



JAMES T. AND ELIZABETH GARRISON, parents of Mary Stephenson. Mrs. Stephenson tells us, "My daddy visited with the sick and read the Bible to them. That was his Sunday afternoon mission. And mama went everyday." (Photo courtesy of Mary Stephenson.)

Mary Stephenson

When my grandfather died, he left everything to Mama and her mother and if they'd taken care of it right, we'd never have had to see a cotton mill. They had a lot of land and she sold everything — let it slip out from her. She sold the place and said she was gonna take her children to Rock Hill and educate them, put them through Winthrop College. After we

lost everything, we had to make a living for we didn't have any money to fall back on. I knowed I had to work then to make a living.

They wanted my Daddy at Lando for a carpenter and we moved from Lancaster and I was just a young girl. I wasn't but about 14 I don't reckon.

So I went to work weaving in the mill. It taken me two weeks to make \$22 — two weeks work — that's about a dollar a day. I made the most of it though. I got to where I made more than that when I worked to educate my children. I was determined that my children would have a education. I didn't want them to go through the world like I've been through the world. I've been places where I was embarrassed because I didn't have the education.

Jeff come from Union County. His daddy come down to run that engine at Lando. I reckon Jeff was about 19 years old when his daddy brought him to Lando and learned him up on that "dummy".

After we married, we stayed on in Lando and Jeff worked down there 47 years running that little engine that they call "dinky". Then they used to take passengers to Edgemoor. Right after we married, we lived in that little three-room house where Helen and Homer Miller lives now. Well Jeff would go up in the morning and pick up the passengers at Edgemoor at 11:30 and 'bout 12:00 he'd come home and eat his dinner and go back to work. He'd go again about 4:00. We didn't have no automobiles then. That's the only way we had to go to Chester ride the "dinky" to Edgemoor and catch the train to Chester. We'd stay all day. We'd carry a big bag and do our shopping and come back that evening. Then the train would meet us again and bring us home. They discontinued the passenger part after automobiles come in. Mr. Wade Wallace bought the first automobile I remember in Lando and the people just thought it was wonderful that we had a car in Lando. He'd take a car full to baseball and things like that. Well then they got to buying cars, but we had old rough roads. We didn't have no roads like they have now. Why the night we got married, we rode to Chester in a horse and buggy and the roads wasn't tiled then. It'd been raining and it was awful bad.

If I live to the sixth day of May, I'll be 85 years old. Me and my husband stayed together 59 years. That's a serious promise. When you promise "till death", that means you got to stick with 'em until death — "through sickness and through health". There's something bothering me about why people don't think like that anymore. All the young folks that marries in our family, I sure have tried to tell 'em what it meant, that it was a lifetime job. My Papa and Mama stayed together 60 years, but people don't stay together like they used to. I don't know what's in the air about that, but I give all my children my advice about it when they went to get married.

We had lots of good times there in that old church. People prayed and they sang and they had a good preacher. My daddy and my mama was both workers in that church. And old brother Campbell — you got to include him and Mrs. Campbell. We had prayer meetings and singings in that old church. My daddy loved singing so good and when he'd get happy you could just see his face light up and boy he'd shout.

I could tell when it was coming. His face would light up and his eyes would just sparkle, and he'd go to shouting. It was just good old gospel.

We used to have box suppers sometimes to raise money to pay our preacher. My husband paid \$40 one Saturday night for a box that I'd fixed up. You'd fix your box with something to eat, then you'd decorate it on top with flowers or something and they'd sell it to the highest bidder. It went for a good cause. And we had poundings too. Martin was our pastor and we got in a two-horse wagon and we went to Richburg and "pounded" them one Saturday night. Even carried the kindling to make coffee, and we took cookies out there to serve. People didn't pay the church then like they do now. They didn't have it, I reckon.

My Daddy visited with the sick and read the Bible to them. That was his Sunday afternoon mission. And Mama went everyday. She didn't miss a day going. That's why I had to swing pots and pans and take care of the home a lot. It'd worry me how Mama'd get so tired waiting on everybody else. But it wasn't anything I could do about it. She'd get out and go in snow and all kind of rainy weather and come home just wringing wet sometimes and have to hunt up dry clothing.

