

After a few days of some serious thinking, and couldn't get anyone else to dig that well, with careful planning and supervision, my brother started where Tootsie left off, with a pickaxe and shovel he would load the bucket and my father and Tootsie would pull the dirt and red clay up, empty the bucket and lower the bucket back down to by brother, this continued for several days. He was so far down, and so narrow at the bottom of the well, he could hardly manage to maneuver around to fill the bucket. Finally my brother yelled, WATER!!!, The echo coming up from the bottom of that hole, was a welcome sound to all waiting at the top. After a few days we had plenty of good, cool, clean, clear water, and most of all, Mama was a proud woman to have all that water in her daily chores.

The well was deep and guarded by a wooden wall to draw water, consisting of a winding rope through a pulley hung above with a cross 4x4, a bucket tied to the rope and a heavy rock. The bucket would fall rapidly to the bottom of the well, the rock tied to the bucket insures that it will strike the water right sinking it one sided filling it. The rope is a piece of plow rope , one end attached to the bucket and the other end pulled through the pulley and fastened to the side of the wooden wall.

A few weeks before starting his, Water well, project, a drummer came around selling Lightning Rods to be placed on top of the house. He had his work cut out, trying to convince Papa he needed lightning rods to protect his house from fire, caused from a lightning strike. The Drummer tried to explain, if lightning would hit the house, the electricity would travel from the Rods, down through the cables and into the ground. The Drummer , explain to Papa that this Lightning Rod thing was a new discovery and a Lightning deterrent, and all the highly respected big home owners was having them installed, and when people saw Lightning Rods on top of homes, that was a sign of success, and prosperity. About eight or ten inches below the top of the lightning rod were different colors of globes about the size of a soft ball, my Dad wanted a globe color to match the brick. He had five rods installed on top of the house and I think only for the decorations. Did the Drummer sell the lightning rods or was it the shiny globes?. Hmmm.

Well things were settling down for years too come, Kenney, Carl and Blend was sent, of course at different times to music school in Chicago, Ill. Working in the fields, and later on Kenney went back to study to become an electrician.

Me, I'm going to school and when schools out, working in the fields , playing with my cousins and black friends, rambling the swamps, doing the usual, and every day routine of a working farm.

We had plenty of playmates and always managed to visit, despite all the other obligations we had helping our parents to fulfilled their daily performances operating the farm.

Beside Uncle Gus and Aunt Edna's brood, we had Uncle Shelton, we called him Uncle Shelt, and Aunt Victoria, we called her Aunt Vic. They lived across the Edisto River, on the Norway, S.C. side. They had three children, Otis, Ejay [E.J] and Theo. When we visited, we would use the short cut crossing the Edisto River river by boat, and walking the rest of the way through the swamp on foot. In the summertime we kids would swim across the river and forego using the boat. This was also the custom when we lived on the Walker place.

It was very obvious that Papa had a closer relationship with his two sisters, Aunt Edna and Aunt Vic, than he did with his other siblings. Of course these are the only two of my Dad's siblings that I knew, the others had passed and it seemed he was always concerned about their well being, and helped them in many ways.

Uncle Guss and Aunt Edna moved from Papa's house on the Ruberg place to Mr Boss McCroy's place, about four miles from the Ruberg place. Mr McCroy was in the timber business and Uncle Gus was going to work for him, but that didn't last long before they moved again between there and Denmark, S.C. and then again, to Bamberg,[Back to the Cotton mill]. Papa helped them get settled in and offered them a cow off the farm, which they gladly accepted and wondered how they were going to get that cow to Bamberg. Well they came up with the bright idea of sending Redrick, Marshall and Harris back home with Papa and they, H.D. and myself would walk that cow back to their home in Bamberg. We started out about two days later with that cow, early in the morning at daybreak, walking it to Bamberg, each taking turns leading the cow, while playing along the road. It was a creek between home and Bamberg, and naturally we had to go skinny dipping. When we finished the cow had gotten loose and had gone to a nearby farmers house, jumped his fence and was in with the farmers cows. We finally got that cow to Bamberg after dark. Papa and Mama was there and we heard them talking to Aunt Edna about she didn't have to worry about the cow having a calf. The farmer knew my Dad and told him the cow had gotten serviced by his bull .Papa or Aunt Edna didn't say or do anything to us, I guess they thought we had, had enough punishment for one day.

Mama, was very pleased with her deep water well, with good clean clear water and not sandy at times when coming from a pitcher pump, especially proud that the well was close to the smokehouse where the females could take their bath and bathe in private. [The menfolk went down to the creek to bathe]. In the summertime things were done a little differently than in winter, in order to avoid heating the house up too much by firing up the wood stove to heat water, A wash tub was put outside near the well, in the sun and filled with water in the morning , after setting out in the sun all day, by late afternoon the water would be well above 90 degrees and ready for a bath. Mama would have the wash tub moved inside the smokehouse for complete privacy.

