



Created By



THE STORY OF  
CLEVE AND BERTHA REDDING'S LIFE

# STROLLING

# DOWN

# MEMORY

# LANE

Written by Opal Redding Bailey  
1987

Compiled into book with pictures and other details by **Jo Berta Bailey Flickinger**  
2014

*ADDED COMMENTS/NOTES IN RED BY:*



Husband – Grover Cleveland Redding  
Born – October 4, 1885, Sardis, Tennessee  
Died – March 12, 1927, Port Arthur, Texas  
(Texas Company electrician, was electrocuted)

Wife - Bertha Adeline (Brooks) Redding  
Born – February 7, 1888, Saltillo, Hardin County, Tennessee  
Died – November 18, 1972, Sweeny, Brazoria County, Texas

Date of Marriage – October 14, 1904, Hardin County, Tennessee  
Performed by – Rev. A. L. Rogers at Saltillo, Tennessee

Their Children – Devorah Adeline Elizabeth Redding  
Born – December 23, 1906, Saltillo, Hardin County, Tennessee

Howard Elbert Redding  
Born – May 17, 1910, Saltillo, Hardin County, Tennessee

Vernice May Redding  
Born – September 22, 1912, Milledgeville, Tennessee

Mildred Nealy Ann Redding  
Born – November 14, 1914, Saltillo, Hardin County, Tennessee

**Opal Ufemia Redding**  
**Born – September 10, 1916, Morris Chapel, Tennessee**

Bonnard Albert Redding  
Born – July 24, 1919 at **Sweeny**, Brazoria County, Texas

Grover Cleveland Redding, Jr.  
Born – January 9, 1922, **Sweeny**, Brazoria County, Texas

Helen Marie Redding  
Born- January 10, 1924, **Sweeny**, Brazoria County, Texas

*See [Reddin family tree](#) for more genealogy information.*

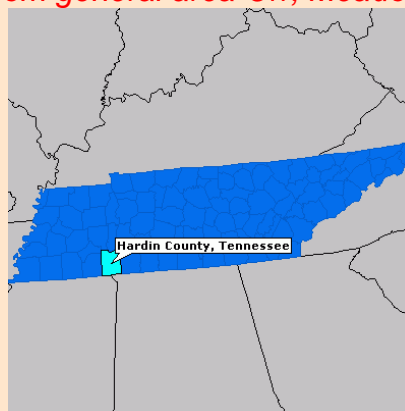
## Memories of Grover C. and Bertha A. Redding Family

Bertha's father died with typhoid fever when she was 27 months old. He and her little sister, Mary Caroline, died 2 weeks apart.



Bertha Adeline, 12 years old, Seana Adeline Anderson Brooks, her mother,  
And Edgar Eli Brooks, one of her brothers. *(picture about 1900)*

***LIFE ON A FARM IN HARDIN COUNTY TENNESSEE ABOUT 1900***  
*Other Sweeny families from general area Orr, Meador, Lindsey, Plunk, Presley*



wikipedia.com

Yes, Mother would sit for hours telling of her and Dad's courtship. And how they ran away and got married (1904). She was only 16 years old and Dad was 19. They borrowed a friend's horse and buggy. Mother said they had gone to church and she was wearing a blue and white check gingham dress with ruffles and lace. So they decided to get married. She sent my Grandmother Brooks word that they'd run off and got married. In about a week Grandmother sent her word to come on over and visit and get her clothes, she wasn't mad at them.

**LIFE AT HOME BEFORE SHE MARRIED:** She said they were always busy. Canning in summer and putting things in the cellar for winter. Their winters were real rough back then, so they had to prepare like the ants do. In the fall Uncle Ed, Mother's brother, would dig holes in each corner of the garden, then he'd put straw in the bottom, then just before frost they'd put in turnips, radishes, parsnips, rutabagas and beets, in another he'd put cabbage, in another Irish potatoes, in the last sweet potatoes. Then he'd cover it with a thick layer of corn stalks and hay, then add sand heaped up high. When the snows came, they'd go dig or make a hole in the side of these storage bins and get out whatever they wanted to eat. In the cellar they put barrels of homemade sorghum syrup, pumpkins, cushaws (*squash*), hung the tomato vines on the walls and had ripe tomatoes until after January 1<sup>st</sup>.

First job in the fall of the year was to cut plenty of wood. Always had a woodshed that you could get into from the house, the snow would get so deep. Corn cobs and chips were saved through the summer to help start the fire.

Next job in the fall was butchering hogs. They'd wait until real cold weather, then kill 3 or 4 at a time. They had 2 good Negro families that worked and helped them. They'd cure the ham and bacon in boxes in the cellar with salt. Fry the sausage and put it in crock jars then pour a gallon of hog lard over them. Put a big, heavy crock lid on them. When they wanted sausage, they'd dig down below the grease and take out what they wanted.

They'd also dry apples and peaches to do through the winter, too. If snow was on the ground and they run out of flour and sugar, they'd have cornbread and use sorghum syrup for sweetening.

When spring would come, Grandmother would have Gramper Presley (Mother's stepdad) to untack the homemade rug Grandmother had knitted in blocks, and she would ravel them apart, wash and re-dye them with all kind of roots and bark. They said was real colorful. Then in the fall Gramper would bring in new hay, lay it even on the floor and Grandmother would have all the rug blocks sewed back together. So they'd re-tack it down again for another winter.

Their home was a large, long room made of logs, with a fireplace in each end of the room. At one end a bed was on each side of the fire-place, and one bed at the other end. At night Gramper would bring in peanuts for them to pick off. They'd eat them, then give the vines to the carrel.

In spring and summer they had a huge, big room run out from the other, made a T shaped house. They cooked and ate in it during the summer months. Was too cold in winter.

Food for Sunday dinner was always prepared on Saturday—fruit pies, cakes stacked with dried fruit cooked and sweetened. When they ate that, each slice was topped with whipped cream.

Cooked chicken or ham on Saturday. Then fixed the vegetables and bread. And if they were going to have dumplings, they'd fix them Sunday morning, too. Usually some family or the preacher and family would come home with them for dinner. So all they'd have to do when they got in from church

was to put a few chips in the wood stove and warm things up and make coffee (boiled). All old folks or grown-ups drank coffee with their meals, children drank milk.

Mother had a pet coon. Uncle Ed had put a collar on it with a small turkey bell around its neck. One Sunday when they came in from church, he had got in the kitchen some way. When Grandmother went in to warm up things, there that coon sat on the stove with his arm up to his shoulder in those chicken and dumplings. So They sent the coon off. Several years later someone told Mother that they had caught her coon in their trap, still had the bell around his neck.

Mother said Grandmother sold the book about "Galveston's Mighty 1900 Hurricane Storm."

And she said she remembered one day hearing Grandmother praying, "Lord be merciful, " and she turned to Mother and said, "Bert, they're having a might big earthquake, listen to that shuttle on the sewing machine." Mother said it swung back and forth, sounding like a bell.

Granddad (Mother's father, Samuel L. Brooks) was a gifted music player. Mother was too. He used to play for all big get-togethers and barn dances. They never had a music lesson. When she was 75 years old, I asked Janis Meador to bring her accordion over. Mother took it and played like she had been playing every day.

Grandmother gave Uncle Ed and Mother an acre of cotton each year. The money from it was theirs. Mother wanted an organ bad. Grandmother said a sewing machine came first. But they didn't buy either one. She bought a bedroom suite, which they sold when they **left for Texas in 1917**.

Mother had two brothers, Edgar and Oscar Brooks, and one sister Mary Caroline, called her Molly. Dad had six sisters, Melissa Almerrean, Maudie Wilma, Mattie Pearl, Etta Dena, Eda Mae, Euda Ufema, and two brothers, John Ervin and Marvin Elbert.



Front row left is Oscar Cyrus Brooks, the other brother of Bertha A. Brooks. Oscar left home and came to Cooper, Texas, when his mother married Parker Smith Presley. Oscar did not like Parker.





William Perry Reddin family-Hardin County, Tenn before 1897. Grover Cleveland back row, right.

