

Papa decided that the car he purchased, just was not the car he needed for the purpose intended, therefore he had to trade it for a more conveniently equipped automobile suitable for his type of business. A two door with a large trunk, capable of holding at least three kegs of whiskey. Mr Cullum, being familiar with my Dads self employment, knew what he needed and had a Chevrolet, two door delivered to him, equipped with heavy springs that would not be to conspicuous when loaded with whiskey, a sure sign for the Fed's or highway patrol. My Dad liked it very much and especially for the dual purpose it had for hauling sugar, meal, or other material or items used in his occupation. Mama loved to go with Papa when he would go to Blackville to purchase the sugar he needed for his operation, because the sugar sacks came in different floral prints, and out of a stack of twelve or fifteen bags there would be probably four or five different print patterns. Mama would say one sack would make Christee Lee, our sister a short sleeve blouse or one of the boys a short sleeve shirt and for herself two sacks of the same pattern would make her a very plain simple dress or three sacks of the same pattern for a nicer dress. You could get a pattern for five or ten cents and a spool of thread for five cents and have a new dress for fifteen cents, Papa had to buy the sugar anyway so the material was free. Mama at the time had an old singer treadle sewing machine, the machine was on a stand with a platform and a treadle on the bottom that you worked back and forth with your feet and this spun a flywheel via a push rod from the treadle to the flywheel and this in turn ran the sewing machine by means of a belt from the flywheel to a pulley wheel on the sewing machine that did the actual sewing. It was definitely two things Mama could do beside having children, and that was cooking and sewing, which was a prerequisite for marriage. Mama was a crackerjack seamstress, but had few opportunities to exercise that trait due to lack of material other than feed and grain sacks made of printed cotton muslin and occasionally hand me down clothing from adult relatives to be torn apart and remade into children clothing, but as my father's business began to increase in production, so did my mother's sewing due to more selections in print patterns of sugar, feed and grain sacks. When Mama hanged her wash out to dry, I think she had every color in a rainbow. I can still visualize Mama sitting at that old sewing machine, just sewing away, with one foot on the treadle going back and forth and when that foot got tired she would exchange to the other without missing a stitch. Sometimes she would sew late into the night with the kerosene lamp nearby with the wick burned so low she could hardly see, and my father urging her to stop and come to bed and she repeating over and over "I'm almost finished". Up early

in the morning preparing breakfast and tending to her brood and giving us kids orders, bring me a bucket of water, go get more wood for the stove, etc as if she had, had a full night sleep and was preparing to go on a days outing at Lee's pond. I now, imagine, all that energy was coming from being so proud of that beautiful dress draped over the sewing machine that she worked on so diligently late into the night waiting to be worn at a big event, that being, going to Blackville on Saturday, sitting, fanning with a Church Fan and watching the people go by. Hearing the black man selling fish, yelling out to the top of his voice, FISHES FOR SALE, FISHES FOR SALE, COME GET YOUR FISHES, and across the railroad track someone is selling boiled peanuts, BOILED PEANUTS, GET YOUR BOILED PEANUTS, FIVE CENTS A BAG. And of course the hotdog vender, pushing his cart up and down the street, HOTDOGS FIVE CENTS. Yep, Blackville was a rout on Saturday.

Blackville is much quieter and more solemn today as it was of yesterday. I remember in my adolescent years growing up in my teenage years, Blackville was a more robust, vigorous and exciting little town with a population around 1000 /1500 and definitely supported by the farming community and more than doubled in population on Saturdays when all the farmers and their families would come to town to do their weekly shopping. What a big event for the children. Blackville is situated at the intersection of US hiway 78 and S.C. hiway 3, located between Williston, S.C. and Denmark S.C. and between Barnwell, S.C. and Springfield S.C. fifty miles south of Columbia, S.C. Located in Barnwell county and in my day, strictly agricultural. The main street, hiway 78, running east and west, was a wide corridor separated with the railroad line running from Augusta to Charleston S.C. On the south side was the Shamrock Hotel, two drug stores, a radio repair shop, feed and grain store, two clothing establishments, post office, a filling station, jail house and residential area. On the northwest side was the railroad station, farmers market, barber shop, residential and police station. Northeast was a couple of incidental stores and behind these stores was the hitching grounds for the farmers to hitch their animals and park their wagons while doing their weekly shopping or just browsing. Running north and south, S.C. hiway 3, was a narrow corridor, with residential, Miss marie's café, Mr Henry Still's meat market, movie theatre, Mr Huffmans's grocery and mercantile, Mr Kaplin's second hand store, Mr Brown,s hardware and livery stable, school house, Mr Nevil's garage, Baptist Church, a hostel, Mr Cullom's automobile franchise, and residential area. On Saturday's Blackville was a booming little town with a more like circus atmosphere, with the street's so crowded with people one

could hardly walk. The local farmers would bring their wagons full of produce to be sold at the farmers market, which were located on the west end of town and beside the railroad track, known as the "Carolina Midland" [for identifying the location of the farming market,] running north and south and crossed the main line of the Southern Railroad which ran from Augusta to Charleston and through the main street of Blackville. At the two crossing were the train's passenger station and depot. Since my father were more acquainted with the farmers market later on upon acquiring land, farming and becoming his own landlord, I will expand on this subject later in my writing.