In the winter time she would heat the water on the cook stove and pour it into a wash tub, the same tub used for washing clothes, and cool it with cold water bringing it to the right temperature. She would have another pot of water on the stove heating, warming up, for the last person to take a bath. That way one tub of water would be enough for all the family who needed a bath too bathe.

Blackville, was a little town that seem to have a Circus or medium size carnival coming to town once every three months or so, and was a great celebration for all the farm families in the surrounding farm communities to attend. This is one time the farmers would set aside all their pending and important projects, when possible, too attend the Circus and the, carnival's show's and festivities. They would come by all means of transportation, including on foot. The Carnival, or Circus, was usually set up on the lot reserved for the farmers to hitch their animals when coming to town to do their, shopping, selling and trading, and due to the limited space during the Carnival days the animal's would be tied to every tree or post around town that otherwise would be off limits to farm animals. The little town Sparrows, kept the town sanitize from the stench of animal droppings.

My Dad, enjoyed so much ringing the bell with the sledge hammer, which was not an easy thing to do, he was good at it, and I believed he like to show the audience looking on, his skill and strength, and by using his will, and grit helped him to accomplished that goal. My friends and I, would spend all our money on rides and use the rest of our time trying to sneak in shows or on our bellies peaking underneath the tents to see what's going on inside.

H.D. would purchase a pig from Papa and Barbecue it the night before the carnival and setup a table on the street beside Mr Huffman grocery store in

Blackville and sold Bar-B-Que sandwiches for 5 cents. After depleting his sales he would joined the others at the carnival and after paying Papa for the pig, his net profit was spent at the circus.

The barbecuing went so well, we three H.D. Blend and myself went into a three man venture and business enterprise. We were going to cut wood through out the week when time allowed and barbecue a pig on Friday nights. We would load the wagon with wood on Friday and take the wood and barbecue to town on Saturday, while H.D. is selling the barbecue on the street, Blend and I would go from house to house trying to sell the wagon load of wood for 50 cents. It was more work and more convincing to sell a load of wood in the summer time than in winter. After passing their homes several times peddling the wood, I think now, maybe, just maybe, those ladies might have felt sorry for us, and bought the wood anyway, or maybe they just felt sorry for the mules. Our adventure went very well, and our father was very pleased with our accomplishments, but later, we finally drifted into separate interests or endeavors.

At one of the carnivals, coming to town my father befriended or became acquainted with one of the participants, a would be cow boy, his name was Shorty Hamilton, who did tricks with a rope, played the piano and supposed to have been an expert in target shooting with a pistol. Yep, you guest it again!, Papa brought him home, promised Mama, he would only be there for a short while. The short while turned into a year or more. At this time, my three brothers, Kenney, Carl and Blend was putting their musical talent in good use and was playing on a radio station WIS, COLUMBIA, S.C. From 12:00 noon till 1:00 pm. As the "Carolina Blues Boys" Their sponsors was three 666,[some kind of tonic], Prince Albert Tobacco, Martha White Flour and Wrigley's chewing gum. Papa bought a battery operated radio with a huge gooseneck speaker, and powered by four large batteries and we would turn it on only when something that was thought to be of interest to the family. Shorty had a long touring car with huge cow horns anchored on the front of the hood. He joined my brothers, playing the piano and continued during the year or so when he was living with us. The group was just about burned out, taking the trip to Columbia and back every day and with other duties helping Papa run the farm and delivering moonshine to his customers. They decided to discontinue playing for awhile, and Shorty decided to leave and return to the life he knew best and loved, the circus.

Papa wanted them to continue playing, but understood the stress, the fast pace they were experiencing and supported them in cooling their heels for awhile. Being a musician himself, and never had the opportunity to expand in his musical capability, he wanted them to continue in their music, but to his disappointment, this never came to pass. H.D. and myself never had the privilege to take music lessons as the others, Christee Lee [Chris] our sister, taken piano lessons while attending Blackville, high school.

