



MATTIE HICKLIN: After I started teachin' in Lando my daddy took me every Sunday evening.....in a horse and buggy and I stayed in the Boarding House." (photo courtesy of Mattie Hicklin)

Mattie Hicklin

I was born in 1890, in the Rodman section and I was a Hollis before I married. We were close neighbors with the George Simpson family. There never was a day we didn't see each other. We lived beside each other for 25 years and never had a "jar" in the family. I'm 85 years old – going on 86 – but I've got a memory and I can see without glasses.

I remember once when I was a little child I went down to Lando. Somebody was down there takin' pictures and my mother took my old crowd down there. It was my sister and Noonie and Victoria and Simmie and Hemphill and me – that was the family. We went in a buggy and they took our picture – course we had to pay for 'em. Let me see, I must have been about 10 years old.

I heard about Lando, but I never had had no occasion to know anybody until I went there. It was a cotton mill and "law" them poor folks that worked there then. They didn't have the material they've got now and they'd come out with their hair just full of cotton lint. They made very cheap blankets, but now they make better blankets. There's one on my bed there now. It's no comparison even.

After I started teachin' in Lando, my daddy took me every Sunday evening from where we lived, it wasn't too far, in a buggy and horse and I stayed at the Boardin' House until Friday evening and he'd come and get me and take me back home for the weekend. I got the teaching job through Mr. Willis. I had taught two years over at Knox's Station – it was the Hicklin School, they called it. Then I taught in Lando for 5 years. Then I got married. When I heard about the vacancy in the school, I went to see Mr. Willis. Whenever I came there the new building was there.

Mr. Willis was head of the Lando school. Now I remember

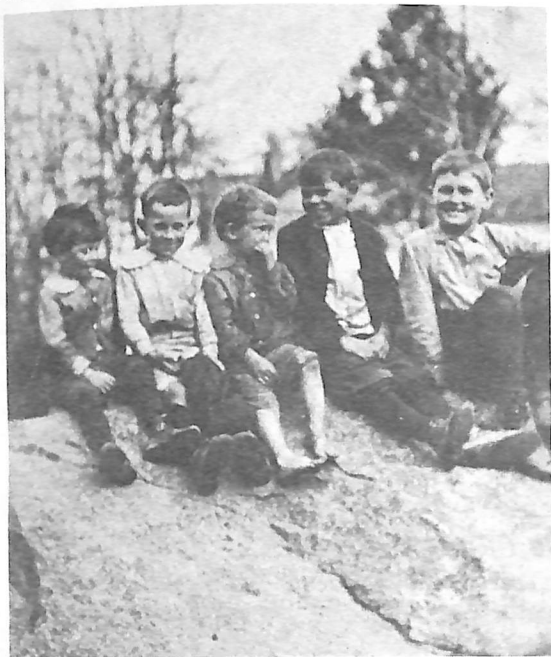
he come walkin', he was stalking, fine looking, over to the school house to inspect the teachers and their teaching. And I remember he asked me – he said, "Miss Hollis, do you teach the letters or do you teach this phonic method?" I said, "Well, I teach the letters". He said "Well, you know, I am sure glad to hear that you do. I myself don't believe in that phonics." You know you didn't teach 'em the ABC's at all in that phonic method, but some of 'em did after that use that method over in Lando. But I declare, I know so many of them people right now that lived there – the Overbys, the Smiths, – oh them was ages ago, yes, it was.

Mr. Clark Walton was a fine person and he was principal. You know the Ernandez well, there was two boys, Charlie and John Ernandez and they were in Mr. Walton's room – you see I taught the first and second grade. Well, anyhow, one day there was a little red headed boy whose daddy was the boss man and he felt like he was better than the rest of the children. He was on the playground when we was havin' recess, and he got to pickin' at these two Ernandez' boys. Well, they never did bother nobody unless somebody bothered them – but they were close brothers. So, Mr. Walton and me were standin' on the porch – well, he kept on pickin' at these boys and they both jumped on him and they was beatin' him up and I said "Mr. Walton can you not see them?". He said, "Yes, I see them. But I'm gonna wait 'til they give that little boy enough." Then after a little bit he hollered and stopped em. But that little red headed boy was the cause of it.