Blackville have had very little or limited attractions, other than a circus wandering through town once in awhile, one being Healing Springs, just north of Blackville on hi-way 3. Healing Springs has a reputation for curative powers that can be traced back to God knows when. And is believed to have many secret healing powers, and as the legend goes when sick or hurt, after bathing in the water their ailments is said, to be cured. In the back of Healing Spring Baptist Church is a pool, of the springs waters [Where I was baptize] and where periodically, church services, and baptism's is held. Many believed that persons baptize in this pool never lost faith or back-slid. Humnnnn.

I remember the elders speaking of Healing Springs and as it was spoken, the spring was a natural spring, oozing clean clear water out the ground and settling in a clean sandy pool. In the early days, it was many natural springs located throughout the territory, this is not the case now. Mr Lute Boylston, was the last official owner of Healing Springs, I remember him well, his residents was across the road from Healing Spring's school from which I attended. When he died he deeded Healing Springs to be a source of comfort for the afflicted and that it should remain as such, as stated on a plaque, placed on a little mystical patch of ground, in a woodland setting, next to the Healing Spring's Baptist Church.

Beside being a successful farmer, Mr Boylston was also a successful well driller, specializing in artesian wells. At the original spring he bored a huge pipe branching off with other outlets or spigots giving a more convenient and better access, for collecting natural spring water in containers.

Second being the Edisto Experience Station, on US 78, west of Blackville at Clemson University's Edisto Research Center, consist of an old museum and learning facility, where I spent many hours in FFA open class studies and experimental projects, while attending Blackville, High School. The task of the station has been and still remains, to find better ways to grow and harvest crops, raise animals and use our natural resources.

And there is, Barnwell State Park, a short distance south of Blackville, off hiway 3, includes picnic area, lakes, camping area and cabins.

And the Edisto River, which by now you are well familiar. It is a known fact that in the Blackville area we have the largest number of black water streams in any one place in the world. The Edisto being the longest black water river in the world. It has a dark color which appears black when you look at it from a distance. The river always seem to be cold and clean. The fish thrive in the river and seems to have a much better taste, than fish from other bodies of water. My father always said the color is derived from the water leaching through the dead leaves in the swamps where it picks up natural dye giving the river its color. The water temperature is cold because the river is fed from natural underground springs and the flow of the river flows through shaded areas of overhanging trees and foliage to the ocean. The Edisto flows about 250 miles to the Atlantic Ocean. Starting out in the area just south of Columbia, the middle and lower sections of the Edisto and several of its tributaries present great opportunities for boating, floating , fishing and camping adventures . It is known that the Edisto is one of the most popular black water boating and canoeing streams in the region. The Edisto is a year round boating and canoe stream, but the long summer is hot and humid. Fall, winter and spring would be the preferred seasons .There is nearly always enough water for boating and floating and when the weather has been particularly wet the river may be more hazardous and confusing as water flows more swiftly, into the many sloughs, side channels, swamps and lakes that adjoins the main channel which makes it more difficult to remain on course and more liable for accidents. The water if held in a glass is the actual color of tea and is generally crystal clear, allowing one to see the sandy bottom almost continuously. On seasonal weekends the Edisto River is known for the family playground, especially the sandbars for swimming, camping and picnics.

When drifting by boat or floating, you will probably meet or come in contact with many friends or neighbors expressing their thoughts of the cool feelings of the river water. Along the way you will also find little shacks of a stores selling, beer, cold drinks, candies or other goodies that will quench your thirst or satisfy your hunger and a juke box to play your favorite country song.

Nothing ever happened in Blackville except the story about Essie Dunbar. During my research in the Blackville library, I came across a true story about

Blackville's living ghost. I will give you excerpts from the article I read, taken from The People Sentinel. The unusual ghost story of Essie Dunbar, rising from the dead has been told around Blackville for over 70 years, and it's all true. In a forgotten grave overgrown now by tangles of vines in the Blackville cemetery on Oak Street, Essie was finally laid to rest again, for the second time, in the early 1970's, but her story has not been forgotten. According to an account printed from the 1963 edition of THE STATE AND COLUMBIA RECORD, and those around town who remembers the event, Essie's funeral came 40 years too soon.

