spoke of them we used the initial and/or the spelling to distinguish the one we had in mind. Sallie K. and Sally R. were both teachers at our Ward one-teacher school. Cousin Sallie K. was there before
I started to school and Cousin Sally R. was my teacher in fourth grade. Cousin Sallie V. taught in a neighborhood nearby. Note: She will be 103 years of age in July 2003. When she was 100, a little boy asked her how old she was. When she told him, she added this question: “Do I look that old?” His quick answer was, “Yes ma’am, you sure do.”

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Eloise has a copy of a letter (printed below) written by Cousin Josephine Ward to Uncle Preston Page (Mama’s brother). The woman recommended was Aunt Mag, Papa’s sister, who did eventually marry Uncle Preston. That is how Papa’s sister married Mama’s brother.

Joford, N.C.
Aug. 17, 1899

My dear Friend,

I suppose I owe you a little apology for not answering your letter sooner, but I haven’t had a very good opportunity to mail a letter without being very public about it. I do not like much to write about such things — no way. I could accept no other than a friendly call from you, but would be glad to have you come to see us anytime. I appreciate your regard for me and will ever remember you kindly unless some future event changes my feeling toward you. I have a high regard for you as a gentleman of character and have in mind a lady friend who would I think make a suitable companion for you, and if at any time you wish any information concerning the one I have mentioned I will readily give it.

With best wishes,
Josephine Ward.

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From Eloise: There were persimmon trees on our place. When the persimmons got ripe, Papa and James and Horace gathered them carefully and put them in a big ugly barrel in the washhouse. Ingredients needed to make wine were added, and much later wine could be obtained from a spigot on the barrel.

***************
From Peggy: In her last years, Grandma refused to buy new clothes because she knew that with her declining health she would not live to wear them out. My mother (Edna) was able to talk Grandma into getting new clothes because they wore the same size. My mother promised that she would take the clothes and wear them after Grandma died -- and she did.

***************

From Peggy: Grandma always wore her hair in one braid that was wound around to make a bun which was secured with large wire hairpins. When she made the braid (a cue) she secured the end of it with the hair that she got from her brush that she had brushed her hair with. In homes where the woman could afford a dresser set, one piece of it was a glass container which had a hole in the lid and this was a hair saver. No loose hairs were ever thrown away. Grandma did not need a hair saver, she used that hair. Today one would use some sort of elastic to secure the end of a braid.

***************

From Eloise: My brother Horace’s favorite World War II story about his service with the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion in Africa and Europe started during the fighting in Tunisia. Soldiers in his unit found a wounded dog, took him to the medics and named him Bo. Bo was treated successfully and became a pet throughout the campaign. He survived well on G.I rations and the mutual love that resulted.

It seemed like a touch of home for the men to have a dog around. Bo was also a good soldier. When the shells started falling, he would hit a fox hole with anyone who was around. When death was reigning everywhere, it was good for the fighting men to have something alive close by.

When marching orders came, Bo knew his place beside the driver of the half-track. When the battalion boarded a ship in a convoy to invade Sicily, he was put in a barracks bag and smuggled aboard. He stayed with the group throughout the fighting in that area.

At the end of the Sicilian campaign, the men of the 58th smuggled Bo, now a seasoned veteran of the artillery unit, on board a ship in a convoy bound for England in preparation for D-day. When the ship started throwing sparks on the first day out, the commander forbade it to continue. The sparks might give away the position. To avoid endangering the whole convoy, the ship was dropped from the group and given a PT boat as an escort the rest of the way.
On the voyage it was impossible to keep the dog hidden. Orders came over the intercom for the animal on board to report to command headquarters immediately. Bo did not report. As the ship approached the port of Algiers for a stopover, orders came from the captain that it was absolutely against the law to take the dog into England, which was their destination. He would have to be put ashore while they were in port.

Knowing that a stray dog in a strange city would not have much chance of survival, the men did not relish that solution. Berthed next to them was an American cargo ship, which was headed for America. By shouting, the men on board the two vessels could converse. The American sailors would be happy to take the dog with them – a beautiful solution. The English crew put Bo in a bag and tied it to a rope that had been thrown between the ships.

