



EMMA AND CHARLIE THOMAS with Nancy: "I was 18 when me and Charlie married." (Photo courtesy of Charlie Thomas)

Emma Thomas

Papa worked down here, and wher school was out papa got me to come down here. I was sixteen years old and I worked in the cloth room.

We lived in Richburg then and me and Papa worked here. We boarded here in the boarding house with Mrs. Boone. She's dead now but she was from Florida. Me and Papa would work all week and go home on Friday then come back here on Sunday evening. We generally rode home with Mr. Shaw Simpson. He worked in the office out here. Sometimes Papa would get my brother to come get us in the horse and buggy.

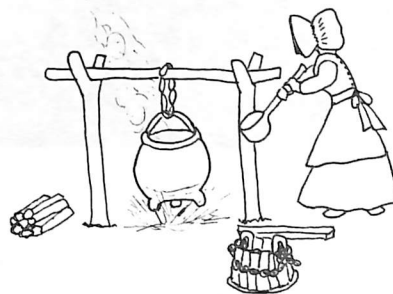
Papa and Mama didn't teach us no Santa Claus. They'd say it wasn't no Santa Claus. Papa would. But Mama would hide the things and make us go to bed and we hung up our stockings. We always got plenty. Maybe a stick or 2 of candy and a apple and a orange, that was about it. There wasn't no money back in them days. When me and Charlie was born it wasn't too many years since the Civil War. They was still under that Construction when we was born.

We always went to my Grandmama's on Christmas Day and she'd have a big dinner for us--turkeys and they'd generally kill a hog. We had pies and cakes and bread. My mama was a good cook.

We played jump rope and I played with paper dolls that we mostly cut out of magazines like the Sears and Roebuck Catalog. 'Bout the only magazine come in here in the mail was them Wild West books. Charlies says you could buy them for a nickel.

I was 18 when me and Charlie was married. We went up here to Preacher Little. I didn't even know how to cook when we got married.

Charlie's mother used to make all the soap I'd use. She'd take old meat skins and boil them in the old black metal pot and get a liquid grease and put lye in there and let it cool down. Then she'd cut it in blocks. I washed my clothes in it, and it got them the prettiest white. We was kinda raised up on Octagon soap for washing our skin.



I used to put assafedita in a little sack to keep the germs off my babies. I put it 'round my babies neck. I gave my children castor oil for cold. Gypsum weed was good. My grandmother used to get sassafrass, a red root or herb, that grew wild. She'd boil it and make tea out of it and it was good.

Cat nip was a little plant used to grow down there at Billy Haggerty's. Good for the hives and it'd make the babies sleep. You make it into a tea, put a little sugar and give it to them. They'd sleep all day long.

I liked "poke salad". It's kinda like "cressie greens," but I didn't like them. It's a big old plant, gets about so high, got little old red berries looks like grapes on it. We'd get the leaves off when they were young and tender before they got the berries on them. I always did like them, but I got so I can't walk much. I just don't get them no more. Why we used to walk plum over there to Martin's Quarters. You had to par boil it three times and rinse it in cold water about three times and cook it with green onions and fat back. That was really good. I loved it.

Ada Wallace used to walk over there with me. She's dead now, but she loved it too. We didn't mind getting out and walking for there wasn't no cars hardly then, and we was used to walking. ■



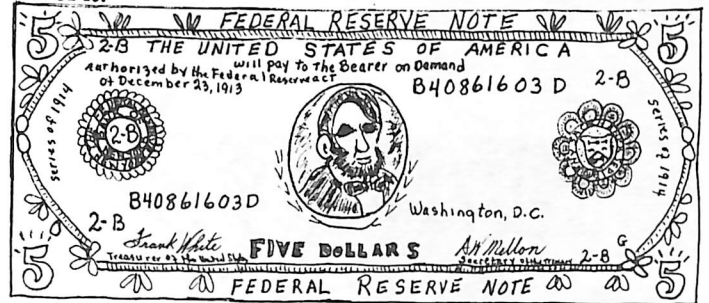
EMMA THOMAS: "I always did like 'cressie greens, but I got so I can't walk much. I don't get them no more."

Charlie Thomas

When I came here in '21 they didn't have no water, no lights or no toilets on the hill. You had to light your lamp at night and there wasn't no where to go. There wasn't but about one car on the hill and he'd charge about \$10 to take you to town and you didn't make but \$10 a week.

I believe they had sound movies when I came to Lando, but down in Georgia where I lived they had silent. You had to read it off the screen. I'd go up town, you know, and a fellow'd say, "You want me to pay your way in?" And I'd say, "Yeah." And he'd say, "You'll have to read for me." You could hear

them talking all over the theater and you knew somebody'd done paid their way in. It wasn't nothing much to movies when they first came out. They just put it up on the screen and you had to read it off there what happened. Then they had a serial. They'd get the fellow in this bad spot and then they'd cut it off 'till next week. It'd be 'bout 12 or 13 weeks before you'd see all of it.



My daddy give me five dollars one Christmas and said, "I'm gonna give you five dollars. Now, have some fun." I went and got married. Emma bought the license and I had to pay the man to take up there to Edgemoor. My five dollars was gone. I got back home; I had a wife and not a penny of money in my pocket. We went back and lived with my mama and them. Emma couldn't cook when we got married. There wasn't no "Tums" then, but I shore wish it was.

When people moved they moved furniture and all, but they didn't have no rugs and such as that. They might have a old dresser, a bed, a wash stand maybe, and a stove. We had wood stove. Some of them had an old ice box. You'd put a piece of ice in there. It'd stay in there about a day or so, but it didn't keep nothing from spoiling.

We have wrapped our ice up in a old blanket or quilt and put it in a tin tub and put our meat on it. They didn't need to much refrigeration back in them days. Old man Brooks had an old store right down there below the Old Pool Room. They'd kill a cow there in July and they'd hang it up in that old store there. If you want some steak they'll cut you off a hunk and hang it back up there. That was the way it was in them days. ■



CHARLIE THOMAS: "Emma couldn't cook when we got married. There wasn't no 'Tums' then, but I shore wish it was."