



THE McGARITYS: Jim, Florence, Anna, and John (Photo courtesy of Flora McKinney)

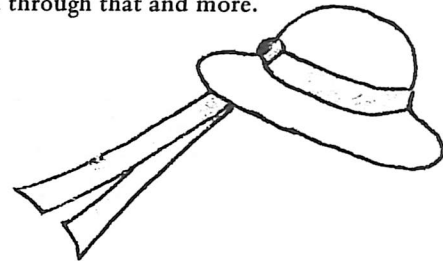
## Flora McKinney

My great-grandmother, my daddy's grandmother, she was a large woman, and we always called her Granny. But when she'd come to our house, sometime all the grannies would be there together and if you'd call "Granny" they'd all three answer. So Florence, my sister, me and her used to make up names and all kinds of things in our minds like children do. Well, we decided one day we was gonna' have a name for each granny. So we called great-grandma "Big Granny". Then my father's mother name was Rebecca McGarity, so we called her "Granmaw Becky". My mother's mother was named Melissa, so we called her "Granmaw Lissie". None of my granmas ever lived with us, but they'd come and stay a few days. Now, we was tickled pink whenever "Granmaw Lissie" came to stay with us, but we didn't care too much about "Granmaw Becky" comin'. Now, "Granmaw Lissie" lived out in the country near Rodman, and we'd walk up there, me and Florence. It didn't seem far, and we didn't have no horse or buggy or anything. I did love that "Granmaw Lissie", but she died when I was pregnant with Pauline. She's buried out at that ARP church at Richburg. They was all ARPs, and my daddy's side was all Methodist.

My daddy farmed for years and years until we moved to Lando. One day we were pickin' cotton and the leaves were beginning to fall off the cotton stalk. I heard somethin' rattlin' in the leaves behind me where I was pickin a row, and I looked around and there was a big old snake stretched out there. My daddy said he thought it was a coach whip snake. Well, I struck out to runnin' and hollered about the snake. I kept a-goin'. But my daddy finally killed him and hung him in a tree. You know people used to kill a snake and if it was dry weather, they'd hang it up on a limb with its belly up to tempt the rain.

We moved to Lando from Richburg when I was nine or ten years old. And that was before automobiles come in style, and we moved on a horse and wagon. Daddy had come over here and worked a few weeks, and he got a house down here and then we come on down. He was gettin' about 75 cents a day. Then when I got old enough, well, I really weren't old enough, but they'd take children in to work then. We were supposed to be 12 years old before we could go to work, but I've hid from the inspectors a lots of times. They'd come through and the section in front of us would send word to hide the kids, and we'd run to the water house. Then we'd all cram in there 'til they left. I worked then ten hours a day, six days a week, taggin' blankets for one dollar and a half. I thought I was rich. I'd never made money before.

Mama and Daddy had told me they needed the money I was makin', but that my first pay check was for me. But they told me not to spend it for candy and junk, to spend it for somethin' I needed or wanted bad, somethin' useful. Well, Walter Atkinson had a store out there where the Youth Center is now. So, I took that \$1.50 and went down to the store and I'd had my eye on the new spring hats that'd come in. Everybody wore hats then, you know. Well, I had looked at this pretty little white hat with black velvet bow around it and streamers hangin' down the back and I thought it was the prettiest thing I ever saw. So I bought that hat. Well, "Granmaw Becky" she come up the next day. She never missed comin' on a Sunday without it was hail or high water. She'd walk from down below Richburg. Well, I'd wore that hat to church one time and Granmaw said to Mama, "Anna, Clara's got to have that hat." Clara, you see, was her oldest girl. I told Granmaw I'd worked and bought that hat. She said, "I don't care, Clara's gonna' have that hat." She kept on 'til Mama said, "Flora, for God's sake, give her the hat." And I did. Now that's just the way that "Granmaw Becky" was. But I lived through that and more.



I remember the first automobile that came out, for if it hadn't been for that automobile, Granmaw woulda' popped me in the mouth. We lived right 'cross the field over yonder then. Well, we'd heard tell of automobiles bein' made, but we hadn't seen one. I wish you could have seen one of 'em. It was the funniest lookin' contraption you ever saw. They wasn't but about so big, and you set straight up there to the steering wheel. Well, one evenin' we was playin' right out at the end of the house, and Granmaw was in the kitchen stayin' with us a few days. She could see out the window to the road. I heard somethin' comin' up the road there, and we watched to see what it could be. Oh, good gracious, we sure run in the kitchen quick sayin', "Granmaw, look out the window quick. The devil's goin' up the road." I thought I was gonna get my face slapped for sayin' that bad word. But she said, "Honey,

that's not the devil, but it shore does look like the devil." I don't know where you could make ten miles to the hour or not. Oh, them was the good ole' days.