Oh yes, and another thing happened to me. There was a little boy and they didn't want to go to school then. They'd play hookey. Well one day this little boy didn't come to school and he went home and told his mama that I'd beat him unmercifully. Well, she was gonna way – lay the road for me. The older boys which was in Mr. Walton's room, they all liked me and they picked up a brick bat and they said, "If she comes here and bothers you, we're gonna let her have it." But anyhow, she come, and I told her that I'd never hit that boy a day in my life and that he'd never give me any trouble. I said "Now he musta not wanted to come to school." And she said, "Well, that's it then, and I'll give him something when I get back home". You know, Doug Bigham? Well, he started to school with me and his daddy, Mr. Charlie Bigham always come over at the beginning of school and would give a lecture. Well we was in the auditorium upstairs and his little boy was just beginning school and he said, "Now I tell you, I believe in the rod and if my child needs it, I want him to have it". Well, it wasn't very long 'til the bell rang and we marched down and went to our rooms. Well, when we marched down Doug, just a little fellow, 6 years old just startin' school, he didn't come in the room. He just marched out the front steps and went on up to his Daddy's house which was just up the lane. Well, they soon brought him back. And you know he started school with me and he was a perfect child and I've always felt near to Doug. And, I declare, since he's been sick I've never failed a night to pray for him – If he can ever get well if it's the Lord's will.

I'll tell you another thing happened while I was over there – You remember the Overby's? Little Charlie Overby

got drowned in that race at the back of the mill. It had a block on it then where you could walk around it. And little Charlie was walkin' around there and he slipped and fell into the race and he couldn't even swim. There was some other children with him and they tried to catch him, but they couldn't do it, because he'd a pulled them in. I sure hated that — Little Charlie started school with me, too. I started a lot of 'em off.



A GROUP OF "MRS. HICKLIN'S CHILDREN": "I started a lot of 'em off." (Photo courtesy of Mattie Hicklin)

They didn't go on into the 12th grade then. I think it went to about the 6th grade. They took 'em in the mill then early. That was before the law. You know with that law (child labor) you couldn't work a child under 16 years old. Well, they went there from 12 years on — some say even younger. There's old Mr. Jim Hefner — his wife Dora started to school with me. And I love Dora, and we still feel close to one another. Mr. Hefner was workin' in the mill — the poor fellow. His Daddy had stopped him from school and he didn't get much education — but he was a nice ole' fellow. I think it was plenty of children worked then. For you know they could take 'em and put 'em in there and get money for 'em, you see. But after the law passed they couldn't do that. And another thing, you know at that time they didn't mix the colored and whites together. And I remember hearin' 'em say that they'd know when the inspector was comin', and they did have some Negro workers down in the picker room, but they'd be sure that there wasn't no Negroes workin' with whites. Hasn't the times changed.

I don't think they had school for the Negroes. I'll tell you the only schools I remember for them was after I moved down here in Richburg. I don't remember of any more — no I don't.

Most of the women teachers were attractive ladies. Now Miss Wilson was a nice lookin' lady. She was from White Oak down below Chester. She taught with me the first two years. Then it was Miss Sadie Boyd and Miss Annie Boyd — they were from Blackstock and they taught there two years. The

last year I was there, I taught with Miss Pettus and Miss McIlwain and she was from Due West. Now Miss Pettus was principal and Miss McIlwain had the grades that Mr. Walton had and Mr. Walton was promoted after he taught there. He was a nephew of Mr. Willis' and course he looked after him. He sent Mr. Walton to Monroe to the Monroe Mill in the office there, and I think his wife is still livin' over there — and I would love to see her.