About a third of the way over, the dog struggled; the bag came loose and went down in the water. In a matter of minutes he would be drowned. A roar went up from both ships. The Americans were shouting, “You damn Limeys, can’t you even tie a knot?” The honor of the British navy was at stake. A naval officer made a beautiful high dive, swam over and tied the bag to the rope. As the dog was pulled on board, a great cheer went up from both ships. Bo was safe and the men of the 58th could now resume their mission.

Contributions with names listed in the section above were received from:

Eloise Ward Phelps
Ruth Ann Mosback Bramson
Lucile Ward Mosback
Susan Ward Martin
Peggy Ward Rawheiser
Dot Stanfield Lambeth
Appendix

Recipes
Poems
Folksongs
Games
Ward family reunions
Maps

Mama’s Recipes

Meals remembered by Lucile and Eloise (asterisk indicates recipe provided below)

*Cush
*Japanese Fruit Cake
Tea Cakes
*Asparagus Soup
Chicken Gravy-thickened with egg
*Cracklin Bread
Corn Bread Sticks
Pound Cake
*Clabber
Vegetables with Fatback
*Hoecake Bread
Vegetable Soup

*Cush
Use leftover rice, grits, cornbread or biscuits. Crumble into pan to brown in butter or bacon drippings in skillet. Add any minced, leftover meat (usually pork, ham, or bacon.) Beat eggs with seasoning and a little milk, then pour over the mixture and stir over low heat as for scrambled eggs. Add a little onion and season to taste.

Asparagus Soup
To pick the asparagus, cut stalk from root with a long knife and leave the roots that come up again year after year. Boil a ham bone to get all the last bits of meat off the bone and add any leftover ham. Add rice. When the rice is about half done, add the asparagus which has been cut into pieces ½
to 1 inch long. Add salt and pepper to taste. Break 4 or 5 eggs into the soup and cover until the eggs are hard-boiled. Use a table knife to cut the eggs against the side of the pan to get them chopped up.

**Clabber and Butter**

When milk (fresh from the cow) is allowed to sit out for a time, it first sours and then turns to clabber. The cream will be on top, and before it sours can be skimmed off to use separately on cereal or make butter. The remainder is clabber and we ate it as one would eat plain yogurt. It was often mixed with a teaspoon of sugar and fresh cream in a glass. To keep the milk cool, it was put in a closed container in a bucket, and the bucket was lowered into the well. To make butter, clabbered cream was put into the churn, and churned until the butter came. Then the butter was taken out and put in a butter mold and put on the table. The liquid remaining was buttermilk to drink.

**Japanese Fruit Cake**

1 cup butter  
2 cups sugar  
4 eggs  
3 ¼ cups flour  
1 t baking powder  
1 scant cup milk or water  
1 t vanilla

Assemble as for any butter-based cake. Divide batter into two parts. Into one part add:  
1 t cinnamon  
1 t allspice  
½ t cloves  
¼ pound raisins, chopped fine

Bake the spiced portion in two greased and floured layer cake pans. Bake the white part in two greased and floured layer cake pans also.

**Filling:**  
Grated rind of 1 lemon  
Juice of 2 lemons  
1 good-size coconut, grated  
2 cups sugar  
1 cup boiling water  
2 T cornstarch
Place all ingredients in a saucepan except the cornstarch. Bring to a boil. Dissolve the cornstarch in ¼ cup cold water or coconut milk. Add to mixture and continue cooking and stirring until the mixture drops in a lump from the spoon. Cool; spread between the cake layers, alternating white and spiced layers.

**Cracklin Bread**

1 quart cornmeal  
1 pint cracklings  
3 teaspoons salt  
2 tablespoons baking powder  
1/2 cup flour  
boiling water

Mix cornmeal and salt, pour over enough boiling water to moisten, but not enough to make a mush. When the meal has cooled, work in the cracklings and the flour with the fingers. Add also the baking powder. Form the dough into cakes 4 inches long, 2 inches wide and 1 inch thick. Bake in greased pan in moderate oven for 35 minutes.

CRACKLINGS: Cut fat back into thin 1-1/2 inch squares. Fry in skillet until they are curled and golden brown. Drain cracklings on absorbent paper. Serve warm or cold or use for crackling bread.

