

Johnnie Lilla Farrell

interviewed by

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October 29, 1975

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ORAL HISTORIES OF FORT WORTH, INC.

I am known as Johnnie Lilla Farrell²¹. My husband was Edward R. Farrell. My mother was Margaret Ann Turner^{r Turner}, born in Tennessee Jan. 27, 1867. When she was two, her parents, the Turner Perrys moved to Arkansas and later came here in 1875-76 when she was sixteen. Three families, Nat, Joe and Anna Eder, the Steens and Perrys all came together after living in Bonham a while. My grandmother Docia Turner married a Steen later. My grandparents, Rev. W. Marian Isham (Sept. 4, 1831-Jan. 23, 1904) and Rowzie, his wife (Dec. 22, 1838-June 15, 1924) came originally from Georgia. Ederville was laid out in 1882. After their marriage, my daddy, Frank Isham, settled on John T. White Road; then built a home in Ederville in 1892.

My mother had first married a Mr. Fahey and two children. They lived on the land where the little Eastern Hill^s lake is located. She married a Mr. Harvey after her husband and children died. (old Handley Cemetery) When Mr. Harvey died (Pioneer) she married the third time. I understand Mr. Harvey had a Union pension. This time she raised a family of eight children, Daisy, Lizzie, Lee, Grace, Mary Frances, Alberta and me. We lived in this 6700 block of Isham. The Ederville Post Office was in the front room of this house. Of course, it has been added on to since that time. My mother's sister, Lela and Jess Reeves lived here at one time. Jess came to Ederville in 1881 when he was twenty years old. They had several children and lived on Nottingham. Earlier they had lived at the hotel.

I went to school in a little two room schoolhouse up here on this hill at Brentwood Stair and Handley Drive where the new bank is located. My first teacher was a Miss Taylor; Miss Katie Keith was the other teacher. Miss Taylor lived in a room at the hotel. They taught through the ninth grade. If you wanted to go beyond that you had to go to Handley. Although I did go to Handley, I remember the days of the water bucket and outdoor facilities at our little school. An all denomination church was held there on Sundays. Since my mother was a Baptist, my brother and I went to Handley Baptist.

My grandfather Isham was a Methodist minister. He and grandmother lived at the hotel at one time. I have heard my Uncle Gordan laugh about the tricks they pulled when a group of preachers were at his daddy's house. The preachers would leave their horses and buggies at a big barn near the hotel. His daddy sent some of the boys down to saddle the horses one time for a visiting minister. They put cockleburrs under the saddle blanket. The old man said that he didn't know what in the world was wrong with his horse since he had never acted that way before!

The two story hotel at Ederville belonged to Boaz and Walker and was pretty good size with fourteen rooms. It faced east and the pavillion faced north.

It was located up here on this hill...and had a both house with rooms for the men and the women. I've heard my mother say that people would come and stay in tents for treatment of arthritis; that she saw them get up and walk away. The water was drawn from the wells by hand, heated and madpacks made. George Eder dug the well about 1875. The deepest well produced a pound of crystals for every nine gallons of water. I can remember water being sold for 5¢ a gallon or 25¢ for six gallons back in 1937. The well was called Silam Wells. There were 15-20 houses, the hotel owned by my grandfather Isham at one time, a skating rink which converted to a dance floor later, a drugstore, postoffice, restaurant, church, school and saloon. I think Mr. Works built the pavillion. M. C. Waler, Jr. of 220 Westheimer, Houston owns the property now. Mama used to talked about the store and blacksmith shop near the hotel...how the hotel served food family-style at a long table where everyone served himself.

By 1914 Mrs. Andrews sold water for 10¢ a gallon. The main thing that I remember about the hotel is that Eula May Brock (now Payne) and I used to go over and play in the old hotel when it was vacant and falling apart from no one living there. Eula May's mother was an Isham and a sister to me. Eula May's youngest brother went to John T. White; he's sixty-two now so you can judge the date of the school from that. They held an auction of some quilts at a homecoming to furnish the kitchen of John T. White School when it was new in 1938.

George Eder was the eldest son in the Eders; he married Zelle...and lived on John T. White Road, later moving to Walters, Oklahoma. "Doc" Eder never married but tended Jim, his blind brother, over on Brentwood Stair near where the church is located. Abby was the youngest and only daughter. She married Bill Foard. All are buried up in Oklahoma.

Most of the Ishams are buried at the Isham cemetery, just off the John T. White Road. When the Ishams first bought the land, about a half acre was a private cemetery.

I have always lived in this area. Ederville was a popular place in the 1890's but it went downhill by 1913. We all had to work hardand just as soon as we were big enough. I chopped and picked cotton many a day. Then I worked at William^S-Dickie.