When we wanted to have some fun, we'd come in and quilt in a night and we sent 'em to the Epworth Orphanage home in Columbia. Some school teachers lived right across from us. They had two rooms and Miss Mattie Hicklin and Miss McElwain was staying up there then. One of the Hicklin boys come to see them on a Halloween night while we was quilting a quilt. After he unhitched his buggy and went inside, we got a old broom and we made it up like a woman, put a hat on her and everything. Then we called him out and told him he had company to ride home with him. Now such things as that, that's what mischief we had to get into.

We had to make our recreation what we had. I'll tell you what we done, we'd go to walk on Sunday afternoon over cross Cow Branch, or Dicky Branch, or to the pasture, and we'd be nearly dark coming back.



MARY STEPHENSON, center top, and friends pose by the Boarding House before going for a Sunday walk. (Photo courtesy of Mary Stephenson)

I worked in the mill and educated my children, for I didn't get a education. I was determined for my children to have a education.



MARY STEPHENSON:

"... I was determined that a education was one thing I wanted my children to have. It'd be something nobody couldn't take away from them." (Photo by Susan Meiselas)

I can remember the depression. I sent my son to school and he didn't have but one good pair of pants and one patched pair. On days that I cleaned up that good pair, he had to wear them patched pants to school. But I told him it was a honor, it was no disgrace, for him to wear them pants and go on to school. He didn't want to but he did.

During the depression they had what they called the WPA. They'd get men folks work on the road and pay 'em so much. They didn't have no food stamps then, but there was a lady they sent out from Chester, Mrs. Malone, to see who had food and who didn't have food. My husband was getting work two days a week, and we had those cows. He asked 'em for something once, but she come and looked in our kitchen at everything and everything was bare, but she wouldn't give us anything. She said Jeff got two days a week and that we could live on it. Mr. Dave Reid let us have food and after he went back to work, Jeff paid it back. Why I have had one loaf of bread to divide between all the children for their school lunch. I made sandwiches around for them as long as it lasted. Then when one graduated, that meant two more slices to divide between the others. But we managed somehow and was thankful that we could.

The WPA used to give out cloth, flour and big sacks of groceries, and they used the basement of the church when they'd give out cloth. If you couldn't sew, they'd cut it out for you and teach you how to sew. You can manage in hard times if you try. There's always a way.