Grandpa William Perry Reddin (Dad's father) fell dead at the dinner table (1911). He, Marvin and Dad had got 4 mules out of a mud bog. He had just took a bite of an egg out of pork chop pie, and head fell back. He was dead. He was quite a man we've been told. They all called him "Bud," said if you tied his hands, he couldn't talk.

Dad was a great baseball fan. Mother said he'd let his crop be late sometimes rather than miss any baseball games. One time he was late getting in from a game. Mother done all the chores but bringing in the wood for the cook stove. So, they always got up at 4 A.M. o'clock in the morning on the farm so the mules would have time to get through eating. There wasn't any wood inside, so he run out to the woodpile in the dark bare footed, and a big cottonmouth snake bit him on his big toe. He shot his gun several times as fast as he could. The closest neighbor came running on his horse. He run on for Grandpa Reddin then on for the doctor. When Grandpa got there, he run a chicken's head off and put those hot slices of meat on his toe. Mother said the meat would turn green. Anyway the doctor got there, said that hot chicken meat had saved his life. It drew the poison out.

They all lived pioneer lives. Mother has told us about them being at the spring just below their home, and they'd hear mountain lions roaring. They'd hide until they came on up and drank, then run on off again. I guess the Lord was watching over them. The men killed them later.

She also told how they would all walk to church in summer and how they'd put flowers in their hair, especially 4 o'clocks."

She also told us of their visit with relatives in Mississippi. Took the big boat ride down the river and how beautiful it was.

Dad often laughed about going home with a friend he had gone to college with. He was married. Met Dad in town, begged him to go home with him and spend the night so they could talk and he could meet his wife. Was real cold. When they went to eat supper, all they had was cornbread, butter, milk, and stewed pumpkin. He hated pumpkin, but was so hungry ate it and found it pretty good.

Aunt Devorah (D.D.) said she hated to see spring come. Ha! Grandma Reddin would want her to sit on the corner fence post of the orchard and throw rocks at the birds that were trying to eat her cherries.

They often told us what a pretty woman Grandma was. She had 9 children and said her shape was as pretty as when she was young. Aunt Cora Orr always said my daughter Jo Berta was shaped just like Grandma.

Grandmother Brooks Presley passed away when Devorah was a baby. Mother said she would rub Devorah's head and say, "Bert, if its hair is red, rinse it in soda water." She didn't like red hair and most of the Reddins had some shade of red hair.

Mother said she now knew her Mother died of a ruptured appendix. Had that pain in her side. They put warm poultices on it, which we know now would worsen it. Should have been cold packs.

Dad's sister Eda married a Dr. Mackey. He got her a big German police dog to be in the house with her while he was gone. A girl in the neighborhood, not quite an old maid, had fallen in love with him. She never got sick only at night. One night was freezing. A rider came for him, she was so bad off. He took his lantern, hitched his horse and buggy, and off he went. Wasn't gone too long. Aunt Eda said, "Was she real sick?" He said, "No! She wasn't sick when I got there, but if she takes what I left her, she'll sure be sick." Croton oil, ipecac, and several other things mixed in red cherry syrup. To make a long story short, she never sent for him again.

### **MOVE TO TEXAS 1917**

Devorah said she could still see Grandma Nancy Reddin **the day they left for Texas**. Had to go several miles in a wagon to catch a train and was so cold, she told the girls, "Come on let's wrap these hot bricks to put in the wagon. May be the last thing we'll get to do for the little things, " crying and wiping her eyes with her apron all morning before they left. And it **was the last time for them to see each other**. (*grandma Nancy Reddin died 2 years later in 1919*)

It was 1917 Mother's health was so bad. Several families had already come to Texas. Frank and Mattie Orr and family, John and Cora Orr and family, Elige and Alice Meador and family, Willie and Irene Meador and family, Andrew and Ida Kennedy and family. So Frank Orr wrote Dad that Mattie's health seemed to be getting better and he could use him as foreman over some Mexicans cutting logs and hauling them to cut for crossties for the railroad. So Dad came on. Mother, Devorah, Howard, Vernice, and I came later. I was 6 months old.

**When we landed in Texas in Sweeny, March 1917**, we got off on the east side of the depot. Later years was changed to the north side to get off, for most of the town was facing it.





The day we landed this picture was made in front of John Orr's town house, which Lela Baker owns today. See [1916 Orr Family Photograph....100 years old in people/joe-lingo-collection](#)

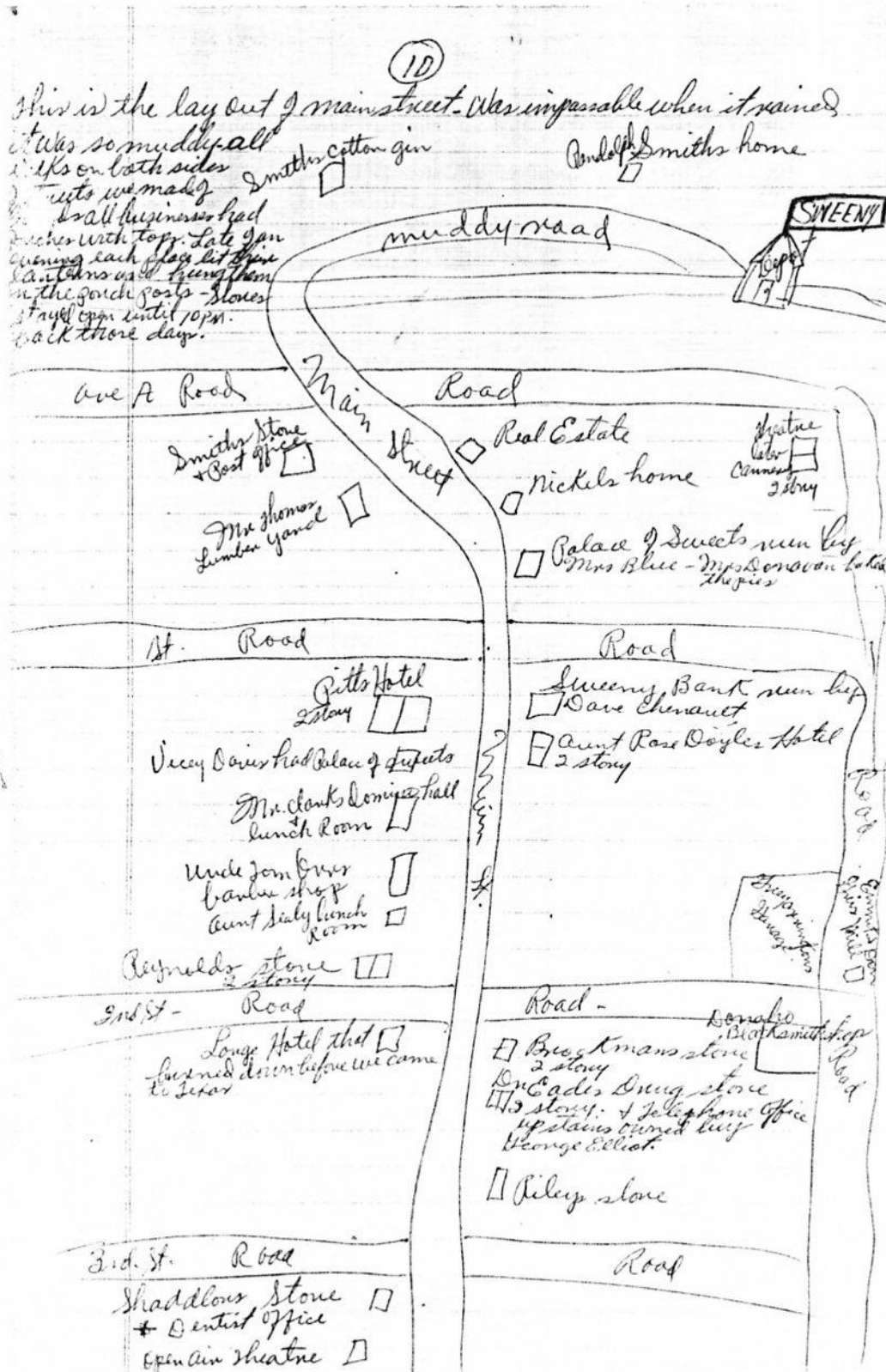


We lived in **Sweeny** for a while, then moved to **West Columbia** since they had a big oil boom. Dad could work a lot hauling with his team of mules.