**Hoe-cakes**

Pour equal parts of a mixture of half milk and half water into a mixture of half cornmeal and half flour. Add a pinch of salt. Stir well. Add additional liquid or cornmeal until batter is about the consistency of thick syrup. Drop as pancakes, or one big thin cake, on medium hot well-greased griddle. When the bottom is a light gold color, flip with a spatula and cook other side. Cool frying pan and add a bit of water to cook over-easy eggs.
Poems recited by Berta or children

Lucile wrote on one of the notecards:
Pieces We Used to Say: Every self-respecting girl used to know several pieces that she could say to entertain company. These are some that we learned.

  Little Orphan Annie
  Under the Buggy Seat
  I Cannot Be a Washington
  The Garden Truck Went on a Strike
  Annabel McCarthy was Invited to a Party

The following are poems or pieces remembered by Eloise with her comments in italics:

Favorite poem of Mama’s:
If we noticed little pleasures
As we notice little pains,
If we quite forgot our losses
And remembered all our gains,
If we looked for people’s virtues
And their faults refused to see,
What a cheerful, happy place
This good old world would be!

**************************

I cannot be a president, however hard I try,
But into something I must grow as fast as the days go by.
The world needs women good and true
And I’m glad I can be one,
For that is even better than to be a Washington.

**************************

Work while you work and play while you play.
That’s the way to be happy and gay.
Moments are useless trifled away,
So work while you work and play while you play.
Do your best, your very best, and do it every day,
Little boys and little girls, this is the wisest way.
All that you do, do with your might,
Things done by halves are never done right.

When a task is once begun,
Never leave it ‘til it’s done.
Be the labor great or small,
Do it well or not at all.

If you make a mistake, let it go for a mistake.
Don’t patch it with a lie for mercy sake.
A lie is the shoddiest patch you can find.
It looks bad enough before and a sight behind.

Horace said this one:
Once a trap was baited with a piece of cheese;
It tickled so a little mouse it almost made him sneeze.
“Look out, there,” the old mouse said. “Be careful where you go.”
“Oh,” said the little one, “I don’t think you know.”
He walked boldly in, nobody in sight;
First he took a nibble, then he took a bite;
Snap the trap together quick as a wink
Catching mousie fast there ‘cause he didn’t think.
What matters - by Myrtle Barber Carpenter (typed from an old newspaper clipping)

My mother says she does not care
About the color of my hair,
Nor if my eyes are blue or brown
Nor if my nose turns up or down, ---
       It really doesn’t matter.

And Mother says she does not care
If I am dark or if I’m fair,
Nor if I’m thin or if I’m fat;
She does not fret o’er things like that,---
       It really doesn’t matter.

But if I cheat or tell a lie
Or say mean things to make folks cry,
Or if I’m rude and impolite
And do not try to do the right,---
       Then that does really matter.

It isn’t looks that make one great
But character that seals your fate;
It’s what’s within your heart, you see,
That makes or mars your destiny,---
       And that does really matter.

***************

The garden truck went on a strike and made an awful racket.
The foolish cabbage burst his head; the onion split his jacket.
The pepper burned; the beets grew red; the kale growled like a sinner;
The popcorn cried, “I’ll never pop for any creature’s dinner.”
The jolly pumpkin laughed aloud, his voice so rich and mellow,
    “That’s just what you’re fixing for, you foolish, selfish fellow.
I gather all the rain and dew to plumpen me and sweeten
So I can make the nicest pies that one has ever eaten.”
And when they’ve passed me twice around, I feel I’ve done my duty,
If Pa says, “Ma, save those seeds, that pumpkin was a beauty.”
Folksongs

Most of the information in this section was provided by Eloise. Her comments are printed in italics

*My mother loved to sing as she breezed around the house doing chores. She had quite a repertoire, and some of hers I have never seen in a book. In the early fifties a man who was collecting folk songs taped most of the ones she knew, supposedly for the Smithsonian. Peggy has tried to locate that tape but so far no success.*

***************

*I can almost hear Mama's happy voice singing this one.*

**No John No:**
On yonder hill there lives a lady
But her name I do not know,
I'll go and court her for her beauty,
Whether she answers yes or no
No John no, No John no,
No John, No John, No John no.

