

*THE PAYNE FAMILY: (back row, seated l. to r.) Romay Caroline Catoe, William Alexander, Lee (front row l. to r.) Frank, Grace, and Lela. "This picture was taken at that house where Sid Irby lived. See the morning glories runnin' up the posts."
(Photo courtesy of Lela Rainer)*

Lela Rainer

I had four brothers and one sister and I was the oldest girl.

I was born in Kershaw County and I was nine years old when we moved to Lando. In Kershaw we lived in the country and farmed – and I'll tell you, it was hard. I helped to pick a little cotton, but mostly I helped to tend to the little ones.

I remember one time we were still in the country and me and Lee were gonna churn for my Mama, she was workin' in the field, and we got the churn out and we was churnin' away and we looked out and seen her comin' over the hill and we took all that milk now and poured it in the hog trough. And we got just what we thought we was gonna' get. We got the spankin'! And we never did bother her milk no more.

My oldest brother found out someway about Lando and come here for just a little while and when he come back, why he told my Daddy about it and then we decided we'd move here. You see, in them days, why you worked a sharecrop – you got so much of the cotton and corn and things and Daddy just thought it may be better here than it was in the country. It was December the second, 1908 when we moved here. I never will forget it. We moved our furniture from Lancaster to Richburg on the train and we come on the train to Richburg and Mrs. Rushie Ramsey's daddy met us at Richburg and hauled all of our furniture here and we come here on the wagon. My daddy had already been here and had everything arranged and when we moved here, I never will forget it. We moved into that house about the 4th house from where Mrs. Alice Ramsey lives. But we rode down through "Happy Holler" Saturday and they've done tore that house down.

It seems like my mother was pleased to get away from out the country to the cotton mill. They made such a little bit here then. My daddy worked here for 90¢ a day and my mother made about like that I guess. They both worked in the mill. I kept the children and went to school, for Frank had got up old enough then to go to school. See there was me and Grace and Frank and we all went to school and I'd go home about 11:30, they'd let me go home from school then and warm up the food that Ma had fixed. She mostly cooked her dinner at night. I'd warm it up and then we'd all be there at dinner time. Ma and them come home from the mill and the little ones come home from school. I was twelve years old when I went to work in the mill. I've worked a many a day down here for 15¢ a day spinnin., Miss Bell Yarborough and Miss Molly Ramsey learnt me to spin. I thought it was a hard job, but after I got used to it it got easier. They took me out of school when I was 12 and put me to work. Ma thought it was time. They thought maybe it would help 'em out, you know. They was makin' such a little bit. And they thought the little bit what I made would help. So you see, I didn't finish the fifth grade. Santy Claus brought me the first doll I ever remember. It was just a little tiny doll with a china head with black hair painted on it and little half way arms. And my cousin got one just like it and she broke the legs off of hers and she wanted to take mine. We had the awfulest fight over that doll. I told her, "You broke yours, now you keep yours. I'm not gonna give you mine." I was about five years old then, I reckon.

Ma'd buy this box of stick candy and every once in a while she'd give us a piece of candy, but it weren't often. That box would last. It wasn't then like it is now. Christmas comes for the children might near every day now.

When I was just a little girl me and my Mama and my sister, why we've hung clothes by the moonlight many a night and they'd freeze on the line.

Lord, we don't have no snows now like we used to have. We'd get out and play in the snow. I remember one time when I was workin' 'fore I was married and I was goin' to the mill down that big hill that goes to the mill. It had snowed and kindly froze over. I took a step down and whooo— away I went. I scrambled around there and got up and I went back home. I didn't even go to the mill that day.