As the story goes Dr. D.K. Briggs, a doctor for 50 years, examined Essie after an attack of epilepsy in the summer of 1919, and found no sign of life. He pronounce her dead, at the age of 30. Essie's family dresses her in her best cottons, placed her in a homemade wooden coffin, and solicited three ministers to officiate at the service set for 11:00 am the next day. The funeral was schedule for late morning, to give Essie's sister of Allendale an opportunity to catch the train to Blackville, which was to arrive shortly before 11:00 am. The train was late. After waiting for as long as possible, the ministers decided to go ahead with the service, thinking that her sister would arrive at any moment. But after the service the sister had still not arrived. Waiting no longer they committed Essie's remains to the grave and began shoveling dirt into the 6 foot grave. A mournful sound was heard at the bottom of the hill, as Essie's sister neared the grave site, clapping her hands and chanting as she came, "Gotta see poor Essie one more time." She had arrived at last, and ran from the depot, then situated near the present location on the Ducane Plant, to the grave-site nearly eight blocks away. But how could she Essie again?

She lay in the grave with a half ton of earth on top of her. After much consideration, the ministers instructed the workers to remove the dirt and bring up the coffin once more, and the lid was removed. To the shock of observers, Essie rose and smiled at her sister. And the pandemonium began! In the confusion that followed, people began to run, the three ministers was knocked into the grave, ladies in white dresses was knocked into the ditch, and Essie not knowing what else to do, ran after them, making everyone run that much faster. The two tall ministers trampled the short ones as they scrambled out the grave and joined the flight. After that day for 40 more years, Essie was known around town as a ghost. It was sad said Mrs Mildred Still. I use to work at the DeWitts 5 & 10 cent store down town and when

Essie would walk in the people would move to the other side of the store. They were afraid of her, she said. Essie was a haunted woman after rising out of that coffin. Haunted by the beliefs that she was really a ghost. She was rejected by her people , and never again had any close family or friends, according to Mrs Still. She was definitely a loner after that event. She was observed picking cotton in 1963 at the age of 70, and was believed to have lived a few more years. Some have speculated that perhaps it was the sound of her sisters voice, that brought her back, or the blast of fresh air that rushed in when the lid of the coffin was popped open that summer day of 1919.

There are no relatives or friends of Essie's that can be found now in Blackville. No pictures or records that document her deaths , or this unusual story, yet her story lives on, and Essie Dunbar will always be known as the real ghost lady of Blackville.

Writers note: I have heard many stories from my elders of similar stories as you have just read. Embalming was yet to be known in the early days and when one died they had to be buried within three days, stories of corpses knocking on the coffin walls as they were being carried by wagon to the gravesight. Corpses completely turned over when coffins were reopened, thank God for embalming fluid.

Blackville, my home town where I grew up from a kid and still have fond memories of those days of old.

My Papa and Mama have come a long way from those days of making shingles deep into the Edisto River Swamps for five dollars per thousand and trying to scratch out a living, sharecropping for Bob Walker.

My Dad was well on his way in fulfilling his goal of becoming his own landowner and putting behind him all the hard work, sweat and the aggravations working as a sharecropper, better known as a dirt farmer.

The first parcel of land my father bought, was a piece of land, 21 acres called the old Ruberg Place for \$500.00 and about a half mile from the old Walker Place. It was said that the celebration was one to remember. It had a much larger and better home on the property than the one we lived in, and it had a big huge Sycamore tree in the front yard where we kids carved our names and a tall beautiful Mulberry Tree. We kids would climb the Mulberry tree in the fall of the year when the fruit was ripe and get our fill of Mulberry's .

I couldn't understand for the save of me why my father didn't move his

family into the house and why Mama didn't insist. My father's loyalty to his relatives and neighbors were impeccable, and it is quite understandable, due to unforeseen circumstances, and with good reasoning, he moved his sister, my Aunt Edna and her family into the house instead, and of course we kids, was all excited about their move, because we had our first cousins to play with. Papa farmed the land in addition to the sharecropping for a corn crop to supplement his corn meal supply that was an important ingredient, used in his profession. Uncle Gus and Aunt Edna was employed at the cotton mill [textile plant] in Bamberg and the older child Connie Mae was put in charge, tending of the smaller children. Daisy [Della] while living here met and married a, Red Black, from Bamberg, this being her first marriage.