Mama said that I called everything Florence, my dogs, my cats, my dolls, everything. But Mama never did know where that name came from. Then my closest sister was born, and I named her Florence. I had lots of sisters, but Florence was my best loved sister. If Florence got a whippin', I cried. If she got hurt, I cried. And we stayed together all the time. Once I had typhoid fever, and they thought I was gonna' die, too, but I didn't. But, I couldn't walk, and my hair all come out. They wouldn't feed me nothin' but raw eggs and a little sweet milk. They just about starved me to death. It weren't the fever that hurt me, they just near starved me to death. They didn't 'low nobody to come into my room with a bite to eat of anything in their hand. Well, one day Florence passed by and I seen her comin' out of the dinin' room, and she had a biscuit in her hand. So I called her, I said, "Florence, give me that biscuit." And she said, "Uh, uh, I can't do it. Mama'll whip me." Well, I got mad and I threw my pillow right down beside the bed, and I said, "Well, will you hand me my pillow?" So she stooped over to pick up that pillow and still had that biscuit in her hand holdin' it up, and that was all I needed. I took a big bite out of that biscuit, and Florence started to cry and she said, "Mama's gonna' whip me." And I says, "If you don't tell her, she'll never know it, cause I know I'm not gonna' tell her, for she'd get on to me." Then a short while after that Florence got sick and they put her in the other room from me. They kept the door shut all the time, and I never did see her again. She had typhoid fever, and that went into pneumonia, and then she went into convulsions. If she'd a-lived 'til the tenth day of May that year she'd a-been ten years old. It was around the tenth of January when she died, and I miss her yet.

Another time when I was sick with typhoid, both Granmaws and Granpaws was here, and they'd all gone out to look at the hogs and just left the table like they got up. I got a chair and pushed it up to that table, and I sat down there and eat enough to kill a hog. I was eatin' with both hands, and you know, I begin to feel better.

After I got over the fever, just about all my hair had come out, and I had long hair. After I got back able, I went to work, and Mrs. Curt Gwinn, Helen Gwinn's mother, had just come back to work, too. She'd had typhoid fever, too. Well, we was workin' together and she said, "Flora, you ain't got no hair. You 'most bald-headed. Let's go out to the water house and I'll cut your hair. I said, "I better not. Mama wouldn't like it." She said, "Well, she can't do nothin' about it. She can't put it back on." So we went on out there and she cut my hair, and it was just as thin as it could be. Then everybody started callin' me "Bobby". But it come back so thick and curly. Usually if you saw a child with their hair cut off, you'd know they had lice. Lice was bad business around this place then. About everybody you'd see was "lousy".

Then the small pox come. Mrs. Myrt Long's brother had it so bad he couldn't wear no clothes, just a mosquito net over him. And people wasn't 'lloved to go in the room. Him and a Ramsey boy was that a-way at the same time.

Then later, the measles just took over this place. There was a family lived up here, they buried one child, the oldest girl, one week, and the next week they buried another large girl and a small child both in one coffin.

There was a woman lived here then, I can't remember her name now, but she and her husband didn't get along too well or somethin', but she was a good worker. It was on a Sunday; this group of boys was down near the race when she walked by. They asked her where she was goin' and she said she was goin' down to the race and drown herself. But they didn't believe her. They thought it was just a smart answer. So she went down there and took her apron off and took her shoes and stockings off, let down her long hair, and put the hairpins in her shoes and set her snuff box down beside her shoes, and then she tied up some rocks in her apron, tied it 'round her neck and jumped in. Mr. Fred Hefner was the onliest deep diver that they knowed of right here in Lando, so they sent for him. He went in the water lookin' for the body. Mr. Hefner, he brought her up, and they had a long cot. They laid her out on that and spread a sheet over her.