My Dad was a band within himself, and a self taught musician. He could pick up an instrument and play it in such a way, that would put most musicians too shame. Playing the piano was his speciality. He could tickle those ivories with a song, as no one has ever heard. I remember in late evenings when I would be walking home, returning from a visit with friends, I could hear Papa playing that piano a mile from the house, walking the dirt road. In the summertime we never closed doors, all remained open the entire summer and our home having nine [9] outside doors, the sound from the piano was easy coming. It seemed as though, the quite night breeze would carry the sound much further, than the daylight hours. Neighbors would be sitting on their porches, smoking their pipes, telling the children to be quite while listening to Papa play the piano, and fretting every moment that he would stop playing. The night would be so still and quite, the only sound other than the sound coming from the piano was the sound of my barefoot coming in contact with the ground. As he would play you could hear some of his many songs, "The old Shanty town", "My blue heaven", "Toot Toot Tootsie good bye", "Wabash Blues" "Whispering" "Down by the old mill stream" "put on your old grey bonnet" "Sweet Adeline" "A hot time in the old town tonight" "In a little Spanish town" Gosh! And so many more. I can visualize now, my Dad, sitting at that piano, dressed in his black trousers, white shirt, sleeves rolled half way up his arm, fingers moving ever so smooth up and down those piano keys.

In the summer, when the black folks were having their church services at "Sunshine Baptist Church" about ½ mile up the road from the house, after church, when Papa was playing the piano, they could hear him and most, on their way home by wagon or whatever mode of transportation, would stop by and gather around the front porch, and in the front yard, just to hear my father play, and mighty proud he was, to play the church songs, that was requested by his audience. When he played a church song that had the rhythm and sound of the old Charleston dance, you have never seen such

a christian exhibition coming from his front yard congregation. What a wonderful group dedicated to their church, good music and everlasting friendship.

When he built the brick home, the piano was the first piece of furniture to be moved into the living room.

I don't ever remember my Dad playing any musical instruments, until the day he bought the piano, I guess he was too busy, working and sharecropping trying to provide a living for his family, and didn't have the funds necessary to purchase any kind of musical instrument. What a surprise for me, when he started playing that piano. He also purchased for himself a Guitar, a Violin, Drums and a harmonica with a contraption to be placed around his neck in such a way he could play the piano, the harmonica and the drums at the same time.

Living in a big house, conformable to any other in the community, we were still living in the primitive age, You walk in your house to-day, flick a switch and you expect a light to come on. You press a button on the remote control and expect the TV to come on. There are many thing you depend on electricity too do each day, from running your well pump, if you live in the country, to washing and drying your clothes. So how did we get along before we had electricity?

If you wanted light you would get a match, go over to the kerosene lamp, lift the globe off, strike the match, light the wick, put the globe back on and adjust the flame for the best light. There was a little knob on the side of the lamp that you could use to raise or lower the wick to adjust the amount of light the lamp put out. After several days of use the wick would get crusted over and would not burn very well. You would have to then roll the wick up higher and take the scissors and trim the crusted part off. This was known as trimming the lamp. This task I performed many, many times.

We had only one lamp at the Walker place, to conserve kerosene and when you went from room to room you taken the lamp with you Here at the big house we had a lamp for each room.

For entertainment we had an old hand cranked victrola or record player as it would be called today. It was spring operated and you would wind it up and put your record on, release the brake that was holding the turntable and listen to the music. The 78 RPM records was the only records in existence then. And of course the battery operated radio that I mention previously. One thing I would like to add. In order to make sound come from the radio,

you would need a long wire hung between two post, 15'/20' high, or from a tree to the top edge of the house, insulated with a glass ring tied off at the post, tree or house and a wire leading inside to the radio to act as an antenna to pick up the stations.

Without electricity, work on the farm was done manually, from shelling corn, threshing peas, stacking hay, milking the cow, churning butter, etc. I remember Mama, how she would fill a burlap bag with dried field peas and place the bag on top of a wood block, beating the sack, with her clothes stick, separating the peas from the hulls, when finished she would then, spread a cotton sheet on the ground, take the sack of peas, hold it high, and let the peas and hulls fall from the sack, the peas being heavier would fall on the cotton sheet while the wind would blow the hulls away. During one of these processes of elimination, Papa informed Mama that Judson, his nephew, [I spoke of him earlier] had gotten himself some kind of a contraption, and as an extra sideline he was going around threshing peas for the farmers and he was going to get Judson, to come over and thrash several wagon loads of peas he had just harvested from the fields. The unit Judson had was a box type contraption that he pulled behind a T- Model ford. When he arrived at his destination he would unhitch the thrasher that had a side hub protruding outward on the end of a steel rod to turn the inside mechanisms, and anchor it down and move the T-Model ford forward about 15/18 feet. He would chock the wheels, and jack the right rear wheel off the ground about 2 feet, remove it and replace it with a hub. [A round piece of wood with two steel bands at each end] He would then wrap a canvas belt, with steel staples around each hub, on the T-model ford and the pea thrasher. Placing a huge bucket of water in front of the T-Model by the radiator, he would disconnect the bottom radiator hose, then connect another longer hose to the bottom, placing the other end into the bucket of water, repeating the same procedure at the top. This modification would prevent the engine from overheating while in the running mode. He then would crank the engine, set the spark, pull the forward lever, and "Walla" you're off. The right rear hub spinning, turning the belt, in turn turning the hub on the pea thrasher. The field hands unloading the wagons with pitch forks, placing the peas, still on the vines, into the thrasher, separating the peas from the hulls and foliage. The peas dropping into a bottom container, the foliage being discharged from a side exhaust, piled, and later used for animal feed. Mama just celebrated with joy.

