



DORA HEFNER: "I'd get up of a morning and mama'd plait my hair in pigtails and away I'd go and spin all day." (Photo courtesy of Jeanette Ellis)

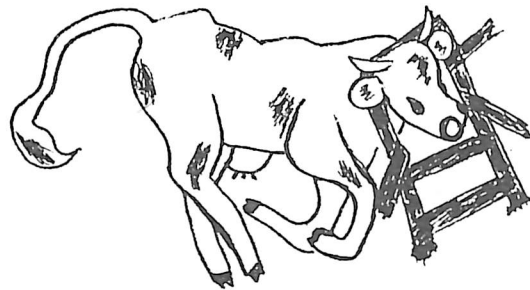
Dora Hefner

"Gramma lived here in Lando, or it might have been called Fishing Creek then. Well anyway, we still lived in Union County and we'd come in to see her on the train they called "Forty-one", and I don't know how we'd get from Edgemoor — we might of walked cause we'd come at night and the "dummy" didn't run from Edgemoor to Lando at night. But I reckon somebody met us in a horse and buggy.

Then when I was real small, Mama and Papa moved here and both of them went to work in the mill. I went to work down here when I was twelve years old for twenty cents a day spinning for twelve hours. I'd get up of a morning and Mama'd plait my hair in pigtails and away I'd go and spin all day. I've went out of that mill a many a day after doffing all day with "Skeet" Langley, and me and him would get out there behind that lower store and shoot marbles. The inspectors would come to the mill checking about children working, and we had one boy worked down there, he'd find out they was coming through and he'd crawl under the spinning frame on one side when the inspectors come through, he'd go out on the other side. But us girls couldn't do that so we had to stand there and take it. But I worked at home before I went to the mill, cause my Mama had a hard time. My Daddy was sick for a long, long time so I had to cook and tend to the babies 'til I got twelve. I had to stand on a box to reach the tub to do Mama's washing.

It wasn't long then till I had marryin' on my mind. Mama didn't care for me going with Jim, see I'd knowed him most all my life, but she didn't want me to get married for I wasn't but sixteen. So we'd have box suppers over at the school house and the girls would cook up stuff and put it in a shoe box and fix it up real pretty. Well the boy that would buy the box, the girl would eat supper with him. But this night I didn't take no box, so I said, "Mama, I'm going to the box supper." and she said it was okay. Well, honey I "boxed" for fifty-five years. I went and run off and got married and that boxing lasted for a long, long time. But somebody found out about us being married before daylight, and come in and told Mama. They thought she was gonna raise sand, but I had a sister and Mama said, "Tell Jim I got another one up here, he can have her, too."

When me and Jim first married, Papa bought a cow and it had a little calf. Papa give me and Jim that calf. Well, we raised her and I guess we still had that calf when our last baby was born. We kept her 'til she just about died with old age. This old cow, you couldn't keep her nowhere. She'd tear down everybody's fence and Jim would fuss. So, Mr. Westbrook 'cross the creek, he'd catch her and charge us a dollar to get her back. But we never worried about that old cow. She'd come home everytime with the gate around her neck. So, Mr. Westbrook didn't get our money. We had a time with "Old Pet".



"Old Pet"

We kept Pet in the Hefner pasture during the day, but we'd go get her and bring her home to the stall at the edge of the yard, we'd feed her and set on a stool or a bucket and milk her. We'd take that milk in the house and strain it in a jar and let it set up to clabber. That's where butter come in. We'd put the clabber in the churn and churn butter saying, "Come butter, come butter, come." And how we kept our milk cool, we'd take it to the branch and Papa would build a box and bore small holes in each end so the water could run through. We'd set our milk down in there 'til we got ready to use it. But you didn't keep it in there too long, cause that's what we lived on — cornbread, buttermilk, chicken, and eggs. We killed our own chickens. We'd have to run 'em down, wring their neck, scald 'em and pick 'em. Back when we first got ice boxes they had a old wooden icebox. It had a drain in the bottom of it. We'd buy chunks of ice from the ice man when he come around. We'd buy fifty or a hundred pounds, or however much your icebox would hold and we'd put it in the box and keep our milk and stuff on ice. A block would last three or four days and it cost about 1/2¢ a pound. Back in them times nothing wasn't high.



We made or grew most everything we needed. We raised our own peas, they was called whippowill peas, little old brown striped peas. Well, when they got dry, we'd pick 'em and we had a "toebagging" sheet and we'd tie 'em up in that and Papa'd get us a hickory stick and we'd beat our peas out of the hulls with sticks.

Then we'd pick out the peas from the hull and that's what we had for beans. We didn't know what lima beans and butter beans was then. We used to eat "cressie" greens. They're little old long slim greens and they grow wild in the corn fields. I usually picked, washed 'em good, parboiled 'em, fried my fat meat grease, took out the greens and cook 'em in with the grease. We made our own lard, too. When we'd kill hogs we'd take the fat, take it out to the washpot, build a fire under it, cook the meat till it was brown, take the fire away, let the grease get cold, then we'd put it in lard cans. We made our own sausage, too, and put 'em in the smoke house.

Then you could buy most anything else you needed from the store down here (the company store). You didn't go nowhere then. Why the first time I ever knowed there was a Rock Hill was when I got married. That's where I went on my honeymoon. We went to the movin' picture show. And then there was "degos" we called 'em. They'd come around - two or three or four of 'em and they'd peddle things like stockings and clothes. I don't even know how them boogers got here. They walked everywhere they went. They carried a great big pack over their back and one on their arm. They'd just



stay here a day or two at the time and move on. They had jewelry and such as that in the little case and spreads and pillowcases and clothes and the like in the big one. But most of my pillowcases come from flour sacks and that's how I got my baby's diapers, too. I'd just rip that sack open and hem it and make a big diaper, and fold it over three corners and pin it in the middle. But I do remember when Mama went to giving me fifty cents a week, I didn't stop till I went and caught a peddler and bought me a dress to wear to church.

The first Church of God was in a little one room store house there by where Beatrice used to live. Then they bought that wood building where the Hut is now. And, honey, I've walked down there when the sleet burned my face up. I had six little youngins, lived down yonder in the little brown house. I'd get up on a Sunday morning and cook my breakfast, get my six youngins ready for church and go to church, come home, cook my dinner and by three o'clock I was out ready to visit Aunt Rusha, Aunt Madge or some of them. One of my boys went thirteen years to that church without missing a Sunday, and then one of my boys stayed away so long one time that he went down there and knocked on the door. I run that youngin' all down that branch. They used to have Homecoming there still do - they're having one Sunday. Food wasn't high then. Well they'd have that table spread. And, honey, they'd say the blessings, and when they'd say Amen, James, and William and Norman they'd grab that banana pudding and away they'd run down to branch. They'd set down on the big rocks, eat that puddin' and drink water out of the spring.

And I remember another time we had a big spread. A long time ago there was a super name of Mr. Manly. He lived up there on the hill where Bessie and them lives now. Well he'd put on a big thing on the fourth of July. Well, I won a dollar one day, believe it or not pushing a wheelbarrow across that yard blindfolded. I thought I was rich. We used to have plenty of good times.



DORA HEFNER laughs as she shows her old churn and recalls her days of making butter. (Photo by Charles Inabinet)