Grover Cleveland Reddin Sr. on mule, Frank Orr behind him.

This is the layout of Main Street. Was impassable when it rained, it was so muddy. All walks on both sides of streets were made of boards. All businesses had porches with tops. Late of an evening each place lit their lanterns and hung them on the porch posts. Stores stayed open until 10 P.M. back those days.



SEE REDRAWN MAP

We lived by the prominent slave Negro and his wife, Charlie Brown. Mother often spoke of them as being such nice people.

The main big boom struck just after we moved over there. Mother always said that Dad's team brought the first boiler into West Columbia's oil field from East Columbia. Was brought up the river by boat. They had several cargo ships that hauled freight and supplies in there and a passenger boat big and beautiful name "Hiawatha." I think Mr. Randolph Smith's father and his brothers owned that.



*image courtesy of Brazoria County Historical Museum  
Sank @ East Columbia 1895. Bell from this boat on display West Columbia Historical Museum*

A short time later Mr. Frank Orr came over and said he had leased more land to cut logs off of, in Brazoria this time.

So we lived just across the railroad track, four houses down to your right after you go over the tracks. Ten years ago it was still standing, but I'm not sure now. Anyway, this was around the first of November. I had the flu. Dad had Dr. Weems to come by to see me. Dad asked him what he thought about us moving. He said, "Go on, roll her up in a quilt. Who knows, the fresh air might do her good." Mother said it did, I was so much better when we got to Brazoria. She often grieved about a little dog we had. The morning we moved it was standing there looking up at her in the wagon, his little eyes matted some. Dad said, "No, we can't take it, a sick baby is enough." She said she prayed someone fed and doctored it.

We got settled there in **Brazoria**. Dad and his Mexican crew was busy as bees. Found a dead Mexican leaning up against a tree. Said they didn't know how long he'd been dead. But his skin was dried up on his bones. Nothing had eaten on him. Dad said that it was said he had eaten so many hot peppers and garlic that nothing could eat him. Ha!

This beautiful November 11<sup>th</sup> morning they went on to work as usual. A little after lunch they heard guns firing, horns blowing, sounds of scream. He and his crew jumped in the wagon and run the mules all the way to town. Was expecting to see half the town burned down. But people were shouting, singing, beating on things. They had gotten a telegram on the wires at the depot that the war had ended. World War One—November 11, 1918.

We lived in Brazoria until that spring. They had gotten the required amount of logs cut. Then we moved out here on the Martin farm in a small four-room house. Dad farmed. On July 24, 1919,



Bonnard was born. The old Martin home still stands. And the settlement is now called **Four Forks**, two highways cross making 4 corners.

*The old Martin home refers to the Levi Jordan plantation house built in 1854 later owned by the Martins, some of the Jordan descendants. A Mrs Martin was an elementary school teacher in Sweeny in the 40s/50s & lived in the house at that time. Now a state historical site.*



He came to town one day and met a friend who wanted him to move to another farm out toward Old Ocean to help him truck farm. So we moved out here where the trailer sits now this side of Barry Chenault's home. Our little house set just on this side of the slough. Dad truck-farmed, raised spinach, cabbage, onions, corn, beets, radishes, turnips, mustard, carrots, potatoes, and tomatoes. And raised a patch of sorghum, too.



*House would have been located to the left of the slough. Barry Chenault home yet to be built*

He would gather the vegetables and tie them in bunches. A man and his wife, who live (where Garland Friday's house now stands) across the road from us, would take his vegetables to market.

They always traveled with them at night with lanterns hanging on their wagon. I never did know where they took them, but they wouldn't get back home until noon the next day. They had 4 children. The youngest was 4 years old. They would lock them in the houses—take all the matches out of the house and kerosene lamps. So they couldn't start a fire. We could hear them crying at night. Broke Mother's heart. She just begged to keep them for them, but they wouldn't let her.

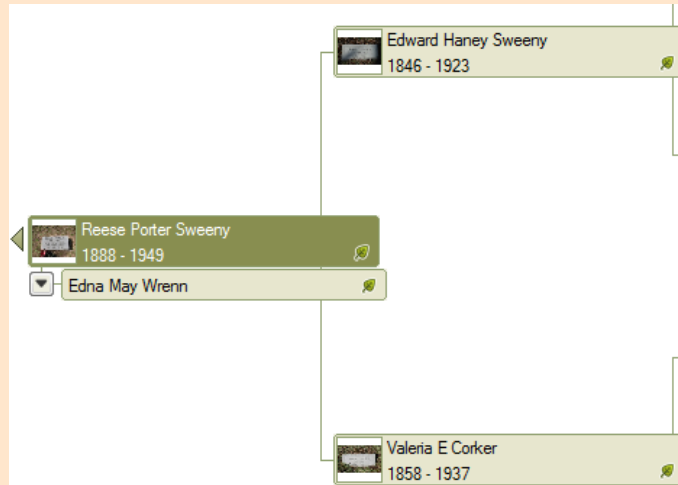
That's where Dad would go out in the spring and shoot 8 or 10 big blackbirds, bring them home and skin and dress them. Mother would boil them and make **blackbird pie**, which consists of dumplings, lots of black pepper and rich crust on top baked golden brown. Really was good. The breast was the only meat on them.



Then in the fall Dad and the neighbor would but the sorghum cane and had a big, huge kettle and press that the mules walked around the kettle, and they fed the cane into the press. And as the mules walked around, would squeeze the juice out of the stalks. Then they'd build a fire under the kettle. Sometimes would take all night to cook it down to syrup. Had to cook it so slow so it wouldn't burn or scorch. Sure was thick and good. They sold most of it, but always kept plenty for the families.

While we lived there, our cousin Bethel Clayton would come to visit.

About 3 miles from us, where Old Ocean is now, lived a large family by the name of Sweeny. They were farmers, and their orchard looked like a paradise in spring. But they had one son named Reese that would come to town every other day and meet the train. Randolph Smith's grocery store would order a case of lemon extract for him. We would **hide** behind the trees from that big curve in the road and watch him. His old horse would stop when Reese would lean over on his neck. He'd open and drink that lemon flavoring and throw the bottle down. After he would get a way down the road, we'd run pick up the bottles. We loved to smell that lemon flavor. We should have been spanked handling those bottles the old drunk had handled. But people didn't think about germs like that, only food germs was their concern.



*Reese Porter Sweeny must be the old drunk. He was the guy that shot & killed Wilson Davis who had shot & killed his 1/2 brother Thomas Jefferson Sweeny. See file [Historical Sweeny Murder & Revenge Shooting](#)*

Then one night Aunt Almerrean's son, Audie, came in from the war. Got off the train here at Sweeny. Asked the depot agent where his Uncle Cleve Redding lived. So he told him. Was 10 P.M. o'clock at night. So he walked to our house.

The next morning he raised our mosquito net off our bed. Sure scared Vernice and me. Yes, in those days everyone had to sleep under mosquito nets. Looked like cheesecloth made the size of the bed and hung to the ceiling by each corner with strong cord. At night the sides and end was unrolled and draped around the bed so no mosquito could get to you.

**Farmers had to gather up green moss and old wool rags and several other things to set on fire at night so their stock could have a smoke which kept the mosquitoes off them.**

Now back to Audie. He gave Vernice and me a slice of gum. First we'd ever seen. And then he said, "Get up sleepyheads." He was in a rush for us to take him home. We all got in the wagon.

Mother put in an extra quilt. We went down the old Ellis road. Aunt Almerrean lived on this side of the sulphur ditch in a little house under a huge pecan tree. Dad had Audie to lie down and covered him with the quilt. When we all got out of the wagon, Dad said, "Almerrean, I brought you a surprise." She was so happy to see us, she laughed all time. He said, "Raise up that quilt." When she did and saw him, you never saw or heard such shouting. He had been in Germany in World War I, and she really didn't know if he was alive or not.

You see Voyd, Audie, Rowlf, Horrell, Wilma and Roy was by Aunt Amerrean's first husband William Albert (Abb) Hanna. Several years later she married Jasper Clayton after Abb died with typhoid fever. She and Uncle Jap as he was called had one daughter, Zelma Olean Hanson now as you know her. Uncle Jap had four children by his first wife. She died as Mr. Hanna did. They were Bishop, Eula, Tom, and Bethel. Uncle Jap was a fine man. I've often heard the men in the neighborhood say they never heard him say a curse word or never saw him get mad.