She is a fair and handsome creature
And to woo her I will go.
I will ask her if she'll be my true love,
Will she answer Yes or No
No John no, etc.

If when walking in the garden
Plucking flowers all wet with dew,
Tell me will you be offended
If I walk and talk with you
No John no etc.

Tell me one thing tell me truly,
Tell me why you scorn me so,
Tell me why, when asked a question
That you always answer No
No John no etc.
My father was a Spanish merchant
And before he went to sea,
He told me to be sure to answer
No to all you said to me,
No John no etc.

And if when walking in the garden
I should ask you to be mine,
If I tell you that I love you
Would you then my love decline?
No John no, No John no,
No John, no John, no John no.

***************

Another favorite was "Billy, Boy."

Oh, where have you been,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
Oh, where have you been,
Charming Billy?
I have been to seek a wife,
She's the joy of my life,
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Can she make a cherry pie,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
Can she make a cherry pie,
Charming Billy?
She can make a cherry pie,
Quick as a cat can wink an eye,
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

Did she ask you to come in,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
Did she ask you to come in,
Charming Billy?
Yes, she asked me to come in,
There's a dimple in her chin.
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

How old is she,
Billy Boy, Billy Boy?
How old is she,
Charming Billy?
Twice six, twice seven,
Twice twenty and eleven,
She's a young thing
And cannot leave her mother.

***************
Jack and Joe

One year ago when Jack and Joe set sail across the foam
Each vowed a fortune he would gain before returning home.
In just one year Jack gained his wealth and sailed for home that day
And as the pards shook hands to part poor Joe could only say:

"Give my love to Nellie, Jack, and kiss her once for me,
She's the fairest girl in all the world I know you'll say is she.
Treat her kindly, Jack, old boy, and tell her I am well,"
The parting words were “don't forget to give my love to Nell.”

Two years had passed when Joe at last gained wealth enough for life,
And sailed for home across the foam to make sweet Nell his wife.
But soon he learned one year ago that Jack and Nell had wed,
He sobs and frets and now regrets that he had ever said:

Chorus

They perchance to meet upon the street Joe said “you selfish elf,
Next time I learn to love a girl I’ll kiss her for myself;
But all is fair in love and war, and since you’ve gone and wed,
I won’t be angry, Jack old boy,” and once again he said:

Chorus

***************

The Cat Came Back (typed from a very old printed copy with one word changed (second verse, second line))

Old Mr. Johnson had troubles of his own
He had an old yaller cat that wouldn’t leave his home.
He did everything he knew to keep the cat away,
Even give him to the preacher and tole him for to stay.
   But the cat come back
   The very next day – the cat come back,
   I thought she was a gonner, but the cat come back,
   ‘Cause she couldn’t stay away.

The cat she was a terror, they thought it was the best
To give her to a fellow that was going out west.
The train was goin round a bend, it struck a rotten rail,
Not a blessed soul was left aboard to tell the awful tale.
    But the cat come back
    The very next day – the cat come back,
    I thought she was a gonner, but the cat come back,
    ‘Cause she couldn’t stay away.

The cat she lay a’sleeping out in the yard one day
Long come an organ grinder and he began to play.
The cat raised her head and kinder looked around
He played ta-ra-bum-de-a and the cat fell dead.
    But the cat come back
    The very next day – the cat come back,
    I thought she was a gonner, but the cat come back,
    ‘Cause she couldn’t stay away.

***************

My mother had a few sad songs. Maybe that's why I don't remember most of the words. One was about "A little rosewood casket lying on a marble stand and a packet of old letters written by my loved one's hand." Another one was about "The Old Gray Goose": "Go tell Aunt Patsy". You may have learned it as "Aunt Rhoda" or something else, but at our house it was "Aunt Patsy." Anyway, the old gray goose died. The gander mourned and the goslings cried.

***************

There are many verses to
"A Froggie Went A-Courtin and he did ride
Sword and pistol by his side uh-uh"
It took a lot of words to court, marry and have a wedding supper for Miss Mousie.