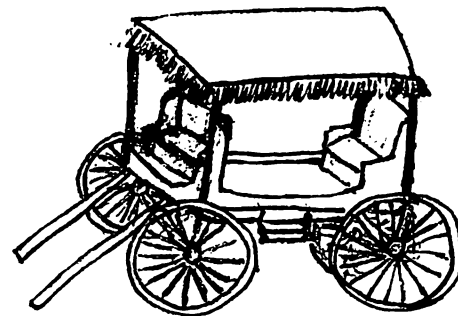
Sometime it'd get so cold in the mill 'til you'd have to stop off. It'd be so cold 'til we couldn't work and we'd all get round the slicer where they made the works for the looms — oh, it's a huge thing and it would be warm. They heated the mill with steam pipes then and I guess they still use steam yet. We'd run to them steam pipes and put our hands around them pipes. And we had to work with our sweaters or coats on. Then in the summertime all us girls used to have a good time. I remember one time we was all gathered around the door and Monk Aldridge come up the gangway. Monk was always full of hisself anyway — well, this day he turned a lizard loose and everybody screamed and run. He'd come in sometimes with frogs or whatever he took a notion to bring in that would scare the life out of you. And it would just tickle him good. That was Dora Hefner's brother. Dora and

Monk's a whole lot alike.

Old Mr. Heath, Gilbert's father, was over the mill when I was working. He never lived here. He come in on the dummy and go thro' the mill lookin'. I wouldn't think he would know most of the people that worked in the mill cause he wasn't here long enough to learn 'em. I know used to they'd come around in the spinnin' room and tell us, "We got to get it cleaned up now. Mr. Heath's a-comin'" And everybody'd get to cleaning and everything'd be just shining and Mr. Heath'd come through the spinnin' room lookin'. Then after he left everything got back to normal.

Gilbert Heath then used to live over here where Jake Hough lives — Mr. Gilbert Heath married Mrs. Myrt Long's sister, Leila. Seemed like it just come natural for them to marry.

Lando looked pretty good then. Most of the houses were here then. But they've built some new ones over there near where Estelle Herring lives. She lives in one of the oldest ones and Marion Hyatt lives in one of the oldest ones. Now that's where we used to have all of our picnics at over in that yard. On the fourth of July we had just a good old time. Everybody looked like they enjoyed it so. We had big old long tables full of food and tubs full of lemonade. And then the old ball park was out here 'bout where the "super" lives at the end of this road. We used to enjoy them ballgames. That's where I was at when I first met Doc. He was out there like everybody else watchin' the game. I was 'bout 17 cause he come here in 1915. Me and Willie Ferguson, Laura Graham, Matt Tinkler and Clem Long, we was just all young girls together and they was all with their boy friends out there at the park and Doc come along and some of 'em spoke to Doc and we just all got to talkin'. Well, we all started walking down the road and went to the spring down here at the mill and just set around there and talked and come back and went back out to the ball park. Then later he come to the house to see me and on Sundays whenever he'd come to the house we'd go back down to the old mill spring and then back around to the cemetery and that was our Sunday walk. I went with him from then — that was in July — until the next April when we got married in Edgemoor. Mr. Loomis married us. We went in old Mr. Ramsey's surrey. Oh man, I thought I was something settin' back in there. Simon Ramsey was drivin' and he was the witness at our marriage. I was dressed in a changeable color dress and a black hat. And Doc had on his suit.



Then 20 years later we had a honeymoon. We come to his sister's and stayed with her 'bout a week and then we went back to my Mama's and that was in April.

Then we went out to keepin' house in July. We moved a good many times. We lived in that little shot gun house, the second house above where the clinic is. Hennis, Romay and Margaret was all born there. Then we moved several more times and I moved here after Doc passed away. I lived in that house next to the church for 16 years.



"DOC" RAINER: "Doc never did believe in me workin'."

Doc never did believe in me a workin'. So I never did work but very little. He said he always thought a mother's palce was at home with their children. I'd say anything about going to work and he'd say, "Well, you'll have to go and get your own job. I ain't gonna' ask for nary job for you." The doctor delivered all my children but one right in the home.

The women never did have no occasion to get together. 'Most all the mothers worked until 12 o'clock on Saturday. Well then they had all their work to do. They just didn't have time to get together.