Now back to my family. Bonnard was born on the Martin farm. Dad rented it as we left Brazoria but didn't stay there very long. The huge, old white house still stands just out of Four Forks. A rich man from up north came down and bought the land and built the big house. Brought his slaves with him. They said he was a mean man. Was said he killed one of his slaves in his kitchen and the blood stains were still on the floor.

Anyway he run out of money, went back up north to get a loan, took pneumonia and died. So his heirs got this place. The heirs rented it out. Years later Mrs. Lela Brooks when she was young, chummed with the girl that lived there. They had a big molasses kettle sitting by their windmill, kept it full of water for the cattle. One night she and this girl were in swimming in the kettle and a bear or mountain lion came up and drank. Like to have scared them to death. They just had their noses out of the water. But needless to say that was the last moonlight dip in the kettle. Ha!

Then we moved to the farm out on Old Ocean highway. In the fall Dad and Mr. Dick Lindsey and several more would duck hunt in what they called the Old Flag Pond. I think those Phillips' reservoirs are built right where it was. Back those days people ate a lot of wild game. With the duck and geese, they put plenty of red hot pepper. Never heard of sinus trouble, and pepper sauce was always on the table. Ha! Wasn't many people sick.

From there we moved to a small farm not far from where J.C.'s and Helen's home is today. Was a nice, big white house with a big front porch across the front of it on the east side. Was so cool all the time.

Uncle John **Presley** was Mother's stepbrother but was so good to all of us a real brother couldn't have been any better. Uncle John lived not far from us. You came to our house on a road just this side of the sulphur ditch. County men kept it graded up high. Uncle John's house stood and faced the Ellis road. And Grady Presley and his first wife Bessie and son Floyd Presley (that runs the washateria today) lived in a tent across the road. And Aunt Eliza and Gramper Presley (Mother's step-dad) and her daughter Esther lived in a small house in Uncle John's back yard. Aunt Eliza married Gramper Presley after Grandmother Brooks Presley died. That is where Aunt Eula died, Uncle John's 2<sup>nd</sup> wife. They had four children, Parker, Vester, James, and Prudy.

That is the place that when Dad or Uncle John would find the first cushaw or ear of corn with the purple tassel on it, they'd bring it to the house for Prudy and I to play with. We played like it was a doll.

I remember Aunt Almerrean coming to spend the day. Mother told me to go get an egg out of the hen's nest for corn bread. An old rooster was in the nest trying to entice the old hens to lay. I scared him off with a stick, took the egg in and told Mother the old rooster laid it. Sure tickled Aunt Almerrean.

One afternoon Dad had gone back to work in the field, wasn't gone long and we saw him coming back. He always took his wagon and gun down to the field, and water, kerosene, salt, and rags in case of a snake bite. That day he heard a frog hollering. Was a low, damp place across one end of his field. He picked up his gun and went to find the frog. He couldn't believe his eyes. Was a huge snake bigger than anything he had ever seen and a beautiful color. He killed it and put it in the wagon and come home for us to see it. Then brought it on to Sweeny to see in anyone knew what kind of snake it was. Mr. Randolph Smith (that run the big general store) had a book on snakes, and they called it a Bull snake. They told Dad they run in pairs as other snakes do, but never saw another one.

I remember the first summer we lived there. My brother Howard dug out a car in the ground. Front seat and back seat. Don't remember what he put up for the windshield, but we had one. He took a broom handle and nailed a gallon bucket lid on it and drove it in the ground for the steering wheel. Boy, we traveled lots. Ha! Make-believe. He read a lot, so he would take us through mountains explaining how beautiful they were. Across deserts naming the different kinds of cactus and color of blooms. Every now and then he's say, "Whoops, there goes a jack rabbit." We played all summer in our earthen car, but old man winter ruined it.

When we'd go over to Uncle John's, we'd have to wade a creek. But Dad put some big logs for he and Mother to cross on.

I never did tell you but Aunt Eliza and Gramper Presley moved in the house with Uncle John and children. Gramper died several years later, but Aunt Eliza stayed until all the children were grown and gone. Then Aunt Eliza married a Tom Bailey from Lola, Texas, so she and her daughter moved up there for several years. Colie, her daughter, died and was buried there in Lola. She injured her knee when she was a little girl. T.B. of the bone set in. She didn't live too long after that.

Aunt Eliza and Tom were divorced not long after Colie's death. So she moved back to Sweeny. Bought a little house on the corner of Avenue A and Holly. The kids and Mother enjoyed having her close. She always slept with Mother or me. If Mother was off visiting Helen or Grover, she's stay with me. Beverly, my second daughter, said, "I can see Aunt Eliza coming down the road with her little brown paper sack on cold winter evenings." She always baked the kids tea cakes with maple and walnut flavoring in them.

While we lived out of town on that last farm, a group of people leased 10 acres of land right where the Middle school is now and planted a cotton crop to build a church. Up to then they had been having church in a little wooden school building, which had nine students. They made enough cotton the first year to pay off a loan that they had got, but someone stole part of the cotton. So they had to raise more cotton the next year.

We moved from that last farm back here to **Sweeny**. Moved into the little white house that used to set on 2<sup>nd</sup> Street and Elm. (The bank bought it, moved the little house off, cut down a large oak tree, and made a parking lot for their customers.) When we moved back to town, Dad went to work on a section crew on the railroad. Would put in new crossties and rails.



*Little white house site now bank parking lot 2nd & Elm*



*1943 aerial photograph shows little white house, the large oak tree & what must have been Dr Eades home across street, now location of the post office.*

Devorah and Parker Presley worked the first switchboard in Sweeny for Mr. George Elliot's telephone company. It was upstairs in Eades' drug store. Devorah worked days, Parker worked nights. That was in 1924.



Grover and Helen were born in the little white house. Dr. Eades lived across the street, and he delivered them. Grover, January 9, 1922 and Helen, January 10, 1924.



Dr. Eades had three children, Mary Catherine, Hudford, and Robert. They were the same ages as me and Bonnard. Robert was older than Grover. On the other side of us stood a nice white house that had roses and zinnias all around the yard fence every spring. That was Don (*Donal*) Rimmer, Minnie and daughter Evelyn we called "Dolly." Dolly, Mary C., and I had some wonderful times together. Mrs. Eades would have us take lunch up to Dr. Eades. His big two story drug store stood on Main Street and is still standing with a lunch room in it now (*torn down about 2000*). Anyway we would stand in awe, for on a shelf around the room he had stuffed animals. We thought they were the prettiest things we'd ever seen.

Then some days Dr. Eades would come home about 3 P.M. Would call all us dirty kids in up to their big dining table with a beautiful white linen cloth. Would have us a big slice of devil's food cake and glass of cold, sweet milk. He had a jolly, old laugh. Would say, "Go on and play. I fed you devil's food, so you're all little devils now." He took bad sick while we lived there. Asked his wife to take him back to Missouri on train, where he came from. He died out there, so she had him buried by his 1<sup>st</sup> wife. Years later their old home was moved off and our new post office now stands in its place, facing 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. The Eades home faced Elm Street.