I remember one man, McFadden, he lived over on Bud Reid's place. He had grown boys and bought a old T-Model automobile, well, it weren't old, it was a new one. But you couldn't take 'em out if the roads was muddy, cause they'd get stuck up in the mud and couldn't move. Them two oldest boys of his, Stuart and Melvin, they took off on the car one Sunday evening. Well, then people tied their cows out anywhere they wanted to, and a man had a cow tied out down there with a chain long enough to get in the road. Them boys run into the cow and broke his neck. So the old man made them pay him \$25.00 for the cow. So, Mr. McFadden and them they went on up home and they cleaned the cow and had it cut up. Melvin and them said they never, never wanted another bite of beef as long as they lived. We used to go up to Mr. McFadden's to gather broom straw. You know, back in them times people'd get out in the field and wring broom straw and make new straw brooms to sweep their floor with. Mr. McFadden, he was kinda' queer in his own ways, but he was a good man. When they first started usin' school buses in this section down here, one of his boys, Stuart, got the job drivin' the first bus pickin' up children and takin' 'em back. He said they was a rough bunch of kids, so he got him a good long leather strop, and he hung it right by his seat, and when they got to cuttin' up on the bus, he'd tell 'em a couple of times, "See my strop." And if they didn't quiet down, they got that strop. Their parents had told him if he couldn't control 'em, to whip 'em.

One time they brought the chain gang and camped 'em out in tents up on the far side of that hill where the Methodist parsonage sits now. You could hear them guards strappin' them folks with a wide leather belt if they misbehaved. On

Sundays, they'd take 'em out over that hill where Mrs. Rockholt lives and take 'em for a walk in the woods to exercise some. They worked the roads and such as that. They had nice guards and cooks with 'em. They stayed there a long time. Two or three of them guards would come down to our house and bring us the slop and scraps from up there for our hogs. They'd save it for us, you know. They'd buy chickens and eggs from Mama. But that was for themselves, it weren't for the prisoners. And I think they'd take a little drink once in a while, but I never knowed 'em to get drunk. They musta' stayed up there 'bout six months or so.

The first I ever saw Pal was in a dream. Then the first time I really saw him I didn't recognize him, cause it was at the old Methodist Church and he was dressed up. Then later that week I was at work, and I heard someone comin' up the stairs and I looked up. Well, I thought I was gonna' pass out. There he was. He had his work clothes on just like I'd seen him in my dream. Well, I reached over and pinched Matt on the arm. Me and Matt worked side by side, and our arms stayed spotted up where we pinched one another to get attention. Anyway, she said, "Is that him?" You see, I'd done told her about that dream. He'd just moved down here from Greenville.



THE PASSENGER CAR ON THE "DUMMY": l. to r. Pal McKinney, Flora McGarity, Mattie Dawkins, and Melvin McFadden. (Photo courtesy of Flora McKinney)

We later got married at home by a Justice of the Peace. His wife was our Sunday School teacher and she was the best Sunday School teacher, except Helen Bolton, that I ever met

in my life. Mrs. Perry that was her name. We had set the day to be married and Mama had this colored woman to come down and help fix dinner. She was the one who tended to me and Florence when we were small children livin' on the farm. Ethyl was about ten years old then, and she stayed down there and took care of us while Mama was workin' in the field. She stayed at our house from Sunday to Saturday and her mother would tell Mama, "Mrs. Anna, if she don't behave and need a whippin', you give it to her." She come down then and helped us on our weddin' day and after everybody'd done got scattered around, Ethyl come in there and she looket at Pal and she said, "Now Mister, if you ever want to whip Flora Reid, you just come out there to Mr. Reid's place and whip me, for I've took whippings for her before." Now I wonder if Ethyl is still livin'.

Me and Pal went to housekeepin' in that little three room house right behind the store and that's where my first baby was born. We moved to another little three room house and it was snowin' on the ground and Pauline was still a little tiny baby. One of the fireplaces was bein' worked on when we moved in. Mr. Garrison was up there fixin' a new fireplace, and I remember it was so cold.

I've lived here a long time. I was born November 15, 1898 and I'll be 78 years old this year. We've raised eleven children and they're all still livin' and all but our first son have families of their own. But you know, we had good times. We didn't know anythin' about it bein' bad times. ■



THE McKINNEY CHILDREN

## Pal McKinney

I'm from Greenville County. I come here by myself in 1914. I was raised up on a farm, and when I was young I helped my father run a rolling mill-grindin' flour. He had a corn mill too. I was about 23 when I came here. I met up with some people that had been to Lando to work, and in the conversation, they started telling me about the things here, so I decided to see what it looked like. They said it was a good place, and I had worked in a blanket mill before and I thought I'd find out about it. I came in here one day and went to work the next. It wasn't any trouble to get jobs back in them days. I came in here on that little "dummy" down here. It'd meet the