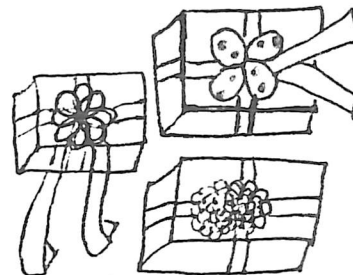
Colored women looked after the children while the women worked. They used to have colored people's house over 'cross the creek there where they called the Quarters. Then a lot of 'em came out from the country. We've had colored women to come in and they'd stay all week and go home on the weekend. We'd have a cot for her in the kitchen. A lot of people that got help out from the country did that.

Times ain't like it used to be. It used to be when anybody'd get sick, why it seems like people couldn't do enough for you. And now you get sick and they don't even know you're sick 'till you die and they get ready to bury you.

I used to love to fish, but them days is gone, too. Me and Doc used to fishin' a lot. Go down to the creek and fish all day. I wouldn't clean no fish. It used to be when I was a little girl that just as sure as Saturday rolled around, my daddy would buy fish from Mr. Rinehart when he come around, and that was my job to clean fish. And I said to myself one day, "Well, if I live to get married and keepin' house, I'll never clean no fish." And I never did.

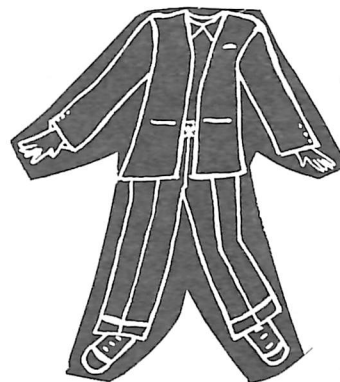
Them was the good old days. But they're all gone now. We used to have a good time in Lando.

We'd have egg hunts on Easter 'bout the only entertainment we had. The people'd donate the eggs and every church would take their little ones and hide the eggs and they'd go and hunt 'em. And whenever 'n I was younger they had silent movies down here below the old store building. They'd have what they were sayin' on the screen. If you couldn't read you'd just see the picture and that was all there was. It didn't cost you but 15¢ and they just had it on Saturday night. And sometimes they'd have box suppers over at the schoolhouse. Your boy friend bid on the box, but if somebody out bid him, why they'd get the box and you had to eat with him.



They'd have the band over at the schoolhouse for our box suppers. Sometimes it'd be the brass band and sometimes the string band. That was our music when we'd call ourselves dancin' the skip-to-my-Lou.

I remember the old Cornwallis house. They used to tell us if we went down by there after dark that you'd see a man go by there with his head off. And we used to be scared to death of that place. You know then when you went to work at 6 o'clock in the morning, why it would be dark and then in the evening we'd get off work at 6 o'clock and it'd be dark again. If somebody was walking long to the mill from your way you could walk along with 'em, but if it wasn't nobody there you'd have to go by yourself.



All my family went to the Baptist Church. They hadn't long built that Baptist Church when we moved here.

I joined when I was 16 years old. I was baptized in the creek down here at the bend, Big Shoals they call it. They was about 16 of us baptized at that time. We all had on white dresses and got in the muddy water. They had had a meetin' that week. I never will forget it. Me and Clarence Irby's mother went in the creek together. I can see old Mrs. Irby now. Now the Methodist used to have a pool down here, there under the hill and they used to baptize there, but they got to where they used the spring to baptize.

They're tearin' down a lot of the old houses now. Say they're cleaning up. It won't do much good tho' if they let all them empty places grow up. I walked down thro' Happy Holler Saturday where they've done tore down all them houses and I said to myself, "Lord, at the memories that used to be around here. But they're all gone now."

Did I show you this here picture. This was a Sunday School group that'd all got together and went to the Boarding House to have our picture made. That was on the front porch of the Boarding House. That was a pretty place there. That's me right there and there's my sister and my brother. Now that was made not too long after we moved to Lando. This man that's on the ground, he was a cripple and couldn't set up and they told him just to lay down. And there's Miss Bell Yarborough's daddy over here. And there's Miss Bessie Hyatt right there. And Mrs. Maude Polk, Doris Ernandez's mother, that's her right there, Lord, that's a old, old picture. Made right around 1910 in front of that old Boarding House. ■



LELA RAINER: "Lord at the memories that used to be around here. But they're all gone now."



SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS around 1910 (Photo courtesy of Lela Rainer)