***************

Madam, you are tall and slender m-m-m-m-m-m
And I know your heart is tender m-m-m-m-m-m
What if I am tall and slender diddle-de-dictum, diddle-de-day
But I know my heart's not tender diddle-de-dictum, diddle-de-day
Madam, here's a ring I'll give you m-m-m-m-m-m-m
Thou can have it if thou's willing m-m-m-m-m-m-m
I don't want your rings or money diddle-de-dictum, diddle-de-day
I want a man who'll call me honey diddle-de-dictum, diddle-de-day

***************

Mama, Mama, have you heard
Daddy's gonna buy me a mockin' bird?
If that mockin' bird won't sing
Daddy's gonna buy me a diamond ring.
If that diamond ring turns brass,
Daddy's gonna buy me a lookin' glass,
If that lookin' glass gets broke,
Daddy's gonna buy me a billy goat;
If that billy goat runs away,
Daddy's gonna buy me a load of hay;
If that load of hay gets wet,
Daddy's gonna whip me, what'll you bet?

***************

This is an old lullaby that Lucile said her mother sang: (from Ruth Ann)

Rockabye, don’t you cry,
Go to sleep little baby.
When you wake,
You can have some cake,
And ride those pretty little horses.
Life is like a mountain railroad

Life is like a mountain railroad
With an engineer so brave
We must make this run successful
From the cradle to the grave
Watch the curves, the fills the tunnels
Never falter, never fail
Keep your hand upon the throttle
And your eye upon the rail

Oh, blessed Savior, thou wilt guide us
Til we reach that blissful shore
Where the angels wait to join us
In God's grace forever more

As you roll across the trestle
Spanning Jordan's swelling tide
You behold the union depot
Into which your train will glide
There you'll meet the superintendent
God the Father, God the Son
With a hearty, joyous greeting
Weary pilgrim, welcome home

Refrain

*************************

Some of the other familiar ones are:

*Reuben, Reuben, or Rachel, Rachel I've been thinkin'*
*I was born about ten thousand years ago*
*Clementine*
*The Old Gray Mare*
*Pop goes the Weasel*
*Darlin' Nellie Gray*
*My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean*
Papa liked this one:

**Old Black Joe**

Gone are the days when my heart was young and gay,
Gone are my friends from the cotton fields away,
Gone from the earth to a better land I know,
I hear their gentle voices calling Old Black Joe.

Chorus:
I'm coming, I'm coming, for my head is bending low,
I hear their gentle voices calling Old Black Joe.

Why do I weep, when my heart should feel no pain,
Why do I sigh that my friends come not again?
Grieving for forms now departed long ago.
I hear their gentle voices calling Old Black Joe.

Chorus:

Where are the hearts once so happy and so free?
The children so dear that I held upon my knee?
Gone to the shore where my soul has longed to go,
I hear their gentle voices calling Old Black Joe.

Chorus:

**Games**

Many of the games were different from the ones that children play today. Games remembered by Lucile and Eloise include the following, with rules written by Eloise included for the last two.

- There Ain’t No Bears Out Tonight
- Mumbly Peg
- Nine Corn
- Prisoner’s Base
- Pretty Girl Station
- William Come Tremble Toe
- Club Fist
Go Fish
Musical Chairs
Old Maid
My Ship Sails
Tag
Hide-and-seek
Hopscotch
The Farmer in the Dell
Jump Rope
Drop the Handkerchief
Hail Over (Red Rover has the same directions)

**Drop the Handkerchief:** One player is designated as “it” and is given a handkerchief. The rest of the players join hands and face in, holding hands. “It” walks slowly around the circle, chanting, “A tisket, a tasket, a green and yellow basket, I wrote a letter to my love and on the way I dropped it; a little child picked it up and put it in his pocket.” “It” drops the handkerchief behind one of the players.

When that player realizes the handkerchief has been dropped behind him/her, he/she must take off in a run to pursue “it” who tries to get around to the empty space in the circle before being tagged. If “it” is tagged before reaching the other player’s spot, he/she must continue as “it.” But if he/she reaches the empty spot, the player left outside the circle becomes the new “it.”