Many things on the farm, though, had to be done, with or without electricity and just by plain hard labor. I remember being overwhelmed and with much excitement, my Dad, being short of plowing hands, due to other pressing needs on the farm, informed me it was about time that he, introduce me to the plow. This was early spring and the field hands had already prepared the land for planting, and furrows had to be plowed for the seed planting by the corn or cotton planter. For me to start plowing was just as exciting as when my brother, Joe, taught me to drive a car for the first time.

Off to the farm we went , I hitched the mule to the plow, Papa leading the way to the field, me behind, driving the mule, dragging the plow on its side behind. Reaching the field, there were already two stakes or poles, 2x2 inches x 8 feet long lying on the ground with a white rag tied at the top. My Dad informed me to take one of those stakes and walk to the other end of the field, and as he would motion with his hands and arms, sink the stake into the ground, when he gave me the signal, this being accomplished, I returned to the mule and plow. he demonstrated to me the technique of plowing the perfect straight row, or furrow. About 36 inches from the bottom of each stake was a notch etched out to measure the space between each row.[By this time my excitement, and me being overwhelmed was just about to disintegrate into oblivion.] For me, he aligned the mule and plow in such a position that the rag on the stake that I had staked out at the other end of the field was visible between the mules ears [Now, that's it!, I was thinking, if I had to plow that damn dumb mule straight to that stake, for a straight furrow, keeping the rag in sight between his ears, no way! Hosea!] With the other stake in hand, he measured the distance from the plow to the notch, sinking the stake into the ground, for the return trip. This procedure would be repeated over and over at the end of each row.

Well time for action, he placed me in between the plow handles, placed himself close behind me with his hands firmly placed on mine on the plow handles and with one git-up, we were on our way. He held on to me for a few steps and turned loose and said well, son, you are on your on. It wasn't as bad as first thought, and my Dad knew the old mule knew she had a green horn behind the plow and would head straight to that far stake as she had done many, many times before. Me, with my pants legs rolled up, my barefoot sinking into the cool wet dirt, hoping my father would be very proud of my performance. The possibility of me becoming a farmer became more evident.



Old Farm implements

Top left: Mowing machine.

Top right: Corn sheller.

Bottom left: Cotton planter.

Bottom right: Sausage maker.

While my father was making successful strides in the past few years, a great Depression was going on. Some said, maybe they should have called it the great devastation. The depression caused a great number of people to lose their jobs and fall into a pit of debt and poverty. The depression had a greater effect on the people for whom had employment other than the farming industry, and had little effect on my father with his farming, distillery and other enterprises, except for prices plummeting in the produce market. He would ship car loads of watermelons by rail up north and lose all due to a poor market. He would refuse to sell his other produce, cantaloupes and cucumbers at the Blackville's farmers market at such a low price, and give what he could to the needy in town and return home with the rest for feed, for the animals. During the early thirties, thousands of families wandered throughout the country, searching desperately for ways to establish a foundation too care for their families by any means possible, for food, shelter, jobs, money and clothing. It is no doubt the depression changed the outlook on life, for everyone.

In the early thirties, during the depression, my father was doing very well for himself, providing for his family and helping others that was not as fortunate. After world war one, and the economy was being destroyed by the Great Depression, in 1932 Franklin Roosevelt was elected president, promising a new deal for the American people. If my history serves me right , the new deal was based on a hundred days, and trying to pass as many bills as he could through congress, one being providing emergency relief for all the unemployed people.

Others that I am familiar with, was the [CCC] the Civilian Conservation Corps, the [WPA] Works Progress Administration, the [NRA] The national Recovery Administration, and the REA [The Rural Electric Administration]

The CCC Camp was created as an unemployment relief. This provided work for thousands of young men throughout the country, in construction, forestation, and nation parks improvements .These young men had to join for one year, wear World War One, uniforms, had free room and board, and received \$ 30.00 a month, and was trained by regular army military personnel. [I, being in the regular army in the mid thirties, was part of teaching them, military courtesy and discipline] The [CCC] was commanded by retired military officers, and the policy was to keep the enlistee's stationed in camps as close to their home as possible.