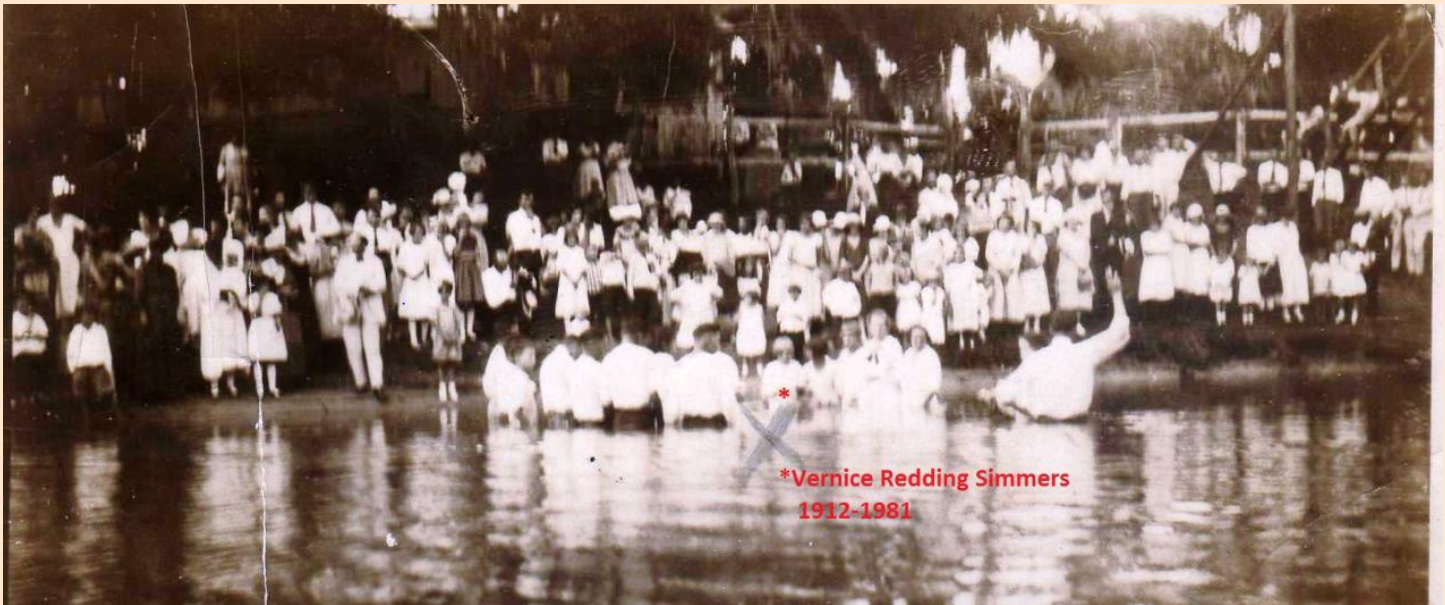
*Dr Eades home site 2nd & Elm (post office). Little white house was across 2nd (now bank parking lot)*

While we lived there on the corner, Mother and Dad both joined this Baptist church. Was in the early 20's. I remember the day they were baptized. Was about a dozen more baptized with them. Down at the river called **Black's Ferry** just as you went over the bridge on the old road. Was a beautiful bank. **We used to have a picture** of all of them standing in the river with the preacher. Women all wore long, black skirts and white blouses. Men wore black pants and white shirts. We never did know what went with that picture. The reason they don't have a record of their baptism is because our church secretary took the books home one time to work on them and his home burned, losing all records.

*The pictures were obtained later from a relative. Others put the location of picture adjacent to Hwy. 35 bridge/Hanson County Park. Reader input requested.*

*There is no doubt baptisms took place at Blacks Ferry, the only question here is this particular picture.*





When the Baptist encampment in Palacios started, Devorah was among the first ones to go. I think Mrs. Randolph Smith took them as she always did when they left town to play basketball.

Back in those days our church doors were never locked\*. In winter the men kept a huge box of wood in one corner of the room. Had a nice, big heater and 2 lanterns hanging on posts. Full of kerosene to light if ever needed. In those days anyone traveling and needing a place to sleep was welcome to go to the church and sleep for the night. Was welcome to build up a fire if it was wintertime.

In October of 1942 the church voted to start locking the doors. The pastor, each department superintendent, and Kimmey's Dry Goods Store would all have keys. In 1947 the church voted to take \$10 out of the budget for young people's Christmas entertainment. In 1950 the church nursery was started.

See [First Baptist Church 90th Anniversary & History](#)



I can remember the women on Sundays and during revival time making pallets for the children to lie down. That's where they got the old saying, "I got mixed up in a pallet swap," Ha! Or, "I'm a pallet swap baby."

The 4<sup>th</sup> of July was a festive occasion. On the school ground, where the Berta Barclay building stood, they would build tables by nailing 2x4's to trees and laying 2 wide boards on them. Had plenty of pecan trees close together then. Everyone brought all kind of food and deserts. The men the night before would dig a long hole in the ground and start a fire in it. Put a lot of live oak wood so they'd have plenty of coals. About midnight they'd stretch strong hog wire over that, then lay a lot of beef and chickens over the warm coals for barbecue. Of course, the farmers would donate that. Then they would have about 3 big, wooden barrels full of lemonade. Dug holes in the ground and set the barrels halfway in the earth. Had big chunks of ice floating in it with slices of lemon. Everyone brought their own glasses from home, so was responsible for his own. You could have all the lemonade you wanted to drink. And it was delicious.



### ***CATTLE DRIVE THRU TOWN.....The wild west.***

Also while we lived on the corner in the little white house, twice a year the ranchers would move their cattle. In the fall they'd take them down close to the beach. Then in spring they'd take them back up in hill country away from those awful mosquitoes.

They would send 2 or 3 runners, as they were called, to town about 30 minutes early or ahead of the cattle. They would run up and down the streets hollering "Cattle are coming." Women would rush out, get their clothes off the lines, brought in kids, cats, dogs, pot plants.

It was sure scary. Sometimes a big bull would get loose. One ran around our little house snorting and bellowing. Never did hear of any damage too serious in town though! We had no fence law back then. Mother had a beautiful garden out there. Of course, they all had to fence their gardens then. Dad finally fenced a whole corner so Grover and Helen would have a place to play.

We had plenty of good water there. Was piped from town. Before we came to Texas there used to be a huge hotel stood on Main Street right where Coastal Furniture and 7 –Eleven stores stand right. (Corner of Main and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street , on the right side, coming into Sweeny in direction from West Columbia.) *(Burned down 1917)* They put down a deep well. Piped it to this little house which they built for some of their folks. Anyway several families would come and wash under **2 big oak trees** that stood in the back yard. Irene **Meador** would get through washing, then call her 3 kids down and bathe them hair and all. Never rinsed them off and would **run home naked** on that dusty road *(2+ blocks up dirt 2nd street to the corner with Holly)*. Mother would laugh. Said, “Those kids will be dirtier than when she bathed them.” Ha! They lived in the old Hodgen *(Hogden?)* home on the corner of Holly and 2<sup>nd</sup> Street.



*Main & 2nd. The hotel is thought to have sat off to the left. Suspect these are the oak trees.*

### ***HOW DOGTOWN GOT ITS NAME***

Gramper Presley, Aunt Eliza, and Colie lived at Dogtown, one mile out of town toward Four Forks. That's where they lived when Gramper died.

Dogtown got its name when a potash plant was built there, had a grocery store across the road from Aunt Cora's on the corner. Was several nice homes there, and they all went together and paid for a good well to be put down. So they were well-fixed that way.

All the farmers had at least 4 to 6 hounds each, for they all hunted. These dogs seemed to like the porch on the store. A stranger rode up to the store one day. Couldn't get to the door, hounds were sprawled out asleep. The storekeeper made his way out. Asked him if he could help him. The man was asking the way to Freeport. As he started to drive off, he asked the storekeeper, “By the way, what's the name of this little place?” The storekeeper scratched his head and spit a big mouth of tobacco juice and said, “By diggies, we've never named it. The stranger said with a big grin, “I'd name it Dogtown,” looking at all those hounds. And that's how it got its name. The main road



then went down toward Aunt Cora Orr's, then turned right by Gladys Lingo's and the store stood on the left.



*Dogtown 1943 Google Earth*

While Gramper lived there, he would bring the largest, big wagon loads of hay by our house here on the corner. Always stopped and hollered at us. I often wondered how he got on top of it or how he got down. He was taking it to Uncle John. He lived in a large, 2-story house with a big porch across the front. It stood on that block where Ida Nusz and Gene Meador live( now Fig Street). The old man that built it went back up north and left a large grandfather clock in the foyer. Was beautiful. Prudy and I used to sit and watch the big gold pendulum swing for several minutes at a time. The big house burned down not long after Uncle John moved.