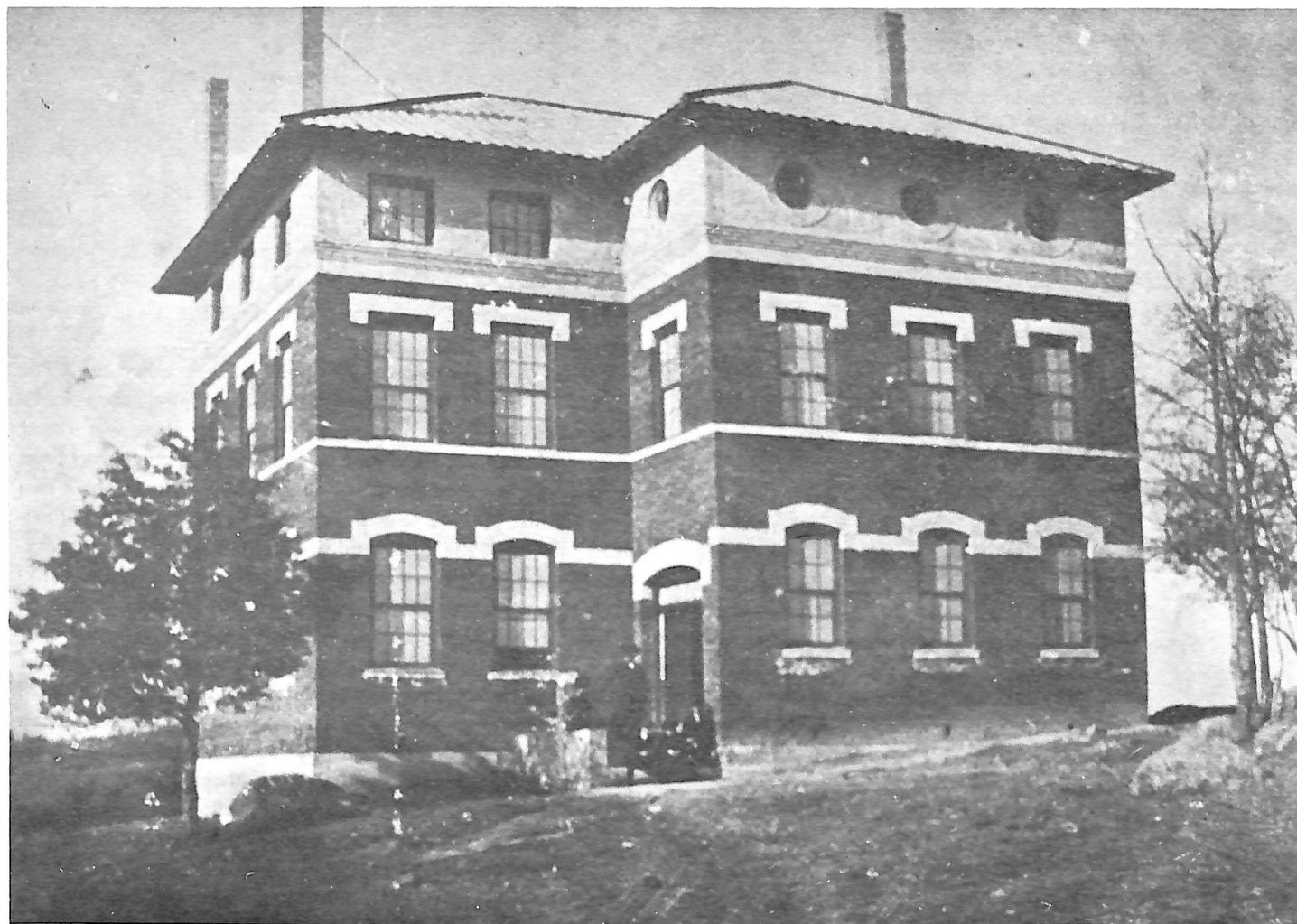
When Juanita went to College, it was during the depression. We kept her tuition and she worked in the dining room to pay the other. I sent her a dollar every week and she saved that money and come home. They was wearing uniforms at Winthrop then, and I thought they were real pretty. Mrs. Sue Heath found out I was gonna send Juanita and she come and told me if I'd get the material, she'd make the dress for nothing. She made Juanita her dress and she had it to wear in the "blue line" the first Sunday she went to church at Winthrop.

There's been lots of people built their homes and got out from down there. I always thought it was home and I still feel proud to go back down there. You wouldn't find people any more wonderful anywhere than you do down there about helping. They'll go out all the way when you need them. If anybody'd get down sick and wasn't able to go to work, they'd make up money for you in the mill and buy you a week's groceries. People'd buy something for a needy family and take it in to them. I've done it lots of times.

We built this house up here because we felt like Jeff was gonna retire and we was afraid they'd put us out, so we decided we better build us a little place to go to. He worked real hard and saved enough money to build this little home. I don't know that they would've throwed us out, but Jeff thought they might need the house for somebody else.

Harry thought of Jeff every year at Christmas even after we moved away from there. And I thought that was real good in him. Showed that he did appreciate him. He sent me and Mrs. Myrt vegetables out of his garden. Harry's good that a-way. He'll send to a lot of elderly people out of his garden and people don't know anything about it. So that shows he cares about his people.

What stands out the most in my mind when I think about those days is that I was determined that a education was one thing I wanted my children to have. It'd be something nobody couldn't take away from them. Children today oughta be real proud that they can get a education.



Lando School, erected in 1907. (Photo courtesy of Myrt Long)