Mama, her health, being an epileptic, her seizures being more frequent, I don't know for certain if she agreed with my father's recommendation or not, that being, bringing someone in to assist her with her household duties. The decision was made in the affirmative, and Papa went to Augusta, Ga. Put as add in the paper and returned in about three or four days with a woman and her child. We kids were instructed to call her Miss Cora [she was a Horton] and her child Cleo, which was about four years old. Things went pretty smooth, according to hoyle, for a year or so until Mama thought things were getting a little too hairy between Papa and Miss Cora and Miss Cora began to get a little on the lazy side, what is known as gold-breaking and started lying in bed until late morning, and as Mama, described to Papa, showing her ass to us kids. Papa tried to be the mediator, but to no avail. For another six months or so, it finally happened, the dancing between my Dad and Miss Cora, finally came to a squeaking halt. Mama couldn't stand it any longer and the hair started flying, Miss Cora losing almost all her hair, demanding that Papa take her and Cleo back to Augusta. Meanwhile, just prior to this catastrophe, a couple of months or so Miss Laura, a good friend of my parents from Augusta for whom they knew when living in Georgia [I'll elaborate on their meeting later on] came to visit, she was a welcome pleasure, we all just loved her. We children called her Aunt Laura, and she was much older than our parents. During all the ruckus between my parents and Miss Cora, she kept on the side lines and never once interfered, however one could identify the direction her animosity were aimed. Aunt Laura brought much vitality and passion to the family household, easy to converse with and seem to understand all that, of a child's problem. She helped Mama in many ways, household chores and one on one personal and private conversation. You will read about their close friendship and how it all came about in my father and

mother's chapter later on in this writing.

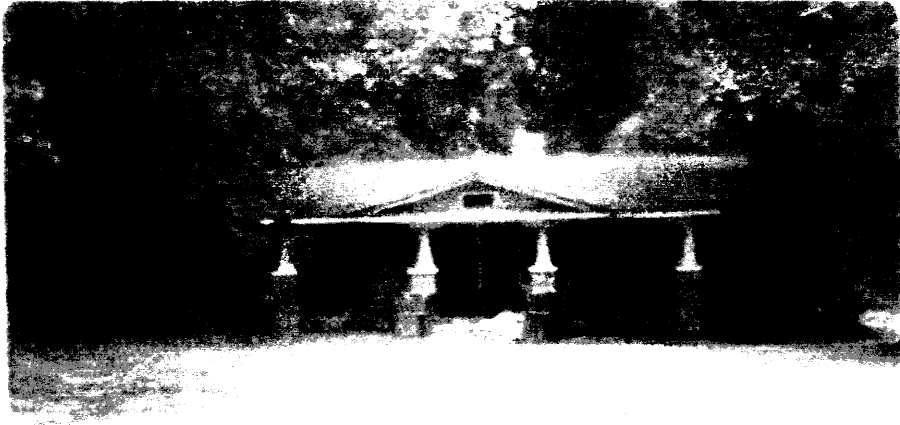
In the 1930/ 1931, I being ten years of age, I remember well how jubilant my father would be when he purchased another parcel of land. By the year 1931, according to the land deeds in the Barnwell court house, my father had purchased a total of 551 acres of farm land in five parcels. And over 400 acres of virgin timberland by hand shake, which was common in the early days of land transactions and perfectly legal as long as the two, the seller and buyer lives. When one dies you have no proof of purchase if not recorded in the county court house.

During the interim, before building his dream home he was preparing his land for planting, clearing new ground for farming, building tenant houses, barns for storage, coral [a lot] for his farm animals, buying more mules for farming and hogs for slaughter, moving tenant hands into tenant houses, buying farm supplies and equipment.

My father was a very busy man, with several projects going on at the same time, he had very little time for himself, not even enough time to look for another house keeper. Not yet. I'll keep you posted.

With two cars on the road hauling his product, some times making two trips a day, the demand were getting greater than his output. And the mash, the sediments that settled at the bottom of the beer vats were piling up so, he was afraid the alcohol odor from the mash would give away his secret location of his establishment, that being, fishermen and hunters were in the swamps continuously. Bingo, a light came on and it gave him an idea.

My father went to the market where they auctioned live stock and bought more hogs and pigs and some old sow's with piglets and turned them loose in the woods and swamp. After a few weeks my father had more swine in the swamps than he could remember buying. At the end of each day when the attendants would change shifts, they would bring the beer mash out in burlap sacks and empty them in a pile at the entrance of the swamp, needless to say this solved the mash problem. My Dad was unfamiliar with the reaction that the mash would have on his incinerators, upon discovering that a few of his pigs was down and couldn't get up, he thought they had the cholera or some other kind of infectious disease. He had Dr Hammond come out and take a look and Dr Hammond said he almost died laughing , telling Papa he had nothing but intoxicated hogs. He made Papa take him fishing.



The brick home, built and moved into by the Davis family, April 1932.

Top, front view

Bottom, side view

Photo taken prior to being demolished in 2000.