**Hail Over:** Form two equal teams with a leader for each and place one on each side of a small building. (We used our one-room school building.) One team lines up holding hands. The leader of that team designates a member of the other team by calling out, “Hail over, hail over, let ______ come over. The player whose name is called runs over to the line and tries to break through the line of arms and hands. If he/she is successful, a member of the team holding hands must be forfeited to the other team. If he/she fails, that player must join the team he/she just tried to break through. The game ends when the winning team has all the players.
Ward Family Reunions

From the 1945 Ward family history -- items taken from Mary Kate Allen’s minutes of the Ward reunions:

Sometimes just after sunset the landscape is flooded with a soft mellow light which fades only as the evening shadows deepen – a beautiful tribute to a passing day. It is hard to know just whence or how this light comes but all earth is aglow with its presence. Now, in retrospect, these family reunions have somewhat the same qualities. So strong have been the Ward family ties for the past century that one almost wonders which was the first reunion. Life in the old South centered about the home and community, but as time went on and transportation became less difficult, long visits to one’s kinfolks were quite frequent.

On the occasions of the visits of the Georgia cousins, it had grown to be a task to even speak to all the first cousins. Established in homes of their own, it required time and travel to visit each one. The old home community of Rockfish was still home to them, and what could be more like the days of yesteryear than to have a watermelon cutting? Cousin Oscar Ward had the inviting grove, the abundant crop of melons and the desire to share them with cousins and friends. Others contributed melons too, and that occasion stands out in the memory of all those who were present.

Sentiments had grown stronger as the years passed, so it was a natural step in the evolution of the Ward family that they should meet about August 20, 1922 in the first annual Reunion. The personal invitation of Cousin Oscar and Cousin Berta to attend the reunion at their home had a special meaning, for most of the family remembered the beautiful grove and the hospitality which one always found there. They came!

The summer of 1923 found each of us looking forward to the Friday before the third Sunday in August, for Cousin Oscar and Cousin Berta invited the Reunion to their home again, despite the memory of porches that took two sweepings instead of one to clear the dirt left by tramping feet. From far and near they came. With Cousin Oscar, tall and stalwart at the road to greet the people who were arriving from opposite directions, one suddenly felt that surely, in all the world, there must not be an atmosphere more pleasant.

While all agreed that we could not have a more pleasant time elsewhere, it did seem rather burdensome to think of the “day after” a Reunion in one’s home, so when Maury Ward invited us to meet at his home in August of 1924, the invitation was readily accepted.
With the reunion of 1926 some of the “first cousins” objected to meeting at one home more than twice. Even the inviting grove would not stay their decision because, they contended, sometime it would interrupt a family’s normal life. The Reunions of 1928, 1929 and 1930 were all held at the old Dell school site. These were informal gatherings with bountiful picnic dinners. … Accepting the invitation of the members of our family who are Universalists, we met at Red Hill Church in August of 1931. … The Tenth Annual Ward Reunion met on Friday, August 18, 1932 at Franklin High School Building in the village of Harrell’s Store.

There are minutes for each reunion from 1932-1944, published in the 1945 Ward History. Each describes the location, the program arranged by the program committee, and election of the next President. No reunion was held in 1935; because of the epidemic of Infantile Paralysis in North Carolina during the summer of 1935, the State Board of Health requested that all public gatherings be called off. Due to gas rationing and other conditions arising from the chaos of a country at war, no Reunion was held in 1942, the year immediately following our entry into this conflict.
Maps showing locations of farms and buildings (all from Mapquest) 

—rectangles indicate the location of the next highest magnification—
The area indicated by the rectangle is enlarged in the map on the next page, which indicates the locations of various buildings and homes or farms of relatives. Numbers of selected state roads to match with road names are:

Wards Rd – SSR 1102  
Byrds Chapel Rd – SSR 1127  
Huffman Rd – SSR 1126  
Old Camp Rd – SSR 1100
Locations indicated:

1. Home place
2. Uncle Bash’s home
3. Byrd’s Chapel Church
4. Herring place
5. Huffman place
6. Maury Ward’s home
7. Charlie Vann place
8. Grannie and Grandpa
9. Jimmie’s home (became Uncle Bob’s place)
10. Schoolhouse
11. Graveyard
12. Farm “over the bay”

Peggy Ward Rawheiser and Alfred Ward provided maps with locations marked.