Then we moved to **Hasema**, Texas, about 9 miles down the railroad track toward Bay City. Was a 2-story grocery store there but had gone out of business several years before. So Aunt Almerrean and family lived in this big building. Uncle Jap and boys farmed some land there. They also had an artesian well. Gushed out ice cold water all the time out of a 4 or 6 inch pipe. We moved on down about a quarter of a mile from her. The one-room school house was just across the railroad track. Howard, Devorah, Vernice, and I went to school there for a little while. I was seven years old. Mrs. Vades Richardson was the teacher. I had already learned to read some. Anyway enough to know how to help the other kids read. So she would let me finish the reading class while she started on the other classes. Had 6 grades. At recess we all ran and got in line at the Wells Fargo pump to get a drink of water. **All drank out of the same cup**. Then on to the little castle in back. Had two. One for girls and one for boys. Had half-moon in the door, with 2-hole seat and a Sears Roebuck catalogue. Was the toilet tissue those days. Ha!



We didn't live there long. The house was haunted. A knocking would start around 9 P.M. and go on until midnight. People from town came out to hear it. Men with lights helped Dad look the house over good in the attic and under the house but couldn't find the reason. So we moved back in our little white house on the corner here at Sweeny. Corner of Holly and 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

That was 1923. I had already started to school in Hasema that fall. So when we moved back to Sweeny, I started up here, as did Devorah, Howard, Vernice. I was 7 years old. My birthday came 10 days late, September 10 instead of September 1<sup>st</sup>. Was a beautiful 2-story building. I have a picture of all the children and teachers standing in front of it. Was made right after we started there. While we lived in Port Arthur it burned down (1926) but was built back in 1927. (a new building was built in 1927 later remodeled and named the Berta Barclay building)



1923

Photo Charlene Finley

Mr. And Mrs. Andrew Kennedy/*Ida Mae Meador* were real close friends of Mother and Dad. So he got several houses to build in Texas City. He begged Dad to go to work for him, so he did. After working a few weeks, he came home in a new 1924 Model T Ford sedan car. The first time Devorah drove it to the post office she went around Reynolds' grocery store corner so fast it threw all 4 tires off. She never did live that down. Ha!

Anyway we moved to **Texas City**. Devorah was transferred to that phone office. While we lived there, she and Alfred Orr were married and moved back to Sweeny. Of course, her and Aunt Almerrean living in Sweeny, Dad thought we should come down every weekend. Had flats, when it rained, had to put celluloid curtains on the car windows. They were made with a metal slit in them and the car had the tiny metal buttons made on it. So was real easy to do.

Dad and Mr. Kennedy got the houses finished. So on our visits to George Elliot's he got Dad to go to work for him in the Texas Company refinery as electrician in Port Arthur. They didn't have any children, and they worshiped Helen. She was such a pleasant, pretty baby. Mrs. Elliot was always bringing her toys and clothes. So Dad took the job in **Port Arthur**.

Yes, we moved. Lived 3 blocks from the Texas Company gate. We lived one block off Proctor Avenue on 18<sup>th</sup> Street. We had a flush toilet out in the back yard. The tank was way up high on the wall. A long chain hung down, had to pull it to flush it. We also had a 2-foot wide wood walk from the back porch to the toilet. Never got your feet wet going to our castle. Ha! We had to use coal to cook and heat with. Clotheslines were always so black. Had a little building in the back yard with a big flap window in back of it opening to the alley. In those days all large towns had alleys. So when we ordered coal, the truck would come down the alley and lift the flap window and let the coal run in the building with a big shoot. Then late of an evening we'd had to go bring in 2 big coal buckets full of coal. Didn't take very much to make a hot fire.

By that time I was old enough to help Vernice with breakfast. She'd make the biscuits, coffee, fry the bacon and eggs, and cooked oatmeal. I'd set the table. Set out the butter and jellies and syrups, cream and sugar. All of us kids drank coffee milk as Dad called it: a half cup of coffee with a big spoon of sugar and filled the cup up with milk. Was wonderful in the wintertime.

Some of my fondest memories of my Dad was at the breakfast table. I can remember him giving advice to two of his nephews that lived with us a lot, Audie and Rowlf Hanna. He would tell them to work for the public, you have to take a lot. Always give a man work worthy of you hire. Always give the other fellow a benefit of the doubt. And he always said a man that would let the sun come up and catch him in bed wasn't worth the lead it took to kill him. But I know if he were living today, he would adjust to the times. So much shift work. He'd understand. And he said a drunk just got drunk to let his meanness out. He didn't drink and didn't appreciate anyone coming around that did.

Another wonderful memory of Dad was when he'd come in from work and before bedtime he'd hold the little ones, Helen and Grover, on his lap, Bonnard and I at his knees, and he'd sing to us. "The Negro Preacher Went A Hunting," "Old Baldy," and so many more. He had a wonderful voice. I guess that's where Helen Marie's beautiful voice came from.

Another thing I thank God for the precious memory of Dad and Mother's love for each other. And all the nieces and nephews loved them both so much and stayed with them as much as their parents would let them.

We hadn't been in Port Arthur long when Howard ran away and came back to Sweeny. He visited Devorah and Aunt Almerrean but stayed with Buford Meador. He liked Texas City for he got a job at the sugar refinery there. Was sample boy. He sure enjoyed working there because there just wasn't anything for a seventeen-year-old boy to do in Port Arthur. He and Buford had been chums before he moved away. Buford was Uncle Elige Meador's boy. They got a job on a right of way cleaning brush and trees. He worked good and was happy.

On Feb. 1, 1926, we got a call Devorah had given birth to a fine grandson, William Alfred Orr, Jr. Dad and Mother were so thrilled. They talked it over. Mother knew she couldn't leave us kids to come to Sweeny to see the baby, so she told Dad to come. He caught a train, got in Sweeny at 10:45 Saturday morning. Didn't tell Devorah he was coming. He walked across the street from the train depot, went in Randolph Smith's general store and bought a nice oak rocking chair for Devorah. By that time some of the Orrs from Dogtown came by. (That's where Alfred and Devorah lived.) So



they took him and the rocker down to their home. Was such a surprise to Devorah, and Dad was so proud of that first grandson. He made the trip back home fine. We all enjoyed hearing about the baby.

Then a man Dad worked with lived in **Nederland**. Got Dad to move over there. He had planned on having a big garden while we lived there. Also Devorah, Alfred, and baby visited us there.

One Saturday morning a man came by, wanted Dad to go duck hunting with him. But Dad couldn't go for some reason or another. The man went on by himself. Went out to a swampy place. He never came back home. They searched for him 3 days and the 4<sup>th</sup> day he popped up out of an alligator hole. He had fallen in and couldn't get out and drowned.

That is the place where Helen Marie had eaten some pickles and given her a high fever. Took convulsions. The doctor came. He and the neighbors worked with her 3 hours before they could break that convulsion. The doctor said she had a small intestine and should watch what she ate. Out yard was full of people, and when the doctor came out and said the convulsion had broken, you should have seen the shouting and heard the "Praise the Lord" that was being said.

One rainy day Dad and his friend was on the way to work. He saw a bad wreck. Scared him so, that weekend we moved back to **Port Arthur** in the same neighborhood his foreman Mr. Roberts lived. Ha! Mother said before we left Tennessee and Grandpa Redding died, that he had said to Dad, "Cleve, you move so much when your chickens hear a wagon coming, they lay down and cross their feet." Ha!

One morning early Mr. Roberts started to work and a wooden sawhorse was on the railroad track they crossed to get to work. It had a lantern hanging on it. Burning bright and setting right under it was a pasteboard box. Inside the box was a beautiful baby boy wrapped up so good and sleeping with a note pinned on his blanket saying "Please take care of my baby, I can't. He took it back home. His wife and kids wanted to keep it, but he said no. So they called a county agent and they came and got it.

Vernice and I had to walk 18 blocks to school. Had our playground on top of the school building. Had banisters all around it with a roof on it. Had high school girls as guards at recess and noon, so kids wouldn't get too close to the banisters. Yes, everyone took their lunches in those days. We all sat and ate, exchanged sandwiches. I remember a little girl loved peanut butter. I always had a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, so we would trade. Her sandwich I liked was mustard with sugar sprinkled on it. Can you imagine? I've wondered since, did I really like that sandwich or was I just sorry for that little girl?