Mrs. Morrow had the first boarding house that we stayed at. I married in 1918 and take 5 years back, now that's when I went to Lando and that's when I stayed with Mrs. Morrow. I loved Mrs. Morrow when she was there. But after Mrs. Morrow left there was another family come — the Grosses. In fact, when Mr. Walton left there he had the room that had been furnished by old B. D. Heath, that was Gilbert's daddy and it was furnished in beautiful furniture. As long as Mr. Walton was there, he occupied that room. But if old man Ben Heath come down to spend the night, Mr. Walton had to vacate. This woman that took the boarding house she went up on all of her board and I wasn't gettin' but \$30 a month and you know what that was at that time. Well, I said, "Mrs. Gross I can't pay it". So Mr. Walton he had married and left there, he said, "Well, Miss Hollis, you don't have to pay it. You just fix your meals, your breakfast and supper in your room there and be clean with it and you can take your dinner with us". Well I paid him to take my dinner with them. They lived in Lando and I walked down and took my dinner with them and then I fixed my own supper. So I stayed there a good while and then the Grosses were gonna' leave, so then I went with the other two teachers up to a Mrs. Smith's. Then we went from there to a Mrs. Clay's. They weren't boardin' houses. What we did was we just got rooms and done our own cookin' and everything. So that's what we did after Mrs. Morrow left there and then after that other one, you might say, went up so nobody couldn't stand it, all the teachers left.

I'll tell you where our social life was. They had picture shows over there in the school every Wednesday night and you had to pay to go — but it would be silent pictures. It wasn't the talkin' pictures then. Well, we went nearly every Wednesday night. And then another thing, they had a band over at Starne's Pond. Now that was a wonderful place where everybody went and they had dancin' this Big Apple.

They expected the teachers that lived in Lando then to go to Church and that's what we did. And we went to all the prayer meetings and things like that.

When I first went there, Mr. Gilbert Heath was head of the lower store. Well, I always found him to be all right, but he was one that never did say nothin' to you. But I've been to his home and eat there. I remember when little Harry was born. Well, he's grown now, but they lived right in the corner there where Harper Simpson used to live.

They tell me they've torn so many houses down in Lando now. When I was there, there was no water works in the houses. They had these government toilets out. Now they've put waterworks in them now. And I understand the mill still owns all the houses.

Now you take that beautician over there in Lando – little Helen Gwinn, she married Curt Bolton. Now that was one of the prettiest little girls. She was a beautiful child and her mother kept her perfect. She was too young to start school when I left there. They went every Wednesday night over to the picture show.

I remember Walter Haggerty. Is he livin? Now how old a boy is Walter? Somewhere along 70! Well, I declare. What about the Dawkins and the Hyatts – the Longs and Millers?

I enjoyed every minute I lived in Lando and I still love the majority of the people that lives there now, I sure do. And I'll tell you something I learned when I was over there in Lando. Did you ever learn how to tie the weaver's knot. Well, I learned how and now if I want a thread to hold, I still do that. I haven't forgot it. And it'll never slip. I used to go down to the weave room and just watch Mrs. Beulah Morrow how they could tie them knots before the machine would even stop.

When I first went to Lando there was a lots of people that wasn't very desirable and lots of 'em had "boogers" in their head. Ever since then I always prayed that Lando someday would get on top and it really did. And they've got good people there. My best friends – Miss Myrt Miller, Mrs. Myrt Long, she is now, you know, Mrs. Mary Stephenson now, Miss Mary Garrison, she was then, and the Clays and old Mrs. Garrison. I know you never did know old Mrs. Garrison, but you've surely heard of her. Well, I declare she was a good

ole' soul. She went to see everybody that was sick. At that time older women were wearing long skirts and you'd see the tail of her dress would just be wet as could be. She'd get up soon in the mornin' when the dew was on and she went out to see everybody sick. She was a wonderful person. ■



MATTIE HICKLIN and LOUISE CRAINE: "Louise has been with me ever since my accident. And we made all these babies."



LANDO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN around 1925. (Photo courtesy of Lela Rainer)