

## Jessie Hernandez



JESSIE ERNANDEZ: "I was married by the time I was fifteen". (Photo courtesy of Jessie Hernandez)

I was born in Cherryville, N. C. My mother died before I was six years old. My daddy married again and we come to Lando. It was about 1907. I was 9 and it was just me and my dad and step mother. My daddy had to buy straight out after he married again furniture and everything. We come from Richburg in a surry. I'll never forget that.

My dad put in the roller shop down there at Lando-- where they made rollers for spinning. He put it in. He come down here and got his job. I don't know where my daddy worked before he put in them roller shops. We left here after 3 years and went to Chester. Then we moved to Greenville and stayed 2 years and come back. Someone offered him another job.

I met Ben down at the mill. I was married by the time I was 15. He was born in Fairfield county, but he had come to Lando to get work. His family come with him. Grandma and Grandpa Hernandez and Willie (I don't know if Willie was married then or not, seemed like he was). Willie was the oldest one of the children. It was a big family. Grandma Hernandez had 11 children, 2 of them died in their infancy.

When we were first married we had a rough time bringing children up. But we still had plenty to eat. We brought up 8 children. I was always busy. Eight children meant working awhile, having a child, working awhile. I'm proud of my family, in-laws and all. The Lord blessed us with in-laws. On the 25th of November, 1963, we was married 50 years.

When we went to housekeeping we bought our furniture from the company store. When both of my babies died, we bought caskets from down there,--they were nice ones. The people in the community would prepare the body for the family. You didn't hear much about embalming back then. When somebody died they'd put money on their eyes to hold them down and tie cloth around their head to hold the mouth shut. A camphor cloth was put over the face to keep it from turning blue. To view the body all that stuff was taken off. Some say it was bad luck to put money in our mouth because nickels was what they put on dead people's eyes.

After the funeral service we'd take the casket to the grave. Everybody would get there the best way they could. We didn't know what bought flowers were. People who had flowers in their yard would put them on the graves--just cut them out the yard.

My children had to wear what they wore to school to church. But they weren't by themselves. All the rest of them had to too. But they were always clean. I used to make them all aprons and things out of flour sacks. And I'd get a little pink and blue binding and put it around their collar. They'd wash and iron and look good!



Four of Mr. and Mrs. Hernandez's children. Back row, l. to r.: Genola, Fannie; front row, l. to r.: W. B., Earline. (Photo courtesy of Jessie Hernandez)

We used to when my children were little, we'd go somewhere every night. Or somebody would be at our house. But it's not like that any more. I think television keeps a lot of people home.

Church was a important part of our lives. I seen to it that the children went to church even if I didn't get to go. We had some good preachers. Old Preacher Garrison as I called him, he was something. I've seen him shout a many a time down there. He had them Methodist shouting. They even had a "Amen" corner. Don't know what would happen if someone said "Amen today".

We used to have an old ice box setting on the back porch. The ice man would come along. We didn't know what a frigera-tor was. For a long time there wasn't any electricity or bath-rooms. It was a big time when electricity come to the people of Lando. We couldn't wait until night to turn on the lights. It was an exciting time, getting the electricity and plumbing put in. Before all the houses had water, they had several spigots around town for the people to get their water. Us women folks would gather early some mornings while the children were still in bed. And we'd have big talks while we got buckets of water to wash clothes with. Lando's always been a friendly place. Lando was just about like it is now only we were all poor. But we had plenty to eat, thank the Lord.



MRS. ERNANDEZ proudly says, "Today I have 18 grand-children and 16 great-grandchildren." (Photo by Charles Inabinet)

## YESTERDAY'S CHILDREN



BESSIE TOMBERLIN REVELS



PETE HYATT



BERNICE IRBY COGGINS