Well it was coming spring. Mother and neighbors had been cleaning some. Washing curtains. This particular Saturday was so pretty. I always walked to the alley with Dad. When he'd come to the street he'd always look back and wave good-bye. This Saturday he said as we walked down the board walk, "If you're real good and help Mom today, I'll take you and your little girl friend Beatrice Pool on the streetcar to Woolworths," a huge type of variety store. He only worked until noon on Saturdays. Beatrice and I got ready. He didn't come in at 12:30 like usual. Or 1 P.M., still at 1:30 P.M. We walked back across the alley to her house. Was just killing time. A neighbor called at Mrs. Pool's back door and told me I better run home. Then she told me what had happened.

Just as we left, 2 men knocked on our front door. They told Mom that Dad had an accident. Of course, she was crying and wringing her hands. They said, "Mrs. Redding, sit down and try to get a



hold of yourself, and we'll run see how he is and we'll be right back." They only drove around the block, came back in and told her he was dead. I guess they were trying to get her prepared for the worst. His foreman, Mr. George Elliot, said his head come in contact with a live wire. He fell down the pole with his belt on. As he hit the ground he murmured, "Oh My God." He was dead.

And it seemed that March 12, 1927, that our world had crumbled all around us. We had wonderful neighbors. Was so good to Mom and helpful and thoughtful. I think it was Voyd Hanna that came and got us. We came back to Sweeny for his burial. Audie and Rowlf, the nephews that lived with us so much, stayed to come by train with his body. He and I had been going to the Christian church. Some of the men he worked with went there and had asked him to come there, too. They had a funeral for him there for our and his friends, then brought his body to Sweeny. He was killed on Saturday and had his funeral here on Wednesday. I'll never forget that day. The sky was blue as the sea, wind blowing briskly from the north, and a solid string of blackbirds flew over. Couldn't see the beginning or end of them while we were at the cemetery.

## **Lineman Victim Of High Voltage**

### **Thrown 30 Feet From Arm of Pole To Ground By Force of Current**

G.C. Redding, age 40 years, an electrician for the Texas Company, was almost instantly killed Saturday afternoon when a 2200-volt shock passed through his body, causing him to topple more than 30 feet to the ground from near the top of a pole on which he was at work. The accident occurred on the west side of the Texas Company works, in the rear of vertical still No. 1.

#### **Current Leak**

G.W. Elliott, Redding's foreman, and other workmen, saw him fall, it was said. Among the first to reach the shock victim's side was H.C. Riley, 1916 Austin, a carpenter, who noted others as naming a current leakage on a cross-arm of the pole as being responsible for the electrician's fall.

Redding's arm is thought to have come in contact with the high voltage current.

Fellow workers used first-aid measures in an effort to resuscitate Redding, but he never regained consciousness. His body was bruised by the plunge.

Redding, who resided at 221 East Seventeenth, came here two years ago from Texas City and has been in the employ of the Texas Company since that time. He formerly lived at Sweeney, Texas.

About a month ago Redding received a slight electric shock, friends said yesterday, and jested with members of his family how he had "barely missed being killed."

Surviving are his wife, four daughters, who are Vernice, Opal and Helen, all of Port Arthur, and Mrs. Deborah Orr of Sweeney; three sons, Howard, Barnard and Grover, all of Port Arthur; one brother, Marvin of Sardis, Tenn.; and three sisters, Mrs. Almarrean Clayton of Sweeney, Mrs. Deena Shephard of Sardis, and Mrs. Eda Mackey, who also resides in Tennessee. Funeral arrangements were incomplete last night, pending the arrival of the daughter from Sweeney, Texas.

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We spent a week here in Sweeny visiting Devorah, Aunt Cora, Aunt Almerrean, and Uncle John. Then Voyd took us back home. And that was the hardest thing for us. Mother would walk the floor and cry at night. I was small or ten years old and I can remember praying for her, asking God to ease her broken heart and give her a peace of mind. And I know he did gradually.

We had a neighbor living next door name Green. His father came down to visit them. So one evening he came over and talked to Mother. He said, "If you have any people in a smaller town, I'd advise you to go to them. A large place isn't the right place to raise children."

Bonnard, Grover, and Helen weren't school age yet. So Mother wrote for Voyd to come **move us back to Sweeny**. We lived in the little house that Stearl Plunk lives in now. Corner Holly and 4<sup>th</sup> Street. But Grandmother Brockman came to Mother and told her she was welcome to live in her house until she could get her insurance settled without paying any rent. Which after the insurance was settled, she could pay her 10 dollars a month for the time we'd been there. Mother was so happy to get to do that. So we moved over there. The house stood on the **corner where the Church of Christ now stands (5th & Elm)**. Had 2 bedrooms on the south side, long, large hall down the middle, and a large kitchen and dining room on the north side. And a nice front porch. Had a small barn, chicken house, and pen. All the yard was fenced and a large garden fenced, too.



*Church of Christ 5th & Elm*



*1943 aerial photograph shows house & what must have been the barn on the left. Notice school upper right. Outline of school still evident in 2014 Google Earth satellite pass.*



The Church of Christ people were our good Samaritans. Mr. Will Hammonds came up the road with a cow and corn to feed her, for us to milk. As soon as she'd go dry, he'd bring another one. I don't remember the farmer that plowed up our garden, but Uncle John Presley came and planted it for Mother. Several women sent hens, and so we had plenty of good milk, butter, eggs and vegetables. They furnished us with good corn so we could have some of it ground into cornmeal.

Mother was real good at managing. I guess she had gotten her experience from her Mother since her Dad died when she was a baby. He had typhoid fever. Our oldest brother, Howard, got a job in a café in Boling during that oil boom. He would hitchhike home on Saturdays to bring Mother some money. The oldest sister at home then was Vernice. She worked in Reynolds' general store on weekends during school months and everyday in summer. That would buy flour, sugar, coffee, and a few more necessities we needed. She usually saved up Howard's money to buy school clothes and shoes for us all.

We lived there 2 years. Mr. Jim Reynolds that run the general store was a lawyer. So he settled with the Texas Company for Mother. Seven thousand dollars. She bought Barley Plunk's home for \$700. Wasn't nothing but a shell. Had 4 lots. All fenced in good, a barn, a garden, and a good chicken house so we could lock up the chickens at night. We had to do that for the woods was right behind us and all kind of varmints would come up and walk around the chicken house at night and holler, trying to get in. Only thing good about the house I thought then was the electric lights. Ha! Didn't too many people in town have that \$1.50 a month. We only had a dug well, the kind you let a bucket down with a rope. It tasted awful, so I carried water from Mr. Brose's pump well for 2 or 3 years. Finally, Uncle Jap Clayton, Howard, and several more men bore us a well. Got good, clear water at 32 feet. We really thought we were rich with all that good water. Mother filled up the old well. Mother got a lump sum of money from the insurance to buy the house and a good Jersey cow. Also a team of mules and several farm implements.

Howard thought he wanted to farm some land. But that didn't work out, so she had to sell the mules and things. And she drew the rest of the insurance, 65 dollars a month. That was just when the bad depression got started, 1929. We always had plenty to eat, lots of people didn't. Mother would get someone to take her to the Q.P. store in West Columbia. She would buy 48 lb. Can lard, 50 lb. Sugar, 48 lb. Sack flour, several sacks of coffee, and lots more things. Then send us kids to 2 neighbors and tell them to come with some pots and pans, and she'd divide with them.

All of us kids were healthy. The worst thing that happened while we were growing up, was Bonnard fell out of a tree and broke both wrists. Howard run to Mr. Gray Arrington's (He lived up by the Baptist church.) and got him to take Bonnard, he, and myself to West Columbia to Dr. Greenwood. We sure had a time. We had to feed him and see after him just like a baby. He was 9 years old then, I think. We made it O.K. through that, and the depression was getting worse each day. Mother had to make several large draws on the insurance, so that shortened our time on monthly draws. Anyway it finally gave out. But Mother was all our strength. She could make a dollar go farther than anyone I know. She was a perfect manager.

There were several more widows in town. Mrs. Della Burt lived just behind us. So she and Mother would take us to the fields where they tied carrots, radishes, turnips, onion, and all kind of greens for Uncle Elige Meador. They quit work around 4:30 in the evening, for they had their chores to do. He always told them to take plenty home to eat. I can still taste those fresh carrots with cream sauce. They were paid by the dozen bunches. I believe it was 50 cents for a dozen tied bunches. So that helped buy what we couldn't raise. She had a good Jersey. Cow. So she sold whipping cream to the café for 25 cents a pint. And eggs, 1 cent each. We always had a garden. She raised chickens all

time, had all sizes on the yard. Mr. Schelle would let her and Mrs. Burt glean in his corn field, which was right by us. So we had plenty of corn. On Saturday mornings in the winter when it was so cold, she would throw some corn out the back door. The chickens would come running. She'd grab a fryer, have it skinned and cut up and in the skillet frying before you could say "Jack Robinson." Ha! With fried chicken, hot biscuits, cream gravy, and homemade butter and always Karo syrup on the table not to mention the homemade jellies and jams, we could take out time and eat and talk and enjoy each other.

Then on weekends we would work cutting wood for Mother to use the next week.

Back to our school days during the bad depression from 1929 to around 1933. In the fall of the year Mr. Charlie Ballard, one of the school board members, would bring several wooden barrels and place them among the pecan trees. At recess all kids picked up the pecans and put them in the barrels. Some larger boys would thrash the trees. Then they'd help Mr. Ballard put them on his big truck. He would take them to Houston and sell them, then buy us new basketballs, volleyballs and nets, baseballs, bats and gloves, and I can't remember the exact things. Without him doing that, we wouldn't have had a thing to play with.

And on one Thanksgiving the P.T.A. served dinner in the hall of the school. I helped wait on tables. That time of year chrysanthemums were in full bloom, so we had big bouquets on each table. That smell was so sweet to me. And the farmers furnished the turkey, and the P.T.A. members would fix turkey and dressing with all the trimmings. And there would be homemade cranberry sauce, fresh pumpkin pie, whipped cream. Only charged 50 cents a plate for grown-ups and 25 cents for children. Even that was high during a depression.

The P.T.A. then took the money they made and bought several children glasses that needed them so bad. And even bought a coat and shoes for some that didn't have any. Back then real good pretty coats with fur collars were 3 and 4 dollars. I had a beautiful one, just 3 dollars, was wine color with gray fur. Shoes for children were from 1 to 2 dollars. That sounds cheap now, but then that was high.

I can remember during that depression we'd have to sell cream or eggs to get soap to wash with. And pick up pecans and sell them to get 3 cents to mail a letter. The government issued food for those that needed it. Mother and Mrs. Burt not to mention the rest in town got a few. That didn't last long. We got notices through the mail when a big county agent would be at Aunt Rose Doyle's hotel. If you needed material to make dresses or shirts or any kind of clothes, they'd give you enough for each member of your family.

Mother signed up for new mattresses. That was later on around 1941. I went with Aunt Alice Meador, Mrs. Burt, and several more to Angleton. Had to take the raw cotton that had been seeded, put it between 2 sheets, and take sticks and beat it until it fluffed. They'd have the blue stripe covers sewed up and you put the cotton in by layers. Then sewed it together by pulling up an inch thick roll of cotton all around with a big needle and strong cord. They were real good and soft mattresses. I made Mother Mother 2. She kept Jo Berta and J.C. for me.

Another highlight in those days was to go meet the passenger train. Came from Houston around 10:30 o'clock in the morning and back from Bay City around 4:30 P.M. in the evenings. Everyone would go across from the depot to the post office and wait until their mail was put up. Got to visit a lot with each other.

Sundays us kids went to church and Sunday school. Our preachers then really preached “hellfire and damnation.” I would run home fast as I could, thought the Lord would roll back those clouds and blow that trumpet before I made it home.

Mother did have some work done on the old home place. Had it sealed and a long screened in porch built on. We slept on it in the summer.

Mother always read us some out of the Bible at night. In winter she’d read us good books which some of the neighbors lent her. We would hurry with our homework so she could read to us. Her favorite book in the Bible was Psalms, but she read us a lot in Proverbs as well as the rest.

As for Mother’s and Dad’s children, which were all Christians, the Lord blessed Devorah with 13 children, Howard had 3, Vernice had 4, Opal 4, Helen 3, Bonnard 1, and Grover 4.

Dad died March 12, 1927, Mother died November 18, 1972, Devorah died August 6, 1972, Howard died February 4, 1973, Vernice died May 1, 1981, Bonnard died March 26, 1969, Grover died December 25, 1977. Helen and I are left alone.

Mother lived with Bryan and I the last few years of her life. We all miss her. But she left us with so many precious memories. And we know she’s with the Lord and her loved ones.

### *MOTHER in the story Bertha Redding*



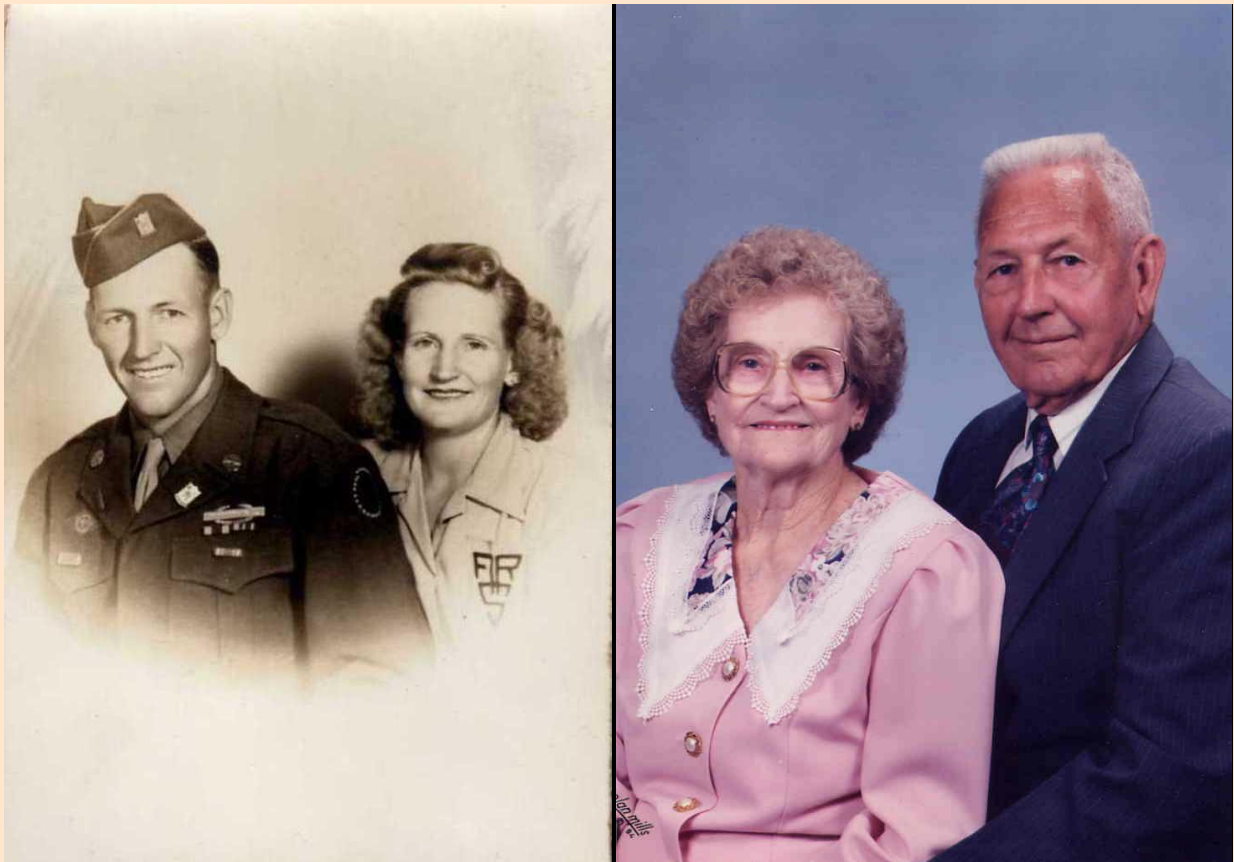
About 1940 Photo Jo Berta  
Bailey Flickinger



findagrave.com Sweeny cemetery



*HER DAUGHTER Opal Redding Bailey wrote the story*



1945/1994

Photo Jo Berta Bailey Flickinger



findagrave.com